



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral History interview with Lawrence A.
Fleischman, 1994 Apr. 18

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Lawrence Fleischman on April 18, 1994. The interview was conducted by Gail Stavitsky for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

Tape 1, Side A (45-minute tape sides)

[Note: The audio quality of the tapes is fuzzy, such that consonants are obscured as well as some whole phrases.-Trans.]

GAIL STAVITSKY: What I thought might be the most helpful is, I went over your interview from 1970, and it was in great detail with Paul Cummings about the origins of your interest in art and your background and all of your experiences up to 1970, which was about four years into your experiences as a dealer here with the gallery.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That was last week.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, okay.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Unveiling the Sistine Chapel.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Was that in connection with the Vatican and developing a new. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, they gave a dinner honoring me. And they unveiled The Last Judgment on April the 8th, so I want to remember that.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Right.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Now you must have an order to this. I'll just follow how you want.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Okay. Well, actually that was one of my questions. I knew that you'd gotten several awards . . . honors in connection with your work in Italy and so I was going to ask you about that. We can even start with that. We don't have to go in chronological order.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I also have been active with the British Museum now. I'm chairman of the Caryatid, and I'm vice president of the American Friends of the British Museum, which is. . . . Caryatid is the support group for the classical department of the British Museum. And the American Friends of the British Museum is the American section of the overall museum.

GAIL STAVITSKY: So you also have an interest in classical art?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes, as a matter of fact, because I don't sell it, my wife and I have built this personal collection of Greek/Roman/Etruscan, and the Getty is showing our exhibition this fall, and then it's going from there to Cleveland, where it opens February 4, 1995, and then it comes back to our house.

GAIL STAVITSKY: That's great. Now that's. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I've been always learning.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Always keeping busy, that's for sure. Now, that shift in your collecting, then, took place when you became a dealer?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, it was emphasized. Actually, in this exhibition, there's a Roman lamp that we bought in 1950. I was always interested and we bought right along, but we concentrated more on the American. But we were always interested in history and in antiquity. And I must say, luckily my wife was interested with me, so she went with me to all the meetings and we were able to do this. Otherwise. . . . And we poured a great deal of time, effort, and money into collecting, and she shared it with me.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Is the Getty show . . . will that be coming to the East Coast, too?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, it's going to open October 12th, 13th, and it's going to be there for two and half months and then it will go to California. Then it goes to Cleveland and back home. We didn't want it out. . . . A lot of museums have asked. We didn't want it out too long. I mean, we [felt, thought] it was important. We wanted

to have a catalogue published. A lot of scholars come to our house from Germany, France, England, Italy-all over the world-Greece. The house has always been open to scholars, but to have a publication where everything's reproduced, they could work with it and study and so on. So we agreed to this because the Getty's publishing this big catalogue. The Getty and Cleveland Museum.

GAIL STAVITSKY: That's fabulous.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: So once that is done and the catalogue's out into the field and so forth, we don't think it's necessary. . . . And anybody's really deeply interested, we'd allow them to see the collection anyway.

GAIL STAVITSKY: So now you really have this dual focus where your professional life is. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's right. But I'm still interested in American art.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yes, obviously.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: We still publish the American Art Journal, up to this point. In spite of its cost, I think it's important to have, first of all, an avenue where scholars both young and old could write articles, based the way that I believe in: facts, not a bunch of baloney. And then have it distributed. There's no advertising in the magazine, so consequently we carry the burden all ourselves.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Well, I was interested, in a sense, hearing about the growth of your various activities. The American Art Journal was founded in 1969?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, once I came here.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And it's still _____, right?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That was an offshoot of an interest, by the way, of the Archives of American Art. Because I created the idea of the journal that the Archives of American Art published. I always felt that the Archives should have a. . . . First, a newsletter that came out. I don't know if you saw all the back issues. First there was a newsletter, then it became a journal, and then Garnet McCoy got very active with it, did an excellent job. But that was my idea-to have a journal that goes out.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And now a lot of this had to do with your feelings about the fact that there just weren't enough. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Publications on American art.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . publications or opportunities for scholars.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: And I also am very concerned today about the quality of publications. So much is views of the writers instead of facts, and objective writing is what I really like.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Well, that was one thing I wanted to ask you about, because I was struck by some of your comments in your last interview about the state of the academic art world, the state of art criticism, and you expressed some of your feelings of dissatisfaction and I was wondering now over that twenty-year period. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: So many years?

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . how _____ you feel about it.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Now another problem has come up with institutions, which bothers me a lot, and that's development offices. In some cases, development people are paid more than curators. And they have taken over. First you had the battle between the object people, who knew about an object and so forth, and the battle of the words with the academic people. Now, in museums, you have development people, which have gained power to the point where they're calling the shots what show's being shown. A curator has an idea of an exhibition, has to go through the development part, and says, "Well, that isn't going to draw enough people." So they're against it. Now the curator might be making a very important point that hasn't been seen before. Development people want to do the same thing over and over. Picasso, Matisse. Now these are great artists, but they want sure bets, they want revivals of the musicals that we see going on on Broadway.

GAIL STAVITSKY: The blockbuster.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. And consequently I feel that the museums are suffering. We're in turmoil right now. It's gotten worse, like I predicted once. Museums don't have directors. Trustees don't know what they expect their institution to do. Now, I'm not overly pessimistic. I think out of all this turmoil is going to come some

new thinking, better thinking. I think we have to go through this to get to a better place.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Now do you feel. . . . One thing I was struck about, too, when your earlier interview you were talking about the state of the art world-the American art world, I should say-when you were first very seriously collecting in the forties. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . and you were struck by the fact that there was just a handful of people like [Edgar P.-Ed.] Richardson and [Jack-Ed.] Bauer and [Lloyd-Ed.] Goodrich who were. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . scholars, who were curators, and I'm wondering how you feel about how the American art world has opened up since then.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: There's more people, fortunately. One of the things that has happened-and it's very obvious to me-there's more women scholars. And a lot of good ones, too. I remember when all graduate students were men, then I see them 50-50, and I was recently giving a seminar and they're mostly women now doing Ph.D.s, candidates. Why, I'm not quite sure. I mean, it's too glib to say it's because of money, because a lot of the jobs today have equalized out and a good Ph.D. in American Art History could get a job that pays as much as an academic job. But that's what the facts are. But there have been a number of [maybe] good women art historians-some of which I disagree with, just like I disagree with men, some which I agree with-but they're good. Barbara Weinberg is an example. She's publishing. [Barbara?-Ed.] Johns. She's publishing. Doreen Bolger is publishing. But a number of them. Then I met a terrific amount of bright. . . . Now, I mention on those women, because we're so kind of. . . . I would like not to be polarized. That's something that's wrong with art today to me. You've got to be Africo-American, not American. Or you've got to be. . . . There is no such. . . . I mean, there's a lot of American artists who happen to be Jewish and they draw, maybe, upon their cultural background but they're still trained, and they were raised in America, and these are American paintings. And this drive about women artists happens. . . . And I never realized it until my daughter pointed it out-I represent a lot of women artists. I never thought of it that way.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Which women? I'm just curious.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, here. We have a show on right now out there. She's a terrific artist-Carol Plochmann-and she's getting museum exhibitions. I've been working her and she's sensational. But I think of her as a great American artist. Carol Wald is another one that we've just taken on. Now that's in addition to the artists _____ we represent [was] John Marin or Charles E. Burchfield or we do a lot still with Leonard [Baskin's] sculpture. But the point is. . . . And Clarice [Smith], another woman artist. I only thought of them as artists, but, the fact is, a lot of change going on. But a good artist is a good artist.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Well, one thing I was struck about, too, when I was reading some of your literature, when you were talking about, in a sense, the raison d'être-some of the reasons. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: You can take that.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, thank you. . . . some of the reasons or some of the guiding concepts behind your gallery, you were mentioning this idea of individualism.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Right.

GAIL STAVITSKY: You used the term "imaginative realism."

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, I don't like "school of" painting. And I hate the term "American Impressionism," for example. Now I sell [Maurice-Ed.] Prendergast, I sell [Childe-Ed.] Hassam, I sell Theodore Robinson. I helped write one of the first catalogues our gallery ever did on Theodore Robinson. These are Americans but whenever you see an American impressionist show against a French impressionist show, to me the French always look stronger. I like Americans who are individual, with their own style: Winslow Homer, Thomas Eakin, John Singleton Copley, Edward Hopper, [Charles-Ed.] Burchfield. Now we all learn from each other; we all absorb something from various cultures. But you add on your own personal style. That's what makes you a great artist.

GAIL STAVITSKY: You used, in the brochure for the gallery, the phrase "imaginative realism," that's used to. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's right. Versus. . . . I don't like postcard realism. In other words, some artists just take photographs. They project it on the screen and they paint off the screen. That's like almost. . . . To me-this is personal, that's my observation-it's not nearly as interesting as some of these artists like. . . . I happen to think Andrew Wyeth is an excellent artist. I don't do much with him, I don't sell many, but I think that-particularly his

early work-if somebody looked at it anymore, "That's realistic." Well, it's more than realistic if they look. Actually, he doesn't paint every dot of the water or every blade of the tree. He's abstracting a lot-from nature.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And there's a lyrical quality to it, too.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: And when I used to talk to John Marin, who was my friend-he was one of the first to mention I should become a dealer-he would consider himself as a realist, not an abstract person. Even though you could recognize a tree, the mountain, the sea, the sailboat, when you look at it, he really abstracted a lot.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Now that's interesting. That's something new you just mentioned about Marin being one of the first people who said that to you, because I didn't recall reading that. I was curious about. . . . In other words, some of the artists also approached _____ a [gallery]?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, they were the. . . . When you like an artist's work and you tell them that, they like you. So as soon as I liked the work of Charles E. Burchfield or Hopper and I'd write them letters, they'd write me. We became friends. And since I liked their work we used to visit them [over the years]. And in discussions of art, there were. . . . Marin mentioned it to me very early on, that I should come to New York. He had terrific wit. But I laughed it off. I was very set in Detroit, my family's there, my wife's family's there, very involved with the Archives of American Art, and getting involved with the Detroit Institute of Art. I was involved with the art school [at the time].

But then the next person that mentioned it to me actually was Burchfield, in a strange way when he was living up in Buffalo, in Seneca, New York. He turned to me when I was describing a certain watercolor [he had there _____], and he said, "I wish you were my dealer"-and [Frank-Ed.] Rehn had died already, and he was very close to Rehn-and I smiled and laughed that off.

And then Edgar P. Richardson at one time said. . . . I told him what Burchfield and Marin-and one time Hopper-said, and I was laughing about it, and he turned to me and he wasn't laughing and he said, "That wouldn't be so bad."

GAIL STAVITSKY: Um hmm. And then the person, apparently, who was the final impetus, was that Rudy [Wunderlich] who. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, he wasn't the final impetus. Once. . . . Well, all right, now, as you're collecting, you build up two bridges. I built up a bridge. . . . Three bridges. One with the scholarship world, and made friends with Lloyd Goodrich, who was a close friend, and Jack [Bauer] was a close friend. And other bridges with some of the academic people. Then you build up another bridge with dealers. And dealers, some you like, some you had a chemistry with, some you weren't as close to. But the ones you were close to, was another bridge. Then you have a third bridge with the artist. So all of these things acting on you made me think. And then, all of a sudden, after I was president of the Arts Commission in Detroit, my wife turned to me and said, "Why don't you?" And that surprised me. That means that she was willing to lift up roots-she was already very involved with the museum thing-and back me up, because she said, "Because down deep you really want to do it." And I was approaching the age of forty. You know, the turning point in one's life.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yep. [chuckles]

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Then, what happened was that various dealers-George Wildenstein once mentioned it to me-different dealers mentioned it to me. Because dealers are always looking for people who could enhance their business, and they thought that because of my long-term involvement by that time in American art that I would have the contacts and I would be a good salesman and I would bring business to the gallery. So they all started talking about me coming in. Rudy Wunderlich was one of the minor dealers that I was dealing with at that time. Because they had a small gallery; they were more prints than anything. But when I thought it over and started to make up my mind to do this, I saw the best opportunity with Kennedy Gallery. It was an old established gallery. E. J. Kennedy, who really was the basis of the gallery, he bought it from Wunderlich around 1900, when it was a very small print business. He was a friend of Whistler's. He brought in the first Whistler show. They had, I think, the first Elihu Vedder show. Very imaginative, _____. He didn't have any children and Rudy Wunderlich's father and [_____-Ed.] Torrington, his other nephew, bought partnerships in it, and as they evolved Rudy Wunderlich's father died in '52 of a heart attack. He took over his half and he bought Torrington out, and he was looking for somebody. And I saw the best opportunity here. When I came here I really brought in and strengthened nineteenth century American art, because they were mostly western and prints, and I brought in the whole twentieth century. And it worked out that way.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, because I guess they had only. . . . John Taylor Arms was maybe one of their few twentieth-century artists.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's right. That's correct. And one of the first artists I brought in was Walt Kuhn. And we started selling individually, because I brought my own personal collection in, which [John D.-Ed.] Rockefeller III bought most of, and that became the basis of his collection. And once I became a dealer I wouldn't compete

with my own clients. Then, eventually, in the end of 1982 I bought out the Wunderlich family. I came in with half interest, and I bought out their half and I owned the whole gallery. And now my daughter's president.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Okay. And in terms of the growth of the gallery, you've added a lot to the roster of artists? I mean, it seems like you started with certain. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes a lot. But I'm also very careful. It's very easy to take on one artist after the other, because you don't pay the artist until you sell the work. But you don't service the artist. There's people who, for novelty, will take on fifty artists and they'll give them a show every fifty years or so. When I take on an artist, I feel responsible to the artist. So I only take on a few artists.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And that's just, you mean, every few years or so if there's somebody who really strikes you?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Well, I've just taken on Carol Wald. There's a new example of a new artist that I've taken on. And some artists for one reason or another-either they drop out of the field or they die-they move on to somebody else. I've had very little of that.

GAIL STAVITSKY: So is the base of your business, you feel, still essentially the historical figures, and then you take on just a few contemporary artists?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes. I do a very big business with people like Charles Demuth, John Marin, Charles E. Burchfield Estates, whom I represent. I do a pretty big business in John Sloan. And I do a very big business, like in Carol Plochmann, who's developing into a very big name. And so that's the basis of it. I did a lot with Ben Shahn. Now, Ben Shahn was another one of my great friends, and, to me, right now that's sort of neglected, but I think there's going to be a reawakening of great interest in social realism. But Ben Shahn, Jack Levine. . . .

GAIL STAVITSKY: That was one of the questions I was going to ask here, because you mentioned in your other interview that Ben Shahn had had a very strong influence on your thinking . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: He did, yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . and I was interested in hearing more about that.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Shahn was a . . . Many artists can only express themselves through their painting. They weren't as verbal. But they were tremendous artists and expressed themselves that way. There are other artists who are very glib and verbal but not very good painters. You know how [it is]-they know how to dress, they know how to socialize, they've got good personalities-but their paintings are rather thin and drop by the wayside after a number of years. There's a handful of artists who were tremendous artists and could paint well, but also were able to express themselves well. John Marin, for example, was one of them, if you read his writings. Another one who was extremely literate, as well as a great painter, was Ben Shahn. He got the Chair of Poetry [when he was, I think it was] at Harvard, and that caused some problems later on. But when he spoke or he wrote, it was very effective.

I spent hours. . . . Once I moved to New York, Ben Shahn used to come to New York and stay with us very frequently. As a matter of fact, when he died in a hospital his wife and son were staying with us at the time. But when you talked to Shahn, he expressed himself. . . . Shahn was completely different than many of the so-called social critics. Shahn was a true intellectual. He was positive. In other words, everybody had dignity. He criticized, he satirized, but he didn't roll in the mud with it, like so many people. Every single character that he ever painted there's a dignity to the human race through [those, them].

GAIL STAVITSKY: Do you think that he had a big influence in terms of, also, your orientation towards the individualism and the humanity of the. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I think they all did. When you're meeting with these superb minds and observers, they're bound to have an effect on you. I listened to them, had my disagreements with them, but more agreement than disagreement. That's why I was drawn to their work. Edgar P. Richardson had an enormous influence. And when you go back and read his writings on Washington Allston. . . . A lot of people are talking now about our tie-up to [Europe], our European heritage. One of the first persons to write about that was Edgar P. Richardson. In the late thirties he wrote on Burchfield, and he wrote on some of these artists when nobody else did it, when it was completely unfashionable. Richardson had an influence, Marin had an influence, Shahn had an enormous influence. Burchfield had a different kind of an influence. When you'd go in to see Burchfield, he'd give you popcorn. I love popcorn. Right off the bat, he would be playing Sibelius music in the background. But he lived to paint. He wasn't as vocal as some of the others, but in a one-to-one discussion it was quite interesting. One of the hardest people to have a discussion with was Edward Hopper.

GAIL STAVITSKY: You just mean he was very reticent?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. But he loved Thomas Eakins, so when I hit upon the subject of Thomas he would talk and talk and talk. One time I was talking to him, and his wife came up and said something about Eakins. He looked up-I was standing like this-he looked up and said, "What do you know about him?" In his paintings there's a woman always yelling out of a window or something. You always see that. I always felt that was his wife. In one of your interviews on Stuart Davis, Stuart Davis made a remark like that to his wife. I don't know if you ever caught it. In one of the tapes.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: He told her . . . cut her off.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And Stuart Davis was another one of your friends?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. The first time I met him was at the Edith Halpert. The Downtown Gallery had a party, and we already owned several of his things. There again, once an artist knows you own his things you're automatically friends. If you don't like an artist's work, it's very difficult to be broad-minded enough _____. An artist is a very sensitive, emotional person. And, typically, when you're a dealer you find out you have a marriage with the artist. It's a very emotional thing. But I walked up to him, the first time I'd seen the great man, Stuart Davis, and the first words. . . . He turned to me-he knew I was from Detroit already-and my wife and I walked up to him and he said, "What's wrong with the Detroit Lions?" That's a professional football team.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh! [chuckles]

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Another time I went up to his studio. He loved jazz music, and he was playing it so loud, I knocked on the door and he never heard me. So from then on I had to. . . . But these were. . . . And that's still true today, the artist, but there's a change of atmosphere today that I don't like, that I think is harmful to the artist. I think there's more hype today.

GAIL STAVITSKY: More hype, um hmm.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I think somehow, particularly New York artists, are craving pretension and institutions. Some of these pictures are so big they don't. . . . They forget that a Van Eyck, which were little pictures, had so much power. And there are other artists that are exactly the same as any other artist, ones who strive, who live for their work, and have plenty to say, and so on. But there are things out there that are harmful. There's too much talk, too much hype, too much recording of record prices.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I recall you saying in, I think, your last interview, you used the term of kind of "antic performances."

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And so you see a continuity in this that's going on. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, well, you know when we talked. . . . It's interesting, because it is twenty-some years since our last interview, and in twenty years things do change and so-forth. But, actually, in the world of philosophy, visual poetry and art, it's but a second of time. But there are changes _____ where they're going. They're changing in fiction writing. You look at theatre. We all love theatre. That's another visual creative thing. Right now, all we have are revivals. Some plays. There's never an absolute-all this or all that . . .

GAIL STAVITSKY: Sure.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: . . . but there's more of a trend or less of a trend.

GAIL STAVITSKY: So, actually, basically, since your last interview, I mean, there were a lot of developments in the art world. I guess pop art was sort of underway already, but _____.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: These movements will always happen.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Um hmm. And I guess I got the impression that those movements-pop art, minimalism, post-minimalism, whatever-were not necessarily of that much interest to you personally and professionally.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Not. . . . Not so. But I'll tell you one thing that has developed since my last thing-practically all art centered in New York, and that has changed. Now New York is still a center, and New York will probably always be a center-or one of the centers. But California-there's a lot of art that's been coming out of California and a lot of attention. And there's been more of a spread and more of a realization of other centers of America, other than New York. I happen to think that's a plus.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And are there some California artists that you represent?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, but there's some that I wish I did. There's Thiebaud. There's a number of artists that I really like that come from California.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Is that Wayne Thiebaud?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh yeah, he's wonderful.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. And there's a lot out there I don't like, a lot here I don't like. But New York will always be a center. I have many friends in California, many clients in California. And I just praise California, because I do see . . . which I didn't see that twenty five years ago, however. They always had artists but I see it much stronger now. But there's still something about New York. There's still an energy here that. . . I love London. We have a flat in London. I go to London frequently to study. And yet-in New York I could get so angry about the dirt and the traffic or this and that-I miss New York when I'm away. There's an energy here that no place else has.

GAIL STAVITSKY: That's true.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: And I think it affects all of us.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Um hmm. I'm curious. When you were mentioning these other places of interest, had you ever contemplated opening a branch gallery anywhere else?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, and I. . . Yes. Contemplate, yes. Thinking it out, no, you know. And the reason is, to me this is not a department-store business. Each work of art is unique. Now you could do that with prints because a hundred . . . the image is the same and you could make a canned talk and train your salesmen in it. But when you deal with unique objects, each thing is a different expression. Several things. First of all, a salesman could never do it the way that you want it. If he was that good he'd have his own gallery. The next thing is that if the picture's at the branch it's not where you are . . . your main place are [sic]. And third thing is I didn't want to be tied up in more administration than you have to do now operating a gallery. But the more branches you have, the more administration. I [turn, turned] down all schemes of franchise and so forth and so on. Because I'll stay smaller. I like to have [our own, a home, an own] business and control it.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And I know the last time you mentioned like your interest in sort of keeping the business simple and also being very hands-on, that you personally like to work with a lot of collectors, and that's still. . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I do. That still is true. As a matter of fact, though, the fact that my daughter's so interested in it is a big inspiration to me. Because, if she wasn't, I'm now approaching the age where I would go purely into study, because I love to study. And the fact that she's so interested in it and professional herself makes me think long term about the business.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And then while you're mentioning study, you're talking about study of American classical, the range of. . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes. Yeah. I still enjoy going and seeing a good American show, and I still enjoy seeing classical art, reading about it. There's views changing here very fast. The greatest experience to me is one of learning. When you see an artwork, too many people think, "What's it going to be worth in so many years?" Well, you always hope that it's worth at least what you paid or more. But it's like sex. That's one of the greatest experiences you could have. But if you put a price tag on it, it becomes prostitution. It's the exact same thing in art. The experience of a work of art is uplifting and it's great, but if you dilute that experience with thinking what it's going to be worth, that's what happens when you become a dealer from a collector. That's one of the reasons collecting antiquities is so important to me. Because there, I don't think in commercial terms. When I was a collector of American painting, I never worried about would it sell or not sell? I was able to pick what I wanted, and say this represents me. When you become a dealer you'll only sell what you respect-if you're a good dealer-but you still get influenced by what would it be . . . you still get deluded.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, well, you kind of can't help it. Well, one thing I was struck by when you were mentioning your early collecting, which was really a range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art that you were able to acquire for very reasonable prices, because you were mentioning that at that time, in the late forties, how incredibly underpriced the . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: . . . American art was.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . American art was, and I think it would be maybe interesting to comment on how that

situation has either changed or. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: It has changed dramatically. I remember, for example, I bought Steelworkers Noontime, Thomas Anshutz. I think it's since been called Ironworkers. I paid twelve hundred dollars. I'd like to talk concrete here. When this picture came up. . . . I owned it for a number of years. When I left Detroit and became a dealer I sold it. That person later put it in auction and it went for a lot of money. And then the Met came to me and said that they would like to go and pay a million dollars for it. Rockefeller II already bought it. . . . [No-Ed.], Rockefeller III already bought it. And that picture on the market today would be worth much more. Another case. . . . I like to talk concrete facts and then it's clear, because, otherwise, it's all just words and air. The great Lighthouse at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I bought it from the person who bought it from Hopper-Allen Tucker, who was an artist. I paid [eight thousand dollars for it from Tucker, and that was in the fifties, late fifties. That picture today on the market would bring at least six million dollars. I bought another Hopper for twelve hundred dollars, which brought three million dollars. Charles Burchfield. . . . it was a marvelous one of a big black iron bridge. That picture was painted in 1935. It sat in a dealer's gallery-the Rehn Gallery-until I bought it in the nineteen-fifties. No one ever bought it. It cost me twelve hundred dollars. That picture today would easily bring five hundred thousand dollars.

GAIL STAVITSKY: It's phenomenal, the way it is.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: So that is the difference that happened. Nobody was buying. . . . [Martin Johnson-Ed.] Heade, there was a man called Robert MacIntyre, who wrote a thin book on him. He was a nephew of [William-Ed.] [MacBeth], another fine dealer. Heade drew a couple thousand dollars. More books came out. Ted Stebbins published a book on him and so forth, and top Heades today are four hundred, five hundred, six hundred thousand dollars. [Hummingbirds and orchids, Hummingbirds and Orchids, Hummingbirds and Orchids].

GAIL STAVITSKY: Wow.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: So that's the story.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Now, do you feel that there are still areas of American art that are undervalued?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes, and I think there's areas of American art that are overvalued. You know my personal views. I think some of the living abstract artists that have gotten a couple of million dollars, and they are way overvalued. And I think the price is dropping already. I think Andy Warhol-contrary to that judge's opinion yesterday or last week-I don't agree with it. I still think that. . . . They struggle in auction and so forth. There's a question of how the market will really hold up. I thought Warhol was an interesting artist. He had something to say. I don't think he was a great artist. But so much of this is by hype and fashion. And I think there's whole segments that are over-priced. There are great things that are out of fashion that are, to me, still much underpriced.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Was one of those. . . . You were mentioning social realism. Do you think that's an area that's under. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Now at one time social realism was a great fashionable thing, too, when America became conscious of the _____. You know, in the thirties we had great plays, a lot of great novels, a lot of great movies. But for the last twenty years social realism has been somewhat out of fashion. I think it's coming back. I think content is coming back. I think younger generations are more interested in content, not only design and color. Only history will tell us [the answer to] who's come back.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Right. Yeah, it's hard to guess at the answer.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: And it never comes completely one way or the other. All of everything is in gray areas; it's never black and white.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, yeah. Well, for you who have both witnessed and, of course, actively shaped a lot of these changes in the reception of American art and in the market, is there any one or several events that you might see as a turning point? I'm sort of thinking, for example, the Bicentennial. There seemed to be so many events and exhibitions connected to that year, and I wonder if you. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I think that turning points. . . . Everything's speeded up. At one time, I think exhibitions had more of an effect on turning points than it does today. I think today exhibitions are part of a turning. But so many things are happening, no one thing anymore. . . . I mean, things like the Armory Show. There was a big show once years and years ago in Kansas on Thomas Eakins that reawakened interest. But now there's so much happening that everything becomes part of a composite thing that forces change. There's so many forces. Things that are affecting it are museum exhibitions, publications, collecting, and what has not been thought about is a change in the audiences. The effect the audiences themselves are having on that. If the audience. . . .

Let me give you an example. The price of tickets of symphony orchestras is not the reason that their attendance has gone down. They're surveying them. A lot of subsidized seats aren't being taken. In other words-I was talking to somebody in the Midwest with a top orchestra-I mean, a lot of their concerts are only half filled. This is a great symphony orchestra. Now the question is, with all the various forces on one-with television, with this, with all these forces-is the audience constantly changing? The answer is _____. Before, it was, "Did you bring the audience up to this level?" Today, "Is the level being brought down to the audience?" And what bothers me is there's too much thinking about what is popular with the people. What was that called, 1984, that book? Orwell.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, 1984, George Orwell.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: . . . and how you would come where you would come down to the level. I think that's where we are right now, but I think that'll change again. At the moment, that is. Curators, directors, are catering to their trustees. They want to be a _____. Directors are afraid of the press. They want to get popular reviews. They have huge PR departments. We lack courage today.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Part of the audience that I, of course, was thinking about, although it's a smaller segment of that, of course, are collectors and one other thing I was wondering. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, that's what I meant by it. That's correct. When I say audience, I talk about collectors.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, okay, because one of the things that struck me: You happened to mention in your last interview that there was a kind of core group of collectors you were working with. You happened to mention, I think, like twenty-five people at that time, and I know you didn't mention any names-maybe that's to protect peoples' privacy . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . but I wondered if . . . I guess I was curious what your experiences were with collectors, if there were certain well-known collectors that you'd worked with and helped to shape their collections?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: [telephone rings] Let me get that.

Tape 1, Side B

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yes. Anyway, I was asking you about collectors because I was interested if there are some. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, I'll name a few at the time when it happened. [John D.-Ed.] Rockefeller III, he was collecting up until the time he was killed. His collection. . . . His children each got a few paintings, were allowed to select, but the bulk of his collection went to San Francisco to the De Young. There's Winton Blount. Winton Blount, from Montgomery, Alabama, built a great collection up. He also built a wing at the Montgomery Museum. They gave them the land for a new museum, he donated them his whole collection, which became extremely valuable. It's now in the Montgomery Museum. There's other collectors who have died and passed it on, and there's collectors who are still collecting.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And with these collectors, there's a process of educating them that you've been engaged in. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes, very. You've got to educate curators, too. Because you find that curators are getting, in many cases, the wrong kind of education. There's a big difference now from before. Before you had great collectors like Lloyd Goodrich, or you would have Ted Richardson or you'd have Sherman Lee or you'd have Otto Whitman. These people really knew objects. They were object-oriented. So a curator would join a certain institution, not only for he has to earn a living, but he would want to work as an apprentice under a great mind or a great eye and be trained. The kind of directors that are being hired today are not these kind of people. Directors. . . . First of all, there's the Ph.D. racket, where you have to have a Ph.D. regardless of what you know. You might memorize a lot of books and be able to pass some tests, but you may never have worked with an object until you're thirty years old. So you got an academic.

Secondly, the way they're hiring directors today, they're supposed to be more fund-raising oriented, more public relations-oriented, so if a curator is a serious student he would have difficulty saying he's going because of the director. He's going now to be paid, or for opportunity, and that changed a lot of things-the opportunity for growth within the curator. And when the curator gets to the institution he has to work with a committee; he has to be careful of the development department. In England that still isn't true. In England, they go-after a very good classical background- they go and start. At a much younger age, they work with the objects, and they raise. . . . They're apprentices in a museum working [all around it]. So this is going on right now in our museums. And so you've got to really. . . . When you look at [a] curator, you

almost have to hold a discussion with him because all he's getting at the museum are discussions of what's popular, what's a bargain, what will get good press, and since all the museum's charge now. . . . Don't forget, this is a phenomenon of our age. I remember when no museum in New York charged-or Detroit or anyplace. So now they've got to think. . . . They think in terms of draw: how many admissions will they collect? So it's really become tinny, and someday we'll get the right kind of trustees and our institution will say, "We've got to raise money and not charge." And it isn't just to charge so people could afford it, because frankly I think a lot of people could afford it, and if they really wanted to go to a museum a lot they could pay thirty dollars and go in the museum as much as they want. But not charging, to me, the real issue of that is to change the concept of getting exhibitions that draw people.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Speaking of museums, one of the institutions that you've had quite an involvement with is the Metropolitan Museum and the American department there.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes, I gave it the Chair of American Arts, yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Okay. And that's the position that John Hallett is. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Hallett, _____, yes.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I see.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: And I'm also involved. . . . [They, I set up an organization called [Brian, Bryant] Fellows which is very good, which is for a group of people interested in that. That's similar to an organization that I set up in the classical department called [Philodores] and an organization that I set up in the British Museum called Caryatid, which are supporting. . . . In other words, if you become a member of a museum, you're supporting the museum in general and that's good. But then you have a specialized interest, so within that structure organizing a group with specialized interests so you could give both to the museum and also support the department you're most interested in-it could be Asian, it could be classical, it could be Egyptian, it could be African.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And you also, I think, got very involved with the new American wing as well, helping that effort?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: In the Met?

GAIL STAVITSKY: At the Met, yeah.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, we gave several galleries, yeah. Gave a gallery in the name of my children, gave a gallery in the name of [Henry Gehrig], gave a gallery [in the name of] Barbara and me. I tell you what, I made money in this business. I felt we should give something back. Unfortunately, I feel too many people don't. But that's the story. I also helped the medieval collection at the Met. The collection is fantastic, but a lot of them are way up at the Cloisters. There wasn't a real good showplace in the Met, so I discussed that with Dr. Margaret [Frasier, Frazier]. Unfortunately, she's not there. She's now [lost]. But we gave money, and they opened up a medieval secular art room, _____ [again].

GAIL STAVITSKY: I just thought I'd ask you that because there's such a great American tradition of philanthropy-of kind of, you know, giving back.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That is American. When you go to Europe-and I'm working with several European art institutions-it's very difficult for them to comprehend. We can be very proud. That's one of our very positive traditions, because they're used to getting money from the nobility, the church, or the state. Now they're all being cut back, so now the European institutions are just being forced to do similar to what America's doing and they have to learn how to do it.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I was curious if that was also a kind of a somewhat new direction for you. I mean, I know you did a lot of traveling in connection with your work with the United States Information Agency. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . and traveling of your collection in, I guess, the late fifties. But it also seems that in recent times with the Vatican collection, for example, that you're having maybe somewhat more involvement with building American collections abroad in museums.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, my real involvement with the Vatican Museum was to get them interested in America. And there's a Ben Shahn room there now, and there's artists like Leonard Baskin, Philip Evergood, Burchfield, Franklin Watson, a number of others. Just beginning. There's a lot to be done. But there are some who have _____.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And now is this something that you had started? I notice you got an award in 1978. Was this

around when those efforts started with the Vatican?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, my efforts started there in 1970. But I was knighted by both popes, as a matter of fact. With one, I got a knighthood of St. [Sylvester, Semestre], and this present pope lifted me up to two stars and a step above [laughs], and presented me with a sword. I got a sword.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And with the Vatican collection, you've been really working with the full range of American art?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes, American, but I also got involved with their Etruscan department, and we helped build their . . . organize a conservation place to restore large sculpture, named it after Cardinal Cook of New York, who was a very interesting cardinal, and we got a Leonard Baskin to do the medallion, and so forth. But my real interest, at this moment, has been a lot with the British Museum. I'm still with American museums, but a lot with the British Museum because my own personal studies have led me into ancient history.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And now the British Museum, I take it, they have no interest in American art?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Oh, no. Their drawing department . . .

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, the drawings department!

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: . . . which is part of the British Museum. Drawings, _____ and Prints [Department of Prints and Drawings-Ed.] have been slowly acquiring some Americans.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I see.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I know, for example, they have some John Marin etchings, they have Charles Sheeler etchings, and so forth. And they're opening up an American gallery. And the American gallery is going to be. . . . That's going to open up later this year, and that's going to be Indian, at some point, the American Indian. And so forth so. . . . Someday they'll realize. . . . You go over to the Tate and you see the great Copley of Siege of Gibraltar, and the great historical pictures of Copley. Europe doesn't want to admit it but American artists-other than abstract. . . . Abstract, they somehow. . . . The Museum of Modern Art had tours [at, with] the early part, and they're more familiar with American abstracts. They are not as familiar with. . . . The Thomas Eakins show that was held this spring was a sensational show. So they're slowly awakening.

GAIL STAVITSKY: But do you find still that most of your sales are American rather than foreign?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. Baron Thyssen bought a lot of Americans. They're being shown in Spain. But he bought from [us]. He bought Winslow Homer, he owns Copley, he owns Eakins, a Burchfield. He was probably the best European private collector. There's several collectors in Sweden who've bought some American, but not much. Other than abstract. There are people in Europe that are buying in the fashion, people like Rauschenberg and so on and so forth.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Now, the abstract expressionists have, I take it, then of less interest to you?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes, I recognize them as artists. I don't think it's junk. I think it's real art and so forth. But I'm like anybody else; I have certain things that I'm drawn to, and I think I'd be dishonest with my clients if I sold something that I didn't fully appreciate. I think for that they have to go to somebody else.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Right.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: By the way, Japan has also been interested in people like Ben Shahn-and to a certain extent Andrew Wyeth.

GAIL STAVITSKY: So have you been working with Japanese museums?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: In 1950 I helped organize a big Ben Shahn show at the Museum of Modern Art. And we still sell. . . . I sold some Edward Hopper drawings. . . . It's small potatoes, the total business, but it is something. There's private. . . . There's a young Japanese architect that is quite interested in the drawings of Edward Hopper.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Is that a part of your business? I mean, when you went into the gallery then you had both the graphics and the paintings business set up. Has the graphics side grown?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: It changed. When I came in they had Old Masters and some American. I got rid of the Old Masters, because either I wanted to do a top job-and for that I'd have to bring in somebody who really knew Old Masters-so I eliminated that and concentrated on American prints, because bringing in a person to sell American prints, he could also sell American paintings. I felt it was more of a whole. Either I was going to do a

good job or not do it, so I changed that from the old masters to American prints only.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Now I seem to recall reading, too, that there was the occasional European work that you continued to sell.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That still happens.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And that still happens?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes. But that's by accident. In other words, a client who comes in and he has two good American pictures but he has a third picture that happens to be European and he wants to dispose of all, we handle that for him, too. But that's occasionally. And I have gotten some very good European [pictures, paintings], which have been sold for the client. Or I've bought and resold.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I see. Let's see, I was going to ask something related to that. Do you still feel that there's essentially, . . . I remember you made the comment that there tended to be this kind of inferiority complex that Americans have about American art and that there's sort of this attitude always that, "Oh, the European art is really the source of everything, this is a superior form of art." I mean, do you think that attitude has changed a lot since your involvement?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I think it has changed. A lot, I don't know, but there's a definite discernible change in the last twenty years. I think there's someday going to be about American impressionism, and I think that people who like European impressionism and they want to buy the work and they don't want to pay the price of a French impressionist, so they like the idea of an American impressionism, which was watered down. I don't happen to think that's the strongest phase of American painting. But an interesting phase if not [the strongest]. But I do think that Americans are getting more secure with their own culture. I think that's another part of the _____, [discernible] change.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I know it's sort of tricky answering questions like "What would be the strongest phase?" But do you think there's any strongest phase, or are there still particularly favorite American artists of yours that you can identify?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, I have my own personal taste, but I think in general it's older people that are hanging on to the impressionists because they've now become old, and the younger people have a different approach already. I think it's still great to get a Jackson Pollock, and I think that's _____. And the other day-it was very peculiar-a couple that have since gotten divorced, and they were telling [me] about all the [James-Ed.] [Rosenquists], how they stood in line to get one, and how they got so many things in the warehouse. To me, if you can't live with it, if you can't hang it, you shouldn't buy it. I never came across that until recent times. But I've seen that several times where people actually store things and they don't buy it to live with. That bothers me.

GAIL STAVITSKY: You mean, in other words, they're buying just as an investment?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And so that's something you discourage?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I think the last couple of years, I think that changed again. I think people found out it wasn't. . . . In some cases, if they had something for ten years they did very well. But where they bought it one year and wanted to sell it the next year, they discovered it wasn't so easy. They got burned. [I mean], in concept they got burned. I think the investors are out of the market, which I think is positive.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And do you think that that has a lot to do with the economic recession and that maybe people just kind of questioning the value?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I do. I think it has a lot to do with . . . there's been articles written where art is not a good investment anymore, real estate is not a good investment, and they're talking about funds and they're talking about this. I think in the last few years there's been a lot of negative publicity in art. The unfortunate thing is the real meaning of art-the pleasure of living and experiencing a great work of art-is still the same. And there's still people doing that. But the recession is affecting everything, and people are less decisive to buy a good painting. But people do. There are still people buying.

GAIL STAVITSKY: So you found, generally, that in this time of trouble and recession that the really good or really quality. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Business is slow.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Business is slow but then at least . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Some things are selling, yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . the quality works are going to eventually find their homes.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Sell, that's right.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Have you discerned any change? I mean, with some of the auctions there have been slightly more optimistic events with works selling.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I'm not so sure that ____ ____.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I mean, do you think that things are getting a little better?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No. I'll know in a year or so, yes.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Hard to tell at this point, yeah.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: If you want to ____ ____ auction houses, then it's [cut] their estimates.

GAIL STAVITSKY: That's true.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: So where they would say that something was a hundred, and they would have told us that, but now they're saying it's fifty. Then they say, "Look it, we sold it at fifty." But it's like when they talk about employment figures. They don't point out that people are being employed at less money. Where a factory worker might have been earning four hundred or five hundred dollars a week a few years ago, he's now being rehired at two hundred to two hundred and fifty a week. So he has less disposable income. That is also true of ____ _____. The auction houses are very publicity conscious. So they like to say, "We sold everything." But they don't say that their estimates are dropping and they're selling it at lesser prices.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah. No, I've noticed there can be quite a discrepancy.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. And as a dealer, I just tell the truth. But I could lie like everybody. "Oh, things are marvelous," and [all this and all that that]. Not true. It's a very tough struggle out there. But things are being sold and museums are still buying and so forth. So there's much [happening].

GAIL STAVITSKY: Do you feel that as far as, sort of, again, the history of your gallery say in the past twenty-four years, are there any particular highlights in terms of certain exhibitions that you feel were very significant and that again contributed to this whole process of enlightening people?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I think our work on Charles E. Burchfield, in particular, revived interest in Burchfield. And our work with John Marin oils. Up till that time. . . . [Alfred] Stieglitz never sold oils from John Marin. [Stieglitz] was interested. . . . He made sales from his watercolor and he started forumulizing, just selling the watercolors. But I always realized that Marin watercolors were great but so were his oils. He painted oils as early as he painted watercolors and, by working with museums. . . . [Parrish] Museum had an oil exhibit.

GAIL STAVITSKY: A wonderful show.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I'm working with the National Gallery, {with [Franz-Ed.] Kline; Ruth [Kline, Klein]}. They had a lot of oils in that. Now, the realization-how good his oils-I think we had a lot to do with it. I think we had a lot to do with the realization of Burchfield. Ben Shahn told me he was practically dead and when we exhibited him a lot we revived interest in him. Of course, then when he died and so forth and so on, and there was [nothing] [in the estate], he too has plateaued out. We'll see what happens. But there's nothing left of his now [except] to buy and resell it

GAIL STAVITSKY: By the way, I'm just curious when you mention him. Do you handle his wife's [Bernarda Bryson Shahn-Ed.] work at all.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I do not.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I guess I was wondering what you think of. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: ____ handle the estate and ____ _____. [Because, So] there's nothing in the estate of his. I understand that it was all sold to Japan.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, I see.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's what I heard.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I was curious what you thought about her as an artist herself-because she's, again, part of the social realism movement that you mentioned.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, it's interesting. She was so dominated by Ben Shahn that I think after his death she sort of came out to do some interesting things on her own.

GAIL STAVITSKY: That's interesting. I'm wondering, too, if there are any future directions that you anticipate that you want to take the gallery.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. I am anticipating. . . . Well, as far as Kennedy Galleries go, my daughter has her. . . . She's interested in the nineteenth-century American art, she's very interested in the twentieth century, and going along that line. As far as in general, I happen to think that there's going to be over the next twenty years a tremendous-it will take that long-revival of interest in art of content. By that now, I don't mean picture-postcard art, which I find thin.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Right.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: But art based on natural symbols, art based on landscape, art based on people. There's a whole phase of painting that's been out of fashion for a long time-that's American historical painting. At one time historical painting in Europe was considered the top of the order, and still life painting was considered the lowest of the order. Now still life painting is very popular today, _____. It's just like a lot of pictures with girls with ribbons in their hair flying _____. Pretty pictures. To me some of the portraits that Copley did of old women or old men, and some of the great landscapes of Frederick B. Church-and others too; I'm just naming a few examples-are so powerful. American genre painting's out of fashion, by the way. But I think that will come back.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Are you referring to people like John George Brown?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Eastman Johnson . . .

GAIL STAVITSKY: Eastman Johnson.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: [George Caleb-Ed.] Bingham's so rare that a great Bingham will still do well. But, in general, American genre, the interest has dropped. At one point, in the seventies, there was a rise in interest, but in the last ten years it's not as _____.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Would someone like William Sidney Mount [fit in there]?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: He fits in the genre.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, because he's a great painter.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, but being rare, one of his pictures that came out of the-which should never have done, by the way-out of the Century Club, Cleveland [Museum of Art-Ed.] bought for four million dollars.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: But the thing is that that came [amount] to the Century Club. That should never have gone out.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, I see.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: But that's what I'm talking about, that kind of painting.

GAIL STAVITSKY: But there are other ones there.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: But there's a lot of Americans [doing] that. [_____-Ed.] Edmunds, for example, another one. There's so many good genre painters, but that style of painting is definitely out of fashion.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Interesting.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: So is social realism. Now that's sort of paralleled out of fashion. And so is American historical painting. Now there's a difference between American historical and genre, you know. American historical painting could be any kind of a. . . . Could be Columbus, if you pardon the expression, landing in America.

GAIL STAVITSKY: [chuckles]

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: It could be any kind of a battle scene. It could be something heroic. Genre is happening at that instant. In other words, the artist is painting an everyday scene that he sees. A farm scene, a street scene, or something. That whole phase, which I find so interesting, is out of fashion.

GAIL STAVITSKY: You mean, because the more decorative still lifes are _____?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I think what the museums have been showing and pushing. And I think that there are collectors who only want to buy what's very fashionable, and they read about a certain artist, they want to run and get that artist. They want to know that somebody will walk in their living room and recognize that they bought an important artist. Now there are other people that would still buy what they like. There are still true collectors.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I'm also curious, you mentioning your interest in study and your love of reading about art, are there any new directions that you anticipate. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I'm not so interested in reading about art as I am about reading what caused the art. In other words, I'm very interested in reading Greek history. I'm very interested in reading about the thirties and all the influence of economics and social . . . rather than just about the artists themselves. I'm interested in seeing the art.

GAIL STAVITSKY: The context.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: The things that really interest me are studying all the forces that are acting on it. You know, we're always talking about how we got to be in danger of microwaves hitting us, or breathing smoke in the air. Very few people realize what we're being subjected to when we watch television. The news being blasted at us, this being blasted at us. Everything's a blast; everybody's yelling at you all the time.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Especially in this city. [laughs]

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Especially in this city. But in general, too, all over the world.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Well, I guess I was curious, as part of that interest of yours, if you saw any future directions or new directions also with the American Art Journal?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, the American Art Journal will always be interested in scholarship. The future directions of art, I think will be towards content. The artist. . . . Everybody's mixed up right now, there's some turmoil. Some people are just media conscious. It's like mannerism. They're just interested in material being [moved]. Some people believe in just taking their hand in front of a light and making shadow images on the wall. Art to me has to be something that is lasting, timeless, and universal. Those are the criteria. And then you say, "What is universal time?" That's one of the reasons of judgment. Time has to be one of the biggest judges of what's really great.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I guess I just meant, in terms of American Art Journal, do you think there would ever be a possibility that it might come out more often?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, since we pay for. . . . The only reason it doesn't come out more often is how much it. . . . We lose about a hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year on it now.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, boy.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: We don't get any income from it at all, except for we have _____ subscribers.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Because it actually is still. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: It doesn't have any art in it that we advertise-that we sell. Our exhibition catalogue is what we use to sell. The Journal is very carefully [guarded].

GAIL STAVITSKY: It really is still one of the few places that scholars in American art can publish, so we know how great . . . how much everybody likes it.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: And we are going to keep it going even though it's a struggle.

GAIL STAVITSKY: It's a service.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: If I put that hundred and fifty thousand dollars in advertising or this and that, it might

get us more business. But the Journal will continue. I would like to put it out more often. If business improved, I would.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Right. We'll just hope for that. But also that reminds me of your comment about the Archives of American Art Journal, which, of course, is one of the other few places where you can publish articles. [laughs]

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I like the Archives of American Art Journal.

GAIL STAVITSKY: A wonderful journal . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: The Archives Journal has interesting articles. Again, those are factual, if you know what I mean. They're not baloney and somebody talking about. . . . I'm sick of political correctness. I'm sick of it because they're all wrong. I mean, I was always taught that the closest thing to try to think about a picture is, how did Rembrandt look at that subject and then how did he portray it? How were all the forces of his time. . . ? To see it through the artist's eyes. What they want us to do is force the artist and criticize the artist according to our contemporary eyes, and that's wrong. And an artist never thought of being politically correct or incorrect. The way women were looked at, that's the way it was at that time. It's wrong according to our standards. And I don't want to go backwards to those standards of theirs. But the point is, it's wrong for us to make judgments about artists with this terrible word called political correctness.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah. In other words, it's important to see things the way they were seen at that time, in that context.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's correct.

GAIL STAVITSKY: One thing I was struck. . . . I think it would probably be just good for the record to talk again about the formation of the Archives, and perhaps the growth that you've also seen or participated in through the years.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Oh, the growth has been big. Because there isn't any book published today on American art that doesn't refer to the American Archives-the Archives of American Art. And before we started this I remember how records were lost. I remember everybody telling me about [Albert, Alfred-Ed.] Ryder papers that were lost, seeing the truck go around and realizing later, too late, that there was a garbage truck with those papers on it. Papers were never saved before; they had no value. Paintings were always saved, because the heirs knew they had value, but letters and so forth were thrown out. Dealers would go out of business and no place to deposit [them]. That's all changed. And I can't think of any book that doesn't refer to it.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, sure.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: And the fact that it's national and, at this moment, it has a very good president who's very interested in working at it. And I think they've evolved a better board, and so I think it's strong right now. Someday it'll have enough money _____. It's the old story. If somehow things changed and they got more money, I would like the idea of going back to one of our original concepts of giving scholarships for writing on American art, to encourage it.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Would that be. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Somebody could take off and actually spend a couple of years researching. Instead of hastily doing things. Because several books have come out recently that I thought were too hastily written.

GAIL STAVITSKY: These were, what, surveys of American art?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Oh, one of them is on an artist, and I don't want to go record ____.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, okay. All right, I won't put you on the spot.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I'll tell you when you turn off your machine.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Okay. No, I was just struck by the fact that you mentioned that in the very beginnings when you were working on the formation, I think with. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Richardson.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . [Edgar P.-Ed.] Richardson, you were able to get, what was it, one staff member at the very beginning of this whole process?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, [Arlene] Custer was the librarian of the library museum. She volunteered her

services; she did it for nothing. Then we got a staff member finally. Richardson didn't get paid to be director; he did it for nothing. We got-I forgot his name-a young man. He was there. . . . And after time and when we got more and more going, we hired Bill Woolfenden for the education department. Before Woolfenden, we hired Barbara Cowdry. There's some books that she did, and Barbara Cowdry did our first sweep here in New York. We concentrated at the New York Public Library. The funny thing is, later on-my wife's now on the board of the New York Public Library-but I had no connection. But we swept the records of the New York Public Library and New York-much of it. And then we went to Philadelphia and so forth. At that point trying to think about how to finance it involved the idea of a membership to bring in annual dues. And I said we should make it national, [at that] point in time to get a New York committee. Those were all my concepts. We organized the committee, so forth. Now there are more committees and so forth.

GAIL STAVITSKY: So you were very much involved, obviously, in the first phases, even to the point of, I guess, helping with the microfilming of papers?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes. 19. . . . All the way through till I moved to New York in 1966, I was very active, very. . . . Organizing, thinking of ways of getting money. And then once I came here and became active as a dealer, I wasn't as active.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Because you were moving in your own directions.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Right.

GAIL STAVITSKY: By that time in the sixties, then, there was a New York office and things were. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: In the sixties? Oh yeah, we already had a New York committee. I formed the first committee. I got Howard Lipman. I got Vincent Price, who became quite interested. I got a wonderful letter from him. Joe Hirshhorn. I got Bob McNeill from Philadelphia. And there's some others, too. Henry Pearlman. Pearlman was collecting Cézannes and all, but he was quite helpful. Then I got the idea of chartering planes and going to Europe and charging everybody five hundred dollars to go on a trip as a donation. That started bringing in money. And then we did all kinds of things. Then later on I got a person called Harold Love interested. He brought in money through his ideas and. . . .

GAIL STAVITSKY: And then, at a certain point, the federal government . . . it became part of the Smithsonian?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, that happened after I moved to New York.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I see. And was that a process that you participated in?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Oh, yes. I discussed it [and so forth]. That happened around sixty. . . . I can't remember, around 1970 [1972-Ed.], I think. I don't remember.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, okay. I was figuring it might have been after the last interview, because somehow it didn't come up in that.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, it was after the last interview. It was after that. And Howard Lippman was active on that idea.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, the other collectors.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Everybody was. Well, there was a lot of discussion, because there were certain negatives to going with the government, too, that we were worried about: the influence of the government. We wanted to keep it neutral, so that people would be willing to give money because the government . . . if it became a government institution. Some of those battles actually did happen-control over who picks the director-those problems did arise. Still are.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, but somehow they mostly. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Work out.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah. And now you're a founding trustee of the Archives?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah, right. The only living one.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh boy, that's. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Now we're. . . . See, after we founded this thing and got it going, we went to Eleanor Ford, and she understood it and gave us some money and went to a few people. Eleanor Ford was [active, our

backer]. Later on, when I became president of the Detroit Institute of [the Arts], Eleanor Ford became my biggest backer. She gave me money for the wing of the Detroit Institute of Art. But Eleanor Ford was one of the early ones that I went to that gave us some money.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, there's a wonderful story of you approaching her and her generosity in just sort of instinctively, immediately offering to help you.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: She had more influence on me than my own mother. Because as a lady who was extremely wealthy, her true feelings toward responsibility to people, I've never met the like. Now, Brooke Astor is a friend of [ours], and I happen to like her. Brooke Astor is very charitable, she has a feeling towards the community, and so forth. She is the second lady, but the one that really influenced me was Eleanor Ford. Eleanor Ford refused to have her name on the wing that she helped build-it wouldn't have been built without her. There's so many stories I could tell you about her. I gave the eulogy when they had a memorial service for her.

GAIL STAVITSKY: She was also quite a collector, wasn't she?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, that was her daughter-in-law.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh, okay.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: She had. . . . That was [Ann, Anne] Ford, who married her son Henry Ford II. Eleanor Ford had a number of good things in her house. [Basically, she couldn't not.] She was close to her cousin, Bob [Tannehill], the ___ collector, her first cousin, and he saw she had a great Van Gogh in the house and so on, but she was not a true collector.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I see.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: But very philanthropic. And very neutral. She didn't push her point of view on the museum. When the museum needed something, no matter what department, she was there to help.

GAIL STAVITSKY: That's amazing. Wish there were more people like that.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Something we need here in New York.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah. Something that you say that we need here in New York?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: There's really not somebody that. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: New York has particularly got a problem with vested interests. At certain museums.

GAIL STAVITSKY: At certain museums, yeah. I guess that's always how it is. Let's see, the other thing I was interested in, too, I know last time you were talking about some of the dealers that you knew. Edith Halpert, for example, who. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I knew Frank Rehn before he died. I knew Curt Valentin. Now, of all the people, Curt Valentin was a great dealer. He was the one who said. . . . One time I was in a-very young; I'd just got out of the army-and I was talking [to him], and he had an artist named Mary [Callery, Flowery], as a matter of fact, and he heard me discuss this and I suggested getting people [intrigued]. He turned to me and said, "Why don't you come to New York and be my partner." He was the first of them all, but I wasn't even interested at that time. I was just really getting started. That was before I ___ [big] eastern ___. But Curt Valentin was an excellent dealer. . . .

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yes.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: . . . [a] great dealer. But I knew them all-all of the time. [Meaning all the dealers at that time.-Ed.]

GAIL STAVITSKY: I guess I was just curious if any of them, I guess, especially someone like Edith Halpert, who was rather pioneering in some of her activities, whether they had an impact on you and your eventual design.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, Edith Halpert inherited Stieglitz's group. She did that, and she had other people. But Edith Halpert then broke with a number of her artists, and she farmed out Jack Levine and David [Breedenthorpe, Grieventhorpe] to other galleries because she wanted to concentrate. No. No dealer had an influence on me. I mean, there were dealers that I admired, like Curt Valentin. The people that influenced me

were the artists and the museum people. I'm trying to think of ____ _____. Now in antiquities, [curious enough], there are dealers who influenced me.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh! Like who?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Jacob Hirsch. He was a great one ____ _____. But there were a few. The only thing I thought about. . . . As a business person, I admired Edith Halpert. She was strong and she had a point of view. As you said that, I'm trying to think back. In some sense. . . . Business-wise Edith Halpert made an impression on me as far as the gallery operation. She did. As far as her artists, I already. . . . I came to her to because I was interested in her artists already. But as far as her operation, she did influence me. More than. . . . I'd go into Knoedler's. And I already knew-way before this-George Wildenstein. . . .

Tape 2, Side A

GAIL STAVITSKY: It was a question about your relationship to dealers of today?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, what do I think of dealers in the last change of. . . .

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yes.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I've been now in New York twenty-eight years, been a dealer for twenty-eight years. And I, as a collector, have been involved with dealers for close to forty years now. The question is. . . . Longer than that, as a matter of fact. Let's see, about forty-five years. So the question is. . . . We talk about changes of artists, changes of curators, changes in museums. How about the dealers themselves? There there's been a change, too. There are a number of dealers today who are educated, devoted to their business, and are like some of the old dealers. But there's too many dealers today that are only interested in the money. In other words, they don't even have a real point of view. They hire big public-relations firms, and they will sell anything that sells. And I remember when there were a lot of very fine dealers who had a point of view. And if you didn't agree with their point of view, you'd go to another dealer. That's still like me. If you don't agree with my point of view, you go someplace else. If you agree with my point of view, you acquire it. But I remember when there were a lot of dealers who came out of being collectors. A lot of dealers who just loved it, and they loved certain artists, and they promoted what they loved. Today there are some dealers like that. But a lot of dealers today just open a place, they never owned a work of art, and they see it as an investment tool, as money-making. Now a dealer has to make money, but it's a different bent. It's more commercial.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Do you think that's because perhaps the stakes have gotten higher?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I think that is part of it. I think that people . . . there's been more publicity about the art world. They read in the paper about pictures going for so much money. They don't realize all the time and all the luck and the percentages that happen, and they've been influenced by that.

GAIL STAVITSKY: It also seems that, as we were talking about earlier, the art world was a fairly small circle, there were all these various dealers that you knew, ____ _____ galleries and now it's. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes, that's broadened out, much broader. . . . Yes. And it's got diluted with a lot of. . . . There's a lot of menopause galleries. By a menopause gallery, I'm talking about people who made some money and they have nothing else to do and they're retired, so they think it's a good thing to do. A lot of those have gone out of business. A lot of people go in and out. Being a dealer is a very tough business. You make money on it. . . .

GAIL STAVITSKY: Especially here, right?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. But you've got to know your stuff and you've got to work at it and you've got to care. And there are dealers like that today, but in my day there were less dealers and the percentage of dealers that felt like I do were more.

GAIL STAVITSKY: So are you saying that there was maybe a little bit more of a kind of a missionary purpose to. . . . ?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yes, correct. That's right. That's a good term, by the way. As you say, there was more of a missionary feeling about it.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Well. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: What's your next question?

GAIL STAVITSKY: Okay, let's see. Well, we've covered most of them. Actually, one of the questions I had, just

kind of going back to-okay, well, just one or two-is [in-Ed.] your original collection you had a lot of work by Burchfield. You've mentioned thirty-four works. I mean, that's what you. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Burchfield and Marin and Hopper.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And now were they basically, then, the artists who were most strongly or represented by the greatest number of works in your collection?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Now those were artists that I just liked, and to me it's like a book. A lot of people say, "Well, I'll get one of this. Well, I got one of that." But a painting . . . each painting has a different feel and a different experience. Now if you like the author of a book, you tend to read. . . . If you like Ernest Hemingway, you don't read one Ernest Hemingway; you read a number of his books. I used to like John Marin, so I have a number of [paintings, things].

GAIL STAVITSKY: I see.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: And that's what I tried to get people to think in terms. . . . If they like a certain artist-it might be Andrew Wyeth, it might be Wayne Thiebaud, whatever, Diebenkorn-you don't get one Diebenkorn, you know. You get different phases, different experiences. If you enjoy them that much. It's life and death, you see.

GAIL STAVITSKY: And that's kind of, in other words, working with your strengths.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah. I don't believe in one of a kind.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I see.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: I don't believe in museums doing that either. A top museum goes in depth in an artist. They show him early, middle, late.

GAIL STAVITSKY: As much as possible.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Some museums are deaccessioned incorrectly because they thought they had one of the artist so they could sell one. I think deaccessioning is a dangerous thing to start with. You have to be very careful. Next question?

GAIL STAVITSKY: Okay. Well, we're just about at the end here. I have a question about your interest. . . . We've been talking a lot about paintings and graphics, and I wondered about your interest in sculpture, if there's been any development [of, in] that?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Our whole collection-of course, ancient art-our personal collection is all sculpture. So I've always been interested in sculpture. But sculpture has not been the big [Wheatie, weenie]. Sell a lot of Leonard Baskins, all sculpture. Well, he did watercolors, too, but sculpture. . . . And I've had things by various American artists that I individually bought and sold. But I've never featured sculpture. And if you ask me why, I'll give you a frank answer. Because, first of all, if I see it and I can handle it. . . . Like I sold a lot of [John B.-Ed.] Flannagan or Gaston Chase. These are artists I like; I do buy some. But to really go into it on the scale that I want to-the big sculptures and so forth-it's physically very difficult. And that's held me back.

GAIL STAVITSKY: I see. Actually, that's, of course, one of the advantages with graphics, and one other thing that struck me-you know, just this last question-is you were starting to go into publishing graphics. At least, at the time of your last interview. . . .

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: That's right.

GAIL STAVITSKY: . . . I think you mentioned [Alexander-Ed.] Calder, for example, and I wondered, is that a direction that you continued in?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No, but we will, particularly if one of our contemporary [artists]. . . . In the earlier days, [when each year] I went to Europe and got a couple of exclusive editions of Miró, Chagall. I liked the artists, I liked their graphics, and I saw that as an opportunity. But since that I evolved away. And we sold out [on the mainland, of them mainly], because I've got so much to do in the American field that my hands are busy with that. And there's certain American graphic people that I like to support. George Sorrels is one of them. We've just taken him on. He's an artist from Pennsylvania. He does small-scale things, but they're absolutely superb. If I don't show him, he won't get shown, so I take his graphics and his dry-points and so forth.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Okay. Well, let's see, is there anything we haven't covered? Any big projects you'd like to mention?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: No. I thought you asked very penetrating questions and I enjoyed talking to you.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Oh well, thank you. It was a big treat.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: We live in a world of change, but there are some principles that don't change. and, to me, if you have something that makes you feel good. . . . If you go to a play and you come out feeling good because you've seen it. . . . If I fall asleep, I haven't experienced it, which I do do. If it wakes me up, I've experienced it. There's something wonderful about going to Turkey, to Greece, to England, to New York, to Chicago. Any place you go if you're interested in experiences, there's something to see and get stimulated by. And you come out. . . . I mean, with all the terrible things happening, there's a hope that there's something, a core in all of us, that will keep striving and striving and striving, and things will get better and things are ____.

GAIL STAVITSKY: That's a great attitude.

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Well, I mean, it's the only attitude to have. Otherwise, you might as well jump off the bridge.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Yeah, how do you keep going otherwise?

LAWRENCE FLEISCHMAN: Yeah.

GAIL STAVITSKY: Well, great. Well, I will. . . .

[End of interview]

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