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Archives of American Art

**Oral history interview with Jacinto Quirarte,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Jacinto Quirarte on August 15 & 16, 1996. The interview took place in Helotes, Texas, and was conducted by Paul J. Karlstrom for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

JQ: Jacinto Quirarte

PK: Paul J. Karlstrom

[Session 1]

PK: Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, an interview with Jacinto Quirarte, an art historian, professor at the University of Texas, San Antonio, where this interview is being conducted on August 15, 1996. This is Session 1, Tape 1, Side A. The interviewer is Paul Karlstrom and this is part of a Latino Documentation Project.

Okay, here we are, and we have so much to talk about and we have to be disciplined and try to focus in on those things that are most relevant to this project that we have under way, and which in some respects, I would have to say, grows out of the pioneering work that you did back in the really very early seventies, I think, regarding Chicano art. There's a fascinating story, of course, how you came to that, but I should mention that you are, first and foremost, an art historian concentrating on Pre-Columbian, I do believe, and you can fill in the details on that. But somewhere along the way, you looked around you and saw interesting things happening that resonated in terms of your own personal experience and you then shifted your focus a little bit north of the border at a critical time in the development of the Chicano Movement. And then you published widely—probably, I would expect, more than almost anybody else on this subject. Most of these interviews, of course, are with the artists themselves, many of whom you worked with like two decades ago or more.

JQ: Yes, yes.

PK: Anyway, so that by way of background, other than my acknowledging or expressing how much I enjoy this opportunity since we met only at the end of May in Mexico City at the conference then.

JQ: That's right.

PK: So there's something very comfortable about the way all of this is evolving. Anyway, why don't we just start at the beginning for you—you know, your own background and your own experience. Well, family background but also specifically in terms of ethnicity and how you found yourself here in America, an American with special background.

JQ: Yes. My childhood and early adolescence were spent in a mining town in northern Arizona, a place called Jerome. It was founded in the late nineteenth century when rich deposits of copper and other minerals were found and the [Phelps-Dodge] Mining Company, I believe, came in. Jerome was chosen because one of the owners of that corporation included a Jerome. I only found that out recently when we went back for some sort of reunion with my own mother. I believe Jerome was at its height in the 1920s. I believe it actually ended up having about ten thousand people. But because I was born in the Depression and almost everyone was out of work, as was the case

throughout the country, the population went down. We were fortunate because my father was among the very few who was able to continue working. There were several mines, actually—I shouldn't have just mentioned one. And my childhood then was in an area of town that was called El Barrio Mexicano. Sometimes people would call it El Barrio Chicano. So I had. . . .

PK: Already?

JQ: Yes. It wasn't until I began to do research on the origins of the word "Chicano" that I found a bibliographic reference to "Chicano" in a book published in, oh, around 1917, and used in that context to refer to unskilled Mexican workers who were coming up to the U.S. during the extreme violence caused by the disruptions, given the revolutionary times. In any case, when I was growing up I, as all children, just simply accepted so many things because everyone around us was from essentially the same part of Mexico. My family—well, my father—came from a little community right outside of Guadalajara, Jalisco. My mother was born in that town in 1912 and her parents had arrived there just several years earlier from the same part of Mexico. So what has held true for so many such communities around the country—and, I assume, in other parts of the world—that word of mouth reaches back to a village—either in Mexico or a city or anywhere else—and people find out about these things and they end up in this particular town so that there was a sense of kinship with these numerous families. So the children I grew up with were essentially bilingual.

PK: Um-hmm.

JQ: I learned Spanish before I learned English. I didn't start speaking English until I started school, and so growing up in such an environment, where Spanish is the dominant language and everything about the community was Mexican. . . . Because we were all first generation. All our parents were from Mexico. We had the ice cream vendor in the Mexican style. We had a magazine and newspaper vendor who pedaled all the Mexican publications, so that, for all intents and purposes, we were really in some northern-most suburb—well, not a suburb—but a province of Mexico. For all intents and purposes, the border was not down in Nogales, Arizona, but up in Jerome.

So, anyway, this was one of those small communities that was predominantly Mexican. I went to school with other Mexican-American children and what we now—or have called, since the 1960's—white ethnics. They were Slavs and Serbs. Almost everyone who wasn't Mexican had a name that ended in i-c-h, like Starkovich, Barich.

PK: How did *they* get there?

JQ: Well, evidently just mining.

PK: Yeah. So everybody in that town was involved in. . . .

JQ: In the mines. There was really no other kind of work. Except services.

PK: Right.

JQ: And the professionals like dentists, doctors, and they had a very fine high school. . . .

PK: Were they mostly Anglos? Or no?

JQ: No, there were some Italians. Mainly Central Europeans. A few Irish. And among the very few Anglos I met. . . . I didn't know that's what they were called until I went. . . .

PK: Whatever that means. [chuckles].

JQ: Exactly. "Non other." The one Anglo, who was actually one of my friends, was named [Donald—Ed.] Hollingshead, and his father was evidently an engineer who worked with the mines. Because I didn't really catch up with him until we had a reunion in '93 and I found out that he'd been to Harvard and he's lives in Los Angeles. It was a wonderful experience to meet up with one of my childhood friends. So Jerome is essentially my formative years, where the Mexican culture—or the Spanish language, the Mexican family structure, the extended family—all of these things were deeply ingrained in what I was to become. And so right after World War II my parents decided to go out to California. Because, after all, I've always thought of California as being the place where everyone ends up. It's almost as if the entire continent was tipped on its side and all the debris from every part of the nation ends up in California.]

PK: "Debris," that's a good word.

JQ: One of the things that I found as soon as I became acclimatized to San Francisco, which is where my parents ended up—because my mother had a brother there—was that there were people from everywhere. Jerome was a place where there wasn't a racial or ethnic mix. I remember there was one Spaniard, for instance, and he was referred to as "the Spaniard"—"el Español". He was a tailor. There was one Jew and he was called "El judio." And there was one black couple. He was the janitor of the school that I attended in elementary school. There was. . . .

PK: Did they call him "El Negro?"

JQ: No. In fact, he was not very black, in fact. He was almost white.

PK: What was he called? I'm just curious. Was he set aside because he was African-American?

JQ: We didn't think much about it, really . . .

PK: That's interesting.

JQ: . . . because he really was not much darker than a lot of Mexicans in town. In fact, he was just a curly-haired Mexican. We didn't make the connection. And there was one three-story house that we always avoided on the fringe of the Mexican community, full of Chinese men that had been allowed in—we found out. If any one of these different races appeared on the outskirts of a town—I didn't find out until years later—that they were not allowed in town. I have no idea how they managed to do that but. . . .

PK: The city council was in. . . .

JQ: I have no idea. Since I was a kid, I just didn't know these things.

PK: So there was discrimination of a sort . . .

JQ: Oh, yes.

PK: . . . already there but of slightly different nature than. . . .

JQ: Yes. It wasn't of the *virulent* nature that you read about or that everyone becomes aware of in the 1960s. Which had always been there. And I found out that the Chinese were there to run at least one or two Chinese restaurants, of course, in a very small three or four block downtown area.

PK: Chinatown.

JQ: Yes, it was a miniature Chinatown. So that was my introduction to other races, other cultures, which was essentially minimal. Now sometime in the 1940s, when I was reaching adolescence, I realized that the Mexican community was certainly insular but not because they really truly wanted to be but because they were set aside. There was a Mexican part of town and the municipal facilities—say, like the swimming pool—was open on alternate weeks so that Mexicans and so-called Anglos weren't allowed to swim together.

PK: I didn't know that.

JQ: And, of course, as a child you don't think about it.

PK: Did your family live in the Mission District in San Francisco?

JQ: Yeah.

PK: So you were right in the. . . . Where was it?

JQ: But, no, here I'm still talking about Jerome.

PK: Oh, I'm sorry. Yes.

JQ: I went back [in the conversation—Ed.]. Just to give you . . . so that you'll know that I didn't come from an ideal community.

PK: A little utopia.

JQ: Yes. No, it was not that. But when you're young, when you're a child, you don't question things in the way that you do as you begin to become aware of things around you. And so what one of my best friends and I did was to go to the neighboring town where there was a smelter, which was obviously part of the same corporation where all the ores were shipped by train down toward the [Verde] Valley, and there was a Mexican community there, but they had a swimming pool and so we would use the Mexican pool in Clarkdale that we would get to by hitchhiking. As kids, you know, ten, twelve years old. That's how we could do that, if we didn't want to wait for the alternate weeks, and, of course, we used to joke about how they would drain the pool after all the Mexicans had been in so that then the Anglos could use it.

PK: But you did talk about that? Even though you were joking you were aware of the fact . . .

JQ: Oh, sure. We laughed about it. Oh, yeah, we joked about it.

PK: . . . that they didn't want that kind of intimate, fluid contact.

JQ: Exactly, exactly. I mean, you just don't want to associate with those people. [chuckles] And my mother would always say, "Well, these Mexicans just deserve such treatment because. . ." They had built the pool in the twenties in the Mexican part of town, but these ignorant Mexicans would go in there and start washing their clothes and bathing with soap. [laughs] I don't remember that but that's what she would tell me. When I would ask.

PK: So she was disapproving of . . .

JQ: Oh, yes.

PK: . . . the etiquette that the Mexicans _____.

JQ: Exactly. And like they brought it on themselves. Which may be true. But that didn't address the fact that they were still being discriminated [against—Ed.]. Separate facilities, you see, for Mexicans and the others. So coming from that experience and landing in California right after World War II was quite extraordinary. But we ended up in a very similar environment in the Mission District, because almost everyone there was white ethnic. They were all Greek, Irish, Italian, and central European.

PK: In the Mission?

JQ: The Mission District was not all Latino then. There were very few. I remember meeting a few Central Americans for the first time in my life. A few Hispanic-Americans—or what we later began to call Hispanic-Americans—from New Mexico—people who had gone there from New Mexico. But there wasn't the kind of *enormous* Latino community that you have in San Francisco now. So the Mission District then was essentially working class. It was not the kind of community that you see now. And so when I attended Mission High School, we had in the city around ten or eleven high schools, I remember. There was Commerce High School, where almost all the students were African-American. And Commerce was right next to City Hall. That later was . . . it's a building that was converted into, I guess, city offices. And right after I graduated in 1950, I remember being aware that that school was closed down. I don't know exactly when. And then larger numbers of black students—or African-American students—began to attend Mission High School. But when I was there in the late forties, almost all the students were of Greek, Italian, or Irish background. And a few Hispanics.

PK: What year was it that you moved, your family left?

JQ: We left in the summer of 1947.

PK: Where did you live?

JQ: Well, we first moved in with my mother's brother. And they were way down in the industrial section on Fourth Street, which is just down the street from where the Mosconi Center. Is that the name of it?

PK: Yeah, the _____.

JQ: It was a pretty horrid place.

PK: So just south of Market, really. What they call South of Market.

JQ: Yes. I remember Howard Street between Third and Fourth was Skid Row. I'd never seen anything like that in my life.

PK: And that's where you lived first of all?

JQ: Well, we lived about ten blocks from there. So as kids, when we went to the Catholic Church, which was just inside. . . . I guess that was St. Patrick's on 4th and Mission. Because it's Howard, then Mission. We were way down by Bryant. We were near the [S.P. - Southern Pacific] depot, at one of these little streets. . . .

PK: _____.

JQ: There was a little street called Freelon Street, and the whole street was full of flats, and there were a great number of families there, in fact. We lived there for about a year—I don't remember exactly—and I kept telling my parents we should move out of there, because it was just not a good neighborhood. And they were shopping around, and I actually took the lead in my family and began to look around the city and found this house for them on Twenty-eighth Street.

PK: Twenty-eighth and. . . .

JQ: Duncan and Diamond, I believe.

PK: Oh, yeah.

JQ: It was called Diamond Heights.

PK: Much nicer.

JQ: Oh, absolutely. And I took them up there, and, of course, they liked it because it reminded them of Jerome. Jerome was on a mountain, and you could actually see for fifty miles, it seemed. On a clear day, you could see the San Francisco peaks, which are north of Flagstaff. And, of course, you always had a view of the Red Rocks where you find Sedona, [Oak Creek] Canyon—where we used to go on picnics, by the way, when I was a child. So, in that respect, it was really a fabulous place to grow up. But being in San Francisco that first year was really a shock. To be in a city. . . . You know, to be in a little tiny town where you know everyone and there's no public transportation; you walk everywhere. There *are* cars, of course. But we had no telephone in our house. We had no reason to have a phone because nobody else had a phone. In that neighborhood you could just go out the back porch and you yelled at somebody. I mean, it's that kind of a peculiar background.

PK: Sounds nice in some ways.

JQ: It was, actually. And we walked up. . . . We would walk for miles when we were kids, all over that area. You'd go up into the mountains, and it was pine forests. You'd go down toward the valley, and then it would be sagebrush and cactus. So all the kind of environments that you find around Reno, for instance. You go up into the mountains, and it's all pine trees and Lake Tahoe. And you go eastward from Las Vegas, the land begins to level out and it becomes essentially arid desert. But in Jerome it was the opposite. Then there was a beautiful valley, where there were a number of communities that have since grown quite a bit—Cottonwood, Cornville, and then up into Sedona, of course.

But anyway, getting back to San Francisco. I remember being absolutely fascinated with Market Street, because that was *the* core of the city, and at that time there were four streetcar lines.

PK: That ran along Market?

JQ: Yeah, there was like a four-lane streetcars going up and down Market and, of course, being a kid from the provinces you don't know what car to get on. So, anyway, it was like being in playland, and, of course, when you're that young you just love all the noise. I remember my very first experience of the Pacific Ocean and loving to go to Sutro Baths, which were still _____.

PK: Still operating?

JQ: Ah, they were always open.

PK: What was that like?

JQ: They were incredible pools. You could spend the entire day there.

PK: I've seen photos. And, of course, the debris . . .

JQ: There was an ice rink.

PK: . . . the remains are still there.

JQ: Oh, yeah. There was an ice rink as you came in, with the usual type of music. Then you kept going further down, and then you saw all the different size pools. Some were very warm water. Then there was the Deep diving pools. Then there was a very large shallow pool with a lot of the slides. And I remember one particular evening—because we'd be there in the late afternoon and then come out at night—being absolutely frightened by the roar of the ocean simply knocking up against the cliffs right there by the Cliff House. So coming from that kind of environment and then experiencing the Pacific Ocean was really something. So, anyway, those are vivid memories.

PK: When did they close that down?

JQ: That happened after I left, so I don't remember when.

PK: I think there was a fire there or something. I've never been quite sure. That's interesting. I didn't realize that it was operating in the late forties.

JQ: So, with that kind of background, I had always been a very good student and very industrious from the time I . . . all the way back to my early schooling. And also drawing. I did a lot of drawing as a child.

PK: Well now, how did that come about? What would be your inspiration or encouragement for drawing?

JQ: I just started drawing . . .

PK: I mean, did you . . .

JQ: . . . doing desert scenes, landscapes and . . .

PK: Did you have examples around you, though?

JQ: Not really. And then one of teachers in third or fourth grade became aware of my drawings, and she had been a drawing teacher or had known about art, so she showed me reproductions and I began to be aware of art.

PK: What kind of things did she show you?

JQ: Oh, the typical Arizona thing with the saguaro cactus. Southern Arizona things.

JQ: Which I had never seen, so, I mean, I only knew those through photographs. What I was doing were things that I saw in that environment, and I also did a lot of drawings of photographs, where I would reproduce as closely as possible the photos of people in the family. And so there was some native ability there and a drive to make images, and since then I've realized a lot of artists are left-handed, which I am. My mother said that I didn't start speaking much until my sister did, who is a

year and a half younger than I am.

PK: Well, I was going to ask you, what about siblings? Are you the eldest?

JQ: Yes. There were six of us. I had a brother. My brother died just a few years ago in San Francisco. In fact, he lived in Pacifica with his family there. He had four sons. And I have four sisters. Three of them still live in the Bay Area. One lives in Concord, and her husband works in the city. In fact, she works [there—Ed.]. They commute. And then one sister lives in Burlingame—or down the peninsula—and my other sister lives in Daley City. . . . No, around [Stone's Town]. I've forgotten what they call that area. On the way to Pacifica. And then my brother settled down in Pacifica. I asked him once why he had moved down there—they used to live in the extreme southern end of the city—and he said that his kids were always being beat up by the other school children . . .

PK: Really!?

JQ: . . . so he left the city for that reason. So it was the brown flight. [laughs]

PK: That's extraordinary. I mean, even at that. . . . Well, I don't know how old. . . .

JQ: That was in the sixties. . . .

PK: That was in the sixties?

JQ: Yeah, I think it was in the sixties when he did that.

PK: I would think that by that time there would have been a strong enough Mexican-American community to pretty much protect from that kind of treatment—certainly in the Mission District.

JQ: Well, no. Even then the community was not that large. And also you have to remember that my family—as has been the case and continues to be the case with many Latino families—that you literally end up marrying outside the group. My brother married an Irish girl—or Irish-American. So their children are Irish and Mexican.

PK: Now wait, are these the grandchildren that . . .

JQ: Oh yes, my father, who. . . .

PK: . . . would take them out and. . . .

JQ: . . . always spoke with a very heavy accent, would take his four grandchildren, my brother's four sons—one is a redhead and one is almost a towhead, when they were children—to his favorite place on Market, which used to have a large marketplace, to show off the kids, and, of course, his old friends would tease him about having stolen the children because they just didn't have. . . .

PK: How could he have. . . .

JQ: Exactly. Where did he get these children, in other words. That's by way of explaining that my family was never really a barrio *Latino* family, let's say. My sister married an Irishman named McElroy who is, I believe, from Detroit who arrived in San. . . .

[Break in taping]

PK: Continuing the interview with Jacinto Quirarte, this is Tape 1, Side B. You were talking about

your family background and the experience in San Francisco.

JQ: One thing I should mention relating to my formative years is that, early on, I have a very clear memory of my first, second, third-grade teachers. I remember their names, I remember the classes, I remember teachers I had through grammar school. I remember in the second grade. . . . My first grade teacher was a woman named Parker, my second grade teacher was named Blackwood, and my third grade teacher was named Thomas. All Miss-This, Miss-That. And in the second grade I remember feeling for the first time that I was excelling in something, because Miss Blackwood would have . . . not the spelling bees but the mathematics or arithmetic bees—if you can call them that—and she'd make all of us stand up as we gave answers to arithmetic problems, and I remember almost always being the last one standing because I just knew my numbers backwards and forwards. I just never had any trouble with math, and in the seventh grade I remember taking algebra and doing extremely well, and so academic areas were extremely easy. And sometime in the third or fourth grade I remember being taken out of my regular classes, which were really composed of just my colleagues—other Mexican-American children—and that's when I first met some of the so-called Anglo children like Donald Hollingshead and there was another boy named Morrison and a girl named Margaret [Dykas] . . .

PK: That's amazing you remember them _____.

JQ: . . . Billie Jean [Fain]. . . .

PK: You remember all of these names!

JQ: I remember all these kids. What obviously happened is that they wanted to take me out of a particular environment—where I had essentially been segregated—into a more challenging environment, and I began to be around children who didn't speak Spanish. And I remember even in some of the grades where we were asked to recite that some of my friends would hem and haw and they would speak with a very heavy accent. They never really got that involved. I don't mean to generalize. I'm only speaking about my experience. But I remember, in many cases, a lot of my friends were not doing that well in the academic. . . .

PK: The Mexican-Americans?

JQ: Yes, yes. So when I got to Mission High School, I took just about everything that there was to take in the sciences and in the arts, and for the very first time I had. . . . We actually had three art teachers. We had one in poster-lettering, and we had one in drawing and portrait painting, then we had one in stage design. With Miss Goodrich—in fact, I remember her name—I became a calligrapher, so I actually was able to earn quite a bit of money when I was a graduate student doing calligraphy years later. So I was able to master certain craftsmanship type of things, and also at Mission High School I ended up getting into all of the college prep courses, again all of the what we would now call the advanced classes, where I took the maximum number of English courses that require a lot of writing and analysis of sentence structure and so forth.

PK: And you liked that? I mean, that was _____?

JQ: Yes, because I excelled. I also was very physical, so that I was on the varsity basketball team, and in my junior year, I believe, we won the city championship—basketball.

PK: What position did you play?

JQ: I played center, believe it or not. I was the shortest man on the team, but I was an elbow expert,

just a mean fighter under the boards, and I remember that we had one kid named Flowers who was six foot eleven but he was so awkward we would only put him out on the floor to scare the opposition. And one guy was six-six. His name was Pugh, and a kid named O'Brien—a forward—he was about six-four. So we were all obviously tall. And I was around six-two and a half at the time. I remember beating the freshman teams at Stanford and we played in the Cow Palace. So I had that side of my experiences as a jock, so to speak, although my coach was constantly ribbing me about drawing pictures and spending my time in all those art classes with Miss Goodrich and Miss. . . .

PK: You mean "girl stuff," that's _____.

JQ: Yeah, exactly. Exactly. Miss Michaels and. . . We had to practice every day—and on Saturdays—because [in—Ed.] the high school—as is the case with all the high schools in San Francisco at that time—sports were extremely competitive. So if you wanted to be a baseball player that's all you did—or if you wanted to be a basketball player or a football player. We rarely had anyone who could do all of them. Oh, I should have mentioned that in Jerome I had played basketball on the junior high team, so I had that experience. I had also played in the band in Jerome, where I played the trombone, and then at Mission I took up the trumpet, so I was taking music

PK: Sounds to me like you had far more opportunities in public school than anybody does nowadays in this country.

JQ: I think so.

PK: They don't even *teach* art and music and these things.

JQ: No. No. At least that was the case then, and I remember getting. . . .

PK: So you were privileged, even though you came from this small _____.

JQ: This barrio, you know. [laughs] So-called barrio. The one thing I remember with particular pleasure was getting a number of awards, because I belonged to a great number of clubs, and I had been on the college—I'm sorry, the California State . . . the California Scholarship Federation. I guess it was CSF, I've forgotten what it is. But they gave you little pins if you had a certain grade-point average. And when I graduated I kept being called to get awards, and I remember getting one particular award that I was very proud of and that was one for scholastic achievement because I had a straight A average, just straight A's in everything, whether it was English or mathematics or physics or, of course, gym or the sports, the music and, of course, the art area. So I was a very, very busy kid.

PK: That's amazing!

JQ: What we would now call an anxious-ridden type who is constantly working.

PK: Over-achiever.

JQ: And then I was working after school as well, after practice. So that didn't leave any time for what a lot of my friends were doing—girlfriends, that kind of thing. So I didn't. . . .

PK: Oh well, that can wait.

JQ: Yes, I didn't waste my time

PK: Although I never thought it could _____.

JQ: [laughs] Well, now this is. . . .

JQ: Now, I went over to Berkeley to see if I could get over there, and I did get a scholarship—a partial scholarship—but I didn't have enough money to get across the Bay to attend classes and I certainly couldn't afford to live over there. And so that's one of my regrets, of not having had that opportunity.

PK: Not having [been able to] find a way to finance it.

JQ: Yes.

PK: And your family clearly couldn't help?

JQ: No, no. And so my first year I went to State [Cal State San Francisco—Ed.] because that was accessible.

PK: That cost almost nothing at that time.

JQ: No, no. And it was there, right there near the [Federal—Ed.] Mint. That was the downtown campus.

PK: Oh, really?

JQ: Oh, yes. The new campus wasn't built until '52 or '53. I was taking all my classes at State my last year, 1954.

PK: You mean, Woods Hall, what's now the University of California Extension? Is that where San Francisco State was at the time?

JQ: Well, it. . . .

PK: No, by the Mint. . . . There was the one way downtown and there was also the Mint out closer to the lower Haight.

JQ: Oh no, not that one. The one downtown.

PK: Okay.

JQ: There was a Safeway built there later next to it and a tall apartment building. Some temporary buildings had been built in this four-block area that had been a girls' teaching school, I believe, or where schoolteachers were trained—which is essentially what all the state colleges were at that time until they were renamed state universities.

PK: And this wasn't near the Laguna and. . . .

JQ: Oh no. This was downtown near. . . .

PK: That's another

JQ: I guess Fell was on the northern side. I frankly have forgotten the names of the streets, but it was a small campus. There were very few art students. And, of course, I focused on art, an

artistic. . . .

PK: Now how did you make that choice? Because here you've described. . . . It sounds to me like you were prepared in every area . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . and somehow you focused. . . .

JQ: I didn't get the right counseling. We didn't have counselors. I remember my English 8, which is the designation for the highest course that you could take, [teacher—Ed.] coming up to me right after graduation, when she realized that not only had I done very well in her class but in all these other classes, that she actually asked me about doing anything possible to get a scholarship to Harvard. And I said, "Well, no, I never thought about that." And it's unfortunate that I didn't pursue it and she didn't advise me on what to do. There weren't the kinds of opportunities that, obviously, *all* students have had in the last twenty, thirty years. So I often say that I have done extraordinary things in *spite* of my education. If I can term it that way. I never thought, given my initial inclination to create images, that I would end up writing books and teaching.

PK: Yeah, a scholar

JQ: Because I had only studied for a teaching credential as a stop-gap. I mean, I just thought of that as, "Well, that's something you do to earn a living." But I had wanted to be. . . .

PK: And that's where you got a secondary credential, didn't you, at [Cal State].

JQ: Yes, exactly.

PK: In fact, you did so in, I do believe, in fifty . . .

JQ: . . . seven.

PK: . . . eight.

JQ: Yeah, '58.

PK: . . . along with your M.A.

JQ: Yes. I came back from the Air Force and enrolled in the masters' program, in the teaching credential program, and finished the entire thing in one year, where I just loaded up on all the seminars. And by then I had the discipline of having gone through navigation school for a year and then special weapons school—that is, nuclear weapons and radar bombardier training, so I had gone to school for a very intensive period of eighteen months, having gone in as a second lieutenant right after graduation in 1954, and by the time I finished. . . .

PK: What about [undergraduate, your graduate] school?

JQ: And I went back to State. Now after my three years in the Air Force, where I flew—I was on a bomber combat squadron with the Strategic Air Command—I. . . .

PK: Hm! This is. . . ?

JQ: '54 to '57. I went through a year of flight training and then six months of technical upgrading,

and they were trying to get me to stay in to take up pilot training at that point so that I could then be one of these triple-threat people, as they were called, because toward the end of my term in the Air Force they were then going into these highly specialized aircraft that at that time were with the B-58. We flew the B-36, which was the largest plane ever built because the nuclear weapons were so enormous, and my crew went into B-52s. They were among the very first. So had I stayed in, I would have been into the B-52s and *possibly* gone into the B-2s or what later became known as the B-2 bomber. So, anyway, I went back to school. I didn't want to spend my life in the military, although I did enjoy the flying.

PK: Let's go back to undergraduate, because I'm still not clear. I need to know how you finally focused on art. I understand how you got to San Francisco State and how you felt that—maybe not at the time so much but, certainly, in retrospect—that perhaps you should have tried harder to find a way to take advantage of some other opportunities, at least going to Berkeley. But what strikes me is that you were very well prepared in all these areas. You could have concentrated on various fields.

JQ: Yes.

PK: For some reason, you chose art and art history.

JQ: Yes. I toyed with the idea of architecture, but that seemed so beyond the realm of possibility because I had no models to follow—no one to encourage me to pursue any given area. So everything had to be self-generated, in a sense, and when you only have a limited experience in school, regardless of the *range* of areas that you explore, you really don't know what you're doing. Now there is one thing that I should mention. At that time the Bank of America had an achievement award for high school students in San Francisco in the various disciplines—art, science, and others. And at that time they would select a student from each high school to compete with their counterparts in each of the other ten or eleven high schools in the city. My school selected me for art, and I won the city-wide—I believe it was city-wide—achievement in art for 1950. And that was the result of my own perception of what I wanted to do. In a sense, I had a major in art. I took all the courses they had in art, whether it was drawing or poster-making or lettering or anything that was offered. And so when I took music, that was not central. Or if I did sports, and although I did well in that, that was not my be-all. I didn't aspire to do that, whereas art had always been part of what I felt I was. And I didn't have a notion of what it would mean to be an artist, let's say, but I knew that's the direction I wanted to go in.

PK: How did you imagine you would support yourself?

JQ: That's where the teaching credential came in.

PK: Ah, right, yeah, you would teach.

JQ: That seemed within the realm of possibility. When I saw real artists, like John Gutmann, who took me under his wing and. . . .

PK: So you had courses from John at State?

JQ: Yes, yes.

PK: Photography.

JQ: My first art history courses.

PK: Oh, art history. Did John teach art history?

JQ: That's what he taught.

PK: I thought he taught photography.

JQ: And I took photography with him, yes. I forgot about that. Yes, I took a lot of photography with him.

PK: _____ now.

JQ: Yes. He would fuss at me because I wouldn't pay attention to the details. He also taught life drawing and he loved to tease me.

PK: He would love to teach life drawing, by the way.

JQ: Oh, yes. And for an eighteen, nineteen-year-old it was absolutely extraordinary to see a Scandinavian-type—if there is such a type—blonde, nude model with a black model or an Asian model. It was really an amazing situation. And, anyway, that's the kind of thing John Gutmann liked to do to. . . .

PK: That's interesting.

JQ: Yes. So I had life drawing with him, and he would go around and check each of us and he would sometimes grab me because I was wearing jeans—I think everybody wore jeans; are they jeans? or like Levis, or khakis—and he would always put his fingers in my belt, behind me and say, "You're too close," and he'd physically pull me away from the easel. And sometimes I'd be standing back looking at what I was doing and he'd come by and nudge me and say, "You're standing too far." And so that was his way of encouraging me, in a sense, so I felt that he took an intense interest in what I was doing. My very first art history course was on nineteenth and twentieth century European art and I remember getting A's in all the exams and quizzes, and he took me aside and talked to me about the possibility of my going into art history. And he also got me involved with putting together a film series for students where I was taught how to order films and how to present them, which was the very first time I went before a group—other than in classroom recitations, which I'd always done. John Gutmann, then, directed me in certain ways toward that. Although I didn't initially go into art history because State did not offer a degree in art history. They offered degrees in art. And so I continued to emphasize printmaking, painting. That's where I met Roy [deForrest, de Forrest, Forrest], for instance. He was a student there at State.

PK: Oh I didn't know that. Is that right?

JQ: Yeah, and I think I ran into Manuel Neri over at School of Fine Arts because I used to go over there.

PK: I wanted to ask you about that. With your growing interest in art and, I guess, increasing idea of what that can mean in terms of something beyond just commercial art or teaching. . . .

JQ: Yes. I wanted to be a painter and printmaker, because that's what I focused on.

PK: So at some point you must have become aware of what was going on at the California School of Fine Arts, which I think it was still called then . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . which had had, of course, a great deal of excitement in the late forties and then into the early fifties with Douglas McAgy . . .

JQ: Yes, and Mark Rothko and Clyfford Still were there.

PK: . . . Clyfford Still.

JQ: Yes. Oh, yes.

PK: And that was very much, I believe, in the air and you must have picked up on that at some time. Were you ever interested?

JQ: Oh yes, but you see, that's where that conflict was. There is a decision you make where you think you want to be an artist, but on the other hand there's this other thing pulling you and saying, "Well, I want to be a teacher. This is my. . . ." I was an unusually serious, responsible type of person, because I wanted to make sure that I would have something to fall back on. You would imagine the parents telling you that but, no, that came from me.

PK: And besides, you obviously had a sort of humanities, what shall we say, academic parallel interest, and I would expect. . . . I don't know if you were aware of this, but the California School of Fine Arts was hardly strong in that. Still isn't. It has much more sort of the heroic idea of singular expression.

JQ: Exactly. Also, I was out of sync with what was going on in art at the time. I was interested in figurative art. Which is what I think so many people as children, when they begin to make images, it's of things they know. Whether it's their surroundings or the human figure and since I had such a strong Mexican experience. . . . My father subscribed to many Mexican publications, and my earliest experience with Mexican images were of some very interesting cartoons that were caricatures of world leaders that were always on the covers of these Mexican publications. So I became aware of Mexican art, and then they often had articles on Mexican painters, so I knew of the muralists when I was an adolescent.

I had this parallel track, actually. On the one hand, there was my experience growing up, not only in the town that I mentioned but within the kind of family that I come from, and knowing about Mexican art up to a point, of Mexican politics—a Mexican view of the world and how the war was going on, for instance, and how it was viewed in my household. So that right before or during my first year at State, I actually painted a huge mural in a Mexican restaurant on Third Street of your typical Mexican images: the Mexican cowboy on horseback, a [china poblana] on a horse—a beautiful horse—a Mexican landscape scene, and then a huge map of Mexico. And the Mexican restaurant was called México Lindo, and I remember lettering. . . . Since I had become an expert letterer by the time I was sixteen, seventeen years old, I did the lettering as well as the map. I took some pictures of it. I have at least one of them in my files somewhere.

PK: What year was that?

JQ: This was 1949-50.

PK: Oh, so this is. . . . Well, my Lord, you were still . . . you were just starting college.

JQ: Yes, yes. I was a freshman. And I remember going to San Jose, spending a summer with my

uncle—with whom we had lived—and by then he had moved to San Jose and had started a business down there and he had gotten me a job painting some mural in some Mexican restaurant down there—which I did. So when I began to take classes with the other painters on the faculty, there was a man named [_____—Ed.] [Nepote] who was a landscape painter, a very sweet man. But not a challenging person, because I was a very restless young man and my personality was very much in synch with John Gutmann, who is a very challenging man.

PK: [He] was also privy to all of that wonderful European culture, and so forth.

JQ: Yes, and then. . . .

PK: It must have come through.

JQ: Yes, and there was [Mundt], who had been an administrator at California State

PK: Ernest Mundt?

JQ: Yeah, Ernest Mundt. I took some graduate courses with him. He was giving seminars in art history, I believe.

PK: [I would say, Actually] art history.

JQ: Then [_____—Ed.] [Johansen], who was a Swede—or [Johannsen (pronouncing it Yo-hahn'-sen)]; I forget his first name—with whom I took seminars in aesthetics, where we had to write papers every week and then discuss them. The usual format. And Seymour [Locks], who was a very important person in my life. After I left school and got married and then came back, my wife and I became very close to Seymour and his wife, Faye Locks, and their children—whom I had actually documented when I was a photography student. I had spent many days taking pictures of his children and his family and printing them for them. So anyway my relationship with him was very close and he had gotten. . . . He was one of the veterans returning from World War II. I believe he got a degree at Stanford, an M.A., and then started teaching at State. So John Gutmann and Seymour Locks were the key figures in my life.

PK: Well, that's pretty good! I mean, maybe you had to go to State for reasons that. . . . Well, you would have preferred going elsewhere, but that sounds to me like a pretty solid, stimulating art environment.

JQ: It was—because of where that particular school is and the people that it attracted. Now, unfortunately the times demanded that one be involved with Abstract Expressionism. . . .

PK: Yeah, that's right.

JQ: . . . and I tried, and made a valiant effort to become an Abstract expressionist. But my heart was in figurative art, and so, gradually, after going into the Air Force and then going on to graduate school beyond that, I just simply drifted away and then began to focus on art history.

[Break in taping]

PK: Continuing the interviews in Session 1 with Jacinto Quirarte, this is Tape 2, Side A. And we left ourselves—or rather, we left you—in San Francisco. You were talking about, basically, your art education and experience. . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . there at State, and some of the, well, faculty. We've been talking about them but then some of the other students and your valiant but unsuccessful struggle to become a heroic Abstract Expressionist.

JQ: Exactly. I did exhibit with groups of artists in San Francisco and, of course, as was the case at the time, I always was included in the annual art exhibitions that were held at the Palace of. . . . Not the Palace of Fine Arts. . . .

PK: Legion of Honor. California Palace of the Legion of Honor is where those annuals were. . . .

JQ: What were those called? Where there was a city-wide exhibition.

PK: Well, they also had them in. . . .

JQ: We had them in Union Square, we had them out at that palace that was _____.

PK: And also at the Civic Center. They would do that sometimes.

JQ: Yeah, where students were included. I've forgotten now what they called it. It was an annual event. So anyway, I was in those. I exhibited my works in The Place, which was . . .

PK: Oh, sure.

JQ: . . . on upper Grant, off Union Street. And then across the street there was a place called A Village Sandwich Shop, where I would. . . . I was doing mobiles. I got involved with mobiles as well as printmaking, and I guess I was fascinated by the scientific or the technological end of it—of how to find the fulcrum in order to balance each and every part of the sculpture.

PK: Also, mobiles were really in at about that time. I remember [_____—Ed.] [Ellevus] had them, who was maybe a little bit later.

JQ: Yes.

PK: And [Alexander—Ed.] Calder was a big influence.

JQ: Exactly. When I became aware of him I was fascinated with that. So I did those and I would exhibit them.

PK: Were you living in. . . . Now, from our conversation earlier. . . .

JQ: I lived with my parents my first year of college, and then I was able to get an apartment—a flat—on upper Union off Grant Street.

PK: That's right by Washington Square Park, I think. [In North Beach-J.Q.].

JQ: Yeah. My landlord had a dingy flat above [Fenocchio's]? What was that place. . . .

PK: That's on Broadway.

JQ: Broadway and Columbus. I remember having to go and pay the rent. It was fourteen dollars a month for this two-room flat and a little kitchen and bath. And if I didn't pay the rent on time, I would

come back to the flat and I'd have a little piece of paper on my door saying, "Please pay flat rent. Landlor." Landlord was L-a-n-l-o-r. It always gave me a charge because it reminded me of my dad. Obviously, one of the many Italians who had come many, many years earlier and had learned English phonetically. And so that's where I was living—on upper Grant. And later a friend of mine and I—named Fernando, who was from Mexico City and who had studied architecture—rented an apartment in the Mission District where the rents were more reasonable. If you can imagine. [laughs]

PK: That's amazing!

JQ: Yeah, that was the early fifties. So essentially, I'm still exploring all these many possibilities, but I'm still thinking of myself as an art student.

PK: Well, if you were at North Beach at that time, it was a pretty exciting time still, because that was, really, the heyday of the Beats.

JQ: Yes. Well, it was right before. Then it was all the Bohemians.

PK: What was that like? Describe what the scene was like. And were you aware of being in a special place where some interesting. . . .

JQ: Oh, absolutely. There were people from all over the country there constantly. Everyone was talking about car trips across the country, Mexico. Everybody had to go to Mexico. Fernando and I spent an entire summer there in 1953. That was my very first experience with Mexico [itself—Ed.], because I had always heard of it from the time I was a child and my father never ever stopped talking about it. And so this was this mythical place where I felt immediately at home. I had no problem dealing with it. It was something that I had known as a child, although indirectly.

Once I came back and did my graduate studies, I began to turn toward an area that had been of major interest to me all along but had always been on the back burner, and that was pre-Columbian art. I remember browsing through bookstores on Fourth and Market, for instance. There were a number of bookstores that, to me, were like fantasy lands. I'd never seen that many books that I could browse through—outside a library. And I remember picking up a book on the Maya—it had just been published—by Sylvanus Morley, called *The Ancient Maya*. I remember buying a copy of that, and so I was in high school when I first became aware of that. And I remember when the murals at Bonampak were discovered, right around then, and so I became fascinated with mural painting. And when I came back from the Air Force, when I went back to San Francisco to work on my doctorate—I'm sorry, my masters—I took all the requisite courses for a teaching credential, where I had to take puppet-making and how to run a projector, all the Mickey-Mouse things—especially where I had been dealing with nuclear weapons and radar bombardier training . . .

PK: Sort of low tech.

JQ: . . . and then being taught how to run a film projector was real Mickey-Mouse to me. I was a grand old man of twenty-five, twenty-six, having gone through three years of this intense experience where I was always on alert, couldn't go anywhere because we were always being called on alert. And I went through all of that but I wanted to write my master's thesis on Maya painting, so. . . .

PK: Oh, you knew that already?

JQ: Oh yes, and so I dug up all the books I could get hold of in the library—archaeology books on painting, wrote a masters under John Gutmann. He helped me as best he could.

PK: What was the M.A. topic?

JQ: On Maya painting.

PK: Okay, so already on the M.A. [level—Ed.].

JQ: At Bonampak. Yes. And so my appetite was just barely whetted, so that was the beginning. Fifty-six, '57, all of a sudden I had an opportunity to actually write a lengthy paper on Maya painting, and I remember seeing an announcement somewhere that somebody who had been down there to look at the Bonampak murals was going to give a talk at Berkeley. So I went across the Bay to listen, and I soon realized that it was of such a general nature that, although I had never seen them, I actually knew more about them than the speaker. Now the speaker obviously knew them in a personal way, but didn't really know how to place them within their proper artistic and historical context.

PK: Where did you get all this information at that point? This was pretty, well, it seems to me it was a pretty new field, wasn't it?

JQ: As far as art history is concerned, yes.

PK: That's what I mean, yeah.

JQ: It was all archaeology.

PK: Yeah.

JQ: It was all mainly archaeologists. And so my wife and I had spent our honeymoon in Mexico. We both loved Mexico. We had married in December of 1954 when I was in the middle of my training as a navigator in the Air Force.

PK: Well, let's just quickly talk about that. Where did you meet Sara?

JQ: I left San Francisco in September of 1954, several months after graduation with my B.A. I was a second lieutenant. I entered the Air Force in San Antonio. I made arrangements to travel with other young men from the western U.S. I remember, there was one from the state of Washington, there were several along the way, so we all carpoled and we drove together to San Antonio. We spent two, three weeks here being mustered into the Air Force. Bright, bushy-tailed second-lieutenants, all college grads, university graduates, waiting for our orders. So then I was assigned one of two navigator training bases in Harlingen, Texas, which is thirty miles north of the border, the southernmost part of Texas. I arrived there at the end of September. I met this young lady, who had just returned from New York where she had been modeling and had come home. She had been a student at the University of Texas. We met and within two months we were married.

PK: Needless to say, you still are.

JQ: It was a very decisive move. And we're still married. We have a daughter.

PK: So you guys made the right choice.

JQ: Yes, yes, very much so.

PK: And that was in. . . .

JQ: December of 1954.

PK: Okay, '54. So then she became part of this. . . .

JQ: . . . journey. Essentially, the journey that we began.

PK: And you part of hers.

JQ: She went back to San Francisco with me when I went back to finish my master's degree, and that's when we became very good friends, very close, with the Locks, Seymour Locks, and soon after I graduated. . . . We had already begun to make plans to. . . . I was going to study toward a doctorate. That's when I made an absolutely definite, or definitive, decision to get a Ph.D. in art history. That's when I began to look around and realize that there were no universities in the U.S. who offered Ph.D.s with that specialty. There was one at Yale. *The* most important art historian, named George [Kubler], who had written numerous books on Spanish art, Mexican colonial art, the colonial art of New Mexico, the pre-Columbian art and architecture of Meso-America or ancient Mexico and Guatemala, but he had not published that book, for which he has become famous. That came out in 1962. So here we're dealing with 1958 when I got my degree. And so I had to look around, and I did look at Berkeley but all they had were archaeologists. Their anthropology program in pre-Columbian was very strong. There was one of the key figures in Olmec studies, but I was not particularly interested in Olmec, I wanted [Maya, Mayan]. So my wife and I decided after long, long discussions that we would go to Mexico. We said, "Why not go to the source?" And I had three years of the G.I. Bill left, and so that was our stake. We had saved enough money to get there and to get started. Our friend Fernando [Carrera] was down there, working on his doctorate in Spanish literature.

PK: Same place?

JQ: Yes, so we were going to the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and when we first got there we stayed with Fernando and his wife.

PK: Now, is that where Americans would generally go if they wanted to study in Mexico?

JQ: Yes. There were a number of people working on doctorates in Spanish or Spanish literature, which is normal, I think natural, for someone to go. I really didn't know what I was doing, as was often the case, but as it turned out I really lucked out because when I arrived I studied with world-renowned people—people who had written all the books on pre-Columbian art, on modern Mexican art, on colonial art of Mexico. I had an opportunity to study with all of these. I didn't know that I would be studying with people of that stature. So that was an *amazing* experience. And then once there, I began to meet to people from Yale and Harvard, because the national university of Mexico [_____—Ed.] being of international renown, given the achievements of its faculty for the hundreds of years that it's been in existence, was a natural liaison for Harvard and Yale-based people—as well as people from the University of Pennsylvania, Penn State, U.C. Berkeley, U.C. Los Angeles, University of New Mexico. I met them all.

PK: They all came through.

JQ: Exactly, they would always go through, and they would touch base with the people with whom I was studying, *and* as soon as I arrived I became a special assistant to the most famous Mayanist in Mexico, because he had discovered the tomb in Palenque, which is just known all over the world now for the extraordinary materials that were found in that tomb. He hired me—once I was in his

seminar in Maya glyphs, where I learned to read Maya glyphs—to do architectural drawings and to do translations for him. And through that. . . . And, of course, he was head of the Institute of Maya Studies, and through that I was able to meet George Kubler for the first time in 1962.

PK: Who was this professor you were working with? The distinguished Palenque discoverer?

JQ: He has since passed away. His name was Alberto Ruz—R-u-z—hyphen Lhuillier. He was part French. Lhuillier was L-h-u-i-l-l-i-e-r. Ruz-Lhuillier is world famous for that achievement of having found that tomb, which changed the way in which all of pre-Columbian Mexico had been viewed. He later became the head of the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. So I mean, he was . . .

PK: A great [little museum].

JQ: . . . first-class. He was a first-class man.

PK: You couldn't have done better.

JQ: No. No. So, I lucked out.

PK: Did you consider going to Yale, to try to go to Yale to study with Kubler? Or no?

JQ: No, because I didn't really know that much about Kubler. I only found out about him once I got to Mexico. And that's when I realized that there really *weren't* any places in the U.S. where you could study pre-Columbian. Certainly not for a graduate degree. You could go to Philadelphia, for instance, at the University of Pennsylvania, and I later worked with a colleague at the University of Texas, who got his degree about the same time that I did and he was interested in very much the same area in art history, but he's had to study with archaeologists.

PK: Yeah.

JQ: There were no art historians, other than George Kubler. And he later trained a few people in art history.

PK: Yeah, like [Judith] [Bettleheim], who teaches at State.

JQ: Yeah.

PK: An old friend of mine. She went back to Yale from UCLA to study with Kubler.

JQ: So getting to Mexico was the best thing that ever happened to me. I studied with the eminent Justino Fernández, who wrote all the books on José Clemente Orozco. He wrote a key book on the work of Orozco in 1940 called *Orozco: Form & Idea*. He wrote the book that continues to be the best source on nineteenth and twentieth century art of Mexico, in the 1950s. I studied. . . . He was my thesis director, my dissertation director—because of art history. And Ruz-Lhuillier was my director in archaeology, since that's the area that I would, of necessity, have to cover. I also studied with the most eminent colonialist, named Francisco de la [Maza, Masa]. He wrote most of the books on colonial art of Mexico. So, all in all, it was an *extraordinary* experience, and once I became acquainted with people from Harvard and Yale, but particularly Kubler at Yale, I made contacts that were later to prove very, very beneficial for me. So following graduation, [and, in] publishing for the first time a number of papers on pre-Columbian art and architecture, I ended up in the Foreign Service, because that opportunity came up. I didn't even *think* in terms of applying to any university

in the states because I knew that would be next to impossible.

PK: Why was that so? At that point you would be one of the few. . . .

JQ: There was no demand for such people at that time. This was. . . .

PK: Not in art history.

JQ: No. This was 1964. I had been working at the University of the Americas that had been known as the Mexico City College, first as dean of men and then teaching my very first class in pre-Columbian art and architecture, and before that, teaching art to junior high and high school students at the American School.

PK: In Mexico City?

JQ: Mexico City. And I was able to get some experience teaching. But because the pay was so low and the raise I received after getting my Ph.D. in June of 1964 at the University of the Americas was so minuscule that it was ludicrous, I thought, "We need to get out of here." And we were ready to leave—after six years. And this opportunity to go to the Foreign Service came up—through an old friend from San Francisco State. A man named Richard Cushing was one of the many returning veterans at State, who had been a newspaperman with *The Chronicle*, and, anyway, he was a public information officer at the American Embassy in Mexico. We became real good friends and he said, "I'm being transferred to Caracas. Why don't you come along with us?" And he ordered his people to interview me, so it was getting a job—as so often happens—through a friend.

And the only interesting thing about that interview that was a pro forma thing was that these foreign service people asked me how I would explain the riots that were then taking place in the U.S. and our problems with Latin America. I was at a loss because when my wife Sara and I left in December of 1958 there was no such thing on the horizon. And in the summer of 1964 that was about as alien as anything could be from our experience. So we only knew about it as a distant thunder, and there was obviously no way I could answer that and I had no ready answer and I passed over that. And then he asked me another question about the problems between the U.S. and Mexico and when I started, "Well, our problems with the U.S. . . ." the interviewer immediately asked me, "Wait a minute. What side are you on?" And that's when I realized that *I had* been gone too long.

PK: [laughs]

JQ: I was already looking at the world in terms of Mexico—or Latin America. Anyway, that was the fun part, and we did go to Caracas.

PK: And this was in '64 . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . that you went to Caracas.

JQ: Yes. We came back to the U.S. for six months. Not six months. Actually it was about three months for training—on how to live abroad.

PK: [laughs]

JQ: So we had to take the Foreign Service Institute where a number of people gave us lectures on Latin America. Again, it was like the experience I had had when I went to hear that person talk at Berkeley on the Bonampak murals. We did have a Puerto Rican—I remember this very clearly—give us a talk on Yucatan, where my wife and I had traveled extensively and that's where I focused on my dissertation. I wrote a four-hundred-page dissertation on Maya mural painting. So that's when I realized—one of my particular personality traits—that I knew that this man really didn't know very much, but that under the circumstances there would really be no reason for me to interrupt him, nor to even tell him afterward that he really should consult this or that source in order to make a more meaningful presentation. because I realized, first, that he probably had been pressed into service, that he had many other more important things to do in his life, and that my doing so, either in the lecture or afterward, would just be showing off. And so I have always been very reluctant, even in situations where I *know* that I know more than an individual. And so I have always been relatively quiet in that sense, other than when I'm in my classroom or. . . .

PK: You mean, unlike La Maestra in Mexico City, Raquel [Tibol.]?

JQ: Oh, gee, yes, yes. Well, you have to show how much more you know than the individual. So at least I recognized that that is not part of my personality, where I need to show off. I think many of us do show off in certain ways, but that certainly is not mine. I don't have a need. . . .

PK: Well, _____ what it's accomplishing in the case of _____.

JQ: I don't have a need to do that kind of thing.

PK: But you did. . . . I think it is interesting that you began to be very much reinforced in terms of your understanding, familiarity with the whole Latin American situation, and from, in some ways, almost, I guess, eventually, really an insider's perspective. Even though you were American . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . you had the tools and the education to easily fit in.

JQ: Deal with this material. Yes. One of things that I often mention in first going to Mexico, opening up an account at the bank and giving my name, and just before I was going to say, "Let me spell it for you," which is what I've *always* had to do in the U.S., the man just simply wrote it up. That was an *amazing* experience, to have someone actually hear my name and literally have no problem with it. And so that was a *wonderful* experience to say, "Jacinto Quirarte," and not have to say, "Let me spell it for you." So, in that sense, I was able to deal with that experience and go with it.

PK: In some ways, because of your name and because of language, your identity fit more comfortably in *some* ways—in that way, at least—in Mexico than had been your experience in the U.S. You always, just using this as an example, having to explain yourself within your *own* country.

JQ: Yes, I was. . . .

PK: You didn't have to do that in this foreign country.

JQ: Exactly. They knew I wasn't from there, because, as the people got to know me in school. . . . And I was just taller than all my classmates, so that my classmates—in a very nice way—called me "El Grande," the big one, because I towered over everyone, and at that time I weighed about 175 so I looked even taller than I was. And it brought back the memories of Jerome, for instance, where I really didn't have a problem with my name because everyone there was equipped to hear it. And so

I was called "Jacinto" or ["Chinto"], which is a short, a nickname, and when I got to San Francisco I experienced for the first time that problem. All my schoolmates were—as I mentioned earlier—either Irish or Italian or Greek, and one of my best friends was named Tom Jackson, and he used to rib me about my name, and he'd say, "Well, what . . ." He'd ask me how I pronounced my name and I'd say, "Hacinto," and he couldn't pronounce that and he'd say, "Ha." And then I would say, "Well, just think in terms of Ha-ha." And then, "Oh! Ha-ha-cinto!" So that was the worst thing I could have done, and so he just constantly called me "Ha-ha-cinto." Then he began to call me, "Jack-cinto." And then he just called me "Jack."

PK: [chuckles]

JQ: And the last couple of years in high school—I'll never forgive myself for having done that—I actually just, rather than fight it, I just simply asked people to call me Jack. Even my kid sisters began to call me Jack and my nephews. . . . Well, at that time were they calling me that? Were there any nephews? No, there weren't any nephews then. No, of course not, there couldn't have been. But even later, when my sisters were married and their children would call me Jack. . . .

[Break in taping]

PK: Tape 2, Side B. Just finishing up one thought before we go to lunch, "Jack." [laughs]

JQ: When my wife and I returned to San Francisco and she heard my siblings call me Jack, my wife stared in horror to realize that I had been using "Jack" in high school, so I was very embarrassed to acknowledge that I had not been able to deal with that problem of having people call me "Jacinto." [chuckling] And, in fact, I remembered many years later that Seymour [Locks—Ed.] was the very first one to shame me into using "Jacinto," because even my first year in college I must have been using "Jack" and I had actually forgotten that. So it must have been Seymour who first told me, "You have no reason to be ashamed." Of course, I didn't realize that I had been ashamed. I wasn't really thinking of it in those terms. I was just *tired* of people asking you, "What kind of a name is that? How do you pronounce that?" etc. So that was a revelation in Mexico to begin to deal with my own background and emphasize those things that eventually became very, very important—and to begin to come to terms with that very special experience of being bilingual and bicultural, and going back to the source, and, once there, acknowledging all those things that were Mexican and the *many* more things that were American. And that's when I realized that I was far more American than Mexican. So in a sense I felt liberated, because I began to see things far more clearly now, and to sort out the Mexican part with the American—and beginning to see the myth of Mexico as opposed to the reality of Mexico. There was my father's Mexico of the provinces—the revolutionary Mexico—and the multi-million-population city of Mexico City, which is just unique. It isn't Mexico; it is an entity onto its own. It's a cosmopolitan city. It's a world center, where you have people from *all* over the world. Even beyond San Francisco, which I felt was an extraordinary place to have finished up on my formative years. It didn't come anywhere near the kinds of things that I found in Mexico City. It was a drawing center for people from the U.S. as well as from Europe. I met many people from New York for the first time in my life. Even though I had met a few from New York in San Francisco, I was more apt to meet someone from Connecticut and Idaho. I had never met people from Idaho, except in San Francisco. Somehow they'd ended up there. Or from Washington.

But Mexico City was something truly special. We met people from South America for the first time—artists from Argentina, from Peru, from Colombia. people who later became actually quite famous as artists. We met people who were about my age at the time. That is. . . . Well, obviously, if they're still around, they're still my age. [laughs] What I meant by that is that we were all about the same generation, men and women born in the early thirties. So we were in our late twenties, early thirties

at that time. Truly formative years. And meeting Kubler, meeting colleagues from Harvard, and then others was a truly inspiring experience. I met a young man from Germany—I'll never forget. [Lothar Kanauth], who had been in the German Youth Movement, had emigrated to the U.S., and ended up in the Midwest right after World War II. He was just my age. So there could not have been two more different backgrounds, and we ended up in 1960—no, I'm sorry, 1959; January 1959—in a seminar on Maya glyphs and iconography—or [epigraphy], hieroglyphics and iconography. So I was there from the U.S., Lothar was from Germany via the U.S. There was a Czechoslovakian woman who is still in Mexico—in fact, they're both still in Mexico. They became authorities in their respective fields. Her name was [Uchmani] [Havah] Uchmani, who married a man named [Peñ a], had a daughter. And I met two of the most extraordinary people in that seminar who are now world renowned. One unfortunately has passed away. [Beatriz] [de la Fuente] later became head of the Institute of Aesthetics at the National University. She will be giving the evening lecture next month at this huge Olmec show in Washington, D.C. She has headed the sessions of the International Congress of the History of Art. So Beatrice and I go way back. We were students together and our paths have crossed many times professionally. So Beatrice has written books on Olmec art and architecture, on Maya materials along the same lines. Given my experience, once I came back to the U.S. I was able to introduce her to the U.S., and for the first time she was invited to give talks at one of these conferences back in 1972. By then I was at U.T. Austin [University of Texas, Austin—Ed.]. But, anyway, I'm getting ahead of the. . . .

PK: Let me just. . . . Before we leave it, we'll go get a little lunch. Just a couple observations and a question, I guess. One, the "Jack" anecdote.

JQ: Oh, yes.

PK: Your name, it's interesting to hear. . . .

JQ: It never appeared after I went to Mexico.

PK: But, for one thing, that was, of course, a standard American immigrant story—taking names that were too difficult and just changing them however one had to to match what then could be understood . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . as part of, well, the requirements, the immediate requirements of a kind of assimilation, functioning in an English-speaking country. So you went through that. But what interests me is that when the Chicano movement—and other movements as well, can politicize all of this identity and ethnicity and nationalism—that kind of an experience would be given a very negative cast, as if you were being oppressed, forced by the culture into, then, giving up something that was very important to you . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . and the way *you* describe this, that wasn't, from your perspective, the case at all. It was a pragmatic _____.

JQ: Yes, I wasn't ashamed of who I was. I simply got tired of having to explain to someone whose ear was not tuned into that kind of sound or those vowels, that just don't exist in English. It's bizarre that I finally ended up using Jack, because I could have used anything else, something that wasn't quite as Anglo as that. Who ever heard of a Chicano named Jack? I mean, it's just ridiculous. But it

came from Tom Jackson who ribbed me about Ha-ha-cinto and then finally got tired of calling me Ha-ha-cinto and started calling me Jack-cinto. And he said, "I'm going to drop the "cinto." I'm going to call you Jack." And I sort of liked the sound of it and then I thought, "Well, all right." And then I actually began to sign the yearbooks that we all had every year, "Jack." I actually have some of them and I look at them and I blanch. "Oh, my God."

PK: The second observation. . . .

JQ: Oh, by the way, let me just mention one other thing. When I became a dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Texas at San Antonio where we now sit, in 1972, I had been teaching at U.T. Austin for six years, and I had begun to make a name for myself professionally, having published a number of things in pre-Columbian art and architecture, somewhere along the line—I believe it was in 1975 toward the end of my six-year tenure as a dean—one of my old classmates came through. He had gone into musicology and was teaching in the Pacific Northwest. He married an Asian woman, I believe. His name is [Robert—Ed.] Garfias. He later became a dean at Long Beach, I forget exactly where. But at that time—late '75 or '76—he came through the campus—it was just pure accident—and when he saw my name and then came up to me, I was standing around with my division directors—I am their boss, you see—music, art and architecture, and Garfias says, "Jack, how great to see you!" [laughs] And, of course, everybody looked around . . .

PK: Did you know _____ _____?

JQ: . . . "Where's Jack?" [laughs]

PK: Did you respond to it? You knew. . . .

JQ: Of course, I just started laughing because that. . . . And, of course, even to this day one of my . . . when I told him the story, my boss, now he's the head of the division where I am a professor, he often will rib me and say, "All right, Jack, you'd better get off your high pedestal." [laughter] So, anyway, that's enough on the "Jack" part.

PK: Well, it does have. . . .

JQ: It's very peculiar. In fact, I'm embarrassed by it now.

PK: I don't know, that's part of *your* American experience. But looking at the Mexican experience—and we will talk more, of course, a little bit about Caracas—but it seems to me from what you've said that you felt at that time that Mexico City was truly the great crossroads of the Americas . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . and that you actually had more opportunity there for interaction with interesting people from all over the world than perhaps anywhere in the U.S., with the possible exception of New York . . .

JQ: New York, yeah.

PK: . . . but that's an interesting observation, because then you were. . . . We tend to be insular in our thinking, and hearing of that great urban center—cultural center—as just, well, it's a little bit far south of us . . .

JQ: Exactly.

PK: . . . but not that far.

JQ: No.

PK: . . . and yet I think in most American's thinking it just wasn't a factor. We almost didn't have any image of it. And I'm not sure that I did so much, until Ann and I went, by the way, in about '65 or '66 . . .

JQ: Is that right?

PK: . . . for our first visit to Mexico City.

JQ: Yes.

PK: The only one until we returned . . .

JQ: Just recently. That's amazing.

PK: . . . back in _____.

JQ: Oh. Well, it was a seminal experience for me, and it allowed me to know Mexico far beyond anything I ever expected, because we were able to study what we had in our classes directly. Every one of my professors had excursions on the weekends, so that we went to all the pre-Columbian sites within the region. And then if we had to go beyond, like Yucatan or Chiapas, we went on our own, which my wife and I did. Or Oaxaca. But in the immediate environs, we went to Teotihuacan, to Xochicalo, [Texcoco], [Tlatilco], [Azcapotzalco], [Tenayuca]—all of these places. And then the same with colonial. Now I had not thought anything about the colonial, but I was *absolutely amazed* at the materials. For the first year I went out every Saturday or Sunday morning with our professor. We would charter busses, and we would visit all the sixteenth-century churches, the seventeenth-century churches, the eighteenth-century churches. It was *amazing* to have this renowned authority guiding us through all this material, and then, of course, going through the classroom, with slides and lectures. So that was really truly extraordinary, because in the past I had works of art available at the Palace of the Legion of Honor, at the de Young [Museum—Ed.], and down at the San Francisco Museum of Art. But the collections, being certainly strong, are not world class. They were not world class at the time. It was fabulous when you compare it to other cities, but when you go to a place that's as rich as Mexico and Mexico City with the rich. . . . At least the areas I was interested in—pre-Columbian art and colonial art, as it turned out. And then the murals—the Mexican murals. I knew about them, but. . . . And then when I was able to study with Justino Fernández, who knew. . . . He actually *knew* Orozco, he *knew* Rivera—he knew them all. He wrote about them. So it was the kind of intimacy that you just can't get in library research. You obviously have to get them together.

In Mexico I did have a reverse problem of identity, because I was part of the American colony but at the same time within the Mexican community. First, because I was teaching at the American School. I was teaching all the children of all of the executives who have companies down there—American companies—and other Europeans, but mainly American. And then at Mexico City College the same thing with American college students from all over the U.S. But at the same time having Mexican friends, Mexican colleagues. So it's a dual thing, and when I first registered at school, they included my mother's name, and in Mexico—as is the case in all Spanish speaking countries, the first surname is your father's name and the one at the end is your mother's name. So I became Jacinto Quirarte Jiménez, which is my mother's name. So when I first published things—and my dissertation

is Jacinto Quirarte Jiménez—and these were cataloged at the University of Texas, Austin, for instance, and other places—I'm listed under Jiménez. Why? Because in the U.S., you take the one at the tail end of the name. So once I started publishing in the U.S. everything is under Quirarte, but there are some things that are under Jiménez because of that peculiarity—or what we would consider peculiar.

It's at that time that I became *very* much interested in what I later called the confluence of cultures, and my teachers always talked of the [choque de culturas]—culture clash—and what they were referring to was the impact that the Spanish invasion had on the Mexican Indian. We had entire courses on how that affected the architecture, the painting, what it did to the Indians, how they reacted when they had to stand underneath a barrel vault. They thought the thing would come crashing down because they have no visible means of support. It was simply unknown architecturally. So I became fascinated with the outsider and the insider relationship in terms of culture and civilization. So the impact of the Spanish invasion—or what we refer to as a conquest, the Spanish Conquest—was really fascinating because I became aware for the first time that the Indians had had a terrible time dealing with a whole new system of pictorial conventions that differed from their own. And it's just wonderful to see all those early images that are found in the manuscripts. So that was my introduction to that kind of material.

Then when I began to deal with the pre-Columbian, I saw that very similar things had happened. Because, after all, we tend to think of finite borders. People, of course, are supposed to be Czechs or Slovaks or Alsatians, or whatever you want to call them—Basques, Catalans, and so forth—but people have always moved around. They won't stay put! And that was the same thing in Mexico. We don't have a little reserve where we find Olmecs or [Totonacs] or Aztecs, Toltecs, Mayans. I soon found out that these people were always moving. So the Olmecs were found in the Gulf Coast and all of a sudden they show up in the Valley of Mexico three thousand years ago. Or the Mayans are in central Mexico, or the central Mexicans are in the highlands of Guatemala in the fifth century. So that these people go in—through one means or another, either through trade or conquest—end up imposing how *they* do things on the local people. And so this, in the art, is one of the most *fascinating* things that goes beyond influences. Because we tend to think of the generating center's model for art, in the generation of art. We tend to think of Florence in the fifteenth century or Rome in the sixteenth, Paris in the nineteenth, and . . .

PK: New York.

JQ: . . . and New York since World War II, and that the further away you are from that center, the less faint [more faint - J.Q.] those signals will be, so that you get all the way over to the provinces and you just hear these faint echoes of the generating center of a style. Well, in this case you have two full-fledged styles coming in contact, and then what comes out of that, whether it's imposed or of their own volition, you get some extraordinarily interesting results. And so that kind of thing, being a bilingual, bicultural person, brought me naturally into areas that were the result of similar confrontation or confluence, simply the coming together of two different ethnicities—two different art styles, for instance. And there are some significant dates in the history of pre-Columbian art where you find these very distinct art styles. The [Teotihuacanos], who established an empire thirty miles Northeast of Mexico City around the time of Christ, who built some *amazing* structures and paintings in their buildings, extended southward as far as Guatemala, so in the fifth century you find little Teotihuacan-type of structures in a place called [Kaminaljuyu], and then northward of there in a place called Tikal, which is one of the most *famous* Maya cities, you find these [Teotihuacanos]—or Mexicans as we call them in the field—in the fifth century. And then all of a sudden the Maya change because there are these people from outside, and all the art—the painting, the sculpture, and the architecture—have this influence, and then, within fifty years, they disappear. So we want

to know why these people were there, and so we study the visual remains of this contact. There is the one that is. . . . And, of course, this has only been known in the last thirty years—the extent of it, after extensive excavations at Tikal. The Kaminaljuyu—or suburbs of Guatemala City—were known as a result of excavations in the 1940s. The one that's been known from at least the time of the Conquest is when the Spaniards arrived in Yucatan and they found these Mexicans there—that is, Toltecs. They knew, because the Maya spoke of these Mexicans who had come in around five hundred years earlier. We call those Mexicans Toltecs. So we refer to them, particularly at Chichen Itza, as Maya-Toltec, because the two peoples come together. Now, the Spaniards were horrified at some of the things that they saw. Like there was a very strong phallic cult, where there were some really very interesting sculptures and this was. . . .

PK: This was Mayan? And Toltec? Or we don't know?

JQ: Well, the Mexicans brought it in, the phallic cults. And the thing that's interesting is that when the Spaniards as the conquerors were very disapproving—certainly the priests or friars—the Mayans, being human, would say, "It's not us. It was not us. We did not do such horrid things. It was the Mexicans who came in five hundred years ago who did these things." And, of course, the Mexicans in turn had gotten it in [Tula] from people from the Gulf Coast. We do know that these things did develop in certain areas of Meso-America. So that's an area where you find some fascinating things, and in 1975 a major Maya mural was found in a place called [Cacaxtla], which is just east of Mexico City, north of the city of Puebla, where you have a full-fledged Maya mural that just threw everything that we thought about ancient Mexico up in the air because the Mayans weren't supposed to be there. And so you have a Maya style deep in Mexican territory around the eighth century A.D., so that we are constantly seeing these groups coming together and the creation of really interesting bodies of work that compare to the kinds of murals that were done right after the Conquest that are part Spanish and they're part Indian. The Indian painters continue to make dragons, for instance—the so-called dragons—but instead of making them in the manner of the pre-Conquest configuration, they're full of acanthus leaves.

PK: [chuckles]

JQ: Well, they could only know about acanthus leaves through these picture books that the Spaniards or the priests, friars, brought over. So these are the things that fascinate me. The Conquest itself includes borderlands people. The young woman who is infamous in Mexican history today, Malinche or Malintzin, who helped Cortéz find out what was going on, was herself a borderlands person. Because she had been sold—or however the story is told of how she ended up in that area—she was an Aztec-speaking person—or Nahuatl, which is the language they speak—into a borderlands that was not Mexican nor Mayan, where people spoke Mayan and Aztec—or Nahuatl or a Nahuatl-type language. When the Spaniards came through there, after having picked up a Spaniard who had been shipwrecked in 1511 and had lived among the Maya for six or seven years—learned Mayan—so with him on board and Malinche on board. . . .

PK: Malinche!

JQ: . . . Malinche . . . she would tell [Aguilar] what the Aztecs were saying in Nahuatl, and then he would translate it. . . . I'm sorry, she would tell him in Mayan—since she knew that language—and then Aguilar, who knew Mayan and Spanish, told Cortéz. Had it not been for those borderlands people—Malinche, in particular—the Conquest would not have taken place as it did. Or as effectively or as quickly.

PK: They didn't feel any loyalty then to. . . .

JQ: Well, there was no such thing as Mexico. There were . . .

PK: These other _____.

JQ: . . . the Aztecs—or what we now call the Aztecs. They called themselves [Mechicas], from which we get [Mechico] or Mexico—or [Mejico, México] or Mexican. So it was these things that fascinated me, because I found a responsive chord in my experience, where all of these things began to come together, and so when we returned eight years later and I became aware of all those changes—and particularly the fact that artists of Mexican-American background were trying to find their roots in ancient Mexico and were calling themselves Chicanos—I thought, "Voilà! It's another borderlands group." They're operating within an American context, trying to deal with their own experience, their own background, for whatever reasons. And, of course, we know that it was the result of the turmoil of the sixties with the Civil Rights movement, the anti-Vietnam War movement, the women's movement, the Native American movement, and, of course, the Chicano movement. All of these groups that were aiming to get their share of the economic, educational, political pie in the U.S. Power. So it just seemed a natural to me. And so that was my interest in that. First, they kept using pre-Columbian, they kept using pre-Columbian language things, they were referring to Aztlán. I said, "Well, who *are* these guys? What are they doing? What is this?" So I began to look around and interview people, and I wrote my first paper on that. And that led to the first book on Mexican-American and Chicano art, published in 1973 [_____—Ed.].

PK: And that is perfect, because we'll break here and then come back to this second part of a story that seems absolutely logical and seamless—you know, how you got from pre-Columbian to all the work that you've done on the Chicano artists.

JQ: And, of course, because I was fascinated with pre-Columbian, I just continued with that.

[Break in taping]

PK: Continuing the interview with Jacinto Quirarte, this is Tape 3, Side A, and we're still on August 15, 1996, continuing with this first session. Jacinto, we broke for lunch at what seemed to me the perfect point, the perfect point, because we've been talking about your personal background, family background, educational experience, then going on in your early work in the field of pre-Columbian art, some of your teaching experience, but basically we have you still out of the country during that period of time, which you seem to think was probably crucial to your later work—that it gave a kind of experiential perspective that you brought to bear on the situation in the United States when you returned. And I think the one thing . . . we talked about Mexico quite a bit but we didn't really do much with your time in Caracas. So maybe we can start there.

JQ: Yes. As I mentioned before, I accepted a position with the Foreign Service in the summer of 1964, soon after my graduation from my doctoral orals, and then spent a few months in Washington going through orientation, basically learning how to deal with the problems that arise from living overseas. The experience was good in just the fact that we were able to get back to the U.S. to get a sense of what was going on and have first-hand experience to see the kinds of racial tensions that had been developing. In Washington, D.C., there was an absolutely enormous black population. We prepared ourselves for our departure for Caracas. We were in that country in October of that year, and we spent the following two years carrying out the contract that I had signed for two years. It was under the Cultural Affairs Office, and my job was to deal with the Venezuelan art community, so I began to establish liaison with artists, with museums, and other individuals involved in the arts. So this was perfect for the kind of thing that I was interested in.

And while there I met one of the leading architectural historians [_____—Ed.], who was very much interested in pre-Columbian art, and he introduced me. . . . Or I should say he invited me to give lectures at the National University in Caracas on pre-Columbian art and architecture.

At the same time, I was acquainting myself with the local art scene, meeting the leading artists, many of whom had studied in Paris, were known on the continent, were known nationally as well as throughout Latin America, and subsequently would be known in the U.S. as well. Among them was a man named Alejandro [Otero], who was part of what we called in the 1960s the Op Art movement. But given his experience as a Venezuelan and interest in the work of [_____—Ed.] [Vasarelli], he and Jesus Soto, who is also a widely known artist in that area, along with another Venezuelan named Cruz-Diez—all of whom resided in Venezuela—that I was introduced to yet another aspect of Latin America, and I found that they were fascinated with someone from Mexico because they didn't know any Mexicans. It's hard to believe that you [don't, know we] have thousands upon thousands and millions of Mexicans in the Midwest and the West Coast, the South, even in New York, and of course Mexico, but there weren't any in Venezuela, and they only knew about Mexicans through film. So it was truly a novel experience for them to hear someone speak Spanish with a Mexican accent. This became a wonderful experience, because it gave me an insight into the multi-faceted art and cultures of Latin America. And Caracas being a very wealthy city, attracted—perhaps even more than Mexico—numerous artists from all over South America, as well as Europe, because there were always political upheavals in all these Latin American countries, and every time there was a revolution or a coup, artists would come in by droves to Venezuela.

Among the things that I did was to organize a Pop Art show in the Spring of 1965, and for that exhibition we brought works down by the leading pop artists—[Andy—Ed.] Warhol, [Tom] [Wesselman], [Roy] Lichtenstein, [Claes] Oldenburg—although he didn't identify himself as an [Op, Pop] Artist. It was comprised of all of the leading figures, and we were able to get money from Phillip Morris International. I shouldn't mention the name, but in Latin America they're known as [Tabacalaira Nacional]. Which simply allowed us to bring Roy in, and he spent a week and I did simultaneous translations for him on television and in public meetings. We had people coming in from as far away as Bogota, Colombia—which is really next door—just to meet Roy Lichtenstein and to listen to him talk. So this was a wonderful experience for me as well as for Roy Lichtenstein, because for the first time I saw politics in the art area, because whenever anyone got up to ask a question it would turn into a speech. And when I tried to wade through all of the political statements I would only concentrate on the question and would translate that for Roy, and as soon as I did that everyone started screaming that I wasn't translating. Many of them, of course, knew English, and Roy was very excited because he had never seen anyone get so worked up over art. Certainly not in the U.S. We were so blasé that it didn't matter what artists did. And certainly that's when Claes Oldenburg was doing his storefront pieces and using the garish pigments on plaster works. There were the funk artists of the Bay area, there was [Alan—Ed.] Kaprow with his happenings. There were just a lot of things that were going on that the American public really didn't get exercised about. But in Latin America, art is a very serious business, and it is part and parcel of what it means to be a human being. And if they felt that art was not addressing the problems of life they were offended by it. So that was an experience that even living in Mexico had not provided for me, because I wasn't in that kind of public forum that my work for the American Embassy gave me.

But the part that became particularly pivotal in my career was my involvement with George Kubler, who, of course, was known hemispheric-wide as well as in Europe. Finding out through my new friend, [Gasparini]—[Graziano] Gasparini, who was an architect/historian, that Kubler would be coming through town, I said, "Well, we need to host him." I got some money to have him stay over, and, of course, the Venezuelans were wonderfully impressed with that. And we asked him to give a

lecture. Gasparini hosted him in a wonderful gathering of intellectuals in Caracas, and Kubler sat next to my wife and began to ask *her* what in the world we were doing in Caracas. Because he knew me through my work as a pre-Columbian student working on my doctorate and, of course, I had gotten the degree. And Sara said, "Well, Jacinto did finish his dissertation." Of course, George knew because I had sent him a copy of the dissertation and he had been very much impressed with it. And, as the conversation progressed, he wanted to know why in the world we didn't come back. And my wife said that it'd be wonderful if we could come back but there was no position. Thereupon, Kubler said, "Well, why doesn't he come up to take my classes? I will be on leave for the next academic year of 1966-67." And my wife got me my first teaching job, because I would never have ever talked myself up to Kubler in the way my wife did. We were certainly very excited, but I didn't really think much about it. I thought that he was being very nice, and within the next week after he had gone on to Peru and then returned to New Haven, he wrote to me with the contract—for a one-year contract. And, needless to say, I was really on my way because the leading figure in pre-Columbian studies had anointed me.

The last year we were there was truly exciting, in just working in preparation to return. And there was one other thing that had happened. At that time, in '64-'65, Yale University and the University of Texas in concert helped or financed a truly ground-breaking exhibition of Latin American art called *Art of Latin America Since Independence*. So this was the first truly important hemispheric-wide-focus exhibition put on in the U.S., with scholars from all over Latin America and Yale and Texas. And the two people involved were John Goodall, who was the chairman of the art department at U.T. Austin, and Todd Catlin, who was an old, old hand in Latin American studies or twentieth-century Latin American art studies at Syracuse. They had a number of conferences, etc., and when Goodall came through town I met him. I took him around to meet all the Latin American artists. So he was favorably impressed, but I had no idea that our paths would cross again. So when he found out that I was going to be a visiting professor at Yale he invited me and my wife to go through Austin on our way back through the States, where they'd hold a barbecue for us and put us up at a hotel and host us and hoped that we would like Austin and so forth. So we did, and my wife and I had an absolutely wonderful time because they put us up in the suite where we were jumping up and down in bed because it was so huge—it was Texas-size—that we were just jumping around with glee.

And so it was the beginning of a totally new experience. We went on to New Haven, and one of the first things we found [was—Ed.] that [Kubler], like a proud parent, had been talking about me to his colleagues, and since he was already in his fifties at the time, the younger faculty members were acting in a way that our children will act in a tolerant way. "We got so tired of Kubler walking around with that huge thesis or dissertation under his arm constantly saying, 'Now *this* is a dissertation'" that I thought, "Well, I'm home. I mean, this is wonderful that someone would think that highly of my work." And we made wonderful friends with Bob Herbert, who is a leading figure in nineteenth-century French art, Jules [Prown], the Americanist, and, of course, Kubler, who is a leading figure in these areas.

PK: So he was around; he was just on sabbatical not teaching?

JQ: He went to teach a number of seminars at Harvard, and I know he was up there for a semester. I don't know if he was there for a year. I was able to use his office, where all his files. . . . It was amazing. It was an *amazing* experience. So I felt that if I could teach in one of the preeminent universities in the United States, I could do anything. And so that was the kind of confidence-building experience that I needed. "If they can do it, I can do it."

So I started publishing from then on. I began to do that very seriously. I had already published a

ninety-page text on the art and architecture of two major Maya cities and several other smaller papers and . . . one other thing. I forget. But, anyway, those are the first things that I published. Important things, serious things that I feel very pleased about. And once there, with that experience of being back in the U.S. and, as I mentioned in other conversations, constantly being complimented on my English and, after explaining that I was from California, New Englanders just simply ignored that and continued to do so, so then I stopped explaining.

While on one of Goodall's many trips, he called me from New York, asked me if I was interested in coming to Texas, and I said, "Well, certainly we would consider that," and asked me what Yale was paying me and said, "Well, we'll pay you two G's more." And at that time two G's [two grand, \$2,000—Ed.] was a lot of money, so I said, "Yes, I'll come down."

I had failed to indicate that on our way to New Haven one of Kubler's best students, who was the only other pre-Columbianist at Tulane [University—Ed.] and whom I had met in the early sixties in Mexico City and who wrote the seminal work on Mexican manuscript painting, named Donald Robertson, had invited me to be chair at Tulane University, and I had stayed there for about a week on our way to New Haven interviewing with all of the faculty—I think there were about ten or twelve faculty members—and found after that experience that the last thing I needed that early in my career was to be a chairman. I was not experienced enough. I'd been gone too long. The last thing I needed was to get involved with that, so that when the Texas thing came through obviously I was more attracted to that.

So when I got to Austin I began to seriously get involved in my career as a pre-Columbianist, but it really wasn't too long after that that I realized that something else was going on in the country. And I began to get soundings on this Chicano movement, and I began to hear that there were artists who were talking about Chicano art. Well, I didn't know that any such thing existed. In fact, I'd never even heard of it. And, as it turned out, just about everyone else in the country had no knowledge of it. And as it turned out, another American corporation came into my life just as Phillip Morris International had helped finance the Pop Art show in Caracas, Humble Oil Company—which has since become Exxon—in Houston wanted to include an article on Mexican-American art. They had just. . . .

PK: What year was this now?

JQ: '67 or '68. I don't remember exactly. I would have to look at my records.

PK: Because you started in sixty. . . . You started at University. . . .

JQ: Let's see, I was at Yale in the fall of '66 through the spring of '67. So it was mainly the spring of '67. Then I got to Austin in summer of '67. So I had to have been there about a year. So it would have been about '68. A man who edited *The Humble Way* had had someone do an article on African-American art, which was called. . . . Not African-American. "Black art." Or "Black Artists." Or something like that. And so he wanted. . . . I'm sure that if he hadn't done one on Native American artists he probably would do one, and so he thought, "Well, we're going to have to have a Mexican-American artist," so it was obviously was a public relations thing. It would give them a good public image and it would be doing a good service to that community that [they] certainly should serve.

So it came, as a result of that assignment, that I began to look into it, and I wrote an article called "The Art of Mexican America," that appeared in a great number of Sunday supplements *all over* the Southwest. I began to get copies of Sunday supplements in San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco, all over Texas, and other parts of the country. So it received very wide dissemination. And shortly

after that the University of Texas Press asked me if I was interested in doing a book on Mexican-American artists. I don't remember the details, but Humble Oil may have been instrumental in that as well, because it had been so well received that they assisted in providing a subvention to defray part of the cost of publication.

So through that grant or contract I felt, "Well, maybe this is worth looking into." But if I had not had an interest in what I talked about before—the fact that they were using pre-Columbian references, that they were making references to the Mexican muralists, they were referring to the Aztecs. . . . I thought, "Well, I want to look at this." Which I did. I began to compile lists of artists. And it turned out that LBJ [President Lyndon Baines Johnson—Ed.], before he left office had asked his people to compile a list of artists. I may be simplifying here but I know it was LBJ's administration that was interested in putting together an exhibition of art that would go from one end of the U.S./Mexico border to the other—from Brownsville to San Diego, let's say. And they had done a preliminary list. So some unnamed bureaucrats in Washington—in goodness knows what agency—had compiled a list of about a hundred people, which I then was able to obtain as a start-up. And then I began to contact all of the museums, university departments, and galleries in the Southwest and other parts of the U.S. to ask them if they had works of art by Mexican-American artists—or Chicano artists. And I invariably received exactly the same answer. "There is no such thing. No, we don't have any such thing. There is no Mexican-American art, there is no Chicano art, there are no Chicano artists." And along the way I received lots of interesting replies. People would send me works by non-Mexican-American artists, but the subjects were Mexican-American, and so I would have to write and say, "Well, the fact that Peter Paul Rubens did some drawings of Africans is not African art. He was Flemish, and I don't need to go further. It has to be an artist of Mexican-American descent or background."

And so I wrote to all the artists and finally brought the list down to a manageable size, and in the interim I had obtained some grants from the Latin American Study Center at the University of Texas, Austin, to provide me with travel money. So in the summer of 1970 my wife and I traveled from one end of the Southwest to the other, through the Pacific Coast, and then up to New York where I interviewed artists. And so I had lengthy interviews with many of the artists that I later would include in a book that was published in 1973. So that was the beginning of my interest, but always parallel interest in pre-Columbian art as well as Mexican art.

PK: Now this project of the quest—the detective work tracking down these artists and interviewing them and so forth, which I hope you'll describe in a moment—but the impetus, if I understand this correctly, was, well, first of all, there was the article, "The Art of Mexican-America," which appeared in, again, the title?

JQ: *The Humble Way*. Which is a corporate publication.

PK: Humble Oil.

JQ: Exactly. That later became Exxon. And of course that's that. . . . What was it called under the old man [John D.—Ed.] Rockefeller? They had names for that. . . . That in California was Standard Oil. I'm not sure. It's the Rockefeller oil company that they called. . . .

PK: Chevron, Standard.

JQ: Yeah. I don't remember what the parent company was called, but the parent company eventually became known as Exxon.

PK: So that really started this, and then University of Texas Press contacted you suggesting the idea of a book.

JQ: Yes.

PK: Humble then comes in with some subvention or support for the necessary research? Augmented by. . . .

JQ: For publication costs.

PK: For publication.

JQ: They didn't provide any money to me at all.

PK: Oh, okay.

JQ: This was strictly university. . . .

PK: [How] to write the book.

JQ: Yes. It was the production costs.

PK: Okay, and again then the source of the funds for you to do your travel and research?

JQ: Was university-generated funds.

PK: Oh, okay.

JQ: The Institute of Latin American Studies gave me two grants, one in the summer of either '69 or '70 to help me travel—it was travel money—and that allowed me to fly to New York, spend a few days there interviewing Luis Jiménez and Michael [Ponce de Leon] and then an ersatz Mexican-American named. . . . Well, I won't mention his name

PK: [laughs] Well, why not?

JQ: . . . who palmed himself off as a Mexican-American, though, indeed, was a Puerto Rican. But he told me he had a grandmother from Veracruz, Mexico. Maybe he does. He's a Destructive artist. His works are in major collections in New York. And then I interviewed artists in San Antonio, in Austin, Dallas, Laredo, Del Rio, El Paso, Albuquerque, Phoenix, and then up and down California. My wife and I spent the entire summer doing the research, and I did most of the writing in the following year.

While I was putting the entire book together I had been directing some seminars on pre-Maya, post-Olmec art that in the field is called Izapan art, and I wrote a book on that during the same period, doing that research, and then the Institute gave me a grant to continue working on that. So I published both studies the same year. The pre-Columbian book was published by Dumbarton Oaks, which is part of Harvard, and the Robert Woods Bliss Collection in Washington D.C. in Georgetown [Dumbarton Oaks]. And my colleagues in Mexico became aware of the text because I had sent them a copy, and they said, "Oh, we want to publish it." So they published the Spanish version of *The Izapan-Style Art: Image and Idea*, I believe I called it.

So 1973 was a crucial year for me because my first two books appeared. *The Mexican-American Artists*, published by U.T. Press—which was a

ground-breaking work, no one had ever done anything like that—and *Izapan-Style Art* by Dumbarton Oaks and in Spanish by the National University of Mexico.

PK: Is that spelled I-x-a-p-a-n, or how do you spell "Ixapan?"

JQ: [Izapan]. It's named after a site that is on the Pacific slope. . . .

[Break in taping]

PK: Tape 3, Side B. On the Pacific slope?

JQ: Oh, on the Pacific slope of Mexico and Guatemala. It's right on the border on the Mexican side. And there are a number of other sites where these kinds of sculptures are found—on both sides of the border—in the states of Chiapas and Guatemala proper. And the people who produced these works developed a civilization sometime around five hundred years before Christ and a few years after, so it's a period of at least half a millennium. And they fit somewhere in between the Olmec, who are dated from around 1250 B.C. or 1500 B.C., through the era of Christ. So they are a transitional group of people. We don't know what they called themselves or what language they spoke. It's still a mystery as to whether they were related to the Olmec or whether they were pre-Maya or the earliest Maya. So there are a number of similarities, but they are a distinctive group, and throughout that decade and early eighties I published *numerous* important papers on the relationships between the Olmec, Izapan, and Maya. Again, that problem of the overlapping of different peoples that are related in some respects, but are ultimately different in language and in culture.

PK: You know, you said before, and I think it's probably worth emphasizing or reiterating again, that although we have this monolithic view of Mexico—pre-Columbian Mexico and right along the way—that that's far from the case.

JQ: Exactly.

PK: These were very different . . . at least, tribes, if not, I guess, whole cultures.

JQ: Yeah. We used to call them tribes. We came to realize that they were highly sophisticated entities—political entities—that they really did have what we would call kings or leaders, with a very complex societal breakdown of various parts of bureaucracies—architects, artists, painters, scribes, the workers. So it wasn't just a tribal, but an urban type of society. A very complex society. Because they could support populations of a hundred, two hundred thousand. So great production centers, for instance, of goods that they exported to other regions. So, anyway. . . .

PK: Let me just, if I may, ask a sort of second part just to be clear on this, in trying to visualize this pre-Columbian Mexico, by way of background for Mexico-U.S. Border culture and so forth in the twentieth century—or second half of the twentieth century. But you have these entities—political, economic, very distinct groups—but nonetheless there are certain shared—if I remember you saying so—shared. . . .

JQ: There's a thread that binds them. They are groups of people that exist within majority cultures, if we use twentieth century parlance.

PK: Okay.

JQ: In the way that our minorities, like the Chicano minority or Mexican-American or Hispano—or

Hispanic or Latino; they're all the same thing—operate within a larger majority culture. And so they take that which is essential for their survival, like language and many other things related to the culture, but they retain those things that they want, that makes them distinct. And this is what was going on in pre-Columbian Mexico, pre-conquest Mexico. There are Olmecs, there are Mayans, and they each interact but they retain their basic identity, and this flux over time is what fascinates me. And so, while someone looking in and looking at my work on Chicano art and then saying I'm doing a book or a monograph on sculpture that was produced two thousand years ago made by a people that no one ever heard of and that no one even knows what language they spoke is hard to imagine. But the thing that drew me to both is that they dealt with those characteristics that I have referred to repeatedly—and that is people who have been in a sense marginalized—or they're on the margins of the majority culture. And so the Izapans are sandwiched in between the Olmec, this incredible civilization, and the Maya on the other, that are separated by several centuries, and so the Izapans are in-between geographically and chronologically. Now. . . .

PK: When did you. . . . Did you right off the bat, like an epiphany. . . . Did you have an epiphany that said, "Wait a minute"? You know, looking here at the twentieth century in the U.S., having been working in Mexico and being down in Caracas, but concentrating on the pre-Columbian situation, was there a moment when you made that connection? Or did it grow through your research?

JQ: It grew. Because, initially, it was just my nature to be inquisitive. I have always been far too interested in ideas to dwell too long on any one of them—and always trying to draw parallels with phenomena. And when I began to look at the Chicano, it was a pretty prosaic beginning, or impetus, but as I delved into it I saw, "Well, this fits in with the kind of thing that I'm interested in. This is, in a sense, part of what I went through when I tried to become an artist." My entry into the art field was not in sync with my inclination or my personality since Abstract Expressionism was not part of who I was or what I hoped to be. It wasn't part of my experience and, in retrospect, I see that as something that is totally alien to my background—where concrete entities, recognizable images, from which one builds, that one experiences, rather than abstractions, was central to what I was about. And in looking back I realized that this grew out of the experience that Europeans had produced—first in the work of Wassily Kandinsky in his early work from 1910 on, where he created the first nonfigurative, nonobjective works—and that that combined with Surrealist ideas led American artists in the 1940s, with an infusion here and there of Mexican expressionism, into creation of work that we later called Abstract Expressionism, and some aspects were action. And then I realized that although we were being told that this was universally accepted art, because there was no specificity either in time or place, that obviously much of what was produced in New York had to do with the Jewish experience. And I believe that that has yet to be explored further, and maybe some people have looked into it, but it was something that we were not aware of—or at least we were not told—was central to Abstract Expressionism in New York City. When it was transplanted to San Francisco, we were given the mechanics of it, and we either swam with it or we sank. I happened to sink with it because it just didn't click with me. And it turns out that that kind of approach to art is something that went by the wayside, and we began to refer to in a rather pejorative way as Formalist art. And while artists at the time were saying, "There is no such thing as an American art; there is no such thing as French art, just as there. . . ." In fact, Jackson Pollock said, "There is no American or European mathematics, and so, by extension, there is no such thing as American art or European art." Which is a lot of baloney. All art is culture-bound and bound to its time and place. But because they were trying to justify a nonfigurative pictorial language, they had to say these things.

PK: Right, universality, yeah.

JQ: And so that is an incredible arrogance to say that "the only art is universal art—that which

applies to all times and all places—and anyone who is dumb enough to do what the regionalists did deserves to be ignored." In other words, that was the attitude in the 1950s, and the same was true of the Mexicans: "The Mexicans were too political. They're too specific about time and place." And the same thing was said about the Chicano artists. Well, had it not been for the women's movement in art and all those other movements, obviously this attitude would have remained the same. And, of course, we call that Post-Modernism, where we go beyond the notions that there is such a thing as universal art. That art grows out of one's experience, whether one is a woman or a man or a Chicano or an African-American, and one builds on what one knows. But at the time that I was doing these texts, I had a lot of hostility from my own colleagues in the art history establishment—in the U.S. as well as Mexico. The reasons may have been different. In the U.S., because all art historians at that time had been trained in a formalist art tradition, just could not fathom anyone being interested in what they considered simply not art. It was just political art—or political statements. And the Mexicans, on their side, ignored all of those people up here of Mexican descent who, through no fault of their own, had ended up on the other side of the border, and always considered of lower status, lower class, and people of no consequence. So when my colleagues saw that I was doing Chicano art, one of them even said to me—from Mexico—"Why are you bothering with those people? Why are you giving them that importance that they don't deserve?" So this was the kind of response I got. Or I would get a crass assessment. One of my colleagues, who is a pre-Columbianist, who focuses on pre-Columbian art at U.T. Austin, said when he saw my 1973 book, "You've got a gold mine there!" "I beg your pardon?" "Yes! You can just ride the train for nothing now. You can just go ahead and write all this stuff." And so he saw it as just a gravy train. He didn't see it. . . .

PK: A career move.

JQ: Yeah. He didn't see it for what I was hoping people would see it, and, of course, the artists I had interviewed were absolutely stupefied when they saw the book, because when I interviewed them they didn't think anything of it. They just thought that nothing would come of it. And so they were all surprised when. . . .

PK: How did you. . . . Let's trace this carefully in terms of. . . . And I know that actually in the introduction of the book some of this appears, but that was written some time ago and you've actually published through your institute . . .

JQ: Several other books on Chicano art.

PK: Yeah, it seems to me quite a few, looks like a pretty terrific resource. And so I realize that much of this information may appear in different ways there, but just for our purposes now I would like to trace this process, but maybe in an informal way. Not only the sequence of events and how it came about, but in a way perhaps revisiting your own experience and observations as you went along. I mean, you just said that when you started out on the project that the artists themselves—the Chicano artists whom you managed to locate, the concentrations in various places—and I want to hear about how you decided where to go and all—but that they were amazed by this attention, even though they had been making noise trying to attract attention, clearly. Well, here they were getting it from an established scholar. And their responses and, perhaps even in some cases, defensiveness at this new attention, wondering maybe about what lies behind it, would I think be of real interest. And it's something that you can [of course] to the extent you can remember and can talk about here, maybe uniquely in a situation like that.

JQ: It always seemed to depend on the age and posture of the artist. The older artists, who were in their sixties and some cases seventies—that is people that had begun their careers in the twenties

and thirties and continued on into the fifties—were very responsive, very enthusiastic, but they resented the fact that I was grouping them with Chicano artists, because they felt that "Chicano" was a . . .

PK: A militant . . .

JQ: . . . lower-class designation.

PK: Oh, lower class.

JQ: And, as I mentioned earlier in the interview, my first experience with the word was in a text I read that was published, I believe, in the teens—early in this century—and it was used to refer to unskilled Mexican workers. But I have explained in numerous texts that Chicano comes from a contraction of Mexicano—or [Mechicano], in the way that my name is contracted from Jacinto—it's Ha-chinto, or [Chinto]—and many other names, like Ignacio is [Na-cho] or [Na-cha]. Consuelo is [Che-lo], and Jesus is [Chuy]. So there was this "c-h" sound that one hears in Mexican Spanish speakers who perhaps don't have a good ear when they speak English, and they will confuse the sound in words that have a "c-h" sound or an "s-h" sound. And I remember in school some of my classmates saying ["Bu-ches"] for "bushes" or "Ay-cha" for "Asia."

PK: [chuckling] Yeah, [bach-es]. We don't need no [bah-ges]. [laughter]

JQ: Yeah, no bah-ges. [With exaggerated Mexican accent:] "I don't need no stinking bah-ges." And so I remember hearing that very early on and being fascinated by the sounds of language, and having studied the Aztec language for at least a year in Mexico, where I was able to do some translations of [Nahuatl], I found that there are at least a thousand words in Mexican-Spanish that come from that language. Some of them have gone into the universal language, like "chocolate" which is ["chocolatl"]. There is "tomato" which is ["tomatl"]. We didn't get ["aguacatl"], which is ["aguacate"]. Somehow we ended up calling that "avocado," which might be also an anglicized version of "awacatl." In Texas there are several places that are from Indian languages, like there's a place East of San Antonio called [Papalote], Texas. Which comes from ["Papalote"], which means "kite" or "butterfly." And the town where my family and I live is called ["Helotes,"] or ["Elotes"] which is Mexican-Spanish for "corn." So it is "Cornville."

So, Chicano comes from this propensity to contract and to use this wonderful sound—c-h sound or "ch" sound [pronounced as in "chicken"—Ed.]—that you really don't find in other Spanish-speaking countries—to the extent that you find it Mexican-Spanish. And so in the Chicano movement, you will find that the low-riders—for whatever reason—always, always use the "Cheh-vy" [pronounced throughout with hard "ch"—Ed.] rather than the Ford or the Dodge or the Chrysler or the Plymouth. They're equally available, but, no, it was the "Chevy." Not the "Chev-ro-let" [rhymes with "bracelet"—Ed.], but the "Chevy." Well, there's obviously a reason there. There's a love of that sound, even though there isn't anyone who might say, "Well, hmm, I doubt that." But when I gave a class on Chicano art in Santa Barbara, when I was a visiting prof there in '84, I had just completed the second series of studies on Chicano art that were published later that year, and when I talked about the "Chevy" and the use of Chicano—where it came from—the Chicano students understood—and they were from all over southern California—and the Anglo students didn't know about any of this and they wanted to know. And one Anglo student asked, "Wait. Why did they want to use the "Chevy"? And before I could answer one of my Chicano students asked her, in Spanish, saying, "Because they speak Spanish." "Porque habla Espanol." And the "Chevy" is Spanish as far as they're concerned. So it fits in with "Chicano," "Chevy" . . .

PK: So they appropriate, basically, the brand name in their. . . .

JQ: Which, of course, originally is a family named Chevrolet that was the earliest founders of the American automobile industry.

PK: And it's probably a . . . sounds like a French name, Chevrolet.

JQ: It is French. I believe it is a French name.

PK: [laughs]

JQ: So the "Chevy" is part of this whole appropriation process that I saw that was fascinating. And so I would talk to them about "Chicano" and why they did this. . . .

PK: Yeah, what about your interviews? I mean, you must have. . . . You know, here we're doing an oral history. I'm an oral historian. There has to be some consistency, sort of a set of questions, or certain things that you were looking for as you traveled around. You invested a lot of time . . .

JQ: Oh, yes.

PK: You didn't invest in a lot in equipment.

JQ: Oh, no.

PK: You told me that you had real low-end equipment.

JQ: Oh, yes. I had low-tech equipment.

PK: [chuckles] But when you started out, what were you looking for? Did you have some expectations of what you might find, or that you expected to find? How did that go? What did you. . . . You'd sit down with [Luis—Ed.] Jiménez. . . .

JQ: Well, I put together a number of questions that I wanted answers to. First, those that dealt with political matters. Others that dealt with historical matters. Those that dealt with sources. Their sense of where these came from and what they meant—and what the movement itself meant. What about the word "Chicano?" What is it you want. . . . What does it mean to you? How does that relate to *Mexican American*? And many of them told me they didn't want to be hyphenated, even though they knew that they were Mexican *and* American so in a sense it *was* descriptive. But that left out, in their view, the political aspects which they thought Chicano exemplified. They wanted to make a political statement, so they didn't care what Chicano meant to the middle class Mexican-American community, who thought of it in a negative way. They didn't want to be identified with Chicano. But the young militants used Chicano to make a political statement. A statement of identity. "This is who we are. We are Indian, we are Spanish, we are Mexican. But because we live in the U.S., we are not Mexican. We are in between the U.S. and Mexico, so we are Chicano. We are in-between." And so they felt that the word would exemplify where they were at that time and place. So I asked them about that and that was a wonderful. . . . That would make a study in itself. Then I focused on the sources and I got all kinds of responses, because the groups also would call themselves—either in reference to pre-Columbian names or with race-conscious names—"The New Race," for instance, ["La Nueva Raza"]—or "The New People" is what it means. ["Tlacuilo" (Tlahkwee-lo)], which means scribe-artist in Aztec. But then a group of artists in San Antonio who call themselves "Tlacuilo" soon found out nobody knew what in the world that meant. So then they called themselves ["Pintores de la Nueva Raza"], which means "Painters of the New People." And

then that didn't work, so then they decided to focus on a barrio term and then they became "Consafo," which means "liberation"—or one of its meanings can be "liberation."

PK: Now did. . . . I wasn't clear on this but our friend—your old friend, my new friend—Mel Casas, whom I interviewed yesterday, was he involved pretty much early on in using that term? I mean, it certainly came up in the interview and that, in San Antonio at any rate, he was. . . .

JQ: They formed themselves into a group just before I finished the writing which may have been around 1972. I have it in the book as to when they began to meet as Consafo and I think the younger militants in San Antonio, among them a young man named [Felipe] [Reyes], drafted Casas who was a gene[ration]—not generation, but at least ten years older than they are—or were at the time. Because they were really not much more than students at that point, and Mel Casas at that time was around forty, I believe. And I found that the West Coast artists had a greater sense of humor—in some cases. And, as you know, every organization chooses the best acronym—or uses acronyms that will also make a statement. A San Diego-based group called themselves "Chicano Artists. . . ." No. "The Congress. . . ." Well, anyway, I'll remember it.

PK: It's in here, in your article.

JQ: Yes, it's in my article. They came up with an acronym that was CACA—or CACA.

PK: [chuckles]

JQ: "The Congress of Chicano Artists in Aztlán"—it was something like that. [Congreso de Artistas Chicanos de Aztlán—Ed.]

PK: Yeah, yeah.

JQ: The sequence is not right, but it's that. Then they called themselves something else. So it was always with the intent to add a little picaresque quality to the name. In Los Angeles there was more a reference to the number of artists, like Los Four, Los Dos Streetscapers.

PK: Was that a reference to Tres Grandes, do you think?

JQ: I think so. I think it was easy. It was not very imaginative, frankly. Here they made a reference to the people in the group, and then "Los" would be not only to the article, "The Four" in Spanish, but the abbreviation for "Los Angeles," where they would. . . .

PK: Yeah, that's right.

JQ: In Chicano slang, San Antonio would be called "San Anto" and Los Angeles would be called "Los," and San Francisco would be ["San Fra" (Sahn Frah)]—I mean that kind of thing, as this wave of Aztecisms in the early seventies led to the use of Aztlán for all of the states in the Southwest.

PK: Now, that really is an Aztec word, is it not? Nahuatl?

JQ: Yes, Aztlán is the mythical place of origin for these people who call themselves [Mechicas], from whom we get the name of the entire country of Mexico. And Aztlán is where they said they were from. It was a place of the reeds, I believe. I don't remember exactly now. But it was in a mythical place in the north, which the Chicanos said is today's Southwest. Well, most people think it was in north central Mexico somewhere, and it was not up here. But for the purposes of mythmaking it doesn't matter, and so in the 1970s Texas became [Tejatzlán], Arizona became [Ariztlán], and

California [Califaztlán]. New Mexico didn't really have to do that. Aside from the fact that most of the Hispanics there didn't consider themselves Chicanos a number of other reasons. But, in spite of it, Mexico itself is a reference to the ancient past. Colorado seemed to have been out of it in that respect, because they could have called themselves [Coloradaztlán], but they didn't.

PK: What about the [break]?

JQ: So the actual makeup of the entire movement was made possible—given the artists' need for attention to make their art known and also to bring art to the people, hence the use of murals in the barrios—and this was made palpable—literally—and possible with the creation of cultural centers where they could have their art shown, the alternate spaces, the publications where their works could be discussed, and Chicano studies centers in universities.

[Break in taping]

PK: Continuing the interview with Quirarte, this is now Tape 4, Side A, and we were really starting to get into now with your description of the. . . .

[Interruption in taping]

PK: At any rate, you were talking about this initial project and some of the things that you began to observe and then record about the nature of the movement—the Chicano movement—but, more specifically, as is manifested within an art community.

JQ: Yes, what made it fascinating to me was their focus on the ancient past, and that I felt I was extremely well suited to analyze, because I was the only one in the community of Chicano artists and Chicano analysts, if I can put it that way, to deal with the pre-Columbian materials as well as the colonial and the modern. Because there were references to ancient Mexico and to modern Mexico, and I knew both intimately. As well as another area that they tended to ignore, but which had to be brought in because they made constant references to Our Lady of Guadalupe, which have been part of the colonial experience as well. So that was of particular interest to me.

And so Aztlán was a very important part of this identity reference, as was Our Lady of Guadalupe. And all the cultural centers as well as the artist groups always incorporated Aztlán or Guadalupe—or both. There was the Centro Cultural Aztlán in Chicago. There is a Centro Cultural Aztlán in San Antonio. There are Artistas Guadalupanos [de] Aztlán in New Mexico—that is, in Santa Fe, New Mexico. And so these two icons have to be understood in relation to notions of identity.

Now Our Lady of Guadalupe, of course, is a very well-known symbol of Mexican identity because she is the Virgin . . . or her manifestation that appeared miraculously on December twelfth of 1531 to an Indian . . . that went a long way toward not only the evangelization but the conquest of the Indians—beyond the physical conquest. Then they became truly Hispanicized as far as religion is concerned. Now they had their own manifestation of the Virgin Mary. So important did she become as a cult figure that the City of Mexico used her as its emblem, as all cities did at that time. And so she becomes identified with the city of Mexico because she appeared in a suburb of Mexico, at a place called el Tepeyac, which had been a pilgrimage site for the Indians before the conquest. So it was a natural crossover there. And everywhere that New Spaniards went throughout the area we now call Northern Mexico, as well as Texas, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona and California, there were images of Our Lady Guadalupe, particularly in places where we can still see her in San Antonio and Santa Fe. All the early churches were named after her or dedicated to her. Families in the Southwest until recently almost always had a Lupe, whether a boy or a girl child, for

Guadalupe.

PK: Named after her?

JQ: Yes, so it permeated the life of every Mexican family. To this day at the University of Texas at Austin, which is almost . . . or I should say, at one time used to be called "Gringolandia"—or what I thought is where "Gringolandia" started, since San Antonio culturally was where Latin America started. Austin is bounded on the western side by a street named Guadalupe. So it's Guadalupe Street. All the streets in cities founded from one end of the Southwest to the other had a Guadalupe Street. Well, this is totally alien to just about every non-Spanish-speaker in Texas and anyone else who comes to Texas, and so we know that street as "Guadaloop" [pronounced "Gwa-da-loop"—Ed.].

And we find then that Guadalupe has to be understood first before one can understand what is meant by Chicano or Mexican identity. And then one would not be surprised then to find Our Lady of Guadalupe represented on church facades, in devotional images, in altarpieces, and in murals in the barrio, and used in names of the artists' groups alongside "Aztlán," which would be a reference to the pre-Columbian past. So we find Guadalupe and Aztlán being really central to what was going on.

But the other thing was the political side. And one of the most militant groups is one headed by two artists who studied at the California School of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, named Estéban Villa and José Montoya. They are among the great pioneers in the field, and they have a wonderful sense of humor. When they started their group in the late sixties, they called it "la Mala efe," which is the acronym MALAF, which means "Mexican Liberation Art Front." [Mexican American Liberation Art Front—Ed.]. Typical political reference. And then they changed that to the RCAF, which was the . . .

PK: Royal. . . .

JQ: No, initially it meant "The Rebel Chicano Art Front." It became even more militant. So that when they exhibited their work they, of course, would use the acronym RCAF, and on one of those occasions when they were lecturing and showing their works, an uncomprehending Anglo from Canada asked them what that stood for. "Is that the Royal Canadian Air Force?" And Jose Montoya, I believe, said, "No. That's the Royal *Chicano* Air Force." And from then on they took to referring to the RCAF as the Royal Chicano Air Force, and they even built a plane of plywood which they included in some of their installations—it, of course, never took off—and they took to wearing World War I leather helmets with goggles. So it became part of the . . .

PK: [laughs] A performance piece, really.

JQ: . . . the performance.

PK: Yeah, right.

JQ: And so you have that side of the equation. So it was a very complex body of material that was *endlessly* fascinating. And I got to know almost all of the pioneers, because I was the first one to interview them and to know them through the years.

PK: Nobody else had done any research similar to this?

JQ: No. They didn't know each other.

PK: That's what I was wondering. Was it the _____.

JQ: But it was all going on at the same time, and when my book came out in May of 1973, the UT Press made it possible for me to have a book-signing in Albuquerque at the University of New Mexico. For some reason, we ended up there. I have no idea now what, how, or why that was done. And then we had another party, essentially, with exhibition, in Taos, where all of the New Mexico-based artists attended. Including Luis Jiménez who essentially was in New Mexico at the time. And then we had a similar event in San Antonio—a book-signing—and by then I was a dean. I had accepted a position as dean of the College of Fine Arts at this university in the summer of 1972—a year before my book came out. And so, as dean, I had access to more resources. I put together the first national exhibition of Chicano art in the country, to my knowledge, here in San Antonio at. . . .

PK: Here at the university?

JQ: No, we didn't have a campus then. We were operating out of temporary quarters, planning for the subsequent construction of this campus that now sits on 600 acres—and approximately 20,000 students. We were able to put together an exhibition and conference at Trinity University, which is a liberal arts college that is very expensive. It's an elitist university. Essentially, only wealthy families could send their children there. Now they have—like so many, even Ivy League schools—lots of scholarships for deserving minority students.

And it was on that occasion that we brought in as many of the artists as we could get. I was able to raise, I believe, about five thousand dollars to bring in Michael Ponce de Leon from New York, for instance. Octavio Medellin from Dallas, [Antonio] García from Corpus Christi, Luis Jiménez from El Paso, Mel Casas already lived here in San Antonio, Estéban Villa and José Montoya from Sacramento, Ernie [Palomino] from Fresno, and so forth. This was the first time that these men—and women—got together and got to know each other professionally, and from then on there were lifelong friendships. And we had a symposium. We taped it. Carmen Lomas Garza attended. She made some speeches and told all us oldtimers that if it hadn't been for her generation none of this would have happened; we were oldtimers. I was in my early forties then. As far as she was concerned we were Johnny-come-latelys, and she was very outspoken. She had evidently been involved with the school walkouts in [Robbstown], which is a very famous walkout in Texas, and evidently this was going on all over the Southwest—and, of course, it was part of everything that was going on, so it wasn't just the walkouts in Robbstown. There were the United Farm Workers' strikes, etc., etc., so that was very important.

And there was another crucial event that took place. I . . . Did you want to ask me a question?

PK: Well, I just wanted to make sure we know the year of this exhibition and that it was held at Trinity University.

JQ: Yes, it was November 11, 1973.

PK: Thanks. And with a symposium?

JQ: With a symposium. And it was really quite extraordinary. That was the first time that these issues were discussed by people in different parts of the country that had been explored up to a point in my book. But artists were able to expand on some of these observations.

PK: You were like a scholarly matchmaker. You traveled around like a pied piper, it seems to me . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . and because you were trying to pull a thread through the whole movement and understand what the connections were, what interests were shared and all that, that through you, as you moved from one to the other . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . they said, "Well, gee, I was just talking with Carmen Lomas Garza or Rupert García," and this presumably then reinforced. . . . Maybe they knew one another but only sort of.

JQ: Yeah, some of them knew each other. Like the California people knew each other.

PK: Yeah, yeah.

JQ: Like they knew Ernie, and Ernie knew José and Estéban. And some of the Texas people knew each other. We had people in their sixties and seventies, in the forties, in the thirties, so it was a wonderful mix. And also, what had happened a year before. . . . Six months after I became dean, I visited my former dean at the University of New Mexico, where I had been a visiting professor in the spring of 1971, when I was trying to recruit people, and he told me of an international council of fine arts deans that I should join. Since I had just become a dean I had no idea what deans did or what was involved. Then I found out there's a deans' council and, as I found out soon. . . .

PK: Identity. You had an identity.

JQ: My group. Another group I could belong to. I soon found out they were meeting in Mexico City, my old stomping grounds. And I attended that meeting in January of 1973. And for the first time, I was in the midst of all of these deans, almost all men. In fact, I think there was not one woman there. There may have been one woman dean. And I was certainly the only Hispanic or Chicano or Mexican-American dean, and I went along and I got in touch with many of my old friends—because, after all, this was only a few years after I had left Mexico. So I had maintained my contacts there—especially with my old school where I had taught at the University of the Americas. And while sitting way in the back in one of the sessions, I noticed that we had a group called "the Feds." This was the deputy director of the National Endowment which, at that time, was only about ten years old. Well, not even that. Eight years old. It was Michael [Straight], who was working under Nancy Hanks, and he had come down to tell them what was available to the deans—you know, what they could apply for and so forth. Somehow or other, the discussion turned to affirmative action and the lamentations of all of these white people over this problem of, "What are you going to do with these non-qualified browns and blacks and others?" that gave me an insight for the very first time to the upper echelons of the equivalent of the smoke-filled rooms, people who make policies and make decisions on the lives of people below them, the faculty ranks. And on the one hand, I was listening to my friends and reminiscing, and on the other my ear was keyed in to what was being discussed. And I realized that the minorities they were referring to were the minority [to] which I belong, and first we became the famous "they" and then "the problem." "They are the problem. After all, they're not qualified and what can we do? What are we going to do?" Of course, we're still dealing with that. And then we became "it." I mean, we were objects, and then I just simply could not stand it any more. I had not ever made a speech in my life—I mean, political speech—and I got up to be recognized, and my friend said that I was so furious that my hand was shaking.

PK: Oh, I'm sure.

JQ: I was just livid. I said, "I don't know what is wrong with you people. You continually refer to "the problem of not finding qualified people to hire," and I have just published a book on Mexican-

American artists—I guess it hadn't come out; it was going to come out—"I've just written a book on artists. I have talked to artists in New York City from Texas to California, and let me tell you that there are dozens upon dozens of artists who are university-trained"—and many of them were—"who would be more than qualified to fill these positions that you say go unfilled and that affirmative action is going to put you into an *unbelievably* awful bind, blah-blah-blah." And I'm carrying on like this. Finally, I just let it all out and I just sit down and I'm still seething and my friend tries to calm me down, which I do, and after the session a lot of these people began to come around and they wanted to know who I am and they want my card, which I gave them.

PK: [laughs] Ah, good move!

JQ: Yeah and, at that point, Michael Straight comes along and says, "We need you in Washington. Let's have lunch," and he wanted to know who I was and he said, "I want you to come up and talk to us. We need you at the Endowment." So I had to be up there. . . . I think the CAA [College Art Association?—Ed.] meetings were being held in New York that year. I can't remember exactly if that was when I went up there or not, but I was in New York the following month, because this was January of '73. In February I was in New York, and in the spring I must have been somewhere else—I guess, Washington. And so I stopped off and I went to see Michael and he took me out to lunch with *all* the program heads of the Endowment. He said, "I want you to meet this man. We need him. We need his counsel. You need to know him so that he can advise us as to what we need to do to bring underserved constituencies into the Endowment."

And in a way it was a blessing, but in another way it was a curse—because it drew me more and more into the Washington sphere and to the point that it almost consumed me toward the end of the decade. Initially, it worked out very well, because I served for two years on the special projects panel. And I was able to help in getting proposals funded from different parts of the country, given the contacts I had made. And so I made those inroads, and also began to serve on a number of panels with the National Endowment for the Humanities, so my contact with Washington continued to expand. The next thing I knew, I was on the Labor Department's panel on Affirmative Action, comprised of a number of university presidents, among them [_____]—Ed.] [Bok] of Harvard, [_____]—Ed.] Fleming of Michigan, I believe, Father [Hessberg] of Notre Dame. That was pretty heady company. And a number of other people. So I'm sitting with these people talking about affirmative action. All because of that dumb speech I'd made in Mexico City. I needed that like I needed a hole in the head. I didn't need that. But I didn't know how to say, "No."

And within the same period, he asked me to be on—actually, before that—he asked me to be on the American Bicentennial Administration, which met from one end of the country to the other to determine how best the U.S. should celebrate its two-hundredth anniversary. And there I met people like James Michener. . . . Oh, a number of famous people. The man who wrote *Roots*?

PK: [Alex—Ed.] Haley.

JQ: Yeah, Haley, who was talking about a book he had just written, and it turned out it was *Roots*. Our liaison officer in Washington was the man who later married Elizabeth Taylor, John Warner, I guess his name is, the Republican—who had married a Mellon, I believe, so he was known as Warner-Mellon by people in the city. A number of widows. Betty Shabazz, the widow of Malcolm X, was on it. There was Madame [Chenault], the Flying Tiger lady, that I didn't know was even still alive. She must have been a girl when she married Chenault during World War Two.

So it was that kind of view of a much broader community that, essentially, broadened further my horizons. But I didn't need that either. I mean, that was neither here nor there, really, in terms of my

profession. And by the time we did our recommendations Nixon was out. Because we were named under Nixon and then Henry. . . . Oof, Henry. The other Ford—Gerry Ford—came in. The Bicentennial came and went, and then I was on the Affirmative Action. We sent in those recommendations and I don't know what became of. . . . Oh! Jimmy Carter was elected. When he came in, one of the first things he did was to do away with *all* of the committees that had been formed during the previous administration, of which one was ours. And so everything we did was worthless. I mean, it didn't mean anything. So that was a waste of time.

But I didn't learn my lesson, because then Michael Straight got me on a task force that dealt with higher education and the arts, where I met a lot of people across the country in the arts. It had to do with the education of the artist. But that wasn't too taxing. The thing that really broke my back professionally was the [task force on Hispanic art, Task Force on Hispanic Art]. And he asked me to head that task force in the late seventies, and I worked on that for about three years. And that's when I brought in many of the people that I had met the first time around when I did research on that book—Carmen Lomas Garza, Luis Jiménez, Judy Baca, and a number of other people. And that was straight out-and-out politics. We were supposed to meet in the time-worn tradition in Washington to determine what was best for the country. And given my experience with the Bicentennial and other experiences, I thought the best way to deal with this would be to go into the community to find out what *they* thought we needed to do. So we met in all the major centers where Hispanics live. We met in San Antonio first, then Los Angeles. . . . No, Tucson, Los Angeles, Denver, Chicago, New York, Miami, San Juan. It seemed like we were always on the road—with a twenty-five member task force—and the politics in the whole process was phenomenal. Now because the Endowment wanted to save money, I foolishly volunteered to administer the funds through our university, which meant that it was a university-based operation which brought prestige to us—I thought—but my bosses really were not impressed, unfortunately.

PK: Not impressed?

JQ: No. They weren't.

PK: [laughs]

JQ: And, more importantly, it meant that because it was administered through the university, I wasn't getting any money for it.

PK: And did you have a full teaching load at that time?

JQ: I had a full administrative load as the dean of the college . . .

PK: Dean, right.

JQ: . . . *and* I periodically taught a course, just to keep my hand in.

PK: And what about your institute [Institute for _____—Ed.]?

JQ: I had an administrator running that, but I oversaw that. And I had a staff of about five people.

PK: Because you haven't even mentioned that yet, but that's going on at the same time, right? [chuckles]

JQ: Yes. And all through this period I'm writing very important papers in pre-Columbian art—on Izapa and on Maya painting. I did most of the first major papers on Maya vase painting, that

continue to stand in the field. For instance, that exhibition that was put on at the De Young Museum in 1984 with a small catalog of Maya polychrome vases includes a seminal paper I wrote in 1978 on one of the key pieces in that exhibition—that I had published in 1978, I believe. All during this period that I'm doing this—and I'm giving papers in Mexico, I attended the meetings in Paris where I gave several papers, and I attended a ten-day international conference at Cambridge, and so I'm maintaining this very . . .

PK: God, it's exhausting just to hear.

JQ: . . . heavy professional life, and then I'm dealing with all of these people on the task force who would drive anybody up the wall.

PK: Well, why don't you talk about that a little bit, about just what . . . You mentioned the political aspect of it. I mean, one observation I'm making—you can respond to this—is that, interestingly enough, because you conducted your research and published this book, made contact with these various people, they then were drawn into national prominence and were empowered politically . . .

JQ: Yes, yes. And they also. . . .

PK: . . . and you invited them onto the. . . .

JQ: Yes, and they were all being paid as consultants on a daily basis for really not doing anything but being there and, in many cases, having a party. It just gave them travel money and they got to see each other.

[Break in taping]

PK: Continuing the interview, this is Tape 4, Side B, final side [for this session—Ed.].

JQ: We wrote a very lengthy set of recommendations on ways that the Hispanic arts could be strengthened. These were very specific, given the lengthy open hearings we held in all the cities mentioned before, so that we could have a statewide view—or I should say, national view. And there was so much internal fighting. . . . By the way, we also had to deal with those constituencies that felt they were left out—like the people from Colorado. We didn't have any members from up there. And so we had regional meetings that I had to attend with a skeleton group, with people like Lomas Garza who was always extremely involved. She was always committed, one of the most hard-working members of the task force. Very valuable. And a few others.

But changes in the national scene overtook us. There was so much delay, so much bickering. . . . Because I had to periodically give reports to the National Endowment for the Arts, I would go before the council—that is, of course, comprised of very well-known people like Clint Eastwood, among many others. There are opera singers, composers, movie actors, etc. In other words, national figures. Theodore Bikel. All of them very responsive to what we were trying to do. And so I'm giving these reports, and because of all the delays *none* of this ever came to pass because Carter lost the election. Reagan came in. Not only did we not get funded, he wanted to get rid of the whole endowment. As we all know.

PK: Yeah.

JQ: So that's when I became *totally* divorced from all of this and, although I received invitations, I just refused to get involved. There had been so much wasted time, there was so much valuable

time, that I just simply refused to get involved.

PK: Well, did you see through your period and then just said, "Okay, that's it," or did you actually say, "Enough is enough"?

JQ: I did not become involved with any further panel participation. I did do a few things with the National Endowment for the Humanities. I had always served on a panel that dealt with research grants, and I remember going through the extraordinary amount of work that you have to do—as all panelists do when they review all of the proposals that hard-working scholars put together—and then making recommendations, and then meeting with the new director of the endowment—since Reagan was the new president—of the Humanities. Because I knew the directors of both endowments very well, and I got along real well with those appointed by Democrats. But when I went up for what turned out to be my last appointment, [William—Ed.] Bennett had been appointed. This extreme rightist, actually. He's still _____

PK: He was after Nancy Hanks, right?

JQ: Well, actually, Nancy Hanks had been the director of the National Endowment for the Arts.

PK: Right, right. Oh, you're just talking about the NEH now?

JQ: H. After the task force ran its course. . . . Actually, Livingston [Biddle] became the head of the endowment during the time of the task force, although I had initially been involved. . . . I think Michael Straight was still deputy. He never wanted to be the director. Of course, he's part of the Whitney. . . .

PK: Smart.

JQ: He's the [_____—Ed.] Whitney family. He comes from extreme wealth.

PK: He doesn't need the job.

JQ: *Prodigious* wealth. [laughs] So, the last panel I worked on ended up being when Bennett was chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. And, after sitting down with him, and his arrogance and pomposity was so off-turning that I thought, "Never again will I serve in anything having to do with the federal government. It's a waste of time. I have *more* than paid my dues. I have spent almost ten years of my life doing this stuff. And for what?" And then all of these people, I find out now—or in recent years—that all of these Hispanic—or Chicanos—thought that I was doing a lot of this stuff for self-aggrandizement. I didn't get *anything* out of it. Except losing valuable time that I could have spent on my scholarly work. One of the things that I remember most clearly was Bennett saying that his goal was to spend as *little* of the money that was allotted to the endowment as possible.

PK: On anything? Or on individual art?

JQ: Returning as much of the budget back to the general fund or whatever it was, that I thought, "Yes, these people were put into these agencies to destroy them." And, of course, Reaganites made no pretense of doing anything *but* that. They wanted to destroy as many of the agencies that they felt were unnecessary. Well, you remember that he even wanted to change Social Security, but, of course, there was just such an *incredible* outcry . . .

PK: [I would say. There always is.]

JQ: . . . that even he had to back off. But who was going to scream about the humanities endowment? Or the Arts endowment? And what have we had since then? Wives of important people. Mrs. Cheney became head of the endowment in the later eighties—the wife of Mr. Cheney, who is from where?

PK: Dick Cheney?

JQ: Dick Cheney, yes. He was the Department of Defense, wasn't he?

PK: Yeah, Secretary of Defense.

JQ: Anyway, I mean, that's something I want to do *nothing* with. And in the meantime, I had been appointed as one of the senior fellows, in 1978, of the Dumbarton Oaks which is part of Harvard University. So I was reaching the points in my career that I felt were truly important, where I could make a difference in the pre-Columbian field, determining what areas should be explored in truly important conferences that will live beyond us. And during my three years' service on that major committee—because we recommended who would get fellowships and scholarly proposals, what conferences would be held, because that would make or break somebody's career. They could have their papers presented and then published by this prestigious center for pre-Columbian studies. And I and two other colleagues, one of whom is deceased and the other is retired from UCLA, the other from Tulane—dear old friend, Donald Robertson from Tulane—and . . .

PK: Yeah, you mentioned him earlier.

JQ: . . . who had tried to . . .

PK: Mayan painting.

JQ: Yeah, Mixtec. Actually, manuscripts. Mexican manuscripts. Henry [Nicholson], who is the leading Aztec specialist in the U.S. Anyway, the three of us served on the board. George Kubler was on it. Gordon [Willey], who is his equivalent at Harvard. Tanya [Tatiana Proskouriakoff] was on it. One of the leading glyphics persons, who had been a codebreaker in World War II, [_____]—Ed.] [Floyd Lounsbury], who made it possible for much of the decipherment that came later of Maya glyphs. So these were top people. And so when we were looking for a new administrator, it turned out that one of my assistants [_____]—Ed.] was perfect for that position, and she went on to have a very distinguished career in that position throughout the eighties.

So I wrapped up my service at Dumbarton Oaks in '81. For all intents and purposes, I wrapped up anything having to do with Chicano-area politics. I finished those two books in 1984, and then in 1986 I was asked to do something having to do with "identity" at the International Congress of the History of Art that was held in Washington, D.C., so I wrote a paper that I showed you, focusing on identity in Mexican and Chicano art. And have since then done a number of papers. I helped organize a ground-breaking exhibition called *The Latin-American Spirit: Art and Artists of Latin America and the U.S. 1920-1970*. We put that together at the Bronx Museum of the Arts. It traveled. . . . I think it opened in 1990. A major catalog came of that. It traveled to El Paso and then San Diego.

I next worked on perhaps *the* most important exhibition of Chicano art, put on by people at the Wight Gallery at UCLA that eventually became known as *CARA*, Chicano Art, Resistance, and Affirmation, where all of the people who had ever had *anything* to do with Chicano art came together. It was a frightening experience because I had had run-ins with just about everybody there

through misunderstandings or one way or another. Either professional rivalries or disagreements—ideological disagreements—so that I had burnout, and I actually bailed out. I didn't want to have anything to do with any of that, but they coaxed me to come back and do a history of Chicano art as seen in exhibitions, which I believe is one of the strong articles in the exhibition.

Then, in the late eighties, I became involved with another national exhibition put on by the Mexican Museum in Chicago with Amalia Mesa Bains, that, after lengthy discussions over a number of months turning into about a year, numerous meetings, we came up with the title, *The Art of the Other Mexico*, that we wanted to go beyond just Chicano artists. We wanted to deal with those artists that were from Mexico or in some way related to Mexico that didn't necessarily have Chicano points of reference. And we had at least three different sub-themes: the family, the afterlife, and the land. And so we grouped the artists under that. But from the time that we wrapped up our work of planning and organization with the administrators of the Mexican Museum and the time that Amalia Mesa Bains and I wrote our required texts, there was a falling out. I turned my paper in about a month after it was due. It was due in September of . . . early nineties. I forget exactly what year that was. And by then I actually had to Fed Ex my paper to the director and his curator at the [Maria Christina] in Mexico City because they were there.

PK: Our hotel.

JQ: Yes. They were there attending some kind of conference or doing some work in Mexico, and they then turned over my text—which was supposed to be the history of the Mexican in the U.S., how they ended up in different parts of the U.S. . . . it was a standard text, essentially. And Amalia Mesa Bains was supposed to deal with the sub-themes of the exhibition. I gathered that by the end of the year Amalia Mesa Bains had not turned in her text, because she was far too busy and finally turned it in early in the year, the following year. And by then I was already dealing with the copy editor, who had asked me numerous questions as to what part of this was this and that. The usual. Because I've done numerous such jobs, since my vita runs into thirteen pages of bibliography, almost, of numerous publications in both areas. So I had experience in that. And by that point it was routine so by the spring I hadn't heard anything from them and I either called the director or he got on the phone and I wanted to know what had happened and "Where are we with regard to the project? Are we moving along?" And he informed me that he wasn't going to use the text. At that point, I thought it was so unprofessional of anyone—whether it's the Mexican Museum or the Metropolitan or anywhere else. I mention the Metropolitan, because I had just done a lengthy text for this extraordinary exhibition that opened at the Metropolitan called *Splendors of Mexico: Three Thousand Years of Mexican Art*, and they had asked me to do all the texts on the eighteen major works by Diego Rivera and some of the other moderns who were included in the exhibition. So that I felt that if I was good enough for the Metropolitan, and a routine catalog like that, and I had published in just about every major press at Harvard, the University of New Mexico, Tulane, University of Texas, University of California, that I could publish a crummy little catalog with this barrio . . .

PK: [laughs]

JQ: . . . museum center called the Mexican Museum. And so I was *horrified* when he said that he wasn't going to use it.

PK: What was the reason?

JQ: Especially when he said that if he put the text in it wouldn't give him enough space—or enough money—to do the reproductions. I said, "You just need to stop bullshitting me. You just need to tell

me why you're not including this." "No, no, we're not going to . . . if we do that we won't have room for the reproductions." And I said, "Look, the exhibition itself is what is important, and so is the catalog. And a catalog is not just a lot of glossy reproductions. What lives beyond the life of an exhibition is the text. *That's* what people are going to look at down the line *along* with the art. If you don't have a text that tells you where these things come from it's meaningless, no matter how glossy they are." "Well, it's something that you've already done already, so all anyone would have to do is just go back through your books and read that." "Yes, but this is this and those are those. That doesn't make any sense."

PK: Do you think they were trying to. . . Did he 'fess up to what they were doing with Amalia's contribution?

JQ: It could be. But I think, basically, he just didn't like it.

PK: Now hers was to be in it?

JQ: Oh yes, it *was* in it. They did include hers.

PK: Hers was to be included?

JQ: Oh yes. And that I didn't care, whether that was in it or not. What I cared about was the *reason* he gave. I actually had no quarrel with anyone saying, "Well, this isn't good enough," or, "This doesn't fit what we want." But this was a charade, because it had been turned in in the fall of the previous year, I had gone through the copyediting, and here we are in March or April, and then he tells me he's not going to use it. I was more offended by the unprofessional way in which this was done than anything else. I really didn't care whether he liked it or not. I just hated the unprofessional way in which it was done.

PK: Was there any reason that there could be a political base for this?

JQ: Yes, it could be.

PK: You know, they were in Amalia's camp?

JQ: It could be.

PK: [With, In] which everything gets identity-politicized and maybe you were taking a more straight approach, I don't know.

JQ: Yeah. Well, mine was more scholarly and more objective, let's say. I had no ideological. . . .

PK: Maybe that's the problem.

JQ: Yes. Absolutely, yes. For what they may have wanted. But, to me, those are topical things and those come and go and a generation down the line that will be meaningless. It'll be a clinical study for future generations. Not that that kind of thing would last. Sometimes it does, sometimes it doesn't.

The next thing I know is that he says, "But we want to use your name in the. . . ." And I said, "No, the hell you will. If you don't want my text, you pay me for the work that you commissioned the work for, but there's nothing in the contract that says that you have to use my name. You're not going to use my name, because if my colleagues see that and they see the reproductions and the Amalia

Mesa Bains text, that'll make things even worse. They're going to see my name and they'll say, "Well, where's his contribution? What's he doing here?" "Oh no, you have to." "No, you're not. If you do, I'll sue you." I was furious. And the next thing I knew, over the next several days, I'm getting calls from other members of the center. There's a young woman who works for the city and is a political appointee and is trying to convince me that "This is important for the artists and that you must do this." And I said, "The exhibition is important enough for the artists, and you're not going to tell me that I need to do any homage to *any* artist, that I have more than paid my dues in national, as well as state and local, service. So don't you dare use my name." And that was the last of it, so . . .

PK: Why did they want to use your name then? Just to . . . ?

JQ: To paper over things, in case they . . . See, they must have used my name to get money.

PK: Yeah, yeah.

JQ: So how are they going to explain having paid me as a consultant, or doing . . .

PK: Was it any wonder that that museum collapsed? Or maybe it's going to . . . we hope it will revive but . . .

JQ: I have no idea and I don't care. That's what's wrong with so much of what happened in the movement: A lack of professionalism. A lack of training, a lack of professionalism, a lack of maturity. The director, to my knowledge, really doesn't have any training in any museum. He may. I doubt it, given his very young age.

PK: What? The new one, you mean?

JQ: Well, I don't know if there's a new one. There's a . . .

PK: In San Francisco?

JQ: No, no, no. This is the one in Chicago.

PK: Okay, so I'm mixed up. All right.

JQ: It's Chicago. It's called the Mexican Center Museum. [Mexican Fine Art Museum—Ed.]

PK: Okay.

JQ: He's not an art person, to begin with. He's a political activist, evidently. But here I have someone who really doesn't know about these matters making a decision that affects me, that was the final blow, really.

PK: Um-hmm. So at that point, you just said, "Enough."

JQ: Oh, yes.

PK: Well, you know your description of your whole experience in this area in which you've really done so much . . . And I think it's coming around. I mean, people are certainly acknowledging the role that you played, because, as we've said, it's become now . . . basically, it's become history . . .

JQ: Yeah.

PK: . . . and it exists as something to be studied, and many of the original participants have actually calmed down a bit and seem to be more mellowed. And actually it moved on to other things.

JQ: They've matured.

PK: And many of them have actually, as we were saying the other evening, mainstreaming with their work. You know, Mel [Casas—Ed.] agreed to that notion, as well, and Margarita Nieto, in talking about this—those who've watched it over the years.

JQ: Yeah.

PK: But what really struck me, and you told me some horror stories, frankly, about your experience simply trying to do a piece of work—a straight-forward piece of work—to pay some attention to these Chicano artists.

JQ: Yes, and I haven't even given you the details of what went on in the task force. Because there was a man named Gordon [Braithwaite], an African-American who did everything he could to undermine the task force even before it got started. He wanted to name someone with whom he could have control. And this was supposed to be essentially Hispanic. It had *nothing* to do with African-American concerns. So he made sure that the New Yorkers who got on were African-American, and, of course, they were African-Puerto Ricans and so I had that mess to deal with. He was trying to put in a militant Puerto Rican woman, who was brought in to attack me in a frontal way at the very first meeting—that I didn't have the fire and I didn't have the experience of being out in the streets and demonstrating. And, actually, at that point if I had just said . . .

PK: "To hell with this."

JQ: Yes. I would have saved myself a *lot of trouble*. But, unfortunately, I was furious that I was being forced out over such a petty power move. Because there was no power in that. I was motivated by the fact that I thought something could really be done to strengthen those arts, not to put myself into the position where "I'm going to have this power." There was none. And that was never a part of it. And I think that that's one of the reasons that Michael Straight felt that I could make a contribution.

So that was a running battle. But we came out with an incredible set of recommendations, some of which were implemented. Some of the people. . . .

PK: So there was some value in _____.

JQ: Oh yes, and it was tremendous for the careers of some of the people. They became nationally known. Judy Baca went on to serve on the national level. Luis Jiménez, he's been at the White House twice now, at least. Some of the other artists also gained national recognition as a result of that. I was never interested in that. I already had the kind of recognition that I wanted in scholarly circles.

PK: Well, this is fundamentally, I agree, to call it for what it is, that in this forum, in this arena, in this venue, the Chicano art movement is a highly political animal, and the difficulty, it seems to me—and I'm wondering how you . . . you've observed it so much more closely than I—to try to keep these things straight and in balance, say, "What are we up to now? What are we talking about now?"

JQ: Yeah.

PK: Because I know enough about the situation, or have heard from others who were involved . . .

JQ: Yeah.

PK: . . . that the infighting was actually terrific, and it gets smaller and smaller and narrower and narrower and arguing over words and who appears to be well-positioned and _____ "Who speaks for the group, who speaks for the people?"

JQ: Yes, yes.

PK: So, presumably, from the time you started your research in that project you were running up against this kind of thing.

JQ: Yes. It's been that way. It was that way all along and, believe it or not, in the late seventies I actually was at the center of a movement to organize all the art historians who specialize in pre-Columbian, colonial, and modern art of Latin America and managed to create an association for Latin American art in 1978 at the CAA [College Art Association—Ed.] meetings. '78 or '79. '79. February of '79, when we met in Washington. But we created the Association for Latin American Art Historians. I served as its first president. I got the thing off the ground. It's still going. But not before there were different factions that fought against my being its first president because they felt that I was there as a power grab. I wasn't interested in that. I had felt that there was a need to bring these people together and to set up a mechanism that would provide a network for people, whether they were in the Northeast or the Southeast or the West, to get together every year during the CAA and have meetings that focused on research in colonial art, pre-Columbian art, modern art, etc. So I did that for a couple of years and then finally left it in disgust because it was the same kind of bickering. So by the time I got to Santa Barbara in 1984 I was up to here with the art historians, who didn't know the kinds of problems I was having with the Chicanos. The Chicanos didn't know what I was going through with the art historians.

PK: _____ [ever].

JQ: And one of the things that came out of the ALAAH was my effort to publish the papers that were presented every year on a mini scale. It wouldn't be like Dumbarton Oaks. And we used the dues and then the monies that I had in my center and I got a copy editor. We did all the papers, we copyedited, we got the illustrations, and at that point the bottom fell out of the task force, the bottom fell out of my research center because our university president decided we didn't need that—I got all the funding cut out from under me—and at that point I thought, "What am I doing? Every. . . ."

[Session 2]

PK: Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, a continuing interview with Jacinto Quirarte. This is session two, being recorded at Helotes, Texas, which is a suburb of San Antonio—Jacinto's home. It's August 16th, 1996, and, as was the case yesterday, the interviewer for the Archives is Paul Karlstrom.

Jacinto, we did four hours yesterday—which is pretty good, pretty good. And then we kept on talking, driving home and so forth from the university, and actually then touched on some topics that I feel really should be included here in the interview by way of kind of wrapping up.

[Interruption in taping]

PK: Anyway, to pick up on this idea of wrapping up. We were somewhat abruptly cut off in our last session and you had been talking about some of your experiences that, frankly, were frustrating, given the commitment you had made to the study of Chicano art and the movement and, I guess, behavior . . . individuals, but more than that I think attitudes that perhaps you ran into along the way that must have been a pretty big disappointment, considering how you had shifted . . . what you had invested, in terms of your own career, sort of redirecting a little bit, and then how that was viewed and received. And this has to do, just to give you the cue based on our conversation then driving home, was the whole political dimension in this kind of endeavor, and where scholarship and art and politics all come together, and clearly the Chicano phenomenon is very much a good example of that. And so I basically wondered what, oh, sort of reflective comments you may have on that.

JQ: The thing that comes to mind immediately is the fact that this is not unique to the Chicano field. Whenever you have people with strong personalities, with strong commitments to art or to the study of it, you're going to find conflict. And it's not so much the conflict but how each reads the other's motivations that will determine whether you're going to have a rupture or a break in professional or personal relationships. And I think that that's what happened here. I am reminded of the numerous parallels in the art field, the field of archaeology. But I think only one example would be sufficient to point out the problems, and that is the related area of Mexican muralism. There were tremendous antipathies between some of the artists as well as those who studied Mexican art of the 1920s through the thirties. And some of this came to the surface when the Museum of Modern Art organized an exhibition that was presented in 1940 that focused on 2,000 years of Mexican art, going all the way up to the twentieth century—and, that is, including the Mexican muralists. Well, by then a good fifteen years had elapsed from the time that the artist has gone through the gestation period, the florescence of it, and then the settling in, the first masterpieces that were produced in Mexico and the U.S. And, as usual, there was a scramble to set the record straight as to who was doing what or who had done what, and among the key players was Jean [Charlot], who had come in from Paris, and felt for a great number of reasons that some people had taken credit for the development of the movement, and he wrote at least one article on what had actually happened. And by the late 1950s there were still enough rancorous feelings in the field that he went on to write the *definitive* history, *The Mexican Mural Renaissance, 1922 to 1925*, or somewhat like that. The same thing happened with the Conquest. When a hero-worshipper of Hernan Cortéz, the great conqueror, wrote a history of the conquest elevating Cortéz to the highest echelons of world history, one of the conquerors who had been in just about every battle felt that the *true* history of the conquest had simply not been told, and in his eighties, from his home in Guatemala. . . . Or not. . . . Well, yes, Guatemala—what later became Guatemala, or Antigua. He wrote down the true history of the Conquest, which we now know in numerous editions so that. . . . I think that what I have to say will certainly be one version of what has happened, and I'm sure there'll be others as the participants get older.

And I found throughout the twenty-five-some-odd years that I've been involved with this material that there were varying degrees of professionalism or lack of it—in not only the art area and those who studied it, but particularly in what we call "the alternative spaces"—these community centers, cultural centers, that were established in almost all of the areas where there were large Hispanic populations. In San Diego, Los Angeles, Fresno, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, San Antonio, Chicago. These cultural centers have a much broader purpose, where they show the work of artists, but they also have theatre, folk music, art lessons, arts and crafts. In other words, they provide much broader services to the community in which they're located. But alongside these community centers are two centers that focus almost exclusively on art exhibitions. And that is the Mexican Museum in San Francisco, that was essentially the dreamchild of Peter Rodríguez, whom I included

in the 1973 book and whom I interviewed in his Bay Street apartment back in 1970, where he told us about his dreams of having a Mexican Museum, and we saw what later became the nucleus of that museum literally up to the rafters in his apartment, and we. . . . That is, when I say we, I'm talking about my wife because we both became very fond of Peter and we saw him even afterwards when he visited in Texas. And so that was the dream of one man that became the model for others, and the only other one I know is the Mexican Art Center Museum in Chicago.

Now, what differs between the two is, I suppose, the genesis. I don't think that there was an artist behind the formation of the one in Chicago. I'm not as intimately involved with how that one came to be, but I do know the people who were running it when I became involved with an exhibition.

Now, the Mexican Museum in San Francisco has moved from one location to the other. It was in the Mission District for a while; now it's been at Fort Mason. I've seen the development of that museum over the years, and I saw Peter through the difficult times when he finally was—I guess there's no other way to put it—ousted by others who came in afterward and felt that, for whatever reason, that he was a liability, I suppose. To my knowledge, he no longer has a part in that museum, and it's unfortunate because such things have to be recognized for the great value that they have in the development of this entire movement.

In Chicago, there wasn't that kind of gestation period or the kinds of conflicts that went on between administrators and the board—to *my* knowledge. The Mexican Museum in San Francisco, of course, continues to have problems with directors. They've had numerous directors over the years. There continue to be conflicts on the board.

But in Chicago the experience I had there was most distressing, because in the many years that I have worked as a university administrator, a dean of men at the University of the Americas, the head of a cultural center in Caracas where I dealt with artists, museum directors, and numerous other such individuals, to heading a college with a very large faculty, and, as a result, having to deal with not only administrators—or I should say—faculty members but other administrators who were my colleagues as well as those who were above us and then community members, I have a breadth of experience that certainly allows me to see when something is being done professionally and when it is not. I have dealt with directors and curators for most of the major museums in this country, and certainly with editors of many of the university presses in this country, and when I saw what happened in Chicago I was willing to make allowances up to a point, but then when it impacted, in a negative way, on my work and the way it was done, then I felt that it seemed to be indicative of this lack of experience, a lack of professionalism, that has kept some of these things from moving forward in the way that they should.

I think that old-timers like me and Peter Rodriguez and others of our generation, who were instrumental in the defining moments of the movement and did everything we could to advance what everyone hoped would happen, should be allowed to at least provide some kind of guidance and not be set aside for whatever reasons that, say, someone who is a generation younger than we are and who really did not participate, nor do they have a sense of what led to the development of that movement. I think that these are, say, the *political* manifestations of movements that essentially spin themselves over time. Most art movements last no more than five to ten years—that is, during the period when all the forces come together and artists begin to deal with whatever issues they think are important in their work, whether it's in Florence in the 1420s or Rome between 1500 and 1520, where we refer to the early Renaissance in the former and the high Renaissance in the latter, or the Mexican mural renaissance from 1920 to 1925. Those are the defining moments. There you get what will eventually lead to an elaboration of what those ideals had been and how they were developed initially in concert with other artists and then artists going their own way and

creating mature works, which I believe has happened in the Mexican . . . or I should say, the Chicano movement.

That began in the late sixties where artists talked about Chicano art. They were truly excited from one end of the Southwest to the other, in the Great Lakes region, the Pacific Northwest. And through the early seventies, through the mid and late-seventies, we have what we call the "cosmic phase" when they've sought to find their roots in ancient Mexico as well as modern Mexico, and then, by the late eighties, depending upon where you looked, artists began to look inward at their own experience in the barrio, whether it was zootsuiters or pachucos or vatos, as they're called, or the home altars, the yard shrines. That is, dealing with those things that had always formed a part of what it meant to have participated in what had begun in the Southwest as early as the seventeenth century. The earliest settlements up in what is now New Mexico date from 1599. The earliest presence there is in the early and mid seventeenth century and Spaniards or New-Spaniards are up in Texas by the late seventeenth century and in California by the late eighteenth. And so all of these things that continue are the earliest manifestations of the belief system, whether it's expressed in attitudes toward family or religion, are really formed and then strengthened by constant arrivals from Mexico, whether it was a result of the Mexican Revolution of the teens and twenties, or as a result of subsequent economic conditions that continue to this day, you find a constant reinforcement of a Mexican source for many of the things that you find in what many of these artists have done.

But as far as the Chicano movement is concerned, what became definitive for Chicano artists begins in the mid to late seventies when they move away from the so-called "cosmic phase"—that, I believe, Shifra Goldman was the first to use in an article she published around that time—that refers essentially to what the Mexicans went through in the 1920s, when there were fights between indigenous—that is, those who wished to emphasize their indigenous background—to the Hispanists, who wanted to emphasize the Hispanic. The Chicanos didn't go through that. They just simply wanted to go through the indigenous phase. That was very short-lived, and they went through the barrio experience, whether it was in Laredo or San Antonio or Los Angeles, San Diego, etc.

And by the mid-eighties when many of them began to get national and international exposure, the movement began to fragment, and we now have—and have had for the last ten to fifteen years—artists who were affiliated with the movement, who got their start with the movement, and continue to be identified with it, others who were not but who were included in exhibitions that wanted to be far more inclusive, and you have the normal development where artists continue to go their own way as Op artists did, conceptual artists, earth artists, and installation artists, and so forth.

So I always have tried to look at the underlying currents of what happened. It had always been my intention to analyze, clarify, edify, and then simply put it out there for the people who were part of it, others who should know about it in the community, and those who are not part of it, who really didn't know much about it and continue to be ignorant of it. And that's what I hope has been my legacy, so that it goes beyond that immediate period, and that's why I always emphasize not only the books that I've published but the many papers that I have published in, in some cases, obscure publications, because I think it's very important to try to make as clear as possible what the artists were trying to do, what they actually did in spite of what they may have said, and how they influenced others. So as an educator I've always felt that, as in any university, the primary goal is to constantly define things, to create knowledge, and to literally send it out there through lectures, through publications.

And I have always felt that books, monographs, articles are a part of that, and another very

important component is the catalog of an exhibition. The works remain, but whenever they're placed in a particular context—as was the case in *The Art of the Other Mexico* that Amalia Mesa-Bains and I put together with the curator at the Mexican Museum in Chicago—that that was a defining moment for that kind of work that will always attach to those works no matter how far they go down the line and however many exhibitions they form a part of—and what will really be the document for that exhibition is the catalog. And my argument with the director who turned down my paper—which he had every right to do—was not so much the fact that he did it but the way he did it. It was the lack of professionalism and my not being able to convince him that what is truly important in an exhibition is the document that is left behind.

PK: Which any art historian knows, of course.

JQ: Exactly. And not the glossy photographs, because the works will speak for themselves down the line, but what is important in historical terms is how they were seen by one individual during that time when they were being produced. I have been fortunate to have been allowed to write rather lengthy papers in some of the Chicano art exhibitions like the CARA, the Splendor show [Splendors of Mexico: Three Thousand Years of Mexican Art—Ed.], which included, of course, primarily Mexican, put on by the Metropolitan Museum and then *The Latin American Spirit* at the Bronx Museum. What I have not mentioned are the many exhibitions that I put together before many of these blockbusters were organized and presented in the mid and late eighties through the nineties. One of the earliest exhibitions I referred to yesterday at Trinity University in November of 1973 along with a . . .

PK: That was one of the first.

JQ: It was the first, actually. Then a solo exhibition for Luis Jiménez, the first one to my knowledge in the Southwest. He had had solo exhibitions in galleries, which always have a limited dissemination, but this introduced his work to a large community in San Antonio in 1975. I put together an exhibition of Chicano murals sponsored by Exxon that traveled all over the Southwest and other parts of the country. That's the very first one that was ever put together. These were large slides of a representative selection of murals, and part of an article that I published for Exxon that I had not mentioned, called *The Murals of el Barrio*. Also the first one to my knowledge to have as broad a dissemination as any other. All along there had been articles in local publications in San Diego or in Los Angeles and other places, but none that would go beyond those borders. And, again, Exxon was very pleased with the reception of that article, so then they put this exhibition together that went all over, also called *The Murals of el Barrio*. The Bell Telephone Company of Illinois sponsored a national exhibition of Chicano art that I organized and wrote a text for, called *Seventeen Artists: Mexican-American, Hispano, and Chicano Artists*, that toured from the mid seventies on.

And the first truly Chicano-wide, Hispanic-wide exhibition was one that was organized by Mark [Zuver, Zouver] in Washington, D.C., called *Ancient Roots, New Visions* in, I believe, '77, '78. And this went on to tour from Tucson to Washington, of course, and numerous other places, and by 1980, I believe, it was in Mexico City. If not the first, certainly one of the first exhibitions of Chicano art in Mexico, where Chicano art began to have a truly international exposure. I participated in a symposium that Mark Zuver held in Mexico City where we had conversations with Mexican artists and others who were interested in these.

So that I certainly played a very key role in, not only the analysis and definition of Chicano art, but the dissemination of knowledge on that art throughout those years, and because of the conflicts—and the one at the Mexican Museum being characteristic of how we began to have almost a

Balkanization of the field—to many others that those of us who really don't have the inclination to deal with any more just simply move away from it.

PK: Let me ask you a couple questions. I don't mean to cut you off, but it just seems to fit in here. Two questions come to mind. Let me start with one, actually. As we're talking, the whole Chicano movement. . . . And we're dealing basically or trying to focus on the Chicano art movement . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . and I understand that that is one manifestation of a bigger phenomenon. And therein lies, perhaps, part of the potential for problem . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . as it has to do, finally, with power and attention, and we were talking about that. And I guess it may even sound like an unsophisticated question, but I'm going to ask it anyway and let you respond. Do we have here primarily, in terms of the way it is played out and the conflicts that developed and so forth, an art or a political movement? Is it politics or art finally that defines this phenomenon?

JQ: I think a lot of the forces that were responsible for the development of Chicano art definitely started with the political movement that began in the mid 1960s with the United Farm Workers strike. The aims of the first artist groups to bring art to the barrio intermingled with their own desires to develop as artists. Sometimes one superseded the other, depending upon the personalities of the artists. And what degenerated into these petty conflicts beyond those early years, once community centers and museums were more firmly established and municipal sources of income were available, then obviously there's going to be a scramble to get those funds. And that's when you have the usual human limitations, as I would put it, weaknesses . . .

PK: Temptations.

JQ: . . . temptations, yes. And then you get career people who are far more interested in furthering their own professional or career aims in the way that bureaucrats feel that it's up to them to disburse as many funds as possible, whether it's in the welfare area or any other, without being concerned about where those monies are going to continue to come from. And in the case of the Mexican Museum in San Francisco or the one in Chicago, obviously much of the time of the director is going to be taken up with where are the funds going to come up for exhibitions? For the personnel, the curators, the staff, and so forth. And that's just simply the laws of supply and demand as far as funds are concerned. So that these are all of the natural outcomes of these early forces that were so idealistic when it came to the artists—and even the first people who set up cultural centers in L.A. and San Diego and so forth. And what we have now are the younger generation people who have not clearly understood what the movement was about.

[Break in taping]

PK: Continuing this second session with Jacinto Quirarte, this is Tape 1, Side B. Jacinto, I think this is great because we're touching on certain critical issues to an understanding of this as an historical phenomenon. And I don't mean the Chicano movement just by itself but then the scholarly . . .

JQ: Apparatus.

PK: . . . apparatus around it. And the one thing that absolutely seems clear to me is that you—

particularly you, and a few others—created—what shall we say?—a mechanism, a foundation really for the movement, or for this phenomenon, to be apprehended and to be seen as something a discreet area of study, as a matter of fact.

JQ: Yes.

PK: And out of this then came—and particularly from your involvement with the task force and how you were able, with government support, to convene symposia, exhibitions, the whole Research Center for the Visual Arts, which you directed . . . a lot of the energy of that. I think attention went into the Chicano movement, you created bibliographies. There's a whole apparatus there . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . that was created by you and a few others, but it seems to be particularly you, who brought attention to the movement, but then to the artists, which then, in turn, allowed *them* to be big public figures, to get funding, and to get reputations and careers. Many of them, of a younger generation finally. And so what I can't help wonder about is how there could be this sort of blindness to this process that was going forward. Certain reputations were initiated by your activities. And we know this is true because writing about art in exhibitions and catalogs . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . this is what gives form to a movement. And I guess—I don't mean to be over lengthy myself in this kind of summary, but this is my response to what I've heard—you must have some thoughts about—and you've actually expressed some of them—but about precisely on what issues was this generational break based. And I was thinking of what you said about Carmen Lomas Garza saying early on. . . . You also acknowledged that she was a terrific worker in the task force and all that . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . but I think you said that one of her remarks early on was that she was lecturing you and the older generation, and that they were the ones that. . . . And I don't know how old she is. She's not that much younger than. . . . But she's sort of the next generation.

JQ: She, I imagine, is about forty-nine or fifty.

PK: Okay. So she's. . . .

JQ: She was a college student in the late sixties, early seventies, so that she was in high school or possibly even junior high when these walkouts took place in [Robbstown], South Texas. But there were other things going on in California. There were massive demonstrations against the war, there was the Peoples' March in Washington several years earlier, so that these were not isolated. But I think that Carmen certainly was right when she felt that we had perhaps appropriated what they had started, and there's no error there, other than that we all go through that stage of youth and energy that. . . . It's hard for us when we go through that stage in our lives to realize that anything ever happened before we arrived on the scene. And even when we look backward, we tend to think of most of that as irrelevant until we ourselves make a mark on events. And if she were to look back now, even if she remembers having said that, I'm sure that she would smile at her audacity. But there was a kernel of truth in what she said. So there were these *numerous* strands that had to form a part of what was going on. It just happened to be fortuitous for me to have arrived when I did, in the late sixties, armed with all of this knowledge of, not only Mexican art of all three epochs, but the enthusiasm to disseminate it and to continue to define it in my own terms, and knowing

Venezuelan art and, as a result, dealing with Latin American art and giving lectures on contemporary Venezuelan art in New Haven, for instance. So when I arrive and I find all of these people in the barrios, Carmen among them, I'm energized, so that I'm as much a part of it as she is, even though I was of an earlier generation so that I couldn't possibly have even had a sense of what it meant to have walkouts, since we had no reason to do such things in San Francisco when I was at that stage in my life. There were other things that were going on—as they do in every generation.

So, in terms of the generational divide, let's say, Carmen and I were really not that far apart, because when she was twenty I was, say, thirty-five, which is about the age that I was when I began to be involved with a lot of these things. I happen to be the same generation as Mel Casas, Estéban Villa, José Montoya. There's another one whose name I've never even mentioned, and he was the key figure in San Diego and that's Salvador Roberto Torres. There was Ernie Palamino in Fresno, who painted the first major mural in the Chicano movement in Fresno. There was a man named [_____—Ed.] [Carillo] in Chicago, who painted a mural in '68. So that it fell to us young, mature men in our thirties and in some cases early forties to make the first definitive statements, whether in visual form or written form, that carried us through the movement so that Carmen Lomas Garza, Luis Jiménez, and many of the others who were, say, ten years behind us—having been born in 1940 or the early forties, [the] first of what we later called "the boomers"—to develop as artists. Their work was defined by this movement. They appear on the scene during their formative years, so that what they created was part and parcel of what that movement was about, and if they have each gone their own ways that is natural, given each personality—in the case of Carmen or Luis or any of the others.

The older generation, say ten years older like Mel Casas, Estéban Villa, and José Montoya, had to contend with styles that were not conducive to their development as artists—like Abstract Expressionism and those that followed. When Mel Casas appeared as an artist, he took from one of the reigning styles, like Pop Art—so that had a definitive influence on him as it had on many others, like Luis Jiménez.

So there are two . . . or I should say, many strands within the movement. First there's the political, which is obviously part of the process, and perhaps is the one that provided the impetus for all those other things that people wanted to happen along educational lines—to establish study centers on Chicano art or Chicano culture, Chicano civilization. And they were established in Santa Barbara, at UCLA, in San Diego, at U.T. Austin. I was part of a two-person funding group, which I had not even mentioned, for the founding of the Mexican-American Study Center at U.T. Austin, which now has one of the finest libraries of Mexican-American materials in the country. Another center for such archives is U.C. Santa Barbara, where educational concerns were first expressed by the manifestos that were written. There were manifestos that focused on education, there were those that focused on economics, those that focused on politics, and those that focused on spiritual matters. So all of these things essentially arise out of what began as a political movement—as it often does—but then each component forms an identity of its own. And then the artists are there as well, and then they themselves continue to develop, and then we begin to find what we now consider professional artists, artists who lived their lives as artists and didn't work as teachers, let's say, who did art, or any other form of employment. And so you have people like Carmen Lomas Garza, who has been an artist, Luis Jiménez, César Martínez, and many, many others who have done that in Los Angeles and the other cities that we've been talking about.

And in the larger scheme of things I think these diminutive administrators who come and go at these Mexican museums are slated for the columns that appear periodically in magazines as to "What happened to so and so?" And people have said, "Well, oh, my goodness, I had forgotten

about that person." [chuckles] So their legacies are different. The artists, of course, are crucial. They are the ones who define what that movement is about. Those of us who have written about it in books and papers are also part of that. Not as important, but certainly. . . .

PK: But absolutely necessary; it's the way it works.

JQ: Yes. And we remember Giorgio [Vasari], when we think of . . .

PK: *Lives of the Artists*.

JQ: . . . *Lives of the Artists*, that focus on those who preceded him and those who were still around when he wrote the first edition and then second. The same holds true with the Mexican mural renaissance. We can't think of it without thinking of Jean Charlot, who was also an artist but whose mark was made primarily as a historian of the movement. Clement Greenberg, with regard to Abstract Expressionism. [Robert, Harold, Jacob?—Ed.] Rosenberg, who focused on action painting. And those Americanists who wrote the first definitive works on American artists in the last several generations are identified with the movement. That is, they are the ones who. . . .

PK: Like Lloyd Goodrich, for instance.

JQ: Yeah, they wrote the first statements.

PL: E. P. Richardson, the founder of the Archives.

JQ: Yes, exactly. And in my case and Shifra Goldman, I think she and I are the two who have written the most on these materials, so that those who will follow us and who will write about this from archives because they will not have known it personally, will have to mention me and Shifra, along with a few others who have written like Tomás Ybarra Frausto and others, but people will not remember the directors of the museums—unless they were key persons like [René] de [Harnoncourt], who put together the very first Mexican art show at the Metropolitan Museum back in 1930-31. He was the one who defined the first of what have since become a standard blockbuster-type exhibition that began with *A Thousand Years of Mexican Art*, *Two Thousand Years of Mexican Art*, *Three Thousand Years of Mexican Art*. . . . [laughter]

PK: Do I hear four?

JQ: Yeah, exactly. And the further . . . we just keep pushing it backwards so that. . . . I mentioned de Harnoncourt because that is not to say that directors of museums have not made an impact, but with regard to that matter, in the Chicano movement a key person in that would be Peter Rodríguez because he *conceived* of the idea of a Mexican museum that went beyond the confines of the community center that would forever be bound to the community. And a museum goes far beyond that, and he will have to be recognized for that, and if no one writes his story, I will certainly see to it that that gets written as I have time to reflect on what all the people who had a key role in defining what the Chicano movement was about.

PK: It's interesting to me because it swings back and forth between the artists themselves—and I think that you've articulated the situation very well: the contributors to a phenomenon—in this case, Chicano art, a movement that's specifically Chicano art. And so you have the artists, you have the writers and the scholars, you have the museum people, you have exhibitions and catalogs, all of which are necessary to create a subject, a phenomenon, that receives, then, critical and historical attention, and that is finally how it gets set and it stays. What interests me is the fractiousness within—that is, that you described and I observed—within the field among the scholars or critics or

the observers—the writers—those who begin to own the subject by putting it into words and getting out publications. And we know the cast of characters, even I do, and sort of a final question from me, growing out of what you've been saying: How can you explain, how can you describe, this competitive aspect within what should be common cause—and that is identifying and describing something of importance to try to understand it. I've talked with some of the people who you have worked with and in many cases made prominent through your work . . .

JQ: Yes.

PK: . . . and among them are like, well, Rupert García, whom I've interviewed and Judy Baca, Amalia Mesa Bains, many others who've become nationally prominent.

JQ: Yes.

PK: And what strikes me as interesting, without identity politics, without having been oppressed—whether they're personally oppressed, I don't know—but without being part of this group that has been marginalized and oppressed, and then what came out of it eventually—this movement—they wouldn't have a voice. They wouldn't have any subject.

JQ: No.

PK: They wouldn't have any attention. They might not even have careers. I'm going to just out-and-out say it. Are you willing to comment on that?

JQ: Yes. I would say that in those cases, the ones you've mentioned, Rupert would have a career regardless.

PK: Anywhere, yeah.

JQ: Because he is a truly . . . or actually, clearly an artist.

PK: Yeah.

JQ: And he would have arrived as an artist regardless.

PK: That's true.

JQ: I'm not so sure about the other two, because Amalia Mesa Bains, I believe her degree is in clinical psych[ology]. I shouldn't say clinical; I'll just say just [psychology]. I think she has a degree in psychology. She has written extensively and become a spokesperson for issues that are of interest to her, and so she is as much a political person as an artist. But I don't think of her, essentially, as an artist. She has existed on three different levels, where she writes, organizes exhibitions, writes catalog texts, also creates objects—that is, altars—and then also is a spokesperson for the movement. And so that each one of which would be more than enough for one person, and if you do too many things you may do them each reasonably well, but they're not defining you as an artist, as a politician, or as a historian. She's not an art historian, she's not an art critic, she's not in what I would consider a true sense an artist because she doesn't do that exclusively. But by the same token, I'm not saying she's a dabbler but . . .

PK: No, I understand.

JQ: . . . it's in between. And this need to be a spokesperson is yet on another level. I would say the

same thing for Judy Baca, although not as much. She has clearly taken advantage of the movement. She was responsible for *numerous* mural projects. We can't take that away from her. She was an extraordinary organizer, community organizer. The Topanga Wash mural clearly is an achievement, if not artistically, certainly logistically.

PK: In terms of square footage?

JQ: Yes. And then, on the other hand, she's also an alternative space organizer. If she had not organized SPARC [Social and Public Art Resource Centers—Ed.], which is clearly a leader in the field, many other things would not have happened—like the study of the Chicano murals in California, numerous exhibitions of Chicano women artists, and so forth. So that, in a more concrete sense, she's been a very, very strong participant in various phases of the movement. The only thing she hasn't done is to write a great deal, but she has been a spokesperson. She has participated in numerous national forums. And so those two are clearly outside the realm of what I would consider the true artist like Carmen Lomas Garza, who has devoted her life exclusively to her art.

PK: Yeah, she's _____.

JQ: And Rupert. And Carmen has often participated in national forums like the task force, but it was something to which she had committed her life but not at the expense of her art. I mean, she continued to think of herself and to *be* an artist. Now, there are clearly many others that could be so defined, but I think there is just one last person that needs to be mentioned, not a particular person, but what is always part of any art movement, there is the trigger, regardless of what it is, the genesis of any movement—the participants, the artists, those who write about it; that is, the scholarly apparatus, the museums that disseminate this—and the one person we have not included is the collector.

PK: Um-hmm.

JQ: Until there are major collectors of Chicano art, the movement itself will not reach the kind of definition we have for Pop Art or conceptual art or action painting, for instance. The great first collectors of Cubist works, like the woman in Paris who had her salon with Alice B. Toklas . . .

PK: Yes. Gertrude Stein.

JQ: Gertrude Stein, who was a poet as well. We know of her as the first collector of . . .

PK: Picasso.

JQ: . . . Picasso. Or Peggy Guggenheim. In other words, the collectors. Then there are the ones who come after, like Norton Simon or many others. There are the beginnings of that. There is a young professional in San Antonio named [_____—Ed.] Díaz, who has been collecting the work of Luis Jiménez, César Martínez, and he has a wonderful collection of Chicano art. There may be some in California. I don't know. There might be some in Illinois, but I know of at least this one person who is an *avid* collector of Chicano art. We need more of that, and until that happens beyond the Metropolitan Museum buying a work by Adan Hernández, or the Houston Museum of Fine Arts buying one by, let's say, [_____—Ed.] Moroles, who is not part of the Chicano movement but is identified as a Hispanic artist, we are not going to have all of those parts that are crucial to the definition of a movement. And then down the line you're going to have the connoisseurs, who will have to determine whether something is authentic or not, whether someone is trying to pawn off a Mel Casas as something else or a phony Mel Casas or a phony Luis Jiménez. Once these objects

become highly coveted, they become collectibles, then you're going to have the subsequent apparatus . . .

PK: Right.

JQ: . . . in future generations. And so that's the one thing that's still lacking and should form a part of the whole thing, the collecting of it.

PK: I think that we've covered it.

JQ: Yeah.

PK: Thank you so much. And now, I'll just mention this here by way of cross-reference, that shortly we'll be over at Mel Casas's house—Mel's casa . . .

JQ: Mel's casa. His casa is our casa. [laughs]

PK: . . . and you two will have a brief conversation, and I think it will be a wonderful opportunity, an artist and a historian, a writer, touching on just a few of these issues and where this will appear, and I think I'll append that to the second session for his interview. So we've done a pretty good piece of work. Thank you.

[End of interview]