



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Angela  
Westwater, 2006 July 18-August 1

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Angela Westwater on July 18 and August 1, 2006. The interview took place at Sperone Westwater Gallery in New York City, and was conducted by James McElhinney for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Funding for this interview was provided by a grant from the Widgeon Point Charitable Foundation.

Angela Westwater and James McElhinney have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. Bracketed text was included post-interview.

## Interview

JAMES MCELHINNEY: This is James McElhinney interviewing Angela Westwater at the Westwater Sperone-

ANGELA WESTWATER: Sperone Westwater.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Sperone Westwater Gallery, sorry, at 415 West 13th Street in New York on Tuesday, July 18, 2006, for at the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number one.

Where were you born?

MS. WESTWATER: Columbus, Ohio, somewhat of a quiet town in terms of art, although, I'm happy to say, more recently the museum [Columbus Museum of Art] has improved and the Wexner Center is there at Ohio State [University]. So the art now has a much stronger presence than it did when I was growing up.

MR. MCELHINNEY: I understand also that the Columbus College of Art and Design is a feeder for the Disney Organization-

MS. WESTWATER: Is that true? I mean, I know more about the-I mean admittedly, I have heard more about the institution, but I don't know so much about-careerwise, where it sends its graduates-

MR. MCELHINNEY: Oh, I have heard that, sort of like the Kansas Art Institute [Kansas City Art Institute, Kansas City, MO] and Hallmark Cards-

MS. WESTWATER: Right, right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: -kind of relationship. What was it like growing up in Ohio? What was it like for a person who was interested in art? Were you always interested in art, or was it something that emerged later?

MS. WESTWATER: I grew up in a household where the arts were appreciated, even though we didn't have art, or art that had a place in art history. There were family portraits and good examples of the decorative arts but nothing of major historical significance. There were a couple of collectors who had some things that-by quote, unquote, known, artists internationally, but not many.

And at the same time I can remember when we came to New York one Thanksgiving that we were all dragged to the Guggenheim Museum, which had recently opened-my mother took us all because she thought it was important we see interesting new architecture and the collection. So that was one early recollection, and then it was really after I got to college, to Smith [College, Northampton, MA], which happens to have a very good museum and a very good art history department, that I became more committed, although, in fact, I majored in political science, actually, called "government" at Smith College, not political science, and minored in art history, so that-that experience influenced me a lot.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So were either of your parents involved in the arts, or was anybody in your family involved in the arts?

MS. WESTWATER: Again, not so much. I mean, my mother was active at the museum and thought it was important to serve as a trustee. But, that's not to say that I was taken to a lot of exhibitions in New York. When traveling as a family, we also visited the Art Institute [of Chicago, IL] en route to the Southwest. We had to get the train in Chicago, so we went to the Art Institute first. So there were those experiences of positive reinforcement.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So you took a train and journeyed to the Southwest. Was that sort of à la Fred Harvey [reference to Harvey House restaurants, legendary chain along the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe railroad]?

MS. WESTWATER: Yes. You got it; you got it.

MR. MCELHINNEY: That's great, that's wonderful. That's a shame that no longer exists.

MS. WESTWATER: Right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: But still it's entertaining to go to the-

MS. WESTWATER: I mean, I don't remember too much about it, but we went to Chicago, spent the night, went to the Art Institute, got on the train with the Fred Harvey-you know, the dining cars and the whole shebang-

MR. MCELHINNEY: Super.

MS. WESTWATER: -sleeping cars, and, and ended up in L.A.

MR. MCELHINNEY: How did you like Los Angeles?

MS. WESTWATER: You know, it's a bit of a blur; it was so long ago [they laugh], and I was one of four kids and we were going all over, and you know, the Farmers Market, La Brea, Disneyland, and seeing some friends of my parents. I actually don't remember going to a museum at the time. I could be wrong, but-

MR. MCELHINNEY: Did you travel overseas as a kid?

MS. WESTWATER: A couple of times, once with my grandmother, which was a North Cape Cruise, ending in Paris, where we were taken to the Louvre. Grandmother was more of a shopper, so I don't remember many museums on that trip. Subsequently, I took another family trip, which included Switzerland and France and Germany, specifically Berlin. The focus was on experiencing different cultures, not necessarily focusing on art although there were limited museum visits.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So you studied government and art history at Smith.

MS. WESTWATER: That's right, that's right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: They do have a great museum there.

MS. WESTWATER: They do. And it was one place that I was always happy to go and spend my lunchtimes looking at art rather than going back to the dorm to eat. It's gotten even better. I haven't been up to see the new building, which I should do. What I have been doing is, from time to time, giving them works on paper, which I think is actually more important for me to be giving them than a cash contribution, because I think most of the artists we've shown over the years will become more and more appreciated and recognized. I think that will keep the whole venture more contemporary than it was at the time I was going to the museum. Of course, that assumes they are being seen by other students, and since I'm not there, it's hard to tell precisely.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Hopefully, it's a resource that they're using.

MS. WESTWATER: At some point, yeah.

MR. MCELHINNEY: But yeah, it's a great museum. I love that wacky [Gustave] Courbet of the-it's a corpse, not a bride [*Preparation of the Dead Girl*, 1850-55].

MS. WESTWATER: Yes, I think so. [Laughs.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: It's a very strange painting.

Since passion for art, one, historians in the future might conjecture, turned on your-or emerged as a result of your studying at Smith, was there anybody there who was for you as a mentor or an inspirational teacher?

MS. WESTWATER: One teacher was Phyllis Lehmann, who taught Greek art. And she was really fantastic. I didn't major in art history, so there were some courses I took, some I audited. But her one on Greek art was excellent. She went on to teach at the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU [New York University], as her husband, I believe, had also done.

Oliver Larkin was at Smith College, who wrote the large book about American art [*Art and Life in America*. New York: Rinehart, 1949]-all about American art-going back and including architecture and more vernacular aspects. So he was certainly a model as well. Henry Russell Hitchcock was also there, of course, as well, not that I-I can't remember if I took a course apart from Art 101. And then, I'm trying to think of the name of the Bernini scholar [James Holderbaum], which escapes me right this minute-*Ecstasy of Santa Teresa, Quattro Fontane*. His

name may come to me later, but also an important scholar who made the subject come alive.

MR. MCELHINNEY: I know who you mean.

MS. WESTWATER: What was missing, apart from these excellent teachers, was someone who was really conversant about contemporary [art], by which I mean art that was going on in New York at that time. And since we're talking about the mid-'60s, it was fairly substantial, but that wasn't really reflected in the coursework. And, in some respects I'm sorry it wasn't, because contemporary wasn't very contemporary, if you know what I mean.

MR. MCELHINNEY: I understand. Well, it's also a long way from Northampton to New York.

MS. WESTWATER: Right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: I would imagine for the average college student, it wasn't all that simple to come here. I guess you could hop on the bus.

MS. WESTWATER: You could, and at that point the train. But it would have been even interesting, in retrospect, had there been maybe a little bit more of a presence, like a trip-let's go to New York and see what's, like, in galleries, not just museums. And that, you know, like, the names that we consider so important now in that period didn't much come up. I mean, there was some awareness of [Andy] Warhol, but obviously not much of a knowledge of the scene, whereas some of these teachers did, I think, know what was going on. Anyway-

MR. MCELHINNEY: There was a lot of Op art-

MS. WESTWATER: Yes.

MR. MCELHINNEY: -and stuff like that, [Yaacov] Agam and [Victor] Vasarely-

MS. WESTWATER: Yeah, there was some reference to-

MR. MCELHINNEY: [Ernest] Trova-

MS. WESTWATER: Right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: People that nobody even today-you know, you didn't hear about at all.

MS. WESTWATER: Right, it's true. There was one show I saw in Paris around that time when I was there-and I don't even know what year this was-that was very much Op-y. The French seem to have a kind of fancy for that sort of thing.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, like, think about [Georges] Mathieu and his ramp-[makes sound]-sort of charging at the canvas with the one hand on the brush, slashing away at it like Zorro.

MS. WESTWATER: Lots of drama.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, it was, yeah, performance art, like Yves Klein later, but the-yeah, it's interesting how things change over the years.

When did you make the choice to get involved in the art world?

MS. WESTWATER: Well, that was sometime later, because I actually have an M.A. from New York University in government. I was pursuing the Ph.D., then after some time, it became apparent to me that the juices weren't flowing enough; the passions weren't there. Happily, because I was living in New York, I was encouraged in my interest-by just simply the opportunity to go on my own to museums and galleries.

A roommate I had at that point shared this interest. I remember we went to a show, and her grandmother bought her an early [Robert] Rauschenberg, a study from one of the Dante series, which was terrific, and very exciting. I'm in some ways more interested in politics itself, rather than theoretical constructs for the resolution of conflict, or all kinds of structural models for planning the perfect government. So the academic accomplishments began to fall away as the vibrations from the art world intensified.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, yeah, it sounds from everything that you're saying that you didn't have really an academic ambition-

MS. WESTWATER: Right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So-but how close did you come to a career in political analysis or statecraft of any kind?

MS. WESTWATER: Not very close, because it just didn't keep me engaged. So, at a certain point I just dropped it and met, subsequently, a couple of people who introduced me to other people in the art world. And all that was very stimulating and very encouraging. I met, in some cases, the right people through, of course, only good luck.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, good luck, I suppose, has a lot to do with just seeing opportunities as they arrive. So it just sort of happened in an organic way that you discovered a passion for art. And the opportunity to pursue it arrived at the same time.

MS. WESTWATER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: That's great. So how did you find a role in the art world in the beginning? How did you get started?

MS. WESTWATER: Through various channels. The head of the museum in Columbus, Mahonri Young, was a friend of my parents and he encouraged me, especially once I finally got this entry-level job in a gallery-the John Weber Gallery, which was in the fall of 1971. And, ultimately, that was a good moment for the museum, because he was very open-minded about some of the art that was shown at that gallery. I helped him get a Carl Andre metal floor sculpture, radical for the time and much more appreciated these days than then, and a couple of paintings; also subsequently a [Dan] Flavin. He had simply asked me to point out a few artworks which I thought were interesting, and they were available at reasonable prices then.

Another one of the people that I met randomly was John Coplans, at that point, actually, one of West Coast editors of *Artforum*, who was living and working in Los Angeles, curating a number of shows, including at the Pasadena Museum. I met him in New York either walking up or down Madison Avenue or popping in and out of several galleries. It was '69 or 1970. In any event, we ended up going around and I was just so struck by what I was seeing: major shows at that time from Abstract Expressionists such as [Mark] Rothko, who had just died, to minimal artists.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Maybe [he died in] '70.

MS. WESTWATER: Because one of the shows I remember seeing with John was a Rothko show at Marlborough [Gallery, New York, NY], of paintings that he did shortly before he died. So that was one example. There were a number of other interesting shows, artists and dealers I was introduced to, but I was very much in awe; a silent, shy observer.

But that meeting of John was very fortuitous. We kept up; he suggested books to read and shows to see. So in retrospect I really consider him a great teacher, a great mentor.

Subsequently, and over the course of a couple of years, I met, through him, Robert Smithson, which was in 1970. And then I met him again, in probably September 1971, when 420 West Broadway was opening. Bob said- because I knew him well enough and had seen him and his wife, Nancy Holt, and hung around with the Max's Kansas City crowd.

He said, John Weber Gallery is just opening, taking over from Virginia Dwan, where I had been to that gallery uptown before and seen Bob's show. He said, why don't you talk to him? So, long story short, I did talk to him. He hired me, and that was my first real job in the art world.

So that was in the fall-maybe I started in October when 420 opened. The building in SoHo was not the first art gallery by any means, but it was obviously a big gallery building, with the four floors with Castelli [Leo Castelli Gallery], Sonnabend [Gallery], Weber, and at that point Andre Emmerich [Gallery] was on the top floor.

That was a really, I think, pivotal moment for many reasons, but for me in particular. I had the entry-level, you know, start-up, answer-the-phones, clean-the-bathrooms, type-John Weber even had me riding a small bike down to the bank at Canal Street and Broadway, which scared me to death, not because of any money I was carrying [laughs] but because of riding a bike in Manhattan.

MR. MCELHINNEY: In traffic-

MS. WESTWATER: Manhattan in the traffic. You know, I ran to get the coffee, you know, whatever. I wasn't a great typist, so probably I got other chores instead, which was just fine for me. It was a great opportunity, because during the course of those first few months at the gallery I met Robert Ryman, Bob Mangold, Dan Flavin, Don Judd, Carl Andre, Sol LeWitt, Bruce Nauman, Richard Long, Richard Serra, Richard Tuttle-a pretty good group.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Any women in that gang?

MS. WESTWATER: Not many. [They laugh.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: It sounds like, you know, like a bunch of-

MS. WESTWATER: Well, you know, Nancy Holt.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Right.

MS. WESTWATER: Bob Smithson's wife. There were certainly a few other women, for example Lucy Lippard.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Certainly kind of a macho crew, though?

MS. WESTWATER: It was a very macho group.

MR. MCELHINNEY: [Laughs] How long did you work for John Weber?

MS. WESTWATER: I worked with John until April 1972, and in fact, some months before, John Coplans had said he'd become the editor of *Artforum* in New York, having taken over from Philip Leider, which he did in June 1972. He said, come work with me as managing editor. Castelli had also offered me a job-I made the right choice, I think.

I started at the end of June. September would have been the first issue I worked on in 1972. I went to Europe with Carl Andre in late April, first to London, where he was having a show. We also went to the Tate, because Sir Norman Reid had bought from John Weber a couple of important pieces of Carl's, historic pieces, as it turns out-a piece called *First Ladder* [*Last Ladder*], from 1959 that he had done in the studio with [Frank] Stella-Stella's studio or space that they shared, and also a brick piece [*Equivalent VIII*, 1966].

In the trustees' room of the Tate Gallery in London I remember being surrounded by a number of the curators, called "keepers," who were sitting around a large table, asking questions of Carl about these particular pieces, all the proper curatorial questions. That was a meaningful experience, and there were others like that-I think a few collectors, meeting a few people whose careers I would follow and some of whom I still see.

Also that year, we went to Düsseldorf and saw some important shows there, including Marcel Broodthaers [Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles]. He also hosted a champagne party for Gilbert & George at Konrad Fischer's gallery. Then I went on my own to "documenta" in 1972, which was a real eye-opener-a very challenging exhibition organized by Harold Szeemann, a brilliant curator.

It was really astonishing to experience the variety of the European art scene, including Joseph Beuys, for example-a number of other artists who were infusing their work with a kind of personal content, which was somewhat new, given the art I knew in New York at that moment.

I also recall in "documenta 5" that there was a whole section on advertising and vernacular media, which was a wild juxtaposition of high art and low art, something, obviously, which would continue to be more and more remarked upon, not that it originated or began in that time-one can, obviously, trace [it] back. In this case it was kind of brought home to me, and it was brought home within a broader European context than I was aware of hitherto.

In Kassel, I got to see Bruce Nauman's terrific elliptical corridor installation works of his and other artists who are important, not only to me today but also-especially in the case of Bruce, Richard Long-important to the history of the gallery.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So how long were you involved with the publishing industry at *Artforum*?

MS. WESTWATER: Through the spring of '75-I was managing editor of *Artforum* for three years. And it was a somewhat dramatic three years, given what was going on there-skirmishes, divisiveness among the editors about what direction was the magazine going to follow. Amy Newman has written a large book [*Challenging Art: Artforum 1962-1974*. New York: Soho Press, 2000] on this particular period which references these controversies-Lynda Benglis-Robert Morris's exchange, an advertisement with a dildo, sexual politics, and the Art Workers Coalition. There were all kinds of crosscurrents of thinking, aggravated by the war, by the position of the United States in the world.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Because [of] the Vietnam War at that time.

MS. WESTWATER: Exactly. There were differing artistic philosophies represented by the Ros [Rosalind] Krauss, Annette Michelson, Max Kozloff-all these strong personalities were involved with the magazine then. [In 1972 I was lucky enough to meet Robert Rosenblum, the extraordinary art historian whose writings had left a strong impression on me. Robert's sweeping curiosity and generosity of spirit offered a significant contrast to the increasingly contentious atmosphere of art criticism I witnessed at *Artforum*. The way I saw it, Robert's openness and receptivity enabled him to view contemporary art as history in the making. His approach inspired and

influenced me.]

The work day was a full and lively one and our office was very small. I don't think it ever was staffed by more than six people regularly; I sat across from John, and, you know, we did it, at that point, on a shoestring. It was a high moment for the magazine, I think, in terms of the attention it attracted and the dialogue it prompted.

As a magazine of record, it was only a harbinger of what one sees today in the art magazines. *Artforum* is big and heavy and full of ads, reflecting the relative prosperity and the highly charged marketplace today.

MR. MCELHINNEY: At least I would imagine the inverse cost of publishing, too.

MS. WESTWATER: Yeah.

MR. MCELHINNEY: -anything of any value.

MS. WESTWATER: Exactly.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So you have to pay. You have to pay the printer and the staff, of course.

MS. WESTWATER: Right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So when did you decide to hang up a shingle and-

MS. WESTWATER: Well, I had done a little writing. And again John Coplans was very supportive. But finally I concluded I would really rather work more with the art objects themselves and with the artists themselves rather than the words and verbiage, if you will, about them.

At the end of '74, beginning of '75 -I really decided to strike out, not totally on my own, fortunately for me, with Gian Enzo Sperone, with whom I still work today. He happens to be here in the gallery today-and Konrad Fischer, from Düsseldorf. Gian Enzo Sperone's history as a dealer was longer, and this is reflected in the volumes that you have. Konrad Fischer started the gallery, '67, in Düsseldorf. And they both had been active with some of the artists that we're talking about, as well as Arte Povera artists, English artists-Richard Long, Gilbert & George, and such. So it seemed like a kind of natural progression to start activity together.

Sperone had already taken the space on Greene Street, 142, where ultimately the gallery would be. He had a kind of fledgling operation there, but it was not where he wanted to spend all his time-didn't want to move there permanently, nor did Fischer. So we decided to start the gallery together as partners with an equal share, although I was the one who was there all the time.

And so we kind of put the program together, sometimes with one or the other of them taking more of the leadership role or being more active, depending on what was happening on the home front. But the program was definitely forged, often with artists with whom they had a working connection before.

One focus which we felt that the gallery could achieve was showing work of artists from Europe, who at that point in New York-in the United States-had a very low profile. I see the United States at that particular moment, or American art, as being chauvinistic, finally taking great pride and satisfaction in the fact that the Abstract Expressionists had created a world-class art, which really put Americans on the map in terms of its accomplishments and stature.

But at that same time the minimal artists were getting a lot of attention and making their statement. But there were really hardly any galleries which showed any contemporary art from Europe. I'm not talking, for example, about Henry Moore at Marlborough or other examples, which would be more historical.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Balthus.

MS. WESTWATER: Yeah, yeah. Not Pierre Matisse-

MR. MCELHINNEY: Right.

MS. WESTWATER: -who showed him. Obviously, historically, from the time of the [1913] Armory Show, you can trace the galleries in New York, which did welcome and debut important European artists. But at this particular moment, mid-'70s, for younger artists it wasn't so much true. Not that many people knew that much about them. As I said for me, my travels in Europe in 1972-and onward-were illuminating because I could see that there was a lot of interesting work going on, but it wasn't making it to America.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Right.

MS. WESTWATER: And again, I'm talking about art being made at that point by younger artists, not the senior exemplars.

MR. MCELHINNEY: In a number of these conversations I've had with other dealers, one theme seems to come through clearly, which is that the New York art scene has since the '30s probably been more or less a global scene in one sense or another-the émigrés from Hitler's Europe before World War II, people after World War II influx, in and out in the next influx and ex-flux of artists to cross the Atlantic and also from Latin America and other places.

So your travels to Europe-seeing "documenta" for example-and everything was illuminating because it showed you that there was a possibility of something as vital and original and interesting as what you were seeing here in New York.

MS. WESTWATER: Exactly.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Have you ever felt that there was anything happening-have you ever been excited by things happening in Latin America or the West Coast or Chicago or any of those other smaller-

MS. WESTWATER: I mean, I think at the same time, especially after I started working at *Artforum*, I became more aware of what was happening.

Actually, one time I went out to see Coplans before he had moved to New York and there was this Stella show [1971] at Pasadena which traveled from MoMA [Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY] to Pasadena-his first big retrospective there. And I went to the opening of that and dinner afterwards, where I remember meeting Jasper Johns.

So the West Coast scene I had experienced a bit in terms of what the museums were doing, and a couple of the leading galleries. I remember going to LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art] at that point and subsequently seeing that art and technology show there that Maurice Tuchman curated.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Right.

MS. WESTWATER: Chicago I learned a little bit about in part through Max Kozloff, who certainly knew artists more concerned with that scene. And then there were a couple of artists I knew from Latin America. Now we represent Guillermo Kuitca from Argentina, a major international figure, who lives in Argentina but whose work transcends those kind of geographic boundaries. And so I became more aware of that.

Somebody who was involved with art politics was-I remember meeting Enrique Castro-Cid through something in *Artforum* having to do with [Augusto] Pinochet and a political statement. There were artists involved with that scene who weren't necessarily the darlings of the art world but who I got to know simply because of the political, kind of, organizing and meeting and gathering that took place then.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So was that something that resonated for you because of your education, in a way?

MS. WESTWATER: It was probably the company I was keeping. [Laughs.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: Okay. So how long were you in the SoHo location?

MS. WESTWATER: Actually, through the year 2000.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Wow.

MS. WESTWATER: So we leased-or we rented there beginning with Gian Enzo Sperone and then continuing with Sperone Westwater Fischer, as the gallery was known, until, I think, towards the end of the-through the end of the '80s. We continued in that space for 25 years, through 2000.

We also got the space across the street, at 121 Greene Street, because we were really were kind of cramped and limited in terms of space and storage. So we got space on the second floor, and sometimes did adjunct shows there, including Louise Bourgeois, Alighiero Boetti, and others. And then the last show at 142 was a bricolage show organized by David Leiber, the director, and the artist, Tom Sachs.

And then we moved across the street just for a temporary time until this space, where we are now-415 West 13th Street-could be ready. That was delayed by the partners in the build-out of this building and subsequently by 9/11.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Right.



MS. WESTWATER: The first show we had, in May of 2002, was Susan Rothenberg. We were very happy to do that, but it was a real risk, because only part of this floor was finished and the floor upstairs, which was the third floor, was open to the sky.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Oh, dear. Well you don't want the weather to come into a building where-

MS. WESTWATER: No.

MR. MCELHINNEY: -valuable artwork is being stored.

MS. WESTWATER: No. I was a bit scared, but it was the correct thing to do because we had been without a big showing space for a year and a half, not good for any gallery and particularly one which has a strong stable of artists, some of whom were eager to show.

When we opened here, actually, there was a wood shanty door downstairs with a padlock, I might add, and shaky stairs. Some people might have felt even threatened to come in the building because it looked so hokey and funky; of course, there were other people who thought it looked just great and wasn't that the most terrific facade behind which could be a great show of Susan Rothenberg's? But we had that door for a long time.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Has anyone accused you of being a maverick because you're out here in the meatpacking area?

MS. WESTWATER: I think a little bit. And, as I said, if we were in the center of Chelsea, we would have much more traffic, but it's not, of course, about the gate. We also have storage in the basement downstairs, which we call "the vault," which is another viewing space. So I think it, for the most part, serves our needs well, and I think we're happy where we are.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So who else is here? Who are the other dealers in the neighborhood?

MS. WESTWATER: White Columns is on Horatio Street, a block and a half away. Downstairs from us is Fred Henry and the Bohem Foundation, a not-for-profit which has happily gotten more active. They're not open the same hours we are to the public, but they are open and regularly commission artists to do shows.

There are certainly galleries, some in the 14th, 15th Street, 16th Street area-Phillips, de Pury and Luxembourg, an auction house, is on 15th at 10th Avenue, so that certainly makes the area more of a destination. And galleries which started in Chelsea have either expanded and gone south a bit more toward us or have new quarters. Now with the High Line being protected and developed, it is likely the Whitney [Museum of American Art] will develop a big branch at Gansevoort and Washington.

[END TAPE 1 SIDE A.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: This is James McElhinney interviewing Angela Westwater at Sperone Westwater Gallery, 415-

MS. WESTWATER: West 13th

MR. MCELHINNEY: East-West 15th Street, New York.

MS. WESTWATER: Thirteenth. West 13th.

MR. MCELHINNEY: West 13th-pardon me, 13th, New York City, on-this is the first of August, 2006.

The gallery here we spoke about a little bit last time, and you spoke about the renovation of the building-

MS. WESTWATER: Right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: -and all of that.

Maybe we could talk a little bit about the operations of the gallery. So what kind of business arrangements do you make with your artists?

MS. WESTWATER: Most of them involve consigning their work for sale. And the percentage given to the artists can vary. It might be 50 percent-it might be less-that actually the gallery would take for its efforts. And that's pretty much been standard, I would say, since the beginning. There are a couple of exceptions to that, but for the most part that seems to work well.

MR. MCELHINNEY: In a couple of conversations I've had in the past, in part the dealers have spoken about paying stipends to artists who are-or acting sort of as patrons to the artists to help them to develop bodies of

work and the pursuit of special projects. Have you ever engaged in that kind of-

MS. WESTWATER: We have from time to time. Another way of doing it-certainly when we started the gallery, it was known, for example, that Leo Castelli offered stipends to some of the younger artists in particular.

We have a contract with one of the artists for a monthly-I mean, you could call it an advance. It's something that's inevitably paid back in this case. But it's actually just a way of providing a regular income for him that's monthly instead of just handed over at the end of the year.

I think in many cases where we have worked with, let's say, a younger artist, someone who we want to encourage but not necessarily go the stipend route, then what we might do is buy work outright. Or we'll buy it half down and half when it's finished or something like that. So in other words, we try to be sensitive to the particular situation.

Another way of doing it that would involve possibly more money might be the fabrication of an artwork, for example. When you've got steel fabrication or some kind of heavy upfront costs, for example, video editing, which Bruce Nauman might do. Those costs definitely would be included in the calculation of the sales price.

Let's say-most recently we talked about Nauman's Mapping the Studio [2001], a series of four video installations, and each of them had editing costs and actually costs incurred by assistants, technicians other than him. So in that case-Bruce needed to recoup his costs. Sometimes they were in the sales price; some we fronted. It just depends. If you're doing-let's say you're producing a videotape-just *Setting a Good Corner* [1999], that I just pointed out to you on the cover of this magazine, is an edition of 40-there're fabrication costs-in making those 40 DVDs. So there could be some situations for such an esteemed and successful artist as Bruce where we get involved in that.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Do you offer the artist any other services, access to other services, like shipping, handling, accounting, anything like that?

MS. WESTWATER: Well, we always say we're a full-service bank, but that could be to collectors as well as to artists. I mean, we're happy to oversee some storage areas. Richard Tuttle, for example, now has his space with us over in Chelsea that we kind of monitor for him. [Also, Nauman.] It really is so individual, because it depends on the artist.

I mean, we've done that for Susan Rothenberg, until she decided to get a big storage space for her own work in New Mexico, at which point we did a huge inventory, very time-consuming. We made the record book for her, so that when the work was shipped down, she would know what she has. That would be another example. Certainly, if there is legal or financial services that the artist questions, we're happy to give referrals, but usually that's more of personal choice.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So all that, [in] terms of the burden of the cost to the gallery, the burden of the cost to the artist, would be done on a case-by-case kind of basis.

MS. WESTWATER: Exactly.

MR. MCELHINNEY: By need, obviously, I mean, if you need legal help or accounting help, then that's something apart of sales.

MS. WESTWATER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: Are there any particular stories that you would like to share about working with artists, kind of outside of the box, outside of the normal, or I guess what a lot of people would assume is the normal artist-gallery arrangement, you know, of consignment of sales?

MS. WESTWATER: There are a number of them, but privacy should prevail here.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So there isn't anybody who showed up and said, I've got a truckload of steel and I need a check for X amount of dollars. We're going to move it to-

MS. WESTWATER: I suspect what has happened-because now the gallery is 32 years old or going on that-it's probably become so commonplace [laughs] in a way, situations like that, but you roll with the punches and you learn to be flexible and open. And if you're by nature a problem solver, it helps a lot.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So extraordinary troubleshooting is more or less a common thing.

MS. WESTWATER: Exactly.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So scholars in the future will have to just dig around and-

MS. WESTWATER: Exactly, exactly. Something I didn't mention, which may refer back to your previous question, actually concerns catalogues raisonnés, which we're beginning to get involved with in a couple of cases. Nauman, for example, has a great start sitting right there on my desk, initiated by Joan Simon, which-the big one-which we're prepared to update, and we've made a real point of staying on top of that. That's something right now that we do as best we can. Bruce is happy to have Joan involved.

I think some artists understand from the beginning and save all kinds of ephemeral and archival materials anticipating the archives or scholars later on. In fact, most of our artists really don't do that, which means, I think, we have to take kind of responsibility for documentation of things, the whereabouts of artworks, collections, these kinds of questions. We really try to keep on top of them.

And now with the auction houses being so much more active, it's a bit harder to do, and those bodies don't really like to share. So it's more problematic than it used to be, but that's something that we think about. And staff members here are assigned artists, with some responsibility to keep up, and we're beginning to do this, actually, for Rothenberg, begin to-just follow up and establish, if we can, who owns what.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, it seems that in some sense, you're as involved with the publishing industry as you are with serving the needs of artists and collectors. Would you like to talk about publishing?

MS. WESTWATER: Well, we've done-obviously, I'm surrounded by stacks of books here on the desk, several of which we either published ourselves as monographs, or catalogues of gallery exhibitions, or ones we contributed to with a financial contribution. Sometimes, in addition to providing photographic images and collection information and press-which might have articles from 30 years ago about Richard Tuttle, Susan Rothenberg, Malcolm Morley, whatever. So I think they are increasingly important, and one wants to have good quality publications around. So this is definitely a long-term commitment.

Most of our shows, I would say, now are accompanied by a catalogue of some sort. We might even do it with another gallery, share the expenses of it, or we might do it strictly on our own.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So is all of that undertaken as a private enterprise on your part?

MS. WESTWATER: Absolutely. And someone on our staff-actually Michael Short-really works on the design of these catalogues. And, of course, all the computer technology is all the more helpful to him, and then we've got several printers we use for these, so this goes well beyond the announcement card format. It might be a poster; it might be a little brochure.

We did one for Evan Penny that we took to the Basel Art Fair, which was very useful. He's a younger, mid-career artist who is getting a lot of attention. We thought we would show five pieces of his, how neat it would be to have an accordion brochure with some images and with a short text about him, because the kind of audience at that particular art fair is big; I mean, it could be 65,000 people. And on that level, especially when it is in Europe, you get a global audience; it made a lot of sense. It wasn't super expensive; we printed it in Canada, but we designed it in-house and pulled it together. So certainly we do a lot more of those than we used to.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So do you think in general, in the art world in the U.S., that there are more people getting involved in the publishing end of things-the galleries? Because it seems to me, like in Europe 20, 25 years ago, you would meet an artist straight out of art school and everybody had a catalogue, and in the States it was sort of something that happened when you happened to have good luck of some sort; somebody had the money to pay for it and/or there was an institution or alternative spaces, if they had the funding, but the amount of private publishing was happening always in Europe. It seemed like it far exceeded the United States, at least in the past.

MS. WESTWATER: Yes-no, I think that-

MR. MCELHINNEY: Are we catching up now?

MS. WESTWATER: Well, I think that's an interesting observation, which also probably sheds light on a number of different issues. One of them, specifically, I remember from having spent time in Germany with Konrad Fischer-or you could also say, to a lesser degree, that the Netherlands-some of those catalogues that those artists got and were made for them in the '60s, let's say, or the '70s, were not always a beautiful coffee table, lavish publication. You kind of expect that more in, perhaps, in France. But they were very workable, practical books that told the story of the artist's work, especially if he was being introduced, let's say, from America into Germany or the Netherlands.

And I think a lot of those local institutions-*kunsthalle*s, let's say-where art was shown regularly but not

necessarily collected, as opposed to a *kunstmuseum*, would often be accompanied by publications. Again, not fancy, very practical, but providing, I think, a tremendous educational service. And probably our library is fuller of those kinds of books of certain artists from Europe in the '60s or early '70s than what you're talking about- than would have been the case here.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Somebody who comes to mind is an artist like Dieter Roth.

MS. WESTWATER: Yes.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, that's interesting. How do you think the web has changed things? I mean, has the web made the need for something tactile, like a book, more compelling, or has it raised questions about its necessity?

MS. WESTWATER: I think probably it goes both ways. There are avid collectors of books and catalogues, especially with the genre of so-called artist books, books designed by the artist, not as a catalogue to document a show, but as an artwork in and of itself.

Richard Tuttle is a real master of that over the years. Surprisingly enough, before his retrospective, which opened in 2005 in San Francisco, was accompanied by this beautiful, huge volume, people always used to say, gee, I would like to get a catalogue of Richard Tuttle-I don't know much about him. Frankly, until more recently, it was very difficult to come up with anything, because Richard didn't want a catalogue; what he wanted to do was to make an artist's book, to establish this other category of art making.

And so some of those are tremendously innovative, creative, unusual, funky, ephemeral-you can apply lots of different adjectives. But what it meant was that when Richard was given the choice-and he was one of the artists who did show first in New York with Betty Parsons and then quite soon after that in Europe-he did the artist book.

So he is someone for whom there weren't very many, what we call, catalogues with biography, bibliography, information, statements of the artist, a little bit of writing, pictures, that sort of thing. So that category is a collectable one now for certain people I know who do value, let's say, the printed word, the printed image, in not only artists books but serious documentation about the art world.

On the other hand, I know there are people who, when offered a catalogue, say no, no, no, if I want to see this, I'll go on your website. Certainly when we had our website designed, we really wanted it to be as rich as possible, really revealing, in-depth, the career of the artist in the gallery, images of early work, shows of early work, full documentation about shows in the past, museums, exhibitions, press references, scholarly publications, whatever. So our website is-people have complimented -it seems to be very good. We add to it constantly, so there is new work by the artists. In the case of Tuttle, there would be new reviews. So after the show went to the Whitney, there would have been reviews added. It's now in Dallas, so it would have been, again, a review added from there.

We have also tried to make it in that way useful for students. We used to get huge amounts of requests-can't you send me out a press kit; can't you send out biography, bibliography. So we would be making many press kits. So it was a big expense, one we were happy to bear. On the other end, now that we have a very full website, we don't need to worry about those requests anymore. And I know a lot of students who use them, in some cases, perhaps too effectively. But people who really study them-and so, to my mind, it's a great service.

MR. MCELHINNEY: How do you find people to write for you?

MS. WESTWATER: That's probably harder [laughs], you know. For simple things that are around here, the staff-we all write a press release; we would write a little introduction to something if we needed to. Often-

MR. MCELHINNEY: I mean like a monograph.

MS. WESTWATER: That is harder, and what we would normally go to is a writer we knew probably, who had some association with the artist in the past, maybe a friend of the artist. In some cases, you can also use an interview format, which can be useful, depending on how much an artist is willing to talk. But it really depends.

I don't think actually it's always so easy. I think one would imagine that it's easier than it is. But if you're looking for a concise kind of, let's say, catalogue text or article, you want someone who is going to provide the context for the artist-a little bit about the artist's history, where they came from. And I wish actually there were somehow more talented writers around that we had found, because it's a challenge. And maybe this is just a function of getting older. But I'm not sure there are as many talented young curators around as there used to be, because some now have fundraising or PR aspects to their jobs that curators 15, 20 years ago didn't have to worry about in the same way.

MR. MCELHINNEY: I'm pretty sure that in most institutions, most public institutions, that's true for anyone who maybe 20, 30 years ago was more involved in a creative sense. Most people have accumulated, I think, more clerical tasks just on account of the cost of keeping the doors open and-I don't know. I've seen myself a trend in some of the museums-I won't say where-but where a lot of museums are trying to find creative ways to use their own collections rather than-to incur the cost of traveling shows. So I'm curious how that affects the shows that might be organized for contemporary artists, where the money comes from for that.

Do you ever-have you ever had to raise money for a museum show outside of the gallery?

MS. WESTWATER: We've been asked.

MR. MCELHINNEY: I bet.

MS. WESTWATER: Absolutely. And in some cases people will say, well, who is the big collector of this artist, or collectors, we go to? Years ago, people did go to corporations, which today doesn't happen, or doesn't happen with the same results. I'm looking at these catalogues, and most of them have been, I would say, realized with considerable private monies.

Excuse me-[interruption].

So to go back to your question, sometimes we're asked for people who can help support the show. I would say more frequently we're asked who might help pay for the catalogue. So if you can get several contributions in that regard, you know, you're going to make a nicer book, which, of course, documents the show.

I'm curious whether some of these curatorial programs, like the one at Bard [College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY]-maybe Columbia [University, New York, NY] is starting one-include professional training in different ways. I wonder if one of them is fundraising, not that it would have been in the old days, but it may well be now.

MR. MCELHINNEY: I think it's not uncommon in American higher education right now-since I've worked in it for some time and have observed this-that a number of programs are looking at less purely academic degrees, without actually calling it career training or, sort of, trade training-

MS. WESTWATER: But it is.

MR. MCELHINNEY: It becomes trade training, yeah. And there is a lot of, I think, subterranean controversy about the appropriateness of that in schools, especially, I would imagine, a school like Columbia, which is an Ivy League school. Certainly a lot of state schools-you remember back in the '70s and early '80s, there were a lot of people studying arts and administration. And that, sort of, has morphed into other things, too.

But, yeah, it will be curious to see where that goes. I don't know. I seem to have apprehended it in a couple of exhibitions-again, I won't identify them-puzzling inclusions-like, what is that painting doing here? I mean, wondering if maybe the lender to the exhibition had some-was especially generous or something, and they decided a piece that may not have been altogether appropriate in terms of quality, just because it helped pay the bills-and that is possible.

MS. WESTWATER: Or even, I mean, you could raise that to a level-another level-and talk about museums bargaining for the inclusion and the trade of the [Henri] Matisse and the [Pablo] Picasso and the [Max] Beckmann and the [Francis] Bacon or whatever, and say, well, if you want that, you better put-you know, I mean, it can happen at, let's say, a simple gallery level or perhaps at the Hermitage [Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, Las Vegas, NV] or MoMA, who knows?

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, it's all part of the changing landscape of art in our culture.

What shows in the past have been wildly successful in terms of accommodation of, let's say, critical impact, the sale, or publication? Is there one, or are there any, that stand out as being, kind of, charmed events where everything just went right, or are all of them that way?

MS. WESTWATER: They're not all that way. But it's hard to single out a couple. When you're representing older artists, there's always kind of a cyclical arrangement. Sometimes this body of work of the artist's at 40 may be great; at 46, the artist may be less visible; at 60, he or she may have a higher profile; or the reverse, which you well know. It's really hard to generalize about that, and I don't think it's strictly a function of the generation of the artist. A show by Tom Sachs, for example, generates a lot of enthusiasm; his kind of irreverent bricolage sculpture speaks to a young audience.

At the same time, we've done shows, especially since 1999, of Lucio Fontana, for example. So we've tried to revisit some senior historical artists who haven't been given their due. Fontana certainly would be one of those major post war radical abstractionists who did show in New York and in America after World War II, primarily

because of the Guggenheim.

Lucio Fontana was born in Argentina but actually spent more of his mature life in Italy-claimed, I might add, by both countries, strongly. The shows of Fontana recently have been tremendously successful. And that's really, in a way, a rediscovery of an important earlier artist who somehow had been off the screen for a while. So we see a responsibility kind of in both directions.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Thank you.

MS. WESTWATER: But that reminded me of something I should have said in this other interview that I had the other day, in New Mexico-and they were asking about the younger artists, and then they said something about the older artists, and I never picked up on that. So I should probably go back to them and remind about this other story.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Yeah. I think it's fair to say that some people intersect with the audience early; some intersect late; some intersect multiple times during their career. I have had some very good friends who were very important writers over the past 30 years, and have known some of them at times when people were not paying any attention to them, and then 10 years later the whole world was watching. And I think that my perception, at least as an artist, is that some older artists assume that, if they don't make the intersection by a certain age, that they're sunk. And some younger artists have the same assumptions. My own opinion, I guess, is that they should just do their work and keep busy, and it will happen however it happens.

But there is-I don't know-there seems to be today-and maybe you could speak to this-a kind of intersection of art and fashion, or art and novelty. And how important is that, do you think, to the lasting value of someone's work that they-and there's also here, there's a question about academically trained artists and the ones who have M.F.A.s, as opposed to artists who have eschewed that path?

MS. WESTWATER: I have to say, on the question of advanced post-graduate academic degrees, I must say most of our artists probably don't have them. A few of the younger ones probably are more apt to have gone to art school, not necessarily finished. Although Malcolm Morley, growing up in England-post-World War II England-went to art school, which I actually think was more common there. Now it may be equally common in the United States.

On the question of art and fashion, art and novelty, maybe to some degree; I mean, you talk about your literary friends, let's say. Maybe to some degree there was a stronger association years ago between art and literature than there is now. Art and fashion and design intersect globally, and there is-what word expresses it?-

MR. MCELHINNEY: Nexus.

MS. WESTWATER: -between-nexus-something like that. Because I think that's certainly true, especially among the young.

MR. MCELHINNEY: But would you agree that that sort of power of the critic has been changed since the '60s and '70s?

MS. WESTWATER: I think it probably has, but part of that you could attribute to greater information, communication, globalization, so that there are so many more sources of information that the power of the few critics, which might have obtained in the '60s and '70s in New York, let's say, has changed a bit, because it's not just *The New York Times*, or it's not just *The Nation*, or it's not just the New York area or whatever.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So the so-called culture works on different models of communication.

MS. WESTWATER: Exactly, any of those things. So that probably has changed but in part because of information technology. But I don't know whether-also the power of those critics diminished because of decreased interest in that profession. I mean, maybe it was less interesting, or is less interesting for younger thinkers to be involved with. I don't know.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Yeah, I was sort of trying to make a connection between them, because you cited my example of my literary friends, but that there was some kind of connection between art and literature, which surely there was, I think, at points in history, especially with someone like Robert Hughes who has-he did a history of Australia [*The Fatal Shore*. New York: Knopf, 1987] and the [Francisco de] Goya book [*Goya*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003]-has undertaken writing tasks that exceed the brief of a critic.

But I was thinking about the perception that sent somebody like-well, somebody like a [Clement] Greenberg had at one time, or others, to sort of shape taste, to direct sales, to influence collectors and curators. That seems to be-

MS. WESTWATER: I don't see one person having the power that he had, which was so diverse at that particular moment.

MR. MCELHINNEY: And you just think that because there are more voices in that chorus.

MS. WESTWATER: Yes.

MR. MCELHINNEY: That makes sense.

MS. WESTWATER: Because he would have been considered very much the one who anoints-the one who anoints, the one who advises, the one who possibly sells, who writes, kind of a one-man band of artistic talents and not without commercial aspirations either, in that case.

I just don't think it's in one person's hands. I mean, you can certainly talk about auction houses today; you can talk about a few very high-powered dealers, some of them more global than others. But there are other factors, too, so there's kind of countervailing powers. But the press obviously is at the top there. But it's not necessarily the Clement Greenberg or the Hilton Kramer or-who else-Tom Hess, John Cannaday-who were very diverse figures, obviously.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, then I suppose, in a way, one can say that the art world was a smaller realm.

MS. WESTWATER: Yes, definitely.

MR. MCELHINNEY: There is a question here, which asks whether-how do you see yourself-well, it says, literally, do you think of yourself as part of a community or as a business person on your own? And I guess they also ask to describe your relationship with other dealers and collectors.

MS. WESTWATER: Well, I mean, community, you can talk about in different ways. In some regard, I do regard myself as part of an artistic, creative community that one could pinpoint around in the early '70s, with SoHo more or less at its center, because at that point when I entered the art world, and then briefly worked for John Weber, and then got to know a lot of artists, and worked at *Artforum* magazine for those three years-I mean, that was a kind of community. It's a kind of community that I don't think really exists anymore. But it was a nice one to be a part of, and one that for me was exceedingly stimulating and fun-a real learning experience, which I certainly value a lot.

But I suppose since we can't, kind of, reset the clock and look at today in the same kind of way that we're looking at 35 years ago, it's silly to try and project whether that community is possible in the art world. Maybe it is or maybe there are just cliques or different, more communities within a larger, pluralistic kind of scene.

I think, with regard to other dealers, I think we are friendly with lots of other dealers. And some-my partner loves Old Masters, so we're friendly with diverse dealers and part of the Art Dealers Association of America since the '70s. I think-I've been on the board, and I think there does need to be a kind of communal effort on the part of dealers, especially when, in many cases, we feel overwhelmed, challenged, fighting with the auction houses.

They do have the ability, today, to dominate the market through the media. We always looked forward to having certain collectors come in, who are very serious, who would sit down and go over the books and say, now, what about this or what about that? "I've been thinking, I read, I saw," you know. All the sources of research and, quote, unquote, homework, are not the ones adhered to by many of the collectors today, who are looking for the trophy pieces, which are promoted by the auction houses. So I think in light of that kind of competition, a lot of dealers have actually felt greater bonds among themselves professionally, perhaps, than before.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So as the stakes are higher-

MS. WESTWATER: Well, I think-

MR. MCELHINNEY: -the cohesion is greater.

MS. WESTWATER: And I think especially-the art dealers have always done this art show, which has been for years, up at 67th Street Armory. There are other shows, including one called the Armory Show, which is on the pier, which is more international, but the phenomenon of these art fairs and the huge amounts of money trading hands there, I think we've felt very much under pressure to make ours better, to try and get collectors there to make it more appealing, to make it more interesting, while at the same time serving some kind of educational function. But that feeling is much stronger now, I can assure you, from some meetings I've been to, like earlier this summer about dealers banding together and say, come on, what can we do to make this better, and to, in a way, show why what we do can be very valuable to collectors in ways that auction houses can't be.

MR. MCELHINNEY: How do you see these relationships or these forms in the business part evolving, let's say, the

next 10 years? Next 20 years? Any idea?

MS. WESTWATER: No, it's-

MR. MCELHINNEY: If you were to wake up, if you were to wake up like Rip Van Winkle in 20 years, what would we find?

MS. WESTWATER: Oh, it's hard to say. Something you might see more of, which we already have seen a bit of, actually is, again, dealers getting together, in many cases, not only sharing artists, possibly, which we have seen before, dual shows, dual representations, but also in the purchase of artwork.

So rather than having to go to auction, Mr. Collector comes to a dealer or consortium of people and says, look, I'm willing to sell this to you, not to have it go to auction, but this is the price I'm looking for. How can we put this together? So there's multiple deals, more than there used to be before, I think, in which galleries are buying things together because of the high prices, making it prohibitive, almost, to do otherwise, you know, unless you can buy things at auction. But even you could buy things at auction, you know, share the expense and cost and selling in that regard. You know, it's hard to say, but I'm sure we'll see more of it.

There's also kind of stranger, I think, more elastic kind of relationships these days, some of them good, some of them bad, probably some of them bordering on-in terms of legality-but between the guarantees and, you know, fronting the money to the collector who has this to sell at auction, setting very different kinds of terms in order to quote, unquote, auction people would say, to get the material, to get the goods, so that's an area that is more about banking and financing, on a level that most dealers really can't compete with.

MR. MCELHINNEY: There was that scandal in the map industry.

MS. WESTWATER: Yes.

MR. MCELHINNEY: And then there was [A. Alfred] Taubman [of Sotheby's auction house] and [Sir Anthony] Tennant [of Christie's auction house] scandal.

MS. WESTWATER: Right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: A few years ago. So I guess a lot of things-

[END TAPE 1 SIDE B.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: -like, are subject to changing economic laws.

MS. WESTWATER: And look, a downturn in the market could make some of these activities almost dry out if there weren't as much expendable monies being spent on art, of one period or another. If it's less interesting that way than real estate or the stock market-well, then some of these situations will move in a different direction.

MR. MCELHINNEY: So as a gallery, you're pretty diversified. You've got the publishing, you've got the sales market, you have got other enterprises that would allow you to stay in the game through time.

MS. WESTWATER: Well, I don't think we really make money from the publications, I have to confess, but the versatility of the challenges makes the gallery interesting. I mean, you come to work every day and you could encounter very different problems, very much apart from showing the art and trying to place the art well on behalf of the artist. You know, you could be dealing with the logistics about bringing steel in. You could be worrying about the-[inaudible]-bringing these beautiful silver balls from Africa, in which the dried skins of camels and other animals were actually kind of hidden and buried. So that was a question where-well, what do we do for customs, so we called it ballast and something, without wanting to mention any animals, so that's one of those strange stories, and there have been many others over the years.

When we started the gallery in 1975, it was really a matter of trying to be able to handle a number of different tasks all at the same time. So it was a very different job from going to, let's say, an entry level job at MoMA or at the Whitney, where presumably you would have a very narrow area of responsibilities, probably if you have an office, a very small one or the corner of someone else's. And what you did every day would be much more monotonous and possibly repetitive because you really-apart from dealing with the one particular area of the artwork, you might not have any idea about handling an artwork, about how you record its properties the way a registrar does, dealing with issues of conservation, documentation, all these different kind of things. I think in a gallery you-I mean, it's more than an opportunity; it's an obligation.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, as you stated earlier about whole service, extraordinary troubleshooting opportunity.

MS. WESTWATER: Yes.



MR. MCELHINNEY: Yes. Yes. Are you yourself a collector?

MS. WESTWATER: I didn't used to be, because when we started, I didn't have the wherewithal to do it, and whatever we could sell, it was important to sell it to keep the doors open. But there's a few things I started to buy in the '70s and '80s, and my husband's more of a collector than I am, so we do collect. But we don't have work in storage to a large degree. We want art around us everyday.

MR. MCELHINNEY: And is it like what you show, or is it something else? Is it like-

MS. WESTWATER: It's work of artists represented by the gallery, but includes others as well; Warhol, [Hans] Arp, [Francis] Picabia, for example. We also collect some antiquities, mainly Greek and Roman, again, not a large number. Of course, that's an area of collecting these days that has its own other problems.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Provenance.

MS. WESTWATER: Yeah.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Repatriation-

MS. WESTWATER: Exactly.

MR. MCELHINNEY: -as the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY]-

MS. WESTWATER: Big story. Yes.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Big story. Well, I know there's some people who collect things like samurai swords or Roman coins or whatever, for fun.

MS. WESTWATER: Right.

MR. MCELHINNEY: You, know, a form of relaxation.

If you were to-if you were to take a snooze again along with Van Winkle and wake up in another hundred years, how would you like your gallery and yourself to be remembered?

MS. WESTWATER: Well, these are such big-picture questions. [Laughs.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, it's on the list.

MS. WESTWATER: Well, I'd like to think that the artists we've showed demonstrate a very important moment in the history of our country, one that, to my mind, is an important legacy. Art, it seems to me, is the way you judge a civilization.

So from that point of view, I think that our commitment to certain of the artists, especially the more senior ones-because you're talking about a long time out and about a kind of retrospective look. Yeah, I think they really have been important innovators and also reflectors of our culture and society at this time. So from that point of view, we've been very lucky and proud to be representing them and just kind of spreading the word about them.

So I hope that, assuming the museums are still out there and the libraries are still out there and the collectors are-as well as younger artists who will probably-or will, at least in my mind, reflect the influence of these artists whom we've shown and whom we've made so much of an effort to present in an appropriate way, and to place in spots where it's made a difference.

MR. MCELHINNEY: That's a great answer because I think a lot of people might expect some dealers to identify a particular style or a particular look. But you're actually describing the content of work, the intention of the work, the way the work reflects the zeitgeist of time.

MS. WESTWATER: Yes. Exactly.

MR. MCELHINNEY: And that's a really great ambition.

MS. WESTWATER: Well, as far as-I mean, it's not-you know, we may have an artist who is, in some respects, a Pop artist. We may have someone else who is, in part, a minimal or reductive artist. We may have another artist who's more gestural, who loves moving that oil around on canvas. There's someone else for whom, you know, the look or the signature is more ambiguous, if present at all. But it is-it's hard to generalize. But again, I think that mix is what really stimulates us and keeps us going. Rather than-I mean, how boring would it be to have, you know, the first generation, the second generation, and the third generation all of the same movements.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Exactly. Well, it's exciting.

MS. WESTWATER: I mean, so keep it fresh. [Laughs.]

MR. MCELHINNEY: That is a good goal.

MS. WESTWATER: So, not so easy. [Laughs.] Especially when it's 105 degrees.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, yeah, thank God for air conditioning.

MS. WESTWATER: Yeah, exactly.

MR. MCELHINNEY: I think we've come to the end of the questions. I don't know. Is there anything that you haven't addressed that-

MS. WESTWATER: Not that I can think of, but you're always welcome to call me back after your next expedition. [They laugh.] But I don't think so. I mean, again, if you come up with another list or the Archives wants to follow up, I'm more than happy to do it.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Well, they may.

MS. WESTWATER: So who knows, whatever direction they are-as I said, what direction they decide to take.

MR. MCELHINNEY: Thank you very much for your time.

MS. WESTWATER: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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