



Smithsonian  
*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Evelyn Statsinger,  
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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Evelyn Statsinger on May 11-13, 2015. The interview took place in Statsinger's studio in Chicago, IL, and was conducted by Lanny Silverman for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's Chicago's Art-Related Archival Materials: A Terra Foundation Resource. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

## Interview

This is track one.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is Lanny Silverman recording Evelyn Statsinger interview for the Smithsonian Institution Archives of American Art. We're in Chicago at Evelyn's studio, and it's May 11, 2015.

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This is track two.

LANNY SILVERMAN: First question for you, Evelyn, is, you were born in New York?

EVELYN STATSINGER: I was born in Brooklyn—

LANNY SILVERMAN: In Brooklyn, yep.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —in 1927, and I—let's see—I [laughs] didn't have this—pardon me. The—then I moved to New York and went to the High School of Music & Art.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a pretty major place. I know that you also went—in addition to that, you've—you had some interesting—you had the Art Students League, as well.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Well, I graduated in the middle of the year, and then I went to the Art Students League for about six months. I studied with Ossip Zadkine, who was originally from Russia and came to the United States with, you know, Max Ernst and all those—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —all those people, and that's the first time that I ever had work realistically. It was run in a, kind of, old fashioned way, which was you had to draw first from plaster casts and then from models.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's old school teaching.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Right, but Ossip Zadkine would come in like once a week and give a critique. And I was the youngest in the class, and most of the people were practicing artists. [00:02:00] So, it was very interesting to me because it was the first time I had actually come in contact with practicing artists.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Let's go back, then, because we started out—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —with where you were born. I guess I'm curious about your family.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Your—are your parents Russian, by any chance?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, my father came from a little town between Russia and Poland.

LANNY SILVERMAN: They changed names to protect the innocent.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Right—to—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know how that goes.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —yeah—escape the pogroms.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: He—my grandfather came first, and he was a Hebrew scholar. And he actually never worked. But he was supported by the community as—he wasn't a Rabbi, but there's a name for that, which I really don't know, but that they would consult him on the laws.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, it was like a community—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. He was like a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know what you're—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —community psychiatrist.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Right.

EVELYN STATSINGER: He also interpreted—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Rabbi plus, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —yeah—interpreting the Bible and the laws and so forth. And my father—when he came—also had, you know, a past—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and he really wanted to become American. I mean, he just wanted to be American, but my grandfather—he had fought with my grandfather all the time. And he had actually wanted to be a doctor. But there wasn't enough money. And he became a dentist. He would've made a wonderful doctor, and I remember that, during the Depression, he—I'm probably skipping, but—during the Depression when people couldn't pay their bills, they knew my father—he loved dogs and animals. And so, they'd [laughs] give him a dog. [00:04:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: You had a lot of dogs in your house [laughs] is what you're trying to say?

EVELYN STATSINGER: We—at one time, we had something like 16 dogs in the house—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Whoa.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —because—I mean, that's an exaggeration, but one of them proceeded to have a lot of puppies. So—and I guess that's why I also like dogs and cats. And so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, how about your mom? Was she—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Now, my mother—my mother actually died when I was born.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I didn't know that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I was born in Kings County Hospital, which is where we lived in Brooklyn. And it was very strange. I don't really know the whole circumstances, but I suppose that I, probably, was pretty frail myself. So, I was taken to—it was, sort of, an estate on Long Island, and I was brought up by a woman. Her name was Mrs. Rodriguez, and she was—she was actually a nurse. And I lived with her for about—her and her husband and her son—I lived with her for about three years and then went back to my original family. But there's a very strange coincidence. I don't know if I can diverge [laughs]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's okay.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —this.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This doesn't have to be in any—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —A-to-B order. It's going to—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —jump around, regardless of what we do.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. When I came to Chicago and I was at the Institute, I was living on the South Side, and I came home from the Christmas holiday. I came back to Chicago on the Christmas holiday, and I received a letter from Mrs. Rodriguez, who [00:06:00]—it had been, you know, 20 years since I had—I had not kept in touch. And she told me—first of all, she had visited my father to get my address here. And it was a beautiful letter, really, a beautiful letter. And she told me that her son, who I remember because he taught me to tie my laces—

[They laugh.]

—okay—had been living right next door to me—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —in Chicago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's wild.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I knew people in that—that was a very small apartment house, like three flat. I knew people there. So, I must have passed him in the street or—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —it—really weird coincidence. It was very, very weird.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, I guess, it sounds like—was your first experience of art really in the High School of Music & Art? Is that where you first—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —had a sense of what art stuff was? Because you didn't sound—it sounds like it was obviously an educated, sophisticated family, but I guess the question is—well, I guess the question is, when did you first know you wanted to be an artist? That's my real question.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I know this sounds strange [laughs], but I always—I always drew. And I wrote poetry. And you know, like all children, I was creative. And I never thought, actually, about being an artist. It was just something that I did, and in a certain way, I still feel that way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I know, it's strange, but I do. And so, I—[00:08:00] but I was a very curious child and asked a great many questions. And I think my parents were very—were very kind.

LANNY SILVERMAN: They were supportive, even if this wasn't their area—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —or his area. It seems like it was something that was supported.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, but I always thought that—you know, that art is just a natural thing that you do. And I don't—I don't really feel that it's something so special. I don't—I really don't feel that way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, in our culture, until it gets beaten out of you, [laughs] I guess.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Essentially—in other words, creativity—you start off—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —doing all these things as a child—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but then, I guess—well, one of the things that happened for me—I guess the same thing for you—was a sense of practicality. There aren't that many artists or poets in our culture.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There aren't that many roles for them.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, did—you didn't think about it as a career for a while. I guess, when you started to think in—how long—when did you first even see an avenue of—was that the Art Students League that you refer to, like seeing working artists?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, but I don't know how to explain it. I still don't think about it in that way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, it wasn't a career. It's just there's an artist.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I didn't—it was just something I loved doing, and it was very interesting. The people were very interesting, and—but I do know that—for example [laughs], I'm going to jump back to, like, the first grade. I mean, that really—as you were saying, it really can be beaten out of you, certain kind of child. And I remember we were told to—told to draw a cat. And the teacher would tell us, you know, you do a circle and then the ears. Then you go down, and you make the tail. So, I drew a cat, and then she held it up to the class. [00:10:00] And she said, "Oh, this is a wonderful cat." And then she said to me, "How did you do it?" Well, I knew what I should say—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: —but [laughs] I couldn't say that. So, I started telling a big story about a cat—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and I had to stand in the corner with my nose in the corner for almost an hour.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Whoa.

EVELYN STATSINGER: However, in New York City—not New York City—they had a contest. It was called the Wanamaker's contest, and I imagine it came from the Wanamaker's store or something. And it was all over the city. And she told us that we had to make a drawing for this. But we couldn't write. So, she went around asking all the children the name—to put down the name, okay? And when she came to me, I had drawn this picture of this woman. She had flaming red hair—

[They laugh.]

—this—with all this red hair, and she had this bat. And she was hitting a flower. And she asked me what the title was. And I said spring.

[They laugh.]

I have no idea if she understood, and I, myself—I mean, I'm surprised that a young child that I could—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: —[laughs] I could do that. And I won a little mention. And I felt very vindicated.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, so I'm curious. So, you'd got—that was your first support for being an artist—

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: —or getting some feedback from the outside world.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, right. I guess that was.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Has it been downhill from there or what?

[They laugh.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: I hadn't thought about that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or uphill. I don't know [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: [00:12:00] I hadn't thought about that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I guess one of my questions had to do with—do you think there's any relationship to the work, if you can remember—the work that you were doing then?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. I remember.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The flaming woman doesn't sound anything like something you've done in the last 50 years.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, no. No. There's no relation.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, you don't—there's no—so—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, except that it made me realize how teachers in art schools know nothing about—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Can you really teach art is the other question.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, that was the other question. I don't think so.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. I wonder that, too. That was for later—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but I guess, while we're on teaching—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —so you obviously were the—well, let's start—go up to the Art Students League again—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because there were some very famous people there.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. There were.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm a little jealous because you may have met some—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you mentioned some—you probably met some—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I remember Zorach. And who else was there? I don't know if John Marin was there or not.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Eva Hesse?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, Eva Hesse is much later.

LANNY SILVERMAN: She's later, as is probably Jackson Pollock, and all those people.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. This is—this is—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —all those—that's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that's way later. Yeah. I'm assuming that, but—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. That's—in time. And also—oh, well. I would say something about the class. It was the first time I had to work realistically because Music & Art was run an entirely different way. We had to do this head, and it was in clay. And I remember doing it and being very disappointed in it, because I thought, "Well, it's just a head, and it can't talk" [laughs]. I mean, which was really, kind of, weird. [00:14:00] I honestly didn't understand.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I remember that that was a—that was a, kind of, pivotal thing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Is that when you abandoned realism [laughs]?

EVELYN STATSINGER: In a way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was going to maybe ask—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —how you got to abstraction, but maybe that's how.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right. No. No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's always disappointing. You can't capture reality.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. It was sad, and I didn't understand that it wasn't about, you know, the head speaking, or if you were really very good, you didn't need that part. But it was strange.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not to mention, expression and being able to—inner-psychology—all the other things that are people—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —representing it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But you were disappointed by the experience of realism [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Right [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: And they were pushing that pretty heavily. So, it was a battle at that point? Did you feel like you had something to say or a different style that was wanting to come out and you were—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —at odds with them, or you didn't know at that point?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. No. No. I didn't connect that to—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. It wasn't—you were—it was too young a period for you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —to have that. So, I guess I go back to—at a certain point, you must have decided, I could do that. I want to be an artist. Is that much later?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. I'm trying to explain, but I never decided that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You haven't ever decided that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I haven't ever decided that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You just love it, and you do it because you love it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I was surprised, in the end, that I am an artist [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: I got you.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. I think I've got that point. I think, basically, I'm not too far behind you. I guess I feel like the cultural labels and the things and the dealing with the marketplace, they're all the parts that we have problems with. The part that's the fun and the beauty is loving the art and the music and the culture and all that stuff.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, you never really felt like that was—so you didn't have a back-up plan or any—it was just you were doing what you loved.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And you figured it would all just take care of itself.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: And you know, I mean, things just happened that were very, very lucky and very curious, really. [00:16:00] When—I'm probably getting—when—I got to Chicago in a strange way. I came—I was at the University of Toledo for a year.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I don't know that that appears on your records.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Anyways.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I had a friend who was unhappy there and wanted some company. So, she told me it's a great place, and I just wanted to get out of New York. So, I went there, and I realized, after a while, that, since I got straight As, [laughs] there's something the matter with that university.

[They laugh.]

But I came to Chicago just for a visit. And I didn't really know anything about the Art Institute. And I went to see the Chester Dale Collection.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And while I was there, I thought, "It would be wonderful to go to school here, and I could—you know, I could see all these paintings." And I just turned to the right. You won't believe it, and there was an arrow. And it said School of the Art Institute [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, I was going to ask you, what brought you to Chicago? It was, kind of, another one of these fortuitous things.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You just—all the things just fell into place.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And so, I followed the—I followed the arrow—

[They laugh.]

—until I got to—did you know Mrs. Howlett [ph]? She was part of the art education.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Who's this?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Howlett. It's way before your time, probably.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. I don't know her.

EVELYN STATSINGER: She was head of the art education department, and I started talking to her. And I think they were interested in getting students for Music & Art. And she said if I wanted to come to the institute that they couldn't give me credit for the Art Students League. [00:18:00] But that, if I sent a portfolio, they could give me a years' credit. So, I sent a portfolio, and [laughs] they gave me a years' credit. So, that's how I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's how you got to Chicago.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That's how I got to Chicago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That was going to be one of my questions—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, I'm sorry.



LANNY SILVERMAN: —but I guess we've got—no, that's okay. That's kind of—it's just that it flowed organically, in terms of how we got there. So, you then—then you didn't look back. You just came to Chicago. It's ironic because so much of the art world is centered in New York, and here you have these formative experiences—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in New York. And you were eager to get out of it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But you weren't looking at the business side of it, obviously. You weren't looking at galleries or trying to get into galleries. You were—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, actually, you know, at that time, there really weren't many galleries in Chicago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's true. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I was one of the first people that Frumkin took, actually.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Did you—you showed at Artemisia. Did you have—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You weren't one of the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I went—what happened—I was in between galleries, and I had a work that was ready to show. And Alice Shadow [ph] called me and asked me if I would like to have an exhibition. So—and that was really a wonderful place to have an exhibition. I liked their space, and I had—I had a large exhibition there. And I stayed for a year. And that's how I'd got to Artemisia and made a lot of friends there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So did you feel like—by way of both, the High School of Arts & Music and the Art Students League, did you feel like you were in this bubble that was outside of the general, sort of, population? You were in this arts-and-culture bubble? Or it didn't occur to you until much later? Or it's not of consequence?

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't think of that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't think of it that way. You know, just because the art world is, sort of, somewhat removed from the rest of the world, and you have these very special experiences.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: I just wondered if you ever looked at it from a perspective of, [00:20:00] I'm in this, sort of, area. There's other areas. Your dad was in a whole other field, and actually, you didn't, probably, have a whole lot of role models. Or did you have any mentors or people that really helped, in terms of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, I did. You know, there are many people I've met along the way, but I—that were of help. There is so many people. [Laughs.] I can't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: How about early on, like maybe even from high school—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —or Art Students League? Any people—you mentioned—I don't have the spelling. I'll get that from you later—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Who's that? Ossip what?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Obsim—what's his name?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. Ossip Zadkine. Z-A-D-K-I-N-E.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Z-A-D—

EVELYN STATSINGER: K-I-N-E.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, that was an important person for you.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, and—well, he was. But I think, also, the people in the class were.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, seeing other people doing the same thing as you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —feeling like there was—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that this was an activity that had, not only worth, but there was something here.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because, otherwise, I don't know about you, but I was a pretty private child. And I would've done it on my own anyways. I didn't care.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But you saw there was a world out there doing what you wanted to do.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. It's the same thing. I mean, I think—I think, also—well, I was hard to describe. It's—you know, it's a saying. It sounds so simple when I'm 88 [laughs] years old—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: —to say that it's just something—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Just something you do—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —I liked to do.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —[laughs] just something you liked to do. [00:22:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's like I breathe or something—I mean, it's just a natural thing that I do, and I'd—you know, I'm not being humble. But I mean, I feel I've—I feel my work is good. And I've been very truthful with it. And I've done the best I can and so forth and so on. But that—I think about it in simple ways. The—but I can tell you, you know, like, I've seemed to always have these strange experiences. I was in the first Momentum show, and I wasn't the first one—Mies van der Rohe was one of the jurors. I think he was the only juror in that show. I'm not sure which—the second or third.

LANNY SILVERMAN: These were at the Art Institute?

EVELYN STATSINGER: What?

LANNY SILVERMAN: These were at the Art Institute?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, Mies van der Rohe.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. I mean, the Momentum Show.

EVELYN STATSINGER: The Momentum show.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Where was it?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, I think the first one—where was that first one? Do I have a record?

LANNY SILVERMAN: I can look it up myself.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. There were several. I think the last one was, maybe, at Navy Pier, but anyhow, he was one of the jurors. And I had one of my big drawings. And he saw it. And he told Katherine Kuh about it. And —

LANNY SILVERMAN: She's at the Art Institute. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Her I've heard of, of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [00:24:00] Yeah, and she called me up and asked to come up. And she came up. And I lived on the third floor. And you know, she had a lot of physical problems. But she was a very game person. And

we sat down. And I was showing her some work. And all the sudden, there's a strange noise. And this big Florida tortoise that [laughs] somebody had given me to—they had gone away and asked me to keep—had been living all winter under my radiator and was hibernating there. He decided to come out—

[They laugh.]

—and he was really big. And you know, they [laughs] walk on their toes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Oh, yeah. There's amazing.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And it was like a monster.

[They laugh.]

And he came out and went right in front of Katherine and began to urinate all over the floor.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's quite a studio visit.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And Katherine kept saying [laughs], "What is that? What is it?" And I kept saying, "Oh, he's never done that before."

[They laugh.]

You know, and then, finally, you know, we took care of that, whatever it was.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That is pretty wild.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It really was pretty weird.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And then she looked at the work. Well, it turns out that she wanted me to have a show at the Institute, and I was still a student in school.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, they're not supposed to show student work?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. It wasn't that. She was the head of the painting department and Carl Schniewind—I don't know if you've ever heard of him.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No.

EVELYN STATSINGER: He was the head of the print and drawing department. He, actually, had set up the [00:26:00] Brooklyn Print Department, and she didn't—for whatever reason, she couldn't tell him. You know, it was some, sort of, political reason she couldn't tell him she would like him to give me a show. So, what she did instead was she invited me to come down, and she invited all the curators at the Art Institute to come down [laughs] at the same time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's great.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So, it was really funny, and so I brought some work down, plus, a large body of photograms that I had been working on at the same time. And he came down. And I really liked him. He was a really wonderful person.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're talking about Carl?

EVELYN STATSINGER: And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Carl?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Carl. Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How do you spell his last name?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Schniewind. S-C-H—I think this is right—N-I-E-W-I-N-D. Maybe we should look—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I can look it up later, but I need to have a [laughs]—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. I think it's good.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Pretty close.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—

EVELYN STATSINGER: So then, he—then he came up, and then a couple of days later, he called me and came up to look at my work. And then he offered me a show. And so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's great.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I had my first show [laughs] at the Art Institute—I mean, at the museum. And it was too big. You remember the old—maybe it's before—they used to have two beautiful, big rooms. And so, I showed all of the big drawings, plus sketchbooks. And—okay—and then, after I—all of them were—[00:28:00] well, actually, this is one that I had recently.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Huh.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's an early one, and then I think it was about five years later he gave me another show of pastels.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's great. So, in a way—

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Inaudible] pastel.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —the business, sort of, took care of itself. People came to you, which is great—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because it's not that easy to go out there.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, and then—oh, we saw some students of—that's how—the first people who ever really bought my work were Rachel and Daniel Brenner. He was an architect and a student of Mies. And he was, then, a first-year professor at IIT. And that's how I met, you know, Jim Spires and all—that whole group of architects that had worked with Mies.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And you were, kind of—I guess my—one of my questions is—you're starting to, sort of, almost partially answer it—you're not exactly part of the Imagists. You're—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm not?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not really.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, and that's why Dennis did that, sort of, *Some Other Traditions*, that show. But you're, kind of, associated more with the earlier wave, the Monster Roster and those people. You're, sort of, more like the Leon Golub and those people, but there was—there's always been a very heavy sense of community from the Art Institute. So, were you—was it a tight-knit group when you were there?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Well, actually, it—I talked about—yes. I mean, I was a good friend of Leon Golub and Cosmo, and, actually, I wrote it down because [laughs] the last interview, they asked me who my friends were.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's funny.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —you know, it was a—it was really, very interesting at that time because [00:30:00] it was after the war, and there were all these people—Dominick Di Meo and—I should look at [laughs]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I know who you mean.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know the names. I probably need to get spellings at some point.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Tom Kapsalis—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah. Tom, I know very well.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and Whitney Halstead. And they were not—you know, everybody was, kind of, working in their own way. And the first time I heard the art—you know, came from Schulze's book—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —*Fantastic Image*. Yep.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, and then, the whole idea—the Monster school and all that. So, I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, your work doesn't—you're—Chicago is multifaceted. You're—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's a lot of other things. I mean, the first time I saw your work, actually, was—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and I met you, probably, then. I was a curator at the Madison, now, Art Museum, and that show was called *Some Other Traditions*.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And you could easily—as much Dennis did with that show, you could easily pick a bunch of other people that did complete—you know, we have Conceptualists here. We have—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: We have, what I call, pod people, women that work in sculpture, like Frances Whitehead or Barbara Cooper. There's a lot of people that did things that are not the stereotype. But you were also outside of—one of the reasons I was asking you about—you may have been close with them personally, but style-wise, it seems like you're in your own little corner, which is true of the Imagists, too. There's a lot of different kinds of Imagists—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and that's, kind of a whole story that's another subject. But basically, what I come to think of as your style, is something that's an organic, kind of, abstraction. You bear some similarity to Bill Conger—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —who's a good friend—in that you work in a way that's not pure abstraction. But it relates to the world. Yours more to nature—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and his more to, maybe, urban, but not always. Sometimes, he does things that are—so where do you think that came from? Is that something that you developed independently of your friends and colleagues? Or is this something that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Of which? I—because I've worked in so many different—[00:32:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's true, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the other thing that I should probably get into because your style has changed quite a bit over the years. But what I guess I'm saying is that what I've seen of your work doesn't fit in comfortably with the prevailing, either Imagists or the, sort of, nasty, raw-ego—raw-id, rather—kind of styles that you—we think of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in Chicago, which again, are not—are just the surface. And there's other things going on. But I guess, even back then, what you were doing—I'm looking at the drawing that—you know, that's behind me. And I'm thinking, even then, it seems—it's image-based. It may relate to Surrealism, which is a big thing in Chicago.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I—and you mentioned Max Ernst, some things like that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, did that influence you more, like, in terms of art history, like Surrealism or—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. I was—I was interested in Surrealism because—[laughs] I can't tell you. You know, since I lived in New York for a large part of my life, I saw so much art. I saw so many things, but I never connected it. I don't—you know, like, I never connected it to my work in a way. It probably, intuitively, became part of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I liked Surrealism, but I don't know. One thing kind of leads to another, and actually, in relation to the big drawings, they're—I think they're also deeply psychological and made use of texture. And they were simply intuitive. I don't make—and to this day, I don't make sketches for things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, you work directly. You don't—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I work directly, and even in the paintings, I essentially taught myself to paint. [00:34:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I don't make sketches. I can't—painting is very different from drawing because it has to be built, and, you know, you would work. And then, I'd get it to a certain kind of balance. And then the next day, I would work some more. And I would—it would just—I'd just keep it in certain kinds of balances until I finished it. The most important part is to know [laughs] when you're finished.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. You can overwork something for sure. What happens when it isn't going the way you'd like? Do you just abandon things, or do you work over—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I try not to because I feel it's a kind of discipline.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's interesting.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I—that's not—I mean, as far as—I can say there's been a few things that I haven't. But if I don't like them, I will just throw it away. But generally, I feel that I must've tried to because, if you start doing that and you hit a problem, you won't continue.

[They laugh.]

Do you know what I mean?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And you keep starting—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. It's about problem solving.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —you keep, you know, starting canvases over and over again. So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. There's probably people that—just like writers—that, you know, like the thing in the Jack Nicholson movie—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —*the Shining*, where he just keeps writing the same [laughs] sentence over again.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Right. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's ways to just get stuck and just keep repeating, "I'm going to finish this. I'm going to finish this."

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure. I understand that. So, I guess, maybe, my question for you is when you work in your studio, where do your—do your ideas—do you come into the studio with a set of ideas?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you just improvise? You just do it?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. It isn't—it isn't—it isn't—sometimes, it will be something really, very simple, like there'll be some feeling about rough and smooth, or something like that, I'd say. [00:36:00] But I've worked such a long time that I have it, kind of—it's not that I—they're always new to me, but there are things that are recurring that I'm not finished with. So—but I don't conceptualize them. It's that—it's the thing itself that makes the painting [laughs]. It's a very simple way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, when you have this, sort of, world that you create, you seem—a lot of your work—the work that I—you know, I think of as—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —as your prototypical work, it creates a, sort of—sort of, a world that the spectator enters into, and they're, sort of, imaginary worlds.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do they have—do you feel like they have—just like a fiction writer, like a novelist—do they have rules of consistency? Do you feel like there's certain things, like not just color schema, but even just forms—formal shapes or things? Do you—when you're evaluating it as you go, do you feel like you're trying to create a world and it has certain kinds of rules and ways of operating, operational kinds of—you know what I'm asking? I'm, sort of, asking you if it's—do you just—does it just happen, and it just evolves into something? Or do you think about it as you go? And do you feel like—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't know because the way I'm talking about it, it sounds like it just happens, but you know, it doesn't just happen.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. Nothing just happens.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, but it—oh, how to explain this? Well, probably—partly, like, say, if we're talking about painting, the painting itself, kind of, tells me where it's going, [00:38:00] but actually, I am [laughs] the one directing it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do the—do you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: And the materials are important.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do the materials dictate some of where you go—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —or do you start out and you've come—you said you think in terms of textures. Do you think in terms of materials when you walk into—you come into the studio, or do you just see what—pick up some things?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, but the materials are part of it. Everything that's in the painting is part of the painting, and I think about it.

[They laugh.]

I know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's tough, I mean, to—maybe this is not something that you necessarily analyze as you do it either.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. I don't.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't, and I like to keep it—I like to keep it ambiguous because I think that—I like to keep it ambiguous—but this sounds like a—but also specific. So, the reason I like a certain kind of ambiguity is because it gives the viewers something to do, and also, I'm—one of the reasons I'm really interested in showing is that I am really interested in what people think about what they see because I, sort of, know what I think or what it means to me. And people will tell me things about it. And sometimes, I can't imagine—

[They laugh.]

—how they got to that conclusion.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, it can be completely different than anything you intended or—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. It can be some other—completely different, and sometimes, they come quite close. But I don't really analyze my own paintings because I really don't want to.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, I know if they're bad. I mean, I—

[They laugh.]

You know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You know the good ones from the bad ones.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I know if something doesn't work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. [00:40:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: For example, in relation to when I started to work with acrylics—and it is just completely spontaneous. I spent a year in Japan with Stan, and I had amazing experiences there. And I brought back a lot of brushes from Japan because I met—I—by accident, I went into this store where brush—wonderful brush maker who makes—I don't know how much you know about all that, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —anyhow—who makes his own brushes. It was like an artist's dream. I mean, you walk in to the room, and these gorgeous brushes are hanging from the ceiling, and the whole room is just full of these wonderful brushes. And I brought a lot of them back. Now, one of the things about those brushes is they're made for specific uses.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So, you have something [laughs], which I call the battle of the brushes—

[They laugh.]

—because you have to—you have to try to make it do what you want it to do.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You've got to wield it. Yes. It's an unwieldy thing.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right. So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You may have been cross-purposes with some. If it was a Sumi brush, you may have been trying to do something else with it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, that's what you're saying. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, and the other thing that's interesting that is—to me—was that in Japan, the



relationship between the artist and the brush maker, there's nothing like it in the United States. You can—as an artist, you can go in, and you can talk to the brush maker, and you can ask him to make a particular kind of brush.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And this brush maker—so he had, along—you know, near the ceiling, all these calligraphies from different artists who had asked him to make brushes. And they had given him—[00:42:00] they had given him these calligraphies as a thank you. One day, I asked him—he only—I don't know; we got along. He [laughs] only spoke Japanese—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You spoke in sign—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and I only spoke English, but I brought—I asked him if I could watch him make some brushes. And it's astonishing, really, what they do. And I brought along a friend of mine who spoke English very well and was Japanese. And he asked her if he could ask me a favor. And what it was—I had noticed a couple of times that one of the calligraphies was a painting by Miró. So Miró used to go get his brushes from this—when he went to Japan.

LANNY SILVERMAN: His calligraphic sense is—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That makes a—I didn't know that, but that makes—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now that you say that, that makes perfect sense.

EVELYN STATSINGER: The thing that was interesting about this is that it was one of—it was a painting that Miró had given to this brush maker, and it was one of those, kind of, pseudo-calligraphy. Well, in—the calligraphies have to be interpreted. I mean, it's not so simple, like it'll be a haiku poem, and the viewer has to interpret what it—what it—what it means.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's not just simply writing.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's expressive writing.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Got you. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And so, the brush maker asked my friend, "Could you please ask her what the painting says?"

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: And you have enough trouble doing that with yours.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

[They laugh.]

But of course, it didn't say anything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, not literarily.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —in the sense—in the sense that he knew.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So, I had to tell her that, you know, it wasn't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That could be a whole history of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Modernist art [laughs]. What does it say? [00:44:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right, which was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I see your reluctance to talk about what your paintings and your works mean, but it's interesting, too, because they're not just illustration.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You want something that transforms, and they're not just nature. I mean, they're not just about nature. They have natural kinds of processes or things going on in them that—and they look a certain way. I'm thinking of some—this I'm characterizing as, maybe, the things I saw at Jan Cicero the most, but I think I saw a lot of works earlier. And I look around the studio—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and I'm reminded that you had a lot of different styles.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And it changed over the years.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But all of it is—that sense of ambiguity is really important. It's not—even though it's abstraction, and it's based in real-world things, it still—it's removed. It's removed from—it doesn't have a literal meaning, necessarily. Now, you said you sometimes have heard people say things that sound like they're—you know, they're interpretations are closely aligned to yours.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now, is that more about formal things, like that you're dealing with textures or dichotomies between soft and hard, like—or is it about psychological when they—when they nail your—the interpretation?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, it's never—it's never that close [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's never that close.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, when people have gotten it right, what is—what's impressed you? When you've gotten this response that, sort of, seems right, it resonates—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —with what you were doing, what's that been like? I guess I'm—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, for example, in some of the—of the late acrylic paintings, which I was very interested in jazz—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and about—you know, about improvisation, and also, they would connect it to music, that kind of—that kind of thing. [00:46:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's interesting, too, because your bulk of your work is very formal and tight.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But these are—you're talking looser now and something that's a looser style, and that's—it's—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, I completely—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —let go of that formal type, kind of.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I completely changed it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You weren't a realist, but at the same time, you had a very—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —heavy sense of structure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, there's a strange thing about—well, I don't know if this is related exactly, but I did a large body of collages. And I don't know if you've seen any of those.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not for a while. When I came by about five or 10 years ago, I was impressed by how much was underneath the surface of what I thought I knew—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because you had done—not only a number of years, but you've done a lot of different things—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and things that weren't even just in the same medium.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There was even sculpture, which I didn't—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —wasn't aware of.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, that's interesting. You know I did sculpture?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Well, while we're talking about sculpture, I'm wondering, since that's not something you're probably well-known for—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —is that just a field—is that just an avenue you went down, and then just—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. Actually, there'll be some in the show. I actually did some large sculpture. Did you know the Kovler Gallery? Were you here then?

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. What's it called?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Marjorie Kovler.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I've heard of it. Yeah, but I wasn't here then.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I came in the late '80s. So, I think that must've been before me.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, yeah. Well, I did some large sculpture that was bigger than I am—

[They laugh.]

—which isn't that big.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know what that's like. My wife does the same thing.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, but it was made of vermiculite and Elmer's glue.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Whoa.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I found out later that it's carcinogenic [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Sculpture is deadly.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I mentioned Eva Hesse before. [00:48:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. There's a lot of people that work in sculpture that are none the happier for it. It's not a good field to be in.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And so, I did—I did quite a few really large ones, but Kovler had a fire, and I lost a great deal of work there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh. So, that's one reason why we don't see that work that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: That was in—it was one—it was an American show that they would have at the Institute every couple of years or something. It was in a—I just found some photographs, but she—my first show with her was *Sculpture and Monoprints*—monoprint show.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You've tried a lot of different things, and as a matter of fact, that's—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —kind of, one of the things I was really impressed with—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —a lot of different techniques and a lot of different materials.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you move in and out of them? Do you revisit them? Or do you just, sort of, exhaust them doing them and then, sort of, move on or—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh. Well, actually, it's funny because, sometimes, I incorporate, like, from the monoprints when I started doing collages. I—there's one up there I guess I could talk, but I incorporated something from monoprints into the collage. But actually, there was something about the monoprints that was curious to me because most of the things that I do come from internally. And of course, it's external, too, because you see things [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that's what we were saying.

EVELYN STATSINGER: You can't work if you're blind.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There are influences. You can't ignore the fact you saw all that art in New York.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: On the other hand, it may not be what directly, you know—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Yeah. Okay, but I had—I had—mostly, I was doing things that actually originated internally, okay. And then I decided I wanted—I wanted to do collage. And then I decided, [00:50:00] because it was collage, I was taking it from, you know, like, magazines and various different things, things that I did my own photography for, and so forth. And then I discovered that the things that I could use, essentially, from the outer world—that I was selecting things that were ambiguous. I couldn't use images that were—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Clearly—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —that were not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —had a lot of impact—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in one particular way—

EVELYN STATSINGER: That were also ambiguous.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that ran it one way.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So, in a sense, I was, sort of, doing the same thing, but I was taking it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Taking from the outside, but taking

EVELYN STATSINGER: —[laughs] from the outside world.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —the stuff that was the style and the way that you operate.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you ever work from dreams, for that matter?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. I don't.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's interesting.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh. I did have a funny dream once about my drawings. It's the only time I ever dreamt about them

LANNY SILVERMAN: Really?

EVELYN STATSINGER: It was the early drawings. I don't dream about my work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow, does that—that's a big part of your life.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, that's interesting that you don't.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, what was the dream you had that was—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I dreamt that I saw some of them. I was looking at some of them, but they were upside down.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: And so, I remember saying in that dream, "So, that's how I did it."

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's like—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I have no idea what that meant.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —a way to see it in anew, to see it—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —fresh, maybe. And there's times when—believe me, there are times when galleries and museums hang things upside down—

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —or even catalogues. I've—we've all heard—had those experiences and they don't get the composition at all. They have their own way it goes, or there's people like Baselitz who intentionally turn it upside down—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —for whatever reason, but—

EVELYN STATSINGER: But I wanted to—well, I don't know. I'm just talking.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Hang on one second. Let me just take a break here to talk about—

EVELYN STATSINGER: What was I going to talk about? Oh, that I—you know, [00:52:00] if it hadn't been for Mies van der Rohe, I actually never would have had those shows, probably. Okay. So, it's really funny, and then the first people that bought my work were students of his. And he asked Dan Brenner if I'd like to come and see his Paul Klees. And Paul Klee is an artist that I was very interested in—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: —mainly because of his approach to materials. I mean, aside from that, his paintings were wonderful, but I felt more closely aligned to him. But that was very—that I just loved his approach to materials.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now that I hear that, that makes a lot of sense. I was trying to dig out of you some influences, but if I had to—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —you know, I was talking Surrealists. Your art isn't really about Surrealism. Some of it may—closer than others, but Paul Klee creates other worlds, is very involved with music and relationship to visuals and there's an abstraction and, yet, a sense of place, very specific and detailed, also the beautiful color harmonies. Now, that makes a lot of sense.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, that's somebody you would feel closely aligned with.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Yeah. Yes, and so, when he asked if I'd like to see his Paul Klee collection—

[They laugh.]

—I said yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But tell you the truth, at that period, I really didn't understand who he really was. And so, one really cold day, Dan and I went up to—he lives right here on Pearson Street, and it's now Mies van der Rohe Street, I guess.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And we went up to his apartment. And it was—it was the worst day. It was like snowing [laughs]. It must have been 20 below zero. It was terrible, [00:54:00] and I was wearing—do you know what you call—I don't know if they—do you know what galoshes are?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's my time. I'm good; I had galoshes. Sure. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right. Okay. So, I was wearing galoshes—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and the door opened, and there was Mies. And I was having trouble getting my galoshes off.

[They laugh.]

Okay? So, he bent down, and he was taking off my galoshes. And then, we went in. And it was—he had the marvelous collection.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't see very many Paul Klees in this country either.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, you don't.

LANNY SILVERMAN: They're mostly in Europe.

EVELYN STATSINGER: A lot of them are his, though, at the Institute.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's probably the ones we do see around here.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, they came from his. But his lighting is very poor, so he was following me around with this lamp [laughs] as we were looking at these paintings. So, then he, you know, he liked martinis, you know, [laughs] so someone's getting me this martini, and I didn't drink very much, and we were sipping martinis. And I was there all afternoon, and then he was telling me stories about the pavilion, the Barcelona Pavilion, and I had just come back from Mexico, and I was telling him about Mexico, and he was a very nice man.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's certainly—when I was fishing for people he would have met, you know, there's a lot of famous people into the arts, too, and like, these will do for a start [laughs] because, yeah, that's quite fascinating right there.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I used to—I used to—he used to have—he used to have parties here, and I used to go, and then I got to know all the architects at that time, and it was a very wonderful time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, your sense of community wasn't just the visual arts, it was also architects and—by way of Mies—[00:56:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, and music.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And music as well. Are you friends with Vera?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, she went to Music & Art also.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow, that's interesting.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, but I didn't know her. I'm not friends with her. I know her husband and so forth.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what I was getting at whether or not—because there are a lot of connections, speaking of artists and visual and music. This is a good town for music, of course, but some of the visual artists are very strongly connected to that. But, you did know Leon, and actually, Leon was incredible to work with, too. And his work was very political. Now, you work—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, we used to argue sometimes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, really? That's interesting, as long as we're getting into that subject. Your work is fairly apolitical.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, but, you know, a funny thing has happened. When I came—when I came—when we came back from Japan, it was right at the end of the Vietnam War, and it was about ended, and it was so shocking when I came back, and I brought back—I had some sketchbooks made in Japan. That is, I picked out the paper and everything. And I began to think about Goya's *Disasters of War*, and I did this—I mean [laughs], I'm not comparing it to Goya. But I decided I wanted to do something about it, in a sense, and so I made this sketchbook. There were three sketchbooks, and Franz has some photos of it in that book.

LANNY SILVERMAN: *Fantastic Images*?

EVELYN STATSINGER: *Fantastic Images*. And what it was, it's like it's almost cinematic. It's like I have cut-through parts that go from—one image is built on the other from the next page, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, it's, sort of, filmis. It's, sort of—it has a—speaking of narrative, this isn't real narrative in that sense. [00:58:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, right. And it's not about a specific war, but it's about war in general, and it wasn't made as a—I know you can't explain it, but I didn't think of it as a political statement at that time. It's just I wanted to do something about war. But of course, now, okay. So, just recently I've had a lot of contact with the Philadelphia—not the Philadelphia Museum.

LANNY SILVERMAN: As in the Academy of the Arts? Because, Robert Cozzolino's there. He's a big supporter of Chicago. I met him.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, yes. And they just bought two things: a painting and one of the large drawings. And I showed him that sketchbook and he's very interested in it, and he said, they have a part in the museum, and it's for political, okay. But I didn't do it in that spirit.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that's part of the argument you had with Leon. You don't feel that art should be—that's not the purpose of art, to be—politics is about black and white; art is about shades of gray is the way I often put

it. You're the shades-of-gray school. You want ambiguity. You don't want to preach or tell a point, even if you feel passionately, as you might about the war or about the Vietnam War, or any war, for that matter. You don't think that's the purpose of art; whereas, Leon had a different—now, he's one of the few that can get away with something that gets beyond just being preachy, and that's rare.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, he has, and I might say that, over the years, I appreciated his work more, but I don't know that I would say that because, if you think about the *Guernica*, [01:00:00] I mean, it's really—it is political, and it's—okay. And you can you think of it; I mean, you can think of other political things like—his name's Posada, you know, the printmaker. They are political, but they're arts—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You can transcend just the politics, but it's very—the one doesn't mean the other to be political. And a lot of times one of the issues is, is the art gallery the place to be doing it in? I mean, the place to do it is in the streets, or on billboards, or social media, or whatever the latest thing is because—let's face it—the people in the art world are usually the more liberal than the people who have your point of view. So, what's the point of the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: But, actually, with this sketchbook, I'd really like to see it published or have a movie made of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that would be very nice.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And, oh, Carl Schniewind was interested in those sketchbooks. Not that one because I hadn't done that one yet, but he wanted to see about having one of them published. And did you know that in top of the Lakeside Press that publishes the telephone book here—okay?—there was a little building on top, and there was a very good conservator; in fact, they would conserve the U.S. Constitution, and there was a man there whose name—I loved his name—was Mr. Tribelay.

[They laugh.]

[01:02:00] He asked me to go and see him, and it must have been that cut one [ph] because he said they—I went to see him, and they kept it for a while, and then he told me that it would be too expensive to publish because it was cut out. But, you know, these days, I get Christmas cards that [laughs]—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Everyone is self-publishing, and it's a lot easier. The bigger issue, in terms of publishing, I think, is it's more likely to be just the marketing aspect, which is the same thing, the marketplace issue, you know. What I alluded to before is how to get somebody interested to back it. But, in terms now, it's do on demand and do it yourself.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I would like that if you put it in a museum, you know, and even to show at this—you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Same thing I'm saying, that it's a different audience, get beyond something that's just the art audience.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That to go—to go out, you know, in a way, but that's just, you know, something thinking about.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, that's one of the few exceptions in terms of—because I didn't expect that you were going to even have that example, but, as I say, I was very surprised by the—and there were even things, smaller, metal pieces that were more, sort of, like—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, I still have those.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Those things, too, so those are things that are also not necessarily—

EVELYN STATSINGER: You see, a lot of them were done—those things were done at the same time I was doing the large drawings. I was doing several things. I was doing photograms.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You mentioned photograms. I was going to pick up on that, too. And actually, that's interesting, and I think I must have seen some of those as well. It's coming back. But so, you were working in photographic processes, too. You don't ever use photos—I started to ask about where your ideas came from, and you don't ever use your photos or photos of nature as starting points? Or do you?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I have a collage in there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But the collage is—obviously, used your own or other people's.



EVELYN STATSINGER: I took my own, but it was all done in the—then I manipulate it in the Xerox machine.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I remember those color Xerox machines, oh yeah. But, by and large, the paintings don't come from literal photos, or yours or other people?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, no.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You create those in some way that you're not—[laughs]. [01:04:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: But I can't tell you that [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: You can't tell me the details, but it's somewhat improvisatory, and it's an internal process. I'm trying to think.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And every one is not planned, and I don't erase, actually, either.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's why I was asking is, what you do when you aren't happy with it? You just work it through.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I work it through, and very often, if you have something that you think is not right, it's like a mistake; you make that mistake work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, mistakes can be the most interesting parts. They can be; they don't have to be [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, [laughs] I mean, you've—it's just, I don't have many disciplines in a way. I mean, that's the only discipline I think about. I think of doing is that I, you know—of course, though, it's—sometimes, it's like impossible, but I always try to make it really work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there are the beatniks who said, first thought, best thought, and it goes downhill from there. But that isn't always the case either, and that's not even really true because he—Kerouac, that wasn't entirely improvisation either. There's a lot of structure and a lot of formal—even despite the fact that a lot of people were down on it at the time, there's a lot of structure and skills and formalism that was involved in something that was supposedly like jazz. So, you'd liken your work somewhat to jazz in a way.

EVELYN STATSINGER: These last things are very definitely—

[Cross talk.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: The last things that you've been doing, I'd like to take a look at those online. You know, there's one over there, yeah. And so, that's actually something that's changed, but do you ever go back to the tighter structure and the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: [01:06:00] No, I don't go back because, I mean, I may—I may incorporate something; it may be incorporated in some way, but I don't go back. The thing is, once—for example, this type of thing in the early work, I could have done that for years. I could have kept doing it, but I felt it would be exploitive, actually, that it was actually exploiting my own work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, if you were more involved with marketplace, which I gather you're not so much, that's one of the issues is, if you have a dealer, they often want you to crank out more of, "These are selling. Put some more of these out there in the world," and then you get stuck with a, sort of, signature style and then you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I've been very lucky about dealers, in a way, because I don't do what I don't want to do. And they—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And they've kind of come to you? Is that what's happened? You haven't really gone out looking for the right dealer or the right marketplace. It just, sort of, worked out. You mentioned some of the sales that came through Mies' students, and some of this is just very organic. In other words, there's a community of people that know each other, that know your work, knew you; that's all happened very easily.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Well, I don't sell that much [laughs]. You know, I have all this work in, but I, you know, luckily I'm not—I don't have to, and, at this point—

LANNY SILVERMAN: In terms of dealers, who was the first dealer you had?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Frank Frumkin.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what you mentioned before.

EVELYN STATSINGER: He called me, and I wasn't there. I had this roommate, and she said, "Someone called. His name was Frumkin." Frumkin? [Laughs.] [01:08:00] You know, who's Frumkin? [Laughs.] And so, he—I was leaving, I think, for California, and he said he wanted to handle my work, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Was it Frumkin-Struve at that point, or was it just Frumkin?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Let's see, it was Frumkin-Struve—

LANNY SILVERMAN: At one point, it was Frumkin-Struve because I know Bill, but that was after—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I think it was—he was where Superior was right after.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's when I came on, so actually, yeah, and that's way later.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay, that's where he was. And actually, there was a strange story that happened there because he, you know, he was on the ground floor, and I was in a show with that drawing, as you come in, with the arrow. Okay. And it was near the window, and it had a window onto the street. And an editor from *Time Magazine* was going around the country looking for artists, and it was a Sunday, and he happened to go past that window, and he saw that drawing. And he called up Frumkin. And so, Frumkin called me and said, "*Time Life Magazine* wants to do an article on your work."

[They laugh.]

Well, I hated *Time Magazine* because you know how they, at that period—I mean, they've improved—but he was a very—he was a very intelligent man, and Frumkin said, "You know, why don't you—you know, would you do that?" And I said, "I hate *Time Magazine*," because, you know, they had the most terrible write-ups about art. And I didn't want to do it, and so, before I said I'd do it—[01:10:00] I won, but I'm contradicting myself [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: He ended up doing it, I gather.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So he said, "Oh please." All right. I said, "Okay. All right." So, this very nice editor came in, and he was with Arthur Siegal from IIT, came as a photographer, and they followed me around all day, and I told him how much I disliked [laughs] the articles that *Time Magazine*—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You might as well start with this [laughs] in the beginning.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Well, I wanted to see if I could influence him, and he said, "Oh, I know." And he said, "It's not going to be like that." You know, it's not going to be like—and he was very intelligent and very nice. So, then the article came, and I don't know if you saw it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't think I've seen that one, and now I'm really curious. So, what did it end up being?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, it was terrible. It was "Girl Explorer," and it talked about the South Sea Islands and so forth. And also, I had a part-time job at Fermi Labs. It was—it was a wonderful job. That's how I got to know a lot of scientists.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Is that how you met Stan?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Where I met Stan.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I figured that [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: And—what was I going to say—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were saying Fermi Lab in terms of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, and I was, essentially, you know, I was counting Geiger counters, and I was washing atomic dishes, and I told them, you know, what I was doing. So, they made it sound, in the article, like I was working on some secret project at Fermi Lab. I mean, it was really embarrassing. [01:12:00] And so, I was right. You know, I was right about *Time Magazine*.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, they need angles; this is what it's about. This is the marketplace. This is like—this is American marketing. You need hype. It's got to be—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, but they—if their—so someone asked me, you know, did I sell a lot of paintings as a result of that. I got marriage proposals.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there you go.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I was—you know, I was standing in front of a painting with a cigarette and—[laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow. Well, that's funny, too, because I think I had intentions of asking you a little bit about galleries, and it seems like you've had a really—in some ways, I mean, one of the ways we met, it was just the difficulties of getting work out there, particularly as a woman. I just watched the movie *Big Eyes*, the one about the Walter Keane thing, which is fascinating because it says so much about '50s where you grew up in; the sense of the '50s and that, if you're a woman, you can't do girl art because, then, people don't buy girl art. All those issues are really tough ones, particularly as a person of a particular age.

It's hard enough when you're a young art star, but the feminist issue is a big issue, too, in terms of the art world, as you well know. I mean, there are people like Lee Bonticou, who had to be discovered. She actually, probably, went to the Art Students League, too, is my guess, but that's probably before, or after you, rather, too, but—so how the world treats the art. You know, the art is—it's capitalism. It's a way of making into a product. You've managed to avoid that and, yet, do pretty much what you wanted.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, I was really always treated seriously, strangely enough. I mean, I really never—I mean, I've encountered that in other ways.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I'm sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But I never encountered it. I always was taken very seriously, strangely, you know, strangely. [01:14:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: And you didn't have to pitch so much. You didn't have to go out there and get that sense of rejection or feel like, you know, you weren't part of the marketplace.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, the worst experience I had—and you're aware of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. Oh, I bet I am [laughs]. I think I know where you're going.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Was about what happened with Rockford College in the state of Illinois, and that was really the worst experience I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, and that's interesting, too. It was somewhat traumatic, and I guess that points out something I've got to say, you know, in terms of my experience of it two. We're talking about the Cultural Center and the Rockford Art Museum, and who was the third player? Was it going to be—

EVELYN STATSINGER: It was going to be the Cultural Center, the state of Illinois—

LANNY SILVERMAN: The state of Illinois was going to also—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, that was really amazing that that was going to happen.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Having it in all three places would have been a great way to, sort of, show different aspects of your work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, to show everything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: To show everything because none of this—I mean, frankly, from my sense, this is the politics of the art world. Our exhibition committee wasn't excited enough to do it as a one-person show because we've done—we had done other shows that were one-person shows.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. But, actually, they weren't approached. What happened is that Rockford College started it, and they would—they gave—wanted to give me the whole museum.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, so they started out with the notion, and they backed off of that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. And they were going to do a catalogue. Okay. I don't know how much of this I should say, actually say.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, actually, I—this into weird territory for all of us, but I guess, in that sense, that didn't come about, and it was a real disaster because you were really—and that's why I did a studio visit. I was really amazed at just how much you had here.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, actually, what happened was that, then, they wanted—I mean Rockford's kind of far away, and they wanted to have a city venue, so somehow, [01:16:00] all these places said that they would do it, but they weren't going to publish. They would take it as a show.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right. That's where I came in because we didn't have a lot of money at that point, the Cultural Center, that is, and Michele Feder Nadoff came along, and actually, she'd been doing a lot of work with us.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That's right. Well, she was—I—she was hired as a curator here, and we worked together here for a whole year.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, it was very organized.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That's why I have—I mean, that was the one good thing that happened because I had all this stuff, and I realized it has—I had to have it in some kind of order, so it's completely documented.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And Stan probably helped to develop the database. So you have everything there waiting for this show.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, I mean, it's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, as you know, Chicago art and this area is very fickle towards its own. You're not alone in that regard. There's many artists. One of the things the Cultural Center did that I love so much was that it did do one—that's what I was saying; there were one-person shows by Michiko Itatani, Leon, you know, Bill Conger—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Seymour Rosofsky.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That was before me, the Rosofsky show. When was that? It must have been in the early '80s or something.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I can't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Anyways, there were a lot of people that deserved—people that had international reputations, even, not that you don't necessarily, but the thing is that there were people that deserved attention that weren't getting it locally. This is one of the problems with our institutions, which, I guess, neither of us, probably, should be talking about [laughs], but it's the truth, and one of the problems is there's a lineup. I actually came from N.A.M.E. Gallery where there were shows once a year of people that also should have been getting the museum shows. And that's kind of sad. So, getting that kind of recognition, at that level, is not uncommon. You're not alone there. There's many artists that deserve mid-career retrospect, and yes, I mean, I know you're past this point, but it was an unfortunate experience for both of us because, essentially, it should have happened. [01:18:00] I think it was more Rockford that had to do with it, sort of, falling through.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, I know. Yes, and I'm not going to go through the thing about that except that the curator had a bad fight with the head of the—what do you call it?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Exhibition committee, or director, administrative?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It doesn't matter because, at this point—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, whatever it was, and there wasn't any money left for the catalogue or for the thing. And so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's when it backed down into something else, and then it fizzled. No, art politics are one of the more difficult subjects to get into because there's so much muck. [Laughs.] So much muck, but it sounds like one of the things is you maintained—early on in this conversation, you maintained that you'd been lucky. You've been able to do what you wanted to. You haven't had pressure from dealers or from the marketplace to do something differently or to make a piece that's going to sell. Have you ever been commissioned to do work? Have you done any public art? I don't know that I'm aware of any.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, no, no, I haven't. I've been offered, but I don't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's not the way you work? I can tell that. That's difficult because, then, you have to deal with audiences and certain kinds of considerations that are not, necessarily, the way your working process [laughs]—if it aligns, if someone would say, "Here, I'd like to do this—put this in the subway." Fine, that would be one thing, but for you to, then, be commissioned would be a whole other thing.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. I mean, I know what my limitations are.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's not the way you work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't go for the—I don't know, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, we're getting pretty—I mean, we have a little more time here. Hang on a second. I guess we were talking somewhat about how you make art. I guess one of the questions I had for you was, how would you describe—let's say you walk into your studio; you don't have, necessarily, any particular expectations. What would you describe your ideal work of art? [01:20:00] What would be something that—you could even give an example from another artist; I mean, we've talked about Paul Klee, but what would you—what would you deem as a complete success? Something of yours or other people's, what would be—what's the ideal for you? Or do you not have ideals? You just work one piece at a time and keep focused on the immediate. Do you have a sense of, like, maybe, what would be the kind of work you would want to make [laughs]?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, it's the kind I make [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Then you're happy with what you're doing, and—but is there something that exemplifies either your most successful work, or something that you would want to make that's even more successful than that? You don't have any regrets in terms of what you've made. It just comes out, and it is what it is.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm really not sure how to answer that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a tough question for you. You don't think in those ways, then. You don't—you said you don't spend much time analyzing the work, but you, obviously, have a sense of—you said you know the work that you feel successful or works, and some less so, perhaps. They can't all be at the same level. So, what qualifies as something that works for you, I guess, is what I'm asking. What are your parameters for when a piece is working? It doesn't have to be the ideal piece. Let's go back to—let's back down a little [laughs]. Ratchet it down a little and just say, what works in your work—or anyone else's, for that matter? What stuff is important for you for it to be successful?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh. Well, I suppose if it says something to you, and it—this is not specific thing, but it says—or that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [01:22:00] It's got to resonate or speak to—

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's deeply meaningful. Whether it works, I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't—yeah, you don't spend time trying to pick apart what works or doesn't work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I know what doesn't work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You know it when you see it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But I—yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's an intuitive feel then.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's not something that you—have you ever—I was going to ask something else, too, in terms of like, you know, if you've ever taught before because, when you teach, you do crits; you've probably done—have you done any teaching?

EVELYN STATSINGER: A little bit.

LANNY SILVERMAN: A little bit. Or residencies or what?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, no, let's see. I actually taught at the Hyde Park Art Center a long time ago. And I had years at the Art Institute; that's how I—Susan was a student of mine, so it was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That makes sense, sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And graduate students, a visiting artist for graduate students. And I worked at different,

you know, young—to make a living, I worked at some community centers sometimes with adults and so forth.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Which I found very interesting.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because they bring a different perspective; they're not—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, to try to get them to do what they can do at the level that they can do—

LANNY SILVERMAN: To start from where they come from.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and not to have a preconceived idea of something that they see, that they're trying to do that, and that what actually is an honest thing in the sense of what is real for them.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Starting from taking them on their own terms for where they come from.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That's a—to be able—right. To be able to accept what they can do.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And then just see where that leads them.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And see the value of what it is they're doing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [01:24:00] That seems to inform your own work, too, is that you start from a certain point, and you're not so much into judgment or analysis or particular ideas; you're not illustrating anything; you just—it's a process of a way you explore.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, you actually try to clear your mind of anything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure. Now speaking of clearing your mind of everything—the opposite approach—when I saw your work when I did that studio visit, I noticed that you also seem to have work that was informed by other cultures, and you mentioned Japan, but works from other cultures as well. Has that been an important part of, you know?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yeah. I look at a great deal. I look at everything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You look at everything. And it isn't even just art; you're also mentioning science and music and other things. So it's your curiosity. Art, for you, is a way to, sort of, push your exploration of your natural curiosity, which hasn't been hammered out of you, I'm glad to hear.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Its maintained, even as we go on.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm not trying to give you a hard time. I'm just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, and that's funny, too, because I read an interview with Ray Johnson, who was a real—I'm a real fan of his, and the interview in the archives, he was trying to give a hard time; he was deliberately dodging all questions. He had no interest in fitting into any—anyone's box.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're not doing that, so I'm comfortable with this, but there are ways in which you very clearly have a strong opinion about how you operate, and you bring that out when you mention the community college teaching because you're interested in not coming in with a preconceived notion of art, or what's art, not art, or what—where people—starting where people—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I once had an experience there with, you know, a person who had never worked before, and she was marvelous, absolutely marvelous. She didn't know it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I couldn't convince her of the value of what she was doing, and she finally left the class.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's just a real shame.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And it was. I mean, she had great natural talent.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that's the thing, you know, [01:26:00] what's surprising in the art world are original ideas, and they're so rare. When you see someone doing it for the right reasons, because it's new to them—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and it's—they're excited.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a real shame that it doesn't always—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —go anywhere. So you've taught some.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But—and you've done some crits.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I was asked to teach at the Institute, but I—the problem is, if I do something, it gets, sort of, all my attention, and in a way—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It'll take over from the art making.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's hard to do both. It's hard to do working. I mean I don't know that many artists. You're in a pretty good situation.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I gather you're in a comfortable situation.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And in the beginning, I would much rather—I mean, lived very, very minimally when I first came here. And it didn't bother me at all. I mean, it was fine. But—why am I talking about this?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, just the sense of having—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yes. But that if I taught, I would really feel that I really should teach and give it my attention.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're going to do it all the way. Well, there are people—I know people that phone it in. I won't name names, of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, but times have changed.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And they're—but I'll - because a lot of people really spend a lot of time and energy, and students can be very demanding.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. And Ted does actually.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I noticed Karl [ph].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I mean, because Karl—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, Karl, also.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Some of Karl's students—people came up, and he was amazing with them.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And the thing is that that just must sap a lot of time and energy, and it's great and gracious of them to do that, but I wonder how much that takes away if you really do that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How can you do that?

EVELYN STATSINGER: But he also is able to produce a great deal of work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, and he's still at it, which is great.

EVELYN STATSINGER: A lot of—but I guess I don't have that much strength to do that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: To do both.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And—so. [01:28:00] But teaching is very—it's very interesting, I think. But I can't do both.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's not your—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't make a choice about that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm trying to think where else we can go with this in terms of—your studio's right here. This is—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is still your studio, your working studio.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: What are you working on? I mean, I see the—some of the things that are fairly recent. What's coming up? What's the next body of work? Or do you even know what that is?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I'm starting something; I'm not sure where it's going exactly. That I really can't talk about. It's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there are some people that don't want to talk about stuff until it's done.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And there's a lot of people that are that way.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I may have some in this—the show in September, but—she wants to do a—Carberry wants to do a kind of survey, but I think we're going to call it Gatherings. So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So it's going to be things that are—how far—

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's a very small space. And I have an eight-foot early drawing in color.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's going to take a lot of room, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That's going to take too much. I don't know if she'll show it or not, but she wants to sell it. It's only been—it belonged to the Brenners originally, and they died, and so it's never been shown, actually. It's the last drawing that I did. No, next to the last; the last one is at the Institute. But I don't know how she's going to do it, so.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, so it's going to be how wide a spread of—how many years, worth of work?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, she wants—

LANNY SILVERMAN: If the early piece is there.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Everything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So it'll be a range of work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: In a small gallery.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't know how this is—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [01:30:00] How to contain you into a small space, and there's—even just taking one medium, even if it was one of the more obscure mediums.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. So I have no idea. But—so I worry about it, but—



LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I'm sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'll say.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And are you going to do any work out in Michigan when you're there?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You have a studio there as well?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I have—we bought—years ago, we bought an old schoolhouse. It's an 1890 schoolhouse; that's it over there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, there; there's a picture of it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And half of it, they made an extension, and they used it—I used the 1890 part as this—it has a north light, which I never had before.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's nice, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's wonderful. And it has oak floors and a little children's drinking fountain.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's kind of neat.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Lots of girls' and boys' bathrooms and so forth.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So when you're there, does that influence the kind of work that you make? Is it different work that you make out when you're closer to nature? Because this is—let's face it, this is—we're now in a—for people we already see.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It really is nature.

LANNY SILVERMAN: We're in downtown Chicago.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That's right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And it's a wonderful museum. There's a great sky—urban sky-scape all around us. But it's packed with people, stress, noise, including, oh, the noise went away.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But noise and everything else. Do you make very different work when you're out in a peaceful, natural setting?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or is it not changing?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I did a lot of painting there, and the thing is that they build a new section, and then they consolidated the schools. So it went up for auction, and I didn't know this, but you can buy a lot of something; you don't know what it is.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And these people bought it. [01:32:00] And they bought it for nothing. No, and then they bid on a lot, and they bought 150 ladders. No, it's the other way around. First, they bought this lot.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Then they got 150 ladders, and then they bought the schoolhouse to put the ladders in. Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Got to put them somewhere.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So when we first saw it, it was full of 150 ladders.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's an installation right there.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, right. So we asked if we could stay over because it's a very, very rural area. It still

had dirt roads. And we wanted to—we're just going to use it for weekends, but I couldn't—the spring is so beautiful, and the fall is so beautiful. Now we use it for about five months of the year. And it made a really big difference because it's the first time—we built a pine forest because part of it is a moving dune.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I had bear roots in little cans, and I told everybody we're building this pine forest, and now it's enormous.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow, that's great.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's a really—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Did you say a moving dune?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: What's a moving dune, as opposed to a stationary dune?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It just—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, that's the difference.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, is—

EVELYN STATSINGER: A moving dune moves.

LANNY SILVERMAN: From the wind, just means it changes—moves around.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So this is near where the dunes are in Michigan, or is this a—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, that was all dune land at one time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, because I—

EVELYN STATSINGER: That was all Lake Michigan. Okay. And those still—it has, you know, this diatomaceous earth around and so forth.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So I guess the question was, does that—does that visual—again, this is this internal versus external.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Obviously, you're influenced by what's around you. You're not—and you're certainly taking that in, whether or not it's directly—[01:34:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Does that—has that affected—when you work in Michigan, does that change the kind of work? Does it become more peaceful, natural?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I don't think so. I think it's the same, except that I can have experience seeing the different seasons and how things change from one thing to another that I've just seen those things, which I had never seen before. But I'll tell you a funny thing about critics.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sounds good.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. I—there were children around, and I thought, you know, they would be curious that we're living in this schoolhouse, and so I wanted them to know, you know, what was going on. So I invited them in. And the next day, there was a knock on the door, and there was this little boy. I'm not sure how old he was, maybe seven, eight years old. And he said, may I see your painting? Okay. And I was painting this—it was one of the '70s paintings. Okay. And I said, sure. And he came up, and he looked at the painting, and he said to me,

what is it? And I said, well, what do you think it is? And he told me, okay. I don't remember exactly what he said, but he was very close.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's one of those cases where you're saying you put—someone brings their own—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —interpretation to it, and this person was probably better than an adult critic because—

EVELYN STATSINGER: He was very—

LANNY SILVERMAN: He was more pure in his motives; he wasn't looking for art schools or specific, sort of, things. [01:36:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, was very close. Right, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: He just—

EVELYN STATSINGER: He didn't know anything about it. Well, then about two days later, there's another knock on the door, and his name was Jeffrey [ph], and you know, they were all slicked up, and they had clean jeans on and, okay. And he said, this is my cousin. He said, can he see the painting? So I said yes, and I saw the little kid; they both come, and they're standing in front of the painting, and he says, "Well, what is it?" And Jeffrey said, "Well, what do you think it is?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: He's learned.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's pretty good.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, that's very good.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So was the cousin as good at interpreting as the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, not quite. Not quite.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Probably not, from what you're saying.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But it was an interesting experience.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Let's see what else I have here for you.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because I want to save some for tomorrow's, too. Let's see where we're at in terms of—so you mentioned that you had been to Japan.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And one of my favorite Chicago artists—I imagine you also like her, too—is Miyoko Ito.

EVELYN STATSINGER: She's a very good friend of mine.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, so she was a good friend of yours.

EVELYN STATSINGER: We were very close.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now that I—now that we—this comes up, it makes perfect sense because her work is not only abstraction, but it's also deals with—it's got some parallels to yours. So you were good friends with her, and you mentioned that there was a whole Japanese contingent at the Art Institute, or—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Uh, some were at the Art Institute.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The Gaka guild?

EVELYN STATSINGER: And well—yeah. Now she—he would—he was not—no. I guess these—none of these were at the Institute, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Miyoko was at the institute probably.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Not when I was there, actually.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But she was there probably. Not sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm not sure either.

EVELYN STATSINGER: You know who I'd like to talk about is Kathleen Blackshear.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh. Let's talk about Kathleen Blackshear. Yeah. [01:38:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. Can we?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. I'm—okay. This is a story.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Go ahead.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Start at the beginning.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So when I first went to the Institute, I wasn't really happy because, at Music & Art, I had really had—you know, you went to school the regular amount of time, plus two extra hours a day, in which they had very professional people teaching at a high school, and so, I was, you know—I had already had what was the first term. And I had started, at that time, starting to do these drawings, and I was very immersed in them, and I really—I really didn't know that I wanted to go to school, and in a certain way, I'm unteachable. Really.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, you have your own of working, and it probably—and we already had this discussion; how much can you teach anyways?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, the—yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You had a—if you have a voice, why—you need to probably just learn technical skills.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Anyway.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So I was in a class with Abbott Pattison, who was a sculptor, and I was telling him I was thinking of leaving, and he said, well, you know, there's a teacher here I think you would be interested in. And it was Kathleen Blackshear. So I had seen her, you know, in the school cafeteria, and so I took her class, and she gave some assignment about—I don't remember what it was exactly, but it was something about dots and lines and the—and you know, it was some, sort of, analysis or something. [01:40:00] And then she would go around—this was the first day—she would go around to each student and talk to them individually, and I was very upset because I wanted to just work on these drawings. So when she came, I guess she saw that I was upset. And so she asked me what I was so mad at, so I said, well, you know, there's something I really want to work on. I told her I was—I started telling her I was working on this drawing. So she said—well, you know, the strange thing about it, if she was interested in something, she had the most penetrating gaze. It would go right through you.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. And she said, well, you know, the reason I give these problems is that most students don't know what they want to work on. So she said, well, why don't you bring in something? Let me see. So I can't remember what I brought in; I brought in something. So what finally came of that was that she allowed me to bring work to the—to school, and she would just talk to me. And we talked about all kinds of things. And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a better technique for teaching for you than anything, probably.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, it was wonderful. It was really wonderful. And it was so interesting because, partly, she was an artist herself, so she really understood the process of making everything. And also, she had such a wide range of art history and many things. She came from a very small town: Navasota, Texas.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. A really small town. [01:42:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's quite a step, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And so we—I just spent an hour or two with her.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So in terms of, like, a teaching process, that's the way—that would be your ideal is to just have conversations about—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —art, about what's happening, what people are looking at in front of them.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But are the—whatever—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And it goes and expands into the world.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And she also got other people to do that. So I don't know how I have a degree from the Art Institute. Now that she's not around, I can talk about it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, but it was wonderful. She was a tremendous influence, and Whitney Halstead was her assistant at the time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I didn't realize that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because I used the one that's—you know, that's—I've heard her, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And also—and I think that they both have had an enormous influence on what happened in Chicago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Chicago. They were among the earlier promoters, even before—probably even before Dennis and Franz and some of the other people.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And Don Baum.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: They probably were the beginning. Also, this is acceptance into the halls. This is—we're talking the Art Institute, so it's also a different kind of institutional respect.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Which is one of the issues I was getting at with Chicago is a lot of Chicago artists don't get respect. Finally, it happened. So did you know Whitney at all, too?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yes. Well, I was very good friends with all these people, and then these people, after the—I knew after I had graduated. I mean, I just—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So the earlier people are—yeah, and—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Are old people, I know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The later people were more the Imagists and the Imagists-related, although not all of them, because there's Richard Hunt.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, and then you know Richard Rezac.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Rezac, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And Julia Fish.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And Richard Hunt. [01:44:00] Actually, Richard I knew a long time, but I wasn't in school when he was in school. So—but I, you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you maintain those—I know you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I see you over at Karl's, so I know you maintain that friendship.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But do you still maintain some of these?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, all these people.

LANNY SILVERMAN: All the people. That's great, so—

EVELYN STATSINGER: That are still alive.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So there's a sense of community. You feel like that's been important. And as I was getting at before, is that the Art Institute, one of the things that's very positive about it, at openings you'll that, if there's an Art Institute graduate that's got an opening, you see all—everyone is very—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's a certain solidarity.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You still feel that sense of art community?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's great.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And actually, that's one of the positive things about the—about Chicago.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's things that there are negative, like the fact that we're invisible to the New York and L.A. art worlds.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or whatever, but we're fairly invisible. But, so you still feel that sense of community.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: As a matter of fact, I'll ask that off the record, but—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, hang on. The—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So the people that you're friendly with are, mostly, the list of people that are, sort of, the younger generation, the—although they're a little—the one generation after you are mostly Imagists, not all, like Richard Hunt, but the—Barbara Rossi and—

EVELYN STATSINGER: And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, maybe not all: Lorri and Karl and Suellen Rocca and Phil—

EVELYN STATSINGER: But I know a lot of other people.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I'm sure you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: These are only—

LANNY SILVERMAN: These are just some of the—yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You know Christina Ramberg, too?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, I did. I put it down.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I love her work, and it also relates to yours, and it has a real strong sense—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —of texture and form.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: A lot of it seems informed by a, almost, feminist kind of look at female—mostly female things.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Did you think that had any influence at all on your work? Because I could see a little bit of a parallel, but do you think that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, we were very close friends, actually, and she asked me—we traded work that Phil has. [01:46:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And it was a terrible tragedy.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It was. I only met her, actually, once. I think she was in Madison. It wasn't that show.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: She wasn't in that show. How about Mary Stoppert? Did you know Mary Stoppert? She was in that show that you were in, the *Some Other Traditions*.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, vaguely.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know her a little, and actually, she stopped making art.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That's—you know, it's very strange. I don't know where it was. It was some party someplace. And I had never met her. I knew her work.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And she sat down next to me, and she said, you know, you're the reason I stayed in Chicago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I was so surprised. I mean, I had—I mean, I wonder why somebody would do that. I didn't even know her.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's funny.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It is so funny.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So she loved your work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Which makes sense.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I don't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Her artwork's very different than yours.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I mean, like with Christina, I can see a parallel, which is kind of interesting: strong textural sensibility.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, actually—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Pattern.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —Christina—also, I certainly can say that I was always interested in Japan. And I'm sure Japan—I know, for example, in these sketchbooks that I had done—well, I have 50 years of sketchbooks, but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —the one that I was telling you about.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That is directly related to—I saw a great deal of Noh plays.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I saw my first live one just a year ago.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I've seen kabuki live.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And actually, I saw that, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And did you ever Bunraku?

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'd seen Bunraku before, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But a lot of people do it in this country, and it's not the same as Japan.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, it isn't. No, it's not. [01:48:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. There's even that guy up in Evanston that does—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, now it has nothing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, kabuki, whatever. No, you got to see it in Japan.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And through a family that we knew there, we were—we knew one of the national treasures in the Bunraku thing, so we could go backstage and see all the puppets and how it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh that's amazing.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's extraordinary.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It is.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's really extraordinary.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, we'll save that for tomorrow because that's a—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because I share that with you. I—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.



LANNY SILVERMAN: My avenue out of Western culture was Japan when I was a kid.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I started listening to Noh theater and kabuki and gagaku.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I listened to that music, as a teenager, because I was bored with Western culture.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It dead-ended for me. Not that I dislike it, but I just—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That was my first avenue.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So maybe we could have a chat about Japan.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think we covered a pretty good amount. I think we're probably pretty close to the right amount of time for today.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And—

[END OF Statsi15\_1of2\_sd\_track02\_r]

This is track three.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is Lanny Silverman. I'm at Evelyn Statsinger's studio. It's May 12, 2015, and I'm making a recording of an interview for the American—for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art. Today, we're going to take up where we left off a little, and I guess one of the things to do is to—since we just talked about [laughs] the fact that you play the piano. It just caught my eye. No, I just want to ask about art and music; you mentioned Paul Klee. Do you—when you're in the studio, do you listen to music when you make art?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, actually, that's strange. I was thinking about that this morning, is that I did—I do listen. I do listen to music, but recently, I realized that, you know, when you're really concentrating on something, something happens in which your mind tunes out everything, and you're in an entirely different space that, in a certain way, you're really not listening. And it's the same thing as when you're concentrating on painting; you're in some place where you really don't hear what's going on.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you could just become entranced?

EVELYN STATSINGER: And so, I would realize that the recording was over, and I really hadn't heard it. But I do listen to music.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know what you mean; there's a certain kind of psyche looking at art. Sometimes art that you're around all the time becomes like wallpaper, and it's sometimes easy to just, sort of, have it become an ambiance that you're not—that it's just basically background.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, it's also something that really happens. [00:02:00] It's a particular state that happens. Other artists have talked about that, too.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you think the kind of music that you're listening to—what artists have talked about the art and music? There's a number of people, but what are you aware of? I mean, what's—what are you referring to?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, well, for example, when I've heard of interviews—and it can be a musician; it can be a writer; it can be anybody—and they also talk about that kind of state. It's a very particular kind of state, and I think it has to do with something about extreme concentration in which you just concentrate on a certain thing; everything else just disappears.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that's the kind of state that you are in, a parallel state, when you're making your art?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But it's very hard to pay attention, specifically, to details in music, even if you're a music lover, when you're trying to focus on something else. So there's, sort of, parallel worlds.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. And I used to put it on because I didn't want to hear any noise any place.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: I can appreciate that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Then I discovered that, in a certain way, I didn't do that because I would just tune it out. But, of course, there are noises like hammering and so forth that you can't tune out.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I don't know about you, but I'm somewhat of an obsessive, which I suspect you may be as well, and there is, sort of, a trance that you get into when you do repetitive patterns; you make art. I can be involved in something and not be aware of anything else. Is that the state that you're also in when you're making the work?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, it's not really—

LANNY SILVERMAN: The house could be burning down, and you can probably be sitting there.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's not only about repetitive things; it's about anything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Just concentrating at a certain level.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, you mentioned jazz, too, because you were talking about—yesterday, you were talking about becoming more improvisatory, a little bit looser in your specific style, painting style. When you listen to jazz, does that inspire that particular kind of—[00:04:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, when I started to—well, it was also about the brushes [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, right, well, we might get back to that, too, but anyway.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Also, I had been listening to a lot of jazz, and I liked a whole idea of complete improvisation and using like with acrylic inks and not building it up like you build things, like in lab [ph] painting. The whole thing went to that kind of thing. I don't remember [laughs] what I said yesterday, but if you lose your concentration with that, like an eighth of a second, it shows, and it spoils the whole thing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You have to be in that moment.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Did I say that? Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't think you did, but I think this adds to it. I figured, going back over this, I wanted to follow up on some things. I have some new things to talk about. But, yeah, I guess one of the things about jazz is that it's very much in the moment. That's true of the players when they're making the music themselves, too. You have to very much be focused on—in terms of the music, it's listening. In terms of the art that you're making, it's something else. It may be just a matter of you're really enjoying jazz, but did you come to the jazz—let's go back to what you were talking about yesterday because the jazz pieces are the improvisatory, sort of, nature is more recent.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: What led you to that? Was it—I guess I was going to talk a little bit more. [00:06:00] We didn't really get too much into how your work has evolved over the years. So, I guess, what I'd like to ask you is, you've done a lot of different kinds of work and a lot of different kinds of media—a lot of different media, which we've talked about a little bit. How would you, if you were looking—if you had an overview [laughs], and I know you're not one to analyze so much as some, you know. You're not a critic, and you don't pretend to be.

But in terms of, if you had an overview, how would you see the course of your work? We won't go to the childhood work; we'll skip that, but from the point of which you developed your voice, how would you say your work has evolved? Keeping in mind that there also were forays into photograms and into collage and into work

that was in sculpture and monoprints, and so there are a lot of mediums. That changes it, too. But do you see a, sort of, evolution or a course? What do you—how would you look at that?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I think so. I mean, I think, in a way, different experiences change the things that you do, and, well, I mean, first being interested in those early drawings—I think I said this yesterday—was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That could be, but I think I want to—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Then I—the next stage and the early periods were all in black and white and, more or less, two-dimensional, and in some ways, I wasn't interested in the third dimension.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not so much in color, either?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, and most—not at all and—because I really love black and white. And also, using that and, also, using—doing photograms at the same time, which were also black and white, [00:08:00] but I just explored that as long as I—you know, as long as I felt like doing it. And then, when I went to Mexico—I did say that yesterday—that I saw a lot of color, and that was a big influence. And I traveled all over Mexico, and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is in about what timeframe? I don't remember if you said. Oh, roughly speaking, we're talking the '40s?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Very rough. Well, the Pan-American Highway hadn't been completed yet.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's probably some point of reference.

[They laugh.]

That's before me, I think, but I'm not sure when.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. I can—I can—this is the wrong one. I should have—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I can—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. Oh, I have it down here. Wonderful. Mexico was 1956.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, so it's a little later than 1956.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now, so you saw color, and did you—when you came back, did that immediately have direct impact? In other words, it came—you said—we talked yesterday a little bit about internal and external, in other words, how, as much as your work is very much internal, you can't but avoid some influence from the outside. So when you came back, was there color then, all of a sudden, in your work?

EVELYN STATSINGER: I was going to say, just because it's internal, it also comes from the outside as well.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, there's a mixture. You're not a hermetically-sealed—

[They laugh.]

Well, I started to ask a little bit about that in terms of the isolation of being in the art world, and you were maintaining that you, indeed, do have references to the outside world, even if your work is fairly internal. [00:10:00] So you came back, and then there was color. Was it that brightly, you know, those aquas, and those—the color schemes of Mexico? Was it that really—because I see your work, the color schemes, as being more modulated. Did you ever have that, sort of, more—oh, I don't even know how to call it—acid, kind of, colors, and very bright hues?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Well, actually, these don't show up. I used very bright colors here. There are—there are things that, you know, have bright colors, too. It wasn't—it was something about being surrounded by color, and I wouldn't, you know—I wouldn't take it and say it, specifically, that I was taking Mexican colors. It was just that the feeling of wanting to work in color was there. And I felt that—I mean, when I look back on it, I feel that that was directly related to having spent six months in Mexico.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's a fair amount of time. That seeps in regardless of whether you're even aware of it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, and it was very exciting, and also, I was probably coming to the end of something in those, which I had mentioned before, and I didn't want to continue doing that. So, I mean, that's why, when I

come to the end of a certain period, something else emerges.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, we were getting into that by way of, where do you get your ideas from? I was wondering if you come in with ideas, and it's not something you plan, but there's a certain point in which you're saying you've exhausted one area and then it's something—do you have an awkward phase in between? I know this from many artists that that transition phase can be really awkward when you've exhausted one thing; you've done this whole series or whatever; you've finished with black and white, pretty much, for the time being. Do you find it hard, in that transition, [00:12:00] to come up with the next phase or—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I didn't in that. But in the acrylic inks, I did because I had changed everything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How had you changed?

EVELYN STATSINGER: It was the battle of the brushes [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, the brushes. Now we get into brushwork.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Secondly, it was an entirely different way of working, and that was extremely, extremely hard to make that change. And also, it's such a difference between working completely spontaneously. And even though I don't make sketches for everything, I let the material influence what's happening in various things, but that it's so extremely concentrated and difficult to do that it was—I threw out lots of stuff in the beginning.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's interesting because we talked a little about that, too, in terms of success and what you do and how you work through things because you're determined to work through—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, in most things, yes, but this is done so quickly that it's—and if you lose your concentration, you've really spoiled it. I mean, you can see when you—see that somebody has really concentrated on something and that you lose it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's also a facility—there a facility, like you look at late Matisse, and you know, a lot of people don't understand why abstraction can be so much a matter of skill, but to be able to have that looseness and fluidity is unbelievable [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's terrific.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Even when he was near the end, where there was just cutouts, but to have that fluidity, that's what you're talking about: that ability, that sense of grace, just to be in that moment, and just—it just flows. That's one of the things you hope to achieve in your art, I guess. We were going to ask about that later, but we'll get to that. So, we're at the ink drawings, and then I guess you're dealing with brushwork. I guess I was going to ask you, were you [00:14:00] changing from flat, kind of, color application to, sort of, more—

EVELYN STATSINGER: The ink paintings are most recent.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, no, that—we were going to the things you're talking about, the more improvisatory, the things we were looking at, yeah. Oh, so that's—and that is a less flat—there's more brushwork involved in that, too. So wait, we've skipped—you've managed to skip 40 years [laughs]. So that's what confused me. I thought you had done some—you were talking about the recent ones.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, I'm sorry.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I guess what I wanted to know was, when you got from—okay, so we're at—I'm with you here. We're about in the mid-'50s, and you went from the photograms and black-and-white drawings to color. So what happened after that, in terms of the evolution, because that's a jump of 40 years, or 50? So I guess what's missing in between is what I'm wondering about. What evolved after the, you know, the color? And the color pieces, formally, were they influenced by Aztec or other kinds of Mexican or native culture?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I—we traveled all over Mexico, and I was in some very—and met some—met some anthropologists that were working there, and went to all sorts of incredible, really primitive festivals.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I never hoped in my life to ever see anything like some of those.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Like Palenque, Chichen Itza, the Aztec Mayan ruins, the pyramids, all that?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, not only that, but there were—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Festivals and—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, but—well, for one thing, we went—unfortunately, a lot of the names escape me, but we went to the—these group of anthropologists that were studying language, [00:16:00] and we went to this festival. And it was a time where a priest would come once a year to baptize all the children, and I saw a man, who was carrying a child, that was going down these steps and actually fell—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Whoa.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And nobody—it was such a feeling of fate in that area that it was like—it was something that happened, but the child would revive or something. And of course, my first impulse was to, you know, run over and do something or try to help. And I realized that, you know, that nobody was doing anything like that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Different cultural—

EVELYN STATSINGER: But it was really, really different.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Concepts. That's one of the things that's wonderful about travel is there are—it opens up your mind up to totally different ways of living—you mentioned Japan yesterday. So where else, in addition—we'll get back to your evolution because I'm not going to let you go on that one. But where else have you traveled, in terms of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, here we are.

LANNY SILVERMAN: We're in the mid-'50s at this point.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. So in '65 was the first time I went to Japan for a year, and there are a few stories I'd like to tell—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, great.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —but they're actually—that's interesting. It's about cultural differences that, you know, you don't read about.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, we had some very good friends [00:18:00] here who went to Japan, because Stan was invited to Japan, and he was working [inaudible], and we had some very good friends here from Japan that were part of the Soga family. We actually rented a house of a friend of theirs, and you have to be very careful, in Japan, about saying how you would like to do something or [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, they're very polite; they will take you up on it. Yes.

[They laugh.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: So we went to the National Museum, and we were with the sister of this friend of ours, and her English—we could understand each other; her English was very poor. And so I would speak to her in a, kind of, pidgin English, okay, and then she could—it was easier for her to understand me. Well, we had gone to the National Museum in Tokyo, and as I was coming out of the museum—it's a fabulous, fabulous museum—and before you come to it, there's a lovely lotus, a huge water area with a lotus pond. And as we were coming out, I said, oh, I would love to photograph the museum, you know. It was a remark.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's all you need.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, so two days later—her name is Mariko—two days later, Mariko called and asked if I would like to go to the National Museum with her, and I said, oh, fine. So actually going down, there's a line in Tokyo that's like—it's like the loop, [00:20:00] and it was very crowded, okay, and I had only been in Japan for a short time. But she was trying to explain to me, on this very crowded train, something, and my feeling was it was something about some kind of courtesy, but I didn't know enough Japanese [laughs] to know, really, what she was talking about. So when we get out of the train, we're going through this park that's leading to the museum, and all of a sudden, this man appears, and they bow to each other, and they're talking to each other. I'm not introduced, which is also a—it's also a cultural difference, and then this man starts going fast, and Mariko turns to me and said, we have to go. But there are two movements in Japan.

You know, when we want somebody to go away, to come, we do this. When we want someone to go away, we do

this. It's the opposite in Japan, complete opposite. So she was trying to hurry me up; she was ahead of me, and she's following this man, and so she was going like this, and I just stopped in my tracks [laughs]. And then the more she did it, I realized she meant the other, and so I'm following after her. And then she says to me that this man, who she was following, that it was her brother-in-law, so, you know, I was in—I had no idea what was happening. We get to the museum; we go up the steps, and I realize we're going into [00:22:00] the curator's department in the museum. And we get there, and a whole staff of people come out, and they're bowing, and they're saying they're very sorry; Mr. Gezawa [ph] is not there yet; he had to go to a funeral, but he'll be there very soon.

So we have some tea, and I'm in, you know [laughs]—I have no idea what's happening, and then this very nice man comes in and speaks to the brother-in-law Mariko. And then he ushers us into his office, and he indicates that I should sit across from him. He at this desk. I should sit, okay. And the brother-in-law is sitting on one side, and Mariko is sitting on the other, and he's talking to the brother-in-law. And then Mariko translates what the brother-in-law is saying to me, and I answer her in this pidgin English. Meanwhile—oh, I forgot the first part. Mr. Gezawa takes out a piece of paper—or maybe he was handed a piece of paper; I didn't see that—and he's, sort of, looking at me, and he's reading this paper, and I realize that the paper's about me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay? So, you know, like completely mysterious. So then he asks why I want to photograph in the National Museum. He talks only to the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Your translator, the brother-in-law, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —to the brother-in-law. And then he—why I want to photograph, and I tell him, and then he says, well, you know, [00:24:00] we can't take anything out of the cases [laughs]. You know, it never occurred to me—

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's not what you were up to, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —in my wildest dreams. And then—but you know, I had just gotten a new camera, and they have very fast film, and the cameras are very good, and I didn't think I would have any trouble. So then he said he was thinking about what he would do, and it turns out that he was giving me permission to photograph in the museum. But what he was doing is they have a card, which they call the hanko, which is like an ordinary—like a calling card, but he put his official stamp on it, and also, he wrote something in Japanese on the back. And I could show this to the guard if the guard is pestering me for photographing. I'm like, okay, and he was, you know, very nice, and we shook hands and so forth, and then we left. And Mariko said to me, "Oh, he really trusts you," okay? So I went to this friend of mine, who is Japanese, speaks English very well, and so I asked her what went on.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: What did I just experience? Interpret it for me.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, what was this about?

LANNY SILVERMAN: And why didn't he introduce—why didn't Mariko introduce you to the brother-in-law? That seems odd in terms of etiquette, too. Did you ever figure that out?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Whatever. Well, let's get on with the story.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, that's probably part of—part of this. Well, things are very [00:26:00] compartmentalized in Japan. Such a busy country that—I mean, such a crowded country that their ways of living that they have, you know, very different kinds of rules. Well, it turns out, I don't know how they got this piece of paper. So he wrote—I showed him this meishi [ph], and he wrote something about I was this very important person on the back of meishi, and, indeed, that card was very powerful. After I realized that, I never used it because I could use it in any museum and any place in the country—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And if I would use it, the curator would come down, okay, so—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were a serious person and you had no idea, and you don't even know how they

determined—how this piece of paper came to them.

[They laugh.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, I have no idea, except that Michi [ph], who was—he was a physicist who was the original friend, okay. Also, I know that the Soga family was an important family, historically, in Japan, so anyhow, so this is the really surprising part.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, we're coming to the dénouement.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So then I started photographing in the museum, and after about a week or so, one of the guards kept following me around. And by that time, I had earned how to say, "I'm sorry; I don't speak Japanese," but I wanted to say it so well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a problem when you speak it well enough that they continue the conversation.

[They laugh.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, nobody believed me. So, by that time, my ear was a little more in-tune, [00:28:00] and suddenly, I heard the name, Mr. Gezawa, and it turns out—I got my dictionary, and I went through it with her, and it turned out he wanted to see me. So as I'm going up the stairs to his office, I'm thinking, why does he want to see me? He doesn't speak any—he doesn't speak any English [laughs]. I can't converse with him about anything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're not going to talk art and art history—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I was worried that maybe I had made some mistake—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You had overstepped your bounds as an important person.

[They laugh.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: I was photographing something that shouldn't have been photographed, or I didn't know what it was; I was really worried. So we get upstairs, and I go to his office, and he's sitting at his desk; he gets up, and he shakes hands with me, and in the most perfect English, without any accent, he says to me, I'm so glad to see you again. Are you enjoying what you're doing? In perfect English, and mind you, I was really angry. I was so furious. We had sat there for an hour, and I was speaking pidgin English—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That is embarrassing. Yes.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, but, you know, I knew enough not to say, oh, you know—I just ignored the whole thing, and he said, well, the reason I—you know, and he asked me what I was doing, and then he said, "Well, the reason I called you today is," he said, "I would like to invite you and your husband for dinner," at his house. You know, this is really unusual. So he said, "I'm going to Chicago to give some lectures, [00:30:00] to Chicago and Boston, to give some lectures in the print department," okay, "And my wife is coming with me." And that's all he said about it, okay. And he said, "But I hope you and your husband can come." So I said [laughs], "We would be very pleased to come," and you know, I was in such confusion, really. So okay, we made a date, and, you know, okay, it was very difficult getting to his house.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And, you know, he's a very wealthy man, and most Japanese, who are very wealthy, maintain Western rooms, but also, I thought, oh, it would be really nice to go have this wonderful Japanese—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were looking for the quintessential Japanese experience.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. So we were—we went to the—we were in the Western room, and the dinner—the—first of all, the silverware, it was the biggest silverware I've ever seen. It was, like, huge [laughs]. There are Western things that, you know, Americans use a great deal, and it's true; they do in comparison. And so they made a big beef roast.

[They laugh.]

And, you know, generally, they cut things in little pieces—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right, so they can eat it with chopsticks, and it's usually—yeah, no, it's usually fish, not usually a beef stew or something like that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: They have wonderful beef.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah. There's Kobe beef, too, of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And the Kobe beef is really terrific. So anyhow, and his wife, I think, knew English, but—  
[00:32:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Too polite to probably try it. Unless you speak it really well, you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —probably didn't want to speak. And, oh, I forgot this; the door was opened by three of his sons, one that was educated in the United States; one was educated in Germany, and one was educated in France, and they spoke perfect English.

[They laugh.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: We had a, you know, it was a very nice dinner, and then we left. And when I had shown my—I forgot to tell you—when I had shown his hanko to my friend—this is the important part—she explained what had happened. She said that, you know, the Japanese, people will show you their kindergarten—pictures of their kindergarten classes, and they keep contact with all their classes up to the present time, and they also have obligations to each other.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Different social sensibility than we do.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, entirely different. Now, somehow, Mariko knew that her brother-in-law knew—had gone to kindergarten with Mr. Gezawa—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So he was obligated—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay? And so she thought that she would ask him about photographing in the museum. What she didn't know was that Mr. Gezawa knew English.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's why that happened [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: So she asked her brother-in-law—he came as an introducer, and she came as a translator. Now, when Mr. Gezawa came into the room and realized [00:34:00] that he had brought Mariko to translate, he realized that Mr. Gezawa didn't know that he knew English.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And he could speak and knew English.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But she couldn't say anything?

EVELYN STATSINGER: So he couldn't, out of deference to the fact that the brother-in-law had come—he had taken time off from work and so forth—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I see, so there were all these social politenesses—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And she couldn't say anything because that would—there's a certain, kind of, level of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —embarrassment. There's all these layers of politeness—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Exactly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that required this comedy to go on. Did you ever find out how he had the piece of the paper that explained who you were?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I didn't.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a mystery that you'll never know.



EVELYN STATSINGER: No, the only thing I can think of was it was done through Michi somehow.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Curious.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Who know—you know, who I knew well.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And he was also was also living, at that time, I think, in Japan, too. We were living quite close. There's another story that illustrates something—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Cultural differences again?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because that was the topic you were heading with. What's the other one?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Is that okay? Is there time—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, yeah. No, it's fine.

EVELYN STATSINGER: We visited a place called Kurashiki, which it has a lot of canals. It's almost like the Venice of Japan, and there are these great store houses and has wonderful folk art museums. Just wonderful. And so we were there, and we stayed at this very old inn. It was just wonderful. There was some Noh [00:36:00] master, who was practicing Noh songs up above us—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: And we decided to go for a walk, you know, just in the—it was a very small town, actually, and just walk in the streets, and I didn't really collect—most of the things I collected were just ordinary things, plus brushes.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a whole—yes.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes [laughs]. And then walking passed the shop, and I saw a beautiful ceramic piece. It was really beautiful. And I thought, "I really would like to buy that." And it was high up—it was high up on the shelf, so we went into the shop, and through, you know, various—I could speak a few words at that time and so forth—the shop keeper took it down, and he was handling it, you know, very carefully, and it was beautiful. And so I asked him how much it was. He said, "Would you like to see my moss garden?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: Interesting [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Now, what that's about, if someone doesn't want to deal with something, there's a complete change of subject.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Wow.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: They don't always show you the first—there's a certain, kind of, layers of impenetrability that they don't always show you the stuff—that they want—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Boy, it means they want to talk about something—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Something else as a way—

EVELYN STATSINGER: It could be anything, but they can't say no. [00:38:00] Okay? So what they can say is a different subject, change of subject; any Japanese person knows that that means, I don't want to talk about it, or, I don't want to do whatever it is.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Now this was really unusual because the moss garden is at his house.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Inside—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm a complete stranger—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —off the street. Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So that's what I'm saying. There's—you—to get accepted and see certain things, even certain pieces for sale, theoretically, requires certain [inaudible] and certain—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, no, no. This is a—this is a unique—this is a—

LANNY SILVERMAN: But the fact that you got immediate entrée is already curious.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's completely unique.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay, because first of all, I'm American, and secondly, I'm a stranger off the street.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Nobody goes into a Japanese house under those kinds of circumstances. So we went, and we sat down, and his wife brought some tea, and we—now, in Japan, you can also look at a moss garden without saying anything. I mean, they're perfectly happy to enjoy something. You don't have to particularly talk, but we knew a few words, and we, you know, said [laughs] the few words we knew, and after a while, we exhausted our vocabulary.

[They laugh.]

And then, you know, we admire the garden. It was. It was a charming little moss garden. And then we went out. Well, I had, you know—I had some idea that there was something unusual, but I had no idea what it was, and against my better judgement—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Uh-oh.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I thought, I'm going to ask again. So I asked again, [00:40:00] and I—oh, I have to change this because I've told this story before, and then, when I listened to the recording of it, I realized something else about it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, let's go back to it—oh yeah, let's give amendment to the amended version.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Do you want to hear the amendment of it?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, yeah, because if it works better, let's hear the—yeah, sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, it's important, okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you have to go back to a detail from before?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I'll tell you this part.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Then it'll explain something better. So he said to me—then he said in English, "Don't mention it."

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's fairly aggressive, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, then he went inside, and he brought out a little cup that you would use for, you know, cake or something, a blue, shallow dish, and he said, "This is 200 years old, and it's a present." Okay.

[They laugh.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: So it was a really terrible experience. So, you know, I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the end of that subject.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm completely out of my—you can't not accept a present.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: There was no way, and also, I had thought, well, maybe I should buy something else, but that seemed really tacky [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's really hard to know what the appropriate response is because the rules are so different.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, and also, I didn't understand why he was doing that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But this is the amendment to that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: After I had listened to that, it—after recording of that, that's how I had actually told it, I realized that I had shown him Mr. Gezawa's card, mainly because [00:42:00] I wanted him to know that I just, you know—I was seriously interested in it. Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You were a serious person; you had a serious card. With little—you realized the impact of that card probably?

EVELYN STATSINGER: I had to use credentials.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You had credentials. Yes.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, but I had forced him to do that actually. I didn't know that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, I think what we are talking about—that's what I was saying; the society is so based on etiquette and on levels of entry—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and instead of, in the West, maybe, of a letter—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —of whatever—send us a calling card.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Maybe write a thank you—right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you had that, and then he's in an obligation to treat you in a certain way, which you had no idea—

EVELYN STATSINGER: He had said that he knew Mr. Gezawa. I mean, he had indicated that he—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —knew him or knew about him, whatever it was. But I didn't realize the way I left him. I, you know—that made me understand why he had did that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But I didn't realize, at the time, that I was forcing him. Okay. It was, really, a bad experience.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's a little tough to—I've been—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in many of those situations. It's very hard to figure out what is going on, especially when the rules are so different and you have to—unless you have access to live with a family or you have access on that, too, and you begin to learn, you know, we're so rude and crude by comparison. There are certain levels of sophistication and of social obligations, at least, that we have not a clue as to how someone could behave in a different world.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, I guess, back to our original—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —thread where we were going with it. Either in the evolution of your work, when you came back from Japan, there—was there an influence of the Japanese experience on your work, you think?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, there was.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How would you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, I was always interested in Japan, and I—actually, I had seen many things here. I always admired their work tremendously, but I was telling you, in the first interview, about that sketchbook—  
[00:44:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. That sketchbook is directly related to—I saw so much theater in Japan.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're talking about Noh and Bunraku, and yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah—

EVELYN STATSINGER: And certain things, even in interiors, where they'll have screens, then they'll have openings, you see things beyond things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How about perspective? Because—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —it's a layered perspective.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's very different than one- or two-point perspective of the West—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Your work, now that I think about it, has certain kind of layering, too, so does that have a—did that come from, perhaps, a Japanese—it may be earlier than—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I think—I think I naturally did that before, but in this particular case, it was definitely influenced by, you know, the three theater, both Bunraku and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Kabuki and—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —Kabuki and Noh, and we went to a shrine in Japan that's called Izumo. It's a very, very early shrine, and it's actually built on stilts and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: What city is that in? I don't know that one.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It doesn't matter.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't remember. It's one of three great—I don't know if that one has the mirror. One of them has the mirror and the sword, and I forget the other, and so—what is—wait a minute. I don't have the great shrine [ph]. Izumo is very old, and we had—there was a festival [00:46:00] going on where the priests were dancing in diaphanous costumes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: And very, very early play that precedes, like, Kabuki, called Kagura, and it's played outside. It's about—Izumo is in a very small town.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Inaudible] close to a village or something.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Right. And it has an outdoor, little platform, and the children come up, and they can stand right at the platform.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: And it's masked; there's all sorts of masks, and they perform these very ancient plays and with dramas and wonderful, little musicians, and we stayed a week there and saw all the plays. It was really something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So this is a real formative experience for you?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Even though you had an interest in Japan, like me, early on in your life, this—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —was your final—this was your culmination—

EVELYN STATSINGER: It was really, really beautiful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now I'm sort of jealous. You were probably around when there was a show that I always want to see.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Kind of always hard to find—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is at the—at the MCA. It was called *Mob* [ph]: *The Interval*, about the relationship of space, something a little like Miles Davis; sometimes the distance, you know, he expressed it; he probably listened to Japanese music.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But the notion that the spaces between things can be just as important.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And this doesn't go—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, yes, definitely—

LANNY SILVERMAN: The game, the stone game, that relationship of space is very important, sort of, the interval. Did you ever see that show at the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I might have—I might have been in Michigan.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, because that's one of those things I would think, if you'd seen, you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —would have also—all that in town—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that would have been—that must have—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh well, I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think it must've been early '80s before I came, so you didn't see that one. [00:48:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: But, oh, I believe in that. I mean, I use that all the time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There's another kind—

EVELYN STATSINGER: A sense of the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: The space—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —space between things—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Interval—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —is the same thing as whatever is there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Here's another one.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's part of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: My friend Kiff Slemmons is a big fan—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —of this wabi-sabi. Do you know about that? Ugly beauty, that sort of sense that—you mention something about being more interested in the ordinary objects—the fact that decay and ordinariness—this is Japanese concept that has been adopted by the West and by a lot of artists and so forth. Do you know about that?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Is that something that interests you as well?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, no, that's—like they always have to have a mistake.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But the mistake is beautiful [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So, it's not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: They're not the only culture.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The near East does that, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's like an affront to God if something's too perfect.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you're—we talked about mistakes yesterday, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you're a fan of wabi-sabi, too?

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of ugly beauty and of, sort of, imperfections.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: This is something that interests you as well. That may have been something—be something you were aware—or you were interested in before you went to Japan though.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I would think. Well, let's go back to where we were. We were trying to follow a linear path, but neither of us are very linear. So that's fine. We were thinking about the evolution of your work, so Japan was an important influence in your work. So after that, at what point was that in terms of timeline? You have your

timeline in front of you.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, right, 1965, '66—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, so we jumped about 10 years, so then after that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Then I went to Japan for a month at each time in '72, '75, and '82. So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you've been there a number of times?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's expensive. I'm jealous [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: I actually took—even though I was interested in it as a kid, I went to a lot of Southeast Asia, but not Japan until very recently.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, we didn't have to pay for it. Stan was invited.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That helps, yes [laughs]. He had an entrée, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Any other places that influenced your work or in terms of travel? [00:50:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, as far as travel, I mean, you know, as I explained before, everything influences it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And it's not that I—whatever you see—okay, yeah. I've been to Milan and Florence, Rome and Ravenna and Sienna. These are at different times. Rome, Venice, Assisi, and I also mentioned Ravenna, and, well, it was a strange thing about Italy. I loved Italy. I mean, if I ever get to be reborn—

[They laugh.]

—I liked to be either born as a Japanese or as an Italian.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sounds pretty good to me.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. And one the things—I know this sounds weird—but I was never—before that time, in a way, I wasn't interested in the Renaissance. And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: How about earlier things like Fra Angelico and Giotto?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, yeah, earlier things—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, okay

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: But not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Not the classical—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Not the real baroque and—okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The stuff that most people—yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And when I went there, you know, it was so astonishing just walking on the streets. The streets themselves are, you know, but a funny thing occurred to me there: that it must have been really very noisy during that time period that they were building all those buildings and cathedrals because, you know, a lot of their hand-cut, hand—human—then you must have heard that all the time. Must have been a noisy city.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's not something you usually think about, but that's true enough.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] I know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So anyway, that was just a curious thought. But—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Do you think—you haven't worked in glass, so obviously—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, that's only one thing [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] One thing that you probably haven't worked in that I can—[00:52:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Never have I [laughs]—I didn't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That I'm aware of, anyways, as you're hiding it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, I actually didn't go to see the glassware.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But there's also the incredible sense of light, particularly in Tuscany and so forth.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yes, oh yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And the early work is probably more influential to you, like when I mentioned Fra Angelico, Giotto.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, oh yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's the stuff that gets to me, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Was there any other—when you came back from—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, Ravenna, Ravenna, which—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I've never been to Ravenna—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —but that was wonderful, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, they have marvelous mosaics.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It's a lovely little town.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know what you're talking about.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I have a funny experience there [laughs]. But I don't know [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Give it a shot.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: See what it is. We can always edit it out.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I had this [laughs]—oh yeah.

[They laugh.]

—going edit the whole thing out. I had a bad cold. And so I stayed—I was lying in bed, and there was a knock at the door, and the Virgin Mary came in to vacuum my room.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] What?

EVELYN STATSINGER: What? The spitting image.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, you're not talking—



EVELYN STATSINGER: Right [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was going to say, did you have vision, or was this the real deal, or what [laughs]?

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Right? It was so odd because, you know, in a lot of the frescos, you see people that look—and that was true in Mexico, too.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: You'd see the living images of the people; it's amazing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It was quite an experience [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] So what did you do?

EVELYN STATSINGER: I didn't do anything [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Did you—just took it in and thought, "Wow, this is—"

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I had been sleeping, and I was wondering if I had—

LANNY SILVERMAN: If you were hallucinating [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Hallucination [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right. God, did the experiences in Italy affect your work, do you think? I'd—you say everything affects your work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm thinking on the—but was there something that happened after you came back that you absorbed that changed the direction you were going when you got back?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, there were probably some paintings where, maybe, colors related [00:54:00] in some way. As you know, I can't make those—I can't make those distinctions.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Yeah, we did that yesterday, and that's—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —sort of interesting too because—that's fine. I mean, you're entitled—there's a—your experiences—the way you experience the world and the way you deal with inside and outside is different than other people, of course.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I'm not trying to push you in that area. I'm just wondering—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I think it's true.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because it seemed like there was—particularly when you mentioned Mexico, there was a real impact that could be, maybe not at the time, but could be seen, if you looked at your work before and after, "Oh, color, this is"—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, that was definitely true.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Now we were sort of along the path of how your work has evolved, the overview of your work. I don't know—we were up to the '60s, and then you did some trips to Japan after that, but in terms of other things that you've done, in terms of your progression as an artist, can you sort of see a path, a sort of—or is it just—you mentioned yesterday that sometimes you revisit and things get reabsorbed. Is there—do you see a forward path or motion or—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, and I don't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —evolution—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —know if I've said this yesterday, is that, you know, when I was in—when I was—when we were getting things together for that retrospective for the first time, I really realized how related my work is, even though it's in different mediums and different times and looks different; how related they are.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How would you describe—I mean, this is a tough one, and I know this is probably going to irk you, but how would you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, it doesn't irk me. I can't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —describe the unifying—this is a curious question because I saw—and I know certain artists like this, you wonder, is this all one person? [00:56:00] There's one person there, you're saying, and you can sense that that was you; this is your work—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How would characterize what they have in common then? This is the overview that I was asking for. Is there a way that you can even describe what that is?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, except that, I know my work when I see it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: —even if it's been, like, 80 years ago.

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: If you don't remember making it, "Oh, that's it's mine."

EVELYN STATSINGER: There's something—I can't describe it; you can't describe it in words.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, there's something that I—whether it's—well, you know, style I also think is not a thing that you cultivate. I mean, in a certain way, your handwriting has a style.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, you don't consciously adopt it. It just happens to you.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. I mean, some people work for a particular style.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There are probably people who are, sort of—particularly the kids who are probably very career oriented. There's probably people that either imitate or adopt a particular style for a reason.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That's right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But that's not generally—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Right—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —what happens. Yeah, I agree.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And that I—and because, also—that's probably what I'm trying to say. When I saw the whole range of what I was doing, I know which is mine. I suppose I'm recognizing a certain something, but I have no—

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: No idea how to character it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No way of describing it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's interesting.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's too bad. We have to see that retrospective [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That would really interesting. Well, there'll be a little bit of it at the gallery with the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, people seem to recognize my work, so they are recognizing something.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. Well, actually, do you know—I could let you have it if I find it. Do you know Ann Wiens?

LANNY SILVERMAN: A little bit, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Because a couple of years ago—probably more than a couple—she did a lecture at one of the art expos. They had one of different critics. Of different people. [00:58:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: I haven't seen her for quite a while. Is she still around?

EVELYN STATSINGER: I think so. I'm not in contact with her.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But she chose me, and it was very interesting. I mean, she knew my work just from seeing—you know, she never saw a lot of it, but she came up, and she really did a very interesting job, and I have the—she gave me the speech that she made.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, the transcript of the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. And she talked about on—I also, you know, I'm telling her the same things that I'm telling you in a sense.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I would imagine.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And she said, generally, when people say they that—I don't know the words she used exactly. I should look that up. I can't remember the word because it was important—that her eyes start to glaze over.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'm sorry, what?

EVELYN STATSINGER: That her eyes begin to glaze over.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Talking the way I'm speaking, actually.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: She said, but she thought that it was true in my case.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Interesting.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That she can't—she couldn't—sorry, I haven't made that [inaudible].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Characterize the work or—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, that it—that what I'm saying—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Can't summarize it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, she can't see exact influences or that—this is really—can we turn that off?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure. Hang on.

[Audio break.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, wait a second. That might help. Okay, here. Rethinking—[01:00:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'll try.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll get it, and actually, there we go.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Thank you.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So, let's see. That should be better. Okay. Now—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Let me put my ears on.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I guess I didn't—I didn't have pause. I guess we have a little—there'll be a little break in there. I was actually setting up the mic.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So what we were talking about was your work being hard to characterize.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Where that was going to lead me, I think, in terms of what we were talking about, is—well, we were also trying to figure out the timeline of your work. Have we—we were up to, certainly, to the '70s, probably, in terms of other things that happened as your work evolved.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: What happened after that, in terms of changes, either in—was it choice of media that changed. Was there stylistic changes? What developed—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Where are we?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, with your timeline, somewhere. So we're looking for what happened in the '80s and '90s in terms of your work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. Oh, I didn't talk about the Huntington Hartford Foundation [laughs]. Do you know about that?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well—

EVELYN STATSINGER: But that's not—let me see. In the '80s, I was—well, I had that large show in Karen Lennox Gallery.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that was one the things I saw that I was going to ask you about, the Karen Lennox Gallery.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I know Karen some.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And she had a gallery at a certain point. Didn't she work, originally, for Phyllis Kind?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, she did.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's how—I just found that out fairly recently.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And, yeah—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I knew her as, sort of, as an aftermarket dealer.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, and I was with Phyllis for about a year. [01:02:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, so you did show with Phyllis?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I didn't show.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, you just—

EVELYN STATSINGER: What actually happened is, I think people were telling her that I should be in her gallery [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that would make sense. That's why I thought, maybe logical. She had a lot of—a wide range of artists. It's not always the standard—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —things we think of.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And, so I was ready. I was ready to have—actually, I was ready to have the show that I finally had at Karen's. And she said she wanted to have it, and she promised me a show at that time when I went in with her.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: You know, I wasn't paying attention, and then it was getting near the end of the year when I was [laughs] supposed to have the show, so I called—I went to see her, and I—it was really, very strange. For some reason, she said, "Well, I don't think I will give you a show." She said, "I think it would be a disaster." It was really strange. And so, you know, and I didn't try to push her [laughs] you know, so [inaudible] no sense. I really never understood the whole thing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The whole gallery thing?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. And I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That was going to be a line of questions. This is a good lead into that. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. And, no, I understood other galleries, but I never understood that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Who does?

[They laugh.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. And Karen was working for her at that time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right, for Phyllis Kind.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And she closed at the end of that year.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Phyllis closed?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: When she moved to New York or something?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, that's what happened. This was when—

EVELYN STATSINGER: She opened her gallery in New York. [01:04:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And Karen called me up because Karen left her at that time. So she wanted to have a show, and so that was the show that Karen had.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And you were talking about that this is the work you were doing—like this would be '80s or '90s, somewhere around there?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, it was the '80s and—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Eighties—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —to be exact, it was 1983.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, early '80s.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And what was the work like then? Because that's what was the line of questioning we were going.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That was—it was drawings and collage. And it was really big show. She had a beautiful space.

LANNY SILVERMAN: This gallery must have been around, and by the time I got here by late '90s, it must have closed. She was around—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I thought that was the show you were talking about. You said you saw—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I saw things at Jan Cicero, which is what I was going to ask you about.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, oh so sorry, yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: We're going to get to Jan next, but I don't think I saw—I don't think I was here when Karen—I wasn't here in '83. I was in Madison then, so I'm trying to think, and I saw your work—I saw the work—your work, first, at Dennis Adrian's *Some Other Traditions*.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, oh, in Wisconsin.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That would have been—

EVELYN STATSINGER: In Wisconsin—

LANNY SILVERMAN: —in the '80s, so I knew that work. I knew that work actually. I know the work. I had seen that then. That's right. That's that kind of work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: What was that I had there? I don't remember.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, those were the ones that looked more like the under-watery kind of world.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's sort of what we're talking—that's, sort of, my sense of the first work I saw of yours.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Senses of place, but flattened, maybe overlapping planes. Nice color harmonies. I mean—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I got—who was the curator there? Do you remember?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Trent Myers was the curator.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, and I was going through some letters. I got a letter from him saying that I did wonderful organic abstraction [laughs]. [01:06:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: That would a tidy—neat and tidy summarization of you work—

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] It summarized it—

[They laugh.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Which I know you're probably cringing at.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, you know—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's as accurate—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —people can see what they see.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I can't, you know. It's probably true.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, you know, all those titles, it's very strange.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're not looking to, sort of, summarize. You don't like being put in boxes, I can tell [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, it isn't—it isn't that. It's just strange to me that I've been put in so many different boxes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that was one of my lines—I guess, we're going to do two lines here that, I guess, we'll follow up on. One is, how have critics and people perceived your work? Which is important to you, in terms that you talked about the audience completing the work. What is the critical reception of been of it? We'll come back to the dealers in a while because I'm curious about that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: How have Alan Artner or whoever else—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or you mentioned, you know, Wiens, Ann Wiens—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: How have—well, how have people responded to your work? I mean—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Very well, actually.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You've gotten a very positive response from critics.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Have they—you mentioned the *Time Magazine*—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: —critics, shall we say, yesterday. That maybe wasn't so positive [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, he told me that, you know, somebody else was involved. He actually apologized for it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, for what they had done in term of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —characterizing your work on secret project [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Getting back to just the critics though, of the people that have written about or responded to your work as critics, what—those are the things that we're talking about in terms of summarizations. Have they gotten you? Have you been happy with the way they've interpreted it? How have they, you know—specifically, how have they, you know, other than the, would you say, organic abstraction?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, there's a certain, you know—there's certain things that appear through all the—okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: The chaff [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, there's certain things, and, like, a lot of people will talk about the technique. I think I talked about that before. [01:08:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That goes through all the things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, Dennis—I looked. I did reread Dennis' essay as I said yesterday.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And the one thing that I got from that is that—it confirmed what you were talking about yesterday—is that there is an ambiguity, an intentional ambiguity about your work. He talks about that a fair amount. So is that something that people—that makes it harder for a critic or for a writer?

EVELYN STATSINGER: I think—I think that makes it harder for a critic.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't have an easy narrative or an easy—you're not—we talked about political art, too. You don't have an easy message, shall we say, or content that's just—can be condensed into a sentence or two. As much as Trent was trying to, there isn't an easy answer for the work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, there isn't.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Throughout any of it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, I think that's true and also because I've changed all the time. And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that's kind of very cool, too. The fact that you're not—you don't want to be tied down to a particular style, or particular movement, or a particular technique, or even a medium.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I just follow how I feel about it. I mean, you know, when I'm tired of doing—when I've explored it as much as I can explore, medium is very important to me. But when I've explored that as much as I can, I want to do something else. And it's simple [laughs], you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, here's something that I wondered about that I wanted to follow up from yesterday. You let drop a couple, sort of, words that made me think that this is an avenue into looking at your work. And one of them was you found your work—you thought your work was very psychological, and I think you may have thrown out spiritual, which is a word that is very tough to [laughs]—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, let's say poetic.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Poetic is a more comfortable—[01:10:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, I think that is part of it in a way.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you're looking for a, sort of, a sense of poetry, visual poetry.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm not—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're not looking for—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I've written things about my work, okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I think there is an—some critics have talked about that; there's a certain kind of poetic sense. And once again, it's not that—it's just—it's just who I am and what I do. I'm not looking for anything. [Laughs.] I'm making it hard for you, I know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, no, that's—I understand. That's a very Japanese—that's almost like a Zen thing. You're not—you're just—you just do what you do, and you're in that moment. You make the art. Others can—you want others to complete the picture, but you're not looking to aid the course of critics or [laughs] fit in—fit into any particular pattern.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. No. No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's just you respond as you respond. I'm totally appreciative of that. I don't have a problem with that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: A critic or somebody looking at this in the future may want to characterize your work and figure out some way to fit you into a movement or into why you were doing this or that. That might be another matter, but I'm perfectly comfortable with this. I'm not looking—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, and the thing is I've been in all the—I mean, I'm characterized as on so many different movements. I have, you know—there's the organic abstraction. I've been in shows with abstraction and, you know, or the Monster Roster or, you know, Surrealism or something—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I don't see—I mean, in terms of the Monster Roster, which you mentioned yesterday, you're, sort of, an odd one out, just as you might be—you're not really an Imagist.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't think you were really grouped with them, not directly.



EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But you're—that's what Dennis' show is about, *Some Other Traditions*. You're an outlier.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Yeah, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] You don't fit in comfortably to any of them, even though you've been associated with them.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: So that's important to understand. That's, sort of, the way you view yourself, too. You're not trying to fit into any—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. [01:12:00] I just think that's something that's extremely interesting about Chicago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Definitely.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That—also that, you know, people can be very friendly with each other and be in entirely different modes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: There is some competition. There isn't a whole lot of, you know, in terms of success in the art world—there isn't a whole lot of it. And this is even true of women, and even after the women's movement. I've had this conversation with members of Artemisia and—with them and strong feminists, that there's a lot of competitive women that fight for attention and space and—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I'll tell you something. I had an experience two days ago.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay [laughs]. This is fresh off of the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Right in this subject.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I was at Whole Foods, and there was this young person working at the counter, and for some reason, Stan told her I was an artist, okay. So she says, "Oh, you're an artist? I'm an artist, too." And meanwhile, you know she's doing—so I said, "Oh." You know, she was so young. I said, "Well, are you—do—are you studying now?" And she, "Yes. I'm a"—she's in the first term at the Art Institute, and she pulled out her card. So she already—

LANNY SILVERMAN: She already has a card, though, yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] She had a card, with everything, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh yeah, people are into careers these days. They're definitely into marketing. She probably has a website, too, for that matter [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Yeah. Well, I'm sure. You know, it was amazing to me.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's a whole different world.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. It is.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's a question I was going to ask you, is, "How has the art world changed?" so that's, sort of, an example of it.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That is how it's changed.

LANNY SILVERMAN: People are much more careerist. They're very goal directed. You, sort of, ambled, just like me. You ambled into whatever you became by just being passionate about it. You're, sort of, very parallel in that way.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And being lucky.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You didn't have a plan.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. Right. [01:14:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: You weren't looking to be—like you saw some role models early on; you saw artists, but you didn't even consciously try to, you know, figure out how to make a career. What do you think you would have been if you weren't an artist? A musician?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I—no. No, I think I was interested in writing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: A writer, which is interesting. That, for me, was my back-up plan.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yeah?

LANNY SILVERMAN: I didn't—I saw early on how difficult it would be to succeed in the art world, and I'm a guy, which makes it easier, probably.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But I—yeah, I—it's probably my parents' voice in the—somewhere in my unconscious saying, "You've got to figure out a way," and becoming a curator was a way to really work and to do writing, which I love, because I basically would be a poet or, you know, an artist. And how many poets and artists does our culture support, as you well know? So your wanting to be a writer is very interesting, too, so—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I wrote—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't use language in your works directly, none that I've seen, correct?

EVELYN STATSINGER: In the works.

LANNY SILVERMAN: In the works.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Never. Because that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, the photogram, you wouldn't say that. The photogram has—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, some language.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —some newspapers in it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay.

EVELYN STATSINGER: But some of them are in Japanese, and I don't know what they say. I've always worried about that [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, so it isn't—it isn't a conscious use of language, though. So that's interesting that you haven't incorporated it, even though that's a strong interest of yours.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. When I was a child, I wrote a poem, my first poem.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: It was, "I Know I Am I, but Why?"

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: I wrote that when I was about 6, 7 years old.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's impressive in terms of the age, because you don't even develop a sense of I until I-don't-know-when, except I'm sure you have some sense of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I had—we used to go to the country once a year. And we'd leave at night, and I remember I thought I was going to the end of the world. It was dark, and I was sitting on somebody's lap and, you know, eventually falling asleep, and in the morning, I woke up, [01:16:00] and I could hear birds. And I went for a walk, and there was this pond. It was one of the most beautiful days, and the birds were singing, and the butterflies were flying, and all of the sky was very blue and so forth. And I remember thinking, here was—and the crickets were all around, and I remember thinking here was everybody. Everything was doing something, but what was I—what was it could I do? What was it I could do? And I solved it by saying, "I could think," which really surprised me [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] That's a big one.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. It was really amazing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I can still remember that really, really, very clearly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Let's go back into one of those circles that we were in.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: One of them was about dealers, your relationship to dealers. We were last at Karen Lennox.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. She was—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I think when I came to Chicago—the first time I saw your work was Jan Cicero; you haven't mentioned her.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So are they—were there any other dealers that—there's Jan, and were there other people that you had relationships—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh yes. Well, the first one was Frumkin.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, you mentioned Alan Frumkin yesterday, right. And—

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I was with him from '52 to '60.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Okay, so that's—yeah, that's early on.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay, because then he went to New York. Okay. Then, you know, they started—Superior Street started, and they asked me if I would join them, which I did. And then there was the Kohler Gallery from '64 to '70. And then Artemisia asked me, and that—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And we talked a little bit about Artemisia.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. And that was—let me—'78. I was there for a year.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. That was a brief—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and I was with Phyllis Kind for the '81 to '82, [01:18:00] and then Karen '83 to '84, and then Jan Cicero from '85 to 2001.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what I thought. That was the long-standing one because that's how I—I mean, I—other than seeing the work in Madison, I—

EVELYN STATSINGER: But the reason was Karen, her rent went up so high—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's true of a lot of—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —that she only—she didn't—I would still be with her, but she wanted to deal privately.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what I know her as; she helped me a lot with like a—with Karl Wirsum show. She's a font of knowledge as a secondary dealer.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. And I didn't—I didn't—I felt I wanted to show, so I was very sorry, and so, but I'm still in contact with her.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And Jan's no longer even dealing privately.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. No, she is, but she came to my last show; it was very nice. Nice to see her.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So she's still around. I haven't seen her in ages. I didn't know her personally, but I figured.

EVELYN STATSINGER: She was a very nice dealer. Really.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You've had good experiences with dealers, it sounds like, compared to a lot of artists.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I really have. I really—except—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And a lot of them have come to you. You haven't actually, seemingly—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. That's true.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —struggled with acceptance in the galleries thing. That's unusual. I mean, I've got to tell you that's not the usual story.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Yeah. I know that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And it's particularly difficult, as I was alluding to, as a woman, who is past, you know, the faddish—there's the, you know, the next new thing.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No it is; it's very unusual, and I felt—and also that I was—I never had problems about being a woman in relation to the gallery situation.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Otherwise, you were saying there were some experiences—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Yeah, well—

LANNY SILVERMAN: But in terms of the art world, you felt like you were accepted and didn't have that. That's also unusual because I know many people, many female artists, and—who would say that you know, "Forget it. There's ageism, plus sexism." [01:20:00]

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And there's a whole, you know, slew of complaints about, you know, like, who shows in the major museums and so forth. Have you had many museum shows? We haven't talked about that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. Only at the Art Institute, but I have—I have things at the National Gallery. And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: In Washington.

EVELYN STATSINGER: In Washington.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Right.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And the Art Institute owns quite a lot of my things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, one could still argue that you're still deserving of that retrospective that we talked about [laughs]—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because that would be a level of, I think, validation and an acceptance that should happen. There's—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, yes. I'm sorry about that because I really would like to see it together.

LANNY SILVERMAN: All together. Whole.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And it would—whether what I think about the continuity of everything, I'd really like to see that and if—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, frankly, so would I. I—[laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: I did what I could—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, I know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —and, actually, that whole story is another thing. I had a couple other questions that I was going to get into that get off of our—think we've covered that other—I guess one of the things I was going to ask you is, you don't have children, do you?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And do you—was that a conscious decision, speaking of, as the woman's role? So that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. No, the—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Or is it—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I think, partly, the reason is that both Stan and I were very involved in what we were doing. That was one—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So there is a career aspect to it. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —that really—that was—I know you—you like to quote a career [ph] [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, you don't like the word "career" even. Well, I—it's your—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I don't—you know, he's a really inventive scientist, and it's not—he's—it's not about a career in the sense—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, mine's not a career. I would probably have the same—I would bristle at the term "career" for me, too. [01:22:00] Neither of us are that ambitious, so I know what you're talking about.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But the sense is that your passion for making art—

EVELYN STATSINGER: For what it is. And also, at the time, I, frankly, don't think we were—we would have made good parents. And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, if you're that involved with what you do, it's very hard to—that's why I brought up this subject. Was that a conscious decision because it would be very hard to split your passion for art? Let's not, you know, call it the C word, but basically [laughs]—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Word. It takes a lot of time, and also, we both had very difficult childhoods, and I think we really weren't ready to have children. I mean, I think we wouldn't have made good parents. But you know, at 88, I can say now I can make a good parent [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's funny that you say that, too, because sometimes the timing isn't lined up. When you're ready for it, it's not biologically, or temporally, or situationally while you're there.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't feel. I mean, now it would be nice to have a lot of children. They could help me with my paintings [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Oh sure, or also, I mentioned, you know, like the estate that I was talking about, helping you resolve, like, what to do with the stuff. There's all kinds of practical reasons, but—so you don't look back in that sense.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, speaking of Stan, I actually was going to ask you this question, too. I don't get the sense that you're that technologic—you're not that involved with technology. You've got a partner that's very involved.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Does digital imagery or social networking or any of the current stuff, does that get to any—that doesn't—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. Actually, I'm like a dinosaur. I really am.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's kind of what I felt like when you were—you were talking yesterday about it—is that that's not your area.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. But what I found out when I worked in a laboratory, I mean, in this menial job, and I first met—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You mean those secret projects [laughs]?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah [laughs], my secret projects. That was the first time I had really come in contact

with real scientists. [01:24:00] And I discovered that they were very much like artists—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Problem solvers.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —really. Not only that in—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Creativity, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —creativity.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's—you mentioned Stan being that way, too. There are scientists who are about the creative aspect even more than just solving the problem.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes, and so, you know, there's complete communication understanding, and Stan really does like my work. That was a good thing.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That helps.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And we've never had any problem about that, and also, I think it's worked well in the sense that I don't—you know, I don't interfere with his type of work, you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Two artists in a family could be very difficult—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —because they're in competing for the same territory, or there's influence, and they're already—you know, look at Leon and Nancy Spero. I mean, there are people that succeed at that, but it's not—it's not an easy, not an easy path.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. So—

LANNY SILVERMAN: So you complement each other. That works very well. Another—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Even though we're very different people. And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Probably.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I believe in that [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, sometimes that's true psychologically as well. I guess I was going to also ask, in terms of—oh yeah, I know what I was going to ask. Well, we didn't get through—just—I mentioned psychological and spiritual or—you were not wanting that particular term, but how would you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, you—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Going back to that, I don't know if you—you may have ducked that very subtly, or you may have done like the Japanese guy [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, did I?

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] I think you changed—I don't know if you changed the—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm not aware of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't—I'm not sure, either, what happened there, but I'm still curious about that aspect of your work because you let—you—that came from you, not from me, and I tend to be very interested in those things. So I'm kind of curious how you would—you would attach either a sense of spirituality or psychology into your work [01:26:00] because there are hints, as I said before, there are hints of worlds that are operating, but they're not necessarily—they're, sort of, very poetic, as you mentioned, or dreamy, but they're not—there's no direct—there's not an easy way into getting to psychological or spiritual. How would you attach those to your work? Either of those terms just—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I don't, you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm really sorry that I had originally got into that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, you regret having used those terms because they're—they slipped out.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, we can let them bypass.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, that's all right because I mentioned it myself.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's why I brought it up because I was curious.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And, well, for example—but I don't—you know, of course, all painting, all work is psychological in some way. I mean, it's part of your psychology; there's—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It comes from people, and it comes from—yeah. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay. If you take this drawing, it's called *Strange Visitation*, okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So I—you know, it—[laughs] I don't know how to explain it. It's probably more psychological than any of the other work I've done, not just as painting, but that period. But I don't analyze it myself. It doesn't—I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's not the way you operate.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I was telling—

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I think I don't want to because, actually, when you work, you—

LANNY SILVERMAN: That would stop the flow if you came up with—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —can't be conscious of all those things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's a critical stance. That's outside the work.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. [01:28:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: You have to be inside the process. That's what you have been emphasizing, very much so.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right. Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, there's some things going on. I guess people won't have access, necessarily, to the visuals, but there's some, sort of, entity-like things going on, and there—and there's some duality. There's a two-headed thing going on there. But what you make of all that, what it means is not even clear to you after all these years, and it probably—

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. And I don't—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You don't look for that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I don't want to make it clear.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. And that's kind of what you—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, it can be clear to somebody else.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. I'm not sure that will be easy.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, a psychiatrist could look at it and make some kind of something out of it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, I'm sure they would. Oh yeah. But that's not your—

EVELYN STATSINGER: But what I'm trying to say is that a psychiatrist would be more interested in that than they would be in that.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh, of course, but you never know because people that would interpret everything.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, well, that's true. That's true

LANNY SILVERMAN: I mean, there are ways of looking at—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, oh yes. I know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —Jungian things that just look at patterns that occur throughout the universe. Well, that's fine. We don't have to press it any further.

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.]

LANNY SILVERMAN: I just—I was curious because, actually, since it did come from you, I was curious where you were going with that, but that's fine. I was going to ask you, I mean, we've both been around a fair amount, and we look at a lot of art. Are you jaded? Do you still get really excited about art? I know you mentioned the Doris Salcedo show, which I also love.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. Oh, it's wonderful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And it's harder and harder for me to find things that I love. Do you see things that you still respond to, other than that show? That was one that, obviously—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, I just saw it the other day.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And I was really blown over by it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, that's interesting as a show because we've talked about political because, as much as it's about political, it's also very much about materials and a very obsessive sense of craft. And there's—and there's a sense of objects and psychology and other things going on. I thought that was very successful.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And also, it's so—and it really is art. I mean, it's so deep about, you know, like if people splatter blood all over, oh, that's terrible. [01:30:00] But this really is terrible, and you sense it immediately that something—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And sometimes you don't need to have emotional, glaring, obvious, like blood, like you say. It can be something that ghosts, like the images of the chairs. What isn't there can be just as powerful—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, exactly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —that this [inaudible], they could be just as important, what isn't in the picture. Again, we're back to the spaces as what's depicted, obviously. No, I agree.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. It's so obvious that something so terrible has happened.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And so amazing. I mean, it's real. I think it's one of the best things I've ever seen.

LANNY SILVERMAN: I completely agree. Are there any other shows that you've seen in the last—I haven't seen anything else that was that good in a while.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. I agree.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] We are getting jaded. It's harder to find things that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And there's a lot of fads in the art world.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, you know, I like Susan's work a lot. I thought her show was wonderful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Susan Frankel you mean.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.



EVELYN STATSINGER: I thought it was just wonderful.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And—well, this is an exceptional year because I've been awfully busy about a lot of things. And so, I haven't really gotten out that much this year. So I'm—but I still, you know—I don't think I'm jaded. When—I mean, when there's something wonderful—

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] When it's there, you'll respond. Well, I just mean it's a little harder. I mean, after you've seen enough, it's a little harder to, you know, to find something exciting because so much of it is just comes and goes. There's a lot of fads.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Except one of the things I find about getting older is that I've changed my opinion on certain things—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Really?

EVELYN STATSINGER: —and that I'm able to accept more things.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So what's an example in terms of the art?

EVELYN STATSINGER: I was trying to think of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: What art have you changed your mind about in terms of accepting something that—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —who I liked. Let me—you know who I'm talking about [laughs]. I can't think of his name. [01:32:00]

LANNY SILVERMAN: A Conceptual artist?

EVELYN STATSINGER: No. No. No. This is—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I don't really—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, you better turn off—turn it off.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So I guess we'll just move on [laughs] from—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Okay.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But you have managed to change your mind about things. What makes you still—you're still making art. What drives you to make art? This is part of your process of exploring the world? Is this something this is a core part of you?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, it's partly because I can still do it [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's important, too.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I'm very surprised because, technically, I still can do what I want to do.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You still have the chops, and you still have the vision, which is important, too, you know.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Has it affected you, some of the aging? Has aging affected the way that you might work or how—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, yes, yes. I'll probably never do large things again.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So the scale's changed.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Physically, I'm not able to do that, and I don't mind because you can make small things look large if you want to [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Oh sure. There are worlds within worlds, sure.

EVELYN STATSINGER: So, right. So it doesn't matter. And—but—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're thankful to be able to do what you want to do, though.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, I'm amazed at myself [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: No. that's great.

EVELYN STATSINGER: That—well, where is that?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Something you've done recently?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. I'll show you what I did last summer. That if you want—

LANNY SILVERMAN: I'll take this off for just a second. Yeah.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: We talked a little bit yesterday about the importance of art for you. [01:34:00] In terms of our culture, things have changed some. How do—how do you view the importance of art for everybody, for everyday people, shall we say, for people that are not in the art world? And do you think that's changed or changing in terms of the role in American culture, particularly? In Japan, you know, artists are revered. They have national treasures; you alluded to that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. But not only that, everybody is an artist in Japan.

LANNY SILVERMAN: And I know that and—

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, it's very simple, you know.

LANNY SILVERMAN: —other cultures as well. It's part of their everyday life. You want to see traditional—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes. Exactly.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You want to see traditional Indonesian theatre, even from five centuries back. You just—you're in a village; you just—they come to your house, and they show you that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's part of their life.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Whereas, for us, it's in a museum.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But in terms of—I mean, museums have now—and now all the kids are with their [laughs] iPhones taking pictures, and it's a different experience. How do you think it's changed? What do you think the importance of art is today for people?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, they certainly talk more about it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's a product.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] It's been marketed.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah, and I'm sure, within that, there probably would be something wonderful that will develop. But I don't—I don't see it at this particular time.

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're not excited about the marketing of art, or in that sense of—I mean, you look at Jay Z. You know, I don't know if you're aware of this. Like, even performance art they mix together with fashion, and they do things—and Marina Abramovic. They start to become something that does get to everyday society more so. It gets more attention. But you're, like me, a little bit skeptical of this [laughs]. Is that what I'm reading you on?

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, no. No I think that, you know, it may—it may really develop into something. I mean, even—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You're an optimist.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —you know, look at what—I don't think I am.

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.]

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, not really. I mean, I—well, maybe I am. I guess I don't—[01:36:00] what I think will actually happen, I mean, considering what's happening in the world, I just feel that you just can't believe what you think might really happen. But—and also, you know, human beings need to be creative or—

LANNY SILVERMAN: You certainly do, and that's what drives you is what we were saying. That's part of your—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. But I think it's lasted all this time. I think human beings really need that and, you know, not only to see it, to participate in it. And however it comes out, I mean, we live in such a different society, it has to be different. And you know, there is so many things that I don't—I mean, there are many things I don't understand. For example, I like to—I read the *New Yorker*. Sometimes I don't—I don't understand what's funny [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: [Laughs.] Well, those cartoons, if you're alluding to the cartoons, that's always—I've been reading the *New Yorker* since I was a teenager. And I've got to say they were above my head in one level as a teenager. Like you—still not so sure [laughs].

EVELYN STATSINGER: [Laughs.] Right. But there are things that they are referring to, I don't really get it, and I'm sure it has to do with generational differences, which is natural, normal. I mean, unless you can—you can see so far ahead in the future, which some people can, but I—

LANNY SILVERMAN: It's hard to see what's going to happen next because the world is looking pretty terrifying in terms of political and religious and other kinds of things that are going on.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes and violence—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And violence.

EVELYN STATSINGER: —that's involved; it's just unimaginable. [01:38:00] And so, I—you know, I can't predict. I just like to think that it's going—it's—the more people that are really interested in, is better.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, along those lines, how would you like your work to be seen in the future if you were 20—I—this is one of those questions that you bristle at, I know [laughs]. I've gotten a sense of that.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But in terms of in the future, how would you like your work to be seen, or what would you like to say that you've accomplished or hope that you've accomplished?

EVELYN STATSINGER: When you're saying how would I like it to be seen, what do you mean? How would I—you like people to see it?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah. First of all, you'd like them to see it. That's point one.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, that's—that's sort of—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because that's important. As you've said, it's part of the process for your communication process.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Well, I would like them to feel something about it.

LANNY SILVERMAN: That's what you said yesterday, too. You'd like them to—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Did I?

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, I think, so you're consistent in that regard. I think—

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah. And I mean, if I'm not here, I'm not here [laughs].

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well, yeah. What does it matter? There's a certain level of cynicism there.

EVELYN STATSINGER: No, it isn't that it doesn't matter. I wouldn't like it to be thrown into a ditch or something. But if people see it, I would—like, I look at things from generations ago, and the things that touch me, even though I'm not of that generation. That, in some ways, you hope that what you've done is an honest thing and that it's related to what people feel about, and it's truthful in that sense. [01:40:00] And I think that's one of the

things that you see when you see paintings of many generations ago; I mean, you can see the truth of it. I mean, if you take, for example, Van Gogh, who—there's such truth in those works.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, well, in his time, though, it didn't—that's interesting in terms of how that requires perspective. That's what I was getting at for the future.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yes.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Because, in his time, it didn't have much response.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Oh, he didn't sell anything.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Didn't hardly sell anything other than his brother or whatever. I mean, there's a—there's a whole slew of people like that that are overlooked.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right, right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: So—but you've had pretty good fortune that people have responded to your work in your lifetime, which is great.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Right.

LANNY SILVERMAN: But I guess we're looking, like, 50 years in the future. That's what I was kind of trying to do a little bit is to get, again, an overall perspective of art. Overview, again, of what is it—you wanted there to be truth to the work and something that connects with people in terms of feeling. That's what you hope that you've accomplished.

EVELYN STATSINGER: And that it was real—

LANNY SILVERMAN: And that it was—

EVELYN STATSINGER: —in that—in that sense. And I think that's what makes—I think that's what makes work live, in some way, because we're not so different, I mean, as people.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Although the differences are what we see in today's society. The differences are getting emphasized, which is—

EVELYN STATSINGER: That—yes, that were there.

LANNY SILVERMAN: Yeah, that's what's really sad, the tribal, sort of, mentality, which is, you know, one fighting against the other, regardless of whether they're sister or brother, religions or whatever.

EVELYN STATSINGER: Yeah and nothing has changed.

LANNY SILVERMAN: No, that's the ways of the case.

EVELYN STATSINGER: I mean, right. So there's something in human beings, in that it's part of them. I think that's—I don't know what else to say about it—

LANNY SILVERMAN: Well.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]