THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH: **SANDRA LANG (SL)**

INTERVIEWERS: **SHARON ZANE (SZ)**

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BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE 1

SZ: This is an interview with Sandy Lang for The Museum of Modern Art Oral History [Project]. It's the 20th of January, 1999. There's a garbage truck outside. I know you can hear it but it will be gone. And we are on West 80th Street in Manhattan. Sandy, can you say something for me? Just hello.

SL: Hello Sharon.

SZ: Again.

SL: Hello Sharon.

SZ: Good. O.K. I want to get your level. Hello Sandy. Sandra Lang, known as Sandy Lang. I'll start the way I always do and ask where and when you were born, and something about your background.

SL: I was born on June 25th, 1950 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. I hardly remember it. I was there only a year or so. We then lived, in my early years, in Stamford, Connecticut. We then moved, when I was in the second grade, to Saranac Lake, New York. . .

SZ: Oh!

SL: . . .which was a wonderful place to grow up as a child. My father was with the American Management Association and they took over the Trudeau Sanatorium because, of course, there was no need to have people to go on cure for tuberculosis anymore.

SZ: The Trudeau Sanatorium. . .

SL: Up in Saranac lake.

SZ: Uh, huh.

SL: The American Management Association took over all the buildings of the Trudeau Sanatorium and began to run these seminars for executives to come and improve their skills and participate in business seminars that my father ran up there. It was a whole retreat idea that the AMA had, and this would have been from about 1957 to about 1963 that we lived there. And it was a fabulous. . . . The Adirondacks are absolutely gorgeous and it's still in my imagination, a wonderful wildlife environment. We then moved.

SZ: Did you. . . I mean, were you an outdoors person because of that?

SL: You couldn't live there and not be an outdoors person. You know, you had to go to school in twenty [degree] below weather. But at the same time, this is a community that was seven thousand people in the winter and opened up to fourteen thousand people in the summer, because so many people from New York came. There was a summer theater. I mean. . . . The whole town opened up in the summertime.

SZ: But in the winter. . .

SL: But it was a very small community. A lot of people from New York. . . . And because of

this -- my father's company, AMA -- a lot of people came from New York. One of the reasons the AMA stopped doing it was the weather was so bad it was hard to fly all these executives in there. After about seven or eight years they, or maybe ten years I don't know, they stopped running these programs. But I have to say, for me it was a wonderful childhood. My home was filled with business executives, and my mother was in the theater with arts people. And I think that the kernel of being interested in both sides of the fence started there.

SZ: So, now tell me what you mean, "In the theater"?

SL: She really was a mother and housewife but she did summer stock. She trained in the theater in Boston, which is where she met my father. He was at MIT. She was in theater school in Boston. And, you know, the theater was a big part of our lives. We would always go to New York and see the theater. And the arts. . . . She had a lot of art books around. And when the theater came to Saranac Lake in the summer, she would act in it, was involved. The theater people came over, the arts people came. So it was always in our home.

In 1963 we moved to England. My father left AMA and went to work for a consulting firm that sent him to Great Britain, to South Wales. And I went to school in the county of Monmouthshire, which is now the thirteenth county. It's called Gwent now. Gwent is this county that is right on the edge between Wales and England. And I went to school in what was then called a "new town," Cwmbran. My school was called Croesyceiliog Grammer School. Grammer school being high school in Britain.

SZ: Sandy, what was that like for you to move at that. . . I mean you were a teenager. . . to go to. . .

SL: I was thirteen.

SZ: . . .a different country.

SL: Well, our whole family was moving. This was it. We got on the Queen Elizabeth, the Old Cunard Queen Elizabeth ocean liner. We ended in Southampton. It was a big adventure. And it was a very interesting life to be outside the United States. When we first moved to England, I remember being so surprised that people were still screaming at Elvis Presley in the cinema. . . in 1963. Right after that, the whole mods and rockers era arrived in England . . . Carnaby Street and so forth.

SZ: You were there for the Beatles.

SL: We were there for the Beatles. I saw the Beatles at the Palladium in London. My teen years. . .

SZ: You did?

SL: I wasn't totally one of these wild teenagers but it was very interesting. We lived first in South Wales. My father consulted to the Alcan Aluminium, as they called it, Company and then to the Steel Company of South Wales. And then we moved up near London, to the county of Berkshire and I went to Maidenhead Girls High School, which is also what we call a public school but it was a grammar school. I did both sets of examinations that the British have. In Wales I did what they then called the O Levels, which you do at around fifteen years old, sixteen. You do them in eight subjects. I did them in nine. And then when I moved up to Maidenhead and I attended Maidenhead Girls High School, I did A Levels. . . It's like a high school diploma.

SZ: Yes, but it's. . . My memory of it in those years especially was that there was quite a big difference between the two systems, and that it was more rigorous in England. So, was that a difficult transition for you?

SL: It was. . . Well, it wasn't such a difficult transition to go from Wales to England. It was a very interesting transition because I went back to the United States to go to college, so. . . . And also because you only do three subjects for A Levels. That was the hardest thing for me. . . is to. . . . When you do these nine, eight or nine subjects, for O Levels then you choose at the age of fifteen or sixteen only three subjects. . . . And I did French, English and History for A Levels.

SZ: You father was a. . . What was he? An industrial. . .

SL: He was like a management consultant, a businessman. He was involved in early time and motion studies, when I was a baby, I guess, at Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, I'm told. Early business techniques and so forth. When we lived in Saranac Lake my earliest memories are of going up to AMA in these big old buildings, which had been the Trudeau Sanatorium, where they had these enormous computers. In those days the computers had big colored cards key-punched that ran through the machines, which as a child was a very fascinating thing to see. So, he was involved with a lot of those early management techniques, computer systems and executive programs. And when we moved to South Wales he advised these two companies. And when we moved up to England proper he took an electronics firm, an American electronics firm, Schjeldahl Inc. out of Minnesota, and established the British division of the firm and started it up in Berkshire in England. They made flexible printed circuits, which was then something you needed to have to put in computers and they sold them mostly to IBM in Scotland, and all over Europe.

SZ: I didn't ask you, do you have any brothers and sisters?

SL: I have one sister who's younger. Three and a half years younger, who's still in England.

SZ: Really?

SL: Yes. She ended up marrying an Englishman.

SZ: Stayed there. . .

SL: Actually she. . . . My parents made her come back to the U.S. for her senior year of high school and then she ended up going back to England for college.

SZ: They stayed?

SL: No. . . In. . . I first came back to go to college in 1968.

SZ: Now how did you make that decision?

SL: It really was that I didn't want to go to university in Britain and choose one subject. American college allowed you to have the freedom to do much more and look at a lot of different choices.

SZ: Did you have any idea at that point at all what you were interested in? Or you just wanted to. . .

SL: I knew I was interested in several things. I loved languages. I thought I liked psychology. I loved. . . I liked music and art. I wasn't really sure at all when I went to college. . . . English. I loved English. I wasn't sure at all. And that's one of the reasons why I wanted to come to the States. I also, you know. . . Because we moved to England when I was thirteen, I felt very English and yet my parents instituted in me this sense of Americanism. And I wanted to find out about it.

SZ: You have no trace of accent so did you never. . . Did you never. . .

SL: I had a trace of accent when I went to college in 1968. And of course, I think, you know, as you do as a teenager, I emphasized it in order to instill the difference. But I

have to say the transition back to American college was quite eye-opening for me because I realized how un-American I was at that stage at eighteen.

SZ: What had you done during the summers while you were living there? Teenage summers. Did you. . .?

SL: I had gone youth-hosteling.

SZ: So travel.

SL: I had gone youth-hosteling all over Britain. I had jobs. I had gone to Europe. I had come home one summer to look at colleges in America, you know. I had gone to camp in Switzerland, I think at fourteen or fifteen got sent there. Different kinds of activity. But you know summers are much shorter. You get out of school in July in England.

SZ: So you came back and looked around for schools?

SL: We came back. I remember we came back in the summer, the summer of Watts.

SZ: ’67.

SL: Right, because everywhere we went there were riots (in Newark, and other cities.) I didn’t feel very American at that stage. It was both eye-opening and frightening and really quite amazing to see this aspect of, you know. . . England was a very sheltered experience in some ways. It was very homogenous. So. . . [Pause]. So we looked at colleges. I had one grandmother who lived in Vermont and another grandmother who lived in Massachusetts. I applied mostly to New England colleges. I got into Bennington and Middlebury. And Bennington was one thousand dollars more and Middlebury was a mixed college and I had been going to an all girls school. Although in Wales I had been in a mixed school, in Maidenhead it was an entirely all-girls school.

And I ended up going to Middlebury. And my friends were going off to universities in Britain and they were going to read one subject in their various choices of university. And there was a lot of teasing about going back to the land of "all brawn and no brains." You know, the vision of America from England is so unlike what America was really all about and I think this is what I learned growing up as a teenager. Although I purported to be American and tried to read the *International Herald Tribune* and all these things, I really knew so little about America. People get so seduced by the glitz. I remember Malcolm Muggeridge, a noted English journalist, came out on the BBC with a program called "The American Way of Sex" and he showed all the worst aspects of American life: 77 Sunset Strip, 42nd Street, group sex in Michigan University. This is 1967 or '68. And people don't realize, didn't then, and my friends certainly didn't realize how really conservative America is and parochial in some way. So, it was. . . . I was always grappling with these differences and being outside. And when I came back to college in America, this may seem strange to say, but I'll never forget walking into the college cafeteria and seeing the huge vats of milk, lifting the lever and having milk flow. This was so American to me, at eighteen years old. I had been brought up with kids who were rationed after the war in England. I mean, I think that was the thing. When we first went to England in 1963, you could see still remnants of the bombs in London and I had never come so close to anything like that. Young people in America had no idea what they had, to me when I was at college. This great lavish beautiful college completely devoted to youth and it was hard. It was a big transition for me. At first at Middlebury, I really stayed mostly with foreign students.

SZ: Well, Middlebury had quite a large component.

SL: It did have a large component of foreign students.

SZ: Because they were big on foreign languages.

SL: Mostly they have a foreign language summer program but they have a very active

foreign language department during the winter. So. . .

SZ: So, did you like it there?

SL: Um. . . [Pause]. You know, I have great fond memories of it. I think it took me a long time to learn how to use an American college. I felt fairly isolated. I had, after all, at seventeen, eighteen, been living very close to London, been taking the train up to London frequently and all of a sudden, you know, you were isolated on the side of a mountain in the freezing cold weather. You were eight hours from New York [laughter]. You couldn't have a car. On the other hand, there was a tremendous cross-section of students who went to Middlebury and I learned a great deal. It was also an incredible time to come and actually find that you were American. The outgoing class of 1968 when I arrived all had crew-cuts and supposedly the rules were that you had to have the doors open, gentlemen could come through the dorms between 2:00 o'clock and 5:00 o'clock on Saturday and Sunday afternoons. And within a year, within two years, there were mixed dormitories. It was a big time, you know, Kent State happened while I was at college. The only thing that happened at Middlebury was they burned down a building that was slated to be taken down anyway. So [laughter]. . . . But other than that it was, you know. . . . I spent a lot of time going down to New York after a while.

SZ: Did you?

SL: Because I felt isolated, because I had friends who were international and because I. . . . My father's company paid for me to go back to England twice a year. And in those days there weren't as many flights. You would have to take these night flights out and in order to be sure that you got there in time you had to take long night buses down from college. And I think the most significant thing that happened was that my roommate, who was a printmaker and sculptor, gave me her student card to The Museum of Modern Art. And that's how I started to think about art. Because I would spend all day at the Museum and then I would go out and get the plane back to

England and, you know, she was much more, she had lived in New York and was involved with art more than I was at that age.

SZ: I was going to ask you. . .

SL: I had actually been asked to drop music and art when we moved to England so that I could catch up on subjects like learning how to divide in pounds, shillings and pence and really important things like that [laughter]. I got re-involved in the arts mainly because of this roommate at college.

SZ: So, until that time you had not really, I mean, when you went to London did you go to museums or. . . ?

SL: We always went to museums but I wouldn't say intensively. We always went to shows and saw things but not as. . . . You know, I think I really became focused at college.

SZ: And so did you study art history?

SL: I switched my major. . .

SZ: You did.

SZ: . . . to art history. I mean, you didn't have to declare your major until I think sophomore year, so. . . I still kept French and art history, and sort of did a triple major, [with] English. But I went to France on my junior year abroad for half of the year and took art courses there then came back and finished up.

SZ: So, you would go before you went out to the airport and you would go to the Museum and you would just look at what was there.

SL: Right.

SZ: Remember anything about. . . about that?

SL: I don't know. I mean, you know, I think I was just very green. Most of what you're learning in your courses is reinforced by. . .

SZ: what you see.

SL: . . .what you see. I remember taking my first course in modern art, and one of the –- and I was also doing studio and studio courses –- one of the tasks we had, one of the assignments was to recreate a work of art. I think this is an excellent experiment. It was actually an art history course. You had to choose a work of art and re-make it, either in its exact size or in a half or quarter of its size. And it really made you look at the painting. It was really a great exercise. And I choose [Picasso's] *Girl Before a Mirror*. And I. . . . It was, you know, the beginning of learning a lot of things. One, that the reproductions are never –- I mean, I went down to New York and saw it and so forth –- but learned that the reproductions all differ. The color is not right. You know just. . . . Because you're so green when you're beginning to look and see things. And just all the kinds of differences that you see in paintings. It was a great beginning early exercise for me. So, and I'm very sorry I gave it away. [Laughter].

SZ: Did you do that in oil?

SL: I think we were allowed to do it in acrylic because it was easier to handle. But, you know, you could do it in oil. But learning to work with oil was a whole different bag, so. . .

SZ: What a wonderful exercise.

SL: It was a great exercise. And my friends were doing, you know, one of my great friends did a Paul Klee, another one did an [Jean] Arp that is actually three dimensional but he didn't do it in that way. I got out of college in 1972. It was time to get a job.

SZ: With a degree basically in art history or?

SL: It was basically. . . I think I majored in French and minored in art history was how it worked out in the end. Because by the time I switched my major I couldn't get enough courses for a full art history major. And. . . I came to New York in that summer of '72 and lived with a group of friends all summer and took a typing course and began to suss out things. The move –- that was sort of a group apartment –- then I moved to being, sort of, a helper with a family on Central Park West in October or November, I can't quite remember, of 1972. And I remember that the museum. . . I had been to all the museums. . .

SZ: Looking for jobs?

SL: Looking for jobs.

SZ: Yes.

SL: And left my résumé. At some point, maybe that summer or maybe September, The Museum of Modern Art wrote to me about a job that by the time the letter was forwarded to me that job was gone but the job in the Art Lending Service had opened up. So, it was a fate situation. And I went for the interview. And I was one of the earliest to interview and they kept me waiting a while and then they hired me. And I'll never forget because when I got off the elevator in the Art Lending Service, the first thing I saw in the Art Lending Service, which is not in the Museum proper, was a huge Bob Thompson painting and wonderful oil paintings that the Lending Service then had up there. It was the part of the building that was called the 21 Building. They had big

spaces for paintings. And prices on everything! And, you know, as a student you are so green, so involved with the art and the history of it. And the whole commercial aspect had not really. . . . I hadn't thought about it.

SZ: Sandy, in 1972, you know, just being fresh out of college and looking for a job in a museum was. . . I mean, was it a tight market? I mean. . .

SL: Well, I was very surprised. You would go to the front desk downstairs and -- I forget if I actually got up to the Personnel Office or if I just filled out a form –- I think it happened that, again, someone in Personnel knew Middlebury. I think that may have been it. I don't know why that sticks in my memory. It was much more accessible than it is today. Much more. And I think, I think it was unusual that somebody, sort of, did that.

SZ: Just somebody off. . . basically because you didn't have any other. . .

SL: I didn't have any contact. I didn't know anybody. I knew I loved the museum. I went to the Whitney [Museum of American Art]. I put in my résumé. . .

SZ: You liked modern art.

SL: Yes, I had taken this course. This course where we had had to –- I mean I had taken a number of art courses but the one that I loved the most at school, and it was just the basic undergraduate course.

SZ: Anything about the interview process, who saw you, or. . .? Did it not matter to you what you were going to do, you just wanted a job in the Museum or a museum?

SL: I wanted an interesting job. I did a lot of temp work, from I think September, October, November. And it was a great way of finding out about life in New York and everything. I'll never forget this man at the Schlumberger Company. I temped there for a week or

two. He said to me, “I want to offer you a full time job. You’ll learn the risk management business.” It was like this cloud passed over me, and I thought, “Oh, I don’t want to do that.” So, you know, in those days, what do you know? You hardly know the questions to ask. It looked interesting. Yes, it was going to be a lot of –- in those days no computers -– typing, and all. . . the log, the records of the Art Lending Service. I interviewed with Betsy Thomas, now Betsy Rea, and Barbara Jakobson, who was the head of the [Junior] Council then, and the Lending Service at that time was under the Council, the Junior Council, it was then called. And they seemed very nice. And I had the, I think I had been on the typing course and could do the. . . skills which I figured could get me in the door of places I wanted to work and learn about.

SZ: And the salary scale was. . .?

SL: I was living as a, sort of, au pair with this family on Central Park West so I didn’t have to worry so much about how to live. Although I remember, you know, even then, the salary. . . Thank goodness I didn’t have to pay rent. But it allowed me to eat and to travel a little bit, back to school and back to England. So. . .

SZ: So it was O.K?

SL: Right. But. . . And I was learning a lot and that’s what I wanted. I was learning a great deal in the Lending Service. And. . . Now mind you –- I’m just thinking back now –- the Lending Service, the Museum was so entirely different. Except for Dick [Richard E.] Oldenburg and the top curators, you know, it seemed like -- and I was very young -- everybody wore blue jeans. It was very relaxed. It was not very corporate. People came. . . . It was a great way to learn and look at things. We were right off the Penthouse Restaurant. We did the exhibitions in the Penthouse Restaurant. The exhibition that was up at the time that I came to the Museum had been curated by Pierre Apraxine and was called *Unique/Multiples: Sculpture/Photos* [MoMA Exh. #1018c, December 2, 1972-January 15, 1973] [ALS Penthouse Exhibition]. Among

other things in the exhibition, it had a photograph of Andy Warhol's scar from his having been shot. And, you know, it was just, just. . . . I responded to the Museum and this department as a place to come and work.

The first thing that happened was shortly after I came to work the Museum went on strike. I was totally flabbergasted because I had. . . . Here, I finally, you know, I had grown up, I was out of college, I had a job that I really wanted, I liked. Betsy said to me "Well, we're all going out." Margery Aronson, who ran the Junior Council, and Betsy Thomas, who was my boss, were all going out on strike and, you know, it was sort of, "Well, you can do what you want", but I hardly knew enough. I thought, "This is odd. I just get this job and I really want it." But I began to learn. So the Museum as always, it's not only a force in terms of learning about art and movements and so forth but it was a social force. I learned a great deal right off the bat, about unions and the kinds of things all the staff had been dealing with there and so forth. And we were out for eight weeks.

SZ: Yes.

SL: And I had to get a part-time job to help tied over. Spent nights on the sidewalk with Pierre Apraxine out back, you know, and. . .

SL: So, you joined the Union. Or did you not have a choice, I can't. . .

SL: I'm trying to remember what the. . . . I did join the Union. I can't remember if it was at that point or later. Could you join before you were there for three months? I'm trying to remember the rules. But I did eventually belong to the Union. So whenever it was.

SZ: In any event you were out.

SL: I was out. I didn't have a job to go to. [Interruption].

SZ: You were just, sort of, mentioning that in the beginning, you know, the strike came on. But I wanted to go back and ask you a little about the Art Lending Service at that time. Betsy Thomas was your boss, right?

SL: Yes.

SZ: And tell me about her and then who else you, kind of, interacted with and just sort of the place of it in '72 within the Museum, if you can do that.

SL: Betsy was terrific. Betsy probably instilled in me the earliest sense of professionalism. She was very thorough. She taught me a great deal. And she taught me why, you know, certain things are the way they are, and why you had to keep great records. She was involved in the art. The Council. . . The Art Lending Service at that time was under the Council so we had to work with the various committees. We were right there in the 21 Building next to the offices of the Council so we saw all the Council people coming and going. Barbara Jakobson was like our great leader. Also, very inspiring and sort of like a mother to everybody but, very savvy, sophisticated, just terrific. Again, being around all the people, the Council people coming and going, learning a great deal, I think I was very green, and just sort of watched a lot of it go by at first.

But the Lending Service at that time within the place of the Museum was a Museum membership program. People could come up to the sixth floor and they ate there in the Penthouse Restaurant, and also came across into the Lending Service. Because I was junior then, I'm not remembering the place of things politically and the structure. What I do remember is Pierre Apraxine who is also one of the most visionary people - What a great way to start out to learn from Pierre. It was the first time I learned about how being a curator is an art in itself. To see him. . . . You know we'd just be carrying the pictures out to the Penthouse and he'd put them together on the wall, and [we'd] see how visually a show goes together, as well as all the thought that goes into it beforehand. And in the way you do, you learn by osmosis. I think the greatest tragedy

was when Pierre had to leave after the strike.

SZ: It was the next year, 1973.

SL: Yes, maybe I had been there a year before the strike happened. Anyway. . . . Because we lost Pierre in the strike. He was half on salary to the Art Lending Service.

SZ: And then he was half. . .

SL: And he was half on salary in the Painting and Sculpture Department. There was a whole brouhaha. He was a very, very strong union person. I remember being all around that. We, in the Art lending Service, felt a tremendous loss of not having Pierre.

SZ: Well, he left the Museum as a result of this.

SL: Yes.

SZ: He was not alone, I believe, also.

SL: Well, there was some “scandale.” He did something that the Museum couldn’t support in the Union, in the Union activities. But he had many supporters. And I remember that there was this great effort to help Pierre, on the [part of the] members of the Council, in terms of finding his next step and so forth. But also, I mean, he found wonderful things for the Lending Service, unusual things, you know, all kinds of early pieces. I remember Joseph Stellas and wonderful drawings and things that he would bring in to the Lending Service. You know, it would be the unusual person who would come by and really see the benefit of that. It was a great way to see a lot of different kinds of art, as well as the Museum itself and seeing the shows in the Museum. It was a great time. It was a great place to work. [Interruption].

SZ: This is your husband probably. [Interruption]. Just to make the distinction. So, at that time the Art Lending Service was basically a Museum membership program and. . .

SL: Yes. Individual members of the Museum could come to the Art Lending Service and rent works of art, and take them. . . for two months, and the rental fee was ten percent of the value of the work of art. If they wanted to buy the work of art after two months, the rental fee went towards the purchase price. And of all of the works in the inventory, I want to say thirty percent, were from independent sources, directly from artists, and the rest were from galleries. And there was a fantastic system, pre-computer, of keeping track of all this, and having a filing system by artist and then a filing system by source, either the gallery or directly from the artist, and consignment forms for works coming in and consignment forms of works going out, and all the rest of it. And then changing the Penthouse Exhibitions several times a year.

SZ: So, at that point, most of what was for rent and/or sale was a reflection of Pierre Apraxine's taste? Or, I mean, was there a different kind of vetting system? How did it work?

SL: You know, I remember that there was a period of time when some of the ladies who were on the Art Lending/Art Advisory Service committee also participated in selections. And I have to say it's a little foggy how that integrated with Pierre, because I know Pierre brought a lot of things in as well. And certainly after Pierre left that was the case, that several of the ladies went out and chose things as part of the committee. Along in the early '70's years, Jo [Carole] Lauder was, at one point, chair of the Art Advisory, Art Lending/Art Advisory Service -- it was combined then -- as well as many other members of the Council. I mean, these were the people who. . . . They are still around now. Gerrit Lansing and Allie [Alexandra] Anderson and lots of these folks.

SZ: Did you start going to galleries a lot at that time?

SL: I didn't go to galleries. After all, I was the secretary. I was just the secretary.

SZ: Well, I just meant even for yourself.

SL: For myself, I started to. . . . Because you're dealing with artists. . . . Let's put it this way, I didn't go to galleries in an official capacity. But I went because you were dealing with artists, you were having to collect the works, or you were having to meet them, or you were getting to know artists and who the galleries were. Yes. It was great because you were wanting to see more of what was in the Lending Service, which was one of the points of the Lending Service, was in its original charter that people come and see a few things and would become interested in seeing more. And we were always dealing with them on the phone. You'd be sending somebody over to Brooke Alexander to see more work by a particular artist, or to some other gallery or artist studio. The archives of the Lending Service are a fantastic history of the gallery system at that time and earlier.

SZ: Yes. That's interesting. Maybe last question. When you first came to this position, did you feel a part of the institution as a whole or did you feel somewhat separated? And I'm asking that, sort of, in a larger sense and then in. . .

SL: I felt both. We were clearly under the Council but the Council was, you know, was. . . it was sort of like this bubble on the side of the Museum, but it was part of the Museum. Certainly as a staff member, as a Union member, you were considered part of the whole. Although I didn't interact a lot. . . I only interacted with the staff that had anything to do with the lending service, needless to say.

SZ: So, that could be curatorial staff?

SL: Yes. After Pierre left we started to have different curators do the exhibitions in the Penthouse. Junior curators. It was one of the few areas where junior curators had an opportunity to work. Martha Beck did a show. Emilio Ambasz did a show, Jane Necol.

Also, later, John Szarkowski. Each one of them did different Penthouse Exhibitions. Riva [Castleman] did a show. John Garrigan, who was then in Architecture and Design, did a poster show. There was more freedom in curating a Penthouse Exhibition than in doing a show for the Museum proper.

SZ: So that was a change.

SL: That was a change. That was as a result of losing Pierre.

SZ: All right. Let's stop here. I'll get myself together and we'll start next time.

SL: Should I send you a copy of this?

END TAPE 1, SIDE 1

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH: **SANDRA LANG (SL)**

INTERVIEWERS: **SHARON ZANE (SZ)**

LOCATION: **THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

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BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE 1

SZ: This is an interview with Sandy Lang for The Museum of Modern Art. It's the 24th of September, 1999. We're in Manhattan. Before we begin you want to say something about how different the Museum was.

SL: When I first started there it was a very relaxed place, everybody wore casual clothes. It was smaller, in a way friendlier. But a little sleepy, and you know, there were still signs, in the volunteer area on the sixth floor, you know, the restaurant, still knew everybody who came to it. There were more signs of, you knew all your members, you knew people who came regularly. Everybody knew the guards. It was a very different place. When you went through the halls of the Museum, you know, there seemed to be a lot more communication between the departments, although I know that wasn't always the case [laughing]. I mean the curatorial departments.

SZ: Well, there were fewer people as well, right?

SL: Right.

SZ: Well, I think last time, you know, we started to talk about the Art Lending Service and the kinds of services it provided at that time. We did talk about where it was located, yes. So, I think that. . .

SL: It was really a great way to understand the commercial market because we dealt with so many galleries and artists and their relationships to the Museum. We had to be very careful about soliciting artwork for the Lending Service and be very clear that it wasn't something for the Museum proper. And in a way we had a lot more freedom to show works in the Penthouse Exhibitions, that maybe wouldn't necessarily be taken into the Museum's collection, or would be taken much later. I remember, when I first arrived, Pierre Apraxine did a show in the Penthouse with the Jackie Ferrara *Knot* piece, which eventually went into the Museum's collection, but the Penthouse was like a place to introduce new pieces. There wasn't pressure on the show that was in the Penthouse. Concurrent with that, very soon after I came, they wanted to cultivate the younger curators or give them projects because there started to be this trend where the young curators were allowed to do these exhibitions. I forget if there was even a *Projects* area downstairs where they could work, in the main Museum - I believe that came later. So, we went through a series of situations where Jane Necol in Painting and Sculpture and Emilio in architectural studies and John Garrigan, who was also in the design department, each curated a Penthouse Exhibition. We worked with all the different curators. And we did great shows with them. And it was a great place for them to, sort of, showcase things that might not be in the Museum's collection, but present a different angle. It was like the R&D area [laughing] or something. It was very interesting. And also they could mix and match. We had drawings and prints and different media together so it was interesting that way. And then in about 1976 it was decided that we should have a. . . . I think I mentioned before, that Pierre no longer was shared with our department after he left. The new person who came on [was] just to be our curator for the Lending Service and the Penthouse Exhibitions. We hired, on a consulting basis, Richard Marshall, who eventually went to the Whitney [Museum of American Art]. He was really the curator for the Penthouse Exhibitions. He did also some wonderful shows. Richard did a very early show of how artists used maps in their work in 1977 [*Maps* [MoMA Exh. #1164a, February 14-April 10, 1977] [ALS Penthouse Exhibition]]. Works from Los Angeles. Different kinds of exhibitions. So, again, we had

a little bit more freedom up there in the Penthouse. There was more flexibility. Gerritt Lansing did a show, even though he was on the Council. He was a scholar and he did a show about Surrealism called *Dream/Reality/Dream* [MoMA Exh. #1187a, September 26-November 28, 1977] [ALS Penthouse Exhibition]. We were able to still continue our tradition of doing some very serious but more popular type exhibitions. And then I remember, very clearly, we started to advise more and more companies through the Art Advisory Service. We had a volunteer chairman named Judith Price, who was controversial but she was very gung ho. She really went after businesses and we got some good jobs. And we were doing a job for the Freeport Minerals Company which was in the Pan Am Building, and the Pan Am Building was shaped like a boat and we had found a lot of artwork for their individual offices. But they wanted a . . . . They had an interior circular corridor and they wanted an exhibition. . . they didn't even know they wanted an exhibition. They wanted. . . . they thought they wanted all one artist or they wanted it to hang together, to look right. And we were doing our presentation in those days in the Founder's Room, off the Penthouse, and I said to them as we were going through the Penthouse to the meeting, "Why don't you take this exhibition?" I forget what exhibition was on the wall. And there started the Penthouse Rental Exhibition Program. Jack Limpert was, at that time, the Director of Development and we began to work out a pilot project whereby if the company was a very high-level corporate member they could rent an exhibition. Again, these were not works from the collection, they were works on consignment to us for the Penthouse shows. They had to originate in the Penthouse, the old Penthouse Restaurant. Then they would be traveled out to our various companies that were members of the Museum. And the contract was signed with the Museum, usually with Jack Limpert, and eventually with me.

SZ: Very interesting. And that's really the genesis of the. . .

SL: Well, the Art Advisory Service had existed before I came, I think it started in the '60's but the Penthouse Exhibition area, that really started the Penthouse Rental Exhibition

Program. In the ‘80’s, we would take a show and move it from Freeport MacMoran to Gannett to American Express, we did this for awhile. You know, move it around from one company to another. You had always to adjust it for different companies, but it was basically the same idea. It was a great way to introduce different kinds of thematic ideas in contemporary art to an audience that didn’t really get exposure. It really did fulfill the mission of the Art Advisory Service in that sense. I remember we sent rotating exhibitions to an advertising company for many years, Dancer Fitzgerald Sample. And they loved it. Every show: “We love to see these things. It really helps us with our own business.” Some companies, of course, were more visually literate than other companies. An ad company being more open. The minerals company was a little bit more stodgy but [laughing] it was an interesting time to be showing different works so we could continue to circulate these shows.

I think the other thing that happened. . . . We had done one of the Penthouse Exhibitions with John Szarkowski and he had curated a show called *Photographs for Collectors* [MoMA Exh. #671, October 1-October 16, 1960] [ALS Penthouse Exhibition]. And, of course, all the Penthouse works were for sale, so all the artworks in these shows that the curators organized, people could buy off the walls in the Penthouse. But then in 1980. . .

SZ: But they were on consignment.

SL: They were on consignment.

SZ: Therefore you would get. . .

SL: We got a small commission for selling them. In 1980 John had a project whereby he, or, I guess, Maria Morris Hambourg, now, had deciphered the Atget plates and figured out the numbering system and so forth, and he had a project whereby he had them printed by a special printer in Chicago. He had about twelve plates that were not very

well known at all, you know. . . actual examples of them didn't exist, so he had a suite of them printed. I think a hundred of each, and he wanted to sell them, and the benefit went to the Photography Department. And we worked out a deal whereby. . . . We had a show of them at first in the Lending Service, and we worked out a situation where we sold them for the Photography Department. He called them restrikes. They were beautiful.

SZ: I have two of them.

SL: They were done in the the original albumen process.

SZ: I bought two of them.

SL: I have one of them too. They're really, really handsome. They were a special benefit to members; you had to be a member to buy them. And so, we started to do that, and we continued to do that for many years. We exhibited them in different places.

In the Art Advisory Service, we began to do bigger and bigger kinds of collections. In about 19, I'm trying to remember, '78, '79, Richard left. I think he was actually taken on by the Whitney full-time. Richard Marshall had been our Selections Advisor for the department, that was the official title. And we hired a wonderful woman named Amy Sandback, Amy Baker Sandback. She became the Selections Advisor for both the corporate area and some of the time for the Penthouse Exhibitions. We started to do some really big jobs. We did Connecticut General which was renamed CIGNA Corporation in the middle of our activities with them. And they bought lots of work and installed it in their huge new headquarters. Well, they had a huge campus outside of Hartford where they already owned. . . . They didn't even know that they owned a [Isamu] Noguchi sculpture. When we got up there and we started. . . . You know, you go into these companies, you advise them on what they already have, you help them sort out what they maybe should keep based on the direction they want to go with their collection. It was an old Skidmore, Owings and Merrrill building from the '50's, and we

looked at both the courtyards in this company and the sculpture sitting outside and said, “You know this is a Noguchi. You really need to have these valued.” We had it appraised for them. And, of course, once they realized that it was so valuable, they then thought, “This is great. We should get more.” In fact, the collection then took a direction of being sculpture-related works, either existing sculpture, new sculptures, or works on paper by sculptors. So, that was the whole thrust of that particular collection up in Connecticut.

SZ: Which they got from you, essentially.

SL: We advised them on it. Outside New York the corporate areas are so huge. They were building another huge new building and they wanted, again, another sculpture like the Noguchi to grace the front of it. And we helped them find a beautiful [Jean] Miró, *L’Oiseau sur l’Air*, and also a whole collection –- they commissioned Ned Smyth, I remember, to do a freestanding sculpture, and a lot of different works on paper from sculptors such as William Tucker and a whole range of artists - Frank Stella and different people. . . . And it’s still there. And in the middle of it, Connecticut General merged with INA out of Philadelphia and became CIGNA. But they still retained us to do the contemporary collection in this headquarters building, in this new building in Hartford. And INA already had an archive and a whole museum of artifacts from their insurance history in Philadelphia. So, they wanted us to continue to do the contemporary. . . . Very often, you know, the Service was used to introduce fresh ideas. I remember American Express coming to us at one point. We had been doing rotating exhibitions for them -- we changed these shows every three months. They had a permanent collection, but we didn’t help them with that permanent collection. [Interruption.] American Express wanted us to do a show about the figure because they were having trouble introducing the figure to their employees in their permanent collection. We had already created an exhibition called *Figuration*. And so we ended up modifying that show and adapting it to the space at American Express. And it was a great way for them to see a lot of different kinds of ways contemporary artists deal with

the figure and not have to buy the works outright. Yet they paid a lot of money to rotate these shows. The tax situation for companies was, and is, of course, very different when they rent versus when they buy.

SZ: Were other museums doing this kind of thing? Maybe not in modern art but in other areas at this point or was this a. . .

SL No one, I think, did it in as developed a way as we did. We really developed in that period –- in the late ‘70s through the ‘80s -- a comprehensive program which offered not only acquisitions but we did commissions. We really devised whole programs for companies. In the case of Connecticut General and Johnson & Johnson, we figured out a communications program for them for their art collections so that it really built up interest, ways that they could use their art in their communities. We often hooked them up with their local museums. They maybe didn’t know the context or how to go about doing it. We always, of course, cemented our relationship with them so they would continue to give to The Museum of Modern Art. And I think Jack put a couple of the CEO’s -- Jack Limpert and subsequent Development people -- put a couple of the CEO’s we were working with on the Museum’s business committee. So, there would be this kind of cultivation effort and attitude of “let’s make the company a real friend of the Museum and help them in every way we can.” In a lot of cases we created a comprehensive art program for a company. In other cases, some companies just wanted the rental aspect or they just wanted us to come in and find, you know, fifty works for the office they were building at that time. So, we really adapted. We were really flexible. I think no other Museum was as developed. I know the Whitney had a program where they rented works from their collection if you were a certain level member. Other museums did it on different kinds of bases, but I think we were probably the most developed. And we. . . . I remember for Johnson & Johnson, they were building a new headquarters building designed by I.M. Pei in New Brunswick and they wanted to make a stance in the community. Part of their whole reason of moving to New Brunswick was to revitalize that community. They wanted their art program to

be consistent. . . . It's a fabulous company anyway, very employee and community oriented. This was the corporate headquarters. It was right by the Raritan River. But the employees were going to have to adjust from [a] big federal-style building that they had been in to an I. M. Pei elegant but much smaller office [space]. And, of course, they wanted the art to help ease this change. They wanted everything to ease it through. So, yes, we helped them find and keep what existed in their collection, which could work in the new building. We helped them buy new pieces. We also helped them think of ways they could have the art program function as an aspect of revitalizing the community. They didn't even know they had the Zimmerli Museum across the street. We set up a whole program of lectures, and demonstrations so that they created an exhibition area within their company. They rented shows not only from us but from other museums – some in their community. I remember that the first one was from the Zimmerli because they were strong in turn-of-the-century prints. So, they organized a show from the Zimmerli on turn-of-the-century prints. The Zimmerli guy came and talked to them, and we came and gave them an international overview of the beginning of modernism. Then the next show I think, was from the New Jersey State Museum, the Morristown Museum, different museums – they borrowed some works from the Whitney Museum, too. It was an historical survey. I think the New Jersey State Museum was the thirties and forties. The Whitney, I remember, did fifties and sixties. And we had about a year —- because the shows were about two months long —- of specific small shows that actually went to the company with our education department lecturers, MoMA's ed department always had great lecturers —- coming out and talking about the historical overview of international art history. Really it was a little course on Modernism. You know, they loved it. And then we started to do things like working with the Development Department to have employees bused into the city to see MoMA. So, we kept those ties going all the time. J&J continued this program of exhibitions and supplementary lectures. We did the last exhibition in that series that year of contemporary art from one of our Penthouse shows, which we exhibited there. Sometimes we would adapt an exhibition very much to what the program was in the corporation. And J&J has continued a strong history of collecting and lecturing and,

you know, public activities and exhibitions, in their premises to this day, which is really great to see. What happens is often you get to the point where the company is so big and there's so much going on that you advise yourself right out of a job because any big company really needs an in-house person to manage its art program.

SZ: Right.

SL: And that's what ultimately happened with J & J – it hired its own art program manager. And we advised them for a while. And they're still very good friends of MoMA, I think, so. . . . But that was one of the good jobs. But we did some other exciting things. When Fisher Brothers (developers) built the building over the [Tennis and] Racquet Club on 52nd Street, they came to us and said, "Look at all this granite. We've got so much granite. We can't stand it. Can you find us some really huge works of art?" We initially put up a group of works based on a theme, very, very large works of art -- I can't remember the theme at the moment -- one was Frank Stella's huge painting *Deauville*, a racetrack series painting, and a [Robert] Motherwell and a [Kenneth] Noland. And they so loved the Stella that they ended up buying it, and it remains there today. It's huge. . . . forty-five feet wide and ten feet high. I remember we had ten men in the middle of the night putting it up [laughing]. Developers were clients, big and small corporations, so we had a lot of range in the projects we did in the Art Advisory Service.

SZ: So, again this was a fee for service but it also had potential for the Museum's fundraising, I presume?

SL: Most companies had to be at least a ten thousand dollar corporate member. . .

SZ: I see, to get this service.

SL: . . . to get this service, on top of which they had to pay fees for our services. We never

tied our fees to the dollar amount of any artwork sold. If anything, we passed on the discount that we received from the galleries. And we were totally on an hourly basis for the most part. Or sometimes, [for] like the big programs like CIGNA and Johnson & Johnson, we created a retainer fee for a period of months or whatever it was. But you can imagine that very often a collection for ninety thousand dollars takes longer to do than the collection for nine hundred thousand dollars. It's more work. You have to find works that are right for cheaper, less amounts of money, that fit correctly. So, it really. . . . The variations of what goes into making a collection are. . . . It's a big step. I learned, in the process of servicing companies, that the more you do up front in terms of programmatic development, in terms of figuring out who the company is, figuring out who's going to be the decision-maker -- is it one CEO, is it a committee, what their tastes are, what kinds of things they like, looking at the space. . . . Very often you're brought in when the space is either re-done or built for the first time and you can learn a lot from the architect who's been there and understands that company and the space. So, it would be a whole process of knowing who they are and showing them things within certain parameters. . . one, within their budget and two, within what you learned about what they might like -- always trying to get them to go for a little bit more interesting art. Amy was great that way. She would, you know, really get them to stretch. That was the greatest thing actually to see how companies, you know, how these people on committees –- maybe it would be a CEO –- came around. They might, you know, they might start with an easier artist at first but they grew to like some very interesting and controversial things. Not always but it varies. [Interruption].

SZ: Maybe this would be a good place to ask you what if any significance there was to the change in the name in the middle of what you were doing? Was it because you were starting to get more and more corporate business? From Art Lending Service to the Art Advisory Service?

SL: Oh, well, in fact, it wasn't necessarily a change in the name. It was that the Art Advisory Service was a separate entity. . . because they existed concurrently for a long

time.

SZ: I see.

SL: We always thought of it as an umbrella structure under which was the Art Lending Service, Art Advisory Service, the Penthouse Exhibitions, the Corporate Rental Exhibition Program (CREP). It wasn't until the Art Lending Service was closed down which was when the new building came into place -- what 198. . .

SZ: '84.

SL: . . .'84, '85 that we then operated without the name Art Lending Service.

SZ: I see.

SL: And this was because, you know, the original relationships with the galleries, the legal contracts of borrowing works on consignment from the galleries (for the Art Lending Service) was the foundation on which the Art Advisory Service was built. The contracts were really Art Lending Service contracts. It was a master contract that was set up. . . I think in the '60s. . . . It was a blanket contract whereby X gallery would always loan works to the Art Lending Service of the Museum to be first placed on view at Art Lending and then eventually extended those same relationships to the Penthouse program and to the Art Advisory Service. There would be another agreement for every specific group of works that we borrowed from the gallery whether it was for the Art Lending Service or whether it was for corporate presentations. And then eventually when we would take and make these presentations at the corporation, all the legalities were under this one contract. And, in fact, I often went to to Dick [Richard] Palmer to make sure that, you know, everything was covered, that I would be covered if I did a presentation of artwork offsite. Maybe a company would have ascertained that they needed five hundred works of art, and they needed, I don't know, seventy-five for the

executive floor, you might bring in a hundred and fifty works in a huge presentation that we would usually do in the Founders Room. We tried mostly to do it on premises at the Museum because it's much easier to move artworks in and out of the Museum. But occasionally you would have to do these presentations at the companies themselves, in which case you would get the companies to take insurance and pay all the costs of moving things with AAS overseeing everything. And we would have to hire more people and so forth. When you had the Museum you could use the back entrance and the guards and sometimes the registrars. Although I must say in working within the Museum the number one goal was you, of course, never upset the flow of the main activity of the Museum, which was the main exhibition program.

SZ: And you felt that?

SL: Absolutely. However, I always felt that I had great resources on my hands. I mean if I had a legal problem I went to John Koegel then Beverly Wolff. In fact John Koegel saved the day with a couple of developers who called one day and wanted to have the paintings we had loaned them taken off the wall on their premises the very next day. And fortunately he had written a contract that was so tight. And, you know, I would not have known. He wrote a contract that was so absolutely airtight. They couldn't put a finger on those artworks without us doing it. You know, I viewed the Museum as a tremendous resource that could be tapped. I mean we went out and sold the Art Advisory Service as a Museum quality resource. This was the basis on which I sold it**.** Never that the Museum could guarantee anything in terms of the value of the artwork except that what we showed them was good of its kind but also that we had these tremendous resources to assist in all the other aspects of managing artwork. We knew how to handle artwork. We knew how to conserve it. We knew how to find out provenances. And we did. We used those aspects of the Museum; the Library, the legal aspects, just everything. You, you know, never tampered with the basic systems. The main thing the Museum had to do was get an exhibition up on the wall. I would go to Jerry Neuner and I would say, "Jerry, can you build this display case for me?" And

he would say, “Well, I can fit it in over here.” You know, sometimes they had down time down in the shops. Or framing. The frame department had. . . in the old days they had down time. So they’d fit me in here. But I had to work around the Museum, and we were certainly last man on the totem pole, as we should be. In fact, there was a lot of the controversy that was often aimed at the Art Advisory Service, you know, that we were all powerful, we had the Museum behind us. But in some ways it was harder to work by virtue of being in the Museum. In some ways it was a great deal easier.

SZ: I was going to say you also had, you must have had, ultimately a kind of freedom that. . .

SL: This department had enormous freedom in many, many ways. We didn’t have the great, you know, yoke of making “Museum of Modern Art” exhibitions. We had also the great responsibility of carrying out everything to the letter and being very sure about works of art that we advised on - qualitative good of their kind. All these aspects. We had to be very, very careful about this relationship (with the Museum) publicly.

SZ: If you can remember any, let’s say, specifics, but from the point of view of the Museum, from the curators, the sometime, the occasional tension because you did have that freedom. . .

SL: If there were tensions I wasn’t initially aware of them. You know, I was young when we did these shows with various curators –- I think I mentioned these shows in the Penthouse –- and, I think, at that time I may not have even been head of the department, I forget, but I, we worked very hard to gain the trust of the Museum to do things in the most professional way, the best kinds of labels, information, etc. You know, I went to the Registrar department and learned everything that they did, how they carried out their registrarial activities so that we could duplicate them. And I made friends with the curators. Kynaston [McShine] did a show with us. John Szarkowski. Bill [William S.] Lieberman. I learned so much from watching these curators. I learned, you

know, that curating itself is an art. Different ways that people create and organize exhibitions. Also, we always had a curatorial advisor. For many years it was Riva [Castleman]. Riva was fabulous. She absolutely understood the marketplace. I mean most of them understood what we needed versus the Museum, and how to work with that. And Carolyn Lanchner was our advisor for a while. I mean, it was always the advisor who was the advisor to the Council while this department was under, what used to be called the Junior Council, and then the Associate Council, and now the Contemporary Arts Council. They never didn't know what we were doing. It might not have been out there in lights. They were nervous about it, certainly on upper levels. I remember that. . . you know, the whole issue of corporate art, certain negatives that are carried with it. I'd get these calls, "Oh, you know, Grace Glueck wants to do another article on corporate art." And it was tricky to talk because, you know, the press —- not Grace necessarily —- but the press was always wanting to know the angles, and what would you do if you had a work of art that a client wanted and the Museum also wanted it. And, you know, this never happened. It never happened. And the ways that dealers and galleries sell and their connections to our own curators at MoMA are just too fine. It would go to the Museum absolutely. It wouldn't even be offered to us, to the Art Lending Service. And that's one thing, that when we did go out in the world, I remember there was a George Segal that we were looking for for Johnson & Johnson. We had to make very clear that it was not for the Museum, that it was for Johnson & Johnson. Because, of course, maybe the gallery was going to give a bigger discount or whatever if it was going to be purchased by MoMA. So, it rarely happened that we had these kinds of conflicts. For the most part, I had tremendous support that I know of from the curators. They seemed to have approved of the shows that we did and the activities that we did. Then, of course, after we stopped doing the Penthouse Restaurant Exhibitions and the Art Lending Service we weren't so visible in the Museum. So, they didn't really know what we were doing except for whoever was the advisor to the department. And they generally knew what Art Advisory did but, you know, everyone was so busy. The Museum was changing. We got busier and busier. We got a new development person. We formalized the whole operation of corporate

services. The Art Advisory Service was only one of them. The whole Education area began to sell its services more directly. Special Events [and Programming] began to sell all the corporate dinners that went on. Beginning with the Picasso show, when they started to sell those evenings, we would be in the corporations talking to them and we would tell them, "You can go use our Special Events Department". And we would be talking to them about the other ways that they could use the Museum. It was a great cultivation tool.

SZ: Yes. Kind of. . . . You were, in a way, a representative of the Development Department.

SL: You know, I went to business school in 1983. '82-'83. It was a very fast track program. You go every Friday and you go intensively for seventeen months.

SZ: What? This was at Columbia?

SL: Columbia Business School. And in that program, I was one of the few people in the arts. Most of the people there were from IBM and other places. And the Museum let me go, which was really great of them. And Columbia gave me a scholarship. And you had to write a business plan for your department. And I wrote this whole plan about why the Art Advisory Service should not be under the volunteer group, the Council. It should be moved officially under Development. And I brought it back to the Museum and then they eventually did change it. Although I physically was always in the office next to the Council and had strong ties to the Council, we moved it to under the Development Department formally.

SZ: And when that happened, do you think that changed the inner perception of your activity?

SL: There was much more support for Art Advisory, certainly on the business side of the Museum. We became part of the official corporate services brochure. We had to make

presentations to the Business Committee. I remember making several. And then, I remember making presentations to the Business Committee and then as a result of that being asked to make it to the Trustees. I think people, sort of, thought we were like a sleepy little program. . . and they didn't realize all the activities we were doing. Of course, in the '80s things were booming. Things were very good. And things slowed down at the end of the '80s. We were touring rental shows from one company to another, and we were advising on acquisitions programs, commissions, all kinds of activities for different companies. And we had a lot of business in those days. It wasn't always easy to solicit business. I think the tensions were more in-house. You know, I'd go to the Museum and say, "Look, I want to go after Goldman Sachs, they are building a new building. . ." And it would be, "Oh, don't go to them because, you know, we're doing this other project with them. We don't want. . ." or "We're floating a bond with that company. . .", etc.

SZ: Because they are worried that it might cut into their approaches for other things?

SL: Right.

SZ: Right, Of course.

SL: I always had to work as a unified front, and I was very sensitive to that. You know, if the Museum was going to a company to solicit them for an exhibition sponsorship, or something, we worked together. That was one of the main reasons it was important for me to be in the Development office. And sometimes it worked the other way, you know, if I was in Johnson & Johnson, I could quietly find out if they'd be interested in funding an exhibition, or where their thinking is. So, it was good in that sense. Sometimes it hindered us marketing-wise. And the other thing is, people (companies) often started with us but they would be very nervous about hiring the Art Advisory Service as a corporate advisor on art, because they felt, "Oh, a Museum is going to dictate what I should do. They're not going to do what I want. They're not going to be

my advisor. They're too didactic, too dictatorial, how can I say no to them?" And it was a harder sell to get some companies to use us.

SZ: That's interesting. The Junior Council in its subsequent variations. . .

SL: Well, the Council was changing a great deal over these years from being, in the beginning, an organization where women had more time –- you know, like the old-fashioned areas where women would come and volunteer –- to having everybody, men and women, working, and everybody being professionals in their own right, and participating in the kinds of activities they were doing. I remember there were several re-vampings of the Council that went on at various stages, in terms of its relationship with the Museum. The most defining one being, I think, when Don Marron was President, that he really wanted the Council to wake up and think about ways that they could participate in the Museum more, and also he wanted to put them on a stronger fee-paying basis. And he reorganized -- he got the Council to reorganize its relationship to the Museum. All the members had to become a certain level member. And the dues went up. So, the Council's relationship became more business-like with the Museum. The nature of volunteerism had changed.

SZ: And how did that reflect itself in, you know, their relationship with you, would you say?

SL: You know, I'm trying to remember if I was still under the Council. . .

SZ: Yes, or whether you'd moved.

SL: . . . in those days. It might have happened right at the same time. Maybe that's. . . . I don't know this consciously but I think that the whole feeling was that the Museum, you know, the Museum began to shape up in a certain way. I was from the business side of it, and the pace quickened and it was needed in a lot of ways. Of course, the integrity of the collections and the curatorial activities was always superb, and it was

always the great saving grace of being there. That you had a rough day or whatever it was, but you could always go and see the collection. In fact, I went there the other day and the collection wasn't up, and I realize it's going to be down for a couple of years, and I'm like, "Oh!" Anyway, the exhibitions were great. And sometimes we played off the shows. I meant to say this earlier. You know, when the Joseph Cornell show was up, I remember we. . . . Oh, no, when the Picasso show was up. . . . We could never have a work of art in the Lending Service upstairs or in any exhibition that we were doing that was about the show that was on exhibit in the Museum.

SZ: You never could?

SL: No. We had to take all the Joseph Cornell prints that we had out of the Lending Service when the show was on downstairs. What we did. . .

SZ: That was a dictum of the administration?

SL: You know, like everything else it was an honor system. We just sort of knew. It was never printed. We knew. We just knew. You just don't come [and] start this conflict. But what we did when, for instance, the Museum had the Picasso show we did in the Penthouse called *Around Picasso* [MoMA Exh. #1289b, May 14-September 30, 1980] [ALS Penthouse Exhibition]. So many artists have been influenced by. . . . Red Grooms created his Picasso take-off, and all kinds of artists. . . . Again, we were able to do these popular, fun shows up in the Penthouse of works around Picasso. And the same with Joseph Cornell. I remember we did a fabulous show about birds, [and] artists and how they use birds as imagery, which again is a show that's much more popularly oriented, could never be done in a formal sense.

SZ: This makes you curator? Business person?

SL: Well no, remember Amy was really the curator, or we would get a curator in for a

specific show. But, I mean, I had to know. I was really like the, you know, in architecture firms you have the designer and you have the account executive, in advertising firms you have the account executive and you have the people who do the creation of the ads and so forth. I was like the account exec. I did all the client work. I had to know about the art. But Amy was really. . . . Because she was on a consulting basis, she's not well known in the Museum, although she was very well known to the curators. After all, she was involved in *Artforum* magazine for many, many years. You might want to talk to her because she has also an incredibly different angle on the Museum. She was fabulous to work with, and is still a great friend. I think one of the reasons she was so fabulous is that she had a great way of convincing these kind of philistine corporate people that this was the greatest thing, how to believe in art, how to believe in the work we were showing them. It was terrific that way. I did some of the works for the shows, some she did. It depended on the situation. But she did most of the corporate collections.

END TAPE 2, SIDE 1

BEGIN TAPE 2, SIDE 2

SL: They don't want me to go blow by blow. You'll have this thing to put with it or whatever.

SZ: No. I think that's great. No, I think it's just whatever the highlights are as they appear. Did the market, did the market break in '87 make any difference to. . . . Because you did mention before you were riding high in the '80s and then things. . .

SL: It was more like the market. . . We felt it in '90. '89 it failed, didn't it.

SZ: No, it was '87, the big break.

SL: By the time it got. . .

SZ: But it didn't. . . Then, it sort of came back, But then things did get slow in '89, '90, '91, I think.

SL: Yes, very, very slow.

SZ: And so you felt it.

SL: Absolutely. But, you know, I should go back and talk a little more about the relationship with the Council.

SZ: O.K.

SL: I mean, I, sort of, am thinking. . .

SZ: And actually I think that was a place where there might have been some, you know. . .

SL: Friction?

SZ: Yes. No friction. It was. . . . I can't. . . . You know, somebody suggested that there was, from time to time, an issue about how much initiative the volunteers were taking in, let's say, putting together a calendar, or picking stuff for Christmas cards.

SL: Oh, well that. . . . O.K.

SZ: Well, you go ahead. [Pause] What? [Interruption].

SZ: In the early stages of the Lending Service when I first got there, yes, the volunteers did go out and choose some of the work. And there was friction that they, you know, this nervousness about them doing it. After Judy [Judith] Price left, I think it was, when we

got a formal. . .

SZ: This is *Avenue* magazine Judy Price?

SL: *Avenue* magazine Judy Price. The committee got smaller. Again, it was part of this situation that the Council didn't have as many volunteer people who had the time to go out and choose work for the Lending Service. And I remember when Amy came. Amy was to do some things in the Penthouse Exhibitions, unless we contracted with somebody else, the corporate advising and I did the Lending Service, choosing for the Lending Service. I had a wonderful chairman, I should say, Carol Blake, who was. . . like anything else some volunteers were trusted by the Museum and some were not. Carol was just terrific, and, again, taught me a great deal, was very open and outward looking. We were a great team. Carol was our Chairman, Amy was the Selections Advisor and I was the administrator, or whatever the title was at the time. And that's when we did some of the best collections. And. . . Carol was just very forward looking in a lot of ways, in attitude, worked with a lot of companies very well also, made contacts, that kind of thing. And also, loved the art, and helped with the art. But, you know, I think as the nature of the Council changed, this issue of the ladies going out and finding the art died because it wasn't happening anymore. And we came to be a very professional organization. Amy was very well regarded. She was well known and often friends with curators on the Museum staff. They would come up to find her, up in our department. We did good shows in the Penthouse that stood us in good stead with the Museum. We tried to be as professional as we could in every area, and, I mean, I hope and I think that that kept us in good stead. There was always a certain nervousness about what the Council was doing, not just vis-a-vis Art Advisory, you know. It was because of the nature of volunteerism in Museums in general. "What are they up to now?", you know! That's a whole other story. We were only one little part of it [laughing]. I'm trying to remember some of the. . . I remember with Carol we also had a young man [who] came on board named Tom Zacharias who was very business oriented and certainly helped with Art Advisory a great deal. Art Advisory and Art

Lending came under attack periodically. I remember we had to do a whole justification of the Art Lending and Art Advisory Service. I think it was when the new building was being built and we got all these letters, which are fascinating to read, in support of the Art Lending Service and why it should exist. Because we wrote a proposal of what kind of space we needed in the new building and. . .

SZ: Well?

SL: Of course, in the end, we really got business-like. We decided that if the Art Lending Service was really going to fly it needed a certain amount of space on the ground floor and couldn't be tucked up on the top floor anymore, hidden away. And, you know, space on the ground floor was at a premium even then. I think some of the curators wanted it and the bookstore. All the things that go on in the Museum. The Art Lending Service was way down on the totem pole, wasn't going to get main space on the ground floor. But that archive of those letters, which I'm sure is around, is a great testament to the support we had in the community, because there are some great letters there. We were not. . . We were allowed to go forward with the Art Advisory Service after we closed the Lending Service.

SZ: And the Lending Service closed for that reason?

SL: Well, they didn't build us a new space in the new building. Right. Yes. That's pretty definitive, you know. We were allowed, for a while, to do shows in the new restaurant and we did some great shows there. We did a show called *Made in India* [MoMA Exh. #1409a, November 8, 1985-January 21, 1986]. Kynaston [McShine] helped me with this show. It was really a lot of Kynaston. He taught me a great deal. The International Council was involved. . . or there was an Indian month or Indian week that year. And this was the activity that the Museum was able to contribute, as well as lectures. I remember we somehow were tied in with the International Council because they paid for a lecture with the artists in the exhibition. Many artists had been to India, worked in

India, worked in Ahmedabad, and the show was of those artists who had worked in India. And it was a great way to use the Service, to use the new members' restaurant, and wonderful, wonderful works of art. It was a show you couldn't do necessarily in the main programming of the Museum, but you could do in this form. And again, it was a testament to showing a different kind of thing and still be in keeping with what a museum's all about.

SZ: But those. . . . Using the restaurant that way didn't. . .

SL: Well, the new restaurant had intrinsic problems. A great deal more light. Just down the hall from the [Claude] Monet galleries. . .

SZ: Right.

SL: . . .into the restaurant. There began to be this argument about why should we spend money to do this. Now there was not enough space to have enough work. The configuration of the space was such. . . . [In] the old Penthouse Restaurant upstairs you could put a lot of small works and they would sell, and you would make money. The configuration of the new restaurant was really one great space over the bar, there was one space, I remember, on the far wall. There wasn't enough space to have a lot of works. It had to be prominent pieces placed. So, we were not making money out of the new restaurant shows. Therefore, it was basically an expense to do these shows. And the argument was, "Why in this great Museum, when we have so much in the collection, couldn't we put our own art in the restaurant?" And it was a valid argument. Then, I remember, there [were] a lot of curators who didn't want the Museum's collection in the restaurant. But [laughing] another issue. I remember Bill Rubin agreed to put the wonderful *Teacup*, the Dubuffet *Teacup* at the end of the hall, which was perfect. So, we stopped doing the new Members' Restaurant exhibitions. We only did a few there. We did this *Made in India* show, and we did a show called *Logical Foundations*. It was a wonderful show, I remember, Alfred Jensen was in it, Fred

Sandback, different people. And we did a show, which we then did take elsewhere, called *Kites*. [It included] many, many artists who worked not within the traditional structure of the canvas; [it had] pieces that hung and flew. And we expanded that show for a huge space in the Citibank Building in Long Island City of works about flying and kite-like works. So, we only did shows in the Members' Dining Room from the end of 1984 to the spring of '86.

SZ: Then it was. . .

SL: Then the Museum. . .

SZ: . . .curtains.

SL: But we were very busy. In the meantime we were doing permanent collections. We were still doing Johnson & Johnson, and Dancer Fitzgerald, changing exhibitions for these various companies. We took *Made in India*, we took *Like Kites*, and sent [them] out to our companies. So we had a lot of variety in terms of what we were doing out there. We did some commissions for a member/developer in Atlanta. And, again, it was a situation where we hooked the developer up with the High Museum, and got them to. . . . I remember one of the things they commissioned was a Jim Rosenquist painting for a new headquarters building they were building, and they invited all the High Museum people and the real estate community in order to market this building. It was done on a marketing basis. But then things did slow down at the end of the '80s when the market fell. The corporate area felt it about two years after that. It got slow towards, really in '89, '90 it slowed down. We were still doing changing exhibitions for a while but then more of the acquisitions programs had fallen off.

We did a lot of work for Citibank. In fact, we started to do a lot of work for public lobbys, for developers. We did for Rockefeller Center Management Corporation. In the early '90s, we did 1270 Avenue of the Americas where they commissioned, after

extensive review of a variety of different artists, Robert Kushner to create artwork for a very special jewel box-like lobby. Several years later when Rockefeller Center was sold, it was reviewed and discussed whether that should be taken down because they were again redoing that lobby, and they kept it because we built up a whole educational program and wrote them letters and so forth. We did several projects for Citibank. One was on Park Avenue. I actually feel like we dotted Midtown between the Fisher Brothers Building over the Raquet Club which has the [Frank] Stella, which we put there in maybe the early '80s to 277 Park Avenue, which has the [William] Wegman painting. It's a building that was owned by Citibank and Daitchi-San. We advised on a Bill Wegman painting on the Park Avenue side and two smaller complementary Wegman paintings way down the two corridors on the Lexington Avenue side. And it was great to have Bill have a painting project in Midtown because he was not at that time mostly known for his paintings. We did a little work for Mitsubishi. We did more work for Citibank out at their Long Island City headquarters, both commissions and changing exhibitions. We did the collection for Dewey Ballantine, which is a major law firm on Sixth Avenue. Those buildings were being re-done on Sixth Avenue. We did several law firms at that time.

. I remember a bit of controversy. We had a gentleman from one law firm who was the Mayor's representative to the Museum and it was through [him] that we originally got the job. I remember that when we first went to this law firm, they said, "Oh, we have only a committee of six. We make all the decisions promptly." Fortunately we had quoted them a flat fee for a specified scope of work. Usually what you do is you say you'll do, say, two or three presentations or whatever it is, and the estimate will be around, you know, twelve thousand dollars, or whatever. When it came down to it this committee had a huge controversy among themselves [inaudible]. Law firms are like, they are all president, they wanted more presentations, they wanted more time. So, I wrote another letter and said you are contracting for more time and fees. By the time they finalized their selections, they spent more on fees practically than they did on the art. Then they wrote us a letter contesting - they didn't want to pay all their fees. And I

remember I had to go to Dick [Oldenburg] over this one because of the gentleman from the firm who was the Mayor's representative to the Museum's Board –- and I didn't want to upset the apple cart with the Museum's relationship. And Dick backed me up, said, "Write the letter. They should pay those fees." Because I had explained every step of the way, that we were going to have to charge more as they increased the scope of the work. They wanted us, in the end, to come in and do a presentation of the same artwork, first to their senior partners, and then to their entire partnership, over a period of three days. So, it ran up the fees. In the end we wrote them a letter and told them, one, the professional reasons they should pay this bill, and two, we were the Museum and we needed this money. [Laughter]. And they paid it. [Laughter]. So, it worked out. But those are always things where I'd have to be. . . . I'd have to wear several hats. I'd have to be very conscious of, not only doing our professional best, but of, you know, what house I was coming from. It was always that kind of situation.

We then went on to do other projects for Rockefeller Center Management Corporation. We helped them do 1230 Avenue of the Americas where they selected a glass artist. And we also, because of them, got the job to do Mitsui Fudosan, which is the. . . it's the old Exxon building across the street to help with their art-related needs. And they commissioned some new work there as well. So, that was sort of like our Midtown. . . . We did a lot of Midtown development work at that point.

And one of the last jobs we did before I left was Sociétè General, also in Midtown. They moved to new headquarters building on the west side of Sixth Avenue. And they purchased a superb collection. It was one of the last and one of the nicest jobs we did. A collection mostly of photography, and some painting and sculpture. So, those are just a sampling of. . .

SZ: No, that's good.

SL: We did a wonderful commissioned piece out in New Jersey for Hoffman-LaRoche. Just as I was leaving we were beginning to build back our business. We did changing exhibitions for TIAA-CREF, which is a big, huge firm, you know, an investment firm on Third Avenue. That was their headquarters. So, we began to build back.

SZ: And you left because?

SL: I left because I was offered a job with Independent Curators Incorporated, ICI. I had been doing this a long time for the Art Advisory Service. I loved it because, you know, really it was a very lucky situation. Every job was different so, I was never bored. You could make as much or as little as your client allowed you to for all these jobs, so that every client made it be a new situation. But I knew that the support for Art Advisory was waning in the Museum. We had basically been told not to do any marketing during the period that they were looking for a new Director. So, it was very, very hard to continue. And I also wanted some new challenges for myself. And I thought it was time for me to move on. I had been at the Museum a long time. ICI came along, and they offered me more money, [to be] Executive Director, so I went on to them.

SZ: Let me turn this off for a second.

END TAPE 2, SIDE 2

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH: **SANDRA LANG (SL)**

INTERVIEWERS: **SHARON ZANE (SZ)**

LOCATION: **THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART**

DATE: **OCTOBER 22, 1999**

BEGIN TAPE 3, SIDE 1

SZ: I'm just going to say this is an interview with Sandy Lang for The Museum of Modern Art Oral History [Project]. It's October 22, 1999. We are at 127 West 80th Street in New York. It reminds me, I think we'll start maybe today with talking a little bit about the Junior Council.

SL: Well, I interviewed for a job in the Art Lending Service. In those days you could walk in off the street and fill out an application right at the front desk. You know, I had just gotten out of college the previous June, and it was Fall. I had filled out an interview [application] and there was a woman in Personnel who knew me and by the time she sent the letter and it got to my new address - I had moved over the summer, and it was not the job she wrote me about. . . and I got back to her - the Art Lending Service job was open. And I went to apply and I was interviewed by two women, one was Betsy, she was then Betsy Thomas, she is now Betsy Rea, and Barbara Jakobson. And, you know, I was probably hired because I could type [laughter]. The old adage. And so Barbara was head of the Junior Council and she was like a guiding light for everything the Council did and the Art Lending Service. I mainly worked for Betsy but we shared a space (with the Council) on the top floor of the 21 Building, which was attached to the Museum. Through this doorway people could come in from the Penthouse Restaurant and see the Lending Service up there, and the Junior Council office was off one side of that open area where all the artworks were propped up on display. And Barbara was

always there. She was there everyday. She was like the mother hen to us all. She was wonderful. She was visionary. You know, I had never met anyone like her. She knew so much. She was, she was a great leader. And just wonderful people came through there. And the Council was very different. It was growing out of this stage of being a voluntary group mostly for women, because more women were getting jobs. As time wore on it got to be. . . it changed a great deal from being voluntary in the old fashion [sense] of ladies who lunch type of thing to being really a group of professionals. And having more men in it. And they wanted more men because everybody got more business and it would behoove the Museum and behoove the Council to become more in line with the Museum. And there were all these various discussions on how the Council could serve the Museum and not, you know, be a burden to the Museum. Certainly in the Art Lending Service there was this issue of whether the Council ladies should be going out to choose the art. It had to be a group that was, sort of, semi-approved. Although I think I mentioned that in the early days Pierre Apraxine chose a lot of the art for the Lending Service. We shared him with the Department of Painting and Sculpture. So the chair of the Art Lending and Art Advisory Service reported to Barbara, and we always went to those parts of the Council meetings that pertained to the Art Advisory, Art Lending Service. I think about five years after I was there, Barbara went on the Board of the Museum and stopped being the head of the Council. And it changed. It was very different. You know, Margery Aronson was there then as the head of the Council. It was in the mid '70s. I think the whole way the Council operated began to change. Not long after that they stopped doing the Christmas cards, they stopped doing the kinds of things or activities where people came in and did a lot of hands-on work for the Museum.

SZ: And those changes occurred because?

SL: I think they occurred both because the Museum wanted them to and also because the nature of the people on the Council changed. I'm not sure why the calendars. . . they stopped doing the Christmas cards. There were all these consternations like. . .

images should be from the collection rather than asking artists to design them, you know? In a lot of ways both the Council and the Art Lending Service were able to do things in a free fashion. Certainly the Penthouse Exhibitions. We could have art up there that, you know, wasn't a regular exhibition of the Museum and didn't have to have the great stamp of approval on it. And we were freer to show what was really cutting edge, the latest artists and so forth. It was sort of like a little *Projects* area without having to be, you know, the latest step. It was, sort of, a. . . it was like the Cinderella area [laughing] of the Museum where we could really show new work. Younger curators of the Museum would say to me, "You can show this. You can show that". I think that's one of the reasons why, with Barbara's guidance, that whole program of having the exhibitions done by some of younger curators –- I think I mentioned before –- was started, of having. . . well, not only the younger ones, because Bill [William] Lieberman did a show in the Penthouse, and John Szarkowski, but also Emilio Ambasz and some of the younger people -- I remember Jane Necol did a show -- who were younger curators at the time in the Museum. But we always had to be very careful what exhibitions we did in the Penthouse in terms of relating to the Museum. When the Picasso show was on, we did a show called *Around Picasso* [MoMA Exh. #1289b, May 14-September 30, 1980] [ALS Penthouse Exhibition], but we could have no Picasso works in the Lending Service or the Penthouse Exhibitions. Not that we had many Picassos by that time in the Lending Service, but we had prints. We had to take them off the racks. We couldn't have anything by whatever artist was downstairs in the main exhibition areas. We could do shows that were related. And when the [Joseph] Cornell show was on, Kynaston really guided me into doing a show of imagery that was related to Cornell. It was a wonderful show. We really had a lot of freedom to do those shows upstairs.

There was a period of time in the early to mid '70s when the shows got a little too out of hand, I think, for the Museum, mainly because we had a chairman who was marketing the shows a little too much. She had gotten free advertising and so forth, and the Museum got very nervous about this. She had parties and when she began to

behave like the Museum behaved it was a little problematic. But, you know, these things were always ironed out. And certainly under Barbara, she was a great guiding light in terms of understanding the Museum's needs and integrating. And, of course, now the Council is on a dues-paying basis, a more heavily dues-paying basis. When Don Marron became President the Museum became much more business-like, and he really changed things. The Junior Council's name changed first to Associate Council, then to Contemporary Arts Council. It got on to a much stronger, I think, in the thousands, dues-paying basis, which it had not been before. It had been like a traditional volunteer group before that.

SZ: But also, my understanding was it was really like a training ground for future Trustees, and was considered that.

SL: You'd hear that nickname around the Museum. It was "Trustees-in-Training." I'm not sure if people feel that way still but. . . And now, of course, the main thing the Council does now is they actually, because of these dues, they make many, many more grants. It's monetary, that they give much more [money] instead of time, and I think, that's a reflection of the times. They've become a big support group. Not like the International Council, which has its whole program and so forth. But they support many more activities in the Museum than they ever used to with money, and have changed considerably in that regard. And for that, I think, the Council is now in a stage where they have to then keep those people happy. They have to do many more programs. They go on trips. The quid pro quo is very different than it used to be.

SZ: I guess your time there just about spanned Dick's entire Directorship.

SL: Yes. You know. . . . I think when I was younger and just starting there I was not so specifically aware of him –- but I remember being very aware of him during the strikes because he was down in the lobby and so forth –- and you know, he was

another era of the Museum. I didn't have a lot to do with him in my department directly although, you know, you always knew he was there, and at certain crucial moments would have to go to him. Especially for the Art Advisory Service. . . once we moved out from under the Council and were under Development. He was supportive to a degree but there was always this ambivalence about the Art Lending/Art Advisory Service. And we went through several crises, certainly one around the time that the Museum was expanding as to whether the Art Lending Service should continue. And we did a study, I may have mentioned, whereby we really looked at other lending services and we got a lot of support letters from people and it determined that if the Lending Service was going to be put on a truly business-like basis, it needed to be not tucked away or sort of half-hidden. . . you know, with the ambivalence that the Museum had towards it, and it needed to be on the ground floor, certainly in a more prominent space. Even though we were getting more space, there was a lot of vying for that space [laughter], and the Lending Service was not going to be on the ground floor. So, in the end they just kept the Art Advisory Service. And Dick was a part of that decision through the chairman that existed at the time, the chairman of the Council and the chairman of Art Advisory. In the end, you know, I think they had a certain trust about what the Art Advisory Service would do and how it would operate, understanding the nature of the commercial art world and the Museum's role in it. And if I ever saw any conflict coming I could always go to him, and he was terrific that way.

SZ: You mentioned some other crises?

SL: There weren't many. I have to say the Art Advisory was fairly independent. It was a very unique position. Beverly Wolff once turned to me and said, "You have the greatest job here," because although it was part of the Museum, I was out at the galleries a great deal. I was out at companies. I was outside and I represented the Museum. At one point, I remember when we were going through various, you know, reviews of my position and the fact that I signed contracts on behalf of the Museum

with these companies and so forth, and Dick, I think, began to realize how much. . . these companies were giving a lot of money, they were high level corporate members of the Museum. For a time in the '80s, because the market was so good for corporate collecting, I made a presentation to the Business Committee, for instance, and then to the Trustees. So, it was a time when, you know, the Art Advisory Service was in a more shining position [laughing] in the Museum then maybe previously. And, I think, also because we had – it wasn't just me, it was Amy Sandback –- we had good relationships with the curators, so they didn't feel that we were. . . We understood the marketplace. Occasionally something would happen. Johnson & Johnson wanted a George Segal because, of course, he's from New Jersey, and we went on a search for one to the Janis Gallery. We had to make very clear that it was through the Art Advisory Service for a corporate client and not to give us the discount they might give the Museum.

I remember that we did this project with Robert Kushner. We did a commission for Rockefeller Center Management Corporation. And after looking at fifteen artists and going the process of choosing one and so forth, they focused on Robert Kushner. It didn't have anything to do with David Rockefeller, it was really the Management group at Rockefeller Center. They selected the artist Robert Kushner. The way that company worked, it did go all the way up to the highest levels of management. Maybe not David, I don't know if I remember that. But they wanted something more solid about the artist. . . . And it was always this very tricky thing that you had to do with Art Advisory. We never said that a work of art was for investment. We said that it was good of its kind and so forth. Because the players at the top of Rockefeller Center knew the Museum people, I remember we had to go to Bill Rubin to get a testament on Robert Kushner. I went through Carolyn Lanchner. Bill hardly ever had anything to do with Art Advisory but when he did, you know, we would make our case, and in the end he supported this commission for this project. And it turned out to be a wonderful project at 1270 Avenue of the Americas. Some years later when Jerry Speyer bought that building, his new interior designers decided that they would

take that work down. And it was through the efforts of writing again to the Museum –- I had left the Museum by then –- not only the artist's efforts and so forth, but I think, writing to Agnes Gund and getting them to understand why that piece was put there – that they kept it there [laughing]. So, it's still there.

SZ: As a member of the staff. . . I mean, you know you talked a lot about what you remember of the initial, you know, the formation of the Union and all that stuff, from a staff person's point of view. As a member of the staff, looking over the years from what you could see, did you feel. . . was Dick an effective manager? Or let me ask you this, what was his style of management? How would you describe that?

SL: You know, I think it's not fair to say vis-a-vis my department.

SZ: Because you were so far out.

SL: We really reported to the Council chairman.

SZ: O.K.

SL: We always had a Museum advisor. Riva for a time. Carolyn Lanchner. And they were, sort of, our safety nets. To a certain degree you wish, you know, there was a long period of time where, you know, I thought they might get rid of the Art Advisory Service. And in a way I wished that there had been a decision to either totally support it instead of just saying, "Oh, don't go after this client because we're floating a bond issue with them for the new building, or don't go after this. . .". So, we were in no-man's land for a long time. And I certainly did wish that at some point they would either support it or kill it. So, in terms of some decision-making. . . . But I think that had to do with who Dick was. Dick was a much more, you know, he was a very human guy and, you know, maybe. . . . I think at one point someone told me, "Well, while you're running it, the Service will last." And I don't know if that's true or not but. . . I remember once having a conversation with him. He came to me and said,

"Oh, Sandy, Grace Glueck. They want to do another corporate art article." And, of course, to the curatorial side of the Museum, it was like, "Oh, corporate art!" used as a pergorative term, corporate art. But it was like a groan. And I thought, "Gosh, let's see this as a positive." And so, I never had that. . . . There was support but it was limited. It was difficult. And, I think that it was difficult for him because. . . my area was so tiny, he hardly had time to pay attention to it, certainly during the building project. But, I think people did get frustrated that he didn't make decisions to some degree but, you know, he took a lot of things into consideration when he did make them, so. . .

SZ: What about from your own personal point of view the culture of the Museum and did you see it change over the years that you were there? How would you describe it maybe. . .

SL: I think I may have mentioned that, you know, when I first got there it was as if everybody wore blue jeans and, you know, only Dick wore a suit. And it really changed over time. Each successive Development Director was more business-like, and more. . . . Even the curatorial departments changed. They got snappier. Kirk [Varnedoe] was like a shot in the arm in the Museum when he came in. The quality of what the Museum does tends to, you know, to. . . be such a uniting force. Even in the Union. For a long time I was a member of the Union and then my job was taken out of the Union, because we were dealing with some of the corporate clients. I guess it was a negotiating tool. You know, and it was hard to understand. I remember when I first got to the Museum, I was so shocked that immediately, right after I got there, they had a strike. And I thought, "Oh, I've just gotten this great job in this great place. I don't want to not work here!" And I was so young and so green and just hardly, had hardly experienced anything. And it was very, very hard. It was very hard to work for so little for so long. And long hours. But, on the other hand, the quality of that staff is phenomenal in terms of being united around doing whatever they did so well and being involved with the quality of the artwork there.

SZ: And that hasn't changed?

SL: Well, it remains to be seen how things change. Things began to change quite a lot under Glenn [Lowry]. You know I left in '95, the end of '95.

SZ: So, he was there already.

SL: He was there already. And he filled the place with enormous energy. Because everybody knew that we had been in this two-year lull of, "Were we getting a new director, what was happening?". . . That was morally very difficult for the whole staff. And it even reached us. Being in the Council you were in this pocket –- I wasn't in the Council then but I was still physically located with the Council –- you were in this pocket on the side of the Museum. It really was difficult. . . . Because no decisions could be made. You know, I was told to market Art Advisory then I was told to stop marketing it. You know, it was very, very hard to know how to go forward. And, you know, Glenn came in and started to make a lot of changes, and has changed almost every department except the curatorial departments, and has changed the structure. That's one thing that happened. . . . I remember when Don Marron was President, he did make Dick structure things a little more differently, so that he had protection in terms of putting in the Deputy Director system and all that kind of thing. But Glenn has done it more so. There are more layers. And from what I can see almost every area has been, you know, revitalized, if you want to call it that except the curatorial.

SZ: Except for the curatorial?

SL: Right.

SZ: And your function at the Museum? What's happened to it?

SL: Amy Sandback ran Art Advisory after I left. By that time. . . . We had a rough time after ’89, after the market fell, and a lot of companies fell off. But when I left we had a lot of good clients. We were doing some excellent quality projects. And then, I think, they decided that it wasn’t worth it and they had Amy stop. . . finish up those client projects about six months or so, a year after I left. . . She was told to move the office to the basement on three days notice. You know, they told that department in certain ways that it was finished. So, that’s what happened.

SZ: And the functions haven’t been taken up by another department? No.

SL: It’s funny, there’s a letter in the file from Alfred [H.] Barr [Jr.], which I can give you somewhere, Sharon, which talks about, should we help businesses. And Alfred agrees. We should. And then I remember there was a situation with Dick where Exxon wanted to borrow something from the collection because they were giving quite a lot of money to the Museum. And he wrote them a whole letter telling them why not and he said, “You can use our Art Advisory Service.” So, in those cases. . . . We would occasionally meet with companies, you know, when they started off on that tack and then they came to understand. There was always a process of getting them to understand what a Museum was about and, you know, why that collection should be protected for the public and how they could form their own collections. Whether it came through that kind of route or otherwise, that was the goal of the Art Advisory Service. But I think that, you know, it was fate that maybe Art Advisory wasn’t making enough money to justify keeping it.

SZ: Of course, I suppose that a lot of, you know, those activities one can buy them from private consultants and businesses.

SL: That was always the argument. Of course, I felt that the Art Advisory Service wasn’t only about selling. The art advising business isn’t just about putting works on the wall. That’s the least of it. It‘s really servicing companies, or individuals, in so many

different ways. From a whole educational process to rotating exhibitions, which I talked about as a way of getting them exposed to art, and commissioning artworks. And really, I felt that there were so many things the Museum could share with companies, legal advice, professional art handling, etc. . . . You would never tap the resources of the Museum because it was too busy doing the Museum activites, but you knew how to find information. A conservation problem for any corporation. Antoinette King would, you know, tell me where to go, or who to talk to for that particular kind of thing. So that I always felt that the Art Advisory Service was about tapping the resources of the Museum, making them available in a special relationship to that company, one that was also one of our big supporters. And, you know, it's odd to me that now –- here we are in very good times –- that kind of things can't continue. But, there are other places to get it. You know, the Lending Service was one thing. The Lending Service was started at a time when it was difficult to go to galleries. And people were intimidated by going to galleries. And now the art scene has changed so drastically. It isn't so necessary to have the Lending Service, perhaps. Although, you know, with the computers today you could run these services much more easily. We began to get much more efficient. The greatest expense of running all these kinds projects is the physical movement of the art and the paperwork, the registrarial work. You know, even though it's better times, it's also leaner times. And museums really need to go after their sources. This was always thought to be, "Is it something appropriate for the Museum to be doing?" It may come again in another life. Somebody, somewhere in 2020 will think about having a rental service that you can email. [Laughter].

SZ: You can display them on the screen.

SL: Right, on a flat screen, or whatever it is. You don't have to go to the Museum. But it was always, "Should it take the place of. . ." It never threatened the Museum in anyway whatsoever.

SZ: Well, what led you to make the decision to leave? Was this part of it?

SL: Well, you know, I had been dealing with this ambivalence for a long time. I mean I loved the Museum, and loved working with different companies. I stayed so long because every client was different. It was a very different relationship both to the Museum and in terms of what they wanted. It was like a new job every time. It was very, very, varied. But after a long period of time, and I wasn't making much money, and Independent Curators, Inc., now Independent Curators International, offered me a job to be their Executive Director. It's an international traveling exhibition program. There were a lot of people I knew on the board there. And it was time to do something else. And now I'm at NYU teaching arts administration because I've been both in the not-for-profit sector and in the profit sector. So, it's very interesting.

SZ: You're enjoying it.

SL: Yes, So far, so good

SZ: That's great. I think we're done.

SL: O.K.

SZ: Thanks, Sandy.

END TAPE 3, SIDE 1

END INTERVIEW