THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH:	**RICHARD HAMILTON (RH)**
INTERVIEWER:	**KYNASTON MCSHINE (KM)**
LOCATION:	**North End Farm, Northend, Oxfordshire, England**
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BEGIN PART I

[Conversation prior concerning current exhibition of Hamilton's *Toaster deluxe* (2008) series of digital and relief prints at the Gagosian Gallery, London]

KM: Yes. So what I'd really thought was that the way I was thinking about the interview, of course, is you span sixty years or more. And you cover a lot of different media and a lot of different thoughts as well as a number of interactions with a lot of the wonderful artists of our time. And so we thought it would be a very good thing to do a general conversation about art and artists –

RH: Yes.

KM: And your thoughts about museums and, you know, life in general. And really think about it as an intellectual biography and where you begin in thinking about art and what were the first real punches. I know it's been covered quite a bit in various catalogues but I thought it might be much more interesting to talk about … for example, the literary influences on your work. Like when [James] Joyce appears in your life.

RH: Yes.

KM: And why it was such an impact. And because you were… a lot about literature from early on.

RH: It's true. It does come out of language and reading a lot. When I was younger.

KM: The work has a lot of that in it. That's why *Ulysses* becomes such a touchstone in the beginning.

RH: Yes. And James Joyce in general I think. His techniques – I mean it's funny to think of it, but even my interest in Marcel Duchamp begins with the language.

KM: Exactly.

RH: With *The Green Box*.

KM: We might as well get to the grand Marcel.

RH: [Laughing]

KM: Eventually. I mean there are lots of things to get to but… but did Joyce start off in secondary school?

RH: No I didn't go to a secondary school. I only went to a primary school and left at the age of 14. And then worked for a couple of years, I mean just as a sort of tea boy backstage in theater. And that two years was filling a gap between leaving the primary school and then going to the Royal Academy School. Because I'd been admitted more or less to the Royal Academy Schools when I had an interview with the keeper[1] [at the age of 13], except the name or the title of the head of the Royal Academy Schools, is keeper.

KM: Well, until recently the curators in England were called keepers.

RH: Yes.

KM: I mean at the Tate were the keepers.

RH: Really?

KM: The keeper of the Royal Collection is still the title.

RH: Yes, like the keeper of the Queen's cellar, wine cellar. I was recommended to go and see [Sir Russell]. The word was passed by somebody who arranged for him to give me an interview. And he said, "Well you won't be able to come before you're sixteen

[1] Sir Walter Russell, Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools

so you must come back when you're… We'll see what we think of you." So I was pretty sure that I was going to go there. But it was rather strange in that most of the people, most of the students there were either in their late teens or early 20s. So I was not a… only taken as a prodigy but almost as a kind of mascot. They called me Titch [Laughter] because I was smaller than them.

KM: And so that's where… and that's where Joyce appeared?

RH: No. The Joyce appears during the war when I… I went to work as an engineering draftsman during the war as an alternative. What happened was that I went to the labor exchange when the war began. I was too young to be conscripted. And I said I need to create some work. The Royal Academy School was closed in 1940, early 1940, so I had a year to wait before I could go in to the army. And I went to get a job from the labor exchange and they said, "What do you do?" And I said, "Well I've been at the Royal Academy Schools for the last two years." And he said, "Can you use a pencil?" And I said, "Yes," and they said, "Oh we'll make you an engineering draftsman then." Which was a pretty ridiculous [Laughing] thing.

And I just managed to get nine months training and then had a job. And during that time somebody gave me a copy of… or half a copy of *Ulysses*. It was a two volume paperback. And I started reading it and couldn't put it down. I went backwards and forwards. But it's necessary to get… to read it at least twice I think, especially in those days. And I was surprised to find that when I was first handed this paperback, it was loaned to me as a … a book that nobody understood. There were only six people in the world that understood it. That was the myth. [Laughing]

And I read it and was rather [Laughing] surprised that even in a first reading I got so much out of it. And then I kept going back. And finally became quite knowledgeable about it because I knew some of it by heart almost.

KM: The other… I mean it's interesting that Tony Smith is another artist who was very involved with *Ulysses*. And he said he could recite it. [Laughter] Particularly when he had a bit to drink. And he had been an invalid as a child and that's when he picked it up and read it. He had tuberculosis or something like that.

RH: I think it is a book that you can enjoy hearing read. In fact there have been some wonderful recordings.

KM: Yes. And…

RH: It was true. But what I got out of it was something I hadn't expected to get because later, I began to realize that it gave some hints about how you might approach art and painting. In spite of the fact that Joyce despised painting [Laughing] had no interest in it at all. But there are certain chapters of the book that are so unlike other texts in his use of parody and changes of tone. He was then a sort of master of style and he could… From paragraph to paragraph you find things are changing.

In fact one is deliberately… one chapter is deliberately directed at the birth of language and starts with sort of gobbledegook. He works, works his way through the history of English literature, through parodies of Shakespeare and Chaucer, working his way up to modern slang really. Paragraph by paragraph. [Laughing] And I thought I've never seen that in art, that change of way, that you could mix styles in that way. So that gave me a lead as to how it might be worth attempting anyway. And I've always felt that it was a way to think about painting. And although I would like to think that my work has no style even if you avoid it. And I like to think that it had no sense of color. I tried to avoid [Laughing] anything of that sort.

And it was long time later that I realized you cannot disguise it, the personality will come out. The fact that you're engaged in not showing your style is a style.

KM: Yes.

RH: So I learned a lot.

KM: When did you sort of first get involved with young artists in London from the Royal Academy?

RH: Well I was born in London and so during the war there was… I can't think why it should be but I liked things that were avant garde even from an early age, early teens. And music… at first I began with a *Poet and Peasant* attitude [Laughing] and worked my way up to Stravinsky quite quickly. And even Varèse was somebody I would try to make contact with. He wouldn't be a favorite now but then. But there was always this desire to be –

KM: To be of your time.

RH: Yes. To read the latest book and go to the theater.

KM: How did you manage to meet David Sylvester[2] so early?

RH: Well that was during the war I met him at a nightclub I think. Maybe no… maybe… Often I did go to a nightclub. I can't think how, but I met him and became a friend and he took me to his home where he was living with his parents in Swiss Cottage. And this would be about 1942 or three I think. Two. I was in touch with all sorts of people at that time. I think it was probably because I used to spend my weekends drinking in Soho in the pubs used by people like Dylan Thomas and writers.

KM: They were all spending their time drinking in Soho. [Laughing] That was the way to spend time during the war.

RH: Well you could sort of forget the bombs a little bit. [Laughing]

KM: There was a specific place where people liked Dylan Thomas would go for a drink

RH: Yes. In Soho, it's well known there, in Charlotte Street there were a few pubs. The Fitzroy Tavern one was called. The other one was called the Wheatsheaf. And then there was a sort of group of poets and painters and whatever. I was a bit young, of course, to be part of it. Except, you know, I lost my virginity there. [Laughing] And so… I wasn't completely outside of it. I wouldn't have been accepted if it were not for Colquhoun and MacBryde. They were two friends who worked in a very similar way. They were sort of stars in London at the time. And I would talk to the two – I think it was MacBryde but it could have been the other one – one evening and sort of trying to present myself as a young painter interested in what he did, supposed too that he might be interested in what I did [Laughing] or what I wanted to do. And he was very snobbish and put me down right away.

So I didn't think I was one of the crowd but I was accepted by… well, there was no question of accepting. It was such a different kind of culture and there were businessmen who would find that kind of escape. And I found… and then once I found sex [Laughing] and had a girlfriend who was at least 10 years older than me, it all worked out quite well.

[2] British art critic and curator

But then I met David Sylvester partly because I was living near him in St. John's Wood and somehow I met up with local people there. One chap used to have one day a week when everybody just went to this basement house, people like Lucien Freud and David Sylvester were among them I suppose. And so I knew quite a lot of the people who went there and –

KM: And that was a sort of little artists club?

RH: Well…

KM: Was it sort of conversation?

RH: Yes.

KM: And discussing contemporary art and modern art?

RH: There really wasn't much to do in London at night during those years. So good groups of people who were often neighbors found each other. [Laughing] And I was also involved with – not involved, perhaps it's not the right word – but there was a nightclub in Soho that I used to go to sometimes. I didn't have much money so I couldn't go there like every night. And there was a cabaret and in this cabaret there was a man who used to do female imitations, female impersonations and he gave cabaret performances that consisted of you know, singing songs of Victorian female singers, comedians [from England?].

And he took a liking to me and he had a coterie of boyfriends and a few girlfriends. But the boyfriends were not really interested in the girlfriends. [Laughing] I tagged along with him [Laughter] to see what I could do with the girls. And he fell in love with me I think. He was always chasing me at his house. And I think he was a middle aged man. And he did things like performances at the small pubs and at the place, the theater that was always open, which was the Windmill Club, the Windmill Theatre. And that was a time when girls could be naked or have little clothing. But they had to stand still. Weren't permitted to move… [Laughter]

KM: I think there was a film about the lady who owned the theater. Dame Judi Dench played her. It was a place where a lot of the soldiers hung out.

RH: It was quite a big theater. But he played… he came into small parts there – okay? And he invited me along in the same way that he invited me to the nightclub. It was called Night Light actually. And he chased me around the table one day when I was in his dressing room and it was insane, he was chasing me and then I ran out and there were lots of girls who were just coming off the stage with very little on and I sort of brushed them aside and got through. And the girls are laughing their heads off seeing [Laughing] him chasing me [a] terrified young kid.

I liked him because … the ambience in the crowd he was with was very amusing. And David Sylvester once said, as we were sitting at the bar of the Night Light, Harris – 'cause he was always called Harris, this female impersonator – said, "Why do you love Richard more than me?" And he was jealous. [Laughing] And I had no interest at all in him, in Harris' maneuvers and avoided them. But I got drinks from everybody. If I'm going to the nightclub I didn't have to pay for a thing. So I was doing very well out of it. But I was astonished that David Sylvester should actually have felt that he was losing something [Laughter] 'cause Harris was concentrating on me.

But that was the time when I knew David Sylvester. But I also knew, I mean I obviously knew him later because he appeared at the ICA[3] when it started up. Because it was in… that was going to the end of the war and the ICA started and I was there right at the beginning just because I was handy. Handy in the sense that I could help do things like change light bulbs or [Laughing] or hang pictures.

KM: Hang pictures.

RH: I just made myself useful. But I also had the opportunity of doing a big exhibition because I was befriended by Roland Penrose. You see that this time I was moving up the art intellectual ladder of London. I returned after the war to the Royal Academy Schools and the Royal Academy had changed completely from its prewar character. And a madman called Munnings, Sir Alfred Munnings.

KM: Munnings.

RH: Have you heard of him?

KM: He was painter.

[3] Institute of Contemporary Arts

RH: He was a painter. But he was also President of the Royal Academy. And he was insane. He would walk through the Royal Academy Schools having come off his horse at Rotten Row. He used to ride around the park in the morning, come in to the Academy in full riding gear, and slapping his whip on his leather boots and shout something like, “Are you one of those buggers that talk about the Picasso?” [Laughing] And it was so funny that I couldn’t take anything seriously there. So I was expelled. But the reason I was expelled was simply because… well by that time I was in my twenties and when they said such things as Augustus John could knock spots off Cézanne I thought they were making a joke. I mean it’s so funny, the idea of Augustus John knocking spots off something like Cézanne who did his spots. It was hilarious.

After a few months I was kicked out. And then I was able to go to the Slade because [Bill Coldstream] said, oh it’s the best recommendation if you’ve been expelled from the Royal Academy Schools we’ll take you obviously. So even while I was a student I was working on the *Ulysses* illustration and thinking like that about *Ulysses* and did an exhibition for Growth and Form at the ICA. So by that time I was the bright young man and although I was still a student, I was beginning to be known. Not highly regarded as a painter but more of an ideas man. People didn’t think of me as a very good painter but they thought I had ideas.

KM: But you also were going to lots of concerts at that time.

RH: Yes. And even during the war there was a wonderful organization called the Committee for the Promotion of New Music. And that Committee for the Promotion of New Music was very interesting. I think every… once a week it may have been or maybe once every two weeks, they had the concerts at the Polytechnic in Regents Street and they played new music. People would play a string quartet or something that had been written by somebody. And then there would a discussion and it was quite high level that the audience was…

KM: Yes.

RH: Refugee, people from Germany –

KM: So you went to things like Myra Hess’ lunchtime concerts.

RH: Yes I went to lunchtime concerts but not much. I was more interested in –

KM: More new music, more modern music. So what were these Picassos and Matisses shown at the V&A in 1945?

RH: That's after the war. Immediately after the war they did a big show –

KM: That was about the first big Matisse and Picasso show in London?

RH: Yes. The Picasso show was all the work that he'd been doing during the war.

KM: The black and white pictures.

RH: Yes. That was a great show. And then there were many good shows of French art and concerts at the Wigmore Hall, French music and French musicians. I liked the performance of a singer called Pierre Bernac. Pierre Bernac was the partner of Poulenc. And they worked as a team. I think Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears were like that.

KM: Yes.

RH: Was rather like… they were sort of modeled on Poulenc and –

KM: Bernac.

RH: Yes and Bernac. But they were nowhere near the quality to compare with them. And there were concerts in London churches. It was mainly I think the French… the French equivalent of the British Council, the Alliance Française that organized them. But there was lot of interesting things going on. And theater from the Czech Republic.

KM: Did Samuel Beckett appear at that point in theater?

RH: No, no. No he was much later.

KM: Much later.

RH: Not much later but later.

KM: Soon thereafter you started to get involved in Duchamp?

RH: Yes.

KM: When did he come… how does he come into your life?

RH: He came into my life through a friend of mine. As a student at the Slade I had a very good friend called Nigel Henderson. And Henderson was a very close friend of Eduardo Paolozzi. Eduardo Paolozzi left the Slade before I arrived there. And Henderson was somehow… older than me, a little older by two or three years, I think. But he was a great leader of men somehow and very free with his knowledge. And interestingly enough his mother was the person who ran the Peggy Guggenheim Gallery in London. He'd met Marcel [Laughing]. Not with, not that he spoke about Marcel as a person that he knew but he knew Max Ernst. And well there was very little he didn't know about what went on in London and surrealism, and he knew Roland Penrose.

So one day we were… We used to walk together and chat and we were just close friends. And he said one day, "Come in and have a cup of tea with Roland Penrose. We'll knock on the door." And Roland Penrose and Lee Miller welcomed us in for a cup of tea and a piece of cake. [Laughing] We were looking around at some of the books in his bookcases in his sitting room, in Roland Penrose, his house in Hampstead. And then Nigel pulled a book off a shelf. Pulled down this *Green Box*. And I was astonished by it. And I think that… I'm not sure whether I borrowed it from Roland Penrose or whether I borrowed it from Nigel Henderson. Because he had a copy which was given to him by Peggy Guggenheim as a birthday present when he was I think in his mid teens he would have been given the book.

And then when I knew him he was married and had children. He didn't know whether the book was completely known, and he didn't take any… any great store by this container with all these things. 'Cause he thought… his children used to play with it and he thought they'd scribbled on it. [Laughing] So he loaned it to Lawrence Alloway first of all. And then Lawrence Alloway told me that he'd got this book that he'd borrowed. And I said, "Oh could you lend it to me?" So I got it from Lawrence and got very involved with it.

And so in 1957 there was a meeting at the ICA of people who were beginning to think that maybe there was something in this strange artist called Marcel Duchamp that nobody knew anything about really. And by that time I was reading the box the best I could, by getting [the notes] translated because I didn't speak any French. So I

had to talk to a chap who was a friend of mine in Newcastle who was an art historian. He taught art history and he was an expert on Tiepolo. His French was good but his knowledge [Laughing] of Marcel Duchamp was less good. So I had to figure out what was going on from a straightforward literal translation, which wasn't too easy. But I was beginning to make sense of it.

So I did a contribution to the ICA evening on Marcel Duchamp. And there was a man called Anthony Hill. Do you know Anthony Hill? English constructivist artist. And the other one was Sandy Wilson, an architect.

KM: An architect, yes.

RH: And collector, later became a collector. And we did our pieces and then I [wrote a letter to] Marcel Duchamp after that evening because I wanted him to confirm or not the diagram that I'd made of the "Large Glass" which was a kind of incubation of the language of the box with the forms on the glass itself. And I didn't hear from him for a year and then a year, on exactly a year later got a letter from him saying that he'd shown my diagram to George Heard Hamilton, a friend of his at Yale. They were thinking of doing… George Heard Hamilton was thinking of doing a complete –

KM: Facsimile.

RH: A complete text. So it ended with that he would like to work with me on the translation. And that's when I began to get… Well I was… It was three years work until 1960 when the book was published.

KM: And immediately had a big impact on some of the artists in New York also. I think Jasper –

RH: Jasper wrote a review of it. A little magazine called *Scrap*, only published for two issues I think. [Laughing].

KM: Yes.

RH: But he didn't mention me but he certainly was interested in what had been going on because I suppose Jasper couldn't understand French, couldn't have understood *The Green Box* himself. So the book was important. But there were three things happened almost simultaneously. I think there's a little book by Ulf Linde that didn't

get much circulation but I got it later through an intervention by Marcel. In 1959 I think it was, the [Robert] Lebel book came out and about the same time that Canadian – Canadian chap named[4]… I'm not sure, he lived in Montreal. But he did a translation. Yes, it was a translation of the notes or maybe a publication of the notes.

And then my *Green Box*… or George Heard Hamilton's and mine came out in 1960. So there was a lot of interest in Marcel Duchamp. And in 1963, of course, there was the first retrospective exhibition in Pasadena, which Walter Hopps did. But by that time I'd been close to Duchamp for six years. Starting… yes, starting with '57, from '57 till he died I communicated a lot and saw a great deal of Marcel. And helped him, helped him with projects. He asked me to do the Sisler collection.

KM: Cordier and Ekstrom?

RH: Cordier and Ekstrom catalogue. Marcel asked me to write the notes for it. Marcel told me, or it was really Teeny, Teeny told me in a letter, after I'd come back from seeing the exhibition in Pasadena, which was the first time I'd had the chance to see paintings in any quantity. I might have seen two paintings in England and nothing more. But it was *The Green B*ox that I knew and I hadn't seen "The Large Glass." So [Laughing] I was pretty uninformed at one level. But seeing the exhibition there was a eye opener.

And I was asked to write a review of it by an Irishman, [James] Fitzsimmons who ran *Art International*, and I had this letter which I hadn't expected which said that they'd received the copy of *Art International* with my article in it. And Teeny was very moved because she said that exhibition was not reviewed at all by anybody. Yours is the only review and Marcel is so pleased because he… Well she said he feels transparent, as though somebody has understood him [Laughing] completely. I've got the letters to prove it. [Laughing] And I was rather surprised.

But the thing that was surprising was that there was really even after the Pasadena exhibition, nobody was writing about Duchamp, nobody was making any attempt. And some people who ought to have known better in England didn't… They were more interested in surrealism than what Marcel was doing or had done. So until Marcel died I was enormously interested. But there came a time when Marcel was

[4] George Knox, art historian

very influential on what American artists, in particular, were doing. But also even in England partly due to this beginning of understanding that was permitted by the 1960s revelations in the books that are available, seeing, even just seeing the reproductions was a help.

And I got a bit fed up with what artists, other artists were doing with the ideas of Duchamp. Because there seemed to be a misunderstanding. They would say that they were influenced by Marcel Duchamp but they would do these things that seemed to me to be rather low, a low level of understanding of Duchamp. And it's very easy to make a readymade if it's readymade. It's easy to say that it's a work of art. I mean that's no big achievement. The achievement was done by Marcel. He took the readymade and in about three or four years – well maybe a little longer than that – but he ran it dry with about nine, ten things and a little bit of writing. But he covered the whole scene.

So I thought that's not much of a [Laughing] – future.

KM: Yes.

RH: Of a future for anybody. So I began to think that it would be interesting to do things that were more retinal. What Marcel was always insistent upon was that the retinal part of art was not the most important part. The most important part went on inside his head. And he tried to lessen the importance of his hand, his [cartographic] qualities. And he was a very talented artist. I think sometimes his early work is put down. But I think, well… "Sad Young Man In A Train" and "The Nude Descending a Staircase," they're terrific paintings, comparable with anything that Picasso did.

So it was difficult to really understand what had been going on with these admirers of Duchamp. And I thought, suppose you come back, do the reverse of what Marcel found it necessary to do, maybe at times it's taken on a look, but Marcel's ideas are absolutely fundamental to the thinking about art. I didn't… he… I worshipped him absolutely but I thought let's try… Here's an iconoclast and that is his virtue. And he would not wish people to be other than iconoclastic even if it was an iconoclasm which was knocking to some extent the principles of Duchamp. Although the important principles will never stop being, which I felt should be knocked.

But it was just a reintroduction of the retinal.

KM: So when you went to Philadelphia, when you first went to Philadelphia and encountered “The Large Glass,” was that quite a revelation or an impact?

RH: It certainly was. And I found it very beautiful. But the odd thing was that I felt that… I knew it. There’s a little incident. My friendship with – which wasn’t a close one I would say because I didn’t really respect him. I know he did a lot of good things but David Sylvester was a bit of a poseur. And I… something I didn’t quite take to about him. A wonderful thing like the Bacon interviews, I think that was quite an achievement, but his approach to art was very selfish. He saw things as a kind of way to gain his own reputation. He was admired so much that I think it turned his head a bit. And he forgot that Francis Bacon contributed quite a lot to that book.

However, he asked me… I thought that when the book was… *The Green Box* book was done it would be a good idea, since there were so few of them, instead of passing them around to all sorts of critics that might be interested or magazines or whatever to review, I thought I’ll be a bit more selective and I didn’t give more than about three away on that piece. And I went to… I telephoned David and said, “I’ve done this book on “The Large Glass” and it would be interesting, thought it might interest you to review it for the *Statesman*.” And he said, “Well I’ve given up reviewing books, I need to… I review exhibitions sometimes.” And he said, “Listen,” rather condescendingly, “ I do exhibitions but I don’t do books.”

So I was invited however to go along and show him the book.

KM: I’m really fascinated about Philadelphia and the impact of the Glass because then it motivates you to do the reproduction.

RH: But while we had this discussion about it I let him know – or he asked me about the Glass as though I would be familiar with it. I said, “I haven’t seen the Glass in Philadelphia.” And he was absolutely shocked, so shocked that he practically insulted me by saying, “You mean to tell me that you’ve done this book on ‘The Large Glass’ and you haven’t been to Philadelphia?” “You haven’t got the… found it worthwhile to spend a few pounds on an airplane ticket to go to Philadelphia?” And I said that I thought that I could understand *The Green Box* and “The Large Glass” without having seen the thing, perfect writing when I’m…

And he seemed to think this was an impossibility. So I didn't see "The Large Glass" until '63 when I went on the way to Philadelphia – no, no to Pasadena. So that's pretty significant I think. To get… not get to see the glass finally. But it was seeing an old friend rather than having a revelation of seeing the Glass. Well the revelation was that I thought it would be a wreck. And it was deteriorating. But I thought it was beautiful, the aging of it had given it some qualities which I hadn't expected to be beautiful.

KM: Well it has had quite an impact. I mean actually I think things like the cracks in the glass are something that I remember from my first viewing. The fact of the broken… image, being in a way shattered, I thought that created a whole other effect to it. That took it away from just the real literary part of it, the bride and the bachelors with it. It went into another realm somehow.

RH: But it's funny, Marcel is always right. It's said that Marcel didn't… it didn't worry Marcel. It was as though nothing… had happened to it. But Katherine Dreier didn't really tell him did she? She went to France and waited for an opportunity to tell him directly. And that was over a year later anyway after it was broken. And so I think it's significant that his response to her was "I can take any misfortune without worrying too much. Don't worry, I can take it." But he saw it as… that his words then spoke of it as a misfortune. And I think what interested him on seeing the glass broken was since they had been put face to face they were symmetrical, they were –

KM: Yes. Because of the accident it was in a crate.

RH: Yes. The fact that they were face to face rather than open like a book – And he appreciated that accidental shape. Then it was some reason behind it because it was this symmetry which is rather unexpected in the thing. So he never misses in his understanding of what's going on in his life. He always makes some sense of it.

So where do we go from –

KM: Talk about your teaching.

RH: Teaching?

KM: Yes. Was that an experience from which you learned a great deal about the art… about art itself besides… I mean besides being involved with the students and faculty-

RH: I took –

KM: Did it sort of have a large influence on bringing lots and lots of ideas to you.

RH: Well not so much bringing lots of ideas to me but I decided when I started teaching that I didn't know how to make sense of a way to teach art. I didn't like –

KM: The idea of –

RH: The idea that they should do something… that I should encourage students to do something in a certain way. But that they should think in a certain way. It was always about ideas rather than images. And the program of teaching that I made avoided any criticism of the [work] stylistically. I would admire some students personality more than others, like Mark Lancaster. You know Mark Lancaster?

KM: Yes.

RH: And when Mark Lancaster was a student and I saw him as a wonderful… wonderfully receptive student. And we got… in a way we're friends. So it all… it always depended upon what they did and –

KM: It became a good dialogue.

RH: Yes.

KM: You did good dialogues. What about a dialogue with someone on the other side, with Professor Lawrence Gowing?

RH: Well Gowing didn't like my… I think… It was a very strange relationship because he was made professor at the school in Newcastle. And a few years had gone by.[5] And when he arrived there he decided to clean it up and really make a good school out of it. And one of the departments there was a department of design and he couldn't stand these students in a university. He wanted to make a university out of it. And so

[5] Lawrence Gowing was Professor of Fine Art at King's College, University of Durham from 1948-1958; RH was appointed lecturer under Gowing in 1953.

he had these people there who were students and they were doing British Airways posters. And he managed to get this guy out. It's difficult to get a person out of a university especially if they haven't, committed some kind of… of criminal act – raping a student or something. [Laughing]

But he managed to get him out and there was also a stained glass department, one which he didn't think much of. He couldn't [close it down] but it was reduced to about two students. And a textile department which did a little better than …. But he wanted to make it a school where art history was important and to build up the library and that sort of thing and to get rid of the design department, the posters. He talked around and there was a man called Hugh Casson. Have you heard of Hugh Casson?

KM: Yes.

RH: Well Hugh Casson was always a friend of mine.

KM: He was an architect.

RH: Always a mentor of mine since the Growth and Form exhibition, a 1951 exhibition. And he suggested to Gowing that I might take the place because Gowing didn't want to lose the teaching post. He wanted the job to be open to somebody but he wanted to get rid of the posters. So he appointed me when we had an interview as a result of Hugh Casson's suggestion that I might fit the bill. But he didn't want me to come into any contact with painters, paintings. The painting school was not my province, quite clear.

And I didn't really have much of a job there to tell you the truth from the point of view of teaching. But I made exhibitions because they had a nice small gallery there. I made exhibitions, anything that interested me I could do. And so even he liked the idea that I could help to put up an exhibition of old master drawings like Caravaggio because somebody in the art history department would make exhibitions but they needed help to make a cheap catalogue, printed inside the university.

So I was helpful but he didn't want me to interfere with students and he didn't like students becoming influenced by me, 'cause he could see it happening. And I got along reasonably well with him but he was always… I think it was a kind of jealousy.

Because he was in a way a failed artist. He was great art historian and a great television personality surprisingly enough, in view of his speech…[6] [Laughing]

But there were difficulties between us. He and Bryan, Bryan who was at the Tate. Was he at the Tate?

KM: Whitechapel, Bryan Robertson.

RH: Bryan Robertson at the Whitechapel [Art Gallery]. But there was… a director at the Tate who came here. Anyway… I'm not very good at names.

KM: Bowness?

RH: Alan Bowness, that's the one, Alan Bowness and John [GOLDING?] did an exhibition of contemporary British art. And they didn't… they didn't ask me to be in the show. And years later Bowness apologized to me in a taxi by saying it wasn't my fault. I didn't ask him, it didn't occur to me. But he obviously had had it on his mind you know, 'cause he'd had a problem.

KM: And I mean about you being the artist _____ [01:05:02] and I mean Newcastle is associated with the two of you and then the students there. I mean and Gowing is… he did a show at the Modern of [J.M.W. Turner] actually.[7]

RH: Well he did know a bit about it. In fact, he did upside down figures, hanging figures. You remember that?

KM: Yes.

RH: It was… he ignores that Newcastle had that German guy [Laughing] [Kurt Schwitters].

KM: Newcastle had a certain wonderful reputation given that it was not one of the schools in London like the Slade or St. Martins. And so you two stand out as having placed major imprimatur on it.

RH: Yes. Maybe I… and of course I had an influence but it was through the exhibitions that I was doing, really above all… Well and teaching but I wasn't… my teaching

[6] Lawrence Gowing had a speech impediment.
[7] *Turner: Imagination and Reality* [MoMA Exh. #794, March 23-June 19, 1966]

duties were restricted so that it wasn't until after Gowing left that I was allowed even to talk to a student who passed his first year.

KM: And what kind of exhibitions did you do?

RH: Well I did Man, Machine and Motions which was –

KM: The first.

RH: Well the first exhibition was Growth and Form.

KM: Yes.

RH: Which was in 1951. In 1953 when I first went down to Newcastle I started on this thing called Man, Machine in Motion, which was then in a development of the –

KM: Was done as a summary of your whole aesthetic, implied in the title.

RH: Yes, well I'll give you that. The exhibitions are linked. They're not seen as linked now but what I did was to say Growth and Form and all this stuff about morphology and Victorian approach to natural history. And then I followed that with an exhibition which was man trying to change his evolution, change natural evolution by putting skis on his feet or making engines and motor cars and wings and flying. So this is all the evolution of man, an evolution controlled by man's intelligence.

And so they do follow one another. And then comes, in 1956, Man Machine and… no, the Whitechapel exhibition, the mixed exhibition.

KM: This Is Tomorrow?

RH: This Is Tomorrow. My contribution to This Is Tomorrow – and I call it my contribution although it was supposed to be a group of three. One of my collaborators left for a year –

KM: This is Alloway?

RH: Lawrence Alloway. And it was extraordinary. Immediately after we decided to collaborate off he went to America to take a course at Yale under Albers. And he didn't come back until a few weeks before the exhibition opened. And a lot of work had to be done. Well I mustn't cry to you any more about that [Laughter] 'cause it…

KM: But that brings about the iconic collage –

RH: Yes, that was the first thing but it was a kind of manifesto, an attempt to start from scratch and say what's important now, partly induced by the fact that I was puzzled by the title which my peers who worked on the exhibition had decided to put on the exhibition – This Is Tomorrow. 'Cause I wasn't able to attend that particular meeting but when I learned of it I said, This is Tomorrow? How are we supposed to say anything about tomorrow? We don't [Laughing] even know what's going on today. So my collage was an attempt to put that right. Like this is today not this is tomorrow. [Laughter]

KM: Do you think… was that show an idea on the reaction to the festival of Britain at all? That concept of that show, did it have anything to do with sort of reacting to –

RH: No. Well my –

KM: 'Cause it did have an impact.

RH: My exhibition Growth and Form, in 1951 was the ICA's contribution to the Festival of Britain. And five years passed before This Is Tomorrow. So I've left, I've left that –

KM: Continuing the conversation.

RH: I certainly left it behind. But as far as the other people in the exhibition were concerned it was… Well it was organized in response to some committee that… Theo Crosby had been associated with as an architect. And he was very into… always involved in committees and associations and… less… But he talked a lot and he had been involved in some conference in France where they were – I think it was grouped Group [Espaçe?] – and they thought that it would be good if a painter and sculptor and after they'd got together and collaborated. And so that was Theo Crosby's idea for This Is Tomorrow.

KM: So did an architect have some input into your collage?

RH: Not in the collage. The architect that I was working with[8] was a man I was very fond of and a very good architect. He did a good job because he knew exactly what I thought it needed as a structure. I had… Well I say no problem but the structure was

[8] John Voelcker

designed by him in isolation. We didn't collaborate on it until a certain point came when it had to be made and I made it in my studio with my wife at that time. And John was helping. John, well it wasn't manually but he looked after it intellectually.

But as far as making was concerned it was a big job because we didn't have money to do it and it was a question of just taking the thing and getting it done. But he wasn't interested at all in what when on, at least he wasn't involved in what went on. He made the structure and said, "Okay done my bit, you get it on with it."

KM: Yes.

RH: So most of that was done immediately… immediately after he conceived the structure. And then the exhibition came and it was the talking point of the show and was a great success and has continued to be. In fact, it is extraordinary that that little collage which nine inches square or something should have been reproduced more often than the most famous work of Picasso. I mean I'm sure it's been reproduced more than "Guernica," say. I mean Guernica is big and probably more difficult to illustrate. But it comes up hundreds of times. I still make money, in fact I'm now due big money. At one time I was earning about 2,000 a year just on copyrighting. It was like, you know, some musician doing a song goes on I mean probably for life. It was absolutely amazing.

KM: Was there a group called the situationists?

RH: No, there wasn't a group, it's just… [Systemic Painting][9] was an exhibition arranged by Lawrence Alloway, which was largely monochrome paintings. Everybody had… or at least they put up on an exhibition, Alloway put on an exhibition and it was called Dimensions[10]. But they were all monochrome pictures and people like William Turnbull, the Cohen Brothers. I wasn't asked to do that… I wouldn't have done it anyway but I wasn't involved but it had a very nice catalogue and presented certain popular myths in the art world at that time. Because somebody like myself would think of it as being a Minimalist to an absurd extent. Whereas now they're taught that this was… Minimalism was the thing.

[9] Systemic Painting at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1966.
[10] Dimensions: British Abstract Act 1948-1957 at the Ohana Gallery, London, 1958.

But Alloway was a very odd character in that he didn't… he didn't have quite the influence that he is supposed to have. He did have a big influence on the Independent Group in his talking. But the things he organized at that time were not really that exciting. Like the first book he did was called *Nine Painters*. But I think none of them are rated now at all. They were Constructivists in the main. And he was a brilliant critic of the cinema. But he became devoted to a woman called –

KM: Sylvia Sleigh?

RH: Yes. And that got him into some difficulty with the artists of London because they were asked to make… Alloway was asked to make an exhibition by the Marlborough Gallery which was the most fashionable gallery going then. And he made this exhibition, put it all together and then said, "I think that a painting of Sylvia should be included. And the artists got together and said, no, she can't show here. And he… I think… He sort of staked his whole reputation on it in a way. His insistence and losing made him, made him bitter. And so bitter that he would then be prepared to write attacks on artists' exhibitions that were simply because they were largely responsible for putting Sylvia down.

So before he went to America his influence was not something that went outside of the ICA and Independent Group. Occasionalists. And he used to write in *Art Monthly*, which at that time was this little newspaper type thing, a lot like *Private* Eye except it wasn't funny, a very parish magazine and he wrote for that. And he wrote… well things that weren't particularly good , I don't think. One article I remember because I kept it – and I think I still have it – it's cruel, but he wrote a whole piece for *Art Monthly* on artists' signatures. [Laughing] And it ended, "if any of my readers know interesting artists' signatures."

KM: Please send them.

RH: Please contact me. I thought this was so pathetic now. But when he moved up in the world – he became assistant director of the ICA. I think that was his title when Dorothy Morland was the director. And one evening David Sylvester gave a talk on Giacometti. He had been talking about the book that he working on for several years, it must have been five years at least of doing this book on Giacometti. It was always his book on Giacometti.

And he gave this lecture at the ICA and it was described to me by my wife because I didn't go to the lecture. But she wrote this wonderful piece of description of what happened. David got up to do his talk and he had galley proofs of his Giacometti falling down off the lectern.

And every now and again he would take a pencil out of his pocket and correct his proof. And then she describes one moment when he says to Lawrence Alloway who's sitting in the front row, "Oh Lawrence would you mind getting me a glass of water?" [Laughing] And Lawrence had to go off and get him a glass of water. And there they had a long curtain that goes all the way out on the length of the gallery. After another thirty minutes goes by, he says, "Lawrence would you mind closing the curtains?" [Laughter] And pull them, you've the little – him pulling these enormous curtains entire length of the room. Now that's cruelty.

But Lawrence came into his own when he went to America, to the Guggenheim.

KM: What about the women at that point? Was Lee Miller[11] being very much the grand dame of that era, of ICA.

RH: Yes.

KM: Did she have some impact?

RH: Well I don't know what impact she had.

KM: Well I meant in the sense of the photography where it was really 01:22:01[inaudible].

RH: No she… but she was… she was certainly a presence on occasions at parties. They often had these events.

KM: She was very beautiful and drank a lot [laughter]

RH: And she behaved very oddly and badly at them. But I was very good friends with her, both Roland and Lee Miller and we used to go to their house in the… They had a farm in [East Sussex] or nearby. And they were always very kind to me whenever… Partly because I would be so… No I mean… well I shouldn't put that slant on it. He [Roland] bought things from me and he bought a painting for the Arts Council. And it

[11] Elizabeth "Lee" Miller, Lady Penrose

wasn't a committee thing any longer but he just went out and bought all the things that interested him. And he bought one of the first things I sold, almost, I should think.

And I stayed once for a weekend when Peggy Guggenheim was there. Peggy Guggenheim hated me. It was obvious. And that was because… well I said, "Why, why… what I have a done? Why, why… well and have I been the recipient of this kind of attack?" He said, "She hates Pop."

KM: Oh.

RH: I can't stand Pop. No it… Well everybody was using the word "pop" at that time. But it meant Pop music. All this stuff is coming from America. Well Elvis Presley times and Bill [Haley] … Anyway, there was a lot of Pop coming out of America. And that music I think would have been played in the ICA before it reached the radio stations. Because…

KM: It was part of what the ICA did?

RH: Yeah people went to… in particularly it was John McHale. John McHale during his stay here for a year at Yale, that was the time when it was all coming out. And he was smart enough to know that it was a new social phenomenon and came back to England. And so one evening was devoted to playing those things that he'd brought back with him. This was after This Is Tomorrow. But it was quite an important evening.

And so the word "pop" was used extensively to mean Pop music. It was used outside. It wasn't the ICA alone that called it Pop music. Everybody called it Pop music. And it could mean anything.

But it wasn't until there was an exhibition, after This Is Tomorrow I think, when there was little exhibition put on somewhere in Mayfair, and I was included even with a picture. And the critics all picked up on the word pop. And in another thing was television program called Pop Goes [the Easel]. But that word was just introduced into art not by the Independent Group itself or by Alloway but by art critics misunderstanding the use of the term. [Laughing] It was all a mistake but it worked very well.

KM: What about this exhibition[12], this design where you did a Gallery for a Collector of Brutalist and Tachiste Art. Was that starting to think about a complete concept of… Is that when you started beginning to get involved in technology?

RH: No not, not particularly. See I, I'd been from the, my late teens for four years in an engineering factory, one of the biggest in England – the Electrical Musical Industry, EMI.

KM: EMI.

RH: And I was an engineer and I was given the kind of problems that are given to engineers, any… I was a jig and tool designer it's called. And you had to know about machinery, had to learn about machinery. And it wasn't just a question of drawing it but having ideas about how to make things rather than… It was making the tools rather than making the object that the tools were making. So you were given a bit of metal, which had to be of a certain shape and with holes here and there, and the problem for the next few weeks was what tools do you have to make to produce this…at a high rate of production on all the machines that were available?

So that's when I learned about technology to some extent, but it was a very limited kind of technology. But because it was EMI I came into contact with research people, you know, the people in the research department who were scientists. And they'd come from a background in the factory of acoustics. So loudspeakers, building a… I built my first amplifier when I was working there, going to people in that department who… I wanted to make an amplifier, what should I do? And they'd say, what are, you've got to make a chassis first then you can put… And so a circuit was drawn for me and I followed the circuit going around to the nearest [program?] or pick up a valve or whatever that was specified. And all the resisters were…

And I soldered it together and to my astonishment it worked. [Laughing] It was a good amplifier. And that was in 1944 or 5 – yes, '44 or '45. And I made a loudspeaker. I made my own pickup. Because you couldn't buy one as good as –

KM: What you could make.

[12] *Ideal Home Exhibition*, 1958, Olympia, London.

RH: What I could make, yes. So that was when, where it came from earlier. But then it continued because when… I mean even before the war I was working at the Reimann Studios and I was in the design department. So I had to make things, I had to make myself useful cutting out, cutting out lettering on this, on a real jigsaw. So I've always been very capable in that sense. But it also I suppose quite… Sort of quite clever in picking up things. I'm sort of able. Some people [Laughing] can't do anything. They can't read a fuse or change a bulb.

KM: I can hardly use a computer.

RH: Well I never had any problems of that sort. And now if I want something that I can't get to the standard I want, the likelihood is that I will get to work on my computer and I would draw it. I'm now in, in the process of making a bed; which seems like a silly thing to do. It's easy enough to buy a bed but I just can't find what I want. But it'll work out.

END PART I AT 01:31:40

BEGIN PART II

KM: So talk about self portraits. Let's start to talk a little bit about your work. I mean it's sort of doing the history part that…But let's try to think about, you know, sort of the general themes of how you worked has progressed and developed and… I mean there's sort of like a design part of things like, as you said, the, you know, the making of the speakers as your… as a beginning. Then that becomes a very big image in your work. And there's a big… there's a big group of work devoted to that.

RH: Well I adopted one of Duchamp's principles of working which I took to be always, always look for the obvious. When you get bored or when you've completed any project and then you're looking for something else to do, they just go to the absolute opposite. I think that's what happens to Marcel significantly clearly in between boxes. He's working on *The Green Box* in New York and he feels the need to get away from it and he goes to the readymade.

So on the one hand he's working on a most precisely conceived and precisely executed work of the twentieth century. And on the other hand he says what happens if you don't make anything at all [Laughing] but just… And don't even, don't even think about what you're… going to do to avoid, the problem of choice is very

important with the readymades. Try not to choose. How can you not choose readymade 'cause you're going to… really kept an eye on your… Make an assignation with it at a certain time.

So he goes through the whole gamut of possibilities with that. And when he was working on the most beautiful of his paintings he suddenly moves into another gear and puts down his brushes [Laughing] and then he starts writing what he's going to do. And then he does it using a T-square and draws perspective meticulously. Learns about perspective even while he's doing it.

And so I thought that that was a good principle. If you're going to make… if you're going to get somewhere and then complete a project, then look for something that's very different to make it more stimulating or make things more of a problem. And so I made a list first of all. I thought so if you've got a subject like self portrait or –

KM: Landscape.

RH: Landscape, interior and it's a long list. And so I started following this. When I finished a painting I looked at the next thing on the list. [Laughing]

KM: I haven't done a flower piece. [laughter]

RH: How about a flower piece? And the still life –which is not a flower piece but equally interesting in its possibilities. And a fashion plate even could be thought as a… as a subject. In oil painting, you know, Constable "Ladies" is like a Vogue page isn't it really?

KM: Yes.

RH: So this was something that stuck to and I still do. Might be that I've gotten to the end [Laughing] of the list and I have to think of other things now. But it's… It's not necessarily the subject that needs to be changed. You can change your approach to it like the "Toasters" have been a recurring theme. I do [inaudible]

KM: Yes.

RH: And it's one campaign. Then maybe ten years later I find myself attracted back to that area of… consumer products. Why couldn't and what have you? But the

epitome seems to me to be the “Toaster.” [Laughing] So that’s my subject. And now I’ve completed –

KM: But then you just… you did a wonderful… you did wonderful things with record players.

RH: Yes I did… Well I was… sometimes I’m relieved of the responsibility of choosing by somebody asking me to do something. I was commissioned by the biggest manufacturer of hi-fi in Japan. And that meant at that time the best in the world. They were doing better. And they asked me if I would make something… something that is associated with them and their products as a fiftieth… to mark a fiftieth anniversary of the founding of their company. And I went to Japan and I couldn’t see myself doing that. I hadn’t got a clue.

And I went to Japan really, except when… on the condition that I didn’t have to do it if I would go, but I couldn’t guarantee that I would come up with something that would be suitable. And I had a very good time, all expenses paid, they treated me very well. And the first meeting to discuss this was with all the heads of the departments and the chairman of the company and we’re sitting around… well in a nice big office. And I asked… the first question I asked, the first contribution I made to the discussion was, “What is the thinnest, what is the smallest depth, thinnest depth that would accommodate your smallest?” And they went away. I mean people were dispatched to go and get… to go and come back with something then.

And they decided that the switch was the thing that would really limit the thing that was… It couldn’t come… I mean more than three centimeters or something. Everything else would go in, like these circuit boards and wiring and all that sort of thing. But it wouldn’t get a loudspeaker. You couldn’t get your loudspeaker into that space. But all the other components for the amplifier were possible.

And so I said that my problem was that I wasn’t a sculptor and I was interested in this idea that… of making an object which was like a painting where that you could put on the wall, but it could also be an amplifier and an amplifier that worked to their standards. I mean it wasn’t the first time that an amplifier… Actually the first time I ever heard of an amplifier being put, or a radio say, being into a picture was with Rauschenberg.

KM: Yes.

RH: Some years before.

KM: Sure.

RH: I was attracted to the problem. But my interest was that I knew enough about amplifiers to be able to say I can… I'm only interested if I can make it… but a really high quality hi-fi is what we need. And so this… well we can make any sort of thickness. What is the size that you would need, the area that you would need? And we decided that I think it was a meter, a meter square. And –

KM: So the program decided the size of the picture?

RH: Yes. There are some decisions but the important things have… It had to have an aerial, I didn't have to have an aerial inside. But it would be good if it could have an aerial inside in the right conditions. But, of course, there should be something that one just plugged an external aerial into. So everything was done in such a way that it was very… well equipped as… just as a piece of hi-fi gear it was very good. And the interesting thing was that having put it on the… having said it was going to go on the wall like a painting, this had advantages because I'd say you can plug everything into the front, from the front. This was [Laughing] this was very, very normal. Like you need a loudspeaker so where are going to put the loudspeaker's attachment? You can't go into the back 'cause it wouldn't work. And I thought that was very good to have all these cables [SURGING ?] into the open. And so that… I said I'm not interested in any more –

KM: Categories.

RH: Subjects. So something like that is offered to me and I treat that as a problem and how do you find the solution? But… and the next thing, it might be a problem that I find for myself. Like a seascape, a political painting. They always start with subject, find… and then you have to find the subject like it about being a political painting. I might say Irish politics.

KM: The Irish.

RH: Or now I've done –

KM: Which had a really major impact, your painting of the Irish prisoner[13].

RH: And now I have a new painting which is a portrait of Tony Blair. I've done a portrait of Hugh Gaitskell from many years ago. The one on the… I'm sort of having to recapitulate [Laughing] this life.

RH: And I had another project brought to me called a Medal of Dishonour. The British Museum has an exposition which opens I think next month. And its theme is Medals of Dishonour. Well –

KM: Well you know David Smith did a series of those.

RH: The name David Smith came up immediately. Not in my mind but I was told that there were other artists.

KM: Yes.

RH: Very clear that the medal of dishonor goes back to Roman times and its peak was in the Napoleonic era. So they've got all this stuff in the British Museum and thought it would make a show, which is very interesting. And I was asked if I would like to do one. And there were six or so other artists. And I did it by discussing with friends of mine that I knew in the printing field in Bristol[14]. And there was a way to approach relief which would mean that I would have to work with a computer and make the relief. And this is a thing that's like an inkjet printer in that it spits out layers but it doesn't spit out layers of ink. It spits out layers of wax. And it depends upon the tone how thick, how much wax they will be depositing in a given area you see.

If I wanted to make a picture of Tony Blair it would have to have… the nose would be a bit lighter, the whole head would be lighter. And then the ears would go back and then the shoulders… and if it were a black tie he was wearing, it couldn't work very well because that becomes a hole in a white shirt. [Laughing] So it's… it was quite a tricky problem. I spent probably a month working on this over the Christmas this period.

But I got there. But it's a technical problem which I wouldn't have been able to tackle without my understanding of computers. And also –

[13] *The citizen*, 1981-83, collection of Tate Gallery
[14] Professor Stephen Hoskins at the Centre for Fine Print Research, University of the West of England, Bristol

KM: Well that is really also been quite an influence on your work. Or if not an influence but a… You've done a lot of things with computers that have made things very unusual. I mean and that also comes from a sort of a Duchamp thing. Like the tire prints, like the… you've made an elusive really innovative work because –

RH: Yes, well that was very early on. And it was because I really hated something that was emerging called "computer art" where you got all these swirls and – What infuriated me about it was it was completely uncontrolled by the artist and it was dependent upon the program I put in the computer and then, you know, sat back and watched it draw something. Well I wasn't interested in that at all. And then I was told by a chap from Cincinnati, a dealer from Cincinnati. Solway, Carl Solway. Carl Solway came over and he was interested in the prints and would I do something with him. And I didn't feel much inclined to because I was happy with what I was… how I was selling stuff through my London dealer. Why go to somebody in Cincinnati? I can make prints for them? [It] didn't seem to make sense.

But I was showing him things and he looked at a drawing which I'd done and he said, "You could have done that with a computer." 'Cause I said I'd abandoned the drawing, it was too difficult. Or too time… It wasn't that it was impossible, it was just too time consuming, madly, insanely complicated to draw. And he said, "You could have done that with a computer." And I said, "Very interesting but I don't know how that could be done." Then he said, "Well you could." And in fact it wasn't quite true that I could have done it with a computer but it became true. Within six months of that meeting some university… Syracuse is it? Uses it.

KM: Yes.

RH: Had developed it and their computer department had developed a perspective program. And so then I was introduced to somebody in a business near MIT, a programmer who would be able to control this program. And I had to give them the information. So all I did was to prepare the data, I had to go back to my drawing and convert it over to sort of a thing that was round. Doing that, I had to flatten it out for the tread of the tires and then I had to unravel it. So you've got to convert the thing into a flat [plane]. And that was quite difficult. I had to do a lot of calculations.

So it was… it was done and I did that with a slide rule which is calculating bar. And then again gave all this information to the man in Cincinnati, went there when he was

finished and he showed me something that was a representation of what it looked like. And I thought that's alright. And then I decided it was a bit peculiar and I went back to my hotel and looked at it. And I thought that's wrong, there's something wrong, checked it.

And I called him out and I said, "There's something wrong." And it seems that you could have made a mistake of some sort with the diagonal dimension type of thing. 'Cause if you have a square the diagonal should go to… all the diagonals of a check pause, diagonals of the square will go to the second point. And that was not the vanishing point of the square. So I had put this vanishing point of the diagonal in and I… he didn't know what that meant. And then I explained it to him and he said, "I'll stay behind tonight [Laughing] because we've got to go somewhere tomorrow to start the work," which is to make the –

KM: The print.

RH: Not to make the print, to make the – The loom. The cards, they were punched cards back then.

KM: Oh really?

RH: The loom, like a loom punched cards and a big boxful that long. It's going to…

KM: Right.

RH: So there are all these stages. But they couldn't make the cards before they got the final information. So he was able right overnight to change that information to them and so we went to a place that was like NASA. There were security guards everywhere and he said it's all military stuff they do here. But they'll take any job. Their real business is military. So that's why they've all the security.

Anyway, we got what we wanted out of them, went to another place that had a plotter and that was also secure, high security but it was young students in California from Berkeley who were operating these things; ponytails and hippies. "What does it do?" And I said, "It's nothing – doing nothing – it's just art." And he said, "Hey guys, come and look at this, this is something that we don't normally do here. It's art." Isn't it wonderful not to be doing weapons. [Laughter] And so we got on very well.

They did their job and this machine did wonderfully well. In twenty minutes it took to make a drawing which would have taken years. So I was very happy with that. And then I didn't see any further use for it but it's… it gave me a great respect for computers. And then I was introduced to a machine that was really designed for the purpose of image manipulation called Quantel. And that was a very expensive. I think it was a substantial rich company and I was amazed to hear that their sales in the previous year had been… [Laughing] Forty of their specialist computers. That's very expensive. But it could do the job. And then I… afterwards the price went down on these things and they were making more. But it was…what was it? Well £60,000 to buy the computer this Quantel Machine. And then they changed the format and I've got another one but I had to pay 60,000 more. So I paid 120,000, which is a lot to fork out.

KM: It's a lot of money.

RH: But the principle was that if I have this I will be able to work at home, make my prints, at least get the image done. And instead of going to Paris working for –

KM: Crommelynk

RH: Where – Crommelynk over a period of six weeks, two months, going back and forth and week by week. And that's the way it worked out. I was beginning to make things and it came through at the moment when I'd done something that I thought was really worthwhile as a print. And the guy who was printing it on an inkjet machine said, "It's a pity that they don't last longer." I didn't get what he meant. He said, "They only last for six months 'cause they're water-based inks, vegetable dyes and…

KM: And then they dissolve.

RH: They don't last very long.

KM: Really.

RH: And I said, "Well it's no good to me." I'll come back when you've got some better inks. How long will that be? He said, "Well we're working on it of course but it'll be a year at least. It's going to come some time next year." And I… Three years later they were saying, well these inks are much better. And they were, but they will still be water-based. However, I made my first edition on that and it's gone on to the point

now where you can say Epson guarantees… well they don't guarantee it but they say that their tests show that it will last hundred and twenty years without change. Well that's better than a Sargent watercolor. So I was really trying to plan my life in a way because I knew I wasn't going to be able to move around Europe or any part of the world making prints which are… You know, that was my main source of income. People didn't want paintings in those days.

KM: Did they all… do all of your friends have a lot of innovations and different ways including the Guggenheim vacuum formed pieces? And, you know, I remember there's the poster, there's a Duchamp poster with the mirror and a…

RH: Yes, the antiquing

KM: Where each one has a little secret to maintain.

KM: You know there's always some new quiet little –

RH: But it's very interesting that you –

KM: You seem to get a problem.

RH: You get something like that lenticular process where I started it for no other reason than Marian Goodman wanting to do a portfolio which contained some… a voice contribution and various other people. And she asked me to do one. And the theme was to be mirrors. And so I looked at the mirror and I thought well how do you, how do you represent a mirror? How can you… If you look in your mirror it's like looking at painting, it's like seeing yourself, maybe in reverse. But it's an image which we can understand but not understand what it's being, maybe. But it's like, exactly like a painting.

KM: That brings up what was really just skipping a little.

RH: One of the… One of the things – now people think that I'm interested in perspectives because of the Duchamp and so it's all from that. But that's –

KM: That's a problem that –

RH: It's not a hidden, it starts there. When I first went to the Royal Academy Schools, okay, age 16, in the first year – this is in 1938, '38 and '39 – and they had lectures

every year. One was on anatomy given by a medical doctor at Sir Thomas' [Hospital], [a] wonderful educator with a live model. And he would say, "William, Tom would you mind showing your latissimus dorsi?" Boom, there'd be a big lump coming on this guy's back. He was absolutely brilliant at that job. And then they would put a red circle around you and paint. This poor model was covered with paint.

But there was also a great expert in perspective, a Royal Academician, called Walter Bayes. And he conducted twelve classes every year on perspective and the way that it's been done just by putting a big sheet of paper on an elephant sized drawing board. And you followed his instructions but you followed it not dimensionally but in principle. Like there is his… I stand… The first thing he said was, to instruct the class was, "You are here" and make a blind stab with a piece of chalk on a big blackboard. And from there a large angle which crossed the vanishing point and it went in a nice, nice progression and you followed. But you didn't… you weren't in the same place that he would be with his staff or your right hand wouldn't go there. And basically everybody ended up their twelve lectures with a drawing, a very nice drawing of a sort of Renaissance city with towers, bridges, every kind of problem that might come up in perspective of the bridge going over in a stream or cupola of a church or tower.

So that was very informative and I learned everything I needed to know about perspective I learned in those twelve weeks. And so when I encountered it in Duchamp I was very familiar with the principles and I knew what Marcel had had to do and how he had done it. And I had to read… In fact I had an assistant – and I was going away for a period – and I said, "Just do the perspective." All the dimensions are here, it's in *The Green Box*, you can't get them wrong. Just follow the dimensions of the plan, they were very basic.

And I came back two weeks later. He hadn't done a thing. He'd been scratching his head the whole time. And it was very stupid of me to assume that he'd… that he would – Would have that capacity to do it. So I had to turn around and get on with the job and make this like full sized drawing. And so I think that it… I was attracted to Duchamp for so many reasons but it was because I understood what he had done at a practical level. It wasn't just the conceptual level. And I thought, why did I want to interpret what Duchamp meant or what is it all about? And it's so fascinating what he did.

KM: Well “To Be Looked At” is an example of that.

RH: Yes.

KM: All of the complications of doing something like that.

RH: Marcel didn’t care a damn what people said. Oh this is about the assumption of the virgin or… If that’s what they think that’s okay. And all of Schwarz’s Freudian analysis, sexual analysis, it irritated Teeny terribly. She couldn’t –

KM: Very much so.

RH: She couldn’t take it at all. But Marcel was always kind about it and he got fed up with Teeny sometimes. He say, “Okay Teeny, you write your book and let Schwarz write his.” [Laughter]

KM: But I mean it brought up that there were other women and I don’t think Teeny liked that.

RH: People like that. When I met Mina Loy in California in ’63 Teeny was very, very friendly. Any other person who is supposed to have had a relationship with Marcel was always treated in a similar sort of way by Teeny. I think she was a generous person. She knew that these things –

KM: Marcel had a past.

RH: They happened in a previous life. She had a previous life.

KM: She had been married to Pierre Matisse, so she had a previous life. But to come back to the perspective. Let’s talk about your traveling and what old masters really hit you. I mean obviously “Las Meninas” would have a big impact on your work. I would assume you would like it very much.

RH: As soon as I saw that painting I was bowled over by it. I thought it was the greatest painting ever made. I couldn’t imagine anything more marvelous.

KM: It’s still very compelling every time one sees it. You see something different and –

RH: Yes, I was in Madrid a couple of weeks ago. I had to go to the Prado to see it again.

KM: And it's done very well at the moment, displayed very well. But there's also I think quite a mystery about it, even if you feel you can see everything and you see the problems that he dealt with. But there's still something extremely mysterious about…

RH: The first time I saw it was in a small room on its own. But now they've brought it out and it's in the center of a big gallery.

KM: Velázquez was looking at you.

RH: Yes. It was as though you were the king and queen looking at it.

KM: Yes.

RH: That is very clever, the whole concept.

KM: Well the scale of the figures is also quite baffling… There are some different scales of people. From the dwarf to the princess, the infanta to the king and queen, to him on the easel, I guess it is part of the abstracting and the perspective.

But nothing like that happened before did it? Not even in Italian Renaissance perspective. Not even in "The Ideal City" [by Fra Carnavale].

A lot of it has to do with the spectator, which I love. It is probably one of the first works where the spectator is really part of the picture in a certain way.

RH: I'm very interested in Saenredam too.

KM: Oh yes, he was always a favorite of mine.

RH: I really love his pictures. And that's so different from "Las Meninas." They couldn't be more different.

KM: I was very happy when I discovered his work.

RH: Purely technical.

KM: I discovered him in going through museums in Holland and I really like always looking for the signature, where it was astutely placed in his paintings. When did you first go to Europe? Touring the museums?

RH: I went in first I think in… when the war ended around 1950, ’51. No, it would be before – ’50. And when I was a student at the Slade. And I went to the Palais de la Découverte. Do you know the Science Museum in Paris? Which was a wonderful thing, like the Science Museum in London was once. But it – anyway it got ruined very quickly, the Science Museum. And they had – I went especially to look at reapers [in Paris]. Of course, they had models of reapers which was a subject of a group of etchings I was thinking of doing. And so the first of the reapers in that group were rather geometric. I might have been looking at framed office drawings or something like that. But they weren’t very realistic.

But after going to Paris I found they [the drawings or etchings?] began to change and they becoming like a reaper in a landscape. A change took place. Well I liked, I loved Cézanne. Cézanne was my great god at the time when I was a student at the Royal Academy. And I had a great love of Cézanne but I didn’t like impressionists like Monet or… I loved Manet.

KM: Well you must have loved Seurat.

RH: Yes, yes I loved Seurat. But those were the paintings that did interest me but there was an awful lot in Paris that I didn’t find interesting. But then there wasn’t any painting in England that I found very interesting either.

KM: The Seurat hadn’t come to the National Gallery yet? Any Cézannes?

RH: Yes, no, I mean English painters. English painters weren’t… My teachers included when I went to evening classes before I went to the Royal Academy Schools, Mark Gertler, Bernard Meninsky, William Roberts, there were artists who were teaching evening classes to get a bit of money, needing it. And they were very interesting people. And there was Sickert and there was Wyndham Lewis. But it’s a rather restricted range in comparison with what one might encounter abroad. When I was at the Royal Academy Schools you were very close to the Bond street galleries. So I was looking at Picasso exhibitions when they were just… wet off the studio wall. Things like the whole exhibition of candlesticks, candles and… The whole show at –

KM: Mayor.

RH: No it wouldn’t be Mayor. It was one of the grander galleries touching almost on the old master lane.

KM: Probably Wildenstein.

RH: Yes, Wildenstein. That's the one. And they were extraordinary, to see things freshly painted that were so unlike anything that had ever happened in England. And then when I was about 16, there was a professor of theater[15], really of theatrics and things like that. And he had sort of adopted me. And one day he said, here's six pence or a shilling or whatever, go and see the exhibition of "Guernica" at the Burlington galleries.

And I went to this – paid my sixpence – and went in and the experience of seeing "Guernica" but not just "Guernica." It was the whole gallery filled with weeping women and all the studies surrounding this great painting on the end wall. And that was… a real eye opener I tell you. Even though – well I say even for a sixteen year old, I think it… It opened a lot of eyes in those days… [Laughing] and created a lot of hostility too with people like [Sir Alfred] Munnings.

But those sort of experiences were the ones that I remember. And they usually come from outside sources. In fact my whole life seems to be… I have friendships with British artists. But the people I feel a strong affinity with are people like Dieter Roth, Beuys, Marcel Broodthaers. The only person in England that I felt that kind of affection for and friendship for was Latham, John Latham.

KM: The Art and Culture suitcase[16] [Laughing] I acquired that for the Museum, the Art and Culture piece that was about Clement Greenberg. Oh it was offered and there was a distinguished severe older man called William A. M. Burden, who was the president of the museum at one time. He looked at it and suddenly said, "Well we have other suitcases in the collection, buy it." Remembering "The Valise."

RH: That was a wonderful purchase. And John Latham telephoned me one day and said that he had a problem. That he had been sacked from his job [from Saint Martin's School of Art] and would I intervene in some way, would I telephone the principal and try to ease things off or was there any thing that I can do? Can I speak to …?

[15] Professor Otto Ludwig Haas-Heye (1879–1959)
[16] *Art and Culture* (1966-69), John Latham, MoMA 511.1970.a-t

And there wasn't much that I could do. But he explained what the problem was. That he had gone to the library and taken out this book of… I've forgotten the name of the critic, people I don't like.

KM: Clement Greenberg?

RH: Clement Greenberg. Taken out his –

KM: His *Art and Culture*, yes.

RH: Yes. Taken out *Art and Culture* from the library and he'd had a seminar or conducted evening seminars at his home I think with students. And they had chewed up the pages and spat it out into this bowl and then he'd got this file of distilled…

KM: Yes.

RH: And it was six months later, he'd got this, as you probably know the story better than I do. But anyway, this was what he was telling me, all about it and gone back to the library and given them this vial and said that this was the book. And that the librarian, a lady, was so annoyed she went to the director, head of the school and he immediately sacked him. He was an artist himself who would normally be regarded as very unconventional and modern in a way and interested in what's going on. I mean an artist that you didn't think was a great artist may be but he had some respect in terms of personality.

And to think to do this was so outrageous that you couldn't imagine. And so when we heard that you had bought the thing it seemed daring. God it was like a dream come true. I never found Greenberg at all likeable. [Laughter]

KM: I never thought that it was very good for critics to dominate artists…

RH: And I thought that… Well it was so funny that John Latham should… that he'd been to America and had met a lot of artists in New York. And then he'd met this Clement Greenberg, important critic, and asked him what he thought of his work. Well I can't imagine what he thought of his work and he, Clement Greenberg, he said, "It's too tasteful."

RH: So when he got home he was thinking about this tasteful thing. And so that really it was a destination. It was so brilliantly done as an answer to this critique.

KM: Well did you have any kind of slight affinity or liking of Francis Bacon or not?

RH: Yes, yes. I was a friend of Francis Bacon but I didn't see him as much as I saw Dieter Roth or Broodthaers. Or even Beuys. But yes, he was very generous to me and he used to bring up–

KM: 'Cause you did those portraits based on the Bacon self portraits.

RH: Yes well that –

KM: I mean you've liked to have fun and provoke people.

RH: Well he was friend of Sonia Orwell. Do you know Sonia Orwell?

KM: No.

RH: Oh, she was the wife of George Orwell. And she married… She was an editor of the *Horizon Magazine*. And she knew everybody in the art world and she was secretly close friends of Francis Bacon. So I often was invited to dinner with Sonia Orwell and Francis Bacon was always there. And it was a very…a very cultured evening with… But Francis Bacon used to invite me to have dinner with him in some restaurant. He liked Wiltons, it was always Wiltons where he had champagne and oysters.

KM: Oysters.

RH: And he liked fish. And he was terribly, terribly kind. And we had long conversations. Whenever we got together we'd have long conversations and very often he would talk about Manet. He loved Manet. But I think he also loved Duchamp. And that's the affinity I had with him was his regard for Duchamp.

And he thought that… I think he respected my paintings unlike most people. There were very few people, like I say, liked my work apart from people who put me in exhibitions. But he was particularly kind. And when I had a show – I mean I'm talking about more recent years – when I had a show at Anthony d'Offay, d'Offay would say, "Francis Bacon was in here this morning." And the next day he telephoned me and said, "Francis Bacon came in again with some friends."

And the third day he called me and said, "Francis Bacon came in again and brought more friends." And I thought that's extraordinary. I mean I had no idea… No, there

was a big lift for me to feel that he was interested. But he was like that. But there came a strange, a strange moment, he quarreled with practically every friend he had and there were few people who didn't reach that point with him.

Friends got close and then suddenly the doors were shut, clang. And I never knew why and nobody explained it to me. But there was a moment in our relationship when I felt he shut the door. And I met him one day and he said that he didn't like my ties. He said that it's… "Why do you have to copy Duchamp, you could do other things?" It never occurred to me that they were like Duchamp. That's all.

But somehow he got through this phase. Maybe another exhibition made him change his mind. And right until his death we were friends. We went to Paris to the Paris exhibition [Francis Bacon at Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, 1971], for the dinner afterwards and all the rest of it. So I felt close to him and admired him. But I didn't feel that I could learn much from him. And I thought that people like [Broodthaers] and Latham, I wouldn't want to work as they did but they were fresh.

KM: There was imagination. It's about imagination.

RH: And the reason I did that… that thing which I call "Portrait of the Artist," was Francis Bacon, by Francis Bacon. 'Cause that… I asked him to take a photograph of me. I said of all my friends, artist friends, anyone I had a respect for and I said, "Take a polaroid of me." And we were in a restaurant. He had invited me to go to a restaurant to meet some publisher or dealer. And he took the photograph but he didn't know how to do it. And I'm… He'd never taken a photograph before. He was incredibly interested in photography [Laughing]. He'd never taken a photograph. But he knew about photography. And his art –

KM: Well he had that friend who was a photographer… John Deakin. The National Portrait Gallery had a show of his in 1996.

RH: Yes. The first photograph Bacon took was so out of focus, I mean even the Polaroid didn't… He couldn't cope with the camera. So I made a photograph of him so that I could focus it and then hand the camera to him and then we'd be the same distance apart. And that was quite successful.

But I got interested in the photograph I'd taken of him so I said let's make a print of this. Because I'm… I was, and still am, addicted to print making. And I thought it's

strange that Francis Bacon has never made a print. And I mentioned it and he said, "I know, I don't make drawings and I don't make prints." And I said… And then he said, "Of course, Marlborough make prints but they make them from the paintings and I sign them. But I'm not really interested in printmaking."

And I said, "Well you don't have to know anything or do anything. I'll make the print." Your involvement in the thing. And he said, "Well alright." And then he rang me some days later and said, "I'm sorry Richard, I won't be able to do that print with you because the Marlborough Gallery" or Fisher or one of the… [Laughing] proprietors had said you're not to do it because you can't do that thing with him. It would be alright if Richard Hamilton sold us some paintings. And I said, "Well why should I do that?" [Laughing] Well the reason I didn't want to work with the Marlborough is very interesting just because [Kitaj] was supposed to be doing an exhibition with Eduardo Paolozzi there. It went to Paolozzi confronted him with the problem that he was walking out on the arrangement, and the person in the gallery who was creating the exhibition turned to me and asked me if I would do the Eduardo part with Kitaj. And I said alright. And then Fisher [one of the owners of Marlborough] said, "Not on your life, I don't want you in our gallery at all. Keep out."

So I wasn't very fond of Marlborough but they weren't very fond of me. I thought why should there be this difficulty. However, I went on and made the print. I know there are about six or seven. And while we're doing them Francis came up to my studio. We were having a… at my house in London we would have dinner. And we'd go into the studio afterwards and he'd make comments about it. And I would ask him "How do you get that funny effect?" I don't… it looks as though a comb or something was used. You know, it's… some textured object. And he said, "I don't do it like that. I do it with an old sock." [Laughter] That's the texture.

It's very difficult to think now how would you get that result the texture wasn't all that distinctive. You know, I can try and grapple with this but [Laughing] but that's the sort of thing he helped me with, to get through. And then finally we had about seven studies I made, which varied a lot, and he came out, to dinner, we went in afterwards. And I said, "Which one would you use if you were me?" And he said, "I think that one."

And I noticed that he had a lilac shirt of exactly the same color. It was very, very interesting. Because there was a kind of participation. But it… the title is long and convoluted but it's quite meaningful. "The Portrait of the Artist," meaning me. But Francis Bacon, who had not touched it.

KM: The fashion plates. And then on [to] the shocking Andrex works.

RH: They're two distinct things, different things. Rita[17] was part of my life by that time. And she wore very, very interesting clothes. She bought very smart things.

KM: Still does.

RH: And I wasn't involved in the buying but she was teaching so she had the means, and she used to buy very well the young English designers. And so she bought *Vogue* a lot too and so there would be *Vogues* lying around the place. And so I was looking at them and one day… Well first of all I think the fashion plates were portraits too.

KM: Yes.

RH: And it was about cosmetics. 'Cause I had the intention of doing a large painting of a model. And I found a way to do it. I was using cosmetics as pigment. Then I decided that my twelve studies were enough. There was no need to be a big, a big painting.

Vogue was still around and I discovered one day that there was a photograph of a girl squatting. And I thought that's very interesting because I've never seen a squatting girl. There's a big problem with fashion photography. You've got a magazine, A4 size or bigger, I don't know, a figure. You've got these slender bodies in the middle. They've got to do something.

And an example of one way of dealing with it was the girls could spread their legs and they can spread their arms and reach for the corners. And so composition was a constant issue for a photographer or so I had supposed. And then suddenly come up with the idea of squatting. Make… take a low level you can fill the picture with the clothes.

That became a thing that was picked up by other photographers so for several months *Vogue*, the *British Vogue* was filled with these squatting girls. And I

[17] Rita Donagh

associated that with another instance. I had the house in Cadaqués, still do have a house in Cadaqués. And there was a girl, a daughter of a woman[18] who came with Hockney and various other people, the week we moved to Cadaqués. This little girl had a group of postcards that she'd picked out on her way down. They were driving to Cadaqués and stopped at a café in Provence. She'd run off and looked at postcards and bought some postcards.

All of the postcards that she bought were of people sitting in a landscape. But it would be like a party, a picnic and they'd all decided to go in and turn the backs on the viewer and expose their asses, 15 of them. And the men would drop their trousers and the girls all held their dress up at the back. And they all had the same legend on them, which was "Une des affets des Eaux de Miers" which was a spa that makes water, produces water of a laxative nature. They just… [Laughing]

That was the whole existence of this spa and probably it's still there. I was very intrigued by these things 'cause I thought those are like the girls squatting in England. Girls in *Vogue*, of course, don't lift their dress up in the back. But maybe there's something in this.

And so I tried to buy them from her and she was a hard dealer I tell you. She was only about nine years old. But she wouldn't sell them to me. I said I'll give you 100 pesetas, which wasn't that much but it was a lot more than she paid. And then she pointed out 500 pesetas. Anyway I bought her group of postcards and then I acquired others because I knew where they came from. It built up and I was using them to make pictures.

And that coincided with advertisements for Andrex, which used girls in the woods. It was to advertise their new range of colored toilet paper. They had yellow and blue and white and pink. So I began to use these adverts because it was so interesting that these girls in long negligee should be in the forest, and boys too. There was always a girl, a teenager, and a matronly one. The matronly one was always standing and the other one had moved in behind the bushes or a tree.

So it looked as though the whole thing was designed around this. 'Cause it is a problem. What do you do to sell toilet paper? And there was another that wasn't a

[18] Henrietta Garnett

brand of toilet paper but a douche. And this was in *Vogue* too. And there was this woman with a sort of… beautifully dressed in a negligee in a pink bathroom holding this sort of platter with a douche on it. And it's so dignified and beautiful and elegant, this whole thing, and it's just to sell a douche.

And I thought the same goes for the advertising of Andrex. So all these things came together. So it wasn't long before I was using the one with her dress lifted up, painted in the backside and lifted the skirts. And on one I put a turd underneath it.

KM: Yes.

RH: Because sometimes these ad things have had… have gone far and put the turd there. But there was a whole culture of… oh I don't know the word for it.

KM: How strange.

RH: I thought that it was… well it wasn't just the fashion and Andrex, and the whole series of things, they were all scatological is the word, yes, I was after before. So that became a period and I made an exhibition which was –

KM: Shocking.

RH: Well it wasn't meant to shock anybody really but it did. I even went… Nick Serota was running the gallery in Oxford, a museum.

KM: Yes.

RH: The Museum of Modern Art, Oxford. And I thought he had a show by Beuys, show of drawings by Jasper Johns and I thought maybe he would be interested in doing… a show of mine and so I asked him. I knew him quite well. Not for the future working and I took him out to lunch in Oxford to look at a portfolio because there were a lot of drawings I wanted him to look at. And he thought about it and he said, "I don't think it would be something that would interest the undergraduates," which seemed like a very… That was just the sort of thing that would interest the undergraduates.

KM: An understatement. An understatement.

RH: And then I had a show at the Serpentine Gallery and that was very difficult. In fact that show toured and it was amazing how that show created problems wherever it went. And I thought it was all, all rather innocent really.

KM: Well it was the Andrex, the Andrex pictures.

RH: That's the detail. Yes, but what I was interested in doing was painting fashion and glamour and beauty, the landscape and all that sort of thing – almost impressionistic. And at the same time I felt I can't go that far and I've got to put some spanner in the works. We've got to put something in. And so I put in this shit element. Just to soften up the glamour a little bit. Yeah, memory.

END PART II AT 01:23:57

BEGIN PART III

[Inaudible]

END PART III AT 00:01:04

BEGIN PART IV

RH: Or maybe you've got an assistant who can do that.

KM: Yes. So today is, Monday was the 18th, so the first part of the tape was on Monday, May 18th, and this is Thursday the 21st of May. Well, I enjoyed seeing the toasters[19] and I thought they were quite special.

RH: They're a little offbeat, I think, in the middle in that. My intent was to make something beautiful for a change. [Laughing]

KM: Well, it reminded me that you like mirrors, also.

RH: Yes.

KM: And I certainly remember the mirrors appear quite often. As we were talking about them on Monday. But in general mirrors appear quite often.

[19] *Toaster deluxe* at Gagosian Gallery, London, April 16– May 30, 2009

RH: Yes, I think the first time was probably an interior painting, when I inlaid the mirror into the surface of the panel. It was a mirror, one with a rather Baroque frame, and I cut a piece of mirror glass and put it in to fill the shape of the things.

KM: So you used the toaster as, the toaster form as the mirror in this way. The aluminum of a toaster, the body of a toaster, becomes very much a mirror in these works.

RH: Absolutely. And the frame is also very well polished stainless steel.

KM: Yes.

RH: You can do it now...

KM: There's a real high tech look to it.

RH: It's interesting now, you couldn't do it before because stainless steel wasn't available. You can use chromium plate. But things didn't change.

KM: No. Well, yes, the system there 00:02:58[inaudible] the most. I sort of like the one where Ricard, there's a Pernod and carafe and ashtray in the background, because I thought that was another self portrait in a very, very subtle found object way.

RH: Discreet. Interestingly enough, that was the first one to sell. There were, they're good friends of mine and they've been great supporters for many years. And they spent quite a lot of money on building up a collection of prints in particular, but they couldn't buy paintings, though they bought a few paintings. Anything that came up they could get access to and decided if it was interesting enough to buy, they bought. And they got this massive amount of prints. And they were the first people who saw, they bought the one with Ricard. And so I thought, "I'll have to do something special for them. Because it would make a nice little installation if they were to hang it with a small card table, floating card table or something underneath it. Not too deep on the wall and [I] put a carafe and ashtray on it. But I've got a few there. I think it'll make a very nice little domestic installation.

KM: Still life.

RH: And there's a lot of variations, when you think – some of them are quite...

KM: I wasn't too comfortable with the color chart one. I think that it...

RH: That was the one I was thinking of. But that is a little joke.

KM: On Richter?

RH: On Richter and Damien Hirst.

KM: I thought so.

RH: There's another way to do it, too. By numbers.

KM: I haven't seen the Richter portraits at the National Portrait Gallery.

RH: We don't get into London very much nowadays.

KM: So, I spent a little time thinking about a few things yesterday and I suddenly realized we haven't talked about the concept of series. That you like series. Even the toasters are a series. It's a constant theme in your works, for example, the fashion plates, and self portraits. There's a sort of consistent thing about...

RH: The Guggenheim.

KM: I mean Warhol also was very consistent with dealing a lot with the series. And I don't know what the impulse is really, except obviously it plays like musical variations on a theme.

RH: I was very conscious of that when I had my first exhibition, when I was a student, I suppose. But it was quite a good gallery. The Gimpel [Fils] gallery in Mayfair. And I had done some etchings, which were called "Variations on the Theme of the Reaper." And I thought of it as being like I said, the musical variation. Bartok or...

KM: Bach?

RH: Well, everybody. [Overlapping] Variations, Brahms variations, anything of Paganini. So I think of it as a form. I was telling the other day, because I'm writing about that particular aspect of my work, which is themes, variations on a theme. Rita's sister is very good at grammar. She is a very, very knowledgeable person. And she said, because I said, "Variations is a form that I like." She said, "Variations isn't a form." Well, it took her a long time to convince me that it wasn't. But I think of music as something that was the inspiration for starting off with doing a variation on a theme

and then it continued all the way through. And the Guggenheim reliefs was the first set. After the “Reaper” the Guggenheim was... But that made sense as a group of things because if you’re going to make a mold, it’s expensive and you might as well make a few casts and then do variations on that. And that was from a plain black to...

KM: To a spectrum.

RH: And well, now variations on a theme...

KM: The other thing that in a way I see quite often in your work is very much “the found object.” In a way a lot of your work is dependent on a found object or a chosen object, really.

RH: Yes.

KM: A chosen object. And that takes a lot of forms, from the toaster or the high tech object to postcards. You like postcards a lot. I like postcards a lot, too because I think for a lot of people a postcard is perhaps a work of art. [Laughing]

RH: Well, I like them, too, because they’re very handy. You can buy them and you don’t have a book to carry around; you just can take the little card, put it in your pocket and you can...

KM: And it’s easier than taking a photograph.

RH: Yes, but I think it hopefully starts with the thought that Duchamp – the difference between a manmade and a found object. He says there is a difference. And to make sure that they were not found, he devised all sorts of ways of avoiding it. And so the fact is that most of the things that have inspired me are definitely choices. They’re decisions. Something that was interesting.

There was one thing that I did that is a bit Duchampian in a way. When I was asked to do something, a contribution to an exhibition in Chicago a good many years ago, it was called Art by Telephone. Did you – I don’t know if you remember that?

KM: Yes.

RH: A man named [van der Marck] got in touch with me to do this art by telephone. And what I, I did ask for some consideration, to give instructions in such a way that the

person who was following my instructions would end up with a painting. But it wasn't simply a painting by him, it was a painting complying very strictly with a series of instructions. And the first instruction on the composition of the image, which was a quite large panel, and I said, "Take a card, postcard size card, cut a hole in it at a certain position said, "Take a card, a large size card. Cut a hole in it at a certain point which was the bottom right hand corner, cut this... I'm not sure what dimension but it's about an inch high, I think. Maybe three-quarter inches wide. Then you place this postcard over, so the two – the bottom and right hand images align, and that is your composition that you will follow." So it was a chance thing. He was then given the option of going and choosing a card or, if he didn't feel like doing that, he could get somebody else to give him a card and he would do that. It had to be [a postcard]. In fact, I made a little addition to those cards. I put on the back that they were dedicated to John Cage. I thought he would like them.

KM: It's the white card?

RH: A white card with the hole in it. So that was the beginning of that [painting]. Trying to avoid this question of decision, and avoid also the complications of finding it was because there is a prescription of avoidance in the whole of the enterprise. And then there was a whole list of things that you had to paint. A certain percentage of the area in negative of the color that was on the postcard, and so on. It ended up with a postcard, with a painting. And actually it was a student in Chicago who was helping me out with it, and he was called in to make the picture. To make my painting. And it turned out to be one of those – it became...

KM: Turned out to be Ed Paschke...

RH: Paschke, yes. You remember that one?

KM: Well, the book mentioned it. He became well known as a Chicago artist.

RH: And then I did one myself because I thought it would be interesting to see if I followed my own prescription, and it's an interesting painting. So, I don't think a found object is such a simple thing. Sometimes I'm inspired by a postcard, which might be a postcard of a beach, a postcard with people on a beach. It has happened.

KM: Well, in a way, I mean in a way the painting of La Scala...

RH: La Scala is very beautiful, yes.

KM: Very much a postcard. Even the sheet of Marilyn photographs… from Bert Stern's photographic proofs.

RH: Variations came into that thing, also. Because when I was in Milan doing the show with...

KM: Giorgio Marconi.

RH: I noticed that there was a beautiful postcard of the interior of the Scala Opera House. And another few hundred yards away you see another shop with postcards, and then you'll see another one. A variation on the form. And the reason that there were so many variations was that it was a black and white photograph, it was converted by various publishers. I got interested in that aspect of it where it was painted, although it was too small a scale to realize it. And so I played with it. I don't think of them as variations in quite the same way, but there are times when I returned to that Scala thing. I even… There was an extraordinary moment when I was asked to make a fire curtain for the Vienna State Opera. Now, that's one of the great opera houses of the world. And what I did was to use Scala and get the finest resolution I could, and blow up to the size of the stage. And during – once during every performance the fire curtain has to come down just to show you it's working. And so they had artists doing things. Every year there was a new artist who had done something. And my contribution was – what descends is this view of the interior of the Scala. Because it's very similar to the interior of the Vienna State Opera... The audience will be looking – it's a mirror.

KM: A mirror again.

RH: And that was very, very successful. Enormously well received by the audience.

KM: Does it exist?

RH: No. Well, I don't know. It was done on, it was printed on cloth by a very, very big machine that paints theatre scenery. So, they could have it. I thought, "How could they get that out of there?" Because it's three pieces, I think, of enormous cloth. And I was told, "We'll crack that one. We use a fairly lightweight fabric." And a lady, while we were trying to get it sorted out one day by fixing it, picking it up, gluing it onto the

top and hanging it – a woman came into the theatre and looked at what we were doing and said, “What’s going on?” And they told her about this problem. And she said, “Why don’t you use magnets?” Because it’s a fire curtain, they could put magnets on the top. It was such a brilliant solution. It’s the kind of serendipity that happens and I think that’s one of them, the idea of La Scala mirroring the State Opera.

KM: Have you ever been, besides that, attracted to the idea of set design or theatre...? Given a lot of your work is interiors...

RH: I did a background for Merce Cunningham [in 2005] because he had a program where he went to different locations like London or Paris. And his team would go beforehand and make contact with artists there and do a theatre design that was only for one performance, once during the week. They got, say, five or six artists, and each had one night. A one night stand. And I thought about it and I thought it would be interesting to do shadows of “readymades.” Well, you’d have to have a few postcards, but the idea of shadows became an important addition to Duchamp’s work.

KM: That was the Man Ray photograph of the studio as the shadow of the hat rack.

RH: I think Marcel took the photographs. It wasn’t Man Ray. They’re quite small snaps.

RH: So I made a film, because it has to be a projection on the back [of the stage]. It couldn’t be hanging. For a one night thing you couldn’t do much with the shadows really. So I made this film, and it was quite successful, really. It was terribly slow because I thought, “It shouldn’t attract the audience too much from the dancing.” It could be a big distraction if it moved quickly or changed pace. It had to be very slow... In fact, people who reviewed it said that they were slides, shots. There was only a very slight movement going on. And so I was at least interested in doing that. But it’s not something that I have any great ambition to do again. Strangely enough, when I was a student at the age of 15, I was taken up and became a kind of – well, there was a man called Professor Haas-Heye who had been an acquaintance or working with Mayakovsky and some of the people in a theatre in Berlin. He left, but he was a German master craftsman, an extraordinary man. He was an Anglophile. He loved England and English things, but all his family, his sons and the rest of the family it seems were not. So he just left in 1939 and came to teach at Reimann

Studios, which was a German [design school]. The idea was based on the Bauhaus, but it was a bit more commercial.

So he adopted me and treated me like a son. And I told you that I was given a shilling to go to see Man Ray. I'll never forget him saying, "Go to Cork Street. There's an exhibition by Man Ray." So this was in 1937. There was an exhibition of Man Ray on Cork Street. And there was this man saying, "Go and look. Look at the way he paints lips." [Laughing] "Look at this, that..." And he was a stage designer. That was his profession in Germany. And he used to take me to museums often because he needed company. I think he was a bit lonely. He missed his family. And he was terribly interested in the English designer Gordon Craig[20]. He was a very interesting designer with abstract theater compositions, *Hamlet* and other things Shakespearean.

And there were models of them around the Victoria and Albert Museum. And I looked at these models and I thought a lot about the theatre at that time. But then I realized that I was interested only in painting. And this was particularly true when I did the LUX Corporation thing, as I told you yesterday. And that kind of understanding, that I shouldn't get too involved with three dimensional things, except insofar as the three dimensional things followed some vague interests of Marcel Duchamp.

KM: Going back to fashion for a minute, what was the impact of Marcel's Rrose Sélavy in terms of your thinking about his work? Because that has its cosmetic... It has its own atmosphere. Besides the photograph and the self portrait and all of that, it has a comic connotation about fashion. You know, it's something that people don't really think about. It's very much a little bit about cosmetics and transformation, naturally, which is what cosmetics do.

RH: Yes. I think of it only as the perfect solution to a problem that he had. When he was working on the readymades at the same time as working on the detail and meticulous construction, painting – object of the 20th Century, and then you get me involved with the readymades and I thought, "Why?" Then it became clear that the reason he was doing these things, that he was looking for something as different as possible from what he was doing, that he'd been working on for 12 years. And then he looks for that direct opposite, and then begins to build on it and say, "Who is this

[20] Edward Henry Gordon Craig (1872-1966)

person?" And the name, he decides that her name is Rrose Sélavy. Why Rose? He told me, "Because Rose is the name I like least for a woman." So he was going the opposite, always looking "What name do I like least? Rose." So, he called himself Rrose. And then, having got the personality named, he had to take the character. And so building on this, Man Ray photographs him in drag.

I once had a letter from some student who was doing – I think he was American, and he was doing an artistic course at some university. And he wrote this question, which led me to suppose that his only interest in Duchamp was whether or not he was homosexual. And he was really quite a womanizer. That's very clear.

KM: Very much so.

RH: But I remember a chat that I've had with Man Ray because I met Man Ray quite often when he was in London, there were parties. He was a friend of Roland Penrose. And so we knew each other from that. And he knew me as a friend of Marcel's, so if we came upon each other in Paris, he would be with Marcel. So he was always cropping up. For me, he said the most ridiculous things, like on one occasion he said, "You know, I gave Marcel..." because we were talking about perspective and I was a great admirer of Marcel's understanding of perspective. And he said, "You know, I gave Marcel his first book on perspective. That's what made him interested in it." And I thought, "That's a little odd." I even went so far as to check on it. When Marcel became interested in perspective was [Overlapping] ...1914...

KM: In the library of St. Genevieve– that's where he learned it.

RH: But how could Man Ray ever have met him much later? What's the meeting? It must be something like 1918 or – certainly not in 1915. So how did he get that idea? And then on another occasion he said, "It's funny..." I don't know quite how it came up, but he said -- one night they'd been out boozing had dinner and went home. They went back to Marcel's studio, where there was a bed, and then Man Ray said that he was too pissed and too tired to go back to his place. So they slept together. And he said, "Because Marcel didn't have any locks on his doors, people wandered in at any time." He said, "Some people came in in the morning when we were still in the bed." And he said that "Marcel's arm was hanging outside the bed down to the floor," as

though he was creating this picture of – what is it called? There's a famous painting of an English man...

KM: Chatterton?

RH: Chatterton, yes. The Death of Chatterton was conjured up. And it was clear that Man Ray was so jealous of Marcel that he wanted to create some association. Even if there was nothing in it from his point of view, because he was a womanizer. They were two people who were entirely...

KM: Drunk.

RH: ...fixed in their sexual interests, being in bed together. But it was somehow a connection that was almost sexual.

KM: Let's talk a little bit about more recent work... for example, the citizen and the subject. Was that a little bit because of – I want to go back a little bit – was that a little bit prompted by your wife Rita's influence?

RH: Entirely prompted by that because Rita's very sympathetic to the Irish situation because she's mainly Irish. That's to say her parentage is not entirely Irish but most of her family, her ancestors were from Ireland. And there was an Anglo side, one side [Rita Donagh's paternal grandmother]. And so when these things began to happen, the so called Troubles, we had terrible – well, not terrible because you can't argue terribly with Rita, but I really hated this argument. And the violence of an incident like blowing up, creating a bomb to be exploded under a bandstand in Regent's Park. And another they loaded with nails and stuff, which are going to kill guardsmen in Hyde Park and kill horses. Well, I don't know how many horses they killed, but they killed people and a lot of damage. And I'd find it completely abhorrent and unacceptable. But Rita would try to [understand] it, try to explain why this came about in the history of Ireland. And I found it very hard to take.

And then the thing that really changed my feelings – although I had sympathy with Rita, because she explained very well why, but it still didn't overcome my difficulties with the violence that they used. So, on one occasion there was a film that was put on the BBC. First of all, it was ITV, I think, and then they got another session inside this jail in Ireland, where [prisoners] were putting their shit on the wall. This came from another area, which was in Scotland there was a man who was regarded as the

most dangerous man in England[21]. And he was in jail in Scotland and he was doing the same thing years before. And he would put – and he spent a long, long time putting his shit on the walls. His motivation was "If I cover myself with shit and cover walls with shit, they won't come in and beat me up." That was his protection, which was quite extraordinary. And in a way I think they may have got it from him, but at least a similar source of irritation with... These Republican prisoners were – I don't know if they were forced to go, but when they went slopping out, they had to do it every morning, emptying their... pan, bucket, whatever, they had to go through a whole corridor of police, who hit them at the slightest excuse. And so they really got fed up with this. And they said, "We're not going to do that. We're not going to go through... So we're going to stay in our cells and put the shit on the wall." So they put the shit on the wall. And these cells, interestingly, because they were unknown – nobody had heard about them. There was suddenly ITV, a commercial television company were allowed to go in and photograph these things. I don't think they were allowed to interview or speak to the people, but they could photograph the cells with the people inside. And I thought this pretty astonishing.

And then the BBC claimed, well, they said, "If the ITV can do it, we should be allowed equal time." So they went and had equal time and they made a little film, which had photographs which were in some ways more interesting. So among the BBC material was an interview with one of the people that went ...had gone on hunger strike. It was the beginning of all the hunger strikes and Thatcher's discipline against them. So, I listened to this interview and I thought, "This man is extremely intelligent." I won't say he's cultured, but my God, he knew what it was all about and he was very articulate. And he was, I think, 50 days into his hunger strike which is close to death inevitably. I mean within a week or two he would've been dead. But he didn't. He got

KM: Forced fed him

RH: …because Bobby Sands died. Then they closed it down but he was next in line. What they were doing, they were coming on once a week or whatever it was. First [Bobby] Sands, and then a new person every week. Some of them had only been on hunger strike for a couple months or something at the end.

[21] Jimmy Boyle, (1944–)

But he was a long term hunger striker, and very articulate. And I thought, “This man is not what we are led to believe from the English press and the government, that they are thugs.” That was the word that they liked to use against the Irish Republicans – the protesters. It all really started with civil disobedience, and then the police get tough on the civil disobedience [marchers] and it gets to the point where they’re shooting and it goes on and things get very nasty. But that was the point where I thought, “They are not what they are purported to be by the English press.”

And the picture was very charismatic somehow. This man... the ...blanket, the Blanket Protest. The Blanket Protest was what it was called in Ireland. In England it was called the Dirty Protest. Language is very important in these incidents.

KM: Connotation? It was a very powerful painting. I remember when I first saw it, the impact of it. It really has a great power.

RH: I tried to get across the idea that this was a kind of theatre.

KM: Well, you were both disgusted and at the same time understanding, being very sympathetic to the protest. You know, I think both things come through.

RH: But it was also trying to show that I understood the problems of them being murderers in many cases. It was clearly murder when you take, when you kidnap a Dutch businessman and put him in the back of a boat and kill him. And that’s murder. And you can’t say, “Well, it’s understandable.” I can’t understand it. So I had to approach the subject very gently, understanding everything. That was my attempt. When I first showed it in Ireland, that was in – the first showing of it was actually in the Guggenheim, but the next one was in Ireland in Derry; Declan McGonagle, his gallery, Orchard Gallery. And a girl came in and she was looking at it and said to me, “Why do you make him look so evil?” And I didn’t think that that was possible, that she could’ve... And then somebody else would come in, who was on the other side of the fence, who said, ”Good on you.” “Thanks for the support.” So it was ambiguous, to say the least.

KM: Yes. But you do have some – the direct opposite which is the Ulster man with his sword marching[22]. [Overlapping] The complete opposite of the self-righteousness.

[22] *The subject*, 1988-90, collection of Tate Gallery

RH: Yes, but having realized there was a certain amount of theatre in the Blanket Man's display of himself. And I thought that the opposite of this, the other side of the fence you've got these people walking around in bowler hats and umbrellas, pretending to be supporters of King William of Ireland. And the whole thing is a kind of madness. It's surreal. And then having done the two pictures, I thought there's a third element and that third element is the British state, who would like to get rid of…The thing that [the soldiers] wanted to do above anything else was just forgetting; letting go. Why should we be dying on the streets of Belfast just to support these maniac Masonic crazed people? And the British public was certainly – and the government was doing their best to keep it – to give support. But the British public really wanted the 00:45:18[inaudible] to get out. And they saw, in a sense, Ireland digging a hole. Why the bit of poverty in one corner? So the state is important. So I did this other picture, which showed that it was a trilogy.

KM: Which one is that, Richard?

RH: That's called "The State." The title of the first one is...

KM: "The Citizen."

RH: "The Citizen." The second one is called "The Subject."

KM: "The Subject."

RH: And the third one is called "The State."

KM: And what's the image of that? I don't know that one.

RH: That's a soldier in camouflage.

KM: Oh.

RH: But I went to great lengths to find my posture for this. I looked in libraries. Because I had the idea that – when I went to Belfast for the first time with Rita there were soldiers on the streets. And when they went out on patrol, there would be two – they went in pairs. And one person, one soldier would be walking at the front and the other person would be walking 100 yards maybe behind him and he was facing the other way. And they were looking at rooftops. Because that's where the danger would come from. And they always went around like this. And the man behind had to

walk backwards. And I then got the idea “I would like to...” – because I didn’t have my camera with me, I had to do research later – “go to the press libraries, which were a good source for that sort of thing. I went through hundreds of 35 millimeter slides in these libraries.

And then I finally found one which was a timely figure, and I thought “He really looks as though he’s walking backwards,” because the distinction between a person walking forward, when it’s a static shot there’s not much to it, but you can see it. There’s a difference in the balance of the photo. So I wanted my soldier to be walking backwards, that is to say, to be getting out of Ireland. He was trying to get out. And that was the idea behind that one. And there was quite a [time] gap between the three [paintings]. Several years maybe between “The Citizen.” In fact, the technology was changed quite dramatically over that period. What I had to do for “The Citizen” with a camera an enlarger and chemicals, I was later able to do “The Subject” with digital. That was my first digital, large digital portrait.

But there was always paint. I think the first painting was completely painted but using photographic material. Making a picture, making a collage. Because there wasn’t one photograph that I could get from the filmed material which showed the whole thing. The cell is only six feet wide and the camera could never see more than the top. So I had photographs of the top of the figure in the lower part of the frame to get a wall. And the material was there, but it had to be put together to get a new figure, full length figure. And that was done by some friends of mine who worked in the BBC, getting hold of the BBC film and they gave me a copy of it – quite illegally, they were just being helpful. And I then made 35 millimeter... That was an eight millimeter I think I had, and then I did 35 millimeter slides from those. And then I could project them and make these elements that I could cut together. So I had to find the right [image] for that bottom piece to fit the top piece. And then I could paint the whole [cell] for my collage. That’s the way it was done.

Whereas “The Subject” came about as a result of a company working for the BBC did a program, which was painting – it was called *Painting With Light.* Anyway, they would help me. And I think six other artists were invited to do this – going to the Quantel factory and working for the day with an operator doing anything they liked with this most expensive equipment. And I was the only one with a little knowledge of computers. So I thought I knew what to expect. So I went in with my material so that I

could make a project of it; whereas they went in and did what they wanted with the machine and some interesting results came out. But I don't think anyone else made use of the material that they got. So I went on to develop that beyond the actual showing of the film, but I wouldn't have started on it if I hadn't had that experience of this expensive equipment. But by the time I did "The State" I already owned all that equipment at my home. I didn't need the resources of the factory.

KM: You seem to be very subtle about your involvement with politics as subject matter. I mean, there is the "War Games" painting with the DV and Europe and Kuwait. That war. It's sort of being on the television of the interior. And somewhere it's some sort of statement, it's probably a statement of war being carried on for television in a way. Sort of like that.

RH: Yes. Well, that's the way wars... It's on television every night.

KM: Yes.

RH: It's happening on the day that you see it. So things have changed a lot. But in the earlier days, there were these news programs where things were explained to you with maps and models. And there was a famous device called the sand pit. The sand pit was this very large model and they could move models of tanks and flags and all that stuff over it. So it was like a game. Well, I thought, "It's a war game."

RH: And I called it "War Games." But it was, the first, that came about as a result of the first Bush war. And that was my reaction to it. To make something from television. Because it was – the war was almost being conducted on television and for television. Made for television. [Laughing]

KM: Very much so.

RH: And then I had a little difficulty with it from the political point of view, but not too much. And then I reacted to what was happening with the second phase of the war, which was this Blair thing.

KM: It was quite a remarkable portrait of him, like Elvis in the cowboy costume. It's sort of a little bit coming from Andy's Elvis.

RH: Have you seen the thing, the painting?

KM: No, I've just seen the photograph of it.

RH: It's quite interesting. Because it's life size or the same size as "The Citizen." So it's a big [painting] to encounter.

KM: Who owns that? Is that still...?

RH: No, it's an ongoing thing. But I thought I would make three of them, not different. And it's not variations on the theme. But I thought a lot of work has gone into this and, really, there's absolutely no reason why it should not be...

KM: For the War Museum?

RH: Well, three, you can do three prints as easily as you can do one.

KM: Right.

RH: It's not like doing a painting, where you've got to spend – well, I suppose I spent three or four months on the painting of "The Citizen." But here it's going to be the same. And so I decided to do three, and now this has become quite difficult, because I want them to be good. The whole thing is being done on a computer. A photograph. The only part that's Tony Blair is the head. A friend once decided that I liked American shirts. They were just Levis really, but they weren't standard gear that they are now. He said he had a shirt that might be a good one and gave me this shirt, which was a dress shirt with yellow shoulders and all sorts of detail on it. So, I've never worn it to go out in, but I gave it to Nigel[23] to [model for me] and then he wore it [for a photograph]. I bought guns, couldn't get guns to use in... In England, the only place you could get that kind of thing would be to go to a theatrical shop or something. But if you go to theatrical places, they're really funny – for anything about the theatre, it would be fancy dress stuff. And they're silly, sort of fabric holsters. And I used my Internet resources and I found a company in America, in some Western state, where they sold these things on the net. But they were model guns. But they're facsimiles. And the holsters. The bullets you can put in the belt. [Laughing] I spent a few hundred pounds on that and I waited, and it took a very long time to come. I really was afraid that they wouldn't get through the Customs. But it did, it just arrived

[23] RH's assistant

one day on a van and I was very happy. Strangely enough, these things that you can buy in Texas are made in Spain. They're made in Spain!

KM: Well, the irony. I mean there's a lot of irony in that portrait because, of course, Mr. Blair is not considered a gun toting politician.

RH: Well, I was worried a little about this possibility of him having his way and the whitewash working. He was very concerned about the legend that he would leave behind. He didn't want to be left with this, after his death with the idea that he was a brute and a fool, and what else? I thought, "I will fix his reputation by making this picture." And then Nick Serota [director of the Tate Gallery] loved it when he first saw it and said, "Can we have one?" Because I promised him a portrait, Tony Blair's portrait before I had made the work, other artists had given things as part of a fundraising campaign, really, to... A purchase, a bit out of their reach at that time. So I said, "You can have one of these." And he was absolutely delighted by it. But what was nice for me about it is that if it's sitting in the permanent collection of Tate Gallery, it's there. They can't deacquisition it and it has to be there for the rest of its existence, whether they show it as often as I would like, it doesn't really matter. 01:00:12[inaudible]… There are other places that it could go – and another thing that happened, which I can show you...

END PART IV AT 01:01:51

BEGIN PART V

KM: Let's go to your angels[24]. What sent you into Italian Botticelli "Angels"?

RH: Well, I became a bit depressed at the way art in general was going. Particularly the amount of work that was being produced, which was, it seemed to be aimed at ugliness as though that was the motivation. How it would be, how could you shock people most by producing something so unpleasant. There was a kind of flippant attitude, which Damien Hirst expresses himself very well, Jeff Koons too. Though I think Jeff Koons delighted in ugliness or ineptitude. It isn't ineptitude. He could have things so beautifully crafted, yet just so empty of any aesthetic quality; as though that was the point. And I thought I would try to do something which was the opposite of that beautiful, elegant.

[24] *A Host of Angels* at Palazzetto Tito, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa for Venice Biennale, 2007

KM: What an amount of work has been missing is the sublime.

RH: The sublime.

KM: A lot of the artists of the moment don't have that concept at all. It's the opposite, really. The lowest common denominator.

RH: It started, I think, fairly early on. I'm trying to go back to the things that motivated it. It started with pictures of Rita in the bathroom. Rita getting out of the bath, which was a photograph she was very indignant about my doing it at all. "'Peeping Tom,' get away! Take that camera out..." Where is it that – the figure was moving through all this. She was just getting out of the bath. But it's a wonderful ghost-like blurred thing. And then I asked her to pose as a request. And she didn't like to say no, so – it was all very straightforward.

And then I painted that thing, which was a picture of a room in the house. And then I decided to make an exhibition of rooms for Anthony d'Offay[25]. And these became a set, but not a set of variations so much but a kind of cataloguing; each of the rooms in the house here was photographed very carefully. It became an image in its own right. And I was then going to put it on the wall of the gallery that Anthony d'Offay had allocated to me, or which I said, "I would like that space." And then I knew I had seven walls, I think, and there were about seven rooms in this house that I could use. So I then made the pictures to go on the spaces, but the walls they were going on are included in the picture so that you would recognize the picture as being in that space. And that was quite successful. But the rooms were, I think, in the main empty. I think they all were. And every picture was an empty interior space. And then after I'd done those I thought, "Maybe it would be nice to inhabit them." And that's when the figures began to appear in the rooms of the house.

KM: I saw the Bride[26], naked woman.

RH: Yeah, and I said, because I don't really like having the kind of dating of – that takes place, once you've put clothes on a woman, it puts a date on her. And so I thought we can only avoid that successfully by making it anonymous. And that gave it a distance of fashion.

[25] *Seven Rooms*, series of seven digitally-manipulated paintings, exhibited in *Five Rooms* at Anthony d'Offay Gallery, London, 1995

[26] Rita Donagh suggests that this is a reference to RH's painting *Passage of the Bride*.

And then I needed a model and Rita helped me to get a model. [I looked for] a professional, we were going to get a professional model. And then one of Rita's students said, that she would ask her friends and classmates at Goldsmiths. And she asked her friends. She came back, some of them seemed to be agreeable but she said, "I don't think – there's one girl in particular who loves taking her clothes off at the slightest excuse. And she would be happy to do it. But I don't think you'd like her 'cause she talks too much." So she said, "I'll do it." And she was a very beautiful woman, an angelic looking person absolutely. And she came with her boyfriend for a weekend and I had an opportunity to photograph her in various places in the house. I didn't want to photograph her posing somewhere. That's no use for me. I needed a reason for her being here, either sitting in a chair somewhere or reading a book or whatever.

And the most successful one was when she was on the telephone sitting in the bedroom. But there was another one where she was using a vacuum cleaner. A vacuum cleaner that they used from the 1950's

And so this thing built up. And then I got another model, who did use the vacuum cleaner. And so I had to put them in environments that worked. And I began to think of them as angels. Because my intention was – I didn't want soft porn. I wanted them to be nude, but I didn't want them to be lascivious in any way. They're attractive and beautiful, but how do you overcome that barrier? You can't really. Because people are going to find them – they won't find them pornographic perhaps, but they'll at least be sexually excited.

And I thought the important thing, the most important thing is that the eyes of the model should not look at the camera. And so they're all – I think of them as being chaste, withdrawn. And this seemed to work. And so this set of variations I suppose you could call those of the figure in the room, and they are always – yes, there's not one male seen in the whole affair. And there's one in particular which I did...

KM: Well, I wondered whether they had some connotation of Marcel's Bride? It has a little bit of an echo of it. That might be pushing it too much.

RH: No, I don't think that... It was a question of inhabiting my empty spaces.

KM: That's another kind of theme, the Annunciation paintings.

RH: Yes.

KM: Quite often inhabiting two different spaces – and the angel being in one space and the Virgin in another one.

RH: Yes. But I've got a painting that was shown in Venice and I intended to redo it. I wasn't satisfied with it. And it will be on my agenda for finishing or making a new one. So I've got things that keep me up at night. But I don't think of it as being very Duchampian. Because there's always a certain kind of humor – well, he always – even that one which I regard as perhaps the most successful, "The Annunciation" that's called, which is the girl with a telephone sitting on a...

KM: Yes.

RH: ...on a seat where she's actually very uncomfortable…on this seat – if you sit on it for more than five minutes. And that is the joke of being called on the telephone and saying I'm going to have a baby. And so the expression on her face has to be surprise. It's a bit like – there's an American comedian, whose name of course I cannot remember, and he did this fantastic recording of a piece that he'd done which is Noah being telephoned by God. So Noah picks up the telephone, and he's an American, slightly Jewish... "Is that Noah? This is God." And then he starts giving his instructions. "I want you to build an ark." And then when all the things that have been done, he finishes up, "Get two animals..."

After 20 minutes of this, Noah gets really puzzled by it all and says, "Come on. Who is this really?" And that's the kind of atmosphere I want in there. I think I especially express the idea, "Come on. Who is this really?" But this is a very private thing I can't see anybody else responding to it in that way. But there were enough clues, if you think about it.

KM: The other thing about, I mean I noticed in Venice that you've – and apparently I think you've done it several times. You have this concept of your paintings being shown as an installation – I think in Venice you brought down pieces of furniture from your house. And talking about this show about the rooms [D'Fabio] where you brought in furniture from the house, like you were talking about the toaster and having the people who are going to get the toast, of having the Ricard carafe and ashtray in front of it. And wasn't sort of all this seeming to set up some kind of – I don't know

what to call it – dialogue. Something else. You seem to quite often want to have more than the paintings on the wall. It's getting into another dimension.

RH: Well, it's true. It is – something that's interested me from way back in the first place. Most of my time was spent on exhibitions. It takes a year to think about and produce an exhibition like that. I didn't have much time for painting. But I was creating this space, and I think that even installation is a kind of form. It's something I can get interested in. I did a lot of exhibitions for the ICA [in the 1950s]. They weren't exhibitions of mine – even hanging mixed exhibitions, I was the most useful of the younger people there and so Roland Penrose became quite friendly, and he got me to make... First, the ICA was so appalling as a place to show that you couldn't believe it. It was done by Maxwell Fry's wife[27], a perfectly nice woman who was also supposedly a partner in his practice. And she put straw on one – on both end walls; a straw mat almost, she pasted on. And then because the room had so little hanging space, one side of the room was all windows, half of the other side were folding doors which went into the bar; and then there was another door on that side, which was the entrance. So the end walls, which were covered with straw [Laughing] were the only things- walls that you had.

And so she made some panels that were about that wide. They were covered in blue felt and they were made of mahogany or something, and they had feet where you can move these around and do like a mirror. But instead of a mirror you'd have mahogany. But you were supposed to be able to hang pictures on this. Well, you couldn't hang a picture of any size. So the first thing I did was remove all that. And then having done both before, I was asked to do another exhibition, which might've been the next exhibition. And then I hung screens – I devised a system where large screens, 8x4 sheets, standard sheets were panels which were hung in any way you like from fixings on the side walls.[28] They were hung – you could hang them diagonally even like that, or you could hang them where you wanted to. It was very flexible. And the important thing – the ICA didn't have any money and it was cheap. You just set them up. And so every exhibition looked a little different. Everything. It wasn't the question of making an installation in the sense that Growth and Form was an installation, just a hanging job. But I enjoyed it. There was something to think about, and something to do. And then I made one or two things which were designed

[27] Jane Drew
[28] *an Exhibit* at The Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 1957

as an installation in its own right. There was a room, which was called Hotel du Rhône [in Geneva]... I remember now. It was a painting that I was doing...

KM: Was it the lobby of a hotel?

RH: Lobby, it's called "Lobby." Now I showed that first as a painting, and then...

KM: You showed it in Sao Paolo.

RH: I showed it in Sao Paolo. You have a very good memory.

KM: They all create dialogue in some way.

RH: When I was working on it, somebody came from documenta – I'm not the sure of the name of the man. A German who was the director for it for that year and he came to my studio and he said, "I'm going to be concentrating this Documenta on installations. This painting interests me that's on the easel there" (The painting that I was working on [of the hotel lobby]) "This painting is interesting, but I'm really sure it's an installation." And I thought that's an interesting idea I began to work really thinking that once he saw what I wanted to do, that it would be what he was working on for the whole exhibition – for documenta

So I got on with it and at that time I had a letter from Emmett Williams and it was an extraordinary letter because it said, "I had a dream that you were working on a picture which had something which stopped you from seeing the picture." I've still got the letter there somewhere, I suppose. But it was very much what I was thinking about with this installation. Putting a mirrored column in front of the picture. So to see the picture you had to go behind it. On the other hand, the room itself was interesting in that I put a staircase in the corner because there's a staircase in the picture. And there was a mirrored column and the picture itself was all about mirrored columns. So that was an installation, which was probably the first large scale installation which had been worked in what was conceived as a painting, but it had become this room.

Then I did another thing that was of that sort. When I was asked by Mark Francis to do an exhibition in Edinburgh, the Fruit Market, Mark Francis was their director for a short period, but he was going to do his exhibition and he said, "We're going to do an exhibition of installations." And the painting I was working on then was "The Citizen." And I thought, well, I can make an installation with "The Citizen." So I will put shit on

the walls of the cell and there will be a mattress on the floor, and a pillow and my painting will hang on the end wall. But you won't go into the room. You'll look at it through a window or through a door. So these things sometimes come about as a result of external stimulus. But I do love to do it.

KM: And do you think this goes back to – the move of the Schwitters' English Merzbau?

RH: No. That wasn't – it wasn't to do with that. Because I wasn't responsible at all for the installation Merzbarn...in the school. But it's rather messy, really. I was working on the reconstruction of the Duchamp about the same time. I think the Schwitters [rescue] had begun earlier. But what happened was the Arts Council of Great Britain sent a letter to me one day, they said that they would like me to go to the Lake District to look at this work of Schwitters at Ambleside [The Merzbarn], I didn't know it existed. But they said that they had a problem because they'd been asked to intervene in some way because the work was deteriorating rapidly and it was in such a bad state that something needed to be done about it. And the important thing was that Mr. Pierce, the owner, who was a friend of Schwitters, had given him a place to work in the barn, but he was getting too old to act as a kind of caretaker. He had a big house. But by that time he was – well, he was just old. He didn't want all the bother. And he was living in a cottage quite near the barn, when I went to see him. I drove over from one side of Britain to the other along Hadrian's Wall which is a big [Roman wall]... To get to – when you get to the other end of Hadrian's Wall, then you've arrived at Elterwater. And so taking a look at it, I sent a report saying, "Well, I think the best thing is, do what can be done to repair the place in situ and then put somebody in charge, like a curator, who would be there to admit people." And they said, "Well, that would be far too expensive. We couldn't manage that." And so I said, "Well, that seems to me to be the best thing." And they said, "Well, we have thought about the possibility of moving it to the Tate. But the Tate are being asked a lot of money for it by the son of Mr. Pierce, and they think it's too expensive. The cost of moving it and the cost of buying it and paying for it."

And so they had more or less turned it down. But before they had turned it down, the Arts Council had looked into the possibility of moving it and they had sent, before I went, they had sent somebody who might advise them on the possibility of moving it, and he was a restorer of paper works at the British Museum. And he came back and gave his report, which was impossible. It's impossible to do anything in the way of

moving it. So that was the situation over there and I'd written my report saying, "This is what we have to do if it's going to be left where it is, that it was a wonderful work, and every effort should be made to preserve it."

Nothing happened for a couple of years, and then we were told that the university building allocated to the fine arts was going to be given an extension, and that it was the policy of the Labour government to empower land, to make as a rule one percent of the building costs would be allocated to the arts. So I put the question to the head of the department, "Would it be possible to spend that one percent on getting the Schwitters over here and putting it in the exhibition space in the art school?"

KM: This is in Newcastle?

RH: Newcastle. And he said, he thought, "It was an interesting idea" and he would put it to the senate or whoever is responsible for making that kind of decision. And then they said, "Well, we have to know if this is even possible to do. Would it be possible to move?" I went next door to the Department of Civil Engineering and spoke to the professor there. And he came with me. And he said, "It would be possible. It would be difficult – and I think it would be very expensive – but it would be possible. But the only way to do it would be to take away all the wet earth on the back of the loose stonewall. There was no cement holding the walls together, which is the Cumberland technique of building and there was the problem of water going through it from the back, through the stone wall into the plaster that Schwitters had put onto the front. And it was a complete disaster because the plaster was getting damp or was damp and drying and moving. And so the painting was falling off onto the floor in flakes. So it was question of organizing everything – the people in charge suggested that before they could do anything at all they had to have ownership of the work. They couldn't go ahead and do it. They work on conservation. It would mean that they had to own it to comply with the one percent rule, I suppose. Decoration of the building. So, it was getting very tricky and the Legal Department of the University wrote up a Deed of Gift notice and I had to take it to Mr. Pierce to sign. And I went with Mark Lancaster to keep me company on the drive. And we went there and before we left, I said to the head of the department, "I can't go there and say just sign this and he gives me this great work of art. What am I supposed to do? Say thank you very much and go back?" I said, "At least I should give him a bottle of champagne." He said, "Well, I don't know if we can buy champagne for it." And I said, "Well, I'm not going there

empty handed." And he said, "I think we might be able to take money from the office cash box, petty cash." Took a few pounds out and gave it to me. I bought a bottle of champagne at the local off license and went off and gave it to Mr. Pierce, expecting him to open the bottle, to tell you the truth. But he didn't. He kept it – he kept the cork in.

He signed the document, but there was nothing to pay because his son – I think Mr. Pierce had just told his son to keep away from it, it was not his business to decide on these things. And so, they had the Deed of Gift, but by that time I was beginning to work on the Duchamp. So I wasn't even there at the time that the move was actually made, this is 1966, but the rumors got around on the Internet, and every report on this says that I was given a grant to undertake the thing. Well, I was never given a grant, any more than I was given a grant to do the Duchamp exhibition at the Tate. It didn't occur to me. I did it because I love Schwitters and because I love Marcel.

KM: Did it have a big impact on you when you first saw the Merzbarn...?

RH: [Overlapping] Yes, absolutely. But what made the biggest impact was to see that the barn was being used as a kind of storeroom for junk. Old garden furniture, things like that. It was in a pretty poor state. So the first thing was to get a bunch of students to spend three months vacation...

KM: Cleaning out the barn?

RH: Photographing – cleaning out the barn and photographing the work meticulously, square foot by square foot, very carefully measured and picking up every bit of color evidence on the floor underneath. And, oh, about six students. I never met Schwitters. Then the answer the civil engineering group had given was the only way to do it is to inject cement into the back of – clear away all the earth, and then move – inject into the loose stonewall cement, concrete, make the whole wall stable. But you couldn't do it to the little bits that went around the end, they said. It was just one wall, the one wall that had been worked on and not the little indications of what he might've gone on to do...if the other walls had been. And then they had to get it over there on a lorry. The first bridge they encountered had to be altered. It's still in the art school in Newcastle.

KM: It is?

RH: Yes. What's happening at the moment is that there's an organization being set up by a couple from Ambleside, who have started a campaign to restore the Schwitters to its proper place. But they're never going to clear it out of the university. I think the best solution would be to get it to the Tate. It should be in the Tate Modern, where it can be seen by thousands of people. But it is probably not being seen by very many people in Newcastle.

KM: I had no idea.

RH: But maybe a few more than would be seeing it in Manchester

KM: There is still another, there's another Merzbau

RH: That was in Oslo.

KM: That's probably the one in Hanover.

RH: That may be the one that's going to Hamburg. I don't know... a very different proposition and the reconstruction of that's being made, I think. What these people in Ambleside are trying to do now is to get a reproduction made but I said that there are two people who are the experts. At least one of them is in the department in the university in Bristol, who is interested [in] three dimensional printings. And they could photograph the thing so it could be reconstructed from the photographs- the three dimensional photographs. It would be possible to carve the thing or whatever.

But, of course, they came up immediately with a solution and said that would mean you'd have to give us several million pounds. A grant to do it. But the universities will do it for nothing.

The funny thing about the Schwitters experience was going there to the cottage where Mr. Pierce was living and there was a chicken running around in the inside of the house. And it was – he obviously moved out of the big house and was just settling down to die, I suppose. He wanted to clear this up before...

KM: He died.

RH: ...before he went. But he had on the walls of his cottage some awful paintings of Schwitters's, flower pictures and portraits. So I was amazed at the contrast. There should be this man who was so extraordinary in the work that he did, and he realized

he couldn't make any money on that and so he was doing abominable things with the hope that the local people, the country people would help him along. And that's what he did. He got some money for it, but he got no money from anywhere else. Except that The Museum of Modern Art did the most extraordinary thing, which was to give him a grant to do it. So if anybody owns that work it's The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

KM: Interesting.

RH: See, he was driven – the first thing that happened to him was that he was put into confinement – well, not confinement, but put into a [internment] camp until all these [German nationals] were sorted out. They didn't know who Schwitters was among the people that were taken to the Isle of Man, and that's how I think he ended up in Cumberland because the Isle of Man is offshore [Ambleside] so he probably came back to England and thought maybe he'd like [the Lake District] because it's beautiful. But it was obviously difficult for him. And he wanted to work from this Merzbarn, and he put in [APPLICATION ?] to The Museum of Modern Art to give him some support, and they did. It's amazing. Amazing also because The Museum of Modern Art gave...

KM: They were very good at helping people during the war. And Duchamp they helped – even Duchamp, we have the letters of The Museum of Modern Art helping him to get his citizenship. They are in the Archives. Peggy Guggenheim helped others.

RH: The Mies van der Rohe pavilion in Barcelona was supported by the Museum of Modern Art.

KM: Yes.

RH: And that's an incredible achievement to rebuild that.

KM: So what do you think about the Museum of Modern Art and its collection? We should have a little conversation about museums and concepts of museums.

RH: [Overlapping.] The Museum of Modern Art is the greatest museum in the world because it's got the greatest collection and a great space. That original museum that's being extended I don't know what it's like right now, but there was no doubt the

job that Barr had done and that d'Harnoncourt had done and Phillip Johnson. That was a great team. There's nothing else to equal that anywhere in the world.

And only recently have we had anything like it. Put it to the work of Nick Serota because he has done a fantastic job.

KM: Over at the Tate Modern.

RH: Yeah. But he moved, you see, from Oxford to the Whitechapel and then he [went] to the Tate? He has done a remarkable job.

KM: Now what, to you, would be the ideal museum?

RH: Well, I deplore the tendency to make museums monuments to the architects rather than to the art that goes in them. Because there've been some pretty awful spaces built. I think that the Guggenheim Museum itself is a difficult museum and it is a monument to Frank Lloyd Wright; but it is unique, it is a great work. And I even like the way you have to hang in that space. It somehow works. And actually...

KM: It's very difficult.

RH: It's difficult but I had the opportunity of hanging a retrospective there so I know exactly what... But I liked it because it made – because the work went in it a little bit different, it would enclose things. And I find chronology is very important. And so the fact that you got to work in a chronological sequence or you can hang work very easily – since the audience spectator has to look in succession as you go down. It's not like, "Do we start with this wall or that wall?" So it has its advantages but there are other places that I've seen – I think Berkeley was one of the first things I didn't like. And then...

KM: That was a bunker, in Berkeley. That was built at the time of anti-war time, the time of student protests, and they built the museum as a sort of a bunker – the California architects. I think it's been destroyed now. I think they're trying to rebuild it...

RH: [Overlapping] There are lots of other buildings that have been going up where you really – I can't imagine hanging my work. They seem to be designed for – well, American artists who do very big pictures. [Laughing] They're the only things that make sense in some of the spaces.

KM: I think we're pretty sensitive to the variety of spaces.

RH: Art doesn't have to be big. If you're going to make room... A painting the size of "The Bride" in The Museum of Modern Art[29], it's not that big, but absolutely staggering beautiful. And you look at the Arnolfini portrait – that's a tiny picture. And it's so grand. And when you think about it, it's big, it's amazing. It's this great work. There are big pictures that need to be big like Las Meninas but so many of the masterpieces are – I mean, maybe it's not for everyone to say the "Mona Lisa" is a masterpiece. It's one of the greatest masterpieces in the world. It's beautifully painted, and it's tiny and people worship it. Modern pictures of that size fit easily in the kind of spaces that are available.

KM: I ask a lot of my colleagues the basic question, "What is your favorite museum?" – you find that they answer quite a lot of the time, probably 60 percent, 70 percent of the time with the National Gallery, London. And there is something in that– I think the spaces there, there is something really rather reassuring, when you talk about scale. The rooms of the National Gallery are a very good scale, very good proportion. There are big pictures, there are small pictures, and it all seems to work. You're very happy to be there.

RH: Yes.

KM: When you have shown there, you did the Artist's Choice there, and that must've been a good experience.

RH: That was a great moment for me, that I was able to make... But that, too, I suppose I treated as an installation, because...

KM: Besides the ironing board. [Laughing]

RH: The ironing board beside a Rembrandt.

KM: Little joke, little subtlety there.

RH: Yeah, but it worked. I think it was very good. And I put a television in it – a television in that space, it changed the whole feel of the room. And putting the old carpet in. I had a good carpet, it didn't really matter very much. They weren't all great pictures.

[29] KM believes RH may have meant to refer to The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

But to put an ironing board in front of a Rembrandt is just to make one think differently about it. And I put a mirror in the room. I asked if they had a mirror, and they came up with a very old mirror in a beautiful frame. Old.

KM: Well, there is the mirror again.

RH: But when you put something like a mirror of the same size as a Goya portrait and they move from the mirror, you say, “What the fuck did he put this here for?” And then you stand in front of the Goya, you realize that the Goya is not like a mirror. The paint has a magic, which this bland reflection in the mirror, even if it’s got spots all over it from the tarnish on the mirror, it’s still a different kind of experience. And I wanted to sort of reinforce the idea that a painting is not a reflection. It is something else. Even if it’s a self portrait.

What that mirror did was to say, “Okay, you’ve got a mirror, you paint a self portrait.” And you’d realize how difficult it was. I put one of my paintings in the exhibition, which I thought was – I think that was one of the [conditions] that was part of the commission...

KM: Right.

RH: And I put in – it was the Marilyn Monroe painting. And that I put on an easel so that people would think of it as being something like a work in progress... And they could get a more real feeling of the person being confronted by the canvas. Put paint on it.

KM: Now, the mirror could be *Through the Looking Glass*, like Alice, but it makes you think that we should be metaphorically moving into another world.

RH: Yes.

KM: Or it could be a real insistence that the spectator is included. And it also can be both. But I wonder how much the Alice idea comes into stepping in...

RH: That’s the magic – that’s the neatness, because it introduces the spectator into the action, doesn’t it?

KM: Yes.

END PART V AT 00:58:36