THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

INTERVIEW WITH: **CHUCK CLOSE (CC)**

INTERVIEWER: **ROBERT STORR (RS)**

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BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE 1

RS: This is for the Museum Archives and, essentially, what they want to know about is your past history, your association with the Museum, and one place to start before professionally is to talk about what your first awareness was that there even was such a thing as a Museum of Modern Art.

CC: My first awareness was, there was an educational series made by the Modern which had cardboard pieces—they must [have] been about twenty-four by thirty [inches]—that must have been sold to educational institutions. I remember, for instance, they had [Joan] Miró's guy kicking a stone [*Person Throwing a Stone at a Bird, 1926*], and some other things. It was about design and composition and stuff. When I was a freshman in college . . . I had been trained very traditionally as a young artist, drawing from the model and drawing from life, and I learned how many heads high . . . all that stuff, perspective and stuff, and I had been quite outraged by modern art, when *The Saturday Evening Post* would do a piece—"Jack the Dripper" or whatever; there was actually an earlier one—but I remember going in 1951 to the Seattle Art Museum, where I saw my first [Jackson] Pollock and I came home and I dripped paint all over my paintings. So clearly, I distrusted it but I was also incredibly seduced by it. But when I decided to go to college—and I was going to study commercial art because I wanted a sports car, and I knew a regular artist wouldn't be able to have a sports car. So I thought, “Well, I'll be a commercial artist”—but everyone had to take the same foundation design and drawing, and in foundation design they had these Museum of

Modern Art cards. I think that was the first time that I became aware that the Modern was the place where the orthodoxy was practiced and where, like if you were a Catholic and you wanted to go to the Vatican, this is where you would go if you were interested in modernism. Then I found myself stuck in Seattle, where everyone looked to Asia and to Native American art. Virtually no one I knew had been to Europe but almost everybody who had the means had been to Japan or to Alaska, so there was a great deal of interest in that. Of course, the two major figures in Seattle, although they hadn't lived there for years, were Mark Tobey and Morris Graves, and to a lesser extent, Kenneth Callahan and some people like that. They were very interested in this Asian-influenced white writing/calligraphy stuff, which I found incredibly boring. I was very interested in culture as it had come out of Europe and out of Europe by way of those people who emigrated in the second world war or just before, and this repository of this work at the Modern.

So I made my first pilgrimage when I was on my way to the Yale summer school at Norfolk and I was twenty years old. I went first to New York for a few weeks before school started. I did all the essential things: I saw *Rhinoceros* with Zero Mostel, I saw *Waiting for Godot;* I saw a number of great plays. I went to Upstairs at Downstairs and I heard Shelley Berman and Mort Sahl and listened to all the great jazz things; I also saw some galleries. But I made the first of my pilgrimages to The Museum of Modern Art, and was suitably blown away. The Met was impressive, and at that point the Whitney was on 54th street; that was sort of interesting, to see some American stuff. The Guggenheim was just more [Wassily] Kandinsky's than you could ever shake a stick at. So the Modern was it. I loved seeing [Johannes] Vermeer, who had always been my favorite artist, and those people in history, but as Jack Beal pointed out, I've never had a book in my library that goes back before 1945, and I am really interested in now. I'm really interested in the time in which we live and what makes this time different, and postwar American art has always been my great love. It was an amazing experience to go there.

RS: What was on display then? What did the Modern look like at that time?

CC: The Modern was, of course, pre-expansion and I found it annoying that there were cars and things like that eating up all this space, and chairs and things that they could have given over to painting [laughing].

RS: Terry [Riley], that's for you [laughter].

CC: I grew up in the west, which is car culture. I didn't come east to look at cars, I came east to look at painting. Every [Willem] de Kooning that I had seen was a black-and-white reproduction, until *it is,* which was a short-lived magazine, which I think is the first time I actually ever saw a de Kooning in color, and maybe why [I did] so many black-and-white paintings: I thought all art was black-and-white [laughing]. I was out there in Seattle with a magnifying glass trying to understand what the physicality of these paintings was like, and of course *no* idea of the color. Coming down firmly with my feet in the [Thomas] Hess/[Harold] Rosenberg camp with de Kooning versus the [Clement] Greenberg/Pollock camp. There was *never* any question in my mind. I understood how important [Jackson] Pollock was, but it never made my heart go pitty-pat the way de Kooning did. And in school you were either one or the other: There was no cross-over, although I was a great fan of people like [Philip] Guston, who I had actually studied with. Basically, you were either for de Kooning or Pollock, and that was about it. So what was it like when I went there. Of course, [Picasso's] *Guernica* [1937] was up. That was before the Avignon painting became the key link [inaudible] after you lost *Guernica*. But it was great looking at the earlier stuff.

RS: [By "the Avignon painting"] you mean [Picasso's] *Night Fishing at Antibes* [1939]?

CC: Yes. [I enjoyed looking at] the [Henri] Matisse's and stuff like that. It was the only place I'd ever seen postwar painting.

RS: Do you remember particularly which postwar paintings were there? Did you sort of go in and say, Wow, there's a de Kooning?

CC: Clearly, *Woman, I* -- the black-and-white de Koonings, which are still amongst my

favorites. When Kirk [Varnedoe] asked me to curate the Artist's Choice show, I actually seriously thought about taking all the de Koonings and putting them all in one room. You want to know what I'm all about, you want to know what I care about, what gives me a rush? This is it. Then I thought, “Mmmm, this is probably not the most interesting thing to do”, so I didn't do it. But that was actually the first thing that occurred to me. And of course seeing the Pollocks. I'm trying to think what else you had in droves. You didn't have Pop art yet, or not anything up, I don't think. That would have been 1961. I wouldn't think you would have had even a [Jasper] Johns by then, perhaps, or maybe you did.

RS: We did have Johns.

CC: I had made a painting on a flag in 1960, actually '59 and '60. I took a very large flag and my cats had eaten a hole in it -—it was a wool flag I used as a bedspread —- so I sewed it back up and I made it into a big collage with some other stuff, and I certainly knew what Johns had done, and [Robert] Rauschenberg, before I had come to New York, but I can't remember if there was anything up of theirs. I don't think you owned a [Vincent] van Gogh then.

RS: Yes, we would have had van Gogh’s up.

CC: What would you have had? I don't remember seeing one.

RS: We would have had *Starry Night* for sure.

CC: *Starry Night*. Sure, that was on the cards. *Starry Night* was on the cards.

RS: Obviously we didn't have the [*Portrait of Joseph Roulin*] until much later. Did you have a sense of what the ambience of the Museum was like? Did it feel like a particular kind of place one way or the other, or was it just a place for paintings?

CC: It had that low-ceilinged department-store look even then, but it wasn't the cathedral

to art that I guess I had expected. It certainly on the street was a church facade to the religion practiced within. It let you know what the old-time religion was that you were practicing in there, more so than the interior, I think. And of course [Philip] Johnson's garden, which was a contemplative religious space for the already converted.

RS: Or the deeply horny.

CC: Yes. Within the next few years of returning as a student, because I came back to go to Yale in 1962 and then I was seeing Andy [Warhol] and Roy [Lichtenstein] and all these people in the galleries. Andy was at Stable and Roy was at Leo's [Leo Castelli Gallery]. Then stuff began to show up in the Modern. When did the first [Frank] Stella. . . .

RS: ’59 was when Dorothy Miller showed them.

CC: I know. I didn't see them; I wasn't east by that point. I was certainly aware of that show.

RS: I think they bought one within a year or so of that. [Note: *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor II* (1959), purchased 1959].

CC: I'm not sure what time it went up on the wall. I don't think there was any up on the wall. But I certainly became very aware of that stuff.

RS: Did it feel to you like a contemporary museum as well as an historical-modern museum?

CC: Yes, it was as close to a contemporary museum as there was in New York. The Whitney was Ashcan realism, pretty much, except for the Annual, and even that was mostly those guys. When I interviewed Paul Cadmus, he was the second-most-frequent person after [Edward] Hopper . . . , [who was in] twenty-some of the annuals. So they tended to play what they thought were the great hits over and over.

RS: It's interesting, your having come round to Cadmus, lo these many years.

CC: Yes. I was always interested in his stuff, I admit.

RS: What was your sense of what the place for realism was? That's kind of an awkward phrase for it, but for closely-rendered, closely-realized painting when you first did the Projects show?

CC: When I first saw the stuff that the Modern had in '62—[Andrew Wyeth's] *Christina's World,* and you had all those people that I never could stand, like [Leonard] Baskin and . . . why can't I think of his name?

RS: American?

CC: Yes.

RS: Figurative?

CC: Yes. It was *the* most favorite painting every time they did polls, for years. [Pavel Tchelitchew's *Hide-And-Seek*, (1940-42)]

RS: Not Hopper.

CC: No. But I didn't particularly like that stuff. I did like the [Salvador] Dalí, *Gala's Back* [*Portrait of Gala*], which I felt was a really nice piece, but there certainly wasn't anything of a figurative nature that interested me in the Modern's collection otherwise, I would say.

RS: When you started making your own work in the city, after Yale, did you think of the Modern as being a place to which your destiny was connected in some way? Was it the place to break into, to show work?

CC: I'll tell you, it was not possible as a place to break into. The artists of the '60s had been given the tag-end of the history of art, in the "so-and-so begot so-and-so begot so-and-so" old-testament version of modern art. The exhibition ended with Minimalism and with Pop art, and then all the '70s and '80s nothing was added; it still ended with the '60s, and with work of the very early 60s, by and large. There was a [George] Segal. But those of us who emerged in the late '60s and into the '70s, that was very hard to break in. Jeff Byers, who was the backer of Bykert Gallery—the "By" part of Bykert, the "kert" part being [Klaus] Kertis—was on the Board of the Modern, and actually he, wearing his real estate hat, was the first person who worked on the expansion of the Modern. He was one of the few trustees at the time who seemed to have any awareness of what younger artists were doing in terms of contemporary art. He tried to give a painting of Brice's [Marden] and a painting of mine to the Modern as a gift, and they were both turned down. This would have been 1972, something like that.

RS: So Bill Rubin would have been there?

CC: Yes. Bill immediately came to a show where I had dot paintings at Bykert, right after the Board had turned those things down. He said, “I want this painting.” I said, “Well, you didn't want the other one” [laughing]. He said, “No, no, we couldn't do anything; there was nobody on the board who knew what was going on except for Jeff. Nobody wanted to put the Good Housekeeping seal of The Museum of Modern Art behind work like that”, that's what Bill said. But now we know we want this, and would I give it to him. I said it was a year's work; it really took fourteen months. I said, “Go ask Rockefeller and see if he'll give you a year's income.” I said, “It's beyond the call of philanthropy to give away a year's income.” So we made a deal with Jeff. He took the painting that he had offered to the Modern, which they turned down, and he sold it for, I think, $40,000. I think it was that much; no, it couldn't have been that much. But he put up half of the cost [for the purchase of the dot painting]. Klaus Kertis dropped his commission, and I took half—I took half of the amount I would have made had it sold through the gallery. I still have a promised gift for the other half of the painting; if

the law ever changes, half of that's still mine. But that's how the dot piece got into the Modern instead of one of the early continuous-tone pieces. I remember Jeffrey being very upset when that acquisition . . . was it that or maybe was it something else, but he was trying to get them to buy a Marden. It may have been earlier. He tried to get them to buy a Marden. I know one of my paintings was about $1300 at the time and I think a Marden was about the same amount, $1500 or something like that. He had tried to get the Modern to buy a Marden and they wouldn't, and Jeff was very upset that more money was being spent on hors d'oeuvres for the cocktail reception for the new acquisitions than he had tried to get them to raise to buy the Marden. So I wouldn't say that the place was all that hospitable or a place where one could realistically expect, at that point, early in one's career, if you were an emerging artist in the late '60s, early '70s, necessarily to be accepted with open arms.

RS: Other than Bill's having come down to the gallery, who was working at the Modern who was identifiably connected with newer work?

CC: I guess Dorothy Miller was still around, although I never really knew her until much later. I don't know whether Kynaston [McShine] was there. When did Kynaston start?

RS: ’70. Did he figure in people's way of reading the Modern?

CC: Not mine. He may have in other people's, but I never even met him. No, I think the Museum-and I don't mean to be totally critical-there was this sense, I think, that the Modern was an unstoppable locomotive. It had momentum and it was going, and modernist issues were going to last forever. I think there's a sense that they had this obligation to separate the wheat from the chaff and to pick the route that modernism was going to take, and that weighed heavily on the institution, not making the wrong decision. Now if you look at the '70s, you realize what a pluralist decade it was, and how so many things coexisted happily together, cheek by jowl. If you read Eva Hesse's diaries, for instance, you realize that it wasn't the narrow, segregated society, the art world in the '70s, that we might think, looking back. Her friends were figurative artists and all kinds of stuff, and we all talked to each other and we were all interested

in what was going on. But the Modern was hedging its bet, I think, in attempting to decide what was the real stuff—the stuff that was going to carry modernism forward—and an obligation to determine that other stuff was not.

RS: How did your first Projects show come about?

CC: Does that seem unfair?

RS: No, not at all. I'm not here, in any case, to be defending the flag. I'm much interested in how it really seemed. How did your Projects show come about in that context?

CC: My Projects show?

RS: Yes.

CC: Kirk asked me if I would. . . .

RS: No, not the Artist's Choice, but the [*Projects: Chuck Close and Lilliana Porter*, MoMA Exh. #1020, January 11 - February 25, 1973] show. That was '73. That was only the tenth or eleventh Project; the eleventh, I guess it was.

CC: That came about because what's-her-name, Howardina Pindell . . . what was her role?

RS: She was working in the Prints department with Riva [Castleman].

CC: But what was she called?

RS: She was probably a curatorial assistant. [Note: Howardena Pindell was Assistant Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, 1967-1979.]

CC: Curatorial assistant, or adjunct something-or-other? Actually, there were two shows—

mine and Liliana Porter.

RS: They were just put together by accident, or was there any organizing idea behind it?

CC: If there was, I'd be hard-pressed to come up with one—just two people who were alive and working at the time. If I had had my druthers, I probably would have rather done a project around painting or drawing, but I wasn't asked to do that, so we ended up doing this bizarre one-print exhibition, which actually was sort of fun. I remember when I had to . . . at that point the unions were unbelievably strong. You could not touch your own work, you could not hang your own work.

RS: Still true.

CC: Still true? We were trying to put this stuff up and the art handlers were putting it up, and I had the original mezzotint plate, which was a. . . copper plate, and every time we would clean it, it would immediately tarnish and fingerprints and stuff would show up, so we decided we would clean it and spray some kind of fixative over it to keep it from tarnishing. But it had already been locked into The Museum of Modern Art system: it had gone into the intake system and it was now theirs for the duration of the show. We had to sneak it out of the exhibition and down into the bowels of the basement and take it into one of the stalls in the men's bathroom down there and surreptitiously clean it and spray it and then smuggle it back into the space to hang it on the wall. I think we had to distract people by buying them Cokes or something to do it. At that point, the restaurant was in the former Whitney building, which sort of looks across the park at where the restaurant is now, and it was the main corridor. Porter's show was in a little room which you could have avoided if you had wanted to, but there was no way to eat without going through my show, which was in essence sort of a glorified alley, a hallway. So a lot of people saw the show, so it did get a lot of attention. I remember when David [Novros] had a show, also in that passageway, of a fresco—he did a fresco straight on the wall. It all seems so funny now, but it was so important at the time. He tried to give the fresco to the Modern, and he suggested that they simply build a false wall in front of it—it was simply a flat sheetrock wall

anyhow—and if they ever wanted to uncover it, they could, and if they didn't want to, they didn't have to, but he would make a gift of this forty- or fifty-foot-long fresco. There was a meeting, apparently, and the word that came back was, since there was only one thing to choose from, they couldn't make a choice [laughter]. Curators, by nature, make choices between things, and since there was only one fresco, they couldn't make a choice.

RS: That sounds like Bill [Rubin]. I remember when I did *Dislocations,* Bill got all upset about something, same grounds. The grounds [were] that, by commissioning artists you were not selecting from the best of their work. It's the same principle, and it's equally absurd. . . . What kind of impact or effect did having a Projects show have for you at that time?

CC: I must say that I had tremendous museum support from the very beginning. The very first sale I had was to the Walker [Art Center], the second was to the Minneapolis Art Institute, the third painting went to Gordon Locksley, who was a private dealer in Minneapolis, and I think the fourth was to the Whitney. So even before I had a one-man show in New York I had had considerable museum support, and I had been in a Whitney Annual before I'd had a solo show. I'd been in a group show at Bykert in the middle of that. What year was my Projects show?

RS: ’73.

CC: ’73. But I think this was the first . . . I don't know what year they acquired the dot painting. It was probably somewhere around there. It would have been somewhere around that time, I think. But in all honesty, at that point, in terms of artists of the 70s, the Modern looked a little bit like it was playing catch-up, and there was a sense that the Projects gallery was a kind of bone thrown to contemporary art. I wouldn't want to say it wasn't important, and it was, as had been predicted, a very important Good Housekeeping seal of approval of the Modern, but I guess there was the sense that it happened for many of us after our first exposure came somewhere else. It certainly didn't have the sense that it was on the cutting edge.

RS: It didn't launch anybody.

CC: No. I think it may have shortly thereafter. I thought it was very interesting, reading your piece in the . . . did you write that piece in the [*The New York Times*] *Magazine*?

RS: Yes, I wrote a piece in the magazine.

CC: And the timeline was interesting, and to see who chose whose work was very interesting. . . . I hope this isn't too negative.

RS: No, on the contrary. It is what it is. People should know how the Museum is perceived, and this is, again, archival.

CC: You know that timeline better than I do, at what point would you say . . . I would not say giving me a print show represented a tremendous risk.

RS: I would have said just the founding of Projects and the very first shows represented a real change in the weather.

CC: Yes. Whose was the first show?

RS: The first show was, I think, Keith Sonnier [Note: MoMA Exh. # 964; May 5 - August 2, 1971], and then there was within that year or so there was *Pier 18* [Note: MoMA Exh. # 967; June 18 - August 2, 1971], which was a conceptual art show. So there was a lot of stuff happening around, and then after that it was real up-and-down in terms of how good the shows were, in terms of how timely they were in the careers of people. It sort of came and went.

CC: There are some people, some curators, who look at this as an opportunity to redress past wrongs or mistakes and some people who, I think, in a more optimistic way are looking toward the future.

RS: I think actually the same is still true. From my point of view the Modern got way behind, and it ought to, in fact, make up for some past mistakes, because it has an audience that's different from other audiences, so those artists should be known. At the same time, there's a. . . .

CC: That's an interesting idea, the idea that the Modern's audience is, finally, a different audience, and I think it's true. I think it's true, and I think its mandate is somewhat different. If you're a young curator on the make, attempting to establish yourself and your personal vision and get attention for yourself in a regional museum, you have a certain opportunity to do that. I think that's a very different activity than working in an institution like the Modern, with the weight of the institution behind you.

RS: She's an ocean liner, and she turns slowly.

CC: Slowly, absolutely.

RS: She can be exciting along the way.

CC: Right. And finally, it probably stops at all the major ports.

RS: Yes, and has a lover in every one of them [laughter]. That's a separate issue.

CC: Does it sail right by a few islands and not notice they're there? Absolutely. If you are, as I was, linked to a sort of fly-by-night movement of questionable importance. . . .

RS: Which is to say. . . ?

CC: Photorealism or whatever. You can imagine why somebody would want to sail right by and not notice that that island is there. And of course, what happens in any artist's career, or with any tendency or any movement or any attitude, the very first shows tend to recognize the common denominators instead of individual, idiosyncratic, personal views, which are often antithetical to this, with the supposed important

common denominators or shared interests. In fact, very often none of those artists who are linked together actually share those attitudes or concerns; it's just assumed that they did. But if you look at the whole rise and fall of photo-derived paintings of the '60s and '70s, I was trying desperately to be seen as an individual. That's why I showed at a gallery which had never shown a recognizable [inaudible]. Even Dwan had shown recognizable [inaudible], but Bykert was probably the last holdout for absolutely pure, formal, nonobjective and process-oriented stuff. So it was very important for me to show someplace where people would not come predisposed toward figuration and where they wouldn't . . . I didn't see myself as pitted against abstraction, or I wasn't doing what I was doing because I was against anything else. In fact, I was doing what I was doing because I loved everything else so much I couldn't purge it from my work without making such a drastic change. I had to say okay, I can't do this, I've got to go find out who I am. But I can really understand an institution not wanting to sign on to some agenda that may or may not be the game plan of a gallery or two and say, Well, do we really want to support that stuff? That's a decision that every institution has to make. The plaintive call of the individual artist in all of this is, “Don't look at me in relation to all those other people, just look at my work and see how different I am from everybody else and recognize that I don't want to come up and go down with something that I don't believe in.” So it was especially important for me that I began to be singled out and seen as an individual and not just . . . I didn't want to be in the *22 Realists* show at the Whitney. I stayed out of the first . . . the first two realists shows were the Milwaukee realist show and the one at some women's college . . . was it Vassar? [*Realism Now*, 1968, Vassar College, Curated by Linda Nochlin]I forget who did it. Suzy Gablik. No, maybe it was what's-her-name, who wrote *Why There Are No Great Women Artists*.

RS: Linda Nochlin.

CC: Linda Nochlin. Linda Nochlin did an early realist show for one of the women's colleges.

RS: It was probably Vassar.

CC: Yes, probably Vassar. So I stayed out of those two because I could. I could say no thank you, I don't want to be part of it. But by the time the Whitney did the *22 Realists* show, they already owned a painting [of mine]; I couldn't keep them from using it. Once I was going to be in it, I thought I better be represented by the best work I can. But again, it was a question of being . . . and I don't dislike all of that work. Certainly, there were a number of artists in that, some of whom are my friends and some of whom I respect, but I just couldn't see going up and coming down with a movement dedicated to the chrome and fenders and whatever. So the Modern's . . . this is a long, circuitous answer, but the Modern's recognition of me as an individual artist just doing something, and doing something that, like mezzotint, that was not the most obvious thing for someone to do or the most obvious thing for them to recognize—certainly an old-fashioned medium. The reason I picked the mezzotint was because I didn't know how to make one and the print shop didn't know how to make one and together we would figure out how to do it. Instead of them having all the expertise and I wouldn't have any, I thought this would be good on-the-job training for us both. But it was a *retardataire* technique, and for the Modern even to want to do a show of mezzotint was pretty bizarre. I appreciated that very much.

RS: You were in the *Drawing Now* show, too, in '76 or '77 or whatever it was [Note: MoMA Exh. # 1117, January 2 - March 9, 1976]. Did that augment the sense of. . . .

CC: Bunny [Bernice Rose] put me behind the door, sort of, with two small drawings, and I think I was relegated to sort of also-ran status. You have these big installations, big wall things. I think it was a nod towards figuration, which she was not particularly interested in, and I was the one representational artist that she could stomach, so she put a couple of pieces in. Curiously enough, though, when the show traveled to Europe and it was hung differently and my two small, very modest drawings were given —- I forget where, in Germany or wherever; where did the *Drawing Now* show go? I didn't see it -- but I was given a lot of attention in Documenta's in Europe and I had maybe a bigger following in Europe at that point than I did in America, and I was given a much more favorable location, and my work was singled out in Europe a lot,

by the press and by artists —- the two very-same drawings that were behind the door at the Modern. [Note: *Drawing Now* circulated to New York, Zurich, Baden-Baden, Vienna, Oslo and Tel Aviv.]

RS: At that time in Europe there was a huge interest in photorealism, and that was the one place where it was not treated as a kind of ersatz movement. I remember Howie [Kanovitz] and people like that still have careers running in Europe as a result of this interesting . . . and Philip [inaudible].

CC: Philip, absolutely.

RS: So it was primed in a way America was not primed.

CC: I had been a fan of Philip's and Alex's [Katz] as people who kicked the door open for a kind of intelligent modernist figuration—arms, legs, not emotional, some sort of distance. They were very important precursors for me. Malcolm [Morley] I didn't find out about until I had already made my first photo-derived stuff. . . . I didn't know what was going on on the west coast with people who were working from photographs out there either. It was all going on sort of the same time. But definitely in terms of a forward-looking kind of modernist figuration, those guys were very important. But I don't know that a lot of people saw much connectedness, because there was this supposed antipathy between so-called "eyeball realists" and those people who worked from photographs. It was something that some people . . . I remember when I had the first piece in *Artforum,* an interview in *Artforum* in 1968 or something like that, whatever that was, and I said that my favorite artists were all abstract. I had Jack Beal, whom I'd never met, beating on my door one Saturday morning. He woke me up at six o'clock in the morning and screamed at me, “They're the enemy, we have to stick together!” I thought, Who is this wild man, who is this person? And then I began to realize that the choice to work figuratively was a moral decision—higher ground, closer to God—and he was giving me a brief window of opportunity to be figurative. There were a number of people who then immediately said these are the Antichrist, these people who work from photographs—something which Philip never proscribed

to, or Alex or anybody else, but certain people. In fact, I was always. . . . [tape interruption]

CC: . . . [Alfred] Leslie felt that way, and I was told that by Jack Beal. I thought, I like Alfred's work, and I was told how much he loathed me. . . . And then later, years later, decades later, when I met Alfred, I was amazed to see how much we shared. When I read, thought— what's that gallery, it's no longer in existence, on Crosby Street?

RS: Barbara Flynn. [Note: Flynn Gallery, 113 Crosby Street, New York]

CC: Barbara Flynn did a catalogue of his early stuff and a lot of his writings, and he could have been me. What he said about his work was exactly [tape interruption]. . . .

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BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2

CC: So the fact that Alfred and I were supposedly going to be enemies, coming at this from an entirely different point of view, just wasn't borne out by the facts. I've actually really enjoyed talking to the guy.

RS: Jack Beal's a special case, altogether a special case. . . . Let me just shift the ground a little bit, if that's okay. Maybe we should fast-forward a little bit and talk about two shows—first of all, the Artist's Choice show and how that came about. You mentioned already that your first idea was to show de Kooning. Were there other game plans that didn't go into effect?

CC: My wife, who had curated shows as a landscape historian, told me that I was abdicating all curatorial responsibility by filling a gallery chock-a-block with art like it was a supermarket, and she almost convinced me that what curators do is select and

weed out and make connections. You put this piece next to this piece for a certain kind of reason. And then there is, of course, the fine Museum of Modern Art tradition of the white wall as sherbet between the courses, which erases the memory of the last piece before you have to settle on a new one, which is a tradition that I buy into wholeheartedly. When I have my work shown, that's exactly the way I like to have it seen. I was very worried about not treating the artists in this exhibition with the proper respect by overlapping the frames and the mats and bringing stuff cheek-by-jowl which had never been seen together—putting a Cadmus next to a [Marcel] Duchamp or whatever—somehow would be seen as too flippant and that I wasn't affording the proper respect. But in fact, how it happened was that Kirk [Varnedoe] asked me to do one. . . .

RS: Had you had much to do with Kirk prior to that?

CC: Kirk, while he was at Columbia, curated a show at Wildenstein [Gallery] of figurative realist work. He and his students and I spent a long time doing interviews and stuff like that for that [show].

RS: That was the portrait show?

CC: Yes. That was the first time I met him. I liked him immensely and I liked his attitude toward his students, and I thought, This is good. This guy knows what he's doing, this guy knows [inaudible] from [inaudible], and he was very generous with the artists and with his students. I thought, Hmmm, this is good. Later, there were a number of factors in our relationship. Kirk visited me in the hospital a great deal. He was very, very supportive, and he and a lot of people showed up. The art world showed up in droves. He was very, very encouraging. When I was in the hospital, the Warhol show opened, and my very first foray out of the hospital, after living continuously in there for months and months, was to go in an ambulance to the Modern for a private tour of the Warhol show. Kirk said, please bring along friends, and I brought Sol and Carol LeWitt and my friend Mark Greenwald, and a number of other artists. Kirk had a luncheon, a buffet luncheon, in the trustees' dining room and we went through the

Warhol show together. I could barely hold my head up. I was at the point where, if I tried to sit up totally upright I would pass out. And I went through this show with him and it was really very moving and wonderful and I enjoyed it a lot. This is very funny, that this is going to be on this tape. We're having lunch and he's made a very nice spread, and [Dick] Oldenburg comes in. He said how great it was to see me and how glad [he was] I was up and around, it was great to have me there, and was there anything, anything at all, that The Museum of Modern Art could do for me? You know me, I open my mouth and put my foot in it all the time. I blurt out stuff that should never be blurted out, and I can't resist a joke. I cannot bite my tongue and not make a joke when some straight man gives you an opportunity. And it was so heavy, the seriousness of this day and how sick I was, and I'm always trying to make light of it. So when Dick said is there anything, anything at all that the Modern could do I said, “Well, a retrospective would be nice” [laughter]. And Dick—the minute I said it I regretted having said it. His mouth fell open and he stammered and he said, “Thank God I don't have to make that decision.” I felt so terrible for putting him in that position. I looked at Kirk and Kirk didn't know whether to laugh or to leave the room or to explain to me why I couldn't have a retrospective or whatever. But that was my first foray back into the Modern. I will eventually answer the question. The next was that Kirk, when I first got out of the hospital, the very first large . . . I did two paintings in the hospital, or one and a half—I finished the other one in the country after the left—in eight months in the hospital, and then when I got out I started the painting of Elizabeth Murray. Bob and Anna Marie Shapiro, who own pieces of mine, had come to visit me in the hospital, and they were also very supportive. And also had Aggie [Agnes Gund]; Aggie also visited me. I had known Aggie more through Studio in a School; other than that, I did not really know her through the Modern particularly. Bob and Anna Marie had owned some drawings of mine for a long time, but they were not active collectors of my work anymore. So it ended up that Bob and Anna Marie in a conspiracy with Aggie and with Kirk ended up buying the first painting that I made after I got out of the hospital, which was of immeasurable help, because I could have so easily been seen as damaged goods. There was a lot of support and good will towards me, but you never know. The art world is a very fickle place, and all it takes is one person to say, Well, he's a nice guy but it doesn't have it anymore, it doesn't

have the edge, it's lost its . . . You came with. . . .

RS: I came a couple of times, but. . . .

CC: You came with Aggie, too.

RS: I didn't come with Aggie. I came just by myself. I wasn't at the Modern then. . . . I was thinking when the cover came out—when Betsy gave you the cover of *Art in America*—you said something about how you felt uncomfortable about it because you thought it was kind of just a vote of confidence, and obviously when the work is placed in a different context it means. . . .

CC: I thought it could be seen as sentimental. I was very concerned about that. Believe me, I was glad it was on the cover, and believe me, I was glad the Modern bought the thing. I'm not biting the hand that feeds me, but I was also worried about how it might be seen. There was the case, I think, of the Good Housekeeping seal of approval of the Modern really making a difference. It made a real difference to all kinds of other institutions and collectors, who said, Okay, the Modern is not going to buy the work of a handicapped artist; they might buy the work of an artist who's handicapped. And that made all the difference in the world. Then when Kirk asked me, after that, to curate the Artist's Choice [show], I don't think I realized how important that was going to be. Still people come up to me on the street, to this day, and they don't say how much they like my paintings or what a good painter I am, but they tell me how much they liked that show and how important that show was to them.

RS: You've got a great day job in case you need it [laughing].

CC: I probably only have one show in me, so I'm not going to give up my day job. It brought new respect for me for curators, because for the first time I realized that curating a show is not what an artist thinks it is, an imaginary, perfect scenario in which you can have whatever you want and put it together in the most perfect way, but operating within the very similar set of severe limitations that an artist is used to

working within when they make his or her own work. It doesn't matter what the Modern has; if you can't borrow it because it's already loaned to another exhibition, you can't have it. So curating a show is the art of the possible, and I had never understood that to such an extent. But I was able to, as an outsider, come in and do something that a curator in the Museum would not have been allowed at that time to do. First of all, Kirk got me the visas to all the other departments, some of whom were not thrilled to be participating. If it wasn't going to be one of the department's shows, why should they waste their time? Some departments were more . . . everybody finally rallied and everybody came through, and I saw virtually every recognizable image and everything else too in the Museum's collection—one of the great experiences of my life. I spent 24 eight-hour days with the collection in all departments except design and film. It was thrilling. I would spend days riffling through boxes of [Alfred] Stieglitz prints, for instance, stacked to the ceiling. Who gets an opportunity to rifle through the real McCoy? It was a great experience. But what it grew out of—which is something I know *you* know—the decisions are not made in that clear white box. The decisions are made down in the bowels of the building or in the warehouse, where you pull a corner of a painting out and hope you can see enough of it to make a decision, or you have it leaning on top of a crate or stacked in front of something else. And with no good light on it and in the worst of all possible conditions you try to decide to put this in or to put that in. The way I looked at stuff just for purposes of my own comparative judgment was to abut them, so I could say, I like this better or I like that, or, Boy, doesn't this look like this next to that. So I just sort of took the logic of that experience of having things next to each other, which just by the luck of the draw they would bring out . . . I would lean it up next to another person who had never been hung next to each other before, and it was so exciting to see that I constructed the supermarket shelves and I overlapped the frames and mats and then hung the salon-style thing, and put photographs together with prints and drawings and paintings. At first, this terrible limitation of this tiny room became this great opportunity.

RS: There were in excess of two hundred works in that space, right?

CC: Right.

RS: And then also, you brought some of your own. I remember the two Cindy Shermans were present.

CC: I tried to make up a little bit for what . . . I didn't take anybody that the Modern didn't' have. I just took works of a nature that the Modern didn't have. So they had Cindy Shermans, they had large pieces that would not fit, and I just couldn't leave Cindy out. They had Lucas's [Samaras] pieces, which were not anything that could be considered a portrait, so I put some in that were, and a few pieces like that. But I respected the collection and just said, Well, they would have bought these if they could.

RS: You've taken the next slippery step down the road of the curator.

CC: The final thing was, they wouldn't let me hang a Museum of Modern Art work on the doors. I said, I'm not going to have white doors in the middle of this exhibition. All it's going to do is draw attention to the doors. It's going to look like "art" and "doors." They said, “You cannot hang Museum of Modern Art work on doors.” So I said, “What if I hang my own work on the doors?” “Well, if you want to hang your work on the doors, I guess that's all right.” So that was the other reason to choose works which were not in the collection, in order that it was wallpapered with art.

RS: Was Kirk actively involved in this, or did he pretty much give you carte blanche?

CC: He gave me carte blanche and encouragement and opened doors for me and fought for me. He fought very hard with some people who resisted, and I think he made some enemies and stuck his neck way out for me. He did, I think, a magnificent job of editing absolutely incomprehensible interviews that we did. I was so fucked-up on drugs I that was taking, prescription drugs I was taking at the time, that I didn't know what end I was standing on. We made these tapes and he managed to take a word and a phrase here or there and make it sound like I was smart and literate and knew

what I was doing. He did a magnificent job of editing the brochure. He understood what I was trying to do, and I thought he'd made a very poignant, pregnant, propagandistic tool to explain it. I think it was good for me, I think it was good for Kirk, I think it was good for the institution, in all . . . I'm not a very modest person . . . , but younger curators in other departments came up to me afterwards and said, I love your show, I would have loved to have done something like that, [but] they never would have let me do it. You can only be subversive if you're coming in from outside. Not that I was all that subversive, but it did, I think, make it possible for interdepartmental shows to be done and to take a certain [part] of the formality of the presentation away—I mean, hanging things more salon-style, hanging things together that normally wouldn't go together, and not treating art with the utmost respect, which the Modern felt like it had to do. The best thing was, was that I got the benefit of happenstance and accident. I put things together because of the frame or the size or because I needed something to fit this hole. They weren't always the most important possible connection. And everyone saw connections where I hadn't, and would talk to me about how much they'd learned having this piece next to that piece when they really hadn't thought too much about it. The way that the eye would sort of scan the room and start to make connections fifteen or twenty feet apart that happened because they were already used to making connections because they were right next to each other. I think it was an important show for me and I'd like to think it might have actually played some kind of important role for the institution.

RS: Briefly let's talk a little bit about the print show [*Printed Art Since 1965*, MoMA Exh. #1287, February 13 - April 1, 1980] because I think that followed relatively rapidly on the heels — in Museum time. That in a sense goes back to the kind of show with the mezzotint print [Note: *Keith*, 1972]. It's a show about the technical and other aspects of the development of an image.

CC: It is also one of the funniest . . . happenstances or connections that you can think of, too, because I'd had a long relationship with Riva. She bought the first mezzotint. The mezzotint show was in the Projects gallery. They had bought prints of mine all along. I'd given them work a lot. And then Debby Wye was a student at U. Mass when I

taught there. I went with her roommate Roberta Burns, took her to her college prom.

RS: You took Roberta to the college prom?

CC: Yes.

RS: [inaudible]

CC: And all kinds of sorority parties with Debby and Roberta and a couple of other brilliant young students, one of whom is the curator of the [inaudible] Park. They're all really smart girls, but they were real nerdy, tweedy, Bass Weejuns sorority girls at U. Mass. Roberta was a four-point student and later became a Rhodes scholar, and Debby . . . they were part of the Andy Warhol fan club. I used to go with them to New York and go to the [inaudible], to the exploding [inaudible] and hang out with Andy and the Velvets and all that stuff.

RS: So Debby and Roberta and you and the scene.

CC: Yes. And then of course Roberta was friendly with Jasper [Johns] and all that stuff, and we would come to New York and see shows together. They were also groupies of the Four Tops and the Supremes and Otis Redding, all of whom I had tremendous respect for, especially the Four Tops and Otis Redding. So we'd spend a lot of time together and we were very close, so it was funny that Debby was now a curator at the Modern. I had done the first print with Bob Feldman with Parasol Press. I'd done it in California, currently with Catherine Brown, who later founded Crown Point Press and did her own, but at that point she was a contract printer for Bob Feldman, did all of his prints. This is my first print as an adult and not as a student. Bob's daughter [Andrea Feldman] was maybe not even born when I did that show, or if she was, she was very tiny. She would not have been born, I don't think, because when she was five years old she came to my studio with Bob and her kindergarten class and I made a drawing of Mickey Mouse, because they asked me if I could really draw, because I worked with photographs. So I made a drawing of Mickey Mouse. I made it on the

back of a set of photographs, die-transfer photographs, which later someone stole and tried to fence to Bob Feldman, and on the back was the drawing I'd made for his daughter in my class. His daughter [Andrea Feldman], now grown up, was the curator at The Museum of Modern Art who did my second solo print show, how many x-number of years after. . . .

RS: ’73 to '93. So, twenty years.

CC: Then she would have been born, but barely. So there are kind of neat brackets on the whole thing, and connectedness. If I believed in such things, things almost had to be. But it was fun working with her and doing another print show that was in many ways like the first. I know these answers are long and circuitous.

RS: No, they're good. Practically nobody knows about Debby's wild-and-wooly past. It's kind of amazing when she talks about her friends.

CC: If we turned the tape off, I'd tell you more about it. After the tape is over I'll tell you more [laughter].

RS: Sort of more to current business, the retrospective at the Modern, upcoming. Maybe you could describe your side of that a little bit.

CC: Of what happened?

RS: Yes. I remember we talked before you went to the Met. We showed you around what was then basically completely raw space.

CC: We had talked, and you had been . . . we were friends and we knew each other from various activities and being on boards together and juries together, and I very happily picked your brains throughout the whole process of looking for something to do that many years after my Whitney retrospective, [inaudible]. I certainly valued your opinion, your expertise, and your honesty as you would talk about stuff, and clearly, I

think, the institution to do something like this at . . . that's no longer wrong—*at which* to do something like this?

RS: [As] to which I will not put [laughing].

CC: The Modern is the logical place, and of course in your heart of hearts every artist wants it to be the Modern and wants it to be right and wants it to be perfect. You wrote half of my first book and you also contributed to the catalogue of my show in Baden-Baden, and I think that you have written as well about my work as anybody and I feel a tremendous respect for you and your eye and your intellect and your writing skills and your curating skills, and of course the perfect of all situations would to end up doing something with both you and Kirk, which at one point didn't seem all that likely or all that possible, but in pursuing it I got to a point in the kind of negotiations with Kirk that it became clear that he would be willing to do something but the space was—it sounds so piggy and so arrogant, but it was less than what I'd hoped for. I didn't like being below the waterline. I remember going to Europe on an ocean liner and knowing that I was in steerage under the water, and it always sort of felt like that to me.

RS: You're talking about the d'Harnoncourt galleries.

CC: Yes, the downstairs spaces. I know that very, very few shows survive that very well. Group shows tend to do better, perhaps, than solo shows, but I think [Richard] Serra sort of won down there by brute muscle.

RS: He, by the way, is the only one of your generation or immediate circle who's shown at the Modern in a major way, right?

CC: Other than [Bruce] Nauman.

RS: But Bruce is a little older than you are, I think.

CC: Just a little bit.

RS: Also, he's not of the contingent that you came up with in New York. You're only the second artist.

CC: I guess that's right. I think the first of our generation to have one was Brice [Marden] at the Guggenheim.

RS: And Bob Mangold had one, too.

CC: Bob Mangold had one there. Then a bunch of us had them at the Whitney. Richard, I guess, sort of held out for the Modern, and got it—considerably later than most of the rest of us had shown. So I guess you're right, I'm maybe the second of my [generation]. I hadn't thought about that, but it's maybe true. So you guys were just in the process of knocking down walls on the third floor and taking that perfectly awful drawings gallery out of there and restoring it to the full-height ceilings, but when I toured that with you guys it was just a sea of columns, and it looked like the basement of Bloomingdale's or something. Just what are you going to do with all these fucking columns? I remember thinking immediately after you did the [Robert] Ryman show, “Oh my God, is this the same space that I thought was unworkable?” It was like taking a sequoia forest and somehow with a scrim making it disappear. It was really kind of amazing, that those huge columns, so close together, disappeared and you could get that flow or whatever. I had my first revelation, that maybe I didn't make the right decision.

RS: You mean about going to the Met.

CC: Because at the same time that I had the enviable option at being at the Modern I was also offered the opportunity to do it at the Met, and to do it with a curator that I have also tremendous respect for, Nan Rosenthal. At that point the Met really, seriously seemed to want to do it, and I was promised the earth, the moon, the stars, all nicely

on a string. I was promised it directly from [Philippe de] Montebello, with [William S.] Lieberman and Nan and Arne [Glimcher] in earshot, and it was clear what I was offered from the beginning, or else I wouldn't have taken it, which was a gorgeous, fully sky lit, 11 to 13 magnificent galleries at the top of the stairs. I remember saying to Kirk, This is the toughest decision. I remember you and Kirk and Arne and I sitting in the room discussing it, and Arne and I would take the car back and forth between the Modern and the Met and look at the spaces and think about it, and it was terrible, but of course a wonderful decision to be able to have the option, but a terrible decision to make. But I must say that Kirk was so gracious, and I knew you supported me no matter what I would do. That's the kind of guy you are, and I know that as a friend you were happy for me no matter what, but Kirk had no reason to necessarily be as generous as he was. He said, “Listen, they're offering you something that we can't offer you. They're offering you much more space, sky lit spaces.” They were offering a really substantial catalogue and catalogue raisonné of major work. He said, “I can't blame you if you take it; I hope you decide to go with us, but if you decide to go with the Met, I will be there the night the thing opens, I'll be the first person on line to shake your hand. It'll be a beautiful show no matter where it is, and if it's not with us. . . .” I know that, just between us, Kirk took some major hits from people like Mike Ovitz and other people who think that you don't take no for an answer and you're not gracious at a time like that; you beat the shit out of the person until they do what you want to do and you threaten them within an inch of your life, *you'll never show in New York again* and some things like that. But that wasn't Kirk's style, and I appreciated it very much.

RS: After the tape's off I'll tell you my covert story.

CC: Well, I shouldn't probably say this one on the tape either, and Mike has my best interests at heart too, and I think he has what he thinks are the Modern's interests at heart. But a very different style. I appreciated Kirk's generosity, and I didn't think I even deserved it. I really didn't. I thought he went way beyond what somebody needs to do. The tribute in this whole thing was, once the Met thing came unglued and there was no longer any commitment to do the show and I was reduced to twice the size of

Pace/Spring Street and a catalogue a fraction of its former self and many other disappointments and was told by Philippe to take it or leave it and they had many other shows they'd like to put in its place, and when I went back to the Modern with my tail between my legs and I left the Met without knowing whether or not the Modern was in place. . . . I was hopeful that it would be, but I think it's incredible that Kirk and you and the institution and the trustees and everybody else who might have known about the other part of it didn't hold a grudge and didn't punish me. I consider myself the luckiest of artists. I always have been lucky, and it continues. The final act of graciousness, I thought, was when Kirk, recognizing all the work, the three years of work that Nan had put into the show, and realizing, as a curator, how disappointing it is to have something ripped away from you, because for me to leave Nan in the lurch was the most difficult decision, although I must say she never pressured me to stay. She understood and she thought it was a slippery slope, that once there was no commitment to really do the show, God knows what else they would not live up to. But that Kirk—and I'm sure you must have had something [to do with this as well]. . . .

RS: I didn't.

CC: . . . felt that, in recognition of all the work that she did and her expertise, the fact that she traveled the world and saw every single piece of mine in the flesh, that that should be taken advantage of and that she should be given an opportunity to write one of the catalogue entries, which I thought was really a wonderful thing to do and great for Nan and great for me. So, considering . . . I didn't want all the controversy, I didn't want conjecture in the *Times* by Carol Vogel and I didn't want any of this stuff, but I must say, considering how much of it had to come up just because that's the nature of the art world, I think it could not have worked out, for me, any better, any more happily, and I'm really looking forward to it. For me, it's coming home. The Met has never been committed to contemporary art, and we were very hopeful that this was the beginning of a new era, but maybe if Tom Hess had lived the Met would have gone in another direction, but clearly the Met was not going to be doing shows like I wanted to do, and to have the opportunity to come back to the Modern and do it was like dying and going to heaven as far as I was concerned. And of course I'm

thrilled to be able to work again with you and Kirk. It's great.

RS: Maybe just to sort of wind up, because I think we've probably got enough for now and if they want more we can always do more, I just want to ask you a little bit about what you think the situation of the Modern is now. You and I, as you mentioned before, have sat on a lot of different committees to hand out money in any different direction we can, and it's pretty apparent, even just from the kinds of requests and stories one hears, how dramatically the economics of the art world have changed, how much pulling-in there's been. The sort of wide-open aspects of the economy, whatever you may think of them, in the '80s did in fact create an incredible amount of traffic back and forth across the ocean—several oceans, for that matter—and a lot of ways in which there was ferment, basically, and it's a much more conservative time—not so much aesthetically, although it's that, too, in some ways, but more just in terms of what can be done. I was curious how you saw the Modern in that mix, what you think it represents vis-à-vis what it was like when you first encountered it.

CC: I think there are special opportunities, and I think it's poised to play an even greater role, perhaps, than it has. When you think about the great moments in The Museum of Modern art's relationship with living contemporary artists--it's probably in *Sixteen Americans* or *Fourteen Americans* where somebody was going out there and laying their neck on the line and saying, “We recognize these tendencies and these issues to be important ones”, at a time when the gallery world was a very small, insular place. There were a handful of places showing contemporary art, and it said to the world, “We think this is important”—in a world which did not value this stuff very much. And we think it's important to put it next to a van Gogh and a [Paul] Cézanne, and we think this is the stuff that reflects the culture that made it and is perhaps a culture at its finest. Clearly nobody remembers who was the mayor of Florence in 1630, but we know who the artists were, and those times, which are summed up by the artists, either as a social conscience or as the person making art that flies in the face of what's going on politically, that celebrate the sheer joy of pushing paint

around; whatever it is, it is its connectedness with society or whatever it is that an institution can celebrate and draw arrows to and raise people's awareness. So I think that at a time when money is shrinking and more and more you have to look to Europe or to other regions, that it's important for the Modern to say, “We really think this is important stuff for society to have produced and for everybody to recognize at this time.” I think that, as the dollars shrink, that it's the most important thing. The art world becomes much more conservative and people take lesser and lesser risks, including curators, and the same old suspects show up over and over, and that's why it's important for an institution to really, in an aggressive way, go out there and try and say this is the important stuff being made right now. So I hope that the enlargement of the Museum, the new acquisition of space from the old Dorset Hotel, will really signal a major commitment. I know buying things like the big [Larry] Gagosian Serra without any space to show it in is a real commitment to that art without any opportunity to exploit it, in a way. But with the greater space and with the opportunity to put more of the collection up, including more of the contemporary part of the collection up, and then hopefully more funding for contemporary group shows. . . . I do feel that maybe the post–*High and Low* experience has been for the Modern maybe to pull in its horns just a drop in terms of large group shows, and I think that's a shame. I think its solo shows, as much as I'm the happy beneficiary of one, and I don't want to say that this is not something that the Museum should be doing [laughing], but it's not the whole picture. The Modern has a very different notion of a group show than, say, the Whitney has. The Modern has never done what the Whitney biennial or annual attempted to do. It's been much more a history of working around themes and other issues. That's maybe what the Modern does best. Even if it's a lightning rod, even if it attracts a lot of negative press—always a good sign, in my opinion; if Hilton [Kramer] hates what you're doing, you must be on the right track. I hope that it isn't just what happens to so many institutions, a kind of edifice complex -- that all the fundraising, all the money goes into building buildings and carving people’s names over the doorway -- but that it means there will be a real commitment to program, funding sources and collecting, but really, the adventurous group show, an enlarged role for the Projects, less of a kind of ghettoized place in the lobby, and a real Projects space.

RS: Someplace to be somebody.

CC: But I think it's a real moment of opportunity for the institution if the will is there and if not every dollar has to go into building the building.

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END INTERVIEW