

## DAVID HOFFMAN MOMA HISTORY INTERVIEWS

**INTERVIEW WITH:** PAUL GOTTLIEB (PG)  
**INTERVIEWERS:** CARL COLBY (CC); RUTH CUMMINGS (RC)  
**DATE:** 1983  
**TRANSCRIBER:** JANET CROWLEY, TRANSCRIPTION COMPLETED  
OCTOBER 22, 2018

PG: Mrs. [Abby Aldrich] Rockefeller and Mrs. [Lillie P.] Bliss and Mrs. [Mary Quinn] Sullivan, and they were obviously enormously intelligent and energetic women with resources at their command and lots of friends and connections. But they have to get a Mr. [A. Conger] Goodyear to spearhead the whole activity, purely, I would think, a reflection of feminist attitudes, or that is to say, their own sense that, you know, a woman couldn't have started that whole thing up. And it's somewhat ironic because Mrs. [Blanchette] Rockefeller now is a wonderfully effective person in the Museum, so there's that tradition. And now nobody thinks twice about the fact that she was the President of the Museum, but I guess, 50-odd years ago, it was unthinkable.

CC: They really did a very good job of organizing themselves also—considering bringing in Goodyear, then obviously attracting Stephen Clark and a number of other people.

PG: Yes.

CC: So it was almost a—not anti-Met but outside of the Met group, this little splinter group went off and formed a museum, and I'm sure it came to the attention of most people very, very quickly, this thing—

PG: Yes.

CC: Quite well endowed or quite seriously—

PG: I guess the time was ripe for it too. I mean, I'm not speaking from any knowledge now—this is just supposition that in 1929, you know, the American public was ready for modern art in a way they wouldn't have been just after the first World War. This, I gather, is the preliminary interview.

RC: Absolutely.

CC: We're talking to 50, 60 people, and certain people—some people it's difficult. Philip Johnson, he could talk—he took a deep breath and just sort of gave a sample—

PG: Oh, fantastic.

CC: A little piece of his history.

PG: It really starts at the beginning, I guess.

CC: Other people really dig in. We spoke to Monroe Wheeler and he was very interesting in terms of the impact, or at least listening to him and then looking into it ourselves—the impact he had and the Museum had, obviously, in terms of design and publishing, the format that—what was the climate before, and what happened afterward, after the Museum got established in the thirties in terms of publishing and design?

PG: Well, you know, I really obviously don't go back that far. [Laughter] I hope that's obvious. [Laughter] And I really don't know the specific history of it. But I mean, the fact is that good illustrated books about art were not frequently published in this country, certainly [not] until after the Second World War. I think that the Museum probably was very significant in making people aware of that kind of a book, which would benefit from the substantial use of illustration. But I really, you know, cannot tell you in any kind of knowledgeable detail about what impact it was.

CC: It's curious because it seemed to be that before when catalogues were published or articles printed, they were very scholarly and there's nothing wrong with that, but they didn't help contribute to the popularization of the art or of the collection that a museum might have. Whereas nowadays, the gift shop, even though it might be bringing in revenue, it's also spreading the word and has been for the last 30 years.

PG: Oh absolutely.

RC: Making icons of the art.

CC: With every kind of reproduction and little sample—or they'll buy one of your books.

PG: And I think that's marvelous. I mean, there's been a lot of conflict about the reproduction business, you know. There are those people, very often curators, who are very much against it. And I've always felt if something like that is really well done—it is disseminating on a very specific three-dimensional basis concepts of good design, really marvelous aesthetics. I think it's probably worth your while, or I could find out for you, to identify what they consider—perhaps Monroe Wheeler talked about this—what they consider their benchmark contributions in the publications field.

CC: Uh-huh, that would be good.

RC: That would be.

PG: I mean, I remember that there have been unusual [Claes] [Oldenburg books](#) which were made like soft sculpture. I'll bet that's the first time that was ever done, you know, to try and make the book itself a work of sculpture.

CC: And was [the Op Art one](#) something like that? I remember there was a very strange cover.

PG: I think, yes. Well, they had several but I don't actually know when the first catalogue was published for instance.

CC: But they used to be mirrored and all sorts of strange.

PG: Yes, yes, when one could afford such niceties. [Laughing]

RC: One thing we learned that was a great contribution of Alfred Barr's was his point on his big catalogue [*Chronology of Painting and Sculpture in The Museum of Modern Art (PASITMOMA)*] of the collection.

PG: Yes.

RC: Scaling pictures proportionately to their size, on the page, with other paintings.

PG: Yes.

RC: I haven't observed whether that's a continued practice. I haven't been aware of it.

PG: You mean that the images themselves were in relative proportion to their actual size.

RC: That's right, and laid out so that—

PG: Yes.

RC: That was an interesting concept.

PG: If he originated that it would have been a major step in terms of design in illustrated book.

CC: We spoke to Robert Hughes, the critic at *Time*—

PG: Yes.

CC: And he—speaking as a young Australian, he said he was very much influenced by the catalogues that came from the Museum, those very reproductions that you're talking about. If they hadn't been disseminated then someone such as he may have come to it later, but not at that time.

PG: That's a real issue now, too, because I mean there's a tremendous sense of the Museum's obligation to publish the best in the field of modern art that they can. Very often, you know, when you're dealing with more esoteric subjects, it's going to be a money-losing proposition. And there's always the balancing of the financial needs and state of the Museum and a real sense of intellectual obligation to the society to publish these other kinds of books and catalogues, which you know are not going to have wide dissemination.

CC: Are they in essence a competitor of yours, or are they a co-publisher, or how do they actually work?

PG: Well, for all trade publishers, to a certain extent the museums, not only The Museum of Modern Art but other museums as well, are our competitors. But they also very often will publish in areas which a commercial publisher simply could not do. Because it is a catalogue which is adjunct to a specific exhibition, the subject of it [is] relatively narrow, and the real market, the real heart of the market are the people who come to the exhibition to see the work. They're the ones who are immediately enthusiastic and stimulated by it and they buy the catalogue there. To put such a book out into the marketplace expecting the

buyer to pick it out of the thousand titles on the bookshelf without that kind of additional intensification of interest in the subject, it's impossible.

CC: What about something like [Pablo] Picasso? You probably have a book or two on Picasso.

PG: Yes, certainly.

CC: They have that catalogue?

PG: They have the catalogue for the exhibition [[Pablo Picasso: A Retrospective](#)].

CC: Did they actually publish it themselves? Or is it in tandem with a house?

PG: Well, that was done—actually it was created by the Museum staff. There's a Publications Department there. It was prepared by Bill Rubin and Dominique Bozo, who were both involved in mounting that exhibition. And then the Museum has a distribution agreement with the New York Graphic Society which is an imprint of Little, Brown. And so the book was published with a joint imprint, but it's actually created by the Museum. However, the Museum does not have the machinery to reach the trade marketplace, and in the case of the Picasso exhibition, of course, it really became a kind of national event. Even though, as I recall—it's very interesting because its impact, the impact of the exhibition, went far beyond the numbers of people who came to see it, because, you know, it didn't travel. And as I recall, there were roughly a million people who came to see it. And you could get the statistics correctly. Well, a million people is a lot of people, but it isn't 20 million people.

CC: No but the impact seemed to reach 20, 40 million people.

PG: The impact was tremendous. I think the timing, you know—the fact that it was done not too long after Picasso's death, the fact that he is perceived as this titanic figure, helped in the sale of the book. It's in a way not unlike what happens to many books which are the subject of television productions. What happens there is that the television program becomes the, if you will, the advertisement for the existence of that book, and no publisher could afford to reach that same kind of market by buying advertising to reach it. But the program for the exhibition creates a very much heightened interest in the subject.

CC: Do you think the Publications Department of the Museum—? Is it key to the Museum's survivability to be able to have viable things like a publications department and et cetera? What I was trying to really get an answer to is, we know that they've been in difficult financial straits for some years to this point, or it's been difficult. Now with the new Museum Tower, one of the points we wanted to make in the film, in the later part, will be that now it's the present. After that first 10 years, we'll give a quick summary as to what happened up to the present, then give comment on the present and try to emphasize that the Museum Tower is really a question of necessity and survivability in today's atmosphere.

PG: Right.

CC: There are not Bliss's and Rockefellers who will just at moment's notice put a million dollars down and solve your financial problems. Is it necessary for them to have then, these almost quasi-commercial departments now within the Museum now?

PG: Well, certainly.

CC: We're just trying to get a bead on some of that.

PG: Certainly it is perceived, I think, as one of the few really profit-producing aspects of museums. There has been, at the Metropolitan Museum, of course, a very active retail and publishing operation, and The Museum of Modern Art also sees that function as a means of contributing to its operating expenses. And you know, there are a number of other museums that are quite actively involved. Very few publish as actively as does The Museum of Modern Art. I think few museums have that in-house capacity to design and create and produce books. But other museums are expanding their retail selling operations. I mean it's a remarkable phenomenon, but once again...

CC: So it doesn't disturb you? It's a part of what you think they'll have to do in the future.

PG: No, it doesn't disturb me. I think it's a reality, and it may sound like crass commercialism, but the fact is that the Museum, with ever increasing numbers of people coming to visit it, creates a market for certain kinds of books and other product. I mean you're getting a highly educated audience. You're getting an

audience with a reasonable amount of disposable income, and I think an audience whose taste level is increasing. You know? Leave aside difficult economic times you're going through, I mean, the fact is that you have a more affluent market developing. And you know, once people can cover their basic needs, one goes to other kinds of interests, and—

CC: Well not just people from Connecticut.

PG: Oh, no!

CC: This is Italy. This is French, Italian, English.

PG: Not only that, but I mean, if you look at the thing nationally, in the course of the next I think year and a half, there are going to be some 13 or 14 major new museums or expansions of other museums opening up. I don't know if you're aware of that.

CC: I read the article about just the Los Angeles ones.

PG: Oh, it's remarkable. So it's happening all over the place. And I don't know if you've seen this article in today's *Times*, but you must read it. It's so germane. Subject: City's position secures focus of art world. It's not—

RC: Bess Myerson coming into the—

PG: No, it has nothing to do with Bess Myerson. It really looks at the world and says New York is still the center of the art world. But it talks about what's going on regionally, you know, what's going on in other cities. And it talks—there are quotes from Bill Rubin. But I thought that you'd find that particularly interesting.

CC: One of the things that we wanted to do was, in the later part of the film, again, speak with somebody—we hadn't met you before but considering what your position is here and also as a trustee, in defining what the new Museum will be like, we know what it's going to be doing physically. I mean, it's going to be quite tremendous, to be that big and to have study centers, and really be able to go and always see an architectural exhibit or always see a photography exhibit; it's going to be quite remarkable. It's not just going to be those at the first floor; it's really going to be expanded. But together with that, is the projection for the new Museum going to create in a sense a new idea of a museum? Is the Modern

now going to—? And it has pioneered many of these other movements, publications, et cetera, in the United States.

PG: Yes.

CC: You begin to think, well maybe they're really going to take a jump and become like you say, really a kind of an industry in and of itself, realizing how many people come, what sort of people come, and start doing things that are very much commercial, and whether that changes the idea of a museum. It's certainly very different than something was 70 years ago—

PG: Yes.

CC: Where you'd go to an old mausoleum.

PG: Well, I don't mean to suggest that it's becoming an industry. It's far too specialized and far too tied to its appropriate function which is as an art museum and to disseminate the information that comes out of that kind of relationship. But certainly, in order to try to contribute to operating expenses in the future, I think it would be foolish not to recognize what will happen when you bring many more people of particular interests in. I wouldn't say, to my knowledge, that there is any plan to do anything radically different from what has been done so far. I mean, I've certainly not been involved in any such conversation. I think that there's a sense that there will be more and more people coming in. And that perhaps one can expand to a certain extent the numbers of titles one will publish, the numbers of museum objects which can be reproduced, graphics, posters, all that. But I think at the moment it's perceived as doing more of what they're doing well. I think we'll have to see.

CC: It's difficult to say, really, in a way, because I can almost see it on three tiers, the one being—let's say you have a [Henri de] Toulouse-Lautrec show and you have a major show and you borrow things and you publish a catalogue and you have a couple of reproductions. Well that's one thing. And the middle level might be to have a big Toulouse-Lautrec show, have a lot of reproductions, publish a book, of course; Toulouse-Lautrec's Paris, a film comes out about his life; a whole series of films might be put together about Paris. There may be an attendant show at the Whitney or an architectural—who knows; really a big splash. And



then the third I really can't envision, but I'm wondering what goes through the mind of let's say a Walter Annenberg when he wants to tie in the Metropolitan with \$20 million, whatever, to create—I don't know what he wants to create; a big community push.

PG: The push that didn't happen. It didn't happen.

RC: It went to L.A.

PG: Yes.

CC: Maybe it's just too—you can't expand it too far. Maybe it's those scholarly—the very discipline of the place won't allow—

PG: Yes, I think you can't be all things to all men. Or as my grandmother used to say, you can't dance at every wedding. You have to be true to your own purpose, I think. And I think the Museum has a very keen sense of its purpose. One hope some of us have is that there will be perhaps more attention paid to contemporary artists.

RC: Are you in that camp?

PG: Yes.

RC: Because we know it's an issue.

PG: Yes. It is of course understandable because, you know, like people, institutions sort of address specific subjects from their own particular vantage point. When you're 40, you look at things not as you did when you were 15; you simply can't; and so on. A museum which is 50 years old has a different perspective on its subject than it does when it's just beginning. And I think that's a kind of balancing that's going to be discussed and it's going to be argued, and it's going to be addressed in different ways. There are a number of us who would like to see both things going on. You'll see in that article, there are other people who are saying that about The Museum of Modern Art, that they really ought to be paying more attention to contemporary artists than they do. And Bill Rubin is quoted as saying, well, but we're not just the museum of contemporary art, we're the museum of the whole modern movement, and that now goes back some time. So we have to keep both attitudes going. You know, to be not just a

museum of record and of history, but to be one that is plugged into the lively world of the arts now, [which] is to me a very desirable opportunity. When I was a kid—I mean, the Museum has, for me, always played some role. I was a kid growing up in New York and went to the Museum's art school [People's Art Center]. The Museum had an art school.

CC: Victor D'Amico?

PG: Yes. Yes. And it was wonderful. I mean it was [an] exciting, wonderful place. The fact of having students, you see, I think—I mean, I don't know that that'll ever happen again. I'm sure it was a very costly operation, and as I remember the fees were very modest. But I mean, I don't remember what they were at all.

CC: But a lot of people were there. Bill Lieberman was there, a couple of different people...

PG: Oh sure, oh sure. It was a wonderful exposure to this whole world, you see. And it was around the corner from the Museum. It may at one time have been housed in the Museum; I'm not sure about that. But by the time I went it was in a building on Fifth Avenue, around the corner. And you just felt it was your place. You felt very sort of involved with it and I think it's too bad that that can't continue. But I think the opportunity of focusing on the work of people who are painting in New York, doing whatever they do in this area or in the country, even though one doesn't have the perspective on it which enables one to judge it against the whole panoply of art history, I think it's not so bad if you make some mistakes; you know?

RC: Alfred said if you get one in 10, that's okay.

PG: That's right. That's right, you see, and I think that would give it a kind of heightened—now mind you, there are exhibitions of living contemporary artists.

RC: Sure.

PG: And not all of them have already arrived or achieved substantial recognition. But I think most of them have.

CC: But I see your point, too, because if, first of all, by focusing or giving a little bit more attention to being contemporary, not only do you attract the newest artists

and are you in touch with things as they are now, you attract perhaps the most activist group but you also by doing things like the school and the other center, you create this love and enthusiasm for the place early on. You give a special status to something so that 30 years later or 20 years later, you have a great affection for the place.

PG: That's right.

CC: It doesn't do anything if it just has big shows, for me, and has very superior and very scholarly shows also. And to me as a New Yorker now of six years or so, is it any different really than the others? I think it's that affection that you're talking about that comes through in how you're saying it, too.

PG: Well, it's funny. All of my friends, you know, have the same feeling about The Museum of Modern Art. I mean, it's sort of character it's—

RC: Everybody we've spoken to on the Board certainly does.

PG: It's carried to a ridiculous extreme by Woody Allen, you know, who said it was a great place to pick up girls. But the fact is, it was a place where you went on a Saturday with your friends or your friend, and it was a real focus.

CC: Monroe Wheeler said, in his generation, people used to meet under the Biltmore clock. But, he said, now they meet, and then the next generation, met in the Garden in the Museum.

PG: That's right.

RC: It's a great landmark in New York City. It really is.

PG: Oh, it's marvelous.

CC: We've also heard the urge or the desire for more contemporary exhibitions from an interesting group of trustees, on one side.

PG: Yes?

CC: Ivan Chermayeff, it may be expected. He's a very forefront person.

PG: Yes.

RC: Walter Thayer was a surprise.

CC: And Walter Thayer, who, [when] we walked in and you know—

PG: Interesting.

CC: [We] pictured an Eisenhower, or we think that perhaps he's extremely conservative [laughing], suddenly the last things he's saying are, let's open it up, and let's—it was very interesting.

RC: He's a great supporter of Barbara Jakobson.

PG: But you must not forget also that there's a company that he runs that owns *Art in America*. So he's in touch and aware—

RC: He's in touch with and he's comfortable with—

PG: Yes.

CC: And he's always downtown.

RC: Of course, Donald Marron.

PG: Yes.

CC: He's supportive of Donald Marron.

PG: Yes, yes, yes.

RC: And then we understood and heard more of a reserve from, for instance, Mrs. Rockefeller.

PG: Yes.

RC: And who else? Beth Straus, who said when you become such a success, people really start looking at you. So you take your steps a little more cautiously.

CC: She's cautious about being so successful.

PG: Yes, yes.

RC: Because you have a big responsibility because you've done so well.

PG: Yes. I wouldn't agree with that because I think there is no disputing that that museum is pre-eminent in the world, really, as a museum of modern and contemporary art. And it doesn't have to worry about its position as far as that

goes. I mean, the collections have been developed in such an intelligent and imaginative way—

RC: So that they can do these transitory exhibitions.

PG: So that's never going to change and what you're talking about really is the balance between the past, the present and the future. And I think those of us who are saying we ought to pay more attention to contemporary art are just saying we ought to do more of what we're doing.

CC: I think you really express, in a way, the middle line, because Ivan was very much for contemporary art also, but he was extremely concerned about the fact that the Museum is becoming very much a museum of fashion in art, a museum of fashion, and it's very contemporary and that—

RC: The expansion and the bookstore.

CC: It's very faddish. And he just thinks the whole thing is becoming a giant shopping center, and he's just concerned in a large way. But maybe that's just the way of—

PG: A shopping center? You mean in terms of—?

CC: Well, not exactly.

RC: Just like, with the expansion and the big restaurants, the expanded Museum store.

PG: Yes.

RC: He was making more, I think, a comment on the times.

PG: Yes.

RC: He said the Museum is a reflection of what's going on all over—

PG: Yes.

RC: And he was a little concerned about aesthetic directions in society right now; he's thinking of the big picture.

PG: Yes; yes.

- RC: He too felt a frustration on the part of not being engaging [with] what is more current in our—
- CC: Well, it's almost as if he has to close his eyes to—and making those mistakes that you talked about, and not being worried.
- PG: Well, you see, I wouldn't worry so much about the aesthetics. But I think, you know, you do have that need to balance between what you are and have been, and what you can be and would like to be in the future. And I think it could afford to be more experimental, if you will.
- RC: The whole issue of expansion, in a way, you say, well, if you aren't going to take on [the] new and grow, then why even bother with an expansion?
- PG: Well, I think that one—I'm not answering for myself but one way to answer that question is to say: Well, look; this place just has untold treasures which nobody ever sees. We need twice the exhibition space. And, you know, I'd say that principally, what the Museum is getting from this expansion is a source of income to offset operating debts into the future, and twice the exhibition space. Well, that's a major addition. And I think people will be very excited by how much they will see that they didn't know existed there. But one would like to see it more energetically involved in what's going on with the young artists.
- CC: We spoke to Richard Oldenburg and we brought up the point that it seemed to be, in the earliest days, '29, '32, when the Museum with Barr, et cetera, was very much like Christ and his disciples.
- PG: Yes.
- CC: The early Church.
- PG: Yes.
- CC: Early Christians. And now it's the Vatican. I don't know who's the Pope; we won't debate that, but the Vatican with its cardinals and its large group, and now it's expanding. And it's a huge institution and it pretty much defines modern art. It certainly—there's a great imprimatur that the Museum grants. It has great power, and if anything, what—how people used to, let's say 20, 30 years ago, laugh. They'd walk through the galleries and laugh at paintings; now it's

extremely the opposite. People are very obliged to say they take for granted almost any kind of show that might be there. There's very little—

PG: But that's not only in the field of art. I mean it's everywhere, the society has become very blasé and, you know, anything's possible, everything goes.

RC: Eddie Warburg was saying he laments the times when—because people just maybe have lost some of their critical judgment these days.

CC: Well, he said, for him, art has a very glandular effect.

PG: Yes.

CC: He said he loves to see something that is really sensual or has great color and all. And he said it started getting a little depressing for him when everyone was categorizing all the art.

RC: Just accepting everything, almost afraid to be—well, art can't be wrong; I must be in the wrong; if I don't get it, I won't say anything.

CC: He's such an emotional character.

PG: Well, but that's an interesting point. People are afraid sometimes to express themselves, partly—but it's a reflection of other things that have gone on in the society. You know, look what's happened in terms of sexual mores. Well, I mean, once you accept the notion that anything goes or anything's possible, you don't express the traditional values and attitudes that people did. So it is also true in art, where somebody—I mean, look at what happened at the Armory show. People went bananas. Violent, violent attacks and—I mean, do you see anything that gets violently attacked anymore? Nothing.

RC: We've seen everything; movies...

PG: We've seen everything and in the field of—once you have, in a way—once you've gotten a society to accept Abstract Expressionism, which is about as far away as you can get from what people really understand on a superficial level, well, anything's possible, you know.

CC: I still think someone like Jackson Pollock is the last straw for most people, and also because of those *Life* magazine articles. He has just been the one who is always set up as the example.

PG: I tell you I think the return to realism is a swing back from extremes which were perhaps expressed in minimalist art and conceptual art and performance art. And they were simply art forms that a large number of people were never going really respond to. I mean, you know that the Impressionists go on forever because they appeal in the way that Warburg wants art to stimulate.

CC: Very light and fanciful and beautiful.

PG: Beautiful, sensuous, colorful, decorative, inviting. You want to look at them.

CC: There's nothing black and white or tough about them.

PG: That's right; they're not tough. They're not tough.

CC: What about realism? Does that upset you?

PG: Think of that [Claude] Monet, you know.

CC: Does that upset you about the Museum? That it doesn't seem to want to grasp anything particularly realist now? I'm not going to put you in a trap, but maybe that's being too specific. But it seems like it just doesn't respond to that.

PG: Well, I mean, you can look at it two ways. If you take the position that the Museum should really not be dealing with anything unless it's really kind of taken a hold, you can look at the return to realism as a relatively recent phenomenon. I mean, it's early sixties, late sixties, seventies? It's not older than that. If you take your role as one which reflects some kind of perspective, 10, 15 years isn't enough time to really assess it. But it certainly is going on. And now there are these neo-expressionists, but it's interesting because, you see, that the Museum has become involved with—it's as if—

RC: It's interesting. I'm wondering if because of their collection of historic expressionism might warrant—they feel comfortable.

PG: Perhaps. Perhaps.

RC: It's a European movement.



PG: Yes, but you know, you see it hanging in the Museum in shows, some of the new Italian neo-expressionists, and it's interesting. They have somehow responded to that, I think, more immediately than to the more realistic artists.

CC: Do you think the Museum will be able to attract members, interested people, as well as it attracted you, let's say, when you were [younger]? I know it's not putting on—it doesn't have a school where you can go every day and think this is just the best thing that ever happened. But can it do anything to create a special dialogue like that? Because it certainly did it for you. I mean, now you're back and you're—

PG: Well, I think so. You see, I've been involved in the Membership Department for a number of years, and you know, the interest and attachment to the Museum has really grown. Now the growth has been stimulated by the display of exhibitions like the *Picasso*. But I think one thing that will happen now, I think, is that the significance of each of the roughly six major departments will grow. Everybody always could see that there's painting and sculpture there, but some of the other departments had much smaller roles. Well, each department is going to expand now. And I've always felt that the Museum has an opportunity to attract people to the special interest areas by special interest, because, you know, it has a fantastic film program, marvelous photography department, and prints and drawings. And so I think first of all—I think the numbers of people who are interested in going to museums is obviously growing, for the reasons we touched on earlier, in terms of the demographics of the society. I also think that people are probably developing their special interests more. So if the Museum is able to reach out, not the way it did in those days, which was just to say, here's where all of these wonderful things are going on—I think it can still do that, but I think it will also have a heightened opportunity to identify its own special areas of activity and to identify in the society those people who will be going to them.

CC: So that's the great benefit, then, of this expansion.

PG: In my opinion, I think that's one of the substantial benefits. I've always believed that even in seeking new memberships that we haven't made enough of these obviously related but different media.

RC: That's really in keeping with the original concept. We often ask people about—if Barr was alive today, how would he feel about where it's going.

PG: Yes.

RC: The way you phrased it, it's really—because it was a wonderful concept. People loved it, and it's—that it's here now and alive and well, says that it was right.

PG: That's right. That's right.

CC: Philip Johnson, we asked him, “Do you think you'd be down looking at the [Julian] Schnabel's?” And he goes, “Well, I don't know.” He said he's not going to pass judgment. Philip Johnson himself isn't rushing down there, and he's got Frank Stella around. He's not going to pass judgment on what Alfred would have liked. He said, it's very possible that Alfred, right at this moment, could have been combing the galleries.

RC: Picking up [David] Salle's.

CC: Looking at the most strange, bizarre stuff.

PG: Sure.

CC: And if you follow his—sometimes he was a little late on things, but generally he was extremely forward-sighted.

PG: Who? Barr? Barr was amazing. You know, he was the first person who really identified the whole Russian Constructivist movement. I mean, from that side.

CC: We talked to people like Jay Leyda, for instance, the film.

PG: Oh, he's a lovely man. Wonderful.

CC: He and Alfred—Alfred had met [Sergei] Eisenstein when he was over in the Soviet Union.

PG: Yes.

CC: While he was working on [Ivan the Terrible](#). And Jay was there, and they—there was a lot of enthusiasm for areas that in those days must have been considered totally outside the purview of a museum.

PG: Absolutely.

CC: Russian films, you know?

PG: And a design department. You know, to take ordinary objects in commercial production and to say this was something worth paying attention to. You know, it's fascinating.

RC: We have a great film clip of [Philip] Johnson going into an ecstasy about a car wheel. And you absolutely now, of course, will accept that. But he was so infectious with it, that you were [saying], 'Yes, that's right! It really is important. It's the most important thing.'

CC: He says now it's terrific they have a design department, but, he said it's tough for Arthur Drexler to decide what to do, because Conran's and Pottery Barn—

RC: It's been accepted; design, good design.

CC: Those are the—if you want to see good design, go to those places.

PG: That's really, I would say, not exclusively but very much under the influence of what The Museum of Modern Art was doing in the design area. It's remarkable.

CC: I'd say publishers, too. Good publishers, I would think, the Publications Department would just point to you and a number of other people and say, well, this is what's happened. Look.

PG: Absolutely.

CC: Look at that wall. 50 years ago I would think most of that would have had to be in German, wouldn't it?

PG: That's right. Sure.

CC: If it existed at all.

PG: Yes, it didn't even exist in very wide.

CC: Skira had a few, or Rizzoli?

PG: I don't know if Skira goes back 50 years. That's worth finding out when they first began to publish.

RC: Monroe [Wheeler] certainly would [know].

CC: Because people are a little less certain as to exactly—

PG: He [Monroe Wheeler] would know that.

RC: He was it. I mean, he was—

PG: He was the head of the Publication Department for many years.

CC: Is art book publishing a very profitable business now?

PG: Very profitable?

CC: Or is it profitable? Is it a going concern?

PG: It could be a going concern and it can be profitable, but it's a difficult business in terms of our society. Because although you see—I mean, the challenge for us is reaching the right people, at an economical cost. They're out there, but how to identify them and how to best inform them about what we're doing, that's the constant challenge. The trade book business, that's bookstores and stuff, [and] that's dominated more and more by the major chains, and the major chains are interested in, you know, the most popular sorts of titles, because many of them are situated in shopping malls, and you're getting people—it's funny. The same person, even, who might go into a museum bookstore and buy a book on art, when out shopping for clothes or groceries or whatever one might find in a shopping center, may not be in quite the same frame of mind. And so they go into the bookstore to buy Jane Fonda's exercise book or the latest novel out, the latest John le Carre spy thriller, but may not be in the frame of mind to buy a 40 dollar monograph on a given artist. So in my opinion, it's a curious paradox, because I really believe that the factor in the society interested in the kind of books we publish, or New York Graphic Society, or other very good publishers of the illustrated book, despite the fact that I think there are more and more such people, the channels to reach them are not growing.

RC: It's almost like what you were saying, the context has to be right.

PG: Yes.

RC: For museum-goers.

PG: Take yourself, you know. You're in a frame of mind—you do one thing or another.

RC: That's true. I wouldn't necessarily in one of the big shopping malls go and buy an art [book].

PG: If you have to buy, you know, some socks, you might sort of peer at a bookstore, one of the chain stores.

RC: It doesn't quite match.

PG: That's right.

CC: Whereas, if you go to the Whitney, and then go two doors down into Books and Company—

PG: When you're thinking about it.

RC: Sure.

CC: You're probably apt to pick up a book on [László] Moholy-Nagy or whatever, and someone else.

RC: And that's a good point. That's interesting.

CC: I think it's that atmosphere that—

PG: So, to answer the questions about—in terms of your general question, the book business in general is very competitive and it's a difficult business because, to a certain extent, the society has never valued the book as highly as it should. I found myself, to my own horror, the other day, in a discussion about the cost of textbooks, saying they're so expensive. Now when somebody else says books are so expensive, you know, I really start screaming because, expensive relative to what? Certainly not relative to what goes into them in terms of time, effort, energy, and money. We have accepted the inflation in all sorts of other aspects of our lives. Example, I own an apartment in New York. The price of that apartment had increased in 10 years eight to nine times. My maintenance has doubled in the last 10 years.

CC: Lunch costs, you know.

PG: You know. Lunch costs how much more than it did. I mean, you used to be able to get lunch for a \$1.00 or a \$1.50. Who gives? [RC laughs] All of those other areas we somehow—going to the movies, you know, cost a dollar. It's \$5.00. \$4.00.

CC: Whereas to buy a paperback.

PG: Book prices have not increased at that rate. Although it's true, you used to be able to get a paperback for under a dollar. And now it's \$2.95 or \$3.95. But the fact is that they haven't escalated in price more rapidly than have other things in our lives. And yet, because books...

**END OF INTERVIEW at 0:45:43**