DAVID HOFFMAN MOMA HISTORY INTERVIEWS

INTERVIEW WITH:	**MARY LEA BANDY (MB)[1]**
INTERVIEWERS:	**CARL COLBY (CC); HARVEY ARDMAN (HA)**
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CC: We're getting a sense of the origins of the Film Department, when Iris Barry, et cetera, and her interest and really the interest of the Lincoln Center, the Film Society as [film] being something separate. But what do you see—? What you're doing now in terms of conservation or preservation, and also assembling a collection, and also the purposes of having a Film Study Center, and also providing, in a sense, art and entertainment for people through having public screenings. Do you see your mission as very different than originally conceived?

MB: No, not at all. I think Alfred Barr's statement in 1929, that the purpose of the Museum is to collect, preserve, and exhibit the best works of art of our time, is the purpose of every department, and it's still being followed today by all of the curatorial departments. This department was the first in this country to actively collect film and say that they belonged in a museum. And they started that in '35 when Iris Barry went to Hollywood, and the following year she went to Europe, and asked people to give us films, to let us have them. She was very successful in getting major American people to give films, people like [David] Selznick and [Samuel] Goldwyn and [Douglas] Fairbanks and [Mary] Pickford and so on; then we got the whole D. W. Griffith collection, in those years. And during World War II, of course, we got a lot of material that people wanted to take out of Europe that we could safeguard. From the beginning, we have built an international collection. The conception was that this was a museum of international art, and we haven't changed that purpose at all. But with different curators over the years, different emphasis has been placed on the collection, and it's gone from

[1] Also present, Luisa Kreisberg (LK), the MoMA Director of Public Information (Press Office).

concentrating on American—Iris Barry was very interested in American Hollywood films, major studio work. She collected a great deal of the European work, the avant-garde work of the twenties. She was very conscious—she'd grown up with this, the major film work in the twenties in Russia and Europe and England—and started collecting the documentary material. And different curators over the years have, for their own reasons and their own interests, favored one area over the other. But on balance, I think that's been a very good thing, because we've built the different areas. We have good holdings in documentary films, in animation, the avant-garde, and the mainstream narrative films from all over the world.

CC: So even in the thirties, there was as much interest in collecting *Chien Andalou* or *Entre'acte*.

MB: Oh, absolutely. We actually got those films. Absolutely.

CC: As there was to get whatever was coming out, let's say—as there was to get *The Gold Rush* or [Josef von] Sternberg films and that sort of thing?

MB: Yes. I like to think—the more I read about the early days—that Alfred Barr and Iris Barry's attitudes about films were probably more enlightened then than many people are today; not so many people in the Museum.

HA: I understand what you're saying.

MB: But people today—it's astonishing that people today still make the distinction about the different levels of film. I went to an independent conference, a conference of independent filmmakers and filmmakers' groups. And one gentleman got up and talked about the three levels of filmmaking. There was, of course, at the top of the list, the independently produced avant-garde experimental film. And the second tier of films that we should think about are the European films, so-called intellectual film.

HA: And last, and certainly least—

MB: Is the Hollywood cinema.

CC: And the last stuff was *Raging Bull*.

MB: And I thought to myself, in the 1980s people are still making these distinctions. This museum, I think, prides itself on an approach that is non-academic in the sense that we don't swing to the semiological approach or to this or to that. We have had a broad base from the beginning, and it's been relatively free of jargon. And Iris Barry was a very wise and very broad-minded critic. And of course, many British critics and historians have understood and loved the American film right from the beginning. And it's still true today.

CC: So it's very encyclopedic, then.

MB: Totally.

CC: What about—? Would you say now—? I was trying to think even this morning, what wouldn't you have or what wouldn't you collect?

MB: Well, we don't have—

CC: You don't have newsreels and a lot of TV.

MB: We have some, but we don't collect television and we don't [INAUDIBLE: 0:05:05].

CC: You don't collect information, really.

MB: We collect films as works of art. Our collection is intended to cover the history of the medium. We are an historical institution, and our job is to collect and exhibit the history of film from the 1890s to today, to show you what happened. We don't necessarily say that one period or one this is better than the other. We are exploring different styles and themes. But other institutions in this country have decided to focus on American art primarily; that's their mandate, or The American Film Institute, which doesn't keep the films; it collects them and gives them to the Library of Congress. The Library of Congress is the copyright depository, so they receive mostly American material. UCLA Film Archive, one of the largest growing archives, is collecting television in a major way. Eileen Bowser, our curator in the archives, says we collect just about everything except pornography. And we have a couple of those. [Laughter]

CC: I think, you would also collect, and I'll just throw these out, things like Smiley's People or Tinker Tailor or who—are people collecting that kind of thing?

MB: Well the Museum of Broadcasting, on the other side of Fifth Avenue, that's their purpose, and they perform separately from us. We work, of course, in close cooperation with them, but they are collecting material made for television. We certainly collect films made for TV, and we collect material that has appeared on television that relates to the arts.

HA: Do you have a videotape collection of that material, or is that on film also?

MB: Most of it's on film. We have always tried to collect everything at least on 16 millimeter film, and a lot of television programs over the years have been transferred onto film, in the days before they were being put on tape. I mean, things from the forties and fifties.

CC: And make a Cinescope of them?

HA: But you don't want everything.

MB: Not at all. We're the most selective of any American institute.

CC: Of any archive, you're the most [INAUDIBLE: 0:07:21] museum?

MB: For several reasons. Since we feel that we're not an archive that's collecting information and documentation of history, but we're talking about *art* history.

HA: Right.

MB: We are careful to acquire—we acquire in small quantity compared to other institutions—those things that demonstrate the history of film. And sometimes films will seem not to have as strong an artistic purpose; it won't be as aesthetically as advanced as some, but they're important because they were pioneering works which taught future generations, et cetera.

HA: But what is the basis? You say you're very selective. On what basis do you select? Can this be enunciated in words? Is it possible to say what that basis is?

MB: The same basis that the other departments collect. We are looking for films that are of as high quality as we believe we can find, films that have a style, that are concerned with the aesthetics of film art, films that have content, that have

something to contribute. I think it's the same basis as all the art collecting in the institution.

CC: It looks like the reason why they might have one film by Kirk Douglas but they're not going to have his third film—

MB: Absolutely.

CC: Because his third film was a spaghetti Western that wasn't very—and the other one was whatever.

MB: Absolutely. Or the first spaghetti.

HA: Are there first-run films playing in New York right now that will be part or are part of your collection?

MB: Yes, definitely.

HA: Like what?

MB: Well, they're very difficult to get, but certainly as a representative example of a film that is meaningful today, whatever we might think of it aesthetically—we would want a print of *Gandhi* for the collection.

CC: It would be an epic.

MB: It's an important example of films that have been made.

HA: Content.

CC: Biography.

MB: Mm-hm, mm-hm. And you see, people in the Museum—curators today are not trying to make final judgment today. We are collecting selectively because of limited funds, limited space, limited—we would *like* to collect more than we *can* collect. Film companies won't necessarily give us as much as we want, but we're not collecting just to satisfy today's tastes. We are collecting with a view that in 10 and 20 years from now, people will say, 'Good; the Museum has made the effort to follow the trends of the eighties and has collected films of the eighties, and we can learn and study about that period,' from what we have put together.

CC: You circulate your films with [the] Cinémathèque Française and different other people around the world.

MB: Well all the archives around the world that belong to the International Archive organization exchange films for each other.

HA: Kind of like a vast lending library, in a sense.

CC: You also show things that are not in your own collection.

MB: Absolutely. The French show [*Rediscovering French Film, Part II*] that opens today, we're borrowing—it's over 150 films. Many of those films were borrowed from other archives in Europe and Canada, and works that we—many that we would like to have in our collection but we don't for whatever reason, and they very kindly are lending them to us, they won't necessarily lend them to anybody else.

HA: Would they let you make a print of them?

MB: We do exchanges with other archives; you have to clear the copyright. Most of the films that any archives has in its collection, unlike the paintings, don't belong to the institution.

HA: Right, just the copy belongs to you.

MB: The *copyright* belongs to the producer. So you have to get permission from the copyright holder, and then, if you can find the money, and if the negative exists, you can make a print, and we will make a print for the French archive of a film they want in our collection, and they will give us a print of something. So we each spend our own money in our own country, and exchange the films to each other. There's a whole policy—[a] set of rules established by the International Archive, and no other department, no other medium, shares in this kind of international exchange to the extent that we do. The International Federation of Film Archives was formed in 1938, '39.

HA: Is the Museum a senior partner of this?

MB: We were one of the four founders. The British Film Institute, the Cinémathèque Française, and the Berlin Filmarchiv, Bundesarchiv, or something.[2] And the Cinémathèque Française pulled out in the sixties when Henri Langlois was having his difficulties with the French government reestablishing. And there is the French state archive at Bois d'Arcy which is part of the Centre Nationale de la Cinèmatographie, and they are observers of this organization. Cinémathèque will rejoin eventually. That was all a political situation. But this organization has grown and Eileen Bowser is on the executive committee, and she can tell you more about it—but it has grown into a strong, international network that allows us to share information, communicate, to exchange films, to borrow, to lend, to whatever, and it's an extraordinary feat of cooperation among cultural institutions.

CC: And it includes the Soviet Union, doesn't it?

MB: Yes. And the year that I went—several years ago I went to the Czechoslovakian meeting—they have a conference every June, and I was there the year that Red China was admitted to it. And it was *extraordinary* to see a hundred people seated around a huge square arrangement of tables, because everybody has to be equal to everybody else, and you're sitting there with people from North Korea, South Korea, China, all the Latin American countries, all of the Eastern bloc countries, the Soviet Union, and they're voting to allow [INAUDIBLE: 0:13:30]. The only instance—

HA: It's like the United Nations.

MB: Absolutely. It is an *incredible* situation, and of course politics are important, and many archives are state run—many film archives are state controlled.

CC: But what it is—? When you say films are probably one of America's chief exports, it's an export industry and a very strong one.

MB: Strongest products, absolutely, and of course the Chinese government visited, sent film records, and they want to make films in China. Film is a wonderful way to reach each other.

CC: And [INAUDIBLE: 0:14:06].

[2] Reichsfilmarchiv.

MB: There are many other agreements [where] the Museum and the French government exchange works of art, Beaubourg and the Museum, et cetera, but this is—the film network is, I think, unique among all of the modern arts.

HA: Now you show films across—every day, downstairs, but do you have a lot of scholars who are—?

MB: Constantly. The Film Department is divided into four parts. The exhibition program is the most visible. We'll, when we're done, have two theaters running every day. We will show the whole spectrum: animation, documentaries, shorts, feature films, narrative, experimental work, et cetera, borrowed films and our own films. And those are in organized series. Upstairs—one of the parts of our department is the Film Studies Center, the whole center of this department. Just two screening rooms; a Study Center with six carrels for private study, [a] room for about 20 scholars, and the individual five rooms for people to sit down and look at 16 [millimeter] film. And there's three or four thousand students, scholars, a year who come in to look at films and to use all of the documentary materials we have: posters, music scores, manuscripts, film scripts; and we have all the clippings and diaries and scrapbooks and so on; a tremendous amount of material that's not in the Museum Library but that we handle in the Study Center. And we also—the third part of the program is the circulating collection, which is 1,100 films in 16 millimeter that go to schools, libraries, high schools, universities, all over the country, and teachers and graduate students regularly rent these films to show to their classes, for study, et cetera. So we reach another—I think that we reach about a quarter of a million people through that; it's a huge program.

HA: He used to do just that.

CC: I ran a program at Georgetown University—I got *Entre-acte* and lots of them.

MB: Then you know all that. Great. And we're coming out this year with a full catalogue; a 300-page catalogue of the circulating collection.

HA: Oh wow.

MB: With essays by our own staff and outside scholars.

CC: You used to be [one] of the only places you could get them. I remember looking and trying to find—and this was probably the only place I could get at least four or five of the prints that I wanted.

MB: Yes, well, we think we have the best holdings of silent films in the circulating [film library], and we've added a lot of other material. We've upgraded it with about 300 new titles, so it's going to be a much stronger collection. And when we come out with the catalogue in the fall, it's going to be marvelous.

CC: Also, the prints are in good shape, more than other people. I remember renting from a couple of companies and whew.

MB: Lots of [INAUDIBLE: 0:16:58].

HA: How are you doing with your preservation, by the way?

CC: Is that the fourth aspect then?

MB: The archive is the fourth. There's the programming, the Study Center, the circulating film library, and the archive. And the archive has 8,000 titles in it, and we are preserving and cataloguing each title. We've preserved maybe half the collection. Eileen can tell you the running feet, the figures are very interesting: how many millions of dollars we've spent and how many running feet and how many millions of feet we still have to.

CC: Are you still having a big problem with nitrate?

MB: Tremendous. All the archives are. Our biggest push has been for the last couple of years to fund our preservation campaign. And we need six million more dollars to finish preserving just what we now have. That doesn't even count the new stuff and doesn't count the new storage facility we [INAUDIBLE: 0:18:02].

CC: Is that putting it on safety stuff?

MB: Yes.

CC: And then how long does it last?

MB: Hundreds of years if we take care of it properly.

CC: So it's really putting it on that safety acetate rather than having it on the nitrate.

MB: That's right, you have to take everything off nitrate. But the problem that's emerging that's even greater in the long run is in the nitrate. There is a finite amount of nitrate in the world.

HA: Yes, thank god.

MB: And we want to be able—given enough money and perhaps 20, 25 years, the rest of the nitrate will be transferred.

HA: It will last that long?

MB: No, a lot of it will go before we get enough money to transfer.

CC: So there are whole collections that you could—could you give us a couple of examples of some things that have been really whittled down because we don't have—

MB: Well, more than 50 percent of all the films in America have been lost.

CC: People like King Vidor and—? Did you know, for instance, that someone like John Ford, he didn't simply direct all of those sound films that we're familiar with, *Stagecoach* and that sort of thing.

MB: We have a lot of his silent films.

CC: He probably did, what? 40 or 50 silent films?

MB: There's a lot of his silent films in our Fox collection, we're restoring those.

CC: Henry King, people like that?

MB: Henry King, all of the American artists, some of their films have been lost. There are very few filmmakers whose entire work has been preserved.

CC: And what about now; color preservation and [Martin] Scorsese and...

MB: That's what I was saying; that's become, in the long run, a greater problem than the nitrate. Because color fades very, very fast, and there's a Kodak stock that's not a long-life stock. We, the archives organizations, sit around and say, how can we issue papers to people telling them only to use long-life stock. We want film companies and filmmakers only to use the Kodak stock. And Kodak will say, of course it's there, but who's going to buy it? And we want Kodak to only sell it,

and it's endless, an endless problem. It's an economic question for the film companies.

HA: Maybe they can be convinced to make a few prints on them.

MB: Well, that's what we're trying to do, and all the color work we do and the other archives, we put on long-life stock.

CC: Are you talking about making the print or shooting the negative? What kind of film is this? Negative or—?

MB: I think when the film companies—

CC: Is it CRI negative?

MB: Yes. When the film companies are making the final prints, they should make them on long-life stock, and the negatives.

CC: Well they can make the negative, at least, on that, and then they can make the prints on the other.

MB: They can do anything they want to do.

CC: It's just another item in the budget.

MB: It's another cost factor and it's a very serious one.

HA: Have there been any really heart-wrenching tragedies of films lost?

MB: Oh, so many. I mean, Eileen Bowser can give you all of those anecdotal stories, the titles of this masterpiece that's been lost, and that, and so on. You can make up numerous lists of how many films have been lost; the American Film Institute is constantly putting together lists of famous titles that are endangered. We could probably put together a selected list of films being restored that otherwise would have been gone if we didn't. There are so many that I don't have an answer.

HA: What about making at least videotape copies of the stuff before it disintegrates?

MB: We don't believe in that. Other organizations do, but our primary goal is to preserve film as film. Other archives believe, of necessity, that it's cheaper, and so they'll put things on videotape, and let's do them [INAUDIBLE: 0:21:34].

CC: Also, there's no guarantee from Sony and all the tape companies that that stuff's going to last.

MB: There's no guarantee, but it's a whole other step to do it, and then you have to get into the whole expense of making the videotapes. I would rather spend the money—I would rather keep doing what we're doing. And we, The Museum of Modern Art, will be a repository for film.

CC: To do a supervised transfer of an hour is almost $400—of an hour's worth of film.

MB: It's a great deal cheaper than film, but it's not high quality. We don't have to do it, and I'm trying to raise the money to put everything onto film.

HA: You want to do it right.

MB: I'm trying. Nobody has all the answers, because there is not enough money.

HA: Is this the biggest problem you face?

MB: Enormous; it's an enormous problem.

CC: So preservation is a huge thing.

MB: If all the archives cannot step up our work, get more money, build more labs, store the films properly, we'll lose another major percentage of the films of our time. And I really believe strongly that in the 21st century everybody's going to look back on us and say *that*'s the thing that they did that was worthwhile; preserve these films. And they thought it was a lot of money then, but it was peanuts. For us to spend $20,000 or $50,000 or $75,000 to preserve a major narrative film appalls people today. I think it's nothing. 50 years from now people are going to say, thank god. They wouldn't blink twice at spending that kind of money to restore a [Pablo] Picasso painting. They spend half a million dollars.

CC: It's like if half of [Paul] Cezanne's stuff disappeared tomorrow, and then people—

MB: Well, maybe a lot of it has, but today people will spend the money to conserve works of—they don't *question* the need to have air-conditioned, temperature and humidity controlled galleries for the paintings and sculpture. Nobody wants to come up with the money to do the same thing for films. They don't understand it.

They don't see the films—but Richard Griffith, the curator who worked here 30 years ago and was Eileen's mentor, said that he was the only curator in the Museum whose collection was disintegrating before his eyes. He was taking care of a collection that was disappearing. And it still—I mean, we've made great strides, but I've started the film preservation campaign because I realized that during the expansion project the Museum of necessity is focusing on the building and the new galleries for all the other works of art, and they're building storage facilities and galleries with all of the proper facilities. We are the only collection that's housed outside the Museum in New Jersey; nobody was planning to do anything for that. So we need about $2 million to upgrade our storage facility and get refrigerated closets and so on. And I said, that's *our* expansion problem; that's our biggest problem. So we came up with our expansion program within the Museum, but it means excluding all the film collections.

CC: Is this something that other countries, let's say, Britain and France, just does by a matter of course?

MB: No, nobody is doing it as a matter of course. The French government realized that so many of the Cinémathèque process prints had disappeared in a huge fire two years ago. In Mexico they had a fire. So many places have lost enormous bodies of work. The French government set aside money in 1968 to form the state archive in opposition to the Cinémathèque, and what is really going to happen is that all the films will be in the French archive, in the state government archive. And the curator that's running that archive has been able to raise enough money from the government to build two magnificent buildings, and he's housing his films under the finest conditions right now. Certain other governments are putting the money into that. Other countries don't have the money to give to it. In Latin America it's very difficult to spend that kind of money on film.

HA: Is Japan involved at all in that?

MB: Japan, curiously, which has one of the richest bodies of film of any country, it's been very little. And they dropped out when Langlois dropped out of the archive. The organization took a lot of people with him; they dropped out, Japan dropped out and they haven't rejoined. And they don't preserve as much as they should.

And interestingly, I'm on a panel for the Japan Society to discuss the next 10 years direction for the Japan Society. And one of our recommendations is that we must take the stand that Japan must preserve its national heritage. It's a great, great body of work, and it's got to have more money put into it. These Japanese corporations that are willing to come up with so much money, just like the American corporations, should put money into taking care of this body of work.

HA: It sounds to me like you're barking up the right tree there; you might make progress.

MB: I think the time politically is right. It's very interesting. Nobody wanted us to start this preservation campaign. People didn't really know what bad shape we were in, and the federal government was increasing its allocations through the National Endowment for the Arts every year. All of a sudden there have been these horrendous major cutbacks, and curiously, the head of the National Endowment appointed by [Ronald] Reagan, Frank Hodsoll, has become very interested in film preservation, which we welcome with open arms. So we're taking advantage of that and we're working with—we had a conference here in November with Hodsoll and a number of people, to show him how important we felt it all was. And I think the thing that did the most for us, that I'm most pleased about, because no one, again, wanted us to do it—we did a benefit in June, *Firefox*, and it netted $111,000 for the preservation campaign, free and clear to go to the preservation campaign. It happened because Clint Eastwood said he wanted his film, if it could, to help the Film Department of The Museum of Modern Art. Nobody had ever asked to have that happen before.

HA: He's an unlikely contributor.

MB: No, he's been on the National Endowment for the Arts panel. He's a very intelligent and perceptive guy, and he came to the Museum—we did a one-day program for him for the membership, and he learned a lot about it. And he liked what he saw, and he knew that we needed help, and he responded, as a kind of intelligent outsider would do.

HA: That's terrific.

MB: And he's the first filmmaker that's ever done that.

HA: What about Woody Allen, who's on, uh...

MB: You can turn off your machine if you want me to talk about people. [Laughter] But, we are hoping—

CC: Are you in competition, in a sense? What is the Film Society of Lincoln Center?

MB: You're going too fast, all of you. I have to finish one point at a time. But we are trying to form a group of friends of the Film Department, of filmmakers of major stature that we believe will contribute over the years to us. One of the first people is Lillian Gish, whom I *very* much want you to interview for the film because she's our oldest and dearest friend in the film world still active today. She set up a trust fund, and at the end of this year it totals $280,000 that is payable to us on her death for the preservation of films. As far as I know, she is the only film person in the history of the universe that has given private income for preservation, and we of course make a great deal of noise about this. We're very proud of it. We think that we can add other film people to this. And we also of course want filmmakers to take care of their own films or to give their films to us or another archive to take care of, which is just as much a problem. The companies, the producers and the filmmakers themselves don't spend the money taking care of their own stuff.

HA: Will you accept anything that's given to you?

MB: No, but we can accept gifts and then make exchanges.

CC: That's interesting, though, because people do—I did this series for instance for German television about New Orleans musicians, Preservation Hall and that sort of thing, and I know a friend—a jazz archive down at Tulane, and I knew they wanted it, and I also knew that I wouldn't mind if somebody had it who would take care of it and so in 30 years

MB: Of course. That's what we're trying to get across.

CC: It's still—it's my gift but there it is if anybody wants to see it.

MB: Absolutely. Well, what we're all hoping to do is to start a campaign with all the film archives in the United States that we're going to call A Decade of

Preservation. And instead of competing with each other, as you were asking, with Eastman House and the American Film Institute and the Library of Congress, we will announce this Decade of Preservation with a goal to finding out where all of the American films in existence are, what shape they're in, what can we do to preserve them—from bringing them from foreign locations, getting them from film studios, and we want support from the President for this. We think we should get it. We feel that this is a nonpolitical issue because it goes beyond this or that administration.

HA: It's preserving our heritage.

MB: This is exactly—this is—one of our greatest American heritages is our film history, a strong body of work.

CC: It's literal American heritage; you actually can see New York and people's ideas.

HA: It's a visual record of what life was like and what we were like.

MB: And the American film industry—French films too, but most of all the American film industry—never has stopped from the day it started. So there's a body of work that's among the strongest of any body ever produced in the history of the medium. And it's our responsibility.

CC: Is this cross-referenced in the sense that you know what other people have?

MB: Absolutely. We all tell each other what we've got; we share information.

CC: So it's just a question that, for instance, Louise Brooks will put her films up in Eastman House.

MB: That's fine with us.

CC: But Lillian Gish will put her things here—what you want to know is—

MB: We want to know it'll be put somewhere. We try, and we're all competitive in a certain sense—we each are proud of our own collection, but as long as we can borrow from each other, we don't worry about it. We want them to be put somewhere.

CC: Who would have, for instance, a lot of the German things, [F.W.] Murnau and [G.W.] Pabst and all that?

MB: We have a very good collection. But one of our campaign projects is to catalogue the collection. Most film archives haven't had the money to catalogue their collections. So we've gotten a marvelous gift from a wonderful man, and the whole project is three-quarters of a million dollars to catalogue everything we've got and publish the catalogue. People don't understand that the main problem we all have is lack of funds. We've got the expertise, we've got trained people, we've got scholars coming out of film schools, we have curators; we need the money.

CC: Isn't that amazing? To catalogue the collection; to know what you have.

HA: Three quarters of a million dollars.

CC: But to know what you have. And the painting and sculpture pieces—

MB: You know what it's going to mean for us to have?

HA: It seems reasonable to know that.

CC: Exactly. Can you imagine the Painting and Sculpture Department not knowing what they have?

MB: Well we know what we have in a sense because everything is on a little card, in a case. But you can't sit down even in two days and know what Warner Brothers films we have. You'd have to go to a lot of work to find out.

CC: Essentially it will all be computerized.

MB: So we're computerizing everything. And everybody's doing the same thing in the Museum, but because the nature of our medium is so different, we are not part of the general museum process, so the registrar doesn't take care of us, [it] doesn't handle, catalogue and photograph what we've got and so on; we have to do it. And the whole process—the budget for the whole thing, is three quarters of a million dollars. The American Film Institute, every time they do one of their catalogues—the teens, they're back on the teens now—each of those volumes costs between $400,000 and $800,000 to do.

HA: It sounds to me like one of your chief jobs, if not your chief job, is to raise funds, essentially.

MB: No, I don't think it's my chief job. I, coming into this job, became aware very fast, because our department was financially very badly off five years ago—I became aware that the key to solving a number of our problems was to get the money, and this wasn't built into the Museum's capital campaign. This wasn't a part of the Museum's policy, and it was the fault, primarily, of the Film Department that they didn't make this all clear to the Museum what they needed. Or, the Film Department has operated independently of the Museum in many areas, because of our physical differences.

CC: Though it might have been part of Barr's vision to include film, photography, and architecture, what would eventually happen would be that Cornelius Bliss would leave his paintings, or so-and-so would leave his pictures, or so-and-so would leave the money to buy the pictures—

MB: But people don't collect film. The Trustees would leave us films but they don't have them.

CC: Exactly. Nobody's got films on the wall.

HA: Yes, but Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford...

MB: Yes, they have given their films.

HA: Right.

MB: And then we have to come up with the money to take care of the films. And if taking care of the films means that you must spend $5,000 to $50,000 to make a duplicate negative and print, that's quite an expensive gift. Nobody gives us the films and gives us the money with the films to take care of them.

CC: Once you get anything, you're going to get prints, but no money to take care of the prints.

MB: That's right. So I'm trying to turn that around.

HA: So that means gifts cost you.

MB: Cost us millions of dollars. So I'm trying to turn around and say that we need all of this money. But I would say that my job is to do the fundraising on top of the other things—

HA: Well what is your chief job?

MB: —which is to make this multi-faceted department function within the Museum, because we're not like the other departments—and to structure the programs. I believe I have a very strong sense of how film relates to the other art forms and that film must be treated as an art form instead of as entertainment. And if I've done something for the Department, I believe I've made this department function in a more art historical way. And I've started a publishing program, and I have taken the responsibility for editing the catalogues and publications that we're coming out with. [INAUDIBLE: 0:36:53]. It's, in my opinion, an understaffed department that hasn't been able to do a lot of things because of a lack of funds and people, and my job as director has been to recognize what's needed and get those people—get the money, and supervise the work. But I believe that each of the four areas—we've changed some of the staffs in those areas in the last few years, but they're all very well staffed at this point, and they are carrying out the work they've always been doing, and I'm facilitating that.

HA: How do you think Iris Barry would react if she were to walk in the door tomorrow and see what you've been doing all this time?

MB: I think she'd be pleased at our approach to film today. She would understand—if I can tell from reading her correspondence—that I have exactly the same political problems that she had when she was here. I think she would applaud our efforts to publish again, to present our point of view, which the Department hadn't done for a number of years. Unlike the other departments here, we had really not come up to scratch in clarifying what we're doing and why we're doing it. I think she would like that. She probably would be appalled at the cost of running institutions today, at the number of people required to do anything, at the expansion of the bureaucracy, and she would probably be appalled that the film companies haven't changed very much from the time that she was trying to get the material. It's just as hard to get films out of people today.

CC: And it's just as hard to have a special day every year—you mean, to have a—

MB: But I think, because Eileen Bowser, who is curator of the collection, and Adrienne Mancia, [who] is curator of the exhibitions—because they both grew up, so to speak, here at the Museum under the policies of Iris, they are devoted to what

she represented. I think it's great that today we're still carrying out what Alfred and Iris started. We don't worship them, but we are continuing.

HA: You said that you face the same political problems that Iris did.

MB: Yes.

HA: What do you mean exactly? The difference between your art form and the other ones?

MB: Yes. I think that's basic to the whole thing. This is the most popular medium of the arts of today.

HA: In both senses.

MB: Yes. It works for you and it works against you. Lillian Gish always says, the oldest most widespread art form, of course, is architecture. Everybody has to live in a building. Film has become—it grew so fast and its economic history, the history of the people that have run the film business, which I think is absolutely fascinating, has carried with it a certain stigma. These people are very much in the news. Everybody thinks they take cocaine. Everybody—blah, blah, blah. You know. You read *Variety*. You know what the attitude is about the people running the film business. It's, I think, in a way, what the novel was in the 19th century. [Charles] Dickens was looked down upon because he was so—

HA: That's the way [William] Shakespeare's troupe was looked at.

MB: There you are. Opera must have gone through the same thing. Painting and sculpture and printmaking, and more recently photography, have all acquired the patina of culture, elitist, aesthetic forms of art that are carried out in the highest levels of society; galleries, independent collectors, the rich, the educated, the elite. Film is still in a Broadway theater and the kids go there and throw their popcorn at each other.

HA: Art of the masses.

MB: I find that wonderful because it's part of the whole tension of it.

CC: That's what I like about it.

MB: We haven't sunk into a lethargy. American films have certainly in the last 10 years had their highs and their lows, but they're still making [INAUDIBLE: 0:41:25].

CC: It's nice to see *Raiders of the Lost Ark* being seen by 250 million people around the world.

MB: It's wonderful.

HA: It appears to me that American film is a very vigorous and living medium.

MB: It's marvelous, and it's stronger than ever.

HA: It's in pretty good shape right now; yes.

MB: And one of the things that Willard van Dyke, when he came in in the sixties as director—because Willard was a photographer and a documentary filmmaker—he felt very, very strongly that young people and experimental work and documentary work had to be more visible in the Museum and started a lot of programs that we're still carrying out today. And if anything is happening today—filmmakers, youngsters, are making films in any way they possibly can without always having to join the mainstream, and it's easier now than it was in Willard's time when you had—the government, during the Depression, commissioned Willard, otherwise he wouldn't have made a living, wouldn't have been able to work. There is a sense of real regional development, filmmakers growing up in this or that part of the country, through co-ops and so on. And we feel that we support that, the growth of independent filmmaking. We take part in and strongly participate in and show a great deal of the work, we work with the other co-ops in New York City, and so on. I think that's very, very healthy right now, even with all the funding problems. And our goal is to do more of what we're already doing. We're not trying to change. Bill Rubin says you don't know what art is going to be like 10 years from now, thank goodness. We're not here to predict it. We are here to support what we think is going on, that we approve of, what we think is advancing the art form, and we're here to collect it and show it, analyze it; whatever. I believe, and other curators may differ with me, but I believe we are not a university; we are not an academic institution. We *support* those institutions; we give them—

HA: You're faced with a much broader cross-section of society.

MB: Absolutely. But we have a very strong duty to present our work to the general public. And I honestly believe that the Film Department is not a snobbish department. We are not elitist. We like the films of [Steven] Spielberg, we like the films of [John] Cassavetes. We like the films of [Frank] Capra and [Alfred] Hitchcock; we like the films of—

CC: All you have to do is look at the schedule.

MB: Yes.

CC: There'll be an odd Japanese film, and then you'll turn the page, [and] it'll be *Play Misty for Me*. [Laughter]

MB: Absolutely. It's catholic in a certain sense. And I also think that Iris was a champion—and I would like to think we are part of this, too—at poking holes in pretentiousness. We don't show films just because they are supposedly worthy or important or whatever. We're not interested in the kind of flashy, immediacy of projects that seem terribly trendy or chic or important. We'll even cause ourselves a little trouble not to do that, because we don't believe in it. And we are here for the long haul; we're not here for the short run. So we're not interested in the easily popular just because it's the thing at the moment. But this staff, for years, have been spotters, and we're the first to show—I mean, Larry Kardish years ago showed Steve Spielberg's independent movies before he became—we showed his first features in the New Directors program that we do with Lincoln Center, we showed *Sugarland Express*. We've shown the first Ralph Bakshi films. You can go down the list and I hope you will talk to Larry and Adrienne about the history of the exhibition program. We have a list of our exhibitions that you'd probably like to read. We've been pioneers in that sense, of discovering new talent, bringing new talent here, long before there were any programs at the Whitney or downtown, or the revival houses, the art houses.

HA: Pretty [INAUDIBLE: 0:45:43].

MB: Absolutely.

CC: I'm glad to see that, actually, because I used to, even six or seven years ago—Phoenix Films would distribute things for me, and we thought, well why don't we

try to place it in New American Filmmakers or their program. And for a while, I'd say about six or seven years ago, it was an interesting series because there was experimental [film], but there was documentary—

MB: They did a lot more films every day than they do now.

CC: And then all of a sudden it became very strict, it became almost that hierarchy that you were talking about, that fellow who stood up and said very experimental—and they don't even get to the European or the popular. And then it becomes very stolid, in a way.

MB: Part of that, I'm sure, is the Whitney's policies and their economics, and part of it is the taste of the curator.

HA: When I first came to New York I belonged to an organization called Cinema 16. Long gone, but I mean the things that were shown in that—

MB: A film society that would show things to their members.

HA: Incredible things.

MB: Very important. Well I'd like to think that over the years we've shown a great deal of work to filmmakers who at that time didn't even know they were filmmakers, or were struggling—to writers, to directors, to producers. Frank Rosenfelt, the chairman of MGM—he's the vice chairman right now—always talks about how many films he's seen here and how important it was for him and other people at MGM. [Luis] Buñuel worked here for a time. Alistair Cooke started his career in America here.

HA: Buñuel worked here?

MB: Yes, when he left Europe—when he had to leave Europe, he worked here for a couple of years on his way, then he went down to Mexico. I think [Robert] Benton and [David] Newman did their research here when they were writing *Bonnie and Clyde*. The list is wonderful. Woody Allen has looked at films here when he's been thinking about—many, many people have used our facilities. Apparently, I haven't read it yet, in Sid Caesar's autobiography, he says that he and his writers—and look at who his writers are.

HA: Yes.

MB: Woody Allen and Mel Brooks and Carl Reiner—used to come here on Friday afternoons and look at our films. And if it was coming here that gave them their material for those fabulous satires on the movies that they did.

HA: Must be.

MB: And that was training ground for some major filmmakers today, and we've had a role in the growth of these people. I think there are a tremendous number of people that we—we were a film school before there were film schools. We were a training ground because you learn from [INAUDIBLE: 0:48:24].

CC: [INAUDIBLE: 0:48:23] is where you learn.

MB: That's right. And long before people thought of doing that in the city, this was the place where everybody came to do it.

CC: Can you tell us a little bit about Margareta Akermark? What was her role?

MB: Margareta started out under Iris and developed the circulating program, [and] ran it for many, many years. And I think Margareta made a great contribution, because she's very sympathetic to young filmmakers. She's very open to the different areas of filmmaking: to television, to advertising films, to short films, to all kinds of biographies and documentaries. And she brought material into the collection, and she got the program out to the schools and universities. And that was long before there were film theaters in all these places around the country.

HA: Is she someone who we should speak to?

MB: Oh absolutely I think you should.

CC: Yes, we're planning to.

MB: I can make up many lists for you. I have—I started one, and I can certainly go down—I'll just tell you some of the names of people who know us or are close to us for whatever reason. Allen, [Francis Ford] Coppola, and [Martin] Scorsese certainly—all of them have made films available to us, have looked at films here, we've shown their work, whatever. John Cassavetes, Spielberg, Robert Benton, Alan Pakula; Michael Powell, the great British director, we did a show of his, he's a marvelous man. I wish you could interview Douglas Sirk who's sitting in Switzerland, a very sick man. When we did—in 1979, we did a one-day tribute to

Douglas Sirk during the retrospective. And he came, [and it was] the first time he had been in this country in 20 years. He walked out of Universal in 1959. I cannot *tell* you the response that people had for Douglas Sirk; it was fabulous. We showed *The Tarnished Angel*. People had thought of Douglas Sirk as making soap opera movies, and today people understand that Sirk influenced a number of young filmmakers, [Rainer Werner] Fassbinder among them. And even in 1979 there were people saying to the Film Department, this is the most wonderful thing I've ever seen; it's fabulous; knocking down the doors to get in. And there were other people saying, how dare you.

HA: When you've got both of them, you know you're right.

MB: That's right, I felt terrific, I thought, this is great, as long as they hate us for doing it. Same year we had the Mickey Mouse 50th anniversary. Why not? But an executive at Universal whom I met the spring after we did the Sirk tribute, said to me, "Well, what kinds of things are you collecting right now?" And I said I had written to Universal [that] I'd like a print of *Tarnished Angels* for the collection. He said, "You're collecting Doug Sirk?" I said, "Of course we are; we'd be proud to have him in the collection." He couldn't understand it at all. That seemed like, meh—it was in the backyard; that seemed like trash to him. David Brown I think would be a wonderful person to talk to. He's on our Film Committee. He's helping us raise funds for the Preservation Committee. Lillian Gish.

CC: He's part of the—

HA: I know who he is.

MB: He's Zanuck, Brown, and *The Verdict* is his most recent film.

HA: Good movie.

MB: Jay Leyda, Professor of Cinema at New York University.

CC: Yes, I had written him.

MB: Who just co-published the [Sergei] Eisenstein [book]. I think it would be interesting to talk to Alistair Cooke about Iris Barry and about his take on things. Filmmakers that are all over the world: Satyajit Ray, if you want, to talk to somebody who—Satyajit Ray and [Akira] Kurosawa, you take two of the great

living filmmakers today who know us well. When—I don't know if Monroe [Wheeler] told you the story, he probably didn't, but, in the fifties, when Ray was first working, Monroe and some other people were in India and met him. And the upshot of it was that Monroe helped Ray get *Pather Panchali* premiered here at The Museum of Modern Art, which was the start of his career in this country. And ever since then, the Department has had a very close and wonderful relationship with Ray and watched people love and hate his films over the years; people like that. If you talk to Clint Eastwood, ask him why did he let his film premiere for the benefit of the Museum? Ask him; he seems an unlikely candidate.

HA: Yes.

MB: He expects those questions. There is somewhere in our collection—Jon [Gartenberg?] can show you, the, I think it's the ABC Evening News of Clint being interviewed at the beginning of the premiere. That's the kind of thing you should ask Jon to dig up for you.

HA: Absolutely.

MB: As well as other premieres and shows. There's Mike Wallace at the Museum reopening in 1964.

HA: We know about that one. We know it exists; we haven't seen it yet.

MB: You *have* to look at it.

HA: How about the ex-museum employees?

MB: Absolutely. Well, I was going to suggest also Fay Kanin, who's president of the Motion Picture Academy, [who] knows us very well. Robert Wise is on our committee; Bobby Broccoli—the Bond movies are another wonderful example. Everyone in this department loves the James Bond movies. We show them all the time. A number of people might question—we would like to acquire all of them for the collection. We love them. Okay? People like [Francois] Truffaut, George Cukor, Myrna Loy. The list goes on and on forever.

HA: And includes all the important people who've been around.

MB: Well, that's what I believe. Ralph Bakshi, most of the important filmmakers working today, certainly the American ones, and many of the great European ones—

CC: It's so interesting. After getting a little testimony from, let's say, Roy Lichtenstein for example, or Jasper Johns, all of a sudden cut to Clint Eastwood.

HA: [Laughing] It's a *wonderful* cut.

MB: I wish you would.

CC: I mean people would be: Christ, what is he doing? But then, of course, I know what he's—

HA: And then it goes to Truffaut or; that would be—

MB: Truffaut told the story at the film festival a couple of years ago, when he showed *The Last Metro*. And he said that he got the idea, one of his ideas for it, from sitting in the back of our theater at the Museum, watching a silent movie, and it was about a train, and just at the moment when someone was either putting their ear to the track or maybe it was *The General*—he didn't remember the film—he's watching this moment on the screen and he heard the New York subway go by, rumbling in back of the auditorium. [Laughter] And if you could get him to tell a story like that, that having been here—I mean, he sees the films seriously here—but then it affects his career, it affects his work.

CC: Oh yes; no; and he's fabulous telling anecdotes.

MB: I think that kind of thing would be absolutely marvelous.

HA: A very charming man.

MB: Alright, who is alive and well that you could talk to about the Film Department? Iris, certainly, is gone. Willard van Dyke is very hard to get; he's in Santa Fe, New Mexico. You might be able to reach him. Alistair Cooke, yes. Margareta, yes.

HA: Alistair Cooke, was he on the staff?

MB: Iris hired Alistair Cooke. Iris also hired Jay Leyda. And Jay's story of how he was in Russia and the things he brought here, of work with Eisenstein—we have a lot of.

HA: Both of those sound very good to me.

MB: I think those two people, who are both easy to get in New York, and so is Margareta, would tell you stories. Hello.

LK: Do I get to sit in the director's chair?

MB: You certainly may. Make yourself to home, dear.

LK: I'm not going to stay very long.

HA: We're having a wonderful time.

LK: She is. Now I have to just tell you, if you don't have her help, then you, forget your film. [Laughter]

MB: Don't worry about it. Sidney Peterson did the film on Arthur Drexler's show, The Japanese House in the Garden, so ask Jon to show you that.[3]

HA: That film, I think he mentioned it the other day.

MB: You definitely want to see that.

LK: That's most extraordinary—they built this whole house in that garden.

HA: There have been several of them over the years, I guess.

MB: Do you want people who are going to say not nice things about us, too?

HA: Why not? Sure.

MB: I'm not sure what you'd get; if I were you, I'd interview Joe Mankiewicz. He, I think, was once rejected—his films were once turned down by somebody in this department. I don't know the story, but believe me, I love Joe Mankiewicz, and we want to do a lot of things. We've shown his work and we're trying to collect it. He lives in Pound Ridge, or—?

LK: Yes.

[3] *A Japanese House*, 1955.

HA: He lives in Pound Ridge?

MB: And he's fabulous; as a storyteller. A couple of years ago, with the Directors' Guild, we did a tribute to Joe here at the Museum. And he came and he had a marvelous time, and thousands of fabulous people showed up; Michael Caine, a whole lot of wonderful people. And Joe doesn't mince words, but he's a marvelous raconteur and he has a lot of things to say. George Cukor might say some interesting things not necessarily totally positive. If you could only find [Greta] Garbo, if you could only get to Garbo, who has come many times to look at films in the back of the auditorium. We know so many people who know her. There might be somebody who [could] get a word in.

HA: We'd put Garbo on film again? "Garbo Films Again!"

LK: You've talked about Woody Allen, I take it.

MB: Oh you absolutely have to talk to Woody Allen.

LK: Somebody said to me the other night, "This film starts with a scene from *Annie Hall;*" it was Riva [Castleman]. But it wasn't *Annie Hall*, I thought it was *Manhattan*. It started with Bella Abzug in the Garden.

MB: There's so many; it is *Manhattan*; sure.

LK: How Woody is meeting Diane Keaton in *Manhattan*.

MB: There's so many films that have been shot

HA: That's not *Annie Hall*.

LK: No, it was the *Manhattan* film. I don't remember it in *Annie Hall*.

MB: No, it's not.

LK: MoMA. But MoMA is very definitive in *Manhattan*.

MB: And Woody Allen knows Dick Oldenburg, so...

LK: And the word is that he gave Diane Keaton a $100 membership to the Museum as his first gift to her, his first birthday gift to her. And he was the one who used to use it in his *New Yorker* magazine article.

MB: You know who you should talk to? Andy Warhol. We're working on collecting his films.

CC: Andy Warhol might be somebody to talk to.

MB: As much to about films as about art in general. I mean I would say that Warhol's films are going to hold up very well in some cases, probably hold up better than—

HA: You think so? Better than they seemed when we first saw them.

MB: No, better than some more recent work that he's done in other areas.

HA: Remember that eight-hour thing [*Empire*] that he did?

MB: *Chelsea Girl*. I think his work is absolutely wonderful, all the people that come in. But again, this department—

HA: I'm not positive I agree with you entirely.

MB: —likes him a great deal. There's a wonderful young British filmmaker who's coming in the spring that I'd love to see you talk to, Peter Greenaway, whose film *The Draughtsman's Contract* was one of the hits of the film festival, produced with British Film Institute money. And the Film Society and the Museum were the first to show Peter's work in this country, where he got *roasted* by Vincent Canby; *roasted*. We put his films in our circulating program anyway. We think Peter is another one of these major filmmakers who is growing gradually. His reputation is really growing and we're proud to have shown his work. He's very articulate; he's an artist and he draws and uses a lot of his drawings in his films. But he's a wise and witty filmmaker and somebody like that would give you a perspective of another person. If you want a wonderfully controversial guy, talk to Stan Brakhage; for the same reasons. You'll get some crows and some—you'll get opinions. And if you're talking about the granddaddy of [INAUDIBLE: 1:01:30], you can do no better than to talk to Stan Brakhage. In video, one of the artists we feel very strongly about is Bill Viola.

CC: Yes, I know Bill.

MB: Okay. I would talk to Bill. Barbara [London] has shown his work; we're acquiring it. Nam June [Paik] and his wife, Shigeko Kubota, we've acquired her work *Nude*

Descending a Staircase, a wonderful thing in plywood with monitors on the risers, and it shows the nude going up and down the staircase and it's like a play on [Marcel] Duchamp, and it's a wonderful piece. It's in a warehouse somewhere.

LK: It would be visually great.

MB: It's fabulous.

HA: That started out—the Duchamp [work] started out as a motion study photograph.

MB: Yes.

HA: Became a painting. I saw a photograph that was a parody, or not a parody really, but a graphic representation of that painting, and now we have a movie?

LK: No, a video.

MB: A video. It's fabulous. It never—it's an image that will go on and on and on.

HA: *Nude Descending a Staircase*, it must be one of the prime images of mankind; [laughing] it's appeared in all art forms. Invent a media, and we immediately have a nude descend it.

LK: They built a mock stairway and they put video monitors in the stair, and they had the nude on the monitors.

MB: Absolutely marvelous. We have acquired it. We've given it to the Painting and Sculpture collection to take care of for us. We will give it to their collection eventually. But I think it would be great fun in this film for you, in those instances where artists worked in differing media, to incorporate that if you can. Claus Oldenburg, for example, has—one of the treasures of filmmaking is, I've forgotten the exact title, but it's preparing an ice bag. It's a short film that he did on his studies for an ice bag.

CC: I can't imagine the two of them together.

MB: Absolutely wonderful. We have a lot of good stuff, too, that doesn't relate so much to the Museum, but Hugh Downs and Frank Lloyd Wright, it's a fabulous piece of film. We collect that kind of thing about—and we need money to take care of it.

HA: But there's a lot of film that you have on artists; is that not so?

MB: Yes. On different exhibitions—that's an area where we all collect less with an eye towards the quality of the film and more for information. It's an extension of our library. Now, any information on art and artists, we're willing to take care of for any department in the Museum, just as a record. We don't care if it's a great film or not. And I, for example, think that there's a reasonable amount of work on architecture; I wish we had a lot more of it; we'd like to see it here.

CC: If we wanted to use some of these various things, obviously, we'd then have to go to each source in order to clear copyright.

MB: Well, you'll work through Jon. It's very complicated. You have to find out—he'll tell you who has the copyright; you have to get permission from them. Whatever films you want to copy, there are very strict rules about copy and financial and we'll all get involved in it, but we only allow people to copy. We don't allow people to cut up films to take out a section; you're allowed to copy the whole reel.

HA: We understand that.

MB: But a lot of stuff is in the public domain, and certainly a number of artists, Brakhage, whatever, willingly would give you permission to use free sections of their stuff. I think you'll get great cooperation and the movie studios will give you cooperation.

CC: How many times has the Museum been in movie movies?

MB: I don't know.

HA: Feature films, you mean?

CC: You're right; I remember the beginning of *Manhattan* now.

MB: Farrah Fawcett Majors and Ryan O'Neal, where she's being stalked? I haven't seen the film. Somebody's trying to murder her, and she and Ryan O'Neal wander through the Garden.

LK: [INAUDIBLE: 1:05:38], I guess I could ask Liz—there was somebody I didn't tell them to see, but they should see Liz Shaw. She was my predecessor; she was here 28 years. Nobody knows this [INAUDIBLE: 1:05:47]. She knows everything. She was here when there was a strike. All that footage you're going

to see was during her tenure. She knew the early people. She grew up with this Museum and she would certainly know about what films were made in it.

MB: Jon also probably—we have a film on the show at the Museum where the Niki de Saint Phalle thing self-destructs, the what's-his-name.

HA: [Jean] Tinguely.

MB: That wasn't both of them? It's just Tinguely?

LK: Just Tinguely.

MB: It self-destructs. [*Homage to New York: A Self-Constructing and Self-Destroying Work of Art Conceived and Built by Jean Tinguely*]

HA: It destroyed itself.

CC: The craziest thing I've ever seen—the weirdest thing in a movie I ever saw with the Museum—did you see *Dressed to Kill*? Do you remember, they go in the Metropolitan Museum, and then suddenly they're in the Philadelphia Museum.

MB: Guess who turned them down?

LK: We turned them down, because they wanted to undress.

CC: Oh, really? Undress in the Museum?

LK: In the Museum.

CC: [Laughing] That wasn't in the final movie. Do you remember that? They're inside the Philadelphia Museum, then they walk out the Philadelphia, and then they went out the Met.

MB: Strange location, very strange.

LK: The one thing about Woody Allen's *Manhattan* was that scene with Bella Abzug standing in front of the [Gaston] Lachaise.

HA: [Laughing] Yes, yes, yes. It was not lost, that little piece of—

LK: And she says, "We're here, I want to thank The Museum of Modern Art for letting us use this garden [INAUDIBLE: 1:07:11]." Meanwhile, [INAUDIBLE: 1:07:12]

and Woody didn't know each other. That was my first experience in the Museum; I slept here when that was being made.

MB: I don't think we've kept track over the years of what we've been—

HA: That would be wonderful to put together an assembly of all the times the Museum—

MB: The Museum on film.

HA: That's right.

MB: Absolutely. That'd be terrific.

HA: Got to get somebody with a memory for scenes, though, who remembers all of those things.

MB: Well, I'll ask my department. I know that we will remember some of them.

CC: I love that story of Truffaut, when you said that Truffaut was in the back of the theater watching a movie.

MB: A silent film.

CC: And this was before he made—

HA: *The Last Metro*

CC: *The Last Metro*—and it was about trains and things, and then he suddenly, during one scene, heard the New York subway go by.

MB: And it was a key moment in the film, when someone was either putting her ear to the rail or being strapped across the train or whatever, and he hears the New York subway.

CC: Which is a complete—a real link in his own work.

MB: And it made him think very much about his film, *The Last Metro*; it inspired him in various ways.

LK: And of course you spoke to—I don't how to pronounce his name quite clearly, B-U-N-U-E...

MB: Buñuel.

LK: And when he worked here.

MB: I don't know if you could get to Buñuel. You might write to him.

CC: Does he live in Mexico City now?

HA: He'd be a very old man by now.

MB: He lives in Paris part of the time. He might be real hard to reach but I'll try and find out.

HA: He made some fabulous films.

LK: By the way, there is another dimension to—

MB: Orson Welles and his Oscar. You want to talk to Orson Welles? He gave us his Oscar.

CC: He gave you his Oscar?

MB: I don't know what Oscar for what, but I'll find out.

HA: *Citizen Kane*. [Laughing]

MB: He loaned us his Oscar for many years, and Margareta used it to hang her hat on [it] every day, or as a doorstop.

HA: [Laughing] As a doorstop!

MB: And when he needed money, he took it back.

CC: He took it back?

MB: So we had Orson Welles' Oscar for—

CC: What did he do with his Oscar, sell it?

HA: I assume he hocked it.

CC: I've heard so many of those from people—

MB: Jon can show you the videotape of Mrs. [Blanchette] Rockefeller accepting the Oscar. You have to have that.

LK: Oh yes, and then when she was—

CC: I didn't even know that.

HA: I didn't know that existed.

MB: Well, the Oscar—Dick Oldenburg has the Oscar at home right now because of the renovation, but I do think it should be in the movie. It says on there, "In recognition of the Department's efforts to promote film as an art form and for its preservation of the medium," or something like that.

LK: Mrs. Rockefeller accepted it.

MB: So Dick and Mrs. Rockefeller went out, and Gregory Peck gave her the Oscar. And it's a delicious moment.

CC: What year was this?

MB: '79.

HA: Yes, it wasn't that long ago; I recall it.

CC: And you have that clip?

LK: Yes.

MB: We have the whole thing.

LK: On national TV. I got a kick because Oldenburg was introduced as Goldenburg. [Laughter]

MB: I wasn't going to say that, but you can put it in there.

HA: That changed him quite a bit, didn't it?

CC: It sounds very Hollywood, doesn't it? [Laughter]

HA: It was a culture shock.

LK: Oh it's just Hollywood versus New York anyway. As far as—

MB: I wish you'd talk to Scorsese. I think you'd find him so interesting.

CC: I suggested it to them.

HA: He's really hot on talking to Scorsese.

CC: I think he'd be perfect.

MB: He started the whole preservation campaign.

CC: Yes, he started the whole color preservation thing.

MB: And he became so interested in it. And I think you'd get some very interesting footage.

CC: He's also somebody who I think could say, to the American public, which is primarily who's going to see it—it could be a couple of clips from his films, they know his movies, I mean, they're infamous.

LK: Yes, right, very, very recent.

MB: I think you'd have a very interesting cross-section if you talk to—

CC: And he speaks very intelligently and he's very impassioned about it. And face it, Scorsese is a buff; he's an incredible film buff.

LK: You know what these two are going to have trouble with? They have so much. [OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE; INAUDIBLE] You could really do a 13-part series. I was so amused when we got this summary, I wanted to share this with you. I think I sent it to you, but if I didn't—when we had our first meeting, the following was written in it: "This is a single, one-hour film as opposed to a 13-part series." [Laughter] And I giggled, and I said, "It is a 13-part series." [Laughter]

CC: Well I'm trying to figure out how we're going to fit in Eddie Warburg and Clint Eastwood. [Laughter]

HA: Andy Warhol and Clint Eastwood.

CC: And Andy Warhol.

MB: Yes. No problem; you'll have no problem, because that's our museum.

HA: The problem is with the length of the film.

MB: Gotcha.

LK: It's so massive.

MB: I think that Scorsese and Eastwood and Brakhage and Spielberg would be a very interesting mixture.

CC: Well what's nice about this section and why we wanted to talk to you primarily was that really, the early story will be told, and it will be part of the other early story. But as far as a blossoming out towards the end of the film, now we're talking.

LK: I mean this department is just absolutely key.

HA: Because no one can accuse this department of not being modern in every sense.

MB: That's right.

LK: It's key in the future of this institution because it is really taking the risks and doing things. You can criticize some of our other departments.

HA: Yes, but not this one.

LK: But not this one.

CC: But it's also showing how—almost without saying so, it says to the audience watching, it began with these incredible people who weren't artists but who were proselytizers. Then artists began; then it opened up, circulating exhibits, et cetera. And then, suddenly, my god! Clint Eastwood, Woody Allen; I mean, everyone's part of it now; I want to be part of it, too.

MB: I don't know how you can do this in the film, but if you assume that all of the other: painting and sculpture and printmaking were already accepted and in the norm, but it was much more difficult in the past 45 years for the Museum to establish its Film and Photography and Architecture and Design. I think Photography was the last curatorial department to be established. Photography, though, in a shorter period of time, has become totally accepted and canonized [as] a major art form now, in a short period of time, and photographs have now become collectables of huge value.

LK: Exactly.

CC: It's true. It's unbelievable.

LK: People paid $16,000 for an Ansel Adams.

MB: That's much more difficult with film.

HA: It's always been [INAUDIBLE: 01:13:22].

CC: A fellow I know who is a dealer, 10 years ago in Washington—Harry Lunn, a small gallery [owner] and he's had a reputation—suddenly he's the top three in the world: he, [Daniel] Wolf, and one other person, [Samuel] Wagstaff.

LK: Very much thanks to this museum. [OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE; INAUDIBLE].

HA: It's kind of odd because it's so reproduceable in a way that no other art is, and yet the objects themselves somehow still have value. It's peculiar to me; it doesn't really make logical sense.

MB: No, and I'm sure that some of the value of photographs has escalated the way that certain print values have. [OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE; INAUDIBLE] The prints are by artists who are not working primarily in printmaking, usually. I mean the prints that have the most value are by people like [Jasper] Johns and [Robert] Rauschenberg who are primarily painters and sculptors. [OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE; INAUDIBLE] But if you want to do something about what's happening next, what we're doing next—we're opening, whenever we reopen, with a British retrospective, and we're doing a tribute, at the beginning of this, to the great actors and actresses of the British stage and screen.

HA: Oh my.

MB: With everybody you can think of. And on our opening night, Lillian Gish is going to introduce Alec Guinness.

: Who will be here?

MB: We have a list of 300 people that are coming: Moira Shearer is going to come, and Wendy Hiller, and—the number of people who already—

HA: Sir Laurence [Olivier]?

MB: We hope so. If you want to get anything that's very current—but by the time this film comes out we'll be opening our British show, or close to it.

LK: The Minelli tribute is going to have all kinds of—I think they need camera crew members.

MB: Oh, you've got to cover the Minelli tribute!

HA: The Minelli tribute. That's what I want to see. I just like his work. [OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE; INAUDIBLE]

MB: That's going to be Liza Minelli and Vincent Minelli here at the Museum on the 2nd of March. You can't not—

CC: Second of March?

LK: The 2nd of March. We're going to have all of those—

CC: Lots of luminaries.

LK: Legendary luminaries. Probably you'll want to have [INAUDIBLE: 1:15:21].

HA: Possibly.

MB: I think you should.

LK: You can find yourself with something going on there that really says a lot. [OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE; INAUDIBLE]

MB: An endowment committee is in formation; Liza is the co-chairman of it. Here we are—this is the first time the Museum's annual benefit is around a filmmaker. [OVERLAPPING DIALOGUE; INAUDIBLE]

LK: A filmmaker! That's a lot of noise to make about it. The annual benefit, which is a big fundraiser; you spend $100,000 to come to this thing.

HA: Well let's hope. [Laughter]

MB: But that's a marvelous evening; you certainly should cover that. It's the Museum's annual benefit, it's usually in the Garden, but we don't have a garden, and it's an idea that the chairman, Lili Auchincloss, and I have talked about for years; how to use film to raise money for the Museum as a whole. And believe me, there are people who have dropped their jaws and said, "Vincent Minelli?" The issue continues.

HA: Aw, but, Vincent Minelli is wonderful.

MB: Not everybody would assume that Vincent Minelli should be in the same museum as Picasso.

LK: That's the juxtapositions that are so interesting. That's the debate.

MB: Why does somebody look down their nose? Why would somebody say that Vincent Minelli, whose films have as much richness, or are as magnificently thought through and composed and so on—? There's a very dark and profound side to Minelli and there's a wonderful sensibility there. Why would people *not* accept Minelli as a major American artist on the same level as a Rauschenberg or a Johns?

HA: Because everybody can afford to experience it.

MB: It's too cheap?

LK: That's a good point; it's the mass nature of the medium.

HA: It's too cheap.

MB: I think it's a fascinating point. They might think that [Yasujirō] Ozu is alright, but they wouldn't think Minelli's alright. Is it an anti-Americanism?

HA: Well then that's alright or is it that it's obscure then that's alright.

CC: Frankly, Buñuel would be outraged to hear really that any—and probably continually amused by the fact that his movies are here.

MB: Sure.

CC: Because he wanted them to be the most anti-cultural, the most anti-established, anti-art, almost—

LK: Were you here at the last expansion?

MB: No. '64?

LK: I just came across the wildest essay. Did you know that the artists were picketing while the opening was going on with placards that had a single question mark on them? [HA and CC laugh]

MB: I believe it.

LK: Do you know why the question mark? Would we commit ourselves to the living artists. That's all [INAUDIBLE: 1:17:58].

MB: We don't have that debate. We don't do what the other departments do. We absolutely commit ourselves to filmmakers who may in five years turn out to be

the greatest thing in the world. I ought to get a xerox of this ["Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures"] for you. *The* finest art historian in this country, if not anywhere in the world, Erwin Panofsky, who is on the Film Committee of The Museum of Modern Art—the man who taught at NYU forever and whose field is [Albrecht] Dürer and Flemish painting and Titian. And he wrote this on movies and some other pieces.

CC: Oh, I'd like to read that.

HA: Oh, I think I'd like to—

MB: And I'll get a copy of it for you.

HA: That would be great.

MB: I find it fascinating. Iris Barry and Alfred had no problem figuring out that they *needed* a major art historian, even if he didn't do a lot for us—they needed him on the Film Committee. And they also put Walt Disney on the Film Committee.

HA: Yes.

MB: There you are.

HA: Yes.

MB: I'll get a copy of this for you.

HA: Great.

MB: You just tell that in a department head meeting today and you see what reaction you get. "Panofsky on the Film Committee? I don't believe you, Mary Lea." [Laughter]

END OF INTERVIEW at 1:19:05