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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Betty Parsons - 1977
 Her first day back in the gallery after the summer hiatus. The outer room is bare, with white walls and grey concrete floor; Betty is in Jack Tompkins' office talking to Jack. She has on loose black slacks and espadrilles (worn), a mustard shirt, a rather shabby black outer garment, and a red handkerchief tied smartly at her throat. She greets me both warmly and briskly, in her quick deep voice, introduces me around. The others are Arthur Larson, her nephew, and ^{Walter March} Jack has everybody who works for Betty ends up staying a long time; Jack has been with her 12 years.

The smaller inside room is already hung, group show of her regulars. Maxine Bill Taggart is due in any moment to hang his one-man show, his first. At end of this room is Betty's office, a cluttered den opening out to storage area. Sculpture, folding chairs, paintings fill nearly every inch, leaving barely room for sit. Betty: "I'm getting a new desk, but I haven't picked it out yet. Do you know whether something can be invaluable and 'old-looking'?" On the wall are a few grey's big red paintings hangs on wall. In all, Betty's office is a very busy place. A review of Clive's work is being done. They have the right to destroy it, but why should they have the right to try to destroy it?

→ head of art dept at New College (NY)

Betty and Jack are opening a new small gallery on the 11th floor this season, to show drawings. The Parsons-Tompkins Gallery. It's about because of our New Talent exhibition last spring. Everyone has now talent show in the spring, but ours won all the prizes. It did so well that we decided to try a new gallery just for drawings... "First show opens Sept. 23, a week after downtown; Walter March, one of Betty's old-timers."

"Arthur is my nephew. He really lives out in Reno, and they didn't know what to do about him so I said send him in here, and then of course we hit it off just like that. Because he's really an artist, you see." He does carpentry, paints, about everything that's needed, he putting in storage shelves in new gallery. [He makes very interesting conversation here]

"I've had a marvelous summer. I went to London and Paris in July, mostly business. Saw the Murray Louis show at the Hayward and of course the big Miro in Paris, and a lot of other things, and I bought a painting by a young Chinese named Dai Saito -- both his parents are Chinese, but he was brought up in Europe, interesting background. I'd like to show him something. And then I went to Lorraine, to stay with a friend. She's doing a show on romances and for the Museum so we went around to about a dozen wonderful churches. First time I've been about to spend time in the middle of the French countryside for ages. I've spent a lot of time in Brittany, and love it."

"I feel that France is the country that's going to come back first over there. England is too tired, and Italy, Italy is Italy. But the French are so rational. They understand that unless they work and work hard, the country is going down the drain. They'll be the strongest country in Europe, I'm sure. Of course it's just an intuition, but I feel it."

"How of course I'm in a state about this garden business (Nixon's garden announced yesterday). It's so outrageous, and so unaffordable. It's the last terrible mistake, and of course it brings back all that catastrophe"

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Betty Parsons - 2

business all over again, and we're all so tired of it." I asked how Europeans felt about Nixon business. "The Europeans are such crooks themselves, you know. They like Nixon. They say he's the only one who's really tried to do anything about peace. They can't understand why we're so furious about him. Also I'm discouraged about his putting Rockefeller in as vice-president..."

"After Europe I went to Wyoming for three weeks, to a ranch run by Hope Williams, near Cody. I really did a lot of work there, it was ideal for me. And then I was in Maine for two weeks, so really I've been away all summer. I love to travel, and I'm delighted to find that I can still do it."

New season: Mark Lancaster, et al. "Very important show by Paul Feeley." (Get her to talk about other names on list).

Lunch at small inexpensive French rest. on west 56th street. Some bio: (see over)

"I come from a very conservative family. My great-great-great grandfather was the first president of Yale, Abraham Pierson. ~~My great-great-great grandfather was one of the first to get a divorce~~ When my grandfather heard I was getting a divorce in 1922 -- it was the first divorce there had ever been in the family -- he demanded to talk to me. He said, 'Does he drink?', and I said he did. 'Does he beat you?' I said he didn't, but that we were truly incompatible. 'That's not enough,' he said. He cut me out of his will because of it. My mother's side of the family was partly French -- thank God for the French! The Porcher Miles, of New Orleans. They were infellectual but not artistic. They had a great library, and they lived in a fantastic old house on Old River Road there, and they all drank a great deal. Whenever I go down there they fill me full of bourbon, which I like. In the old days, I hear, they used to think nothing of drinking four juleps before breakfast -- four juleps!

"My middle name is Irish -- *Bierne* -- it comes from a grandmother on my mother's side. I'm sure I take after her. My mother and my older sister were great intellectuals, always telling me facts about the past, and I hated it. I think that's what made me so anti-historical."

"We spent summers at Newport, we had a big house up there. My grandfather was one of the people who started Bailey's Beach. It was fun ~~for~~ when you were little, but terrible as you got older. (Gen. J. Fred Pierson).

~~The family could stand the idea of being independent but it was an independent family~~

Betty went to Chapin School in NY, then to Miss Randall McKeever's Finishing School. Miss McKeever gave her first real taste of the arts, which had been frowned on at home. Betty had, however, gone to the Armory Show in 1913, when she was 12, and been very struck by it. "I'd always thought the old masters were much too advanced, that I'd never be able to catch up to them, but then I saw those things at the Armory and I thought here's where I can get in board."

"I was always more drawn to sculpture, although painting came more easily to me... (more here).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series/Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

From Vogue, Oct. 1 1951

Born 1900, at 17 W. 49th St., where Rock Cent is now

Abraham Peim came to Boston from Yorkshire, England -
1639, and helped found town of Southampton, Stamford,
and Newark. His son Abraham P. Jr. was first pres of
Yale. His great-grandfather and grandfather ran the
Rampso Foundry and Wheel Works - iron planks, cotton mills
and other industries on abt 100,000 acres near Foxe's Park.
His father continued the business until 1900, when he
was forced by our brokerage firm, J.F. Pearson & Co. (and
friends) to lose all the money).

Betty was next-to-oldest of 3 sisters, all considered beauties
Summer at Newport, winter in NY, Palm Beach, Bermuda.

After marriage, the Parson lived in a four hour drive at 15 W 55,
has country place in Islip. Divorce 1923.

Back to NY 1935 (Gallery says 1936) worked on Commission basis both
at Midtown Gallery (where she showed) and at Mrs Sullivan's

(64 E. 55th St.)
Partner in Wakefield Bookshop and Director of art gallery -
discovers here: Theodoros Stamos (18), Adolph Gottlieb,
Oronio, Walter Murch, Hedda Sterne, Saul Steinberg.

Mortimer Brandt had handled only older painters - BP ext.
modern section: Hans Hofmann, Wm. Hoyter, Ad Reinhardt.
Brandt, displeased by major sales, dropped the section in 1946.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 3

Studied for a ~~time~~ ^{winter (1918-19)} with Gutzon Borglum, "who was a terrible teacher. When he'd have us draw a bone, he'd make us draw it from his sketch book -- we couldn't even draw a real bone." *This was just before marriage, at the League (May 1919)*

"I didn't go to college. I think the main reason was that the family thought I'd become too independent. But I always was independent, I couldn't help it."

Married at 19, to Schuyler Livingston Parsons, from another good conservative NY family. "He was ten years older than I was, and he had money, and he was socially prominent. We met at ^{a party at} ~~the~~ the Vincent Astors in Bermuda, I remember. He was kind of a drunk. A very nice guy, but he drank." They went to Paris on their honeymoon, and Betty loved that.

Soon after their marriage she started working in Mary Tonetti's studio, doing sculpture. ^{Had met the} Tonettis thru the King Coit School, where their children went. ^{also Hope Williams!} Learned a lot from Mary Tonetti, and still has a small carving of Neptune from that period. "Sculpture was my ideal."

Divorced in 1922, in Paris. An agreeable rupture. She didn't want to put him thru what you had to go thru to get a divorce in NY, so she went back to Paris and got it there, with much exchanging of letters to show the judge that they were incompatible. Parsons' best man at the wedding acted as her lawyer, "so you see there really was collusion." Schuyler had been with Ambulance Service during WWI, and knew lots of people in Paris, so Betty did too. It was the right time to be there, and she met all the expatriates, who were considerably older than she was. "It was a time when the creative spirit really was in Paris. Nobody cared about making money, the one idea was to make a statement. It was a marvelous spirit. I knew that fantastic women, Natalie Barney, and everyone came to her house. I had a little place at 29, Rue Bouvard, ^{behind} ~~near~~ the ^{side} Montparnasse, and a studio in the Rue Percival, off the Avenue du Maine. I even had a show in Paris, at the ^{Galeries des Quatre Chemins (1922)} and Janet Flanner came and wrote it up, and ~~we~~ we became friends. One thing is that I've always had good luck in timing -- somehow I've been in the right place at the right moment. I was in Paris at the right time, and I was in California at the right time, and I got to New York just at the time that Rothko and those people were ~~getting~~ hitting their stride."

"I've lived so many different lives. I stayed in Paris for nine or ten years, and the only reason I came home was the '29 crash. I was broke. I went straight to California, and stayed there four years. I taught painting and sculpture, and I worked for a while in a liquor store -- all the butlers used to come in from the rich houses, ~~and~~ to buy the wine, and fortunately I knew a little about wine. I painted a few portraits, too. Bob Benchley saved my life, I just adored him. And Charles Butterworth."

We talked about Eric Gugler's death. "Eric always had both feet planted in the past. It's good maybe to have one foot there, but not both. I've never had that problem; I've always been interested mainly in the unfamiliar."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

→ In Paris

Studied first under Baudelle, later with Archipenko (Hollywood?)
and Zadkine. Summers in Brittany studying
watercolor with Arthur Lindsay (English).
Knew Calder, Max Ray, Jean Sireat, Miyachi, Hart Crane,
Max Jacob, Gora, Eugen Jolas, Stein etc.

Also Caresse and Harry Crosby - went to wild parties there, met Hart
Crane. "Harry sent me an opium pill one Christmas. I threw it down
the drain. He carried out his suicide pact in the apartment of a
great friend of mine, Stanley Mortimer." Caresse remained a friend
for years afterward.

In California

Studied with Archipenko (Alloway, Whitehead catalog), also
Goussens in sculpture and drawing.

Knew Garbo, & played tennis with her - was asked to
join US Olympic tennis team and declined (Alloway).

In Hollywood, she painted portraits on commission
(Art News, Mar. 1968)

Garbo - met at house of Sacha Pierrat one Xmas Eve.
G. very shy, "kind of positive but very shy. And
mysterious." Lots of people thought they looked
alike. Sailors in San Francisco used to call out
"Hi, G.G." to Betty. Even today in NY people
mistake her for G.G.

Samuel Hoffenstein another pal. "He was no more Irish
than Hottentot, but as soon as he'd had three drinks
he became one hundred percent Irish."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 4

Back after lunch: Going up in the service elevator, we see someone with a painting too big to fit into it. "That must be for me. I always warn them to measure the elevator first, but they never do."

Upstairs, Bill Taggart is re-assembling a painting on the floor, with Arthur. Others stand against walls, still in plastic wrappers. Taggart is a friendly, perspiring young man in colorful undershirt and jeans. "I've had my eye on him for several years," Betty says. "I've bought a few of his things -- he's a very interesting sculptor as well as a painter. He has a marvelous, childlike quality -- you see how he uses paints from a child's paintset, and then blows water across them to get that effect? He also has a wonderful sense of humor. Anyway, I just decided to go ahead and give him a show, bang like that."

Jock wants her to come and look at two of Richard Tuttle's "Rags" which have just come in. ^{pieces} Pieces of canvas, straight edge but not geometrical, with cutout sections. Ruffled -- Tuttle doesn't want them folded but rather wadded up when not hung, so they'll get a texture instead of lines. They are to hang any which way on walls, flat but not taut. ^{These two} are from Sam Wagstaff, ^{ex} director of ^{Wadsworth Atheneum} ~~Wadsworth Atheneum~~ ^{who is selling} his entire art collection in order to become the premier collector of photographs. Tuttle having show at Whitney ^{in Spring} ~~in Spring~~, and Jock, ~~wants~~ who has loaned him his own green Tuttle octagram, wants to know whether he should offer to sell it. "I think it's important that Armstrong (new Whitney dir.) have the very best Tuttle available, don't you?" Betty says why not let him have his choice of that or these two, make up his own mind. Betty and Jock discovered Tuttle. "He was an office boy here ~~for two years~~ and we didn't even know he was an artist. One day he asked if I could help him get a gallery, so I said I'd better go right away and take a look at his things, and when I did I just flipped." Now he is famous and successful.

Jock says that Sally Eisler is going to call from St. Louis to find out which of her drawings Betty has picked for show in upstairs gallery beginning Oct. 22. Betty goes upstairs to pick. Picks fifteen (out of thirty or more) in a very few minutes, little hesitation. Collage drawings with net, wire mesh, plastic mesh, tape, colored electrical wire, etc. She ~~expresses~~ has no hesitation about picking, but asks what you think of her choices, and really wants to know.

Back downstairs, they are ready to hang the Taggart show. "Let's try this one there," Betty ~~says~~ says, and three men hustle. She tries one thing and then another, takes suggestions from Jock and Taggart - a mutual process. They change paintings around for half an hour before the right order is reached. "It's a question of getting each one where you can really see it, without it's being overwhelmed by the others," Betty says. "We never put the strongest one on the wall facing you as you enter, because that would tend to make it overwhelm the others. We put the strongest there and there (right and left walls)." A lot of shifting to get the blacks in two paintings working together. "Let's try it." "Sometimes it goes very fast." Jock: "Betty is so astonishing at this. Sometimes when she's hanging small things she'll just start at one corner and go around the room in sequence, and it will come out just right." Now, Jock usually makes tentative layout first, Betty makes changes, he may suggest others. If artist wants to hang his own show she lets him, but will make suggestions. Taggart very pleased with result -- they look so different from the way they did in the studio, and they all work well together, reinforcing one another.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 5

Glyn Metz
Deborah LawrenceSept. 16th - day of Taggart opening

Everything in place the way they had laid out yesterday -- no changes. Betty et al were there until about six PM lighting the show, but no problems. "Betty used to take hours to hang her shows," Jock says, ~~xxx~~ "and then sometimes we'd change things after the opening. Now she rarely takes more than two hours." Taggart had to go to the dentist to get a new tooth anyway.

After that Betty went to the Whitney opening -- "to see Katz and Nutt -- I can't believe those names." (Alex Katz, Jim Nutt). She saw Tom Armstrong, new young director of Whitney, who was very cordial. He said he had read Betty's little lines in the Montclair catalog about the "American Dream," and that he was planning a show on that theme and wanted to come and discuss it with her. "The American Dream seems to be going down the drain at the moment," Betty observed.

Her office a little less cluttered. She is going to lunch Thursday with someone from Channel 13, who is interested in an interview about "Art and Posterity."

Everyone agrees that the Taggart looks great -- "strong, but light" as Jock says. She points out her wood sculpture that was on the cover of the Mont. catalog -- it was bought by Joel Grey, who buys quite a lot now. She likes his acting immensely -- "he makes love to the audience."

Young artist, bearded, comes in with app't to show slides. Jock agrees to look. Quickly glances at about six (of a dozen or so), says no, "they're too pretty, too aesthetic for me." Artist asks why. "I'm interested in life, not in aesthetics." (Later) "So many today are interested only in aesthetics, in ways of putting paint on canvas. That's all you see at Emmerich -- Noland and those people. Unless there's some statement behind it, I'm not interested." Jock looks at new work every Saturday, for the upstairs gallery. He chose about 20 people for last spring's new talent show, and then Betty rejected three or four. This is how they work -- "and I realized she was right in each case."

The Opening

Eleven Taggerts hung. Entering from hall, visitors see "Chief", the large white painting with footprints, on facing wall. Then into main gallery where black painting, "Skywires" is on facing wall (sectioned off into squares of black with squiggles of bright color and a few footprints); ~~xx~~ the right wall has "Windmill," the biggest, with rainbows and bands of pigment; left wall has "A Light Case," which Betty said was the strongest; back wall has "Night Owl" to left of door, "Spot" (black and white) to right.

In the inner gallery, group show, Betty has hung a collage of her exhibition catalogs going back to 1940s -- "before most of these people were born:" Reinhardt, Pollock, Tomlin, Rothko, Lindner, Newman, etc.

Plenty of people from the start. Herbert and Dorothy Vogel, tiny couple who have been collecting since 1965 and who've been to every show here for years. He works in Post Office (dead letter office), she was a librarian. They live in a 2-room apartment on east 86th street, every inch of which is crowded with works of art. Mostly minimal, some conceptual. He's a great pal of Tuttle and other artists. He studied art but not too good. They have 5 cats, turtles, lots of energy and enthusiasm.

(Can't buy small tags here "because" somebody would swipe them.)

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 9

Lunch at Southhold -- 9/15/74

The studio is almost hidden in shrubbery -- dense groths of beach plum and wild cherry and grape. "I liked it because it was so wild," she says. Cypress weathered to silver-gray outside, with wooden stairs leading up to screened deck where she sleeps -- "I can look right up and see the stars. It's marvelous in August, when they're falling all around you." She discovered the property thru friends, bought it ~~xxxx~~ for \$6000 and paid off by installments. It was ten years before she could afford to build on it. The studio is about fifteen years old - built 1959. "I think it's Tony's best."

Inside, a big square room with very high ceiling, in the middle of which hangs Noguchi's biggest lamp. White walls, and a lot of objects. Books, magazines, stones everywhere. Several of her painted wood sculptures on a high shelf against white wall. A big new canvas tacked to wall near workbench -- red and blue (?), done from a sketch made in Wyoming. "It looks like a UFO, I think." Workbench is piled with pieces of wood she's picked up on the beach and painted. Near it is a small table with a tray piled with painted stones. "Pick out whichever one you like best, if you can find any you like. It's supposed to bring good luck."

We have lunch on a table set up at the edge of the cliff, overlooking a vast sweep of the Sound. Directly opposite is Old Lyme, Conn. Garlic spaghetti, salad, cheeses and wine, and fresh peaches and ice cream for dessert. Betty quiet thru lunch, during which Esteban does most of the talking. She seems withdrawn. Goes back and forth, clearing table and bringing food. Not much help from Simone. Betty dressed as always in wide slacks and blouse, with beret and overblouse-smock thing.

After lunch she takes me down the steps to her part of the beach. People in boats wave to her. "I must know them." Says she can swim in the nude, over behind that big rock. "I've been doing it for fifteen years and nobody's caught me yet."

Guest house, built by selling a Pollock. Bedroom, bath, living room-kitchen. Bookshelves filled with all sorts of treasures. Bound copies of Diel, Transition, The Enemy (Windham Lewis), L'Oeil. A small woodcarving from Italy of a saint "who is the image of my ex-husband." Small pre-Colombian figures -- most of these are packed away in the cellar however. Roof deck for sunning and occasionally sleeping. "And in winter from here you can see the studio. It's entirely different in winter. The ice builds up on the beach ~~xxxx~~ tremendously, and the spray freezes into the most amazing forms."

Talk of drawings -- "I think I like drawings best of all. I have a big collection -- nearly two hundred now, although I've sold a lot. I can't resist them. I should buy a pair of shoes, and instead I buy a drawing."

Giacometti - "I worked with him for six years, you know. We were both so shy we hardly got to know one another. A few years ago I went to his studio. ~~xxxx~~ He was making drawings, a whole series of new ones. I said, 'How do you do it?' He said, 'It's easy. It only takes a lifetime.'"

Tamarind tree by stairs - she planted it as a seedling, now it's to the roof.

Light - "I have to get light in my paintings. If I don't get light into it somehow it's not good at all."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 10

September 18th, Wednesday

Betty in her office opening mail. Waiting for Mrs. Kenzo Okada to come. Okada is in the hospital. Betty is going to give Mrs. Okada the stone she brought from Wyoming, for him: a jagged, yellowish rock fragment with a bottom polished smooth by natural forces, and veined like marble. She thinks it's a fossil. "You look at it and it doesn't look like anything, and then you turn it over and there's the truth! I always feel the truth of things is at the bottom."

(Okada is the gallery's big seller. He's been with her for 18 years, and appeals to very rich buyers. The Rockefellers have a lot. Jock says that when the Okada show opens and the Tuttle drawings are on view upstairs, they'll get everybody to the gallery).

Taxi downtown to lunch with Mark Lancaster at the Bank. En route, Betty tells me that she met Barney Newman thru Adolph Gottlieb. Went to dinner at the Gottlieb's in Brooklyn, and met Barney and Annalee. Took to each other immediately. Barney the best talker she ever knew except Esther Murphy. "Put the two of them together and you'd really have something!" Story about Esther and Chester Arthur, both great talkers, divorced because they got no sleep -- talking all night.

When she first knew Newman he wasn't painting abstract -- paintings of insects, mostly. He took her out to Springs to see Pollock, etc. *(more)*

At the Bank: Mark recently back from Europe - Paris lively, but London worse than ever. The rich all leaving because of new tax on visible signs of wealth; the Americans have left long ago. Betty takes a glass of white wine, and admires the new paintings -- a series of abstractions in the color spectrum; each has one predominant color and a little of the colors on either side; the next in series has one of those as predominant, etc.

"He's got light and tension in them, which is why they're so powerful," Betty says. "There's tension in his brushstroke." How does one get light in a painting? "I think it comes from inner excitement, from something inside. You see a line that excites you, or a flower -- the color of it -- and you work with that, and the excitement makes light. Once years ago I ~~was painting~~ went for the weekend to *Lady Reddings in England* and I was painting inside their greenhouse. *Lady Redding* came in and said she didn't see what on earth I saw to paint like that. I told her, I said, "That flower excites the hell out of me, and I'm trying to paint that excitement." *She saw right away what I meant.*"

"I've always been interested in the abstract world, in great cosmic forces like light. If it weren't for the abstract world you couldn't extend your arm out from the elbow -- it goes into space, you see, abstract space."

Betty's description of Agnes Martin's work: "Heartstrings pulled out endlessly!"

Hirshhorn story (don't quote): "He plays a game with me. He comes in and introduces me to someone, 'Here's the richest dealer in New York' - when I'm probably the poorest. He goes right to the telephone and makes two or three calls, and then about five minutes later the phone rings and it's for him. And then he always wants to cut the price in half. When I hear he's coming I say, 'Quick, Jock, double all the prices so we can cut them in half.'"

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 11

Addenda, at Mark Lancaster's:

Betty pulled out her little red notebook and read the following quote, from Willa Cather: (Thea, in "The Song of the Lark," quoted in *NYT Book Rev.* Jan. 27, 1974)

"What was any art but an effort to make a sheath, a mould, in which to imprison for a moment the shining, elusive element which is life itself."

"That's my motto for the year," she said. "It really covers the whole art world."

Addenda, at gallery:

Joak says that a lot of people have come in to see Taggart show, but nothing sold yet. However the Four Seasons is going to hang one, which is good.

Notice of new gallery on bulletin board:

"...Some might consider it odd to launch a new venture today, but the partners believe the future is promising for the artist and for art. This confidence stems from Betty Parsons' observation that, 'Men and women of good will are and will remain visibly dominant.'"

Addenda - taxi to Mark Lancaster's:

Betty says that Barney Newman wrote the catalog notes for several of her shows. For the Pre-Columbian show, he wrote that the art of Pre-Columbian times developed in complete freedom, without rules, and this is why it belonged in Betty Parsons' gallery. (see catalog)

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 12

Whitney Opening, 9/19/74

Dinner at Jock Truman's first. Betty arrives quite late, in a beautiful long dress, paisley wool, that belonged to the grandmother of a friend of hers - very high style for the period, and immensely becoming. However she had ripped one side of it open getting out of the taxi, and had to retire to the bedroom where Gwen sewed her up.

Gwen was wearing a man's white-tie-and-tails outfit, which Arthur Pierson found for her in the family attic in Ramapo. Debbie had on an old cotton print dress (long) of Betty's, also provided by Arthur. Jock and Eric outfitted as sailors. The idea was to come as someone from urban or rural America of 100 years ago.

Betty holds herself and moves as one who has always been aware of being beautiful (J's observation). She has that sort of confidence.

Usually she goes early to openings, looks at the show before it gets crowded, then stays a little while only to talk. She said she hated them, and that Jock makes her go.

At the Whitney, she moved thru the fourth floor galleries devoted to her own painters, and many of the pictures there had hung in her gallery. Reinhardt, Ossorio, Gorki, Pollock, etc. A number of people made special efforts to talk to her, including Tom Armstrong the new director, a big man in an old fashioned frock coat and top hat; he said they must talk about the American Dream. The crowd was far more sedate than opening crowds used to be at MOMA and the Jewish Museum -- more Junior League than art world. Richard Lippold, in an exquisite costume, about the only artist I recognized.

Standing with Betty, before Oldenburg's giant Ice Bag, she said she liked Oldenburg very much. And told a story about Warhol. "The first time I ever met him, he came in and asked to draw my foot. I don't remember what he said, but he wanted to draw my foot -- my feet are very narrow, you know. I said as long as I could go on doing what I was doing it was all right with me, and that's what we did. I worked at my desk, talked on the telephone, wrote letters, and held my foot up so he could draw it. I never saw the result." Betty thinks of Warhol as the Great Negative.

She seemed glad to leave, but not a bit tired.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Forest Ben, who makes a living as a shrimp
fisherman in Texas. "It's visionary, as if
Betty said of him. "He claims he paints from
the third eye." (Art News, Mar. 1966)

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Betty Parsons - 13 at 7 West 81st St (Beresford)

Huge, crenelated building on 81 and CPW. Betty has been here five years now. Before she had a small house on 2nd at 74th Street. "I've always lived in vefy Bohemian places." But she was robbed several times, and her nephew Billy Rayner, Emily's son (and since Emily died like a son to her), said it was time she went into a proper building with doormen, and so he bought this coop in 1969 and gave it to her for life. Living room, bedroom, dining room (foyer), kitchen, guest room, The living room and bedroom are very bright and sunny, and overlook the Central Park lake and the skyline south. High ceilings. It's rather cluttered now because she hasn't fixed it up after summer.

In the little foyer, she shows me two small pictures by Forrest Bess, a red slashed canvas by Fontana, a Paolozzi "Icarus", an early Okada, and a construction of dangling wires with attached objects by Emil Hess -- "everybody is amazed by it but nobody ever wants to buy it."

~~She~~ We make the tour. Dining room is full of her own paintings in cardboard boxes, from Montclair show. On one wall is a fanciful painting by Altoon, who committed suicide, and whom she describes as "the American Miro." A wall of narrow shelves has dozens of small objects -- her very early plaster of Neptune (done in Mrs Tonetti's studio), some Pre-Columbian things (altho most of this is at Southhold), rocks, fossils, souvenirs. "Once I was out in New Mexico, and they told me whenever I saw one of these flat rocks I should crack it open and there might be a fossil. I must have cracked hundreds without finding anything. And then -- just look -- I cracked this one open and there was this -- a sunflower. Isn't it beautiful? It's unimaginably old." On far wall is one of Jasper's Moritorium lithographs, inscribed to Betty.

Her bedroom, full of light and color and all kinds of things. Rothko and Pollock drawings. Some of Betty's early sculpture -- "I did one cat and one dog in my life, and there they are." Alex Liberman painting. A drawings cabinet, on top of which are dozens of travel mementos. "I sometimes paint in here, against that wall."

Guest room - Many books and early BP sculpture heads, and a very colorful canvas called "Circus." "I love the circus. I ~~never~~ go every year, and wherever I travel I go. I've been to the Moscow Circus, and of course to the Cirque Medrana on Paris."

Living Room -- A thicket of plants over by the windows -- "They've been with me forever. They like me -- they won't die." Paintings on wall include a Youngerman (black, white, and blue), a Poussette Dart. Newman black and white drawing on another wall. Tuttle wood pieces, "like acorns. All his shapfes are so unusual." On the mantle, a Chinese head and a sculpture. Tomlin. A very early Cornell box -- "I gave him his first show, you know." On a bppkshelf, a tiny Turner that she got at an auction at Gimbels years ago. Two comfortable sofas facing, not much other furniture, but a sense of the room being full of things. On the coffee table a bunch of blue bead necklaces, a scimitar of some sort, a flute, some books.

Betty made tea and raison toast, which we drank out of handsome pottery cups. She has a lot of pottery around, bowls and such. "Sometimes I think if I hadn't become a painter I could have been a potter."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 14

Collecting

She started in 1923 -- a small Zadkin gouache that she's still got. "I had very little money then, but I was also working with him. I could have picked up fantastic things if I'd had any money -- Klees and Picassos and all that." Her money situation was this: While married to Parsons, she had gone to Parsons School of Design and done so well she was offered a job there. "So I told Schuyler I didn't need any money, that I could get a job. But when his mother heard about it she absolutely refused. 'No Parsons is going to earn a living,' she said -- particularly with that name at that place. So she made him give me alimony, not much but enough to live on. I got alimony until 1929, and then the crash came and everything stopped."

She bought some drawings in Paris, but didn't really start accumulating until she was at Wakefield in the thirties. Many things were given to her -- by artists when they were in trouble, or to pay off a debt, *often, when* ~~just~~ when they were broke, "I'd go in and buy something."

Pre-Colombian didn't come until later. But she saw her first pre-Colombian sculpture in Bourdelle's studio in the twenties. "He asked me what nationality I was, and I said American, and he said You mean Mexican? He said my work was very primitive. Then he took me to his studio and showed me two pre-Colombian sculptures, the first I'd ever seen. They fascinated me, and it was because of that I went to Mexico in the forties."

"I'm very catholic in my tastes. But I do like things that have an archaic note, a purely unsophisticated note. I call that (pointing to Youngerman) 'The Wild Geese' because it gives that ~~feeling~~ ^{feeling} of flight. I like its wildness. I don't ever like ~~effete~~ effete things."

California

"There was so much talent out there. Dietrich, and Garbo, and Bob Benchley, and Charles Butterworth, and so many others. I met them through Mrs. Robert Ames, who was married to the actor Ames." Also great friends with Wright Luddington, who had a good collection. She spent one year in Hollywood and two in Santa Barbara, where she had a job in a liquor shop and used to advise the butlers about wine. She was teaching drawing and sculpture, and doing watercolors and sculpture herself.

Galka Scheyer - "She told me something I never forgot. I asked how she went about teaching children, and she said, 'I never teach them, I just wait until they get to a fence and then I help them over.'"

New York

"I always wanted to get back to New York, but I didn't have the money. I didn't really like California that well -- I met a lot of people who became great friends, but the atmosphere was depressing somehow. There was such heavy drinking. I loved Bob Benchley. We used to call him "house afire," because he was always making us laugh so. Or 'Parthenon', because he was such a big person. But finally I sold my engagement ring for a thousand dollars -- I know Schuyler had paid a lot more than that for it -- and came back to New York.

"Soon after I arrived I had a show at the Midtown Gallery, that did quite well. Quite a few pictures were sold. Then I worked for a while with Alan Ruskin, the Midtown's director, on a commission basis. And then I went with Mrs. Cornelius Sullivan, whom I met through the painter Calvert Coggeshall. She lived then in a beautiful big house across the East River somewhere --

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Gertrude Macy

Betty is Aquarian - has that quality (humanitarian)

Her speech was very Newport society. Thin lips and a good figure. Society overtones. Used to wear sweaters sets and shoes with tongues. Very chic; But at the same time she could be at home with artists - always amazed she could do both.

She always wore her hair straight - very unusual in thirties when everyone was ~~waxed~~ curled or bobbed.

I've never heard her criticize anyone.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 18

work on a commission basis.

"It's a very peculiar position, my position. I'm sure most dealers think I'm an idiot, but they respect me because I have that kind of an eye.

Edith Halpert - "I thought she was very cruel. Once I brought an English friend, an artist, into her gallery, and she was so rude I've never gotten over it. But she was a good businesswoman, and she made money for her artists."

Dealers she admires - Antoinette Kraushaar, Catharine Willard.

Grace Borgenicht did some painting - she can't think of another who did.

"But there's no conflict between my work as an artist and my work as a dealer because when I sit down to paint a picture I have no recall. Nothing interests me except that direct contact I try to make with the canvas. A lot of artists don't go to exhibitions because they're afraid of being influenced -- a lot more shouldn't go, I could name them but I won't. ~~But~~ I started quite ~~early~~ late, finding my own vision, my own clear path, but now nothing interferes with it.

"Painting is a compulsive thing with me. It's a way of keeping alive. Although sometimes I think I might have been a potter..." (picking up a bowl and handling it).

"I got lost with the Old Masters. They posed too many problems, and I felt I could never catch up. But I always wanted to be an artist. I concealed my early ~~work~~ sculptures, because I was almost embarrassed about them. My family discouraged all that. In our house and in all those houses in Newport ~~in~~ you could see the most wonderful crystal and china and flowers, and great big pieces of furniture (maybe that's why I hate furniture), but never any paintings or sculpture. There was such complicated moulding on the walls that you couldn't even hang a picture if you wanted to. In the period of about 1900 to 1920 Newport was ~~very~~ ^{compulsively} anti-painting and sculpture.

"I was looking for something else, it's true. I appreciated all that beautiful glass and china, but I felt there must be something more than that. I don't like a room without a picture in it. One picture brings a room alive, and one piece of sculpture brings a garden alive.

Bourdelle

"He was a marvelous teacher and lecturer -- a better teacher than a sculptor, I think. He always said, 'Beware of learning too much about art', because it could keep you from finding your own way. He knew all the pitfalls. Once you see your own way you can study all you like. I studied with him for six years, in the winters. Giacometti was in the same room for five or six years too."

Bourdelle worked with a model, and Betty tried to convey what she felt about the model. "Bourdelle once said in class that Giacometti and I were the only ones who were trying to say something about the model, not just copying what someone else had done." His studio was on the Ave du Maine, and he also taught at the Grand Chaumiere."

After Bourdelle she studied two years with Zadkin, because she wanted to learn all about materials and he worked with many different materials.

"But Zadkin imposed Zadkin on you, so I left."

Later in California, she studied with Archipenko

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 20

Tuesday, Sept. 24th - at the gallery

"We've just sold a painting, a Taggart. Just this minute. Mrs. List bought it. A very good thing for Taggart -- for all of us." She bought the black and white canvas called "Spot," for \$900. "She has always had a great eye for sculpture, and she told me she wanted to learn more about painting. She asked me all about the pictures -- what he was trying to say in this one, and so forth. I spied on as best I could. She's also been asked to select a show for some museum, I forget which, and she wants to have us show her everything we have under \$750 that we think is important."

We got up to the 5th floor to see the Murch show, which she installed Monday morning. Jock says she did it in an hour, while they worked on the gallery getting it ready. "When Betty hangs Murch it's really something special. We just leave her alone. It's the same when she hangs Paul Feeley -- she has some mystical sort of contact with their work."

The gallery has a spare, pure look. Not too many pictures, and lots of bare wall. A white space, with a white bench in the middle (Tony Smith made it). Two pieces of marble sculpture by Cascella, and a small stainless steel Steven Porter in the corner. One potted plant. "We may do the walls over a little whiter and the floor a little darker; if the walls are too white, it kills the white in the paper."

Murch was for years the only representational artist in the gallery. A Canadian artist who died ~~four~~ four years ago. "But the other artists all liked him. His work is not really representational - he was always in the cosmic abstract world. Look at that teapot -- it's not in a room or on a table, where is it? Everything is suspended somewhere."

The announcements only went out yesterday, as result of a holdup at the printers. Betty is distressed -- "the opening of a new gallery!-- but not terribly. A few friends show up: Cleve Gray, John E. Myers. Leaving, Cleve says, "Good luck. Merde, as they say." Betty: "Merde! Of course."

She looks at two Steinberg prints brought in by Tony Towle.

At 5:30 she leaves, to go to a memorial service at the Cos Club for Audrey Hess, Tom's wife, who died the other day.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 21

Dinner at Jock's - 9/26/74

Joel Gray and his wife, Jock, Eric, Betty, Judy and I. Joel tiny, reed-slim, face of an elf. They collect -- modern, Amerindian, Far Eastern, very eclectic. Got to know Betty five years ago thru Jack Youngerman, who used to be married to Delphine Seyrig. Joel has bought Tuttle, Franciscus. He leaves tomorrow for New Orleans where he does a nightclub performance. This winter he'll be on Broadway in a musical based on the Dauphin and Jeanne d'Arc (not Shaw's), with Joel playing the Dauphin. Crazy about Betty - they had brought from ~~Malibu~~ Malibu a collection of rocks and pieces of driftwood for her, each wrapped in white tissue paper (they've also bought one of her painted wood pieces).

Joel: "Betty is the strongest vulnerable person I know."

Jock very excited over ~~sales~~ first sale from the new gallery upstairs -- a man came in and bought three Michael Robbins drawings. He called another collector who wants some, and he's coming in tomorrow.

Theater and movie talk. Joel and wife had been to see "That's Entertainment," which he loved. It was those movies that made him want to do what he's done. He is 42 - a surprise. Went to school in Cleveland, where his best friend was R.B. Kitai; they re-discovered one another recently, when Joel went into a gallery in London and saw a Kitai on the wall. Joel's name was Katz.

Betty said she was "terribly frightened" by the movie "Rosemary's Baby." She believes that sort of evil really does exist in the world, has come into contact with people who terrified her because of something "destructive" in their character.

9/27/74 - At the gallery

Mario Ceroli, Italian sculptor, whom Betty and Jock have been trying vainly to get in touch with for two weeks, walked in unexpectedly this morning, with his Italian dealer (Milan). Great relief. They're having a Ceroli show in December, of cut-out wooden alphabet forms. He's shown once at Bonino, five years ago. Betty's been interested in him for some time. They discuss business in rapid and idiomatic French.

Jock has sold four more Michael Robbins drawings. "He's going to think I'm Santa Claus."

Lunch at Gattopardo, Betty's favorite ^{Italian} restaurant, with Billy and Ches Raynor. They're just back from a holiday in Turkey - they went to Ephesus with Iris Love, but mainly just rested by the sea. Glossy couple. She's also a decorator, he's with Conde-Nast. Betty likes the restaurant mainly for the salads.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 22

9/30/74 at the gallery (Lancaster going up)

Betty and Jock say it was a very exciting opening at the Everson Museum in Syracuse, of Ruth Vollmer's sculpture. "I've never seen Ruth's work look so well." I.M. Pei building. Betty: "I would have changed only one thing" -- a sculpture placed too squarely.

Ruth Vollmer was born in Munich, has been in NY since 1935. She makes mathematically conceived objects. Tuttle wrote the introduction to her catalog - he admires her greatly.

Betty just had ~~xxxx~~ been to the hospital to see Okada. "He's so funny with me. ~~He~~ 'Control yourself,' he said, as I was leaving."

Emily Staempfli once told Betty, "I don't know how you keep it up" -- her enthusiasm.

There is a big Okada diptych in the back room, filling the large wall. A commission, it's going to an industrial firm in Connecticut in four days, ~~xxx~~ this will be only chance for others to see it. Muted greens, blues, earth colors.

Mark Lancaster arrived with his pictures about 2 PM, and set them out in order he liked. Betty made only one change -- switching two so that the strongly colored lavender one would hold the opposite corner of the room from the red, which is the strongest of all. Hanging went very smoothly, as did the lighting. Betty wanted to bring the lighting down a bit, because it was washing out the subtlety of some of the paintings. "Look, there, how that ^{olive} ~~pink~~ green shows up now. I didn't even see it before."

Ceroli and his dealer come in and spend half an hour discussing arrangements. Betty says Ceroli's wife is an actress who is becoming a star in Italy, and that Ceroli doesn't like it a bit. "Italian men just want their wives to sit around and take care of them."

Michael Robbins brings in a portfolio of drawings for Jock to select, all his others having been sold. He tells me that this is the first encouragement he's ever had. For years, nobody has bought anything, and none of the dealers he went to would take his work. Ivan Karp said he liked it, but that he handled only cool ~~xxx~~ pictures. Someone else said Robbins' stuff was too emotional. The drawings are very odd -- buildings taking off at high speed, cars and other vehicles dematerialized by speed, skydivers, some erotic nudes seen at high speed.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Betty - 10/1/74 - 23

Lancaster Opening. Betty in purple jacket, slacks, beads. A moment of quiet in her office, when she talks about her trip to India. "India is so fascinating because it's so mysterious. I remember one day, I went up on the back of an elephant to see some marvelous palace in the mountains. Their palaces make European chateaux look like mud huts. Anyway, there was a little boy out in front leading the elephant, and all the way to the palace he played the most beautiful music on a flute. It was exquisite. I wanted to get it somehow, to hear it again, so when we got there I asked the guide what it was the little boy had been playing, and he went and asked the boy, and he came back and told me that nobody would ever hear that again because the boy had just been making it up. I'd rather go back to India than any other country in the far east. Indian sculpture! Years ago I liked the Greeks, and then I liked the Egyptians more than the Greeks, but when I got to India and saw Indian sculpture, I liked that the best of all. There's so much life in it!"

del P. 13

Crowded, chic opening. Jasper and his crowd, etc. MOMA types. Merce and John. Now and then you'd see Betty standing along in the room, hands clasped behind her back, eyes moving very alertly from side to side, not smiling - self-contained but solitary.

"Everyone is in good spirits!" she said.

Exodus from 7 to 7:30, then ten of us to Brittany du Soir for dinner.

→

Betty: "I'm not interested in the historical ~~process~~ ^{there}. I go along entirely on enthusiasm and belief in artists and faith in the creative process."

Jock story about Betty: When he told her that someone wanted her to pick out a group of pictures for him to see, pictures that would be suitable to hang in the home, Betty said, "The home? I've never been interested in the home. I'm only interested in great painting."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 24

Washington D.C. - 10/2-3/74 (Hirshhorn Opening)

Betty caught the 3 PM shuttle down, along with the artist Azuka and CT. Stayed overnight with Adelyn Breeskin in Georgetown. Dinner with her dealer in DC, Caril Dulcan (Studio Gallery) at the stuffy Metropolitan Club. Betty wore a long African gown, with vertical stripes.

"Ad Reinhardt was the most neurotic artist I've ever known," she said at dinner. "Once he took back a damaged blue painting to repair, and painted it black instead -- he was in his black phase then. He hated to see his paintings sold because then they might get into the wrong hands -- they were all like that. They all felt their work belonged in a museum."

At the Hirshhorn - very cold night; Betty ventures out into sculpture garden but returns quickly, outdistancing us. We go upstairs to the ~~top~~ gallery floor. Betty being greeted constantly by other dealers, friends, artists. James Harithas of Wadsworth, Fritz Perls, Sidney Simon, George Segal etc. The exhibit~~ion~~ here opens with a group of abstract expressionists, and Betty is off at a fast clip.

"Come and look at the beautiful Poussette-Dart," she says to Jock, leading him into another room. She sold the painting to Hirshhorn. Also a Tomlin, a Rothko, and later a Kelly. She wants to see the whole museum. Is constantly coming across paintings she's sold.

(The next day she went back with Adelyn Breeskin and did the whole museum a second time, more thoroughly. She said that the sculpture there was disappointing -- the scale of the garden was so big that the sculpture didn't hold it down. She also felt the outside of the building was too commercial -- "it looks like a big gastank." But the inside was quite wonderful).

WI only worry that the paintings I've sold wouldn't hold up, but they do. The Poussette-Dart, the Reinhardt, the Tomlin -- the Tomlin is a shining thing there. The pictures all look happy on the walls. The way they do at the Albright-Knox. At the Guggenheim the pictures all look as though they wished they were somewhere else, but not here."

"Well, it really is a fine collection. I used to think the Albright-Knox was the best modern collection, but this is better."

Betty got to bed somewhat after midnight. Up early next am (can't sleep after 8 am), did museum again with Adelyn, went to her gallery for business discussions, lunch with someone else, home on 5 PM shuttle just in time to dress for huge party at Sy Newhouse's apartment for Alex Liberman opening.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Hirshhorn

He bought a lot from Betty. In the current show, a Youngerman, a Poussette-Dart, a Reinhardt, a Kelly. Lots of younger artists too.

"Joe was an enthusiast rather than a connoisseur. Edward Root was a real connoisseur, Joe isn't. He's a vulgarian but not a hypocrite. He's very proud of being a self-made man. He has heart. He always was very positive -- positively wrong in the beginning. There never was anything tentative about Joe."

Other Collectors

Mrs. List one of Betty's favorites. Mrs. Tremaine is "only interested in the very far out. She bought one of my wood pieces. She's very tough. In the early days I got rather cross with her over a deal, and we didn't see each other for several years. But then we became friends again, and now she comes in a lot."

Collectors as a breed are strange, though, and usually suspicious of the dealer, afraid of being cheated or taken advantage of. "My favorite collectors are those who come in and look around and decide on their own what they like. Sy Newhouse always used to come with Alfred Barr -- what's the fun of that, buying something because somebody else says it's good? Mrs. Paul Mellon is one of my favorites. She looks at pictures the way I do, she gets a charge out of a picture and so she buys it."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 25

10/4/74 - lunch at Japanese rest.

Any reluctance at selling certain pictures? "None at all. I'm not the possessive type. Possession is entirely an inner thing with me. If I fell in love with a picture, then because I love it it's mine -- it doesn't matter where it is or who owns it. My own collection is really just a tribute to the artists I like. I don't really want to own things -- I'd rather use the money to go travelling!"

"Down at that gallery in Washington yesterday, the Studio Gallery, I saw a painting that really struck me as pretty good, and I said who did that and Caril said it was my own. I'd completely forgotten my own picture!"

Martha Graham - "I thought she was one of the great creative advances. I met her when I was living out in California, and we became quite friendly. I wanted to do a head of her, but I never got round to it."

Gurdjieff - Met him thru a friend of hers, who had two children by him. "I always felt he helped men more than women. He was a bit of a brigand, but very brilliant." But Betty has been interested in the occult ever since. "The creative thing is in contact with something more than you are. Art always tries to find out what that is, that something beyond."

Current period in art: "I think now there's a struggle going on, over the problem of how to be successful and how to be an artist too. Some artists who have become successful are not as good as they were before. But quite a lot are only interested in trying to say something. It's a kind of a battle going on now..."

"The creative world is very unpredictable. What seems like a pause in the activity may be just getting ready for a great jump. I do feel interested in the future. I feel that ~~there's~~ in the time of great changes ahead of us we're going to depend on the artist more than ever before. Businessmen never see anything but profit and loss. But the world is going into a phase where that doesn't count any more."

"I used to say an awful thing -- I said I'd kill my grandmother if it made me feel more alive. So many people are three-quarters dead. Feeling alive, being really alive, is all that really matters to me."

SUBUD - For the last 12 years Betty has been going twice a week, for half hour sessions on Mondays and Thursdays. They try to surrender ~~their~~ body, brain, emotions -- to dismiss all that and try to enter "the creative void." Betty thinks she is healthier and calmer as a result. "I move, mostly. It's beyond language." Others sing, or cry out, do whatever they like. She learned about it in 1958, embarking on a trip around the world with Annie Witzel -- the sculptor Addy Kent's sister, Alice, sent a book on Subud to her on the boat. The founder is from Djakarta. She got interested, looked up the NY center on return. "Religion is like love -- you have to find it. I'm not a believer. I just have to find the things that work for me, and this really works."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

Parsons - 26

On sculpture and painting

"Oh, I love painting too. But I've always been a very fluid person, and sculpture seems more solid, it's always seemed good for me to ~~mix~~ have that kind of solidity to work with."

"I've been picking up those pieces of wood on the beach for a long time. I loved to see what the water and the sun had done to them. And then all at once it struck me, why not paint them and see what happened? It was as simple as that."

Lunch at Victor's, a Cuban restaurant that Simon likes. Betty orders yellow rice and Spanish sausage, "very Spanish." Interested in the neighborhood and the people - entirely different from 57th area. "We might as well have gotten on a train and gone to a different country. That's one of the things I like so about New York."

Expanding world - "Everything has been expanding in this century. Business, politics, communications, everything. So it was natural for the artists to reflect that." And it was the place it could be felt most acutely. By Europeans -- of that whole group, the only real American was Newman (and Anselm was born in Valencia). Now all that expansion has come to an end. What's essential from now on is to do away with competition and to stress cooperation. "That's our only hope."

Back to 7 West 41 to see Betty's sketchbooks. She pulls out a dozen or so, black, four-by-six-inch books found in way out supply stores. She's filled more than forty by now, at the rate of about one or more a year. She draws with watercolor or watercolor pencil -- always has a little glass bottle of water in her handbag, with a stopper she made herself.

We look first at the one she took on the 1972 African trip with Billy Rayner. First page, inside cover filled with names of birds and animals and plants -- Wood-buck, Warbler, Kudu, Bat-eat-Fox, Fish Eagle, Lilac-breasted Mallard, etc. Many pressed flowers, colors very bright. Many drawings are much more than quick sketches -- quite complete in themselves in fact of those were not cut, framed, and hung in the "Pictorial show". Quick notes by Rayner. "It's interested in a lot of things as you can see." Rayner's sketches, postcards, photos, etc etc.

From 1974 (current) book: "A leaf and a flame/ looking for a shower/ confronted me/ with too much power." Mostly abstract drawings here, with many of St. Nepton.

1989 - Turkey - sketch of the Acropolis ("They had a hard time getting us away from the Acropolis"). And these lines from Vol. Solzhenitsyn, translated from Turkish:

"Traveler, you must not rest/ At dawn! And wipe your feet/ The fog-wind witness of the earth ... The night feet for joy, the feet dragged and the "bones prayed: Valid, / may you never walk, / when the sun waits, finished."

Betty's been twice to Turkey and twice to Africa. "I try to get it before it disappears." the words of Rayner. Another pressed leaf, very white. "I have a process for leaves - that's so incredible -- imagine if you could get a leaf that white?"

"Turkey and the most incredible view to see. I always thought the great

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

26-a

Betty Parsons - 10/8/74 at Victor's Cafe (72nd and Columbus)

Betty and Jock went to the opening of Jenny Licht's show at MOMA last night. "I thought it was all interesting, and elegant, and intelligent, and beautifully done -- but that none of it had any vitality at all," was Betty's reaction. "It's as though these artists are doing things with museums in mind. Artists shouldn't think like that -- they should think only about what they want to say." Great interest today in different materials, and how to use them. Fortunately, there are still some artists around with vitality. "That's what I like about Taggart! He has great vitality, and a childlike sense of humor, and he's not afraid to show it."

Lunch at Victor's, a Cuban restaurant that Simone likes. Betty orders yellow rice and Spanish sausage, "very Spanish." Interested in the neighborhood and the people - entirely different from 57th area. "We might as well have gotten on a train and gone to a different country. That's one of the things I like so about New York."

Expanding world - "Everything has been expanding in this century. Business, politics, communications, everything. So it was natural for the artists to reflect that." And NY was the place it could be felt most ~~clearly~~ acutely. By Europeans -- of that whole group, the only real American was Newman (and Annelee was born in Palestine). Now all that expansion has come to an end. What's essential from now on is to do away with competition and to stress cooperation. "That's our only hope."

Back to 7 West 81 to see Betty's sketchbooks. She pulls out a dozen or so, black, four-by-six-inch books found in any art supply store. She's filled more than forty by now, at the rate of about one or more a year. She draws with watercolor or watercolor pencil -- always has a little glass bottle of water in her handbag, with a stopper she made herself.

We look first at the one she took on the 1972 African trip with Billy Raynor. First page, inside cover filled with names of birds and animals and plants -- Reed-buck, Marabou, Kudu, Bat-ear Fox, Fish Eagle, Lilac-Breasted Roller, etc. Many pressed flowers. Colors very bright. Many drawings are much more than quick sketches -- quite complete in themselves (a lot of these were cut out, framed, and hung in the Montclair show). Quick notes to herself. "I'm interested in a lot of things as you can see." Newspaper clippings, postcards, photos, etc etc.

From 1974 (current) book: "A leaf and a flame/ looking for a shower/ confronted me/ with too much power." Mostly abstract drawings here, with many of St. Maarten.

1969 - Turkey - sketch of the Bosphorus ("They had a hard time getting me away from the Bosphorus"). And these lines from Wole Solinka, translated from Yoruba:

"Traveller, you must set out/ At Dawn! And wipe your feet upon/ The dog-nose wetness of the earth ... The right foot for joy, the left dread/ And the Mother prayed: Child,/ may you never ~~walk~~ walk/ Where the road waits, famished."

Betty's been twice to Turkey and twice to Africa. "I try to get it before it disappears." The garden at Topkapi. Another pressed leaf, ivory white: "I have a passion for leaves - that's so incredible -- imagine if you could get a wall that color!"

"Turkey had the most incredible glow to me. I always thought the light
(over)

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

5-22

in France was so marvelous, but in Africa it's even more so. Everything near seems far away, and everything far away seems near -- all because of the light. The light has a great softness in France and Italy; in America it's very hard and brilliant, at least to me."

... and beautifully... was Betty's... Artists shouldn't think like that -- they should think only about what they want to say... Great interest in different materials, and how to use them... Fortunately, there are still some artists around with vitality... He has great vitality, and a childlike sense of humor, and he's not afraid to show it."

lunch at Victor's, a Cuban restaurant that Simone likes. Betty orders yellow rice and Spanish sausage, "very Spanish." Interested in the neighborhood and the people -- entirely different from NYth areas... that I might as well have gotten on a train and gone to a different country... that's one of the things I like so about New York."

expanding world -- "everything has been expanding in this century. Business, politics, communications, everything. So it was natural for the artists to reflect that." And NY was the place it could be felt most acutely... of that whole group, the only real American was Newman (and Anushe was born in Palestine). Now all that expansion has come to an end. What's essential from now on is to do away with competition and to stress cooperation. "That's our only hope."

Back to 7 West 81 to see Betty's sketchbooks. She pulls out a dozen or so, black, four-by-six-inch books found in any art supply store. She's filled more than forty by now, at the rate of about one or more a year. She draws with watercolor or watercolor pencil -- always has a little glass bottle of water in her bag, with a spongy end herself. We look first at the one she took on the 1952 African trip with Betty Raynor. First page, hands cover filled with names of birds and animals and plants -- head-back, horse, hat-car fox, fish as in, blue, breaded roller, etc. Many pressed flowers. Colors very bright. Many drawings are much more than quick sketches -- quite complete in themselves (a lot of heads were cut out, pressed, and hung in the container). (Quick notes to herself. "I'm interested in a lot of things as you can see." Newspaper clippings, postcards, photos, etc etc.)

From 1954 (current) book: "A last and a flame looking for a shower, confronted me with too much power." Mostly abstract drawings here, like many of St. Mark's.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

(30)

Parsons - 9/10/74

Jock Truman

use w/ Bushman?

Been with Betty twelve years. "It's just amazing how she's influenced my life. I'll give you an example. ~~When~~^{When} I came to her, my job was more or less to map out her day -- what phone calls to make, whom to see, and so forth. I often had a hard time getting her to make phone calls. One day, it was absolutely essential that Betty call Gordon Bunshaft about something, I've forgotten what it was now but it was extremely important. She wouldn't call him all morning. She went out to lunch, and when she came back she said, 'Guess who I met in the lobby of the Pierre -- Gordon Bunshaft.' From that day I learned that if Betty wasn't going to ~~call~~ make a call there was a damn good reason for it."

"Betty vibrates -- and this place vibrates because of her. That's what makes this place go. The whole atmosphere ~~is~~ here is just extraordinary. I worked for several years for Bob Isaacson -- it was an academic gallery, specializing in painters from the turn of the century. I got awfully depressed there. There was such a decadent, burnt-out feeling. So when I came to Betty, with this fantastic commitment to life of hers, it was a revelation. ~~It~~ She was 62 then, and about fifty years younger than Isaacson who was 32.

"This is the atmosphere she attracts, so it affects everyone here. That's what we see. I feel we're quite unselfish in this gallery. We spend lots of time on things that have nothing to do with making money."

(Jock studied architecture at Harvard, never finished; ~~he~~ ran a designing and decorating shop in Cambridge "which was wildly successful, except that I went broke." Came to NY, did a number of different things before Isaacson. Says he was forty when he came to work for Betty, and felt enormously heartened because Betty had been 40 when she started her gallery. "I had a tremendous amount of hope because of that. When I got here I felt as though everything I'd done ~~before~~ became useful -- until then it had seemed like a lot of unrelated failures and messing around. People from my own past all gathered back again. I feel now that I've had a very good life, although at forty I thought it was a mess).

"Here's another story. Richard Poussette-Dart, ~~was~~ one of Betty's old timers, is a very difficult man. When he was having his retrospective at the Whitney some years ago, he and Betty got into a terrible row during the hanging, really a bad ~~xxxxxxx~~ row about something. I went to the opening with Betty, and as we were leaving, down on the main floor, Betty suddenly became lost in thought in front of the biggest of Poussette-Dart's canvases. She was just enveloped in the picture -- she couldn't even have told you who painted it at that moment, and she certainly had forgotten about the row. When I mentioned this, she said, 'Never identify with the artist, always with the paintings.' It saved her life many a time."

The gallery sends out no press releases, and doesn't lean on anyone to come unless they're sure the particular person would be interested.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

(3)

Parsons -

Jock ~~Mittler~~^{Truman} invu - 9/12/74 at 310 E. 55th

Do their tastes usually agree? "Betty likes a lot more things than I do. We're both highly intuitive, but she's still seduced by things that I think are no longer valid. We had an argument about this recently. I said that I just wasn't interested in aesthetics, in beautiful ways of putting paint on canvas, that no matter how well it was done that wasn't enough for me. Betty thought a minute, and then said, 'I think it's still enough for me.'"

"Other people feel that we have an aesthetic point of view here, which always surprises me -- I never thought we did. One thing is that we do tend to like painting that is understated. Someone like Taggart may not seem understated, but there's a childlike quality there that makes it valid for us."

"We're only interested in work that is an affirmation of life. While both Betty and I have great respect for Warhol, we would ~~never~~ have wanted to show him. Betty calls him 'The Murderer.' There's a way of painting despair that is not destructive, I think. Ellsworth Kelly and Jack Youngerman had a young black artist that they ~~wanted to show~~ were promoting, and they brought him in here to see Betty. He was obviously very good, but he just terrified Betty -- she felt there was something really destructive about him, and she ~~didn't~~ couldn't have him in the gallery!"

The artists who left: Betty not tough enough?

"I think that's partly a myth that she's built up about herself. Once I went back over our records and made a chart of sales during those years in the forties and fifties. Pollock made \$8,000 one year, ~~and Rothko~~ which was not bad then, and Rothko made \$12,000. When Rothko went to Janis he made less money the first year -- nobody ~~made~~ more, really -- but of course time was on their side, and their prices had to go up eventually. It's true that we are not a star system gallery. Betty doesn't go out and sell the way Castelli does, she can't hound people. But she's always done pretty well by her artists. ~~It~~ I think Betty has encouraged the myth ~~because~~ partly because people are always trying to borrow money from her, and if they thought she was making lots of money they'd try harder."

"As I understand it, the story is that ~~six~~^{four} of her artists came to her -- Rothko, Pollock, Still, Newman, -- and said, 'We know we're important, and ~~it's important for you to see us more~~ we know you can't give us the time and effort that are necessary while you're handling all these other people too.' They wanted her to drop the second rate artists, and said they would make her the most famous dealer in the world. Betty's answer was no, of course. She couldn't let anyone dictate to her how she ran her gallery. Betty is a free spirit -- she said no, and she was right to say no."

Betty as a dealer -- the fact that she's socially equal to anyone is a factor. "My idea when I came into the gallery was to push her into becoming the star she is, and then I would step in to fill the vacuum, and that's really what happened. It's worked. She travels a great deal, which she loves to do, and she's more useful to the gallery travelling than she is sitting here. Betty really was very shy, and she resisted it. The only reason I could pull it off was that she likes to travel so much. Now that she's a star travel is much easier for her -- she never has to stay in hotels, and there are always

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

(19)

people to meet her at the airport and things like that. And she accomplishes more now. ~~Every~~ Each year she says is the great year of her life, and it is -- I really ~~believe~~ can see that each year is more magnificent for her than the last."

They are not going to move downtown. "Soho gets the circus, and we were never interested in the circus aspect."

Truman says they both feel that Tuttle is one of the most important artists around. "I think Tuttle is the greatest of this century, I think he's greater than Pollock."

Pop - "Neither Betty nor I have ever been interested in anything with a literary connotation."

Minimal - They had the father of minimal in Ad Reinhardt, and the next generation in Agnes Martin. (Martin really went nuts, left the gallery for ~~Elkon~~, then soon afterward had herself committed). ~~Maxx~~ They also had Ellsworth Kelly and still have Lyman Kipp. (Martin add: "She told us later that she just hated Elkon, so he was the ideal dealer for her; all she did was send over the paintings and receive the checks").

"Our mainstay is still ~~xxxxxx~~ a few of the rich and the super-rich. We like to say, whenever somebody new buys a painting, that he's one of our new young collectors, but really the list is very small."

"We're never going to be rich -- we don't run the gallery that way." But they do reasonably well. Last year was best in their history, this year they're going to lose money.

Her Painting

She's painting more now than ten years ago. "She has the asset of complete forgetfulness and total concentration on what she's doing." Her sketchbooks are very important -- many paintings come from them.

"Her painting has changed about three times in the last ten years. Jack Youngerman was responsible for the first change -- he saw those stones that she picks up and paints, and he said to her why don't you consider those studies for big paintings? Which she did. Then in Africa two years ago, the color and excitement made a great impression on her, and her paintings became more active as a result -- they became more vibrant, and began to move. Then this summer out in Wyoming her colors shifted again.

"I think she's a very good painter. It comes directly from her heart, and it's very satisfying to look at. It's not intellectual painting, not an aesthetic exercise. I don't suppose she's a great painter, but she's very good.

"She sells pretty well. She'd sell even better if I were promoting her. But we feel duty bound not to push that side much here. Sachs has been her New York dealer, but her last show didn't do well and he wouldn't give her one this year."

As A Collector

"This is the truest clue to Betty -- the most eclectic, covering the longest period, and having the biggest scope. Neither of us would ever want to show anything here that we didn't want to own. A lot of her pictures are out on

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

(53)

loan with the U.S. Embassy Program -- the program that places contemporary art in US embassies all around the world. (It was started by the Stanley Woodwards, now run by State Dept. under supervision of Mrs. Llewellyn Thompson). Betty must have 50 paintings on loan there. ~~When~~ "We also had some pictures in the White House, but when Nixon came in they all came back."

Loyalty - very important to her, perhaps the most important. This is behind the complete breaks with Theodoros Stamos, Clifford Still, and Sidney Janis.

"I've been thinking about Betty and the gallery, and it occurs to me that I can sum up the whole thing in five sentences. Betty ~~is~~ has always been interested in the unfamiliar. But humanity is afraid of the unfamiliar -- like that collector yesterday who said he was afraid to pay less than \$5000 for a painting; when a painting gets to cost \$5000 it's become familiar. ~~Very~~ few people are not afraid of the unfamiliar. So, when we get one of them as a client, we're very excited. Dick Baker is the most important client in the world to me -- he bought the first Pop Art paintings, he has the best avant-garde collection of the last fifteen years. Emily Tremaine, Betty Blake in Dallas, and a few others like that. Duncan Phillips and Edward Rpot kept Betty alive in the beginning. Ordinarily it takes five years to get people interested enough to buy the new image. We're very interested in any artist who stays vital and alive. We're not excited about an artist who's accepted his image, and jst keeps repeating it.

"This is really the crux of what we're all about. I think it's why Betty remains so young. I hope I'll be the same way. It's why this gallery differs from Janis or Marlborough."

(Richard Brown Baker - began collecting abt 15 years ago. Betty got him started).

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

34

Jock @ 10/1/74 at 5th floor gallery

(Dorothy Miller says that)

"Betty really isn't so interested in her artists after they become rich. She's un-sold a lot of paintings for that reason." Pushing Kawabata after someone has decided on Okada, because Okada sells well and Kawabata doesn't.

"Betty is like Libefman, she really wants her painting to be more important than anything else." Jock agrees that she may be somewhat competitive with her artists.

"Betty always takes the side of the artist, and I take the side of the client. She has absolute reverence for the artist. She likes artists better than clients..."

Jock bought out the last Tuttle show of plywood pieces, because Betty didn't get it, didn't know what to say in selling. (Don't use).

"In the last two years or so Betty has been more into her own work, and when that happens you can't be as interested in the work of others. I hope I've given her the freedom to do that."

Painted wood sculpture started about 1966, from Youngerman. "Artists like her sculpture more than her paintings. To me, it's allied to Calder in attitude."

When they decided to open the new gallery, it was clearly understood that Betty was not to work any harder. But Jock says she's very excited about it, won't leave it to him to do. "I'm sure she'll become friends with young Michael Robbins."

Curt Valentin, who really brought modern art to Us, was unable to see the work of Pollock at all. Edith Halpert had her group and stopped there. But Betty has gone through four major modern periods without losing interest -- abstract expressionism, hard edge, minimal, and the current pot pourri.

"Betty believes in all her artists. Sometimes I don't see how. I think that because the gallery has shown the giants, it's unfair to show those who are not giants. But Betty always hopes the next show will do the trick, she never loses hope. And she's been vindicated so many times. For two years nobody would look at those empty paintings of Ed Zutrau's, but now they've caught on and people are buying."

"There was one bad period when Betty thought the gallery would have to close. Marian Hartkey, her assistant, went out and took another job -- this was before I came. But she stuck it out somehow. Of course, Betty's never taken any substantial sums out of the gallery."

Betty never did much investment in art -- would never let Jock hang a picture if not by one of their stable. Jock has been building up this side of the business, which is what most dealers make their real money on.

No interest in prints as yet.

On going after clients: "We're always afraid we're not going to like them."

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

40

Mark Lancaster - 9/18/74

Met Betty in St Maartens, thru Jasper. He's very happy with her, altho not crazy about the gallery space. She does very well by him, and his pictures sell. "She's very good that way, she's tough when she has to be," altho no real hard sell like Leo. Mark feels the gallery's function is really just to show his work, not to promote it.

Doesn't feel that Betty's being an artist makes her competitive. "It just means she really looks at your work, she knows what goes into it."

Feels Betty does show a lot of mediocre artists.

Betty as a child was not overly positive about things as she is now. But she always had untold energy and enthusiasm.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

(40)

Mrs. Thomas McCarver (sister) 9/19/74

This is the older sister -- Betty was the middle one. The youngest, Emily, died some years ago (see Witzel invu).

She says ~~Betty~~ there was nothing at all unusual about Betty as a child. She was something of a tomboy, very good at tennis and swimming, and very interested in sports. Also in reading. She was popular, happy, not rebellious -- "a perfectly normal young girl in every way." Never showed any great interest in art until she got married and went to Paris -- it began then quite suddenly.

The three girls each had their own governess, and saw relatively little of their parents. Later, after Betty's ~~divorce~~ divorce, the parents got divorced too. Betty married at age 19, and it seemed a good match.

Betty as a child was not nearly as positive about things as she is now. But she always had untold energy and enthusiasm.

Dubiner is a Canadian, who made a fortune out of go-yes. Then he and his wife decided to go and try to do something for Israel, and eventually he managed to get into the art world there and started a gallery. Betty's show of Adcock sculpture was all brought over by Sam. He just came into the gallery one day, and told Betty she ought to go and see Israel, and she just followed him...

Betty's sense of humor and merriment -- often just bubbles with glee.

Complains to have her sketch book with her. Even at the Philharmonic, she sketches or writes poetry. "She was very cross when she went to Canada, because the seating was so close together and so much was happening all around that she wasn't able to draw."

Daddy, the younger sister, meant more to her than anyone ever has. She was very sad for about two years after Dolly died (about 3 years ago).

Ever since she started the wood sculptures, her work has been selling better. Things seemed to open up for her.

"Basically she's the most honest person I've ever known. Any kind of phonyness just drives her up the wall."

Ask about her favorite painters (Turner, Giotto). Going to see the Giotto in Italy, spending hours, not sketching.

In travelling, she is never late for anything. She knows good food but doesn't insist on it, can be perfectly satisfied with a greasy hamburger. She has no interest in archaeology.

Mama left her once, and she was heartbroken. Six months later, the Gredas asked her to lunch. Kinis said, "Kiss very naughty boy." He never even had a show at the other gallery. She welcomed him back.

Betty goes well, thru her own enthusiasm. It's hard to resist.

In Wyoming and St. Martins, she wants to paint all the time.

In India, she was mad to go to the Ajanta caves. But they arrived during the monsoon season, and couldn't get there; Betty accepted this without any fuss, and began right away painting in her hotel room in Bombay. Later she got her heart set on Rajasthan, but the monsoons were still in progress.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

(12)

Annie Laurie Witzel - 9/19/74 at 405 E. 54th

They met about 1957. Says Betty seems just about the same now, except that she has more equanimity and more tolerance. She looks at things in the same way -- childlike without being childish; a sense of wonder.

St. Maartens - Betty went there the first time with intention to buy (she had seen slides of the island and talked with ~~her~~ ~~two~~ ~~come~~ ~~her~~ who urged her to go down). Her house is utterly unpretentious, and everything works perfectly. Deck where she paints every day (Betty says she got Jasper painting; he had said he couldn't paint there). View of the sea on one side, mountains on the other. The great event of the year is New Years Eve at Mary's Fancy: All the blacks who work there line up to dance with Betty, to a steel band. She never stops all evening, doing the calypso. "She is really the belle of the ball."

"Did you know she was mad about people with heavy eyebrows? ~~Sam Dubiner~~ She went to Tel Aviv one year because of Sam Dubiner's eyebrows. Sam Dubiner is a Canadian, who made a fortune out of yo-yos. Then he and his wife decided to go and try to do something for Israel, and eventually he ~~started~~ got into the art world there and started a gallery. Betty's show of Amlash sculpture was all brought over by Sam. He just came into the gallery one day, and told Betty she ought to go and see Israel, and she just followed him..."

Betty's sense of mirth and merriment -- often just bubbles with glee.

Compulsion to have her sketch book with her. Even at the Philharmonic, she sketches or writes poetry. "She was very cross when she went to Candide, because the seating was so close together and so much was happening all around that she wasn't able to draw."

Emily, the younger sister, meant more to her than anyone ever has. She was very sad for about two years after Emily died (about 5 years ago).

Ever since she started the wood sculptures, her work has been selling better. Things seemed to open up for her.

"Basically she's the most honest person I've ever known. Any kind of phoniness just drives her up the wall.

Ask about her favorite painters (Turner, Giotto). Going to see the Giotto's in Italy, spending hours, not sketching.

In travelling, she is never late for anything. She knows good food but doesn't insist on it, can be perfectly satisfied with a greasy hamburger. She has no interest in archaeology ~~(and time)~~

Okada left her once, and she was heartbroken. Six months later, the Okadas asked her to lunch. Kimio said, "Kenzo very naughty boy." He never even had a show at the other gallery. She welcomed him back.

Betty does sell, thru her own enthusiasm. It's hard to resist.

In Wyoming and St. Maartens, she wants to paint all the time.

In India, she was mad to go to the Ajanta caves. But they arrived during the monsoon season, and couldn't get there; Betty accepted this without any fuss, and began right away painting in her hotel room, in Bombay. Later she had her heart set on Katmandu, but the monsoons were still in progress

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

and they couldn't land -- they flew over the city, and saw it thru a sudden parting of the clouds, but the plane had already turned back. A man behind them in the old DC-3 sighed and said, "It seems I'm always going to Katmandu."

Betty had a Pop show? (ask Jock).

The fanciful side to Betty: She has two stuffed animals that go on all her travels -- Leo and Lumpy. Keeps them in the closet in NY, but they come out when she travels.

Her clothes -- very natural elegance, and a passion for "Aztec colors."

Surprise party for her at Max's Kansas City - she danced all night (ask Jock).

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Greta left her once, and she was heartbroken. Six months later, she
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Companion to have her sketch book with her. Even of the Philharmonic,
Betty's sense of mirth and merriment -- often just bubbles with her.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

(13)

Sidney Janis - 10/3/74

Says he knows that Betty has given out a story about the dispute that is not really true. The landlord at 15 West 57th came to Janis, he says, and said that it was a building violation for two tenants to occupy the same floor, there being only a single exit for both, it violated the code. "They gave us priority on the floor. Betty was disturbed, because she thought she had priority. I accepted the situation as it was presented to me by the landlord. She decided to sue, but she couldn't sue me -- she had to sue the landlord, or rather the agents for the building. The suit went to court, and the court found against Betty, so she had to move. She couldn't find a new place at first, so I let her stay on and pay me rent for several months. When she found another place she moved."

"She was angry with me because I didn't say, 'Oh, no, I can't accept this, you should have priority."

"We both needed more space."

"The thing that disturbed me was that Betty remained angry at me although I had really been the Good Samaritan. She must have paid rent to me for six months."

"The agents had to put one of us out, and they preferred to have us stay. We instigated absolutely nothing -- they came to us. She was suing the landlord. And if she won the suit, as she says, why did I remain and she leave?"

"Of course it is a fact that we were doing very well then, and she was not doing so well. Several of her artists had left her, and then eventually they came to us -- but Pollock and Rothko were both free agents when they came here -- I think Rothko had been without a gallery for a year or more."

"She nods to me now."

One reason the big boys wanted to be with Janis was that he also showed the greats of the previous generation -- Mondrian, ~~Rixxxx~~ the Cubists, etc. He showed the abstract expressionists on the same level, "and I think that influenced the artists." But then years later, when Janis took on Oldenburg and other Pop people, the abstract expressionists left him in rage. Ironic. "Artists are very grateful to you at the beginning of their careers. The artist-dealer relationship is great at the beginning, and ~~notxxxxxxxatxxxx~~ very tough later."

Check records of ~~with~~ William A. White (Henry Hof), for lawsuit dating early part of 1962. Betty paid rent to Janis from June 1962- June 1963. Janis' present auditor is Sidney Lehrer at 866 UN Plaza, PL 2-6983.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	TOMKINS	II.B.21

(44)

Jeanne Reynal - 10/4/74

Much the same background as Betty's. They were friends as children at Newport. "Betty didn't have quite as much trouble with her family as I did with mine."

Jeanne was three years younger. She and her friends "thought Betty was just terrific. She had a real peaches-and-cream complexion, her eyes were like Delft, she played damn good tennis and she swam beautifully, and she always seemed to be surrounded by the most attractive boys. She had a great many beaux. I think she also knew the hunting people, altho she didn't ride.

"It's interesting that Betty never broke with all that. She just seemed to widen her sphere to include other worlds. I used to call her Lady Elizabeth Pierson Parsons -- she was like those great English aristocrats who take for granted what they are."

Betty was very outgoing and athletic; Schuyler Parsons was more intellectual, and definitely not athletic. He seemed "highly inadequate" to her.

Breaking away -- "We all had a model in Mrs. Whitney, who had got away with it."

Jeanne had an affair with a man and got banished by Newport. She went to live in Paris (with a man), was there when Betty was but they didn't see much of one another. They met again in California. But didn't really renew the friendship until Betty was running the Wakefield, and spinning in the orbit of the ~~xxx~~ New York artists. Jeanne very fond of Rothko.

"Everyone loved Betty. She used to say, 'I just gave them walls, they did the rest.' She imposed no conditions of any kind. There was ~~x~~ maybe a feeling that ~~xxxx~~ she didn't work hard enough at selling them..."

The artists she showed "more or less ignored" Betty's own work, as an artist.

"She has an almost Oriental quality of centeredness -- sometimes when she's in a group of people you feel she's miles away. She has this ability to retire from the world. This remoteness is one of her secrets."

Sukey (older sister) and Betty were both knockouts as girls, Emily less so.

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Bill Raynor Dunch 10/7/74 at Century

Betty rather resisted moving into a bourgeois building. She'd always wanted to live in a studio and always had. But there had been too many robberies. The last one at the 3rd and 73rd apt scared him -- a closet had been broken into so violently, with an axe or something, and Bill feared what would happen if the burglar came when Betty was there. They looked all over the Village, but everything was so expensive. She would never have moved into a Park Ave apt, but the West Side was OK.

The African safari -- 1966 or so. The Raynors and a group were going on a photographic safari, and when they announced they were bringing Bill's seventy-year-old aunt some of the group were dismayed. But Betty was anything but a drag. She was always first one packed and ready in the morning. While the others were photographing she would be in the landrover, sketching. Bill thinks she is the first serious artist to paint in Africa, and says her big African canvas is terrific. (See African sketchbook). They went to Kenya, Tanzania, etc.

Betty has never really talked about retiring, so far as he knows.

He doesn't know about her business affairs -- has always felt she handled it perfectly well on her own. "Betty's very practical in her way."

Bill went to Taft -- was expelled for smoking and came to Betty's.

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BETTY PARSONS GALLERY

24 WEST 57 STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10019/CI 7-7480

<u>1974</u>	<u>Betty Parsons Gallery</u>	<u>Parsons-Truman Gallery</u>
Sept.10-28	Bill Taggart	
Sept.24- Oct.19	Mark Lancaster	Walter Murch Walter Murch
Oct.1-19	Henry Pearson	Susan Eisler
Oct.22- Nov.9	Minoru Kawabata	Gregory Masurovsky
Nov.12-30	Mario Ceroli	group
Dec.3-21		
<u>1975</u>		
Jan.7-25	Paul Feeley	Kathleen Cooke
Jan.28-Feb15	Risa	Vita Peterson
Feb.15- Mar.8		Greg Otto
Mar.11- Apr.12	Kenzo Okada	Richard Tuttle
Apr.15- May3	Thomas Stokes	Michael Robbins
May6-31	Toko Shinoda	Elinor Roberts
June3-14		

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44

ARTISTS OF THE BETTY PARSONS GALLERY ~~EST~~ 1974

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Helene Aylon | Patrick Ireland |
| Fanny Brennan | ✓ Kenzo Okada |
| Andrea Cascella | Greg Otto |
| ✓ Calvert Coggeshall | Henry Pearson
VITA PETERSON |
| Mario Ceroli | Stephen Porter |
| Kathleen Cooke | ✓ Jeanne Reynal |
| ✓ Paul Feeley estate | Barbara Chase-Riboud |
| Richard Francisco | Hans Richter |
| Thomas George | Risa |
| Cleve Gray | James Rosen |
| Jan Groth | Sam Russo |
| Theora Hamblett | Yehiel Shemi |
| Dorothy Heller | Toko Shinoda |
| Lee Hall | ✓ Saul Steinberg |
| Jean Hugo | Thomas Stokes |
| Jean Jones Jackson | Bill Taggart |
| Minoru Kawabata | ✓ Hedda Sterne |
| Henry Koehler | Marie Taylor |
| Mark Lancaster | ✓ Bradley Walker Tomlin estate |
| Gregory Masurovsky | Richard Tuttle |
| ✓ Walter Murch estate | Ruth Vollmer |
| | Zuka |