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Hunter

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Bagoşian

Halley

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Larry Gagosian - 10/21/98

"I really admire Ileana. She's very strong, and I always liked the no-nonsense look of her gallery. Almost clinical. The way she presented things, they always looked important even when they weren't."

"She'd never let me buy anything from her. I used to try to buy things from her shows, but I never could. Antonio would say, Oh, yes, we would like for you to have one, but we can't. Not we won't, but we can't." Larry wouldn't do the required dance, apparently.

"She's the total opposite of Leo. He's open, she's completely closed."

Heiner
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Johns
Karp
Halley

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Homeier

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Karp

Halley

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Peter Halley 8/19/98

Joined the gallery late 1986. Had been with International With Monument (Meyer Vaisman). "I don't feel that Meyer has received sufficient credit for what he did with International With Monument. It was quite a special cultural moment for many of us, and he was the first person to get it together to show Jeff Koons. I had two shows there. I was interested in the East Village, and the fact that artists were forming their own galleries and showing the neo-conceptual work that the official art world had completely dropped..." Neo-expressionism had taken over.

Meyer Vaisman decided he couldn't be an artist and run a gallery, but wanted to keep what he had done together. "So he went to Ileana -- and I urge you to contact Meyer, because he had a very close relationship with her. But, one of Meyer's parents was Romanian, and from Ileana's generation. He felt she was the only one who hadn't sullied herself with 80s hype, and with chasing whatever the latest thing was...Leo was just willing to do anything, but Ileana was more selective. Meyer felt that gave her gallery a certain dignity."

"It represented quite a change of direction for the gallery [Ileana's], because...some of her better-known artists were like Terry Winters...

Halley and Ileana had "a charming first meeting, because at that time we had a dachshund who had always bothered people who came over, because he was a bit ill-behaved; so Ileana had dachshunds, and she was the first person who ever liked Henry. She can be really nice with people, too, when she takes people under her wing, and during the 90s she seemed to be doing that more and more." (talk to Carroll Dunham or Haim Steinbach).

Did Ileana have a real insight into your work? "Actually, I wasn't too sure. I had a lot of respect for her judgement, but in my particular case, unlike the other three artists, I thought it was a little a bit outside of what she usually responded to. My painting has a little to do with hard-edge painting and 60s painting, and you don't really think of Frank Stella or Donald Judd in connection with Ileana. But over the years I didn't have any real feeling that she wasn't supportive of the work."

Best times with Ileana and Antonio were in Europe. They came to his museum show in Germany, also group expo in Amsterdam. Her being multilingual, knowing everyone..."If I had to go someplace [new], I would call Antonio and ask where they stayed, ask him what the best things to do in the city were. I used to joke with him that they should publish their own travel guide...There's a little baroque church that I always visit when I go to Munich, the apse couldn't be wider than thirty feet, but it's one of the baroque masterpieces..."

"The other thing about Ileana is her interest in popular culture as

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	Tomkins	II.B.53

well as high culture. To me this is the highest sophistication -- to know 17th century architecture and also to be interested in -- one time we were coming home from the opera, and she said how much she liked Michael Jackson's music video. If you look at the work she's shown over the years, you can see that. Once I asked them what they thought characterized all the work they'd shown over the years, and Antonio answered, 'A sense of theater.' Theater might not be the right word; it might be drama, or something of the theater. I thought that was quite cogent. All the way from Warhol to Gilbert & George, and Wegman, as well as Kiefer...I don't know if Ileana discovered Kiefer, but she walked into his studio and bought 25 paintings. [Clear that with Ileana].

"Her collection is a big thing for me. I guess I don't want to be attributed saying this, but it's clearly the biggest collection of post-1960 art in the world, and it's got to be worth two or three hundred million dollars. I hope they've figured out what they're going to do with it later on. To go back on the record, the quality and variety of things she has, from Man Ray rayograms to Oldenburg papier mache pieces, some of which are probably from The Store, to the classic Johns and Lichtensteins and Warhols, and 25 Kiefers."

In Paris, Ileana stayed at the Pont Royal long after it went into serious decline, because she liked the concierge.

"Ileana dresses in a uniform. The fact that she doesn't live with her collection is really interesting. Her quietness, and the extent to which she has been able to speak thru Antonio is interesting." Why did she adopt Antonio? "She was already married. Antonio's a big part of her life. So the only job left was fils. It seemed really refreshing to me."

His personal relationship with Ileana - "More familial than maternal. In the years that I showed there she wasn't really involved very much with practical matters of the gallery. So a lot of our relationship was based on friendship. I think she and Antonio had a lot of fun with this group of younger guys, artists, and in a lot of ways we all sort of worshipped Ileana for her cultural accomplishments. It was almost like a mythic figure whom you feel a fondness for. There was very little friction because of her lack of involvement with practical matters. I never had any discussions with her about money, or even collectors." Any problems with getting paid? "Not for me." He sold a lot thru her.

Off the record: "They did a great job handling people and selling things, and for the most part advising me about collectors as long as the 80s boom lasted. But when the recession started, Antonio and Ileana were not exactly hungry kids. So it happened more and more that my work was being sold by other people. They really didn't have to go out and hustle..." Also, they talked Ashley Bickerton out of having a show in Europe; certain of their artists were anointed. Ileana, unlike Leo, wasn't keen on having her artists show at other galleries.

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	Tomkins	II.B.53

"Leo has received so much of the credit for the great artists of the 60s and 70s, and many people have said to me what a collaboration it was, and how maybe Ileana was maybe the more intellectual and analytical. She certainly deserves a lot of credit for that. On the other hand, she doesn't exactly love to be mentioned, anytime or anywhere."

Halley's never been to Ileana's apartment.

Role of Estelle Schwartz? Ask Meyer Vaisman.

None of the neo-geo artists had had any offical recognition until they showed with Ileana in the fall of 1986. Halley had mixed feelings, tho, because the East Village scene had been very exciting, and it was coming to an end. The artists would all meet at the openings of the three galleries, IWM, Cash-Newhouse, Nature Morte (Peter Nagy) which showed somewhat similar work. Pat Hearn was showing a kind of biomorphic abstraction, Peter Schuyff etc. The bridge artist to that was Philip Taaffe. Jay Gorney opened in 85 or 86; had been a private dealer before. A couple more.

Ileana's accomplishment - "A lot of my favorite artists were at her gallery. Wegman, Gilbert & George, Vito Acconci, Baldessari, maybe a couple others. It was that kind of conceptualism that was psychologically laden, performance-oriented, full of psycho-sexual issues like Gilbert & George or Acconci, that grabbed me at the time. They were the artists who were important to me. I really think Seedbed is one of the most important works of our era. I credit Acconci with accomplishing a basic change in the role of sexuality in art. With Acconci, the object of desire goes not from male to female body but back to his own body. It seems to break thru a lot of sexual assumptions, whether it was masturbatory or whatever."

"It's really great the way Ileana has done it her own way. And it was great to be involved with people who are perfectly functional and thriving and famous and revered, whose ideas about stuff had no relation to the norm. It was fun. I really admire Ileana for that."

"Collectors were pretty much in awe of Ileana. I do know that her relationship with other gallerists was intensely competitive...(END INVU).

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Newhouse

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	Tomkins	II.B.53

Homer

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Karp

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Antonio Homem - 7/9/98 Born Oct. 13, 1939

Born and raised in Lisbon. Father a lawyer with Hoffman-La Roche, wanted him to be a chemical engineer; so he went to Zurich to study. He liked literature and history, had no interest in science, and no idea what to do in life. Started going to galleries with his wife, met Bruno Bischofberger when he opened gallery in 1964. Second show was Pop Art. Ileana and Roy Lichtenstein came to opening, and they met. Two months later, Antonio and wife was in Paris, went to gallery and met Michael with Ileana.

In 1965, his wife went to work for Ileana in Paris. In 1966 she and Antonio separated, and she quit ~~eft~~ the job. Ileana invited A. to visit them in Venice during Biennale; they saw each other every day, and Ileana asked him to work at gallery. He felt he should finish his studies. But he also started working at Bischofberger's, and in 1968, after finishing his studies, he went to Paris and said he was ready to work at the gallery. Michael said yes, but Ileana not sure. He went back to Zurich, feeling lost. His parents were coming to visit him; he went to the airport to pick them up, and coming back into town he saw Ileana crossing the square near Bruno's gallery. Said hello to her, and she said, "Oh, by the way, why don't you come and work with us?" He started a few days later. (This was 1968, after the May riots).

Came to NY in Jan 1970 for opening of uptown gallery, paying his own air fare. (SoHo gallery in Sept.1971). Michael was running the NY gallery. Idea was reverse of Paris: to show European artists in NY, and also some Americans. It was Michael's idea to take the gallery at 420 W.Bway.

"Michael is someone who absolutely is unable to deal with any kind of restraint. He has to follow his instincts and his nature, and he won't change anything for anybody. He was very much loved by all the artists in Europe. Once in the late sixties, a group of Belgian collectors invited him to give a lecture in Belgium; he went, and spoke about Durer and the reception of Durer by the Flemish..." He was the reason why the gallery opened in NY, and why it moved to SoHo. "But he was not really interested in the running of the gallery...The NY gallery was supposed to be Michael's not Ileana's. But Michael did not want to be enslaved by the space." The situation in SoHo seemed very promising, very new, but it was important for someone to put in the everyday effort. Antonio insisted to Ileana that she must do that, because if the gallery floundered, Michael would be very upset. (She hesitated to interfere.)

"Michael gave Ileana the freedom to do what she wanted, so that she could then do something for both of them. It was a very positive situation, of bouncing that back and forth. Michael's life is a life entirely of impulse. I always say that Michael was the first conceptual artist; he worked with his life in the way that an artist would. He molded his life completely to his own

Pincus-Witten | Jacobson | Johns | Karp | Krauss

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

character...It was an invented life. Michael can never be put into a category, such as scholar. His translation of Dante is a translation that doesn't exist, it's a Borges story. He became very involved with Dante, and learned Italian to read Dante in the original. And then he spent the rest of his life, sixty years, reading Dante with the idea of learning all of Dante by heart. Clearly an impossible task. It became his activity. A scolar would have some kind of practical reason, but Michael has no practical reason on anything. He has contempt for rationality -- and in a certain way Ileana does too. We often joke that I'm the only person in the family who believes in rationality."

"Michael being that way was an enormous catalyst for Ileana." She used to be very shy."He allowed her to be herself. At the gallery, it was always Michael who gave the initiative, but Ileana who acted. That's the way their relation works. He incites, she reacts.

"Michael denies himself many things, almost as though in self-punishment. And if he has to make any sort of compromise, forget it, he doesn't want to do it."

Ileana's reputation for toughness: Typical situation was one where people wanted to buy things that Ileana didn't want to sell, and she wouldn't give in. Tells story about a group of Warhols that she could have sold, but she held on to them until they could sell for what she thought they were worth. Galleries always asking her for shows, but she had certain ideas about how they should be done, and this made people say she was more difficult than the artist. "Certainly she was more difficult than Leo. She was not thinking either diplomatically or financially - she never does, in spite of what people think. (END SIDE ONE).

Most of the artists they work with are not easy to sell. "Our achievement is to to be able to make other people get involved with something that is difficult."

"I wondered several times what the link is between the things we have been involved with. Curiously enough, the only thing I thought came close was something that Peter Schjeldahl said once, that there was something curiously terminal about the artists we dealt with. I thought that was an interesting idea. I thought it meant something extreme, something that couldn't go any further -- anything going as far as it could go in a certain direction."

What does she have in mind when she takes on an artist? "I don't think she has anything in mind. There's that quotation of Picasso's, 'Je ne cherche pas, je trouve.' If you start to look for something...but what you want to find is something you didn't look for. We get interested when we feel that there is something very particular, something specific about the work." Often Ileana will change her mind about something she didn't like at first.

Gilbert and George: They used to mail postcards to the galleries, with sayings like, "All my life I gave you nothing, and yet you ask

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Jacobson
Johns
Karp
Newhouse

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

for more." Antonio intrigued, saved a few. By 1971 they had had a few shows, with Konrad Fisher and others, and Ileana and A. began to think it might be interesting to show them in NY. Wondering how to get in touch with them, maybe thru Konrad Fisher (but didn't want to poach). Then, Konrad asked them if they would consider showing G & G.

"There was so much new going on [in 1970s], and so much that was not being shown by anybody. We were making very quick decisions. Mel we decided very suddenly to show, because it was work that was already so mature...I think Ileana is probably more ready to show new work than I am. [ENTER ILEANA]. Here she is!"

Mel Bochner - "We went to the Projects show [at MOMA] because we were already interested in some work we had seen -- which came after some work of his in which we were not so interested." Ileana's saying it was "too bad" he couldn't show with them was very Ileana; she didn't want to embarrass him.

They used to offer stipends, but no longer. [ILEANA LEAVES].

In Paris, Ileana would often keep quiet in conversations. People used to wonder what message was being sent, but there wasn't one. (In Europe, everything has another meaning to be decoded.) That happened a lot.

Her Collection: Whenever she asked for a show from Janis, he would make her buy everything, so whatever didn't sell became hers. That's the basis of her collecting. Why compete with clients? Just take what doesn't sell, and that's usually the more difficult works, which often end up being the more important. (He also makes the point that Leo was always much more diplomatic and charming, and willing to sell anything.)

The Paris gallery never made much money, nor did the NY gallery at first. When they needed money, Ileana would sell something from her collection to keep going -- she was both the dealer and the backer. She and Michael never thought about finances until it was necesary to sell something.

Defections from the gallery, in early 70s and late 90s: Terry Winters and Tip Dunham left only six months ago. In 70s, Bruce Nauman was showing with us in Paris, but with Leo in NY, so he withdrew. Vito Acconci went with Protetch because he got interested in making large public works, and felt Max could handle them better. Wegman went to Holly Solomon in late 70s. Peter Halley - the one case in which we sued an artist -- just to make it known that we thought what he was doing was not proper; when judge ruled for Ileana they dropped suit. They had been showing the work for his next show at Ileana's to collectors, had sold nearly everything, then two months before the show he pulled out and took it all to Gagosian. They felt he should have waited until after his show to do so. Halley also felt that with all the expenses with Jeff Koons there wouldn;t be enough money for him. With Jeff Koons,

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Jacobson
Johns
Karp
Newhouse

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

there was a huge amount of money advanced against fabrication of the work. Koons wanted to make four examples of each piece; they suggested that he make only two, have the show, and use the money from sale of first two to make the rest. Koons was "totally out of touch with reality." But now he's back with gallery, after being with Jeffrey Deitch and Anthony d'Offay. Was Ileana hurt when they left? "Ileana is very good in situations of crisis. She takes success very badly, but she's wonderful with disasters." (END TAPE)

(ANTONIO TAPE II)

Carroll Dunham is an example of someone whose work didn't interest Ileana at first, and then she became interested, changed her mind. When he joined Ileana's gallery, he had had great success with his paintings on veneer. She suggested that maybe he should stop working on veneer, and he said he had been thinking the same thing. He did stop, but then nobody wanted his paintings on canvas. He got into figuration, more success -- and off to Metro. Antonio was the one who had the conversation with him, not Ileana.

Being adopted by Ileana and Michael: His own parents were still alive then; they were very good about it. Felt his own relationship with Ileana and Michael was unique, and the adoption didn't mean much to him. Purpose? Ask Ileana and Michael. Now Antonio has renewed his relationship with his own son, and since that happened he's felt much more that Ileana and Michael are his parents. He feels Nina must have felt he was butting in, but he gets on well with her. Antonio is an only son, and his son is an only son.

There is no catalog or inventory of Ileana's collection. It is not even quite clear where they all are. "Michael and Ileana never think of the past. They are always in the present." The collection is in different places, some of it always out on loan. The art deco has been shown only once. He can't (or won't) even give specifics about the photographs.

The new Chelsea gallery is next door to DIA, on ground floor. Will be very simple, no Richard Gluckman. Leaving SoHo end of December, hope to get in new space from January on.

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Johns
Karp
Newhouse

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Pincus-Witten

Jacobson

Johns

Karp

Kienholz

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Barbara Jakobson on Ileana

Ileana has a court, of which she is the queen bee. A network of people all over the world who take care of her. (Atilio Codognato is the courtier in Venice.)

Her apartment in what used to be the Fifth Avenue Hotel is shabby and rundown, and there are very few works of art there. Most of her vast collections are in storage. She is phenomenally acquisitive. Someone who just has to have things, and never parts with anything. She has given nothing to any museum. Barbara and Kirk have been trying to get her to sell Canyon to MOMA -- they know it is useless to ask her to give it, but they've been working on her to sell it, and also give a couple of minor things to offset the tax, but she eludes them always.

Her collection is really uncharted - no one knows what she has, except Antonio. What was shown at Princeton and in Europe was just the tip of the iceberg. Not only paintings and sculptures, but photographs (she has vast holdings of 19th century photographs, and the greatest coll. of Hoyningen-Huene), furniture, jewelry, etc,

It's not true that she was the eye for Leo. She was in the background at 77th street -- people dealt with Leo or Ivan, not Ileana. But Ileana was much closer to the artists and much more personally involved with their work. She persuaded Jasper to make her a copy of the Green Target painting. Ask the artists about her -- many of them ended up hating her, because she didn't pay them, or delayed paying. A lot left for that and other reasons.

The whole neo-geo group came through Meyer Vaisman, via Estelle Schwartz. Not Ileana's doing at all.

Her own taste in art is different from Leo's -= Mel Bochner.

She plays games with people, leads them on then disappoints. Cat and mouse. She is a great seductress.

Leo says she was unfaithful before he was. Started her affair with Michael Sonnabend while Leo was away in the army, in Bucharest. She left Leo, not vice versa; he would never have left on his own.

Jim Dine says she and Antonio were lovers. Now she and Antonio live in her apartment, and Michael lives down the hall.

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Johns

Karp

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	Tomkins	II.B.53

Barbara Jakobson - II (7/29/98)

Talk to Paul Brach, one of last survivors of AbEx generation - he showed with Leo in early days. Great story-teller.

In the early days of the gallery Ileana was always in the background, always in black, very shy. But even then she was having an affair with Michael. Nobody knew about it.

Michael and Ileana have always had a life of the mind, something Leo never did. Leo read a lot, and may have introduced Ileana to the pleasures of literature, but Michael opened her up to many things, especially opera. They listen to it at home, and go often (or used to). Ileana and Leo were never really in love -- he was infatuated with her older sister; she wanted to get away from her parents and out of Bucharest, and Leo was just the ticket.

Leo and Ileana were divorced technically, but never emotionally or professionally. And the fact that her gallery was one floor above his didn't hurt her at all. She always got Leo to pay for things when she was in Paris -- packing, shipping, insurance etc.

Ileana has consistently cheated her artists, which is why so many have left her. Anyone who could leave, did so.

As a collector -- she hoards. Doesn't have to live with what she buys, or even see it. She has always lived like a refugee, in shabby, makeshift-looking rooms. Even the Venice apartment had clothes hanging from overhead pipes.

She is like a great spider with sticky fingers, luring people and artworks into her web. Her seductiveness. But she gives away nothing. MOMA has been trying for ages to buy Canyon. It would fill an important gap, it belongs at MOMA, but she won't sell. Now and then she'll call and say she might sell them a Calzoleri, or a Mario Merz igloo (they already own one).

Incidental: Si Newhouse may be selling Broadway Boogie-Woogie. Barbara heard the rumor, told Kirk, who was so upset he called Si about it, and offended him. Si doesn't attend board meetings there; when he came on the board he made that a condition. He's given them a couple of big Lichtensteins, maybe a few other things, but not a cent of money.

Pincus-Witten
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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Rivers-Witten

Johns

Karp

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Rivers-Witten

Jasper Johns - 10/20/98 in Sharon CT

Trying to recall his first meeting with her, he said he thought it was on the stairs at someone's party, and that she gave him a check -- she had bought a small white number painting, the first he sold, for something like $100.

Ileana was very involved with what was happening then, a very strong presence in the gallery. Leo was coming into his own then, and he did not want it to seem like a collaboration -- he wanted to be running things. "She was in the background in a way, but not really."

"Bob and I an Ileana became very close. We saw her without Leo after they split. She had an apartment on the west side, with Pollocks in it. She went somewhere, Mexico or somewhere, for a quick divorce, and then took an apartment on the west side, and Bob and I used to visit her fairly often. She was a very lively, interested person.

"My feelings for Ileana were close and personal. With Leo, what I felt was more like respect."

"I showed with her once in Paris." It was her first show, and he didn't go over for it. She took some things of his from a group show that Pontus Hulten had organized. "I had to make a painting for her ~~she~~ she'd have something to sell," and she sold it to Ben Heller. He didn't show with her again there, or with anyone else, because he didn't make enough work -- there was never anything to sell.

Jasper was surprised to see her quoted in the New York article talking about Leo and Barbara. He thinks her earlier published comment was more characteristic, that she had many thoughts but no comments.

"Ileana takes much more pleasure in art and artists than Leo. I don't think he really likes works of art in that way. Leo has no interest in buying art, he likes to sell art."

Ileana "was amusing herself" with the gallery.

Karp

Kleinhouse

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Pincus-Witten

Karp

Kienholz

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Ivan Karp - 9/9/98

"Ileana had very powerful convictions about everything in life. She played a significant role in maybe confirming Leo's final declaration of ? in an artist. She was resolute -- let's put it that way -- in her belief that what she saw was right or wrong for the gallery. The breakup was under way between then when I came to the gallery in 1959, but they were seeing each other on a regular basis; when it came to professional consultation, she was there. I don't remember there being any disconcerting turbulence between them."

"It was Michael Sonnabend whose seduction brought me there. I was working at that point with Martha Jackson, and one day he heard me lecturing on Antonio Tapies. 'You talk like that all the time?' he said. 'There's a nice little man, little Italian man who'd like to meet you -- he recently opened a gallery uptown and he shows these two peculiar artists Johns and Rauschenberg.' I said, you mean Castelli. Most of us in the art world then saw Johns and Rauschenberg to be the opening into a new level, and the idea of being in a gallery representing them was very interesting..."

"Leo was always willing to look in that period. He was willing to accept the idea of something that was really brash and bold and forthright and distinctly American. 'This is really American, isn't it?' he'd say. I don't think Ileana played that much of a role in the actual identification of artists to be shown, but she played a confirming role. He would ask her, how do you feel about this?" But he says she never went out to New Jersey to see Lichtenstein -- "she couldn't speak New Jerseyan."

But "She was a person who expressed her convictions without any hesitation. And Leo really wanted her support. I could feel that. He counted on her as an elder statesperson in a way, right thru the turbulent interval of their marriage [breakup]. I felt her presence frequently. I felt that she was around, and that he saw her, that he respected her.

"When she established her gallery in Europe, and he began sending work to her there, he was most anxious to make sure that she had exactly what she wanted -- and she got it. As far as economics were concerned, he was immensely generous. He was always, as long as I was there, a person of almost victimized generosity."

"Mt relationship with her was always one of affection. She was very respectful of my opinion and my convictions, and there was never any time of agitation or distress between us. I was a little disconcerted by Leo's generosity about turning over works to her." Would he sell them to her? "No, no -- if she announced that she was making an acquisition, there was no pressure to turn over revenue. It was just word of mouth: I want to have this, I want to sell that, I want to exhibit that. She got what she wanted."

Ivan doesn't recall the incident of the Stella painting (**Point of**

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Pines-Written

Pines).

"I was skeptical about the benefits that might acrue, but over the years it worked out well."

He feels she's made mistakes with her gallery, "but over the years she's showed professional work." What she chose shows "a whole different climate of conviction" from Leo's.

Michael "had very extensive opinions on everything. They were voluble. He was often fraught with false scholarship."

* "Leo was not very acquiring, at all. He was not a collector. Things found their way into his house because there was no storage space in the gallery, but he was not a collector."

Her gallery today is not looked on as a nesting ground for new talent. Young artists don't think of it.

* When Rauschenberg was doing his Dante drawings, he was constantly asking Michael what this or that passage meant. Ivan thinks Michael was very put out when Leo commissioned Dore Ashton to do the translation for the portfolio.

Kleehouse

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Pincus-Witten

Klenhouse

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection: Tomkins	Series.Folder: II.B.53

Prices-written

SI NEWHOUSE

(How did you buy those 2 Johns paintings from Ileana? How did it happen? Did you approach her)

Yes.

(You just called her)

I talked to Antonio.

(Did she give you a price)

No. I said what I'd pay.

(Then what happened)
She said that was very generous, and she would think about it. And then months passed, 3, 4, 5 months, and finally she said she would only sell one of them. And then I said no, I'm not going to do it unless you sell both of them. And then she came back and agreed to sell both of them.

(How long did that take)
About five or six months.

(Did you think you were going to get it)
I had no idea.

I suggested a price. And there was never any discussion. She said, could I have just one. And I said no.

(Did she call you back)

It was all done through Antonio.

(She's a collector, like you...)
I heard that the gray target was not owned by her. It was owned by Michael. ...and the Flag was probably hers.

(Have you ever bought any other things from her)
Oh, sure. Sure.

(How did this compare to that? Do you usually work with Antonio)
I work with Antonio and almost always, heretofore, it has been not her work. It's been the stuff that she's shown.

(Right out of the show)
Yuh.

(But this sale was different)
Yuh. And I had remembered this pictures from 30 years back.

(You hadn't seen it for all that time)
No. Because I had remembered it. I remembered that circle

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Pincus-Witten

picture, and so I asked about it.

(She's a tough negotiator. What other times buying out of the shows -- hard or not so hard?)
Many years ago, I tried to buy a Lichtenstein Composition. And she has what I think is the best of them, and I wanted that picture very very much. And then she was willing to sell and she named a price and I named another price -- a lower price -- and right away she withdrew the picture.

(And you didn't get it)
No. She still has it.

(Do you still want it)
Now, I couldn't -- it was when I had the other house. And she has Canyon, of course.

(Are you interested in Canyon)
No. I think it's got fleas. (laugh) She'll sell it.

(You think eventually she will)
If the right price. If someone would offer $25 million for it, she'll sell it.

(There was no haggling on her side, about price)
No. She said it was very fair. And she would think about it.

(You didn't know that those were for sale, you just approached her)
Yuh.

She has it seems a very original, very bold eye. I think much more so than Leo. Leo listened to a lot of people. Ileana seems to have a very elusive quality of judgment of picures. Very very...

(Out of all the dealers you know, she's the one...)
Well, Larry has it. Larry has a wonderful eye. Very sensitive and ...

For a long time now I have not approached either one of them to buy from their collections. David Geffen of course, got the early -- they're called Circles, aren't they? They're not target. The early circle painting with the body parts. And that was a fantastic acquisition. He paid $10 million and in terms of value of today, that's a great bargain. And maybe Leo is easier.

(Did Ileana come to see the painting after you bought it)
She doesn't really go out -- I don't think she goes many places.

I never think of inviting Ileana.
(Did you ever)
No.
(Did you invite Leo)
Yuh.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Ileana is like a black hole. Things go in and don't come out....I think she's a footnote.

You know that David Geffen was involved with this sale.
(Whose idea was it)
Mine.
(Who made the calls to Ileana)
I did.

Pincus-Witten

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III. B. 53

Ruscha-Written

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Robert Pincus-Witten 9/1/98

"I'm not without certain anxieties about this conversation, because, although I've known Ileana for decades, and I love Ileana, Ileana has hurt me very very deeply. I don't want anything I say to sound wounded, or as tho I'm seeking some vindication." [We promise to read him his quotes, to see how they sound in context]

The break came because Robert was working for Gagosian - "Ileana has an idea that I went to him, when in fact he came to me." Antonio is the evil genius in that situation. He suddenly refused to speak to Robert. After that, Ileana was in the hopital; Robert wrote to her and the letter came back unopened. "It was one of the harshest things, after so many decades..."

A number of artists, dealers, and others have experienced this very shocking rupture, very unforgiving on her part. Leo is one of the few who have come back into her good graces.

He met her while doing his graduate work (art history) in Paris and moonlighting with Iris Clert's gallery on Rue des Beaux Arts. Then went to another gallery Mathieu's gallery. Ileana called and offered him more money, like $100 a week. "I became part of Ileana and Michael's family. I was in my twenties. I remember thinking, I love these people, I think they're wonderful...I thought she was remarkable, original...I was even emotionally involved with her. I thought about her every day -- I still think about Ileana every day. There's not a day that passes that I don't have a moment to think of her posiively and now negatively." He thinks Antonio is a negative advisory force in her life, " a highly problematic figure, probably the most sophisticated mentality I've ever dealt with, has had very negative effects in the running of her gallery. Antonio has a profound indifference and separation from people, that many artists can't deal with; the rejection phase is covered over with a kind of logorrhea, an intense nervous - no one can get a word in edgewise."

Her rather cryptic financial accounting was all right with artists so long as they felt nurtured and cared for, but when the alienation process took over all that disappeared. But why would Ileana turn against an artist? "Ultimately, she was her own head on her own pillow, and she had grown indifferent to the work. But art dealers have ears as well as eyes...although I would apply that less to Ileana than to any other dealers. Ileana was an extremely independent eye and an extremely independent ear. And she certainly stayed with artists whom informed taste had rejected totally."

Peter Halley was in mortal combat with Jeff Koons. Ileana saw Koons as a hotter property.

What Ileana liked: "Ileana is interested in a certain vulgar strength. A certain brute level of strength that Ileana is very sensitive to. Ileana once said to me, 'I want what I don't like.'

(see quote in his catalog essay)

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

It's such a great remark. Everybody wants what they like. But for her the experience of art is some sort of abrasive challenge. She's very drawn by --vulgar is the wrong term. Post-Leo, post-Greenberg, post-high culture. It would represent Rauschenberg more than Johns. The vitality and energy -- Robert is the talismanic figure... Something about Robert, which is the conquest of failure. The regenerative aspect. Something about that excess which is I think a model for Ileana. It's deeply eroticized, but I don't know that it was ever...Ileana is deeply flirtatious, she's a Don Juaniste personality, that's part of her personality. A woman who's dumpy, compact, but with the mentality [of a seductress]. She's hardly maternal..."

The life-saver charm -- "I saw her once panic because it was lost, mislaid..." She doesn't wear it around her neck any more.
The Nouveaux Realistes -- Ileana knows that most movements come down to two artists. Leo had Yves Klein; when he died, she got Arman. Like Johns/Rauschenberg.

Michael Sonnabend -- "an adorable man. His sweetness and goodness...He's the eroticized brother. He introduced something preserving and loving and protective of Ileana."

"My love of Ileana is deeply filial. There's no erotic edge to it. Her rejection of me -- I didn't feel I had been rejected as a friend, but as a son. That was what was so extraordinarily painful." But would you go to her with personal problems? "No." He had a separate life in Paris, with his own friends etc. "One of the things about Ileana and Antonio is that one senses they have no adult side of life. Have I overstated it? It's a highly compensated maternal-infantile relation." She adopted him for practical reasons -- he had no green card, couldn't stay here otherwise. [END SIDE ONE]

Ileana's apartment (NY) - "There was a kind of dinginess to it all. But, you know, without in any sense being 'done,' there would be a Jasper Johns on the wall, not very large -- because there was an avilable there. A lot of music. Sort of sitting around, making phone calls, trying to invent a conversation. People's whose natural pleasure includes a great deal of silence."

Reputation of Sonnabend Gallery now - "Extremely compromised."

Her big contribution - "The generation of Johns and Rauschenberg. In the desert of the Ecole de Paris, the incredible vulgarity of the seventh and eighth generation of French art in the 20th century, they were the Tibet, they were Katmandu. You could find in that incredible meaningless a center that middle-aged European curators could come to and actually get information and get work. It was a wedge between the triviality of the Ecole de Paris and American art following the second world war."

Was Ileana in part responsible for RR winning the 1964 Biennale? "No. I've heard that repeatedly. What was amazing about Leo and

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Ileana was that they would actually pick up tabs. European dealers were so dependably cheap. It was such a relief to find some vitality and some energy, in a world of deeply..." Story in Sonnabend Collection catalog of Ileana kicking out condescending Paris Match reporter: "Get out." They were genuine.

Ileana as a collector -- "A lot of her collecting was just what didn't get sold...She would acually buy works of art from other dealers as well." But she also sold a lot of things. Rebus, which she bought from Victor and Sally Ganz for virtually nothing, she sold for $100,000 to keep the gallery going. (tape count 130ff). "In the 1970s particularly, she had to protect the gallery." Pincus doesn't know about the collection apart from the part shown. Says she would occasionally go thru clearing the back of the gallery, and find things she'd forgotten she had.

She is capable of deeply humorous, belly-laughing good times with a very few people. This happens, "when the rupture of good form is so deep and shocking..." Tells story of being in Germany with Ileana, at an art fair (Documenta?), they saw big sign on the street in German. She asked what it said. "I said, 'Shitzstein oma,' which means 'Fuck your grandmother.' It was one of the major laughters of one's lifetime, one of the happiest moments in both our lives."

Ileana and Antonio "have a deeply ironic relationship."

Her reputation for being difficult and mysterious? "It's simply her shyness."

How does Pincus know about Ileana's jealosy of her older sister? "She told me. She's always been aware of her dumplinglike aspect, that she was visibly secondbest. And her mother was beautiful."

"I don't think there's anyone around her who can get the Europeanness as an American, more than I can. The funniness of it. The dislocation. And it's a loss for her. I imagine she's deeply, deeply lonely."

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II. B. 53

Rauschenberg

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Bob Rauschenberg 9/2/98 (by phone)

Their close and complicated relationship - "Well, it's never been complicated from my point of view. She's been my inspiration. If there was anybody that I was painting for, I've never finished a painting without thinking what she would think of it."

"I always felt much closer to her than I could to Leo. She seemed to be more open and more social, in the sense of adventurous. I felt that Leo went for the intellectual side, and Ileana headed to the sensual. Adventure and danger was included in her itinerary, as a necessary part."

Had met her first soon after Ninth Street Show, when he got to know both of them - "the priest and priestess of the art world by then."

The famous studio visit, Leo meeting Jasper, etc., was it true that Bob didn't know afterward whether Leo and Ileana were going to give him a show? "I was no more in doubt than I had been before. But the fact was that Leo promised Jasper a show on that occasion."

Did you feel that Ileana had more of a feeling for your work than Leo did? "Oh, yeah. From how I described her, you would. I had all the ingedients that she insisted on, personally."

He doesn't think Ileana was in Paris when he came over for the Cordier show, He had no money, couldn't leave the hotel room. "I went by the gallery, and Cordier tried to hide from me. I noticed that the painting in the window was upside down. But Ileana wasn't there yet."

In Paris, "sometimes we went out on the streets together to gather sand, when I was working with the Egyptian series. I don't know, we just had a really good time. Every time we worked together."

Ever any difficulties about being paid? "No."

Was she motherly? "I don't know. The combination of family, and girl friend -- I had all those feelings. The broad feeling of love and trust. I'm sure I'm the only person you're going to get an answer like that from!"

"She's very temperamental. I'm told she would sometimes fire her whole staff one day, and they'd all come back to work the next. She's often not liked what I was doing. Her preference for my work was -- well, when I got into construction pieces, she alienated me a little because she thought that I was too good a painter to do that. But then she'd come around." Did she try to persuade you? "Oh, yes. It didn't change my activity. At a certain point, Ileana and Leo both came down -- this was the only really bad time that I had with them; they made an appointment together, and I was very excited, and pleased. This is when I left Leo's gallery. I didn't know that this was going to happen. But they had unitedly agreed between themselves that they weren't able to do enough with my

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Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

work. And suggested that maybe I should go to Pace. At that time I wasn't so happy about the Glimchers. Eventually -- now I have a marvelous relationship, couldn't be better, with Arnie. But it really hurt my feelings.

"Well, it was my fault, because I was feeling the wrong way. I mean really, they were like my life, it was the only thing that I related to constantly, in relationship to my work. I don't think Leo ever really liked my work. He felt uncomfortable with my work because it was tactile. He couldn't put it in the corner, and it be the same way when they took it out. He couldn't talk about it on his terms of art. When you think about it, the artists he was most successful with are pretty clean- shaven. When you go back they're right where you put them."

The life-saver charm - "It's in lead. The same year that I cast buton cufflinks for Leo. I was looking for stamps to mail a letter in his office drawer, and it had been two years since I gave them to him, and they were right there in the same package, so I pocketed them!" But did the life-saver have some personal connection? "The life-saver means what it means. I sucked on the life-saver, if you want to get really down-and-dirty, a little bit, so it didn't look like a casting of a life-saver. I put it on a cheap chain, and gave it to her. I think maybe that life-saver is probably the most verifiable example of the feelings that we have for each other. Who is the life-saver for? Is it for the one who throws it, too? It became an icon of our friendship, beyond the call of duty."

Has the friendship survived? "Oh, yes, absolutely. I call her and she calls me, and we express the fact that we miss each other. She still sends me a monthly check, and I don't know what it's for; and then I still send her presents when I'm feeling particularly strongly sentimental. It's really hard to keep the bookkeeping with that going on, you know?"

Michael Sonnabend -- very fond of him too. Hears he's finishing his translation of Dante. "I want to continue the Dante works, getting into Paradiso and all that, with his translation..." But Bob didn't know about Michael and Dante until after he had started his Dante drawings. "That certainly solidified our friendship."

"I'd like you to see the Bilbao show. I'm sort of tending to insist that this be the last of the retrospectives. I don't know if you've ever been thru a situation like this, where for two and a half years you've had to just restore, rebuild, as honestly as you can, the past. It's really tiring, and you can lose the present. So instead of going on to Los Angeles I think I'm going to make Bilbao the final thing, and make it as beautiful as I can. I think that would be a wonderful place to stop." END INVU.

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Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Richardson, J.

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

BRENDA RICHARDSON

She's a cross between Buddha and Machiavelli.

Obviously you know what I mean, because you know her. The Buddha part is that incredibly still, centered, quiet -- which is a very powerful thing, as I presume the Buddha was powerful to followers and admirers. And at the same time, she's a very powerful business woman and she's without doubt -- not ever to me -- but certainly to her artists and to her competitors, clearly Machiavellian in her business planning and her shrewdness, not to mention her manipulativeness. I know that from artists that have worked with her and feel that way. And I just think that it's an amazing conjunction of character. I really love Ileana and I connected with her -- we had some sort of bond from a very early moment. And it's lasted for many many years. And I think that stillness of hers is something that I relate to. And despite her very very public life, she is into herself at all times, but she knows what's going on around her to the blink of an eye. And it's remarkably attuned to her surroundings and to the character of people. That I think of as being both buddha and Machiavelli.

(How did the collection come to Baltimore)
I asked her. This is my favorite story. Over the course of years, people were just awestruck when they saw the collection in Baltimore would say, oh my God, how did you ever persuade her to do this? and my answer was very straight forward. I asked her. In fact, when I talked with her initially about it and put the proposal, I said, you must have been asked repeatedly. And she said, no, you're the first. No one had ever asked before.,,,Sometime in the mid to late 70s, I asked her. To me, it was just completely rational. I got to Baltimore and discovered that because of the particular funding picture there, my wonderful predecessors had collected brilliantly, through Abstract Expressionism and then just stopped cold. And didn't stop cold because they stopped admiring what was happening in art, but rather because they didn't have any money...Basically the Baltimore collection was wonderful, thanks to the Cone collection as a base. I'm talking obviously about the modernist collection now. But it stopped at the point when Ileana's great strengths started. And I thought, here is a person who has a private collection, although I don't pretend to know the minute distinctions between her gallery inventory and her private collection. But at least in terms of credit lines, these have always been cited as private collection, so I believe that's what they are. And I knew they were in storage and I knew that she was bearing expenses presumably for insurance and for shipping and for photography and conservation and framing. All the things that the museum could do in administrative ways while presenting to its public the most extraordinary works. Most especially the Warhol holdings. And she said yes without even thinking. Again, I think that she is thrilled to have the work seen, but I think she's also smart enough to have understood immediately that this represented a benefit to her as well as to the museum and its public...Curatorially when I was there, I gave

Stella

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection: Tomkins	Series.Folder: II.B.53

it a very high profile. And had a wonderful response from the public. And it's been a great thing for the museum.

(What happens now that you're not there)
I have no idea.

...I have worked really closely with a number of her artists, including Gilbert and George and Mel Bochner most notably, doing retrospective exhibition projects with both of them. Adn I would slash my wrists before I'd want to be one of her artists. The dynamic of being an artist with a dealer -- that dealer has to be business person, psychiatrist, lover, friend. Not literally lover, but standing in that role in some capacity. It's an incredibly complex relationship. More complex than the very complex between curator and artist, because the business aspect of it isn't present. And we see so many of those relationships fall by the way side. I've heard the other side from the artists. So I wouldn't want to be in that situation. But certainly as a curator, I never had anything but a very positive relationship with her. And on some level that I can't really define very articulately, I must say, I've felt that my relationship with Ileana is more personal than professional almost. We have some kind of resonance between us.

(Were there any conditions with the collection coming to Baltimore)
None whatsoever, except that we take care of it. And by the way, what that means is really quite relatively speaking, quite demanding for the museum. We really do handle the administration of it. So that if Ileana's staff calls me or more likely the musuem's registrar and says Ileana has agreed to lend this painting to Munich in three days, which is not at all untypical, I might add. She does not know how to say no to anyone, even when I call and tell her that it's not in the object's best interest to lend it. Because museums are certainly more conservative than she is about how and under what circumstances objects are loaned. But the museum would do it, without out question. It was her collection. The museum would take care of everything. Absolutely everything.

(How much of the collection do you have)
In numbers, I really don't know.

(Did you choose it)
Ileana and I chatted about it. And initially, my interest was in really filling gaps and taking very much the Pop art -- so Warhol, Lichtenstein, Dine, Rauschenberg, two Twomblys. She had two Twomblys and we didn't have any Twombly. And given the rest of the collection and how I was developing that...that was really a major gap. And the cost of Twombly was such that we could never have acquired one by purchase. So having hers was really invaluable. But along the way, I must say the collection changed. I saw her fairly often in New York. Whenever I was in town, I'd drop by. And we also had a tradition of taking for her birthday dinner...Or she'd pick up the phone and call me and say, such and such just came back from wherever. Madrid, Munich, Tokyo. Would you like to

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

have it for the museum? And usually, if not always, I said yes. And so we also had things in storage that we couldn't show on a regular...we had much more of hers than we could possibly show. So like our own collection, we rotated it. So we had Gilbert & Georges, Kiefer. We had a wonderful Kiefer, which was on regular view. Definitely Dines had to be rotated. And Rauschenbergs. We had quite a lot of Rauschenbergs. We had Chamberlain. It varied. And they constantly came and went. Because she was such a generous lender.

(What was it like dealing with her. Was it hard to make it happen)
No. I went up there, I met with her, and I expained this gap. It would mean so much to our public. You have it in storage. We can take good care of it. Would you place it on long term loan? and she said yes. That was it. She didn't even think about it. It was a one word answer. Adn after that, very quickly, we kicked into action and our registrars arranged for the shipping, and it was done. It was really very simple. And I think that Ileana would say the same. It was an efficient relationship and a mutually advantageous one.

Lets be honest. Let's assume for the moment that I had stayed and was still there, no matter what happened to the collection, at any point after x number of years, if she had taken it all away, I would still have felt that the museum by far got the best of the bargain. We had been able to present to our public works of art of just extraordinary status in the history of art. We had Rauschenberg's Canyon in our museum, year after year after year. ...Baltimore has been Canyon's base. It always comes back. After it's gone away for loan, it always has come back...

(Did the museum ever hope to receive any of this as a gift)
Yes. Of course. Where I'm headed with that is that I would not have been doing my job -- and she knew that -- if I didn't make it repeatedly clear, in writing and in person, that I hoped that the collection would in whole or in part end up in Baltimore. Of course I did. And I still do. Baltimore is a collection that I had a fundamental role in building...I was brought to Baltimore from Berkeley to build a contemporary collection, and so of course I worked very hard to build it and Ileana's collection meshed just perfectly. And there were many occasions when we discussed it and she was evasive. Which is her right. And that's the buddha and the Machiavelli at work. I have absolutely no idea what her plans are. I think it's absolutely fair and accurate, however, to say that yes, you're right. Her relationship is not with Baltimore, it was with me. I introduced her to Arnold and they also became very fast friends...So her attachment definitely was to people, and with both of us gone, I don't know how she feels.

(Did she ever give anything as a gift to Baltimore)
No.
I've made with Arnold's and the trustee's involvement, made formal written proposals to her to purchase works from the collection. And she's declined those as well. So the material that she had on loan

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

to us, and most especially the Warhol collection -- the early Warhols now turn out to be incredibly important to Baltimore because when the opportunity arose for us to acquire works through the estate -- the foundation -- at the half appraised value, and that basis that was offered to a number of museums in America, we did buy, and we bought, purposely I put together a proposal for the trustees that focused on late Warhol, because there was Ileana's early Warhol. And I knew that if that material stayed, it would be the most remarkable holding of Warhol, second only to the Warhol Museum in Pittsburg. But I also knew that even if that Sonnabend material left, we would then have a comprehensive holding of late Warhol. Otherwise we would have had to spend all of that money to buy one modest early Warhol. Adn that made no sense to me at all. So the point I'm making is that in the time that I was there, I did work to mesh the holdings, not to duplicate them.

(Did you ever try to buy Canyon)
Canyon was included in certainly the larger proposals that we put on the table. One of the things that I suppose she and I connect about, and it's not that we discuss these things explicitly, I feel that this Baltimore collection that I put together -- I really do feel that they're my children. As corny as that sounds, it's a kind of attachment that a curator has for works of art. I feel responsible for them, for their physical protection as well as for their artistic integrity and how they're presented. She feels attached to the works in her collection very much the same way. It's why she basically doesn't even consider selling. She doesn't like to sell anything, really. I mean, it's a battle to get a price out of Ileana when you're a curator and want to buy something. And Baltimore did buy things from her from time to time.
(Out of shows, not out of her collection)
Yes, exactly. But she just holds on to these things. And it's because she loves them so much. Canyon is, with all due respect to Nina and Antonio, I don't know how she'd choose. It would be a tough thing for her, how she feels about Canyon. And I don't feel so different about Canyon. Only I don't own it.

I, for the Baltimore museum, bought a Johns. It was the first acquisition I made in Baltimore. It was through Ileana. She has a great eye and she's a great dealer. At the same time, I know from my own experience, that it was a kind of torture for her to let it go. Device, which we bought.
(So that was in her collection)
WEll, it was in her inventory. And that would have been in about 1976 by the time it was bought. I can't say -- collection, inventory, gallery. That's something that she would have to answer.

(Do you have a good idea of what is in her collection)
No. In so far as I organized for the Baltimore Museum a collection of her art deco collection, and that was shown at Baltimore in 1985. And then traveled on to Miami. And I went into her storage space and actually pulled works out of storage for that. So I have

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

a fairly good sense of what that material is. Painting and sculpture, I think I know pretty much, because I -- I can't say I've seen all the catalogs of the shows that she's done, but she's done quite a lot of exhibitions of her collection, and I have at least half a dozen of those catalogs, and it does seem to me that that's pretty well covered, but I don't know that for a fact. I don't know that she doesn't have other material that she hasn't included in these shows. I don't know what sort of ownership she has of materials that she and Leo might have jointly owned, which was certainly a part of the Jasper Johns Device issue. I think that she and Leo might have had some shared interest in that painting. Then she has what I understand to be very very substantial collection of photography, including vintage European photographs. And I've only seen those episodically. So I can't begin to comment on the scope of that collection. Although I can only imagine that it would be quite exceptional. I think there's probably quite a lot. I think she has art jewelry, art deco things. I don't mean precious stones tucked away. That's not the image I'm trying to convey. I have a feeling that there's material that we haven't seen. And I've probably seen more than most.

(I don't think it's written down anywhere)
Oh, I can assure you it's not written down. (laugh) For all my devotion to Ileana, it can be very frustrating as a curator doing projects with the gallery, because almost nothing is written down. And the record keeping is -- not financial, but archival material for projects -- is hard to come by. It's not the most organized gallery that I've ever worked with in that sense. And one of my very favorite stories is sitting with Ileana at one point and I said something to the effect that she had not answered some request that I'd sent through to her. And she just put that incredibly impish sly smile on her face -- not the buddha smile, but an impish one. And she said that that is my policy. I never put anything in writing. And it's gospel. We at the museum all these years in working with her had to pull teeth to get a signature on a loan form for an exhibition so that we could go ahead and arrange international shipping. It's a very clever way of doing business. It's not slippiness. It's quite the contrary. That's the Machiavelli part. She knows that if it's not in writing, it can't be proven. And it's sort of a conscious way of doing business. She's amazingly powerful. And even as she ages and becomes more frail physically, she can still hold a room. There's not question about that. I gather that she's certainly turning over most of the day to day business to Antonio in the gallery, but when I see her, the powerful presense is very much in evidence.

(What do you think about the gallery these days)
I think they're in a really tremendously difficult time of transition -- partly because of the way the art world is. They're having to move to Chelsea. Disrupt the way of life that they've become accustomed to. And with Ileana's aging and Michael's aging and Leo's aging, and I think Leo can not be taken out of any equation that has Ileana in it. I think that's been very difficult and painful for her. And I don't get the sense that she's terribly

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

disturbed about giving up day to day operations...I think she's perfectly happy to have Antonio to go forward in that way. But I think it's a difficult time.

(How would you characterize the collection)
If I think of the whole picture -- not just of the painting and sculpture, but the art deco furniture and glass and jewelry and the photographs -- it's a very very personal collection. It's a self portrait of Ileana and her tastes and interests and passions. I think she's incredibly shrewd, but I think she's also passionate about art. The way she feels about Canyon, you know, Canyon may be the favored child, but she's fearfully attached to these works. She loves to look at art. And one of the things that she's commented on about having the collection in Baltimore all these years is that she misses it. She once said jokingly that she wished the Baltimore Museum were in SoHo because she could walk up the street and look at it then. And she was very admiring of the way we presented the collection in Baltimore...I think some of that had to do with her knowledge -- and I don't mean this at all, this will sound immodest -- but I think she understood that I cared about the objects in the same way that she did. That there was an attachment that went beyond intellectual abstraction for a work of art of value, but rather a kind of real love for the work. And she has that. I've spent a lot of years knowing her, and being in the gallery, and her dragging me along with countless other people into the back room to look at things that she just adores watching you enjoy. I mean, she really does love art.

(Do you feel that Leo does)
Oh, yes. I think Leo does too.

(Is she unusual)
They were an unusual pair. These two people coming together. My God. What an amazement.

(Leo has had recognition in a way that Ileana has not)
I think that's right. I suppose in the early years -- now, because of her advancing age, possibly you can't bring this to bear -- but she's a woman. She was his wife. And she was always in the shadow, so to speak. She is very shy. She's very reticent. She's coy, very coy, but she is shy and reticent. And I think that's genuine. I've asked her for years to write her biography, by the way. I'm very envious of you and Cal being able to write this profile. She, for years and years, when I ask her to write the biography, she would say no no no. When I was terminated at Baltimore in February, I asked her again, and she said "maybe." She switched from no to maybe. She never mentioned this piece that was being done, of course. Which is typical. She would always say I don't remember anything, which is patently false. She remembers everything.

I was deeply impressed with how much Leo and Ileana loved one another. It was palpable. I never visited Ileana when she didn't say let's go down and see Leo. And I never visited Leo when he

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

didn't say let's go up and see Ileana. And when they were together, there was something that was really connected. And it didn't have anything to do with business. It was just they were really connected. And I can only imagine that when they got together, not that partnerships don't grow over the years, because they obviously do, and I didn't know them in the earliest years -- but I have to think that something of that was always there. That they really were partners. And they still are. There's no question about it. No matter what has changed -- and a lot has changed obviously in the last year -- after the party I said to Arnold, in some sense, there was no one in the room but Leo and Ileana. There still is a certain connection there that's just unshakable. And it takes nothing away from Michael.

(You said it was hard for her to have the collection so far away in Baltimore, but yet she doesn't live with the work)
Oh, but she wanted to. Not only did she make that remark to me about she wished they were in SoHo so she could walk up the street and look at them. But she was attempting to buy a building in SoHo. I asked what it would be used for. If that was a new gallery. And she was going to live there. It was going to be a gallery and she was going to live there. But Antonio made it clear to me and so did Ileana, that part of the reason for wanting to do this was so she could live with her art. If you've got art like that, why not live with it. But that did not come to pass. ...My heart beat faster, at the very idea of Baltimore losing all these things so Ileana could live with them, but who could argue with that? I never had the sense that any of these works were for sale. When I wanted to consider acquiring something for the museum, I couldn't even get a price out of these people. It was always laughable. I would stand there laughing and then have to call ten times and practically get on my knees (and still she wouldn't sell). It's not easy for her to let go of these things. Leo was much quicker to sell. And in fact Leo once told that Ileana was so smart. He said, she's the smart one, because she always wanted to hold on to everything, and she knew why. She knew that all of those things were going up in value -- art historical value as well as financial value. Whereas Leo would sell them to the first person who asked. Leo also, to a curator, was just a dream come true. I remember at one point wanting to buy a Donald Judd sculpture for the museum from Leo. And he quoted the price, and I said oh my God, we don't have anything approaching that. And he said, how much money do you have? And I told him and he said, that's fine, I'll take that. And it was a fraction...It was so far from his original quote and it was just because he knew that I loved it fanatically and wanted it for the museum and it belonged in the museum...I've heard other curators tell stories very much like that one, that they had the same experience.
(What would your experience with Ileana be)
Incredibly tough negotiator. Incredibly tough. Lovely and generous personally, but when it came to any business negotiation, which a museum acquisition is, she was very tough. If the similar situation had happened, which it didn't, but if it had, I am entirely confident -- I know that Ileana would not have...she

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

wouldn't have laughed at me when I told her how much money I had to spend, but she wouldn't have sold the sculpture. We wouldn't have gotten it. There's no question. They were totally different in that regard. But Leo is the one who said that the result of that was that she was sitting there with extraordinary works of art. Comparable pieces he had let go.

(You could say she became the museum, whereas Leo let museums have pieces)
That's right, but we don't know what Ileana will do with these things in the end. There's a huge amount.
(She's had to sell things now and then)
That's true. Even the Jasper Johns Device -- she would laugh about it when she visited Baltimore and would see the painting and she would smile that sweet little coy smile and say, "I shouldn't have sold that to you." (laugh) She knew she was letting go of something even then that she would just as soon not have let go.

(How hard was that to get from her)
It was fairly complicated because the museum was attempting to acquire a Jasper Johns and we had started with one that was with Leo and then we moved to one that was with Ileana and there was a question of a painting that we wanted being too much money. It was a complicated situation, which dragged on for quite a while. Ileana was prepared to sell a Johns, however, at that point. That was 75, 76. And I think that at that point probably it was a financial imperative for her.

The museum also bought -- I'm thinking of object that I know were precious to her -- we bought an early Judd copper box from her, and that too was probably difficult for her to let go of.
(Did you negotiate that)
Yes.
(How did that go)
It was pretty straight forward as I recall it. I'm a pretty tough negotiator myself...I think that we probably didn't negotiate very much. I think it was probably a standard museum discount.
(Is it hard for her to let things sell right out of the show)
I haven't had that experience. I don't think it is. That's a different issue. The kinds of works we're talking about in her collection are things that she's had for years that she kind of grew up with. I don't mean from childhood, but grew up as a maturing person. And when she does a show, she does a show and it's there on the walls to sell. I think that's more business. The museum has bought from her Becher and Bochner and Barry Levay and maybe Sugimoto. It's always been very straight forward.

She's fascinating and complex and remarkable.

She's very funny. She has a tremendous sense of humor and of course that wonderful little giggle. She is very funny.
I do tell a story on myself (end tape)

One of the first times that I was out for dinner with her, and Mel

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Bochner was with us. I was working on a Bochner show, and we went for dinner to DaSilvano of course, but it was in the early years. We had a lovely dinner and then it was time for dessert and the dessert menu was brought out and they were all wonderful. And I said something like, this is impossible. I don't know what to choose. And Ileana said, well, we don't have to choose. And she ordered one of each dessert and had them brought and lined up down the middle of the table, and then she just took one bite from each one. And so did the rest of us. And I grew up in the mid west, rural mid west, and for me this was just an amazing thing. And it says a lot about Ileana. It's nothiing about greed. I mean, she had the means to go ahead and order one of each dessert for those of us who were at dinner, but she very delicately took a bite of each one so that she could taste them all too. And I did love that experience. I never forgot it.

I admire her, as you gather. And I'm well aware of her power and I"m well aware of her danger in a way because of her power. I would be devastated if she were to turn against me, as I know she has turned against people over the course of years...For me, I've sustained a very long and very respectful and fond relationship with her.

(Do you know anybody else like her in the art world)
Not anybody that comes close. Not even close.
The collection is extraordinary. Corny as it sounds, it's such a testament to her vision. Arnold Lehman tells a story about being in Paris in the early years when he was working at the Metropolitan with Henry Geldzahler and they were trying to collect art deco for the Met. And they were in Paris and every single shop they went into, every single object that Arnold would say this is something that we'll take for the Met, and they'd sorry, it's already sold. And it was already sold to Mrs. Sonnabend. Every single time. She is just always one step ahead of the rest of us. Whether it's the Gilbert & George singing sculpture performance or Jasper Johns or art deco, she was just there. And she saw it and she believed in it and -- Kounellis, Mario Mertz, artists that she was just right on top of. And she was always fresh. She's just as passionate about the work of Tip Dunham and Terry Winters or Ronald Jones. Artists who are very demanding, very challenging in their work. Ronald Jones is someone I admire enormously, and she too connected to this work, immediately. By then she was already in her late 70s. She's never let up. She won't. I don't know how you do that. It's absolutely profound and amazing that she continues to see that way and feel that way about art. It's wonderful. I"ve traveled with her in Europe and had great times with her looking at art and watched her dealing with artists -- again very powerful. Adn everyone is aware of the power when she walks into a room.
(end interview)

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

JUDITH RICHARDSON
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I started at Janis and my first show was the last Franz Kline show. I was at Janis from 62 to 66 or 7. Then, Pace was coming in from Boston. They just opened the gallery at 9 W 57th...then they moved to 32 E 57th. That's when I hired Nick Shidey...Then Ileana approached me and asked me. Frankly, between me and you and the lamppost, I don't want this in any article, but I was really more interested in the current generation. And I could see Arnold -- one of the most fabulous, shrewd businessmen. And he certainly made the Dubuffet market. There was no market. It was a dealer's market. Pierre Matisse sold to Elkon and sold to Janis, etc, etc, etc. And he made that market. He's brilliant at all that kind of thing. But I really was more interested in working with the artists. I'd gone to Swathmore and then I'd gone to Bennington and to come into NY and doing a Kline show -- on whom I'd written a paper six months before -- it was astonishing to me...

Growing up in Newport, couldn't wait to get out of here, right? You just couldn't wait...

(The difference between working for Sidney Janis and Ileana)
Ileana is one of the great souls, spirits, people of all time. That's the difference. Sidney was a human, a very human man. A wonderful man. A fantastic sense of business and an extraordinary sense of timing. Sidney always would ask questions of many people. His wife had the great eye, and he had a fine eye. No doubt about it. But he would always get a sort of compendium of opinions. I can remember him doing it at the Venice Bienale about Louise Nevelson, when she won it in 62 or whatever. Ileana never had to ask anybody anything. Ileana knows. Has always known. Immediately. She was the great guide for Leo.

(How does she compare with Leo)
Leo is one of the great dealers of all time too. I mean, these people are the Dudensings and the Duveens, and there are no more left like that. I don't think. Because it's come down to business. Pure and simple business, and they could just as well be selling doorknobs.

I think Ileana was really in so many ways the inspiration for Leo..Leo wasn't really interested in money so much. And that's what put him aside. Also from Sidney. Ileana and Leo were -- Leo most of all, I think -- he was interested in other aspects. It wasn't the making of money, which is what it's all about today, for the most part.

(What about Ileana)
Ileana, both. I don't think hers was interested primarily in making money. Of course, they wanted to be successful. But their, and especially Ileana, was her dedication to the art. To the art. It didn't necessarily mean the artist. That too. Great fondness. But Ileana is an extraordinarily intelligent woman. She has had a

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

fantastic life. I can remember the first summer traveling with her in 69, just before we were getting ready to do NY, and I kept saying to her as we flew different places on planes, getting the story. I kept saying go on, go on. It's better than Casa Blanca. Their getting out of Europe and that whole extraordinary, phenomenal story. Can you imagine knowing that you've got four days to cross Spain, you've used your last money because you didn't have a Visa getting in at Algesaris, and having to get across Spain with no money, and a governess and a dog and a child and twenty odd pieces of luggage? You probably know that story of them hitching a lorry truck ride to Madrid and Ileana saying we're going to the Ritz. And they went to the hotel. They thought that was where her father left money, a possible route they could get out of Europe. Because at that point they really had only four days to get to Vega, Portugal. And she's probably told you about them running out of food, 5, 6 days out.

(You knew Ileana before she opened the gallery in NY)
Oh, yes. Because I had been involved in Robert Whitman happenings at Bennington. Adn then when I came into NY, Janis was just in the process of taking on Dine and bit by bit Oldenberg and a whole bunch of the Pop artists. So there were happenings going on, and if my memory serves me correct, I first met Ileana when she was in an Oldenberg happening downtown. We just chatted. It was a small art world. And it was so much easier in a way for people because there were only about at the most 10 terrific galleries that everybody went to. The rest were dismissed. They weren't real. And that's what the problem is today...In the old days, serious collectors began by doing their homework. Looking, reading, buying drawings. And working up. And very much more serious...I'd been spoiled. I never was certainly involved for the money, God knows. I was making $75 a week with Sidney in the beginning. And really out of a passion. And that's what Ileana has.

(How did she approach you)
I was dissatisfied with the Pace situation, and she knew it. I don't know how she knew it, but she knew it. We had come to a meeting of the minds -- Arnold and I -- Fred was leaving. And I just said, this isn't for me. Because ARnold really wanted the whole show himself, as it were. So she knew that. She knew I was leaving. And she asked me if I would set up the NY gallery. That she wanted to have this NY gallery, and would I set it up. Which I did. We worked together on who we were showing in the first shows. And at that point, or very shortly thereafter, when we opened Madison Avenue -- it was a year later -- I helped arrange 420. And then, Ileana said to me, I'm going to be sending in shipments of art decoratif. She had been collecting it for years. She's a real collector at heart. She always had trunks of laces. I never saw them. I always wanted to see those trunks of laces that she collected. And she said you've got a short time to -- 6 weeks -- to learn whatever. And nothing was written on art decoratif. We called it, when we were growing up, it was art moderne and arte decoratif were all the same thing. They didn't make the distinction between the styles. And there was nothing written.

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

And that first show, the Finch show that Elaine Varian did, was a very first exhibition. But Ileana was also one, if not the first gallery to do fine art photography shows. The first real art gallery that did that. I remember we did it with August Sander. Uptown. When we opened downtown -- and I'll never forget that first opening with Gilbert & George -- I remember I said how about having John Bull waiters and set it all up with tea sandwiches and sherry and tea. And I had ordered enough for 2,000. And we were out of it in 20 minutes. They never did simultaneous openings again. It was so scary, the building was so crowded, on every floor. With Gilbert & George singing -- they're underneath the arches, we dream our dreams away, painted gold faces in those highwater pants. It was amazing. I can see Jasper Johns right now sitting on the floor, just entranced. Entranced. But anyway, Ileana, the first years, didn't come that frequently. She came every few months. But we really corresponded and were on the phone all the time, because there weren't even fax machines then.
(She was still in Paris, but she was tuned into NY)
Absolutely...Operating in France, it was a shock to me when I was first with Ileana, it's so difficult. Very difficult. The whole number was difficult. That's one of the reasons I think she opened Geneva at one point. She had the gallery in Geneva briefly before she came back. When I left Ileana is when she really came back to NY full time with dear Antonio.

(When did you leave Ileana)
Say, 74, 75. I was there since 69. All those first years of putting both galleries together. When we opened downtown, I ran between the two. Ealan was downtown...And Nick went between the two. Nick's memory would be very good because he's been there nearly non-stop for 29 years. Since I hired him -- I hired him for Pace. Then, he was very displeased at Pace. And I said, we're going to open this and you'll come on with me.

(How is Ileana different from Pace, from Janis, as a gallery)
She has the real passion, the heart, and the absolute sea to the center of the universe with artists and with art. Her vision is unparelled. Her passion -- in the early days, people like Julian Levy had that kind of passion, I think. But i didn't know him all that well. Ileana is such an extraordinary personality, in every single way. It's almost like being with these vast stores of inner knowledge. I'm sure you've gotten that sense from your times when you're talking to her, that you're just touching the iceberg. There's such a vast oceans and universes of intuitive information. Her background is so extraordinary. Get her to tell you the story about riding on her father's trains. Because her father was a great Rumanian industrialist and going from Bucharest to St. Moritz at Christmas on the train, driving her sister crazy playing a victrola you wound up. And with coal stoves still on the train. It's a combination, for me it always was, and this may sound too romantic -- I always knew that with Ileana I was graced to be with one of the great people of the century. I felt that. I remember I'd always been so annoyed when I was growing, I'd say to my father, you didn't know Fitzerald? You didn't know Ernest

Stella

Sundell, Nina

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Hemmingway? I was so incensed he didn't know anybody. And I knew that I could never be an artist or writer. I had wanted to be a writer. I had won everything at one point, all these national awards, but I came very quickly to the conclusion that I'd never be really any good. But maybe I could help as an editor, originally I thought, with writers. and then I realized it was with artists. And that being with these extraordinary people was, I could serve, as it were. Serve. That's really what it was, as I look back on it.

(Why did you leave Ileana)
Because I was marrying James and coming to Newport...We always got on wonderfully well. And I'd be like the old maid governess at times. I'd have tons of folders of stuff I'd have to go over with her. And we'd have lunch and we'd all visit and it would go on and on. And Ileana knew when I was just about ready to explode, because I wanted to do the work.
(Did you go to her apt)
Sure.
Dear darling Michael. He's quite a wonderful character. Always was.
(What was his involvement with the gallery)
Very much so at the beginning. He made several trips without Ileana when we were in the middle of construction.
(Was he involved with the artists)
Yes. He traveled with Ileana, and she always asked his opinion and respected his opinion on many things.
I remember travelling with her was wonderful, wonderful. One of the trips I can remember is when we were going to Italy, to Milan, and she had done a lot of business with ~~Jean~~ Enzo Speroni, had been very good to him. And she had been showing Zorio and Merz, etc in Paris. Of course, these were the younger generation coming up, and it was amazing. When she did that first Piero Manzoni show in NY, that was astounding. She never backed down from challenges. They pleased her.
(Did it matter that things didn't sell)
No. No, it did not because she bought things herself and then owned them. She was always a very very astute collector. A collector at heart.
(Did she ever sell anything. Did you watch that)
Oh, yes. I did. Watching Sidney Janis do it was like watching a ballet. He was a phenomenal salesman. Ileana, very good. Very quiet. Again, that thing that's so hard to put your finger on. The power of the woman. And I don't mean power in the sense of the way power is meant today -- politically and all that kind of thing. But the immense power of her commitment to the aesthetics of it all.
(Was hers like a ballet)
Yes, you could say, almost the way that Western ballet differs from Eastern dance. Sidney's was absolutely the western ballet, because he would move. Adn of course, he'd been a dancer. A professional ballroom dancer during the first world war. In fact, when I had to travel with him, I'm a very good follower dancer. But Sidney did these routines, so I'd have to go to Roseland with him and do

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

lessons before we would go on certain trips to the Basel art fair or whatever, so I could follow him. And by the way, I never called him Sidney. I always called him Mr. Janis. Ileana was always Ileana. And I called Leo Mr. Castelli for years and years, and he said, you're the only person who calls me Mr. Castelli, and I said, you've never asked me to call you Leo. But Ileana was always Ileana from the beginning.

(But Ileana was more Eastern/ballet)

I was just using that as an analogy. That hers was quieter, more tai chi. People could I think pick up on the terrific perceptiveness that she had. And then when she spoke about a particular work, what she said was simple and not overly wordy and it was right to the heart of what it was all about. And for the real collector, the person who had some passion too, it always was amazing. Antonio is a wonderful salesman.

(Ileana says "tempt me." So it's really the buyer who's coming to her)

That's right. They come to her as the empress. In the old days. I don't know what it's like now...You just don't have that same caliber anymore.

(I tell her that she won't sell to Larry)

That's what I mean by passion. That's what I mean by -- she has no axes to grind. She is so pure. I've never worked with anybody or had a friend who is as pure.

(If somebody wrongs her, that person is written off)

Yes. She's all done. Even with someone like years ago, Dr. Ludwig. He's dead isn't he, now? (I don't think he is dead) God, I don't want this in the article, but I can remember him almost on his knees, because he had done something. I don't know what it was, but he really almost had to beg to get some works.

(Then she made up with him)

Yes, she did. She always liked him.

(What was it he did)

I'm trying to remember...Her parameters are extensive and she allows things to go quite far. Adn yet, if a person is too stupid not to pick up on that they may insult her, she's all done with them. She's a queen. When I say empress, I mean that. In the real sense of that. That's a woman with true nobility of spirit.

What we did uptown were the art decoratif shows, and those were the first exhibitions of art decoratif in America. A whole room on Lalique...and as we said, it was very hard to do any background stuff on it. I had to learn very fast...When Brenda Richardson did that show -- it was a marvelous exhibition. Brenda Richardson is such an intelligent woman, and Ileana responds to intelligence. Stupidity bores her. It doesn't anger her. It bores her. It's dismissed.

(Ealan)

He wasn't loyal.

(And the same with Pincus Witten)

I don't know about Pincus Witten. I knew PW very well, and I knew that she -- because PW had worked for her in Paris. And he did, again, it was wrong of him. I don't want to put anybody down who's alive. But Ileana was correct in her (end tape)...

Stella

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

It was his mistake, and you see, that personality flaw did him in. ...Ealan was trying to take artists from her, and that was something you don't do...Even though people raided galleries in the old days, there were certain standards. And Ileana has very high standards.
I love her, with all my heart. I always felt very close to her, from the very first moment I began to work for her.
(Some people say that she's more comfortable with men)
Oh, no.
She has had women artists over the years. But more men. At one point, was it Lucy Lippard, they were picketing all the galleries for not having women artists, and I remember going downstairs and saying, get your facts straight. This gallery is owned by a woman, run by a woman, and we have 3 women artists or whatever it was at that time...But that was the number that was out there. There just weren't that many ones that were on the level of the people of our stable. In the direction or on the level.

(Ileana's contribution to post war art)
WEll, it's like tearing through a sound barrier. That's what she's done each time, because she has no fear. And because she wasn't thinking about that horrible word bottom line. Ever. Ever. I'd be the one who would call Paris and complain. I remember when Vito Acconci was going to do that masturbation piece.
(Mel Bochner was in Venice with her when that happened)
I called and I said, I wasn't even upset about the piece. Nothing like that upset me. But I called because I was always thinking about dollars and cents. Not always. But I was thinking in terms of we had to pay bills. And we had these draws. And I remember calling her and saying, well, the lumber. And I described the piece very rapidly. Because that wasn't my problem. I said, but the lumber for this piece is going to be $3 or $4,000. I said, I think that's awful. And they were laughing at the other end of the phone, cause Ileana has an extraordinary sense of humor. Her humor is just enviable. And she loves to laugh and giggle. She has a great, great humor. I was deadly serious. That's why they always found me very funny. And they could always laugh, because I would be going on about the cost of the lumber, and they would roar with laughter. But she wasn't the slightest bit put off. And neither was I. I was more worried about a piece Vito was doing. I can remember one of the pieces that was being shown in that same show was a girl lying wrapped up in an army blanket on a very narrow, in fact, narrower than she was bench, with a blow torch wrapped around her ankle. Adn her whole self was covered, except this foot with the blow torch. Again, I was just more worried -- I wasn't even thinking about the masturbation piece to tell you the truth. I was more thinking about what if that girl gets burned. I was the -- I remember Michael saying once, and I'm not Jewish, Michael said you're our sabatagoy. He was joking. The one who lights the candles, because I'd be called...
(Do you remember her response to you that day on the phone in Venice)
She wasn't shocked at all. I just remember howls of laughter from them all coming. Because I was going on -- not that they thought

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Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

I was prudish. They knew I never discussed things. I just accepted them all and didn't go on about it.

(Mel remembered that she wasn't worried about the masturbation)
Oh no.
(What she was worried about was "Will the boy hurt himself?)
Yes. Exactly. We would be on similar wave lengths.

I was director.
(Did you sell)
All the time. Because she wasn't in America. I did most of the selling.
I thought the work was so pure. It was certainly the continuation of that classic spirit in 20th century art to me. The very conceptual ones on the floor (Mel's), were so pure to me.
I think her eye is marvelous and I think she has always responded to the heart of the matter. And if it's very very tough, all the better. And things that would make her laugh out loud.

My years with Ileana, I remember a lot of laughter. Every day. If she were disturbed about something, you'd know it, because it would be such stillness. She was an enormous mentor to me. I began learning, really learning -- I did't learn a thing really in school. The marshalling of facts is a lot different. I began learning with Sidney, but I really learned with Ileana. Not just about the artists and the fine arts, but about passion. It was always wonderful to be with her. In those times, one's life really was one's work. The social life, for the most part...
Ileana's interest in opera, for example, in past periods, in the arts in general, her knowledge is vast. Dealers don't have that level of cultivation that Ileana has. Her level of cultivation is unparalleled.
(The relationship between Ileana and Leo at that point)
They were always business partners, friends...

Antonio's ex-wife had been working for Ileana. That's how Antonio came. He came to work for Ileana the same year I was working for her. He had been there a few months when I arrived in Paris in the summer of 69. I just adored him from the beginning.
(Were you surprised about the adoption)
No. I certainly wasn't. He is the son of her heart. And talk about loyalty and devotion.

She was always very loving to Nina. I think Nina was very lucky. Nina is a very different personality. She's got both her mother and father at work in there.

(Mel said curiosity and greed...)
It's greed, but it's not greed for money. And it's not greed for things either. It's greed for more. Of this passion. Of this touching at the heart of things. Having it.
(Like the collection)
Like those trunks of laces. She remembers each one of them, I'm sure. And yet it isn't about acquring. That's why it is hard to

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

verbalize it, to articulate it, because it's of such a different nature from anyone else I've ever known in my life. She is totally unique...Maybe she doesn't still have them, but I remember she had trunks of laces, Michael telling me about them.
How do you think Nina took the adoption of Antonio?
Nina was so brilliant in school -- beyond belief. And she probably was disappointed that Nina wasn't using that more.
Did she tell you about when she and Leo arrived at Ellis Island? The food and how the idiomatic expressions like "Watch your step." She couldn't imagine what that meant. And how they used a Yiddish translater -- even though they all spoke five languages or something -- because the governess was being used a spokeswoman and she was English. Adn they got a Yiddish translater because the judge couldn't understand the English governess's English. So strange. And she's obviously told you all about 4 East 77th St, which was her father's townhouse.
(She said her father wasn't able to get much money out)
But he had knitting mills in New England. He had business in this country. He already had those mills here. The man had many many interests. He was an extraordinarily rich industrialist. And she always said how they spoke French at home. Once I was going to some sort of a ball where Prince Michael was going to be there. And I remember saying to her, how do I say "How do you do," in Rumanian? And she had to pause. She said, we only spoke Rumanian to the shopkeepers. They spoke French at home.

The liver is the one organ in the body that regenerates and I don't think hers did. I know she always had to be very careful about certain things. She can't drink... I remember on a very hot day, when we were traveling one summer, and I see this gesture, where she would take her beautiful handkerchief and just pat her temples. The rest of us would mop. But she would just pat her temples. And that complexion. It's like porcelain.
(Was she always overweight)
When I first met her she wasn't overweight. No. I mean, she was a bigger woman, the build and all. More medium sized.
(Was she beautiful)
I don't know. To me, she was beautiful, because that face -- I always felt like I was looking at eternity in a way.
(Mel talked about her being a femme fatale)
Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Oh, definitely. She's an empress inside. Did you see that movie Elizabeth yet? You saw how that change took place. I think that kind of change must have taken place with Ileana. I think when she was married to Leo.
(I have the feeling that she became herself through Michael)
Yes, possibly, but she was herself earlier. I have no doubt, because she was the one who directed Leo in many many ways with the artists. She's the one who found them...Let's put it this way. She was very influential. Whether either one admits it. That intelligence didn't just crop up overnight.
(What about the artists in the gallery? Did you sense a good feeling towards Ileana?)
Sometimes. Most of the time, but there were times like when Dine was about to leave. I can remember once, Chrissa -- I don't want

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Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

this in the article. Chrissa coming into Pace was furious about something, and I wouldn't let her in to see Arnold cause he was in there with Mrs. H. Gates Lloyd. And I remember her just striking me. Yet she was very fond of me. Too fond, in fact. Anyway, I remember thinking to myself, Judith, you're a nurse in a mental institution. To stay sane myself. So taking into consideration the madness that must run in any great talent, great artist of any field, and there has to be, because there's an agony there. And when there's an agony there, there's got to be a kind of madness at times. And the artists certainly would become unreasonable at times.

(Did you know why Dine was leaving)

More money. Money.

(He talked about Ileana would pay them)

I always remember that pocketbook. She could open that pocketbook, and she'd have bunches of currencies in there. And lots of money. ...She gave a regular monthly draw when I was directing the gallery to her artists. And in many cases, just like Leo, she was putting money out and not getting it back, quite a bit. So that's the point that I've always gotten on with Ileana -- the loyalty was sometimes one-sided. Because she would be so generous and yet when they wanted something -- you've probably heard this story of Bill deKooning and why Martha Jackson ended up with all those Women pictures at that time. He went to Sidney and he'd always go on these terrific benders and Sidney had been financing things. This is before my time, but Sidney had said to him, it was on a Friday, Bill, I'm not going to give you any money. You're just going to go out and get drunk all weekend. And he went to Martha Jackson and got the money. Unreasonable. And I think with Ileana sometimes, certain artists like Dine, would get annoyed. I adored Jim Dine, and we worked extremely well together over many years both at Janis and at Sonnabend. And when Ileana wanted to take Dine on, he and I were talking and I said, please, cause I'm going to be there. And he did, and we worked very well togther. ...At Pace, he's got all the money he can want. And I can understand if you've got a family...But Ileana has always been very good to her artists. And there may have been moments because they saw on paper there was x amount owed to them in my day, that they'd get furious. THey wanted it all then. Like a child.

(Rauschenberg)

That was always very special. Very special. And with Michael too. ...I don't know whether they're friendly again now or not...

(Was there a falling out)

Not so much. I think it was when Bob was -- not a falling out, perse. No. Never. It was more with Leo, I guess. ...He (Bob) understood her (Ileana).

(He said he never finishes a painting without thinking what would Ileana think of this)

That's how important she has been to some of these phenomenal artists. And certainly I think her place is a major place in American art. She falls into that handfull of important dealers, important editors, whatever one wants to call it.

...Those artists that also had fabulous senses of humor, were the ones that worked best with her...and her reaction to work, it

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Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

colored my opinion very much, of how I looked at art too. For me, specifically, if it annoyed me or maddened me or made me laugh out loud, I knew I had to look further. When it was so difficult -- some of the conceptual pieces at first. But it was really through Ileana that I began to see more and more. Through her eyes. She responded to original gestures, aesthetically, more than anyone I've ever known in my life. On a real gut level understanding. And her level of cultivation and her intelligence is phenomenal.
...She always tried to have interesting people around her, to keep her amused, inspired, stretch that mind even further.
...She has an enormous appreciation and love for what has gone before, but is always interested in what can come, what is as exciting and that pushes her buttons.
(On her collection)
There's no catalog resonae, that's for sure. If she'd lived in the Renaissance, she would have been a de Medici or something, with the collections. And her understanding of it all. So wide. Her interests are so wide. And that inate, instaneous understanding, inner understanding. She's one of the great people....A great generosity of spirit, that when that is betrayed, it's cut. Betrayal is an important word, because she doesn't betray. At all.

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	Tomkins	III.B.53

JUDITH RICHARDSON
(18 December 98)

She embodies all that nobility of spirit and all that modesty, and very independent, very gentle. You don't hear her raise her voice. When she's angry, it's a stillness.
It shows only in the way you'd know from an empress. There's almost an Orientalness to her. I can see her in a past life, perhaps, of being a Chinese empress. Because she has that phenomenal ability that most of us wait too long to try to work for. I don't think she ever had to work for it. I think it was there. She's a good soldier, you see. She's not a foot soldier, that's for sure. But the general, the queen, the empress planning it all. And sees the larger picture. It's almost as if she has second sight, with her aesthetic choices certainly over the years. So far ahead of the game. You see, that's where -- Sidney always had to take a concensus of opinion as it were. At the Venice Bienale, wherever it might be. He had his feelings and he certainly had a fine eye -- no doubt about it. But her eye is the one I think in my lifetime is the finest eye I've ever seen -- for contemporary art, for something that's right this second. It's always easy to go back and to learn. But she has the instinctive inner knowledge.

When you're thinking about this empress image I'm using, it's of the time of the czars. But there's also that side that's ahead of all of us. She's modern looking, forward looking, very excited about the next act, the next step.

This is a woman who would say, Judith, you've got to try, it's that time of year, these white truffles from Torino. These white truffles are of the season. And I remember them, I've only had them that time in my life. They were the most extraordinary thing I've probably ever eaten in my life. Except for masses of the best caviar or something. And to come to New York -- she mentioned it once and to have whatever ready, and to have that jar of Marshmallow Fluff. She'll probably be furious at me for saying that. And American creamed corn for Michael. And they'd just come from Balzar -- I knew it from when I was a student. But they ate at Balzar a lot in Paris. And there was a dessert there that Ileana introduced me to called a Fountainbleau. I'm pretty sure it wasn't Fountainblur, I think it was Fountainblow. And I've seen it in cookbooks. Now that was sublime. And that's what Ileana is. She is sublime. Her sensibilities are sublime.

have Marshmallow Fluff ready for her when she came back from Europe.

(On Silvano's -- she says Ileana discovered it) A little boit down there. Because there were no restaurants. When we first went down to 420 W Broadway, there was Belato's on Houston. That was it. And then they discovered Da Silvano. Nobody went there really, except for a few people who loved food. Found it out. But it was Ileana. I remember they did a wonderful party there for Gilbert & George. Now Gilbert & George. Originally Jillbert & George. But I understand halfway through this, from 1970 to 1980 when I was there with Ileana, it had changed. The hard G became Gilbert...I

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Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

remember they did a wonderful party there and Mick Jagger -- I was so excited, Mick Jagger was down the table. Which is no big deal these days for anybody, but it was for me.

(On Ileana as Bhudda and Machiavelli) Ileana is not cruel. I never saw it really as Machiavellian. I saw it again, this wider vision. And the game has to be amusing...It has to be an intellectual game for her, as well. It has to be an end point there. Usually she's several steps ahead of anyone she's dealing with. If not many steps ahead. She has the script, which the rest of us don't necessarily have.

So many of us are frightened on the high diving board. She's someone who walks out to the end of the high diving board, and she dives off. Which most of us won't do. She is an extraordinarily courageous woman. Intellectually, spiritually, every way. Really courageous. And there's a gallantry there, that always saves her and stands her in such good stead.

I loved being used as her emissary -- like (with) Cecil Beaton. That's what Antonio was with this deal with Si Newhouse...Michael once said to me, Judith, because I could provide services and lots of them and fast and I always could do a weeks worth of work in a day, I remember him once saying to me, you wouldn't have been Napolean, but you would have been his aide de camp. Because if you were asked to get a thousand troops across Europe, you would have had them there in 24 hours. But Ileana could think up where the troops were going to begin with. But she would use something like that -- Antonio, at this point esp in her lifetime, now I'm sure she's physically not as strong to be in the gallery all day long...She used to travel all over Europe in the summer or in the spring. They were always on planes going places. They went right to the horse's mouths, always, to the artist, to the collectors.

first class?

I remember saying to Ileana, when I was asking about he had finished his Columbia studies here and was sent back to Europe into the American Army Intelligence -- Weren't you worried about Leo being all alone over there? And she said, oh, no no nonono. Leo always had plenty of dancing girls...That acceptance and adaptability have been her middle names in many many ways, because she is one of the most adaptable people I've ever seen. And wherever she was, she was always at home instantly -- in a hotel room, in a gallery, in a restaurant, in a plane, in a chauffeur driven car, absolutely at home. There's always been an aura of -- it's not self confidence. It's another word I'm looking for. Of infinite patience. Infinite patience. But it's the patience of wisdom, because after all, when we've gone through whatever it might be and we think it's so awful, we look back and we say, gee, that wasn't as long as we thought it was. We thought it took for years. We need to fall in love. Will it ever happen. You can see Ileana has always known and accepted, accepted, and is always looking forward to the next act. Always. She looks back and can talk about the previous acts, but she's always looking forward to the next window to open. This is corny, but from Mame, open a new

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Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

window, every single day. That's Ileana.

I never heard Ileana refer to her stable of artists as a stable, horses, really. Ever. Because they really were her children. She was very often delighted in them. Proud of them, her buttons bursting with pride, for them, of them, all of it. But also, she could be stern with them, the way one would be with a loved child. And then I think maybe was hurt when they didn't see this as helpful. As being a deep affection. Wanting to do the right thing, which you want to do for your children.

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Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III. B. 53

Stella

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Frank Stella - 9/9/98

"I hate Ileana. People always assumed that she knew something that everybody else didn't, and she never did. I mean, in the end Leo found the artists and Ileana picked up what she liked. But I don't see anything special about it -- except her selfishness, which is a monumental achievement. Her sense of entitlement -- only my first wife could match her sense of entitlement."

Point of Pines - "Leo sold it to her without my permission, for a price that was beneficial to Ileana, for ten thousand dollars, and I said,'You didn't ask me, and it wasn't your painting, and you don't have the right to sell it for ten thousand dollars.' And that was it. And then we went to court, on the grounds that Leo couldn't sell a painting that didn't belong to him. It was settled, a brilliant settlement by Jerry Ordover. She didn't really fight very hard. She accepted a settlement for a number of Polish [Village] paintings, about five or six paintings. I don't know why I had to give her anything...We had to compensate her. I still own it."

Frank didn't show with her in Paris after Larry Rubin closed. Tells story about Jim Fitzsimmons asking him to do a cover for Art International, which was a pretty important magazine at the time. He did a silver drawing that was "brutal. It took the shape of the cover, and I just went across the top with a stripe and down each of the sides so it was an inverted U, and then it just kept going until it ended in the middle. I left a band on the lefthand side to put in the logo. Fitzsimmons, who was quite a nice guy, said, 'Oh, this is sort of grim.' He had a point, altho it's still not a bad cover. In fact I think it's the best cover they ever had. Anyway, somehow Ileana got into it, and she took me aside and said it was a very important magazine, and I should do this and I should do that, and I said, 'Hey, look Ileana, when Fitzsimmons asks you to do a cover you do it just the way he wants you to do it.' And that was the last time we talked, I think."

"The only one I could think of who was like Ileana was that guy from Boston, Cabot. Cabot's idea of a really hilarious thing was at dinner, when the waiter had a big tray coming by, he'd stick out his foot and trip him. Ileana was sort of like that. She'd go down to Princeton on the train, and she would send the food back from Amtrak because it wasn't good enough. We took her down to see Darby's [Bannard] painting. That was when I was with Leo. I also took her to see Carl Andre, and then she said to Leo, don't have Frank Stella take me to see any more of those terrible artists any more, I'm tired of his no-talent friends."

"She's not my cup of tea. I feel about Ileana like a feel about pornography, I guess -- it's not all that bad but I fail to see the redeeming social value."

"My idea of the kind of artist she discovered is Michelangelo Pistoletto. That's her taste."

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

"She had no influence in my coming to Leo. I didn't even meet her until after I was already in the gallery."

Sundell, Nina

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	Tomkins	III.B.53

Easthampton house had two-storey grapevine-covered pergola in back, where they used to sit and have coffee or drinks and talk. Just heaven. Nina was frightened of Pollock -- drunk and angry -- but she remembers that Ileana seemed to deal with it OK. "She says she's a bohemian, but in her own special way." Ileana had taken medication for depression that was in its experimental phase -- marcellid, which had been used for TB patients; her uncle was investigating its use; it had very bad side effects on Ileana, who got bad hepatitis as a result.

Ileana and women - "Oh, she didn't like other women at all until fairly recently. Maybe that's why she and I get along better now. It has taken her an absolutely unbelievably long time to realize that she has been a role model for some people. She is still skeptical...So many people talk to me about that, and I am just thrilled. She has spent a substantial part of her life being self-effacing."

See interview with Ileana in piece about Leo called "The Lion in Winter," in New York Magazine.

Sundell, Nina

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.52

Basilico

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Nina Castelli Sundell 8/24/98 Born 1936, Vienna

Earliest memory of Ileana as a mother was when they were leaving Europe during the war, when Ileana wrote an illustrated book for her called William the Worm, whose favorite color was purple (as as Nina's), etc. She and the nanny, Frances, taught her to read en route, in English. "I don't think she was a bad mother. I think she was often made to appear like one by Leo and Frances. There was this atmosphere of, Don't contradict your mother, and You've got to behave, your mother isn't feeling well. I don't have any negative memories of her. I was a very good child."

"The moment I went to college, they took our apartment and changed it into a gallery. My bedroom was the office. But I felt it was so exciting, I didn't resent it too much. I worked there for a time, after I got out of school."

Nina started a gallery in Cleveland after her marriage, because there were so few galleries there. It was not successful, but later became successful as alternative space.

Ileana's role in early days of Castelli Gallery - "I always feel she's ? because she never gets the credit. I think that a gallery that Leo had done by himself might have been wonderful, but it would not have been the same gallery. It would probably have been a bit more more Apollonian. She was enormously instrumental. She's been extremely daring throughout her life..."

"She is a great collector. Leo is not a collector. A real collector would not have made that wonderful gesture he made with Bed; somebody who has a different attitude about things gives them away."

At home, "Ileana has a big beautiful Warhol Flowers; one of Bob's jacquemart Sistine paintings, a rather small one; a beautiful Kouennellis -- all small things. She once had a Gilbert & George. She had a Kiefer for a while. Not very much. I don't really understand why she won't keep it all together...Of course it represents power."

Leo and Ileana separated about five days after Nina got married (1958). Nina not surprised. "She didn't accept Leo's girlfriends before Toiny, and not during Toiny for years. She was very unhappy. Later, she was very sorry for Toiny, because she saw Toiny undergoing the same kind of behavior that she had; and then when Toiny was ill, they talked a lot, and Toiny said Ileana was the only person who cared about her. Toiny was a very smart woman, but definitely of another class. French Protestant, and very bourgeois. She was the greatest Johns collector of all time. She bought very well. She may have seemed stupid because she was so out of control emotionally, and so angry."

Leo and Ileana were not close after the breakup, but became so again thru their professional collaboration.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Michael Sonnabend - "He was my substitute father. He would take me to museums, and generally do what a really nice dad would do." There may not have been any "personal" relationship between Michael and Ileana.

Nina has two children. Ileana is very fond of the youngest daughter, has been financially supportive of her and recently of the son too.

Ileana intimidating? "I think she's got it right now, but there was a point in her life when it was so unfamiliar for her to assert herself, that she was stronger about it than necessary." The big change came a couple of years after she started her gallery.

"Our great friendship started quite late."

"She does have a tendency to be a little unforgiving."

Antonio - Very characteristic of Ileana to look at the essential and not worry about how it might look or be perceived. He had a filial relationship with them for many years. Adoption was just a recognition of that. Ileana didn't discuss it with Nina. How did she feel about it? "I think I just thought it was silly." But didn't bother her - she shares with Leo a disinterest in longrange money interests.

Her collection - Seven or eight years ago Ileana and Nina and a couple of young people they hired undertook to find out about it, but it was already too late. It became clear that this could not be done. The collection is "staggering," from point of view of both quantity and quality. What will happen to it? "I'd love to know. I would hope that she would make some arrangements about it, rather than leaving me and Antonio to make the arrangements, but I feel it may well end up being the latter."

Ileana "hated my husband. She's only just begun to like him recently. She thought I was foolish to marry an academic. She thought I needed much more money in my life. I remember her saying, why do you have to get married? Why don't you just have an affair?" What about rumor that Leo wanted you to marry Bob Rauschenberg? "That's crazy. I love Bob, but I was much more friendly with Jasper."

The relationship between Bob R. and Ileana - "Very, very close, and very complicated." Not maternal. "She loves the work, and she loves Bob." Strange to Nina that Bob and Jasper, who seem so much to speak to her generation, should also speak so intimately to Ileana. Her openness - "Isn't that a Rauschenberg trait? She's very fearless in every way."

"She's always preferred really frivolous people." Fearless and brittle, like Ealan and Pincus. Wit and energy much more important to her than humane values. "So she gets hurt."

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Abstract

Wingate

Writers

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	Tomkins	II.B.53

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(Why did you decide to go to Ileana, as opposed to anybody else)
We were all interested in the history that Ileana had had with the gallery. She had represented, particularly in Paris, a number of artists that we felt an affinity to -- namely Warhol, Johns, and Rauschenberg. It just seemed like the most interesting choice we had at the time.

(What was her response when you came to her)
We didn't go to her. She wanted us. It was at a time when Mary Boone was also interested in the work that was being shown in the gallery as well as my own work. There was interest coming in other directions. We didn't really go to Ileana.

We ended up choosing her over the choices that we had. We ended up feeling that she was the best, but we didn't go to her. She had expressed an intent or a desire to be involved with our work.

(Was Leo a possibility)
Yuh. Leo was a possibility in the way -- and what ended up happening is that I ended up showing with Leo as well.

(That first show that Ileana had caused a great deal of interest -- Neo Geo. It became another ism in the art world, really the last one)
The last.

(What was her response to the work)
She seemed to like it. You know her. She's very quiet and she rarely says very much at all. She seemed very content with attention the gallery was getting. Remember that she had lost Baselitz and Immendorf and company to Mary Boone some time before that. So she was very happy, I imagine, to get a lot of attention again at the gallery.

(This was an idea that was yours. You were already showing the work.)
She was one of the galleries that had expressed interest in what we were doing as artists, and we chose her. She seemed to be the most interesting option.

(Why was it at that point -- you wanted to get out of dealing and focus on your own art)
Yuh. Because for me the gallery was from the beginning very much a conceptual endeavor. Adn the moment it became an entirely, let's say, commercial situation, I really was no longer interested in being involved. I did not want to be an art dealer. So I decided to withdraw from it all together and to only dedicate myself to my work.

(Had you known her before she came to you)
No. I knew of her by reputation, and the artists that she

Wegman
Wingate
Writers
Artists

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

represented. But I didn't know her personally.

(Did she used to come to the gallery? Was she in the East Village)
At the time, the East Village was sort of exploding and it seemed like SoHo had died down and what was happening was happening in the East Village. So all the major dealers really were coming around practically every Sunday to look at shows.

(What was it like to work with her, to be an artist with her)
At the beginning it was good, it was fruitful. After a while, things changed for the worse. I feel like Ileana, unlike Leo -- let's say, I had a chance to work with the two of them and so I could very easily point out the contrast between one and the other. I always felt ~~like~~ that with Leo, that he felt that whatever was good for the artist was good for the gallery. And if it was good for the gallery, it was good for him. In that order. I felt that with Ileana, she came first, second, third, fourth, and fifth. Then came Antonio. Then came the collectors. And then eventually came the artist. That proved to be a situation that was not a happy one for many of us. And the proof is that so many artists of the gallery have left. One after the other.

(What was her initial reaction to Jeff Koons)
Uhhh. Well, I don't know. Jeff would let you know. She was very very excited to have all of us in the gallery. It seemed to mean a lot to her. Whereas time went by, things began changing and it wasn't as good as before.

(Did Jeff become number one in her eyes)
I didn't feel that. I didn't feel like she was focusing on one artist more than the other. Remember, we were sharing the space or her mind also with Terry Winters and Carrol Dunham and a number of the artists that she had been showing from the 80s, and I never really felt any sort of rivalry between the artists over that. I think, as I said before, it was more of a case of her coming first, second, third, fourth, and fifth, and then everybody else. That was more the problem, than her showing preference for one of the artists over another.

(Did you work mainly with Antonio)
Yuh.

(What was your feeling about that)
Antonio, he always did her bidding, I suppose. That's why they have worked so well for so long. It was fine working with Antonio. Antonio is a person that can run 100 ideas in one hour, and I would see the way they would sit down and discuss things, where Antonio would say, let's do it this way, I will do it that way, and then we'll do it this way, we'll do it that way. Ileana would just sit there quietly, listening to all of it. And at one point, she'd either would get sick of all the suggestions or actually think that one of them was better than the other, and she'd say, Okay, Antonio, that's it. We'll do that one. That's how I saw it work.

Wagman
Wingate
Writers

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

(Of course, you came from an ideal situation, where that whole moment in the East Village and what you did...then to go into a gallery with another dealer...)
It wasn't at the beginning. It really was different. But at the beginning, I felt the little time that I operated as an art dealer, and it was for a short time, that whatever was good for the artist, was good for the gallery. Sort of the way Leo still does it, I suppose. And it certainly felt that way at first with Sonnabend, but after a while it changed.

(But she had a myth about her)
Oh, definitely. That's what was so attractive to us. She had that history, and that is something that nobody could take away from her.

(Do you remember anything about how she approached you. Did she call you? Did Antonio call you?)
She called to set up a meeting with me. And at that time, I was a lot shy-er than I am nowadays. Especially in front of a super legend, as she is. And she called me for a meeting, and I remember we sat in her office on her formica desk, looking at each other for 45 minutes, and not saying a word to one another.

(Just the two of you?)
Yuh. And we just smiled at each other, and that was it. That was the meeting. That was how the whole thing was sealed.

(At that point, had Mary Boone already come to you)
Yuh yuh. Mary had come and had met and had met the artists, and had dined us. And there was this other dealer. There was a lot of activity at that time. I think Ileana did it in her sort of I guess usual passive aggressive way and it worked well for her.

(Were you intimidated by her)
Not by her personally, because she does appear to be this sort of very nice grandmother type. So usually doesn't have a threatening presence like somebody like Mary Boone would have. She's very up front, very aggressive. Ileana is quite the opposite. And I guess I related more to that than to more of the hard driven business ways of Mary or some of the other people.

(Do you regret that you chose Ileana)
No. I don't have any regrets about that. I wish that she had been a lot less selfish. and we would all still be showing with her. But the whole thing just kind of fizzled out. But I don't have any regret.

(Who else was interested in having you show besides Ileana and Mary)
There was talk at that time of Angela Westwater being interested, of Arnie Glimscher being interested. And of course we would hear this through people that were close to them, but once Ileana and Mary were deep into it, I guess everybody else just sort of stood by and watched the whole thing unfold. Because they were not going

Wegman
Wingate
Writers
Artists

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

to get involved in that fight.

(Did Mary get upset)
Oh, she got extremely upset. Somebody like Peter did go to her at first. Then changed his mind and decided to join the rest of us at Sonnabend. The four person show at Ileana's happened and Peter had already made a commitment to show with Mary, or was holding talks with Mary. Adn they had come to sort of at least a semi-agreement to work together and then that changed soon after that show. He never had a show with Mary.

(What were Ileana's business methods like -- did she pay promptly)
Oh, at the beginning everything worked out fine. She does tend to haggle, and one of the reasons that made me not want to work with her anymore -- let's say, the ambiance, the any decisions that were made were made bilaterally. So in terms of where I was going to show in Europe and in terms of money that was being dispersed or owed. Adn there was always an agreement about that. Adn then after a while, she began making decisions on her own, and that's one of the reasons I decided to cut out. I didn't think it was a good working environment, where your dealer that is supposed to protect your interest, does begin to do things against you. Or start negotiating situations that really were not in your best interest, but it was in her best interest.

(Were there any other problems)
Yuh, there were problems like I remember that my work -- I had gotten a lot of requests from dealers in Europe to show my work there. And she, and through Antonio or herself directly, would discourage me from working with this dealer or that dealer. They never really liked anybody. And at the end I realized that they * really didn't want me to work with anybody, because they wanted to keep control over my whole output. And I just wasn't willing to hand that over to them, because I wanted to have exposure in Europe.

(Was it that way with all other artists)
Yuh, yuh. I felt like Ashley -- after a while, I realized that that's what they were doing, and I'd just set up my own things in Europe and let them know. I wouldn't ask them what they thought. I'd say, listen, I'm doing a show with this dealer. And they had nothing to say, because they ruined for me a couple of very good situations with their kind of haggling and oh, we'll get you something better. And somebody like Ashley, he suffered from that because he did listen to them. He really did believe they were getting something that was better for him, and of the four of us, he got the least amount of exposure in Europe due to that.

(She has a reputation for being difficult. I was going to ask you was she, but you've been talking about that over the European shows. But anything else. Was she tough to talk with)
Yuh, she's tough. In her quiet way. You would feel that she was being a pain in the ass, even though she wasn't being always the pain. Some people are very always a pain in the ass. She wasn't.

Wegman
Wingate
Winters

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

She did it if it's through Antonio or a nasty look. She's very good at making very nasty comments that can sort of pass you by and hit you two hours or two weeks later.

(Is there anything in particular that you can remember)
Not in terms of business. On a personal level, I remember I had taken once to wearing white jeans for some reason. I would wear them practically all the time, and once she came into the gallery and she looked in my direction. I was looking at some of my own slides because I was meeting with a curator later that day. Adn she told the gallery assistant, "I recognize those pants." And I immediately said, "And I recognize that dress." And she didn't really like that at all. And she just walked right by me with a kind of angry look on her facs. So she exposed herself to it. Because she didn't say, hello Meyer. You're wearing those pants again. Nothing. She did not acknowledge my presence. She acknowledged the presense of my pants. So I did the same with her dress.

(At that point, you weren't afraid of her)
I was never really afraid of her. I would see her make people extremely uncomfortable, with her silence and with very small comments that she'd say. But I'm very comfortable with silence because i can deal with that very easily. So I never really felt intimidated by her silence at all, or by her little comments.

(But it gives her a great strength)
Oh, definitely. Some people will find that extremely intimidating.

(Did she do this with other artists)
Oh, definitely. Yah, yah.

(Not so much with collectors)
She had very little contact with collectors. That was more Antonio's thing. And also, she had with the artists, with all of us, a lot more contact in the beginning. Adn then that just sort of began changing. And i don't know if that was a function of her getting older, and she had fallen I remember. Or if she was just that way. I get the impression that Ileana is very nice when she wants something. And then when she gets it, she doesn't feel like she has to be so nice anymore.

(She gets the credit for Neo Geo -- having discovered that. But as we were talking with Peter the other day, we realized that that really came from you)
Well, yuh. It started from my gallery, and the thing is that it would have continued had I wanted to remain an art dealer. Offers were raining on the gallery at the time from backers. If you want to move, we'll back you. And money was being offered to make International With Monument this little gallery in the Easdt Village into a very important player in the art world. And had I wanted that, it would have become that. The thing is that I didn't really want to be an art dealer. I had always wanted to be an artist. So I didn't pursue it, so we found somebody that would

Wegman
Wingate
Winters

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

essentially do for most of the artists of International With Monument and myself, what I was doing for the artists in the gallery. And of course, it didn't turn out that way, but the whole thing really began in the East Village and it was very important to mention that it was a situation that spouted from artists for other artists. That it became commercial later and it changed, then it did. But I do find it crucial that in the case of International With Monument and in the case of Nature Morte, and some of the other places, it was artists that began these galleries.

(And the show came already made to Ileana at that point)
Yuh. It was packaged. Yuh. It had happened already. By that time, the museums were beginning to show the work. The collectors were buying it. I can not say that Ileana didn't provide for anything. That would be a big lie. But it was already happening. She took advantage of a situation that was already made.

(Did she have a feeling for your work)
Ummm. I would imagine she did. Yuh.

(Did she buy your work)
She bought some things, yuh. In the beginning, I think she buy some...

(Before you went to her gallery)
Not before. No. Remember, all of this happened within two or three months. So it happened very quickly.

(After that meeting at the formica table)
Exactly. It just was put into motion. I think it was May or June of 96, and by Sept, Oct of 96, that show was already on her walls. So it all happened very fast.

(How would you talk about her eye in general)
I think Ileana is an extremely knowledgable person about art and design. They're very curious. No, she's a wise woman. And knowledgable, well read. In many way, great to be around. But she's got a streak of a sadist in her. Adn that's where she runs into problems.

(Would you show with her again)
I doubt it. I feel that showing with her and Leo was good in some ways and bad in some other ways, because as an artist, I would have been better off showing with someone more or less my own age, more or less my own experience. So I could grow at the same time as they were growing. By the time I showed with Ileana and Leo, their histories were already made and those histories were fabulous and they're very important dealers. So whatever is very exciting to me was something they had seen happen to them and their artists many times before. So in that sense, it had its positive aspects and its negative ones.

(How did Ileana feel when you showed with Leo)
They had shared artists before. I don't think that was too much of

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

a problem for her.

(Had you already left her at that point)
No no. I showed with the two of them from the beginning. As a matter of fact, after that four person show, I did a show with Leo, then I did a show with Ileana, then I did a show with Leo. I was sort of alternating things.

(Were any of the others)
I was the only one. I mean, Leo was quite taken by my work. And he wanted me to show with him. And I wanted to show with him as well. Him being such a wonderful guy and having such a great gallery. At that time, everything just happened really fast and also almost passively. Sort of like the desire was expressed and it just kind of happened. That's how it worked.

(When you met with Ileana, did you also meet with Leo, up front)
No, I think with Leo it was some time afterward.

(How long did you stay with Ileana, when did you leave)
I never really left officially. I didn't want to leave spectacularly, the way Jeff and Peter had gone and some other artists. I just sort of let the situation just kind of fizzle out. So there's no exact date.

(And why did you leave -- because of the trouble over the European shows)
It was for many reasons. I just felt that they really weren't doing what they were supposed to be doing, that the art world, they really hadn't changed with it. The art world, in the beginning of the 90s, it became very chaotic and lost in terms of directions. And they lost interest in it as well. But for me, my interest as an artist wasn't monetary. I felt that since they weren't making money, so they weren't really that interested in working that hard or something like that. You know, they're rich anyway, so.

(It's interesting that Ileana is doing something with Jeff again)
They are? They have so much money invested in him that they can't get out. It's like the big banks lending to underdevoloped countries. They can't stop it. They have to keep lending. There's a bit of that.

(What are you doing right now)
I'm working in the states and I"m working here (Caracas) as well. The new work that I'm doing requires some very high end technology, so that part of it was made in the states. But I've been spending a lot more time here than I used because my dad had a stroke a year ago. I'll be coming and going much more often.

(Do you have a dealer in NY)
No. I've been waiting for the art world to sort of settle down. I kept some of my relationships with dealers in Germany and devoloped some new ones with other people, but nothing in NY. I"ve been holding talks with some of them for the past few months, but

Lig mon
Wingate
Writers
Articles

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

nothing has been decided yet. I haven't really wanted to concentrate on that, because I wanted to be more focused on my work than anything else.

(Does Ileana try to get you to show with her)
No. We kind of lost track of each other.

(The work was developed work. You spearheaded the Neo Geo work)
Oh, yuh. The work was there. Adn the fact that Ileana got involved was very very nice. And it did work well for some time. But it would have happened anyway. You couldn't really say she had this covered. Because everything was put in motion. I don't think that her presence really made it, made the whole thing happen. It added something to it.

(But as would Mary Boone's -- added something to it)
Yuh, except something altogether different. And we liked the profile that Sonnabend had and the history that it had. And okay, Ileana, at least at the beginning we liked it better than Mary's and that's why we went there.

(When would you say things soured? The show was in the fall of 86)
I think by 90, 91, it kind of began fizzling out, I think, for everybody.

(And if we think about what was happening in general, on the money side of the art world, things were collapsing then)
Yuh. They were collapsing and I felt, and I remember discussing this with some of the other artists in the gallery, that Sonnabend did not take a proactive stance regarding the situation. They just kind of let the whole thing ...and we all felt that they should have taken a more active stance. But their attitude was like they had lost. And that was it. And that was very upsetting, because they had the knowledge and the resources to at least reconceptualize things, ameliorate the situation. They could have done a number of things. And being part of the art world, they should have assumed the responsibilty, not only toward their artists, but towards the world of contemporary art. And they could have done it. And they didn't do it. And maybe that was a function of age. Ileana, she's old. And I wish that I'll be as active as her at her age. Maybe it was a function of that too. I don't have any big regrets about having worked with them. Certainly it was fruitful in some ways. It was a disaster in others, but I can say that I was happy to have had that experience.

(Did she ever try to comment to you about your work and how you should do your work? Did she go to your studio? Was she involved)
Not in the work. No. You've spent a lot of time around her I imagine. You know how quiet she is. She'll say very little. Antonio will talk for her and ten others, and she'll just sit there quietly.

(But she comes out with a few little gems. She's very quiet, but then something comes out. Adn I just wondered in the studio, if

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

she had come. Did she do studio visits)
She did come. Yuh. She'd come once in a while. I don't remember anything particularly brilliant coming about the work. She would just look pleased or say I'm pleased. This is going to be a good show.

(Was Michael involved, or was that all finished at that point)
I don't remember Michael ever coming to my studio.

(Was he involved with the gallery, as far as you could see)
Not really. He was never really a presence. It was Ileana and it was Antonio. Any business dealings were done directly with Antonio.

(Did you spend personal time with her? Did you go to her apartment)
No no. That was sort of very clearly off limits to the artists. You could nothing about her personal life, at least the way she lived. But I went to lunch with them certainly many times. Or bump into them in Europe and I spent time with them, but that was about the extent of it.

(Regarding the new gallery in Chelsea)
Antonio is a very energetic guy. And I feel bad that they don't really put this effort into trying to keep the artists in the gallery. They've lost so many artists so many times. And it's a shame that happened. And I fear that their move to Chelsea just won't change that.

(Did you have any thoughts about Ileana and Antonio -- rumors)
About their sex life? Oh, I don't think there is one. I think their both asexual.

(And Michael)
I never really got to know him, so I could not say...But I don't think they're very interested in sex, which is fine.

Wegman
Wingate
Winters
Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Wegman

Wingate

Writers

Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

WILLIAM WEGMAN 8/10/93 (phone)

(He joined the Sonnabend Gallery in 1971. In the beginning of the New York Gallery. My first show was in Paris, and very soon after was in New York.)

(How did you join the gallery)
It was startling, really. I had just moved from LA and I had done a performance at Performance Space associated with ~~Willoby~~ Sharp called 93 Grande. And she came to that performance. And I had been in a show at the LA County Museum which I think Sol Lewitt noticed a piece of mine and wrote to Konrad Fisher. And Fisher had set up a show for me, and I think she may have been curious about that. So she sought me out the day I moved to New York. You know, it's usually a big sweat how you're going to get a gallery when you're a young artist, but I just tiptoed into New York, she called my parents in western Mass, saying "where is Bill."* "I don't know, he lives in New York." And if you knew my parents, you know how strange that would be to call them. So it was quite spectacular.

Then I met with Michael Sonnabend and Ileana, Antonio and Elan Wingate at the apartment at One Fifth. Or 12 Fifth or wherever it was. I was there with my little box of photographs, my orange -- it's so memorable for me cause it's my first big thing. I had a box of my work, which was all of my work in an 11 by 14 Agfa box. And they looked at them and Michael said, well, we'll send them to Paris. And everyone in the room just looked at Michael like, "wait a minute." But they did. And I had a show there. This was like December 71. And then the show in NY was probably in the spring. (check bio)
(her reaction to the work) She said in a Hungarian accent, sounding like Peter Lorre, "Some of the work is funny, and some of the work is not so funny." (laugh) And it was very eerie the way she said it.

I think Michael sort of jumped the gun, but I'm sure they had all agreed on it too. And I remember she bought a piece of mine. She flashed four one hundred dollar bills and slipped them to me and bought a piece, which was the first sale I had made to someone other than Ed Ruscha -- who bought a lot of my work a year before.

I think she did come to the performance at 93 Grande, where I didn't really know who she was or much about anything or hardly even that she was there. So that may have been the first meeting after the performance.

The other thing I think really attracted her to me was my dog, whose name was Man Ray. And she used to -- at all of our meetings -- secretly feed him cookies under the table. There'd be like a table cloth in her office and she would fish these cookies out of her pocketbook. Something that dogs probably shouldn't eat. She just loved that dog. And that was her I think most vulnerable, sweetest side, was her relationship to my dog.

* See p. 6

Wingate

Writers

Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

(What was your work like in the first show)

It was photographs and videotapes. The photos were all black and white, 11 by 14, little scenarios, with me in it or the dog or both, or a book or a glass of milk. Kind of minimal, but also humorous, I think. This was at both galleries (Paris and then NY)

(What were your first impressions of her as a person)
I was a little frightened of her. She's sort of buddha-like, very quiet. Just that little smile of hers and she had a little girl's laugh, which was incongruous to her other thing. But she was like an incredible poker player. She didn't say much.

(What about as a dealer)
As a dealer, she of course had a lot of power in the early 70s, and was the one place where work like mine was being shown. She showed Gilbert & George, Baldesari, Dennis Oppenheim, everybody that was doing that kind of photo, video perfomance -- Acconci. And that was a brand new gallery at 420. And it was really happening. On the other hand, she supported the gallery and everything by selling Dines and Warhols and the big guys in the back room. So after a few years, it was hard for me when I started to do only drawings and wouldn't allow her to frame them -- it was very hard for her to sell that work and I think that's probably why I left after a few years. Because it was hard for her to sell and Holly Solomon was buying most of my work and she had started a gallery. So in 78 or 9, I went over to Holly's. I left the gallery in 78.

(Was that hard to leave her)
Yes. It was really hard. My building had just burned down and I lost everything, and she cut my stipend at the same day that I found out I had lost everything.

(Why)
I don't know. I thought she was calling me in to give me more money. But she in fact say, "you know, Bill, you owe the gallery a lot of money." And it wasn't true. She owed me $20,000 as a bookkeeper found out. But I think she thought -- it was right before I started to do the big Polaroids. And I think that, which turned out to be commercially saleable. And I think that she thought I was just going down and down into an area that was -- and that this fire would have made me even more down -- that it was time to just let it go. And at first I really resented it, and now I don't. I think that it was probably the right choice. I think her timing was a little bit cruel, but...

(She knew about the fire and called you?)
Yuh. Because Rauschenberg was helping us all. There were a lot of people involved in the art world in that building -- Dickie Landry, and others and Lois Lane. Everyone sort of pitched in and helped us recover. And Holly helped me a lot then, and Rauschenberg. He had an emergency group called CASH that helped artists in desperate situations. It was 27 Thames Street, down below the Trade Center.

Wingate
Writers
Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

(Did you have a personal relationship with Ileana)
I was like a little boy I think back then in my 20s. And she was kind of like a mother figure, but a stern mother -- not one that I could really penetrate. Other artists could. Mel Bochner was really good at it. Other people just had a way of dealing with her that wasn't frightening to them. They were older and I was really pretty immature then. I don't think I would handle it the same way now. (What would you do now?) I would sic my wife on her. (laugh)
(Is she like Ileana)
She's not bossed around very easily. She's very clear and tough, and I'm kind of a mush. Some artists are tough and some are kind of wanderers.

If you've ever seen her knitting in her apartment in Paris, you would be very confused. That is such a beautiful image. Her knitting.
(Did you see that)
Yes. (laugh) My first trip. I'm in the wrong apartment here?

(What did she make, by the way?)
She has relatives, children. She makes things for them.

She also liked my first wife Gayle a lot. They were very close. And Elan Wingate became very good friends with Gayle. As a person in the 70s, I always liked my dog Man Ray, because he let me recede somewhat. He was in the front. People always wanted to meet him. And he took kind of that edge off. I could be shy and retiring. And people always wanted to see the dog anyway. And my wife Gayle was helpful that way too.

(Did you find Ileana tough)
More mysterious and that way was tough. That situation in 78 was pretty tough, but it was one I didn't argue with her saying, Oh please or let's go to court. I just said, very well, and carried on.

(Do you feel that she did enough to promote your work)
Just being associated with the gallery in 71 and 72 was pretty good, but Fisher was also a powerhouse, esp in Europe. I think there was a lot of conflict between me showing with Konrad Fisher and also her in Europe. There was kind of a clash of titans, so to speak. And it was really difficult. I felt caught between two very moody dealers and that was a little annoying.

(How did you handle that)
Not well. (laugh) I suffered, because I wanted everyone to be happy. I found that it was startling that artists are less difficult than museum people and dealers. I think that because they have an outlet for their craziness. And dealers don't. But all the curators and dealers I dealt with -- Wilouby Sharp, Konrad Fisher, and Ileana, seemed -- even though they were grownups, seemed kind of like babies in some sense. Sort of jealousies, and rivalries.

Wingate
Writers
Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

(Was she competitive)
Oh, yuh. I think so. She didn't really want me showing with Fisher. And since I felt that he had discovered me first, because he had been writing to me when I was still in LA and had promised to do a show.

(But he was in another town)
He was in Dusseldorf. But the art market is really one or two towns in a way. It seemed like it was then, even maybe more than it is now.

(How was she as a dealer)
I think that she probably spent more time with some people and kind of collected others. Collected in the sense of having part of her coterie or her stable of artists. It was probably important to fill it in with a certain number. But there was really just a few that she was really good to.

(Were you one of those)
In the very beginning, but not later. I don't think she followed me that far into the mid 70s. And I think in a way, with reason, as I explained before. That she had a sense that I was not promising any longer. And I did -- I went through a really dark period. And then came out the other end. She saw my first show at Holly's and she said, You never let me frame anything. (laugh) So I kind of made it hard for her, because I was holding on to an aesthetic that was really part of my work of the 60s. And I didn't open up to what was happening until I left her, and my work changed, when I started to work with these large format Polaroids, which were big, colorful, accessible, what people wanted, and they had to be framed to be protected.

(You probably needed to break away from her to do it)
Just one of those things. Always in my life, I've found that it's been an awful situation that causes something much more interesting. Like not getting rehired as a teacher in Wisconsin made me move to LA and get a dog. And not getting a gallery in LA made me move to NY, where immediately I got a gallery. It's just always been that way.

(What was Michael's role in the gallery. In that first meeting, he was the one who said Paris...Was he an equal partner)
He was really an incredible person. I stayed in his loft. This was a very generous thing. They gave me his loft on 49 Crosby Street. And after I left, they gave it to visiting artists. People would come and stay there for a while. And I think there had been people before me too who had stayed at 49 Crosby. But I lived there I think for two years, it was my studio and home. And this big crate of Michael's writings, these little notebooks about Dante. He's a poet and a scholar.

(Was he involved with the gallery)
He must have been, but that was about the only time I remember him from that very first meeting. I saw him seldomly afterwards.

Wingate
Writers
Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

(What about Antonio)
I loved Antonio. He was the most incredible, smart, fun tour guide I had ever met. My first trip to Paris, he took me to the Louvre and showed me all his favourite pictures and Elan Wingate too is hilarious. He and Antonio were really the people that I talked to every day, and they were great. And it was them that I really talked to every day and Ileana I would just sort of peak in and look in her office and meet briefly, like the principal in elementary school.

(Was she still wearing the same tent dress)
Yes. She never changed since I've known her in 71. She looks the same.

(What about the adoption of Antonio. Was that a surprise to you)
No. He took care of a lot of things for her. A very helpful child. Like a farm child. He had chores to do. Milk the artists.

(Did she pay promptly)
I have no idea. I was not very tidy. To me it was just like a teacher at school, bringing work in. "Look what I did. Here's another pile of stuff," and then I'd just hand it over.

(Did you feel she was fair to you -- outside of that last experience)
I think so. I think she was fair and pretty straight forward but I don't know. I stopped thinking about that.

The Peter Lorre story, the first meeting, it really just sums up how I still feel about her. She's very funny and she says these things, but she's a little scary too. If she wanted to come over and see my work, I would go way out of my way to do that. There's a few dealers like that. Sperone is one. People you just love to have look at your work and you love pleasing them adn you love that they love your work. They're kind of few. And with Ileana it was partly in the combination of Elan and Antonio. Because it was never just a solo thing. (She came with both of them) Yuh. She's always flanked. It's almost like those triptychs, where she's the central figure and the others are the supporting cast. That makes her more powerful.
(Does she still come to the studio)
No. But I saw her the other day, adn she still likes my work I think, and still has has some sort of memory of fondness for me, I'm pretty sure.

(Has she bought anything since that first time)
Not that I know of.

Leo was really towering back then, and was a generation or two before me. Lichtenstein, Johns. And she was also the first person to do something with photo art. And she had also collected Cecil Beaton and those type of photographers too, which was really kind of startling. That was kind of strange.

Wingate
Writers
Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

My parents are country, rural people. They're not blue collar, but they're not involved in the art scene at all. They're very middle class. They're wonderful people. They're intelligent but they're not like part of any scene. And we grew up in this tiny little town in Western Mass. To get a call from someone like that -- I think it was even 11 at night or first thing in the morning. "Where's Bill?" I left for school when I was 17...and I didn't tell my mother where I was..."He lives in New York," she said.

It's such a rush of thoughts when I think of her. And it's like when any artist talks about their first important work and who they met then, and everything is memorable. So I hope you're not too hard on Ileana for lowering my stipend in 78, because I really don't think about that when I think about the first ones.

(Some people refer to her as the Mafia don, he tells me)

Wingate
Writers
Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Wingate

Writers

Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

EALAN WINGATE

The gallery opened in Sept of 1971, and I really, although not on the payroll was working with her the full year before. I graduated from college in spring of 70. She did not want me to be working at the uptown gallery, because she thought -- I was very young, and she didn't want me to pick up any working habits and traits from other people who had already been in art galleries before. And they were in fact running the gallery uptown. And so she wanted to make it as kind of a fresh start as could be. So I mostly supervised the construction of work that was going on downtown in SoHo. And I took some graduate classes, and I would wait for them -- she and Michael and Antonio. Michael was living in NY. And she and Antonio to come in from Europe, and we would have a good time. I would go to Europe in the summers.

(How did she find you)
I was a volunteer worker in Cleveland at the gallery that her daughter Nina, and Nina's partner, Marjorie Talalay, had started. I was a junior in college, and they had just recently opened and I had walked in there and volunteered. They needed help and they pounced on the notion. And we became good friends -- Nina and Marjorie. I babysat for Nina's kids. I babysat for Aggie's kids. It was just a very easy-going and good time. And I worked at the gallery. And then Ileana came to visit her grandchildren at one point, and met me, and I drove everybody around. There was a lack of licenses, for some reason, in that whole group. And I had one. So I drove everybody around. And Ileana was very impressed, and the next thing I knew, I had a job. (laugh) That was very much Ileana functioned. Totally, empirically on whim.

(And you became part of the family)
Yes. Very much. Would spend seven days a week with them and finish the work day at 6:30, 7:00 o'clock, go home, prepare dinner with them at Ileana's apartment, and stay until I would kind of say, well, I don't live here. And then I would stumble on home, and the next day would be the same thing again. It was that for around seven years.

(You would cook)
It would get done. I don't know if I would do the cooking. Ileana would cook. It really wasn't cooking in that grand way. It was kind of collegiate cooking. It was like getting a skillet very hot and pan frying until it had no more red in it. (laugh) It was that level. Or eating out a lot.

(And Michael?)
Michael had already cooked for himself. Michael would already have eaten by then. His schedule was completely different. Michael would be up so early in the morning. He would be on a completely different eating schedule than anybody else. But he would sit around and talk. There would be a lot of talking. Or he would be following something special on television that he was taken with. Or something that he was taking very involved notes on. He would

Writers

Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

walk in and out. But mostly it was Ileana, Antonio and I. Sometimes there was an artist, who may stop by. It was very entitled. Very special. Very heady.

(How much was Michael actually involved with the running of the gallery, with the decision making of the gallery.)
He was living here, and Ileana had set it up that he would run the gallery. But it became clearer and clearer that it was not to be so delegated. And he would like to come in and he would have his newspaper and he would sit in the back and he would underline stories and circle words and look them up and cross reference and do the kind of thing that he had been doing his whole life. And was not really involved at all or interested in the machinations of how one runs a gallery. Granted, we knew that we were having a very special kind of gallery. Ileana in the Paris operation, had never been thought of as a money making, sales seeking operation. Although sales did happen and money accompanied it. And certainly that time was so different from the present time. But the New York operation, esp the SoHo operation, was one that was going to be presenting very difficult art, and from the getgo, it was very difficult. It was going to be performance art, it was Gilbert & George and Vito Acconci and some Art di Povera artists and things in which it was the first commercial flush of concept art in which everybody prided themselves that there was nothing to sell. So we were all being wonderfully sanctimonious about the fact that there was nothing to sell. And yet we were in a selling mode, but we wouldn't know what to sell. It was clear that we could make sales, but it was very hard to find out how. And Michael was not instrumental in that way. And it became more important for Ileana and Antonio to spend protracted periods of time in New York, to help run it. Most of the sales sales were nurturing pictures from ten or fifteen years before that she was in fact selling, so as to keep this operation going. That's really what kept it going.

(Did you know how to sell at that point)
I didn't know how to sell. I wound up selling all right. Even to this day I don't consider it anything that I do or anything that I champion doing. I admire it in others.

(Did Ileana close the deals)
Ileana is a very good sales person. She's very tough. A very tough negotiator.

(Give us an example)
Not necessarily in terms of sales, but Ileana was the only person I know on the eve of a show to cancel it. And when I say eve of the show, it's opening tomorrow morning at 10:00 am and you're having drinks with the artist the night before, and the show gets cancelled because something doesn't work out. Until that gets resolved and everybody's on tenderhooks, and then it's resolved and everybody goes home. A little battered, but the show opens. So that kind of play, which I don't anybody else who's capable of pulling, that absolutely eleventh hour kind of the rug gets pulled. She does it.

Writers

Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

(This idea of showing very difficult art, what was behind that? Was this the kind of art Ileana cared about herself? Or because she thought that it was important)
No. Ileana cared about it very much. Ileana was very thrilled with all the investigating research time, finding out what this new kind of land art, performance art, action art was going on in New York. And enjoyed it enormously, and enjoyed pondering it and deconstructing it and wondering what it was all about and how it fit into those things that she had either known previously, learned from other works of art that had preceeded it or readings, was fascinated by trying to have it fit in in the same way she was fascinated by it that moment a lot of German cinema was happening that she was very interested in. Of Fassbinder and Schlindorf and a lot of other people who were beginning to show at that time. Strowd. It was a whole moment of great excitement for her. She had just come through being from thrilled with the Arte Povera and was toying with introducing it in a heavier way than had been done in New York, but with people like Acconci and Graham and Gilbert & George and Bochner, and this whole moment she felt very connected and very inspired and very turned on to present it and to be the one to present it.

(And to be the sort of the evangelist for this sort of art here)
Um, I would take away the religious aspect of the evangelical and I would substitute a little bit more the patron of it. The amateur, the one who loved it and wanted to share it. She has a much humbler sense, it's a dichotomy. On one hand, she's very imperious and very grand and has that grandeur about her -- from her heritage and all her mien and her way of thinking, but at the same time, she wanted to very humbly be the handmaiden of the art and get it out there and let you make the decision. And if you make the wrong decision, then she'll slap you. But by and large, it's about making that presentation, shoving the tray towards you.

(Where does that leave her as time goes on. What keeps doing that for her)
She's always been fascinated by that which she found challenging, and those things that redefine for her what she had thought beautiful was. And she talks about the first time that she was able to acquire Mondrian or the first time that she had bought that little Schwitters that she has, or being rather bored with all the -- I think she wasn't as interested in the New York school, although lived through. That was more Leo's gig. But completely woke up, like a princess, a sleeping beauty being kissed by a prince, with Rauschenberg. And absolutely had this connection and charge and a reason for looking at art and being turned on in that classical aspect. And that led to Johns and Twombly. So that kind of spark of -- everything else was comme il faut, but then there are these moments in which there's something that she just doesn't understand and she must get to know it, and must be amazed by it and be surrounded by that. Because the amazement of it is such a turn-on.

(What else did that for her as you go on)

Writers

Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Gilbert & George did, and Acconci did, and I think Bochner did. Wegmen, I think was more about the spirit and it was more about being a bad boy and being naughty and being kind of just charming and clever. And maybe Baldesarri, also, in that kind of way. I don't feel that she felt the charge. And I think a lot of it is telling as to who she collects for herself. Because a lot of the people only crept into the collection later when they became more important and she filled out the holding.

(Kiefer)
Kiefer was very important. And Baselitz, also. They were very important. that moment, she connected that with Morris. Kiefer and Baselitz and Morris and a great disgruntled, a great unrest. But that's a jump forward of almost ten years. That's 1979, 1980.

(What happens between then. Is there anybody who comes in and charges her up)
Jim Dine leaves mid 70s. She had devoted herself greatly to him, and to her credit, she got him to start painting again when he was in London in the second half of the 60s and found great affinity and connection with him, and lost that affinity when the work for her became very academic. When he started making the pastel and charcoal portraits. I think whatever misgivings she had about the previous works, she was able to like, but that particular body of work troubled her, and the bond, that fabric that kept their relationship healthy, just eroded. So it was over the work. I think that it is work driven, Ileana's choices to show or not to show. It's not personality driven, because I think she understands that artists tend to be very difficult personalities and I think she concedes that she herself is a difficult personality, but then the two of them cancel themselves out and it's going to be the work that's going to wind up judged. And who shows it, how it's shown, who made it, who talked about it.

She was very very excited about Acconci. She was impressed and titilated.
(What happened there)
He was very difficult and he left the gallery. He became very very difficult. He became very difficult because he had certain psychological barriers with being an official artist, being on time, being responsible, finding out that was endemic to being a bourgeois or to selling out or to those kind of notions of professional propriety. He didn't show up for his shows (laugh), and his shows starred him live. (laugh) So how can I put it? There was a point there where -- he was talked about, not in a way that he is now, that certainly in the art schools. And these kids, they would have traveled from the University of Buffalo or Virginia, and you know the morning of a show of his, they were there, lining up. Right? They had traveled all night. They were going to see Vito Acconci. And he was nowhere. He wasn't answering the phone. And I would telegraph him, I would say, Vito, you know, we've been working for the past week on the show and it opened an hour ago without you. (laugh) When I think of all that we could have went through and Ileana's attitude was, she'd say, "Well," the

Writers

Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

voice all very wisty and high and she's pulling apart a handkerchief, "we're an experimental gallery." It was really extraordinary. I literally went into the back and took those large cardboard things that Vito made and with little nails hung them so I could put them in the gallery. And I'd say, "Maybe next week." And also he and Ileana -- because Ileana likes to play with people. You know this. (laugh) And that got him crazy -- er. (laugh) But we opened like that. We opened in 71 with Gilbert & George and Bochner and Calzalori and Acconci and Dan Graham and Dennis Oppenheim and Wegman and Baldesarri, and eventually showed Mario Merz, who we had shown uptown two years before. Kounelis and Jim Dine. So at the same time in the same building, Leo was showing people like Hanna Darboven and Larry Wiener and Robert Barry and Douglas Huebler. And John Weber was showing Sol Lewitt and Ryman and Mangold. So it was very much of an exciting building, but even within that, within those three floors, Ileana was showing the most difficult. The work that you really questioned, what do I have here to buy?

(Did you have the sense that she was conferring with Leo. Was there a back and forth going on)
Yes. She was always conferring with Leo. A little less in those days than later, because Toinky was still alive. So that relationship was more recent. It was like she conferred with Leo very professionally and knew what he was about to show, and knew which art that he had seen let's say at an art fair or an exhibtion out of town he was interested in. And he knew which ones she was interested in, but it wasn't as daily conferencing that happened in the 80s.

(Do you think that there were discussions about who should take on whom)
Oh sure. Yes, she would say something like that's right. And he or she are perfect for you, and if you like it, go with it. And yes, you need it, it's perfect for you. And he would say, oh, yes, that would be perfect for you. And she would say, oh, that's terrible. I think that work is just horrible. I hate it. And he said, I still like it. So do what you want. In other words, they would have that very kind of professional give and take in a very friendly way.
But she championed for example even in Leo's gallery, she was the one who championed Rauschenberg and Morris and wound up showing Rauschenberg and Morris, even though they were in Leo's stable and not officially in her stable, and she was the one who was showing them and promoting the work. And urging them to work and getting the best work out of them.

(She was also buying Rauschenberg for her own collection)
Yes, although the buying of Rauschenberg really was earlier. It was a 50s and early 60s buying. Extraordinary pieces. Amazing pieces. She wouldn't buy with any vigor, Rauschenberg, after that. Maybe a single piece.

(She was acquiring things in all of the years you worked for her)

Writers

Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Yes.

(She was buying things from the shows)
She was buying things from the shows. In some cases, she had prepaid for the works of our new show through stipend, to be fabricated as well as to be underwritten, and then at the end of the show if they did not sell, then it was in her collection. So there was some buying like that by default, and there was some collecting in which she would go and she would see something and say that's very wonderful, I must have it. And buy it.

I left the gallery in 1977.
(She hadn't taken on the Germans yet)

No. She hadn't.
(Before we get off the business of her collecting, the issue of her collection is still somewhat mysterious)
And will remain that way, I'm sure.

(I keep hearing that this is one of the great collections of post 1960s art, and that we've only seen a part of it in exhibitions)
I think there must be some very good things in it. But it would be more in depth with things like Bochner and Levay, which are not very saleable, but then again are very important to own. I don't think that the holding of the Germans is significant any longer. I don't think she has much Kiefer. One or two paintings of Kiefer.

(We heard she bought out a whole show of Kiefer)
In the early 80s? Yes. She bought 15, 18 paintings and then sold them. I bought -- my Kiefer is from that group. And I know where others are. She would constantly be buying from him and then selling.

(What do you make of this situation where she doesn't have to live with the art that she collects)
Oh, no. That's very Ileana. It's like when Andy made her portrait -- Andy made the portrait of his dealers on spec, and he then presented them with the paintings, two an four panels. and after they oohed and ahhed and either liked it. Leo didn't like his. Toinky didn't like his eye shadow, so Leo's had to be remade. And then a few months later, Fred kind of intimated and presented a bill. And so Ileana was very taken aback by it, and then there was this big back and forth about well, she was going to return it. And I remember when she said, it doesn't matter who has them, I'm on them. (laugh)

(Did she buy it)
She bought them. But that notion, and I bring it up, is it doesn't matter who has them. I'm on them. So it actually doesn't matter to look at the art. She just knows that she has it. So that aspect, you would even mention the name of it, and she'd say, oh, yes, it's beautiful, isn't it beautiful. And it doesn't have to be installed. It could be a rather complicated piece. But she has it in there. Adn the ownership of it is very special. And

Writers

Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

empowering. Ennobling.
Ileana knows where every little thing is. And then there are some things that she forgets that she does have. Little things that she doesn't want to confess that she's misplaced it, so it's better to forget it. But when it comes up and you show it to her, she's so thrilled. There was this little Johns drawing of a flag on an orange ground on an envelope that was I think it was sent to Merce from John Cage. So the John Cage return address to Merce, and on the back of it is the Johns. And it was among papers, and we were cleaning out a closet, and I said, look at this. And it was like, Oh, you found it. She never wanted to confess that it was officially misplaced, because if she did, then it would upset her. But they are ephemera. I mean great ephemera. But a lot of the other things -- she's rather special in that way. She'll remember an installation that she had had when she was one of her apartments, I think it was when she just separated from Leo, she had the Flag on orange ground and a little Schwitters. And she talks about that installation as giving her great pleasure. Now, do you know, Michael is a lot of the force behind Ileana's permitting this way of thinking because Michael is a very conceptual person. There is a lot that he cloaks in humor and in irony, saying things like paintings are very good for covering up the cracks in the wall. And in fact there was a Rauschenberg combine we kept on moving as the crack on the wall got more pronounced -- in her apartment. (laugh) And it was very strange because you would go to this apartment at that time, and I visited the apartment through most of the first half of the 80s, and it hadn't changed. Although I don't know how her apartment is now. 24 Fifth Avenue. The old Fifth Avenue Hotel. And the walls weren't painted and nothing was very done, nothing was finished, and the Lichtensteins were crooked, and the Rauschenberg was crooked and things were shoved here and not lit, and it looked all very not cared after. Which was a further aspect of this, that the art is somewhere else. I mean, these are just the objects, but they're not the art. It was very lofty thinking.

(And you think that came from Michael)
I think a lot of it came from Michael.

(Ileana in a way became a conceptualist herself)
Yes. and Michael promoted that. Michael helped fashion the Ileana that we know. Because given her drothers I think she would find more solid means of expression herself. He kept pushing her to be more and more outrageous.

(Why did you leave the gallery)
(His father's business had gone public, he wanted Ealan to run the divisions he had done). "And I felt that I had come to the end of a certain level of work. I didn't see a growth, I saw a coasting at the gallery. And Ileana as not an easy person to work for. She likes to play with people, she plays with your sense of self, your sense of ego, your sense of worth. She took that psychology course at Columbia, and got to think of herself as a string-puller -- and she is. She does that to everyone...[who's part of her inner

Writers

Addenda

FOR STUDY PURPOSES ONLY. NOT FOR REPRODUCTION.

The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

circle]. After a while I just couldn't take it. Antonio changed after I left -- before,he had been more easily manipulated, but after he became empowered to speak up. He began to speak rather candidly, at times even rather cruelly to her. It might have been a certain kind of growth." He always felt the closeness between Ileana and Antonio was a-sexual.

(Ileana and Michael)
They were always very dependent on each other. He would behave completely independent of her, but he needed her to be the creator of his world, to mae his life feasible. And she permitted him to exist as a student, a collector of the world's facts and information. He then gave her the extra push to excell, and to be difficult and outrageous. He created her, in the sense that Leo represented all the bourgeois that she really didn't like. She was that, but she ran away from it. And then she came to New York and was very very bored. I knew her when she was weaning herself... she was on mostly very heavy-duty vitamins then, but she had played out the whole pill business, with the big liver illness in the late fifties, and it was exacerbated by -- you know all that about Leo's brother, George Kramer, who prescribed experimental pills for Ileana that were mood elevators, and they were OK, but then she found out that they had terrible side effects, and she got all the side effects, which was hepatitis.

(Ileana and Nina)
I think their relationship was a very strained one, a very distant one. And also with the grandchildren, altho that was much warmer when they grew up.

(Sonnabend Gallery today)
Many artists have left, and new artists have not been taken on. So it hasn't renewed itself. In the late 80s she was very excited by Koons and Halley and Steinbach. Koons was the one that inspired her the most. That played itself out, and Koons and Halley left her. I don't of know anything that happened after that, after about 1991. Everything is much more short-lived, much less cared-after...

They are opening a new gallery, and that should mean new versus what she wasI think it's fascinating.

(About artists not getting paid)
Her book-keeping was very inventive. She had this on-going sense of what she was debiting versus what she was crediting, and the artists of course was thinking they bring the art work in and they want their money. But with the very bizarre back and forth -- several people were very upset. It wasn't great. Jan Groover, the photographer, she and her husband had an opportunity to buy the loft they were living in, and she couldn't get the assurance from Ileana as to how much money she could count on. So she gave up the loft, and only found out a year later that she had much more money coming to her. There was a lot of that cavalier aspect -- let the artists do what they do well and I will do what I do well, and they'll get paid and be very happy at that moment.

Writers

Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

(His falling out with Ileana)
Several. I left the gallery and that was a hard moment, which I tried to mollify by staying on for another six months to train someone else. We patched up there, and became very close afterward. At my father's company I acquired a normal salary, and I was able to acquire some art -- I become a collector of Ileana's. We would meet at European exhibitions, and spend time together. That was when I introduced her to opera. That was a bond, getting very much involved with opera and music and records. This was around 78, 79, 80. Then, after working in my father's company for ten years, my division was sold in a leveraged buyout, and I married, and my wife and I thought rather than continue in a world in which I no longer fit...I decided to go back into the art business. I became involved with Elizabeth Kouri, who was running International With Monument with Meyer Vaisman. Meyer wanted to get out...so we arranged that I would buy his position. While Meyer and I were negotiating on that aspect, he was also negotiating with Ileana to take the stars of International and bring them to her gallery. International was the hot gallery, but Meyer was pulling all the money-making people out of the gallery and giving them to Ileana. She was very angry at me, because I did not ask her if I should open a gallery. I had not done the obeisance. So that strained our relationship...When I said well, Ileana, can't be share these artists, she said no, there was nothing to share. We were rather cool from 1987 on. But then things warmed up a little bit. But then in 1991, Peter Halley approached me. We had been very good friends, I had bought his work, he was one of the International artists and he had made one more show with International because he felt so badly...he was being very correct. He approached me saying it wasn't working out, it was really Jeff Koons who was on her mind...By then Larry Gagosian had the SoHo space, and I was already there [Oct 1991], so he decided not to do the show with Ileana and a half year later we got the show and we got a court order. He was sued and Larry was sued -- I was never sued...It was a frivolous case, and it was thrown out. It was settled wonderfully, with the threat of a deposition. Can you imagine Ileana being deposed? Right after that, with the Halley business, I was dead...Pincus-Witten is also dead because he was with Gagosian.

(Is Ileana competitive?)
No. She's vindictive. She's not competitive professionally, she's competitive emotionally.

(Opera)
She's very quick to belittle anything sentimental. So, she likes Mozart if it's conducted in a certain way -- very objective. She likes it very dry. She likes the lofty emotions of Wotan in Valhalla, or great Verdi heroines and heroes who have larger-than-life emotions that are not maudlin. She has a hard time with Puccini. Her favorite thing was the Ring cycle.

(Her eye)
Her eye is extraordinary. Leo was able to put an entrepreneurial

Writers

Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

package together that transcended new art for a larger audience. But I think it was Ileana who would be thrilled by the art, who would be buying the art, who would be promoting the artists in ways that would be beneficial to them. I think that a lot of the attention that went to Leo in the fabled years should go to Ileana, but she would deny it. But not it's much too late for all that.

(Her main contribution)
It was the only major gallery that presented the most challenging and difficult and impossible work. I think she's greatly respected.

(Influence of Rauschenberg)
Bob took Ileana from painting into the turmoil and the drama of making art. Bob was one of the great forces. She was friendly with Pollock, she was friendly with de Kooning because they were in the John Graham group. And yet I think it was Bob, and his involvement with John Cage and Merce and all those possibilities, that that was the drama.

(What he learned from Ileana)
It formed my whole way of looking at art. It formed my way of prioritizing, because I couldn't care less about making a sale. But caring for the art, and grappling with it, and getting it in front of the public...Larry cares only about sales, and he's wonderful about that.

(Ileana and women)
She's very accepting of women. It gives her something to bitch about after they've left. She thought of women as consorts -- or as a woman artist who was jealous she wasn't a man.

Antonio and Nina have always said that Ileana is a witch.

Writers

Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Writers

Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Terry Winters - 11/21/98

Ileana came to him in 1981 and offered to give him a show, after seeing several drawings in a group show. Never took a stipend, never had any problems getting paid. Didn't want to create a dependency. His first show there was Nov. 1982. She'd just started showing the Germans, Kiefer etc.

"What I liked most was the variety of people she showed, the range of interests she had..." He was one of the few painters.

Visited her apt in Paris - "very spartan." Records and books.

Why he left - "Ileana had less and less to do with the gallery...It was difficult for me to relate to [Antonio]." This was two years ago. "I just told them I couldn't deal with this any more. There were no hard feelings on my side. I just couldn't communicate with them, about things that had to be done. It didn't seem to be a priority." Antonio is brilliant, but no energy directed to what he needed. Everybody felt this.

Ileana to a well-known collector who was equivocating over a picture at Terry's first show: "Well, you don't have to buy it."

Any connecting thread in the work she shows? The idea is what counts, and the work "has to have a certain conceptual necessity." But Ileana connects with it at a visceral level, loves the work.

Ileana made all the decisions. "I don't think anything gets by Ileana. Someone once said there are only two people in the art world that you had to be careful of every word you used -- Jasper and Ileana. She's very sphinx-like. It was really a good place for me to be while my work was developing..."

"She can be very deliberately cruel."

Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III. B. 53

Addenda

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Jeanne-Claude Christo 12/26/97

Story about Valley Curtain offering -- $10K for subscribers, who then get 40% discount for works out of the studio. Ileana subscribed, but never came to the studio to pick out work. A year and a half later, when the Christos were broke after the event, Jeanne-Claude called and invited her to come in. Ileana said she had changed her mind, wanted her $10K back. J-C quickly raised the money and sent her a check.

Ileana told them that when she and Leo were first married, they used to buy cheap modern chairs in dept stores, put them in the car, and drive out into the countryside, exchanging them for old peasant pieces.

Ileana had an affair with someone in the south of France, before the war. Her father, furious, locked her in the tower. Leo used to sneak candy and desserts to her.

She refused to sell to at least one collector, saying "It's not for you." To a Belgian collector who asked if she knew who he was, she said, "Yes, I do, and the price will be a little higher." She played games with collectors, as well as with artists.

When the Christos first came to NY, Ileana gave them detailed advice on whom to invite, who was sleeping with whom. e/g/, Don't invite Leo Steinberg with Lawrence Alloway.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

ATILLIO CODOGNATO

She's Vampira. She loves blood.

"She's such a pretty girl..."

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

GEORGE CRAME

(Did Ileana have hepatitis)
I'll tell you what it was. It was a very very tragic situation. She was taking a drug that was used for -- it's an antidepressant. At the time she started the treatment, it was not known that the drug might cause hepatitis. But unfortunately she developed the disease, this hepatitis and she was very seriously ill for a couple of weeks. And then she recovered slowly.
But she did make a good recovery, fortunately. But she was very very sick then.

(It was hepatitis)
Well, actually, it was a degeneration of the liver. Because the complication of that particular treatment.

(Did Ileana influence Leo's choice of artists for the gallery)
I have no idea. I cannot answer it.

(The marriage. How did you feel Ileana dealt with Leo's girl friends)
Well, I can tell you something about the current wife of Leo. Of course, she's not very much in love with her. And with the other girl friends, I was not aware of anything going on then. Frankly. ...I was just not informed of anything. I mean, I know that the year before the war, I was in Paris and for a while, Leo and Ileana lived together in a home, and then they separated. That was in 1938. They separated and Leo and myself lived together in Paris for a few months. I don't know where Ileana lived. I think Ileana lived with her mother. But anyway, they were separated during that year.

(How did Leo deal with that)
It was hard on him. No question about it. And Leo and I shared an apartment for a few months the year before the war. Then I came to the United States. And then Leo of course continued to stay in the same place. But anyway, after they separated, Leo and I lived together in rue de l'Université. Leo, he was very much interested in the gallery that he had just opened. And most of his effort and most of his emotions were involved in this gallery. I don't think he did see Ileana very often during that period. And I didn't see her very often either. Probably she was not in Paris at that time. I'm talking about the last few months before the war.

(Do you know why they separated)
They never told me about it, frankly. But it was some sort of incompatibility, I guess, in general.

I was a guest a few times in East Hampton and they seemed to get along very well. At that time.

There is a mutual dependence that persisted after the many separations that they had. Frankly I have no explanation for it. ...Off the record, I don't think it's a very healthy situation.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

In a way, it has its positive features too. Because they developed their galleries together, so it was a cooperative sort of effort. And that brought them together again. And even now, after all, they have the galleries in the same building. So all those things are not a coincidence.
Ileana and I have been good friends ever since she married Leo. And there was a period when I used to see her quite often in NY, when she was already separated from Leo. Then of course I used to see her quite often after she became ill with hepatitis. We didn't talk too much about it. Now that I think of it, we just kind of accept the situation as it was.
She's certainly a very interesting person.
(Were you her doctor)
No, except that I had a lot to do with the discovery of antidepressant medication at that time. And since that particular drug marsilid was so successful before they found the drug toxic, I prescribed it to her. And it had wonderful effects. Actually, I remember that she was seeing a psychiatrist for psychotherapy at that time, and I was wondering myself how he would take it. And a few days after she started the treatment, I got a call from him. And I thought that he would be angry because I interfered with the treatment. But actually, he told me just the opposite, that she never looked so good and she was so happy with treatment as when she started drug therapy. And unfortunately she was one of the few people -- not too many -- who developed this liver disease. Marsalid was taken off the market very shortly after they discovered the side effects. Actually, they discovered the side effects the same day that Ileana came down with the condition.

Once it occured to me that we talked very little about Leo. I used to see her quite often after they separated. Particularly when she was in NY. We just didn't talk about Leo very much.

I'm a psychiatrist and my specialty was the study of drugs used for psychiatric conditions. It was just the beginning at that time.

(Do you have the same last name as Leo)
No. I changed my name. Leo took his mother's name. And I changed my father's name to Crame.

(Do you remember the first time you met Ileana)
I remember quite well. She and her parents came to visit my family, who was living in Budapest at that time. Does that sound strange to you, or what? You probably heard about it. No? Well, anyway, Leo was engaged to Ileana and he was in Bucharest, where also Ileana lived, but my parents lived in Budapest, but I continued my studies in Italy. But I went to visit my parents in the summer. And one particular summer, Ileana's parents and Ileana came to become acquainted with our side of the family, before they married. My family was very nervous about the whole thing. And they went out of their way to entertain them, and this created a certain amount of -- oh, I would say, some comic sort of embarassment. But anyway, Ileana seemed to be quite at ease. And much more so than my parents were with the rest of the family. Leo

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

and Ileana seemed to be very much in love. I think Ileana was not quite 18.
(Was she beautiful)
Well, I wouldn't say she was beautiful. But very attractive.

(How did you feel about the occasion. Did it seem strange that the family came to stay)
It didn't seem to me strange, but we had the feeling that the whole family was a little bit -- a little strange or belonged to somewhat different world. Sort of. I mean, my family was well off, but not couldn't be compared with the Shapiro family. It was a complicated -- it was a very tragic comic situation. There was nothing particularly unpleasant that happened but I imagine that two different families with different backgrounds and different -- the language was mostly German, but really with different aspirations would have that type of problems. Nothing unusual did happen, really.
(How did the families get along)
Well, they didn't have much to do. My father got along very well with Ileana's mother, but her father was a rather difficult person. I remember him very well. And actually our family was a little bit intimidated by Ileana's father.

(In what way was he intimidating)
Because he obviously was a much more successful businessman than my father was, although my father did all right too. But at that time, my father had retired and whereas Mr. Shapiro was still quite active.

(Do you think Leo felt this too)
Oh, yuh. We had a chance to talk about the whole situation and I had a chance to discuss it a year or so after they married, and they said that our family did not make a very good impression on the Shapiro family. Leo said that. And particularly my mother. My mother was not well at that time. And she felt very inhibited. My father got along much better.

(Did her sister come too)
No.

As far as I know, Leo had informed my father that he was about to get married to Ileana, so he went down to Bucharest to meet them first. And then, they came over to Budapest.

(How long did they stay)
A couple of days.
(They slept at your house)
No no no no. They slept in one of the big hotels. Our apartment was not big enough, anyway, to accommodate three people. And then we had to entertain them for those three days. And my parents were very much excited. Afterwards, they found out that all this effort to entertain was a little bit out of place, and really unnecessary. That was more than 60 years ago.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

I don't think she ever spent that much money on clothing.

(About their relationship)
An unusual one. That's the best I can say. To go way back to when they first were engaged, they seemed to be very much in love with each other. Then I saw Leo and Ileana a few times. I remember once I went to see them in San Moritz in Switzerland in 1935 or 1936. I used to see them once a year at least. And one year I went down to see them in Bucharest, so I used to see them once a year. And we went along very well. And then of course in Paris I saw them much more often and then in NY, I used to see Ileana quite often at a certain period. And then of course she went to Paris, I lost sight of her. And of course every time I go to NY now, which is about once a year, I spend some time with her.

It's difficult for me to understand this type of relationship, but it was there.
(Why)
Because, mostly if people they are separated or divorced, they go their own way. Usually, usually.
(But they never did)
No. Apparently not. And when Leo remarried the second time, this created problems. But I can not tell you too much about it, because I just don't know what was going on.

The effect of the illness, unfortunately, I was the one who was responsible for it. That was a very very unfortunate thing. And at that time, we did not know that.

(Did you know why she was depressed)
I'm sure that it might have had something to do with the situation with Leo which was a very unhappy one, but certainly she was depressed at that time.
(What year) In 57, I'm pretty sure. It's a long story because this particular drug I did contribute to a number of studies of the drug and the drug seemed to be one of those miracle drugs that really worked very very well. Much better than any of the drugs that we have now...the blood test that I took was normal and then suddenly she developed this condition. But this particular side effect became known all of a sudden. The newspaper were full of it that day I remember. And they had to take the drug off the market. But Ileana had been already on the drug for about two weeks. But the effects were so dramatic that nobody believed that she had taken the drug only for such a short time.
(That must have been a big sadness for you)
Oh, it was terrible. It was the worst day I've had in my life. I had several patients on that drug at that time, but she was the only one who developed the side effect...She was really very very sick. I went to see her at the hospital every day. She was at the Mt. Sinai Hospital for a couple of weeks.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

JUDITH GOLDMAN

Ileana subscribes to the Daily News at home...reads all the tabloids. Likes crime and murder stories.

She's like Jasper's Decoy, full of doors that open and shut. She's as elusive as Jasper.

Talk to Si about how he negotiated over the two Johns.

She's a seductress. How she manipulates you.

She's going to check on the Point of Pines story.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Ben Heller - 11/30/98

"When I bought One from Jackson, he gave me -- and he made it very clear that this is not a reduction in price, this is a separate gift because of the commitment of buying One -- the black enamel in question. Then at another show, along came the four-foot-by-eight-foot panel that finally ended up at Pulitzer, green and silver and yellow and so on." (It hung in his dining room on Riverside Drive. The panel has no name.) "At any event, when that was on offer at Sidney's, nobody bought it. So I finally called up Leo, and said Leo, this is ridiculous. I guess Leo had just become a dealer. I said why don't we go fifty-fifty, you hang it six months of the year and I'll hang it six months of the year. Which we did. This would have been I believe 1955 -- Jackson was still alive. To put up my half of the purchase price, I put up the black enamel painting, which is now in Kansas City.

When Blue Poles was shown at MOMA, Heller, at lunch with Porter Macrae, learned that it was for sale, at $32,000. He asked Macrae to ask Olsen if he could get it with two years to pay, and the answer came back yes. Heller and Leo sold the panel to Jacques Ohlman in Paris, for $17,000, which was half the Blue Poles price. So the black enamel was traded in exchange for their purchase of half of the panel, which ultimately got sold for half of Blue Poles.

He doesn't recall any other Pollock deals with Leo and Ileana. "Yes, I wanted to sell the panel to buy Blue Poles. And if she says that's pressure from me, I guess that's fair enough.But I didn't sell the black enamel to Kansas City. I didn't have anything to do with that."

Ileana's tale of five other Pollocks owned jointly? "Oh, come on. I will tell you exactly the 5 Pollocks that I owned. One was the first purchase. Echo was the second purchase. The panel was the third purchase. The black enamel came in with One. Then there was a small, 24" x 18" one, and then there was Blue Poles. I bought nothing else, and the only time I acted with anybody in relation to Pollock was on that panel." The panel was in the 1950-51 show, which had Lavendar Mist and other great works in it. He thinks Pulitzer gave it to the St.Louis Museum.

Blue Poles ranks after One and Echo in Heller's estimation. He doesn't think it's lost anything in Australia. One suffered from cracking when it was stored in a basement in Baltimore, and bellied out; it's been beautifully restored and looks great. Boston turned down Lavender Mist because of the conservation report. Barr turned down Autumn Rhythm , when Lee offered it to him after Pollock died, because he thought it was too expensive.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

MARGIT ROWELL

That is where I learned what a great dealer is.
What I heard was ...She had a Donald Judd exhibition in her gallery in Paris and she called up first Eddy deWilde, who was the head of the Stadtlich, and she said to him that she had this incredible exhibition and that there was a piece with his name on it. Actually, before she called Eddy deWilde, she told her secretary that when she had Eddy deWilde, that the secretary should already start dialing Schmallenbach. And then when she had Schmallenbach on the line, the secretary should dial Franz Meier, who was the head of Kunst Museum in Basel. And Schmallenbach was the head of the Nord Rheinwestfallen in Duesseldorf. And she said exactly the same spiel to each of them. She said there are one or two works in this exhibition which are museum quality and they have your name on them. So what I was not saying was that she was being dishonest, what I was saying is that she really knew how to work the room, right? Whereas most of the dealers that I knew in my experience in Paris just sat at a table behind the door and waited for somebody to push the door open, right?...With Judd's work in Paris, nobody was going to walk in the door and probably say I want that, that, and that anyway. It was a revelation to me. Because I had never heard anybody function that way. That must have been the summer of 69 in Paris...It was about convincing people of the worth of what she has.

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	III.B.53

Kirk Varnedoe - 12/4/98

Can't discuss any museum purchases, but says that they've been after Canyon for years, and that if they don't get something from Ileana it will not be for wont of trying. But can't be on the record saying that.

Don'y think anybody knows the extent of her collection. Knows what's been revealed in the exhibitions. When he was doing the Twombly exhibition, he found there were a lot more Twombly drawings there than anybody knew. "If you ever penetrate it and go in, you find there's a lot more there than you thought."

Her eye - "I feel strongly that much more than Leo did, she really concentrated on European things at a time when America was pretty blinkered by Pop and Minimalism. She keot a keen eye on things, especially in Italy. Given that she was the one who brought the Americans to Paris early on, and then in turn kept the faith of the Europeans here, it's been a fairly crucial bridge that her collection forms. She followed her own nose with things, especially with European art, and a ground level collection of a lot of arte povera stuff that people in the U.S. weren't giving the time of day to. Pick your date from 1964 untiul about 80, until the Beuys show at the Guggenheim in 79, and then when European painting came back, with Kiefer and Clemente and Cucchi and all that, and in between there was so much art of a different kind going on in Europe, that she really glommed onto."

"Unlike Leo, I think she's had a taste for more conceptually-oriented stuff, like Baldessari. A very different take and taste."

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The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY	Collection:	Series.Folder:
	Tomkins	II.B.53

Duchamp