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MOTHERWELL: The questions here fall into three categories, so that they overlap. One is a series of questions that I would call historical, of which Grippe, Ernst, Hare, Reinhardt, Barr and Gottlieb ask, and the larger number of questions are what I would call strictly esthetic questions about the process of creation and about the quality of creative works - of which the questions of Ferber, Hare, Baziotes, Lippold, Smith, Sterne, Hofmann, Biala, Lassow, Bourgeois aim to follow. Five people - Pousette-Dart, Lipton, Tomlin, Newman and Brooks - have asked what is almost an identical question; which is a question of community - what is it that binds us together (if there is something that binds us together) in different form. If you like, I can read the questions very rapidly, as it is strange that it seems to come down to these areas. The questions of history can be answered more easily. Would you like me to read all the questions, either anonymous or signed?

ALL: Read them signed.

MOTHERWELL: O.K. As I said, the questions seem to be of three orders - historical or esthetic or the question of the unity of this group - so that I will rapidly read the questions and then go over them more slowly and I

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will read the signatures so that you can remember the questions and who asked them.

Ernst: To what extent are the artists in this group making use of some of the methods and theories that were developed by the various earlier movements and groups of modern art? Are the artists in this group searching for a personal vocabulary, and if so, what is their method of familiarizing their public with this language? Is not a pure painting a self-portrait?

Reinhardt: What is your work (of art)? Do you consider the production of it a professional activity? Do you belong to Artists Equity? Why or why not?

MOTHERWELL: Reinhardt's question is also a historical question, but it is really three questions.

Gottlieb: Is there any difference in direction between advanced American and French painting or sculpture? If there is a difference, what is its nature, and what does it mean?

MOTHERWELL: Here's a question sort of jointly by Baziotes and Hare which exists here in two forms:

Baziotes: What do you feel is more important in the art movement today - intuition or reason?

Hare: Do you work from a previously formed conception, or does your work become its own inspiration as it progresses? What do you feel about the unavoidable changes which are forced upon a work during its birth?

Which do you feel is of fundamental value to you-- the success with which you are able to say it, or the importance to you of what you have to say?

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Do you paint your subject, or is painting your subject? (subject in the sense of content, not in the sense of realism versus abstraction)

Of what value do you feel your work is to society? If any, what changes would you wish it to effect, and why?

MOTHERWELL: These questions are not especially concerned with the internal character of the work of art, and they are not concerned with the internal unity of this group with relation to social situations.

Barr: What is the most acceptable name for our direction or movement? (it has been called abstract-expressionist, abstract-symbolist, intra-subjectivist, etc.)

MOTHERWELL: I will jump to the third category which asks if there is any unity here.

Lipton: Is there anything that binds this group together historically?

Pousette-Dart: Can we find some binding factor or practical common denominator between us - a common purpose upon which we all can work as well as talk - perhaps each to paint or sculp upon an agreed subject, theme, idea or problem and exhibit these works together (myself preferring neither signature nor titles).

Tomlin: Assuming that painters in this group hold similar views in relation to the picture plane, are there other plastic convictions held in common sufficient to establish a body of objective criteria?

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Does painting which excludes automatic technical processes, but which involves a concern with the subconscious, necessarily fall into the classification of subjective?

Newman: What ties us together as a community of artists?

Brooks: What are the qualities, or is the quality, in their work that establishes a community of the artists, of which this round-table is a section?

Rosenborg: What can we do about making a group such as this more permanent? In coming together on an artistic and social basis? I would like to know what others think?

MOTHERWELL: Now we come to the group of questions that seem to me to tend to be strictly esthetic:

Smith: Is the painting concept leading sculpture or have they separated?

Lassow: Conceding that an all-embracing definition or explanation of art has not yet been generally accepted by artists, it would be of great interest and enlightening both to the public and fellow artists alike if each member of this round-table answers in his own way the question: "What is art?"

Biala: Like many of us, I was raised on the notion of "painterliness" - that what is most moving in painting is just its painterly quality. But when I think of the art that I love - for example, the art of Spain, with its passion and noblesse - I wonder if painterliness is not meant to serve something beyond itself, and it is then that I question a great deal in modern art. Consequently, is modern painting impoverishing itself, and is this inevitable?

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Hofmann: What do you think quality is?

Sterne: Is art a problem of how or what?

Lippold: Is it possible to make a work while under the influence of an immediate experience - i.e. fear, disgust, love, etc.?

Baziotes: (see page 2)

Ferber: Can purity in the arts be compared to the medieval notion of discussing how many angels can stand on the head of a pin. A notion of refined disembodied essence which is no longer consonant with modern ideas which embrace the whole man and his human engagements.

Bourgeois: The Genesis of a Work of Art: or in what circumstance is a work of art born:

1. Definition of the term "genesis" - process of creation. Is it the process of being born or the process of giving birth?
2. What causes the work of art to be born? What is the primary impulse? What makes the artist work? Is it to escape from depression (filling of a void)? Is it to record confidence or pleasure? Is it to understand and solve a formal problem and reorder the world?
3. What conditions the birth and growth of the work of art?
 - a) Before the act of creation:
 - Sociological aspect (surroundings and milieu).
 - Taine's theory of the milieu.
 - Personal aspect.
 - b) During the process of creation:
 - Experiences undergone while the work is being done.
 - Resistance of the medium.
 - Properties of the medium.

Hare: (see page 2)

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MOTHERWELL: I would suggest, to expedite matters, that we might vote if necessary on what category of these three groups we would wish to begin. Maybe most people are involved in the esthetic question and would give that preference. Would it seem agreeable to vote upon?

REINHARDT: There are really two categories - historical and community are really the same thing. One is in practise the social problem and would take less time than the esthetic question.

MOTHERWELL: From this point of view we are really giving two categories to talk about the actual nature of our creative process and answer certain questions about our relations with each other and with the outside world. And the question is if you would like to talk about both, and which first. The question would be would you prefer to talk about the historical, social, esthetic relations we have first and the creative process second? All those in favor of the social, esthetic, historical first raise their hands. (seven hands raised). It would seem to be clearly in a minority. All those in favor of talking about the process of creation first raise their hands. (fourteen hands raised). Then I would propose something else: would you be in favor (as I suppose we still will be talking at 6:00 o'clock) of talking about the process

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of creation, and devote the last hour to the minority question? All in favor of that raise their hands.

LIPFOLD: I would suggest that we take a vote at 6:00.

MOTHERWELL: I would say that the questions that are dealing with the creative process tend to revolve around the question of how a work originates; what it is really referring to and in that sense what its actual content is and how clearly it is known at the inception. And the other series dealing with creative process tend to revolve around the question of quality - what quality is. However, it also involves some social problems - why we are together. Select the questions that have to do with origin.

FERBER: I noticed in the last two sessions questions were lost because when a question was proposed and the second man spoke about it, a third went off on a tangent and the moderator made no attempt to limit the line of discussion, and I would suggest that at the point where the discussion starts to go off the moderator could ask whether the group wants to continue on or change the subject.

MOTHERWELL: It is possible for all of you to bring pressure also without it being a personal attack and say, "Let's move on to something else. I feel impatient with this discourse." Lewis said, "This is becoming unreal,"

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and the moment he said it, it became real. It seemed to me quite clear the first day that there were two differences which over-lap. One is a notion that a work in its beginning has its conclusion. In a sense, the conclusion follows the original line of thought and the work is to cut out anything that is irrelevant to that line of thought; and the other notion is a notion of improvising - that one begins like a blind swimmer and what one finds enroute often alters the original intent. The people who work like that are involved in the problem of impression. That's enough to annoy somebody.

FERBER: I wasn't making any point about inspiration.

MOTHERWELL: I think the first portion to outline also throws much stronger emphasis on the fact that a single work is a single complete work, and is really an image of a whole continent (?). These distinctions over-lap and have to be exaggerated for the purposes of analysis. One notion does not totally exclude the other.

LIPPOLD: I am glad that Motherwell suggested that it's a matter of emphasis rather than conclusion. I did not exclude the question of improvisation or the possibility of each work contributing to the general development of an artist's improvability.

POUSETTE-DART: Would you say a work was an experience

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of discovery -- that you are turning up new stones?

MOTHERWELL: Hedde said that this portion involves an a priori notion of what a work is. You can't carry a work through to the end unless you know what is beautiful.

POUSETTE-DART: You have to know if you are . . .

LIPPOLD: (interrupts Pousette-Dart) We have moved forward only when a specific problem presented itself and then we have groped around for a conclusion. I attempted to explain all things concerned with a problem and we have come to it after three days of fumbling around. I attempted to explain that my method seems to be to have a problem with which to begin and then proceed with it. I would like to take some questions which have been suggested which have to do with the genesis of a work.

FERBER: What about this problem of how a piece is begun?

LIPPOLD: I think Miss Sterne's question has to do with origin. I would say that in terms of origin is it a question of wanting to say a specific thing, or how one says it; and where do the two meet? Do we begin with the necessity to convey a message, or do we become intrigued with the way in which it is to be said?

FERBER: Could the process which I suggested as one process

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be compared to the way in which one handles a kaleidoscope? One's relationship to the world in which we live might be a kind of base from which one starts. If you turn the kaleidoscope you stop at an image which takes form in a satisfactory way; and the painting becomes the realization of that image which is only a moment in the whole process and you turn the kaleidoscope and make another image. Since one's attitude changes slowly as we get older, you have the given elements in the kaleidoscope from which we are made.

MOTHERWELL: Are the elements in the kaleidoscope essentially "hownesses" or "whatnesses", or can you explain them?

STERNE: I think that for the artist himself the problem is not beauty ever. It is one of accuracy, validity and life.

BARR: Would you say preoccupation with the idea of beauty is a bad thing?

STERNE: No, but it doesn't lead anywhere because beauty is a matter of conception. If you have a definite --- thing of ---- you want the round shape which is self-contained. You are what you are.

NEWMAN: A concern with beauty is a concern with what is known.

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POUSETTE-DART: Beauty is unattainable.

NEWMAN: The artist's intention is what makes a specific thing uniform.

POUSETTE-DART: I have the feeling that in the art world beauty has become a discredited word. I have heard people say you can't use the word "God". When a word becomes trite (couldn't get balance - spoke too softly)

MOTHERWELL: You are slipping off what Hedde is asserting about beauty.

STERNE: I am here to be true to myself - not to define anything; but to give life to what I have the urge to give life to. We live by the particular not by the general.

MOTHERWELL: It is not necessary for her to define beauty in terms of what she is seeing. Beauty is not a primary source of inspiration. She thinks that beauty is discovered enroute and, therefore, beauty cannot be an inspiration for her.

REINHARDT: Is there any one here who considers himself a producer of beautiful objects?

MOTHERWELL: That's a very astute way of putting it.

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GOTTLIEB: I agree with Hedde that we are always concerned with the particular not the general. Any general discussion of esthetics is a discussion of philosophy and any conclusion can apply to any work of art. What I am driving at is that I think what would be relevant to the question of the origin of the work of art is to have people tell us why they do what they do. Why does Brooks use swirling shapes? Why Newman a straight line? What is it that makes each person use those particular forms that they use? There must be some basic reason for that. It seems to me that would pin it down.

MOTHERWELL: Let me hold it a second. Now Gottlieb is proposing to switch the thing to something more concrete. Will you accept his proposed switch to the question of our specific forms?

SMITH: I agree with Miss Sterne. The question of beauty is not involved by the creator, but is a result of recognition and never the thing the creator is involved with.

LIPTON: I feel that Hedde's view seems more valid and sound. To me it's a concept of function that art stems from experience. It is a developmental process and the artist is involved in that in every possible way. The work of art is an end result. The other concern is an a priori kind of view which pre-supposes ideas. It's too

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limited and narrow; and as far as I am concerned, Hedde's view is larger and far more valid than that approach which was largely one concerned with historiography (?) - if art as a product has a fixed beginning. It can stem with an idea, instinct, with the senses, but all the factors become inter-related in the course of work with no fixed definite way. I see her concept of art in its relation to beauty; why she is concerned with beauty and leaves it out of the discussion. The world. With me, painting is a balance

BROOKS: I suggest that the artists begin with a discussion of their own particular points of view.

MOTHERWELL: I am extremely interested in something you do which is painting behind a canvass. Perhaps you could begin by talking as well as you can about why you have led to these forms and procedures.

BROOKS: It is very difficult to generalize. It is very difficult to describe how a series of paintings starts, but mine is improvisation to start with. My purpose is to get as much unknown on the canvas as I can. I can start digesting or changing. At least the first thing I try to do is to get a great many unfamiliar things on the surface. The working through on another side is an unfamiliar attack. There are shapes suggested that start

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improvising themselves, which I start painting. There is a terrible confusion and retreat into tradition. As I rely on cubism, my painting loses its newness to me. If I can manage to keep a balance with improvisation, my work can get more meaning when it reaches a certain fulness. Then I can quit working on it. Many of us work as though we have control of the world. We feel the world has become more complex and we must relinquish control of the world. With me, painting is a balance between what is imposed by usage and what is happening in my environment. Finally, a product is a certain relation between the painting and the world I feel around. My painting has a certain truth to it. It doesn't differ from the world I live in.

GOTTILIEB: I would like to know, isn't it possible that a straight line could develop on your canvas? I am inclined to think that it doesn't appear because it is excluded. Swirling shapes are not just the result of unconscious process. It is somewhat confused and deliberate. What is the basis of your work?

BROOKS: It is not as deliberate as you think. I have a preference for it, but that is as far as I can go.

MOTHERWELL: You have more chance with irregular lines than with straight lines.

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TOMLIN: Can he inter-change the words "authentic" and "improvise"?

BROOKS: No, I don't consider them synonymous.

TOMLIN: Do you feel that the authentic thing enters into your work at all?

BROOKS: I am not able to term exactly what the mixture is. It varies with me a great deal when I think of it.

TOMLIN: Do you consider that in Pollar's (?) work it was more authentic than in yours?

BROOKS: Yes, the swirls are due to a reaction against cubist shapes which I was attracted to for a while, and this is a way to get away from them.

DE KOONING: I consider all painting freer. I regret that we can't have that kind of thing. As far as I am concerned, it is not very clear. I don't think that when things are circumspect or physically clear it is purely an optic phenomenon. I don't think that geometric shapes are less clear in terms of art. It is a form of uncertainty - if you have to decide it is like accounting for something. It is like drawing something and then it is like bookkeeping. Bookkeeping is the most unclear thing.

REINHARDT: The emphasis on geometry is that if the known

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quantity is of value, it is obviously in the other direction.

DE KOONING: I am not playing on words. I don't know how to do that.

FERBER: Why is geometry more clear than the use of swirling shapes?

REINHARDT: I want to straighten out the terminology, if I can. Unclear is generally romantic and less clear if you want a different terminology.

DE KOONING: I meant geometry in art. It was against art -- the beauty of a rectangle.

LIPPOLD: This means that a rectangle is unclear?

DE KOONING: Yes.

MOTHERWELL: He resents the implication that a geometric form is not clear.

DE KOONING: The end of a painting in this kind of geometric painting would be almost like the graph for a possible painting -- like the blueprint. It makes a big influence upon the world, and is immediately adopted as a possibility for doing other things.

TOMLIN: Would you say that an authentic structure is in the process of becoming something in a plan and that (geometry?) has already been shown and terminated?

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DE KOONING: Yes.

NEWMAN: It is not a question of clarity at all. When a thing is precise, does that make it clear? Precision does not mean clarity.

MOTHERWELL: It seems to me that what De Kooning is saying is very clear. He feels resentful that one motive of expression should be called clear, precise, rational, finished and he regards the expression to refer to the worlds (?) of value in which one cannot say that one form represents a more clear - - - in relation to reality.

BAZIOTES: I think when a man first discovers that two and two is four there is beauty in that, and we can see why; but if people stand and look at the moon and one says, "I think it's just beautiful tonight," and the other says, "The moon makes me feel awful" we are both clear in our own opinion. So that a geometric shape - we know why we like it - and an unreasonable shape - has a certain mystery that we recognize as a real thing; but it's difficult to put it in an objective way.

LIPPOLD: The geometric shape is no more reasonable than a non-geometric shape. All forms are found in nature and constructions of man, but the way in which it is used is important. Some paintings use them in a sensible way and other works use non-sensible forms. It is all a form of our rational world.

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NEWMAN: The question of clarity is one of intention. I have seen pictures with triangles all over them.

STERNE: I think it has to do with Western thinking, not necessarily in a logical way. A Chinese thinks very well, but doesn't use logic. The use of geometrical forms comes from logical thinking and separating your own view from reality.

REINHARDT: Your work to some extent looks generally planned and preconceived. I would like some discussion on it.

STERNE: I think if you can achieve to do exactly what you want is mastery. It is very difficult because the thing takes life and becomes stronger than you. But if you are strong and great yourself, to achieve it you are greater. I feel that we are too concerned with (words?) and I feel the need is how. I try to create a kind of vacuum of esthetic prejudices. I try to find shapes which impress me strictly psychologically. I don't think of a painting. I go through it and see what I can do with it.

KEES: In regard to this issue of clarity, it might be interesting if we could find anyone who could say that he doesn't care very much about clarity as an element in his painting.

SMITH: I am not involved with clarity, but a straight line

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is a form which is the most abstract thing you can find.
It's a support and not an element.

HOFMANN: I believe that in an art every expression is relative and not absolutely defined as long as it is not an expression of a relationship. Everything can be changed. We speak here only about the means, but the application of the means is the point. You can change one thing into another with the help of the relation of the things. One shape in relation to other shapes makes the expression; not one shape or another, but the relation of the two makes the meaning. You want to bring out the commun--? of your work as far as the public is in a position to understand you. As long as a means is only used for itself, it cannot lead to anything. The construction consists of this use with one thing in relation to another which relates to a third and higher value.

MOTHERWELL: Would you say that a fair statement is that the meaning of a work of art consists of the relations of the elements and not the elements themselves?

KAUFMAN: Yes, that I would definitely say. You make a thin line and a thick line. It is the same as with geometric shapes. It is all relationship. Without all of these relationships, it is not possible to express higher art.

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FERBER: There seems to be a great deal of talk about shapes and we all have personal prejudices and (commitments?) to shapes which predominate in our work. It cannot be resolved on the question of the shape of the piece. If you step outside of plastic arts and think of poetry or music, you have a sense of clarity and the truth or validity of the statement, which we, as painters, don't recognize as clarity because of the shape of the line or the number of s's or w's in the line. I want to bring this idea of citing another art as a way of recognizing the ----- of the means are not important for the end and are not the way for determining whether a given thing is true or false.

LIPPOLD: Could you say what is important?

FERBER: The means are important, but what we were concerned with is an expression of a relationship to the world. Truth and validity cannot be determined by the shape of the elements of the picture.

DE KOONING: About this idea of geometric shapes again: I think a straight line doesn't exist optically. There is no such thing as a straight line.

REINHARDT: We are losing Herbert's point. I would like to get back to the question of whether there is another

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criteria.

MOTHERWELL: It would be very difficult to formulate a position in which there were no external relations. I can't imagine any structure being defined as though it only has internal meaning.

REINHARDT: I want to know the outside truth. I think I know the internal one.

FERBER: The relationship of the parts plastically is the truth, Reinhardt says. You are saying our attitude toward things determines their truth.

MOTHERWELL: He was emphasizing very strongly that the quality of a work depends upon the relations within it. Between you and Reinhardt the question is being raised whether these internal relations also relate externally and I don't think that the question is possible. I would first think that the question to discuss is whether the external relations refer to the arts, the world, or both, or how it works.

ERNST: I felt very strongly about that when I saw Reinhardt's show. I saw one painting in particular which seemed to be full of images which seemed to be very clear. I was aware of the fact that he was interested in a different relationship. I am not too friendly towards it.

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TOMLIN: May I take this back to structure? In what was said about the parts in relation to Brooks' work, the entire structure was impressed embraced . We were talking about the shape without relation to one possibility of structure. But I would like to say that I feel that geometric shapes can be used to achieve a fluid and organic structure.

HOFMANN: There is a facility in the elements which can be used in a practical way which is ---- used in Klee. It is related to handwriting - it often characterizes a complete personality. That can be used in a graphic sense and in a plastic sense. It leads/^{back}to a point in relation to another point. Picasso, for example, in the construction of points - the construction carries many a ---- about it. It is the relationship of all points considered in a plastic relation. It offers a number of possibilities which he has not yet discovered.

REINHARDT: Does he consider a work of art a self-sufficient entity?

MOTHERWELL: He said, "No".

REINHARDT: Do you consider the relationships you mentioned that the inter-relationships of the elements in a work of art (is that self-sufficient)?

HOFMANN: It is related to all of this world - to what to paint for the joy of painting. I slice off a piece of

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you want to express. You want to express something very definitely and you do it with the help of your means. When you understand your means, then you can do it.

MOTHERWELL: I find for my own part about the genesis of works painting for me fulfills two functions. I will speak of the more important one first. The thing that binds these arts together and represents my own endeavor is to find a mode of expression that represents my own view of reality for which there is an existing iconograph and which I am not sure can be expressed in terms of an iconograph no matter how well done. The constant problem I have is to find something opposite me that, when it looks back at me, I have a feeling, "that's my world." Nothing is left out and the emphasis is there as to what I feel. That kind of painting is the most bitter struggle which I have ever undergone. There are other moments in my life in which I want to paint for the sheer joy of painting. This other problem is so staggering that the moments of joy are small and in between. The only thing I can do is to make something I have discovered. One of the things I have discovered is a three-dimensional rectangle which was made out of chalk and tar. It is something I want to know better. I feel so familiar with it that I can play with it. Joy has a lot to do with playing in those moments when I want to paint for the joy of painting. I slice off a piece of

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this chalk and tar and look at the cross-sections. My joy is in rearranging it. Sometimes I want it more (regulated?). Sometimes I tend to make the stripes to make the edge very swirling. Sometimes I want to make it very precise, without breaking the surface plan. What I am trying to say - and I am confused - is I think this problem of trying to find a total expression of what is modern is really without an adequate iconograph so that not only do we have to find new forms - it is much more difficult - we have to invent painting itself again. I think all modern artists' work is really a criticism in past art - in representing what we really feel. It is so staggering that one must take a simple concept to paint for the sheer joy of painting. When painting tends to get simple, it is because the real problem is so involved it is almost unintentional. For some people it ----- in a situation in which the whole thing is beyond the whole human mind to grasp. In one way or another, everybody here is involved in it.

REINHARDT: Let's talk about that struggle.

MOTHERWELL: When I look at a Renaissance ---- he can modify using this existing iconograph to show his own uniqueness and his sense of (tempo??) without in any way being involved in having to invent painting or reality itself. I think that painters like Mondrian tend to be

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painters who insist upon moving as rapidly as they can toward an iconograph. It is understandable because the strain is so great to reinvent reality in painting.

REINHARDT: What about reality and the reality of painting? They are not the same thing. What is this creative thing you are struggling to get? What reference does it have outside of the painting itself?

ROSENBERG: The thing in my mind is that I am concerned with truth and beauty. I have to establish a reality. If I assume that when I ----- in art, I can awaken. When I was thirteen or fourteen, I decided that music was much richer insofar as it was closer to dreams which were super-real. As I grew older, I thought that music wasn't the thing because I was dealing with dead form. I found that I still become so shy that it is difficult for me to speak. We are awake because we are telling what we feel. I think that I can paint religious things that way because it all has been done before. Through art I will awaken. I must have a complete idea of what beauty is. Whatever takes place, I don't want to be called "abstract". I don't think it's beautiful for a man to argue that a man shot somebody but a lawyer does. I don't think that a surgeon would look inside a man and think that is beauty.

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REINHARDT: You were talking about the reality of the painting when Hofmann said, "What are you trying to express?" I want to frame the question that way. What is what we are trying to express? -- if it does have a value or a relationship to a reality outside of itself.

MOTHERWELL: What I mean by reality is the way the world feels in relation to art.

FERBER: I want to know what Reinhardt thinks.

POUSETTE-DART: I believe in beauty; in spiritual beauty and intellectual beauty. You have got to find some plastic problem and let the artists apply themselves to it. The cubists had the cub. That bound them together. You must find some plastic problem if you are to bind them together.

LIPPOLD: I should like to find where I think I lie. It is the general impression among some people that it is a great problem as to what to paint, and with what to begin. Unfortunately, it is never a problem for me. I have material for the next ten to fifteen years in my sketch books. I would like to describe it as knowing what I have experienced and trying to search again beyond what I have experienced. I feel that the relationship of the artists in 1950 is that of a synchronizing of what we have discussed today. We have talked about formal relationships.

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This is not a new thing with the abstractionists. The creation of Adam is one of the most beautiful examples for expression, as in the finger of God touching Adam. It would seem to me that people of Mondrian's school have been interested in exploring the formal relationship internally. Other schools have been concerned with the relationship of art to propaganda. Others feel to explore the areas of a dream world. If we are aware of the things which happen to us in our immediate past, those things come into our consciousness and into our work. We cannot pretend to sit down with no idea as to what has happened before and create something entirely new which has never happened before. I feel that all I am doing is synthesizing something which has happened in the past. My materials are not new; my relationships are not new. My relationship to the world falls into the (area?) of life, and those experiences get into my work.

MOTHERWELL: We have some questions which haven't been read - they are by people who came in late:

Stamos: Is the automatic painting conscious or not? In the early 1900's Ernest Fenellosso wrote an essay with an introduction by Pound on the Chinese character as a medium in poetry. Are the artists today familiar with it, or are such characters or writing unconscious? There is an amazing connection between the two.

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Are certain artists working closer with the tradition of the Hudson River School in the sense of the organic esthetics? If they are, what are the binding factors of both?

Lewis: Is art a form of self-analysis?

LEWIS: I would like to add that there is a struggle to express what we are doing in our thinking. We make a constant reference to Plato, which wasn't understandable at that time but which we understand now. If we lived one hundred years it would be easy to understand this time we are now living in.

MOTHERWELL: The object is not to know what will happen one hundred years from now, but to provide adequate evidence.

LEWIS: Are we projecting ourselves that way?

MOTHERWELL: Are you saying that art is not a form of analysis and we should not be here analyzing what is going on? Or, is art a way of analyzing the world?

LEWIS: Yes, psychoanalysis.

MOTHERWELL: Is art a form of self-analysis?

LEWIS: Yes, phrase it that way.

DE KOONING: If we talk in terms of what kinds of shapes or lines we are using, we don't mean that and we talk like

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outsiders. You use an every-day phrase as a flower is beautiful, or a girl is beautiful. When you talk about beauty it is an experience. When you say you paint stripes, you don't mean you are painting stripes. We are still thinking in terms of what kind of shapes we are painting. But (amorphic?) shapes, geometric shapes - we ought to get rid of that. We are painting -- I know I am very unclear. If a man is influenced on the basis that Mondrian is clear, I would like to ask Mondrian if he was so clear. Obviously, he wasn't clear because he kept painting. A picture to me is not geometric - it has a face. It is some form of impressionism. We ought to have some level as a profession. Some part of painting has become professional. It doesn't seem to be understood.

NEWMAN: Bill has moved from his original position that straight lines don't exist in nature. Geometry can be organic (?). Straight lines do exist in nature. If I can draw a straight line, I can draw it because it exists. I think this exists optically. When Bill says they don't exist optically, he means they don't exist in nature. The edge of the U.N. building is a straight line. If I can make it, it does exist in nature. I recall a story about God controlling the world. It is true that God makes wheat, but I can make bread and, therefore, bread

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exists in the world. A straight line is an organic thing that will contain feeling.

DE KOONING: As a fact, I know that a bulb must be a flat surface, and they make flowers and paintings horizontal (?). You can follow a straight line. The fact that a painting is called Mondrian's optical illusion it is not an optical illusion. It keeps changing in front of us.

MOTHERWELL: The table seems to be split between -- to continue this discussion about the nature of shapes and straight lines has exhausted, and we must talk about other things, and other people thinking it has become concrete. Let's get a level with which to get hold of what we want to talk about. We have yet to talk about the minority question.

STERNE: I think that there is a direct continuity. This is becoming a question of plastics. We can't discuss shapes. Everybody here is in search of order. If whatever shapes we use we can establish an order, that is what matters. This is what ties us together here. We all look for order and discipline. (as for liberty?) and automatically it is like flying. If a plane goes high, it flies; if it goes higher, it flies better; and if it doesn't go into the air, it doesn't fly.

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SMITH: I think a reasonable discussion on each thing is a stimulating thing. We must decide for ourselves. We must decide how long we will talk on one question so that it doesn't all lead to other discussions.

LIPPOLD: The thing which I wanted was to carry us from a discussion of formal problems and how they relate to other questions.

NEWMAN: There is so little discussion on these questions, we should handle a few more.

MOTHERWEL: Everyone has agreed that the real problem is not one of any given shape, but whether in any given case that shape is adequately expressed by the agent who has made that shape. There some feel very strongly one way or another. I would say that the general conclusion is that ---- cannot be defined in anything as obvious or simple as an optical shape. This discussion has been that a straight line can be used in all kinds of ways. It is impossible to say a work is abstract or expressive or non-expressive because it uses straight lines or doesn't.

REINHARDT: Relation has nothing to do with Mondrian. The problem is to move on from the internal relationship to what the external relationship is.

GOTTLIEB: It is my impression that the most general idea

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which has kept cropping up is a statement of the nature of a work of art as being an arrangement of shapes or forms of color which, because of the order or ordering of materials, expresses the artist's sense of reality or corresponds with some outer reality. I don't agree with it - that some expression of reality can be expressed in a painting purely in terms of line, color and form. Those are the essential elements in painting and anything else is irrelevant and can contribute nothing to the painting.

MOTHERWELL: You are proposing a question of non-objective art. There is hardly an artist here that is totally non-objective in a way. We have been talking about color and line because we are painters. The question of our relation to the world is that every one is related to the world in one way or another.

FERBER: It seems that Adolph was making a point that non-objective art is a relationship internally (?) satisfactory.

GOTTLIEB: That it's not satisfactory.

MOTHERWELL: It is not the real issue. All of the people here move as abstractly or back to the world of nature as freely as they like to. Everybody here seems to be absolutely free that way. It seems to me that everybody here represents no commitment to a decision and principal-plan on art, but does what he likes at any given moment and would fight at any time for that freedom.

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NEWMAN: We are raising a question of subject matter and what its nature is.

MOTHERWELL: We went over it in talking about degrees of abstraction.

DE KOONING: I wonder about the subject matter of the Crucifixion scene - was that subject matter or not? What is subject matter? Is the interior the subject matter?

FERBER: Bob Motherwell described it in his approach of subject matter.

MOTHERWELL: Everybody here is in accord - which is that the subject of a painting is the way the artist feels about the world. Ernst has a subject. Mondrian has a subject. We will get into a discussion that has happened again and again. I think we have been over it more than any other question, except the question of purity and I am fed up with it as no one here is occupied with it. We all operate exactly as we feel.

HOFMANN: I think it goes all the time back to subject matter. Every subject matter depends again on how to use the meaning. You can use it in a lyrical or dramatic sense. It depends on the personality of the artists. Everyone has a relation to the world and how it comes to a question as to how each person expresses himself. Everyone is clear about himself as to where he belongs and in which way he can give

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esthetic enjoyment. A painting is an esthetic enjoyment. I feel that it is incorporated in my work, and my work shows it and it means something to the world. I want to be a poet. As a painter I must conform to my nature. My nature has a lyrical as well as dramatic disposition. There is not one day the same. One day I feel wonderful to work and I feel an expression which shows in my work. Only with a very clear mind and on a clear day I can paint without interruptions and without food because my disposition is like that. My work should reflect my moods and the great enjoyment which I had when I did the work.

MOTHERWELL: What Hofmann said leads directly to the question which Lippold wrote.

(Lippold's question: Is it possible to make a work while under the influence of an immediate experience - i.e. fear, disgust, love, etc.?)

I have been asserting that the reason the level of abstraction differs in the work of the people here is that actually the people here are people who accept the fact that their personalities are multiple. They have definite moods and use definite means for given moods. There are artists who make all kinds of different works - according to the situation in which they find themselves at any given time, and

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other artists follow a very straight line who have as an ideal the one satisfactory relation to reality, regardless of whether their wives were good or mad at them that day.

REINHARDT: In relation to these levels you talked about (anybody?) that's more appropriate. We could emphasize the rational or intentional. That might bring in the subject matter or content.

MOTHERWELL: The efforts of these people have to include everything. If you ask me what distinguished these people is not to have a shape (interruption by Reinhardt)

REINHARDT: We have forms in common. We have cut out a great deal. We have cut out all the naturalistic documents or the super-realist ideas or the political.

ROSENBERG: It is a well-known fact that there are only three or four men in the world that they think simultaneously on four levels and perform all things. I am not exactly in agreement with that. We are also trying to cut out by still putting in everything.

REINHARDT: You're putting in everything about yourself, but not everything outside yourself.

ROSENBERG: The object is not to put yourself in the middle and say, "That's him".

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MOTHERWELL: How can the outside come into the thing and say, "That's him"? I have ---- something new since which included everything would be the same as reality itself. It has to be a man's relation to the world, and not the world itself.

ROSENBERG: We are trying to put everything in our works since we are in a minority.

MOTHERWELL: One becomes a poet when our feelings are so intense and our reality complex. The effort in that sense of all artists is to be a poet.

ROSENBERG: I want to be a ^{dancer,} writer, poet, musician in my work. I would paint for painting's sake when I was angry. But I will not paint today because I will not paint anything unless I have something to say and I am moved only at certain periods. I will not paint when I have nothing to say. I am trying to say everything all at one time. As an example, there are two things that move a person like myself - nature, and the environment which I am caught in. If I am going on a bus and I would rather take a taxi, I might not want to go anywhere. If I was a painter of houses, it would give me the idea to paint the window a sign was plastered on. May wine gives me the idea of Spring. The idea of May wine gives me a whole series of paintings. I can go back twenty years - the whole month of May.

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MOTHERWELL: Rosenberg is saying that everybody accepts nature in an imaginative sense, but hasn't the slightest idea in rendering (?) that.

ERNST: I know I can't paint when my mother-in-law is in the house.

MOTHERWELL: Thus we go on with the practical questions:

Reinhardt: What is your work (of art)? Do you consider the production of it a professional activity? Do you belong to Artists' Equity? Why, or why not?

Barr: What is the most acceptable name for our direction or movement? (It has been called Abstract-expressionist, abstract-symbolist, intra-subjectivist, etc.)

SMITH: I don't think we do have a unity on the name.

ROSENBERG: We should have a name through the years.

SMITH: Names are usually given to groups by people who don't understand them or don't like them.

BARR: WE should have a name for which we can blame the artists - for once is history!

MOTHERWELL: If there is any way of giving a name, we will all be still called abstract artists. Do you regard painting as a profession?

REINHARDT: Some of our pictures hang by the pictures of

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other artists in Artists' Equity.

MOTHERWELL: If we were all actors we would all belong to Actors' Equity. We all belong to a specific world; the world of 57th Street and museums and galleries. Anybody belonging to Artists' Equity is saying ipso-facto, "My profession is painting."

NEWMAN: I had an experience with the census taken. He asked my profession and I said, "Painting" and he asked, "What kind of painting?" and I said, "Landscape abstraction" --- and he put down "abstract painter"! In order to have a profession we would have to be involved in some social outside activity. The purpose of Artists' Equity is that the men are united not as artists involved in (interruption).

MOTHERWELL: Do you regard it as legitimate that you mean to earn your living as a painter?

REINHARDT: You could still be unemployed and still be a professional.

MOTHERWELL: If you simply define profession as in terms of what do you do most often, or what is your major activity, then everybody here is a professional painter.

REINHARDT: If some here belong to Equity, should or shouldn't we belong?

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MOTHERWELL: Very few people here think that it clarifies it.

ERNST: I joined because I was tired of being asked why don't I belong.

ROSENBERG: I don't consider myself an artist. I would rather think that there is the ministry and doctors and lawyers (???). Art at one time was considered quite a high profession. Therefore, I am a member of a profession and I am a member of Artists' Equity because I respect the men in the group.

NEWMAN: The thing that binds us together is that we consider painting to be a profession in an ideal society. We assume an (arbitrary use) of insisting that we are creating our own paradise. We should be able to act in a professional way on our own terms. We go out into a normal society and insist on acting on our own terms.

SMITH: I exist in the best society possible because I exist in this time. I have to take it as the ideal society. It is ideal as far as I am concerned. I will not go back and admit that there is any history in my life outside of the times in which I live. Nothing was more idealistic than right now - and there never will be an ideal society.

MOTHERWELL: We are not acting in relation to the goals

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that most people in our society accept? feelings is really

NEWMAN: Yes. (little) choice of a career.

SMITH: I mean that this is the ideal society because this is the time I live and have to function. Therefore, it has to be ideal. How can I consider an ideal society as ideal in one that I can't possibly live?

MOTHERWELL: What distinguishes these people is that they are acting ideally in a non-ideal society. They are doing.

POUSETTE-DART: It is an ideal society, but only the artist realizes it.

DE KOONING: You can't call yourself professional unless you have a license such as an architect. There are differences and you can make money without a license, but to call ourselves professionals we can't do that, but to be a professional, we can do that; but you must be a professional to someone else - not yourself.

SMITH: It is just an attitude of mind.

REINHARDT: You must remove yourself in order to create art.

NEWMAN: I feel that art has no -----.

MOTHERWELL: Can we say that every one here accepts the fact that in most societies people have a career of one kind or another? To choose painting, and at the same

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time insist on integrity of one's own feelings is really to make an (idiotic) choice of a career.

ERNST: Can we say that no one here is an amateur?

ROSENBORG: I wouldn't advise anyone in the outside world to be an artist, but if I had to do it all over again I would do it.

BROOKS: Professional conveys to the outside world that people spend a great deal of time in what they are doing.

NEWMAN: Professional means serious.

MOTHERWELL: In relation to this question of a name, here are three names: abstract-expressionist; abstract-symbolist; abstract-objectivist.

(refers to Barr's question - see page 37)

BROOKS: A more accurate name would be true art. It doesn't sound very good, but in terms of meaning, abstraction is involved in it.

NEWMAN: I think the word self-evident.

TOMLIN: Brooks also remarked that the word concrete is meaningful, but it must be pointed out that people have argued very strongly for that word. Non-objective is a vile translation.

NEWMAN: I would offer self-evident, because the image is concrete.

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DE KOONING: It is disastrous to name ourselves.

MOTHERWELL: Maybe we could conclude by going around the table and each person speaking only for a second and saying if he thinks there is a communal feeling here and what constitutes it.

FERBER: There was a question that Hare delivered on the problem of whether the art we make is a benefit to society or not.

BROOKS: It is self-evident. We should go on to the question of community.

MOTHERWELL: Shall we say whether it is a community or not?

LIPPOLD: I said before that I was a synthesizer of what happened before this time. I apologize if that's necessary because I feel that everybody feels the same way and the thing that makes us a community is that we are artists.

ROSENBERG: I feel very definitely that there is a community feeling here. If we will go on and make something tangible we all respect each other, then a title will come from us which will identify us in relation to (abstractions). If we choose to say that at 7:00 this is the last meeting, then it would follow that the community feeling has lapsed and there would be no need for a title. The word abstract solves nothing for me and has said nothing for

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which I can respect abstract art. We can use the word only because we have never found another word. There is need for a community feeling and a title.

LASSOW: I believe that all of us share a close togetherness in our various ways. We are all growing approximately the same way. We are all painters.

GRIPPE: One of the nice things about a group of this type is that we are all definite. I feel that I am against a title of any kind. We should be called abstract artists even though the term is inadequate. We are all different. We have something new to say to each other. We all express ourselves in a different way. We are the same only in terms of the abstract. We are modern artists - contemporary artists, so to speak. I like the idea of getting together and talking about artists and their own work, but we should not emphasize anything particular.

MOTHERWELL: You feel that each person insists on his own individuality.

GRIPPE: I think we all express a different thing.

STAMOS: I think it is a community, and it shows here, and even though everybody works in a different way, the line is the same.

REINHARDT: Most of us do not take an (a----ing) preconceived conception of art. That makes us different from

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other artists. We are not professionals and don't ----- skill and craft in that way. Informal relationships can be of (no-new) value. The problem is a matter of self-awareness and self-discovery. We are against (impoverishment). We would value enrichment and complexity.

Painting, itself, is the object and the content, and that would be a common thing. I heard the expression (specialist) and relation, and we have that in common.

BAZIOTES: We are all painters and we have something in common, and we have unity in that.

ERNST: I think that we were a community before we came together, and the fact that we might remain a community is supported by the fact that we have not established a dogma that applies to anyone in particular. We are now joining a lot of (in-----ences) that have gone before us and are becoming aware of our surroundings, and that makes us a community as individuals.

LEWIS: I think that it is a wonderful relation that exists here and it has been expressed.

FERBER: I think it has been pretty well said, and the avant-guard (seems-sums) a community in any society.

KEES: I think the community is more largely geographical than we think. I mean that there are just as many factors

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are all painters. Maybe we can call it modern or abstract that makes for a great difference of opinion as for agreement. I would argue against anything that bordered on a brotherhood, or anything else. Anything of this nature that is apt to become a community way of thinking would be dangerous.

POUSETTE-DART: I think the real artist is the true citizen of the world. There are many artists that are not here because they have not been invited. We haven't arrived at anything practical here.

MOTHERWELL: Some statements of real value have been recorded which you can't say is impractical.

POUSETTE-DART: No binding factor has been arrived at.

LIPTON: There are a number of people here that have a very similar kind of approach, and yet there are many sharp differences. In the main, everybody is attached to a search for a reality in a tangible art (meaning-meeting) and everybody here feels that more or less. We are all searching for something which belongs to us validly and honestly.

HOFMANN: I don't want to be classified. I am proud to call myself a painter. You must (write-lay) down certain principles on which you consider your community. It is too restricting in our freeness of approach. We really

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are all painters. Maybe we can call it modern or abstract painting, but what does it mean in the end? We are just a local geographic group. What about all the other artists who are in the country? I consider it dangerous to be associated with other artists of similar aims. I wish to be free as a bird.

SMITH: What I got most out of this group is just the force and the sample of the force that exists in this country. It seems to be a greater force, and I am pleased that it happens to be taking place here at this time. I don't think it ever took place in the same way in this country before.

GOTTLIEB: It seems to me that what we have is a gathering together, and despite the differences between the people, I think that there is a common denominator, and that is a mutual organization that all of the people involved are advanced painters and sculptors in the sense that they are attempting to advance the art which they practise. They organize that effort on each other's part despite any differences of opinion.

DE KOONING: For most of us, art has been an international thing. Previously, international meant that art came from Paris. I like that we have gotten away from nationalism.

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HARE: I don't see any tendency toward a group here. We are here out of politeness. There is no reason to form a group in this country. We are not in a position to have to form a group, since we are not persecuted. The word "avant-guard" doesn't mean anything. We are a group insofar as we are painters and sculptors.

BIALA: I was wondering whether, as a group, we have more in common than other groups of artists. We are all painters who respect one another, so we are a community in some respects.

NEWMAN: I disagree. We are here because we are artists. We would have to be here with a group of other men in whose work we have no interest. I thought our purpose was to find some common ground, and I don't think we have it. We are here specifically because we have a specific interest in each other's work; otherwise we would not be here together. The work doesn't have a specific nature, but we have a specific common intention. One of the things that binds us is our insistence on being ourselves. I feel that we have a community in the sense that we are vitally interested in what the other fellow is doing.

TOMLIN: There has been a reluctance to examine whatever we have in common. There is a doubt implied that there is a community. There is not a movement in the sense

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that painting has moved forward in schools. I feel that there has been a strong tie to protect individuality. I don't feel that individuality need be endangered by a movement.

STERNE: I do not have much to add. I like and respect most people, and I am happy to be a part of getting together.

BROOKS: I don't think there is any need for a conflict between the concept of the individual and the community. I agree with Reinhardt. I think it is most comprehensive.

BOURGEOIS: I think that we are trying to be a group, and I think it is very hard. For the other painters - Poore, Van Gogh - we are a group because we are their enemies.

ROSENBORG: I have never thought of myself as an enemy of any artist. We are all God's children.

MOTHERWELL: I know very well what I think, but I don't know very well how to say it. I must say it presently. I could say that there is a certain maturity in the work of these people and in their general relations to reality, and for my part there is a real problem which is that I think things mature in a millennium, and I think the problem is one of (color). I would really like to say

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painting in America is becoming mature. A great number of artists did not come for one reason or another. We are all involved with each other and with many other people. We all have to deal with each other, and we are all terribly involved in an identical problem - whatever our differences are and whatever our ways of meeting the problem. We speak more adequately about the problem than anyone else because we really have to deal with it all day long every day, and we didn't want to form a group as a pressure group, but to have it handle a few statements to build on and amplify everything else.

- End -