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2013-11-04

# Interview with Warren Adelson

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**INTERVIEW WITH WARREN ADELSON**  
**DATE: NOVEMBER 4, 2013**  
**INTERVIEWER: PATRICIA HILLS**

*Original transcription completed November 13, 2013*

PH: PATRICIA HILLS  
WA: WARREN ADELSON  
AA: ADAM ADELSON

[Side A begins.]

PH: One, two, three, four, five. October 18th, 2013.

[Recording stops, resumes.]

PH: ...supposed to be fresh batteries. Testing, one, two, three. This is Pat Hills, and I'm interviewing Warren Adelson on November 4th, 2013.

[Recording stops, resumes.]

PH: So, I will repeat the questions. Warren, thank you so much for meeting with me today. And as you know, what we want to do is to do an interview with you, and that we will then edit it down and publish it in our BU Art History alumni newsletter. So, the various questions that I have: the first one is, I understand that your mother, Beaze Adelson, ran an antique store in Brookline. Growing up, did you ever think that you would be a gallerist yourself? Did that influence your decisions to be an art history major and then go on to get an M.A.?

WA: Well, it didn't work that way for me. My mother and my father ran a shop in Brookline for, I think, over 50 years at the end of the day, and they sold antiques and decorations, and lamps and shades, and they framed pictures, and they sold some pictures, and I grew up in that business, and I don't know that I ever really thought about doing that. If I did, I really wasn't—it was nothing I took very seriously. I

guess as a kid, I thought of other professions. And when I went to college, I started out—when I went to Boston University School of Liberal Arts, as it was called then, I started out as an English Lit major, and I loved that, and I had some wonderful, memorable professors in English, and enjoyed it thoroughly until, I guess, about my second year, when I took some art history. And I really, I really liked that. I got very interested in art history, and I—junior year, I took a bit more art history, and then the summer of my junior year in 1962, with a friend, I had an opportunity to go to summer school at the University of Florence. Just for a month. And that was, I think the month of July, and I had never been to Europe. And I got there, and it really turned me around. I saw a lot of the city of Florence, I saw all of the Uffizi and the museums and the great outdoor sculpture in the *palazzi*, and really had a marvelous experience there in July. And then in August, I decided I'd travel some more. And I went to Rome and Naples and Pompeii, and looked at art, and came back with a different attitude. And I believe it was my senior year that I took mostly art history courses. So although I graduated as an English major, I probably, with another course or two, could have been an art history major. And really loved it. And I decided to go on for another year, so I got a Master's degree in art history, and I did that, with, it was the same teachers that I had, there was Bill Jewell and George Levitine, and other people. And I enjoyed the classes, I enjoyed the challenge of understanding an artist and groups of artists, and how work evolved, and how styles evolved, so it was something that I worked myself into. And when I, when it came time, when I graduated in '64, and got my M.A., I still didn't think I knew what I wanted to do, and there were lots of options that I explored in other businesses, and

then I looked into the museum world, and ultimately I decided for better or worse I would open a gallery. I didn't know too much about it, but I loved art, I loved the pictures, and I thought that I could—in that I had grown up in a business, I had some sense of what it was about, and so I opened a gallery first on Boylston Street but then I moved quickly to Newbury Street, and showed mostly Boston School artists and a few contemporary artists as well.

PH: I remember a long time ago Bob Vose talking about you. [Inaudible – "business..."?]

WA: He was a very dear man, and he was so kind to me, and his brother Morton, they were both really very generous with their time and their discussion. And I would go in there often and look at the paintings they had. And I remember their father, I guess he was Robert Vose, Sr.—Bob's father—he was quite elderly then. Of course, I was in my early twenties, so he seemed like he was a thousand years old, he was probably my age now or something. But anyway, he—I met him. Bob was very encouraging to me, which was amazing, because I really didn't know much, and I had no experience, and I was just kind of flying by the seat of my pants, but he knew I liked the Boston School and I was interested in that, and of course, many of those artists, Vose Galleries had represented as contemporary artists. John Enneking and people like that. So, it was a time of tremendous exploration for me, and the American art field was just beginning to take some form in the mid-'60s. This was '65, '66. And it was—it turned out to be a good time to do it, although my timing was just serendipitous, of course.

PH: So how long did you have your gallery?

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WA: Well, I was on Newbury Street from '66 to '72. I moved—

PH: From sixty—

WA: Nineteen sixty-six to '72.

PH: Uh-huh.

WA: And in that period of time I did many exhibitions of a variety of artists, both turn-of-the-century and some contemporary realist paintings, and then I did a few historical shows. I did an exhibition of nineteenth-century American still life, which interested me. And again, this is before even Bill Gerdts wrote his book on still life, and I knew Bill then, he'd come up to Boston, and other people that became well-known scholars were kind of new in the game. Ted Stebbins used to come in, and John Wilmerding. And the—Boston was a town that had some curiosity in terms of people that were coming in. And you could do a variety of different shows and people would come and look, and sometimes they bought things and sometimes they didn't, but it was not a bad time to get started. And it was an exciting time in many ways, of course, with the civil rights protests, and later on, in the later '60s and early '70s, Vietnam, the street changed rather dramatically, and not for the good. And it was at that time I had an opportunity to move to New York and I took it.

PH: Now let me just—all right. This happened once, I—ah, it's going again. I was interviewing Benny Andrews, and the whole tape just didn't work. And I was really [inaudible]. [They laugh.] OK, so then you went to New York, and what year was that?

WA: Nineteen seventy-two.

PH: You see, I do remember meeting you in Boston. And it must have been when I was doing the Eastman Johnson exhibition. I sort of remember that. I saw you had a small drawing of a woman leaning against the window.

WA: What year was that?

PH: Well, my Eastman Johnson show was 1972. And then after that I did the show on *The Painters' America*—

WA: Perhaps [inaudible], 'cause I think I closed the gallery in April of '72. So maybe it was just—

PH: Yeah. Well, my show went on in, like, March of '72, so I would have been planning for it like a year before.

WA: So it might have been 1971, or something like that.

PH: Right. I was still in graduate school when I was doing that.

WA: Right. Right. Yeah.

PH: So, and if I recall correctly, it was Ira Spanierman who introduced me to you.

WA: And I knew Ira, I had met him when I was 18 years old at an auction in Boston, at Louis Joseph [Auction Galleries, Inc.]. So I had known him, and several other people, all of whom were older than I, but I got to know those guys because I was back and forth to New York all the time.

PH: Right. So, do you have any—anything stands out in terms of your memories of your gallery in those, what—it's around six years you had the gallery?

WA: Yes. Well, I—something I touched upon was the diversity of galleries in Boston. And I—there was Pace Gallery, of course, started in Boston, and although I had met Mrs. Glimcher, I didn't really know Arne. But I had met Mrs. Glimcher

there—she did an art show, and then there was Hy Swetzoff, who did some, what at the time were avant-garde shows. And there were a number of dealers in Boston—Portia Marcus and Barbara Krakow—that were really doing very contemporary or cutting-edge art. And for that, it was a very interesting time, because there was so much of that going on on Newbury Street. And I, of course, was doing the earlier material, and there were several galleries that did that as well, other than Vose. I mean, Vose was the old firm, but the Childs Gallery—Charlie Childs was still active—was very big, and then John Castano who dealt in turn-of-the-century American and European art who was up the street near the Ritz, and he had lots of things, and he had been there a long time, he was really a fixture on Newbury Street. And then there was Bob Campbell, who had the Shore Gallery, I think it was called, something like that, and Bob did realist painters, but he also had, he'd have a Homer now and then, or a good nineteenth-century picture. So there was—in that the art market wasn't very active, and there wasn't a lot going on, there were quite a number of dealers in different aspects of it, all on Newbury Street and all trying to make a dent, so to speak. So for that reason it was fun. I had lots of colleagues, there were a lot of people around that were interested in the business, and there were a few collectors around that were pretty savvy people and would be—were enjoyable to meet.

PH: What do you think the situation is in Boston now?

WA: Boston has changed in so many ways. It has blossomed in terms of its appearance. Of course, we're sitting now on Harrison Avenue in the South End, in my son's gallery, Adam's gallery [Adelson Galleries Boston], and this whole area in the South End was blighted back then in those days, and now has turned into this

rejuvenated, renovated, very beautiful place, with wonderful townhouses that have been fixed up and more and more shops and restaurants and galleries coming into the area. And for that reason it's certainly a very exciting place with this youthful, dynamic population. I mean, Boston always had its student population, and I think now, more—my feeling is that an awful lot of those students have decided to stay in Boston [laughing], as my son Adam has, because the city is just so appealing and so manageable physically. It's not overwhelming in size, and you can get around it, and it's just such an appealing place. The art market, I think, in some ways is not what it used to be here because it does not have, it seems, quite the diversity that it had back when—back in the '60s and '70s. So there aren't the, so it seems, as many galleries doing such a diversity of art dealing. So I think that was, when Adam decided that he wanted to open a gallery here, I thought the timing was just perfect in that there was this great area that is so accessible here in the South End, and that it would be an opportunity to represent the Boston art population—artist population, which has grown tremendously, and also perhaps revisit other modern painters that were at one time shown here, such as Jules Olitski, which is the show that Adam has now [*Olitski in the 21st Century*, October 18-December 22, 2013], and he was of course shown here in the early 1970s. And I think it's an opportunity to revisit some of the excitement that went on back in the '70s in terms of the contemporary scene. But also, there are just so many more artists' studios and opportunities for artists, and some really wonderful painters in Boston. Adam is looking very, very closely at them.

PH: So you decided to move to New York in 1972. Did you go to Coe Kerr? Was that your—

WA: I didn't, no. It's when Knoedler changed hands, and Dr. Hammer, Armand Hammer, bought Knoedler, and I went there to more or less head the American department, and at the urging of a friend of mine, Jack Tanzer, who was a New York private dealer who was a friend of Dr. Hammer's. And I saw that '72 was a recession, and business had dropped off, and Newbury Street had changed, and I thought it was a moment to try something else. So I moved to New York, and so I was at Knoedler for a year. And then I went private, it didn't really work out for me at Knoedler, and within about a year later, I had an opportunity to join Coe Kerr Gallery. Ironically, Coe Kerr, Mr. Kerr, had been one of the partners at Knoedler who had left Knoedler in 1968 to form this gallery, and then within a couple of years tragically died of an embolism, leaving his partner, Fred Woolworth—

PH: I remember [inaudible].

WA: —without an art guy. So Fred asked me to join the company and be the art dealer, or the—and I had asked him if he'd like to pursue just American art, and since they already represented Andrew and Jamie Wyeth, that made a lot of sense to Fred and it made a lot of sense to me, so that's what we did. And I was at Coe Kerr for 16 years. And they were great years. And I learned a great deal and had a really wonderful time with Fred and my colleagues at Coe Kerr Gallery.

PH: Didn't Bill Gerdts work there too?

WA: When I went there, Bill was there. He was there writing his book on American still life. And Bill has always had an alliance at Coe Kerr Gallery, yeah.

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PH: I think the first time I met him, he was at the Coe Kerr Gallery.

WA: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

PH: So that would have been...

WA: Early '70s.

PH: Sure, uh-huh. Well, I was hired by the Whitney to be their curator of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art. One of my first jobs the summer of 1972 was to put on a "loans from private collections," you know. So I went bustling ["rustling"?] around, and Bill, Bill just had a lot of friends who were collectors.

WA: Yes.

PH: And he gave me, you know, like Lee Anderson and a bunch of other people. And he gave me the names and the addresses, and that was great.

WA: He's always been very generous that way, and he certainly knew everyone and still knows everyone, and had access to lots of collectors that he advised or certainly consulted with over the decades.

PH: So, and he was affiliated with the gallery up until just recently, [inaudible]?

WA: With Adelson Galleries.

PH: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

WA: Yes, and he still is. I mean, sure.

PH: Right. So, moving on to John Singer Sargent. How was it that you became one of the leading scholars? Was it Coe Kerr? I mean, how did that happen, that all the Coe Kerr—I mean, now you're the go-to person when it comes to Sargent. How did that happen?

WA: I had looked at Sargent back in college. There was one American art course at Boston University, and it was taught by Bill Jewell. And Bill had been a painter, Boston School painter, and was your archetypal professor, He had a vest and moustache and a Phi Beta Kappa key [PH laughs] and he was really adorable. I mean, I have fond memories of him. And he taught nineteenth- and turn-of-the century American art. But I remember when he spoke about Sargent, he said that he was a facile painter with great talent but not much more than a recorder of the rich and famous. And that was pretty much party line after Sargent's death, because it was the criticism that Roger Fry, who was a contemporary of Sargent's, laid on Sargent later in Sargent's life and after he died, and he was very—Fry was negative about Sargent because he felt he wasn't much more than just a toady of the aristocrats and the plutocrats and wasn't much more than that. And when—and Jewell said that, and I took notes in class, but then you'd see these pictures at the Gardner, *El Jaleo*, and you'd see the pictures at the Boston Museum, and to me it didn't exactly match up, 'cause I liked them. And I didn't really, I don't know that I'd fully gotten my mind around what it meant to be a facile painter. But I didn't see that with Sargent. And when I got in the business in Boston I met David McKibbin, who was writing the catalogue raisonné on Sargent. He was the librarian at the Boston Athenaeum, and I met David on a few occasions, and he was a serious scholar. And in 19—I guess 1970, another book came out on Sargent by Richard Ormond, the artist's great-nephew. And I had moved to New York, and then in New York, we acquired a collection of pictures that had belonged to Frank Millet, the artist's—Sargent's—friend and colleague in Broadway. And there were these—there were some informal

portraits and some outdoor figures all done around the time of Sargent's impressionism, and I thought they were gorgeous. I thought they were the most beautiful pictures. And this was in the late '70s. And we sold one of them. It was a girl in a white apron with a sickle, out in the garden, it was just this ravishing picture, and we sold it to a famous New York businessman who loved it, and Fred thought it was a great picture, and I did. And I started thinking that maybe—to do something with Sargent, to do an exhibition. I got wind of Richard Ormond, and I heard that he had now—I think in 1977 McKibbin had died, and I didn't know what was going on with that, and then Richard in 1979 did an exhibition of Sargent in Leeds, England, and then it traveled to the Detroit Institute. And I was curious. And I went out to the Detroit Institute in '79, and I met Richard, and I saw the show, and I thought the show was fabulous. And I thought, wouldn't it be great to do a show of just those private, those—not the portraits, but the subject pictures, and show another side of Sargent rather than the common wisdom of his portraiture. And I went and I met Richard in Detroit and said, "I'd like to come see you in London," and he was very polite, and he was cordial. And I saw him, I went to London and visited him, and I walked in his office, and he was deputy director of the National Portrait Gallery. And I remember his office was downstairs, and I walked in, and on the whole left side of the room, there must have been two dozen or more cardboard boxes. And I kind of looked at it all, and it was kind of piled up against the wall, this load of stuff, and I said, "What is that?" And he said, "Well, that—" We were talking, and I said, "What are all the boxes?" And he said, "Well, that's David McKibbin's archive, and I'm going to do the catalogue raisonné." And I thought to myself

[laughing], this guy will never do it! There's just too much stuff to wade through, I mean, it's impossible. One person couldn't do that. So what happened was, I went ahead and did an exhibition in 1980 called *John Singer Sargent: His Own Work*, which was really a lousy title, but I couldn't come up with anything better than that, because it was about Sargent, not the portraits.

PH: Right.

WA: So I borrowed all of these pictures for the show, and at the time I thought what a nice contribution it would be, if in the back of the catalogue, we could list every Sargent in an American museum. And I had a young woman that was working for me at the time named Meg Robertson, and I put her on the case, and she got in touch with every museum. And in those days, there was no internet, you just got on the phone and wrote letters. And Meg did a great job, and we put it all together, and we did this catalogue and did this show. And people loved the pictures. I mean the real—

PH: And that was at the Coe Kerr Gallery?

WA: This was at Coe Kerr, in 1980. And what made it—the finishing touch for the show was Raymond and Margaret Horowitz came in, who were the preeminent collectors of American impressionism in New York, and Margaret loved the show. Just loved the show, thought it was a terrific show. Although she felt they were hung too high. [PH laughs.] Which was what Margaret felt about most shows.

PH: She was very short.

WA: She was very short. But it was a terrific show, and it was met with great response, let's put it that way. Not by the press, by the way. The press was kind of

lukewarm. I don't remember what they said, but it wasn't bad or good, but it was just sort of lukewarm. And that's when I was inspired to—I met with Richard later on and said, "You know, it would be very exciting to really do the catalogue raisonné." I had no clue as to what that really meant. But I thought it was a great idea and would be a great contribution to the body of literature. And that was in 1980, and we shook hands and made a deal as partners, and we were going to go ahead and do it, and then it's taken so much longer than I ever expected, but it's gone wonderfully well. And I think part of it, with my colleague Elizabeth Ustinov, who was at Coe Kerr—later on, I had left Coe Kerr, and she had the inspiration to write our own database, 'cause we were using a database at Coe Kerr, but it was so primitive and unwieldy, it was really not worth much. And Elizabeth oversaw the writing of a database, and that database was the basis of the current catalogue raisonné. That's a real long-winded answer. [Laughs.]

PH: Yeah. So how many volumes are there now? [Inaudible.]

WA: There are going to be nine volumes. Currently there are seven on bookshelves; there are seven volumes out. The eighth volume will come out in 2014, and the ninth volume will come out in 2016.

PH: OK. Well, I only have six of the volumes. I love the book. [Laughing.] The book is great. I mean the books. The books are great.

WA: They are wonderful, and it's a tribute to Richard and Elaine [Kilmurray], who have done this extraordinary art history to make them happen.

PH: Well, but in the meantime, it seems to me that you did this very clever thing of getting to know all of the Ormonds, you know, many of whom have a lot of these

pictures, and when I went over when I was planning my own show for the Whitney, and I went over and met them, they invited me to dinner, one of them [inaudible]. And I visited several of them, and they all just seemed to be living on selling the one watercolor a year that would keep them kind of going for a while.

WA: Something like that, yes. I mean, some did, it depends—

PH: It's a wonderful legacy they have.

WA: Because some of them, some of the family, really were loath to sell anything. So it wasn't across the board. There were other family members that did occasionally sell things. They were all very—they all held them very dear [inaudible]. The ones that sold them, was [sic] for financial need at the moment, and then there are several who've not sold anything and never wanted to, that sort of thing, but loved the pictures.

PH: Just wanted to pass them on to their children.

WA: In the family, yes, yeah. So, it was slightly more complicated than that, but yes, I mean, some over the years. And now it's been 33 years and over the years all sorts of things have happened, and people have sold some things and passed some on and given some away.

PH: They were all, I mean, Richard Ormond, again, when I was over there, he was so nice. He was at that point the director of the [National] Maritime Museum.

WA: Yes.

PH: And his wife was nice. I mean, they're all just very nice people.

WA: They're wonderful people.

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PH: And the person who invited me to dinner? She was the person who I think—she did a small show at the Adelson Gallery on other drawings; what was her name?

WA: Well, not Elizabeth Ustinov.

PH: No, not Elizabeth Ustinov. One of the Sargent family people.

WA: Oh, Flavia Ormond.

PH: Flavia.

WA: Yes, Flavia Ormond—

PH: Is she the sister of Richard?

WA: She's sister-in-law. And she had been—she's ["not"?] trained as an art historian, and then taught art history, and then became a dealer in Old Master drawings.

PH: Uh-huh. Right. OK. So you are involved with Sargent, and I will be giving a talk on Sargent tomorrow morning at the MFA.

WA: Oh, terrific.

PH: One of their classes. And I actually wanted—let me just turn this off—

[Recording stops, resumes.]

PH: I'm giving this talk tomorrow at the Museum of Fine Arts as part of one of their courses. It's basically an 80-minute lecture, or a 60-minute lecture, with then some Q&A at the end. And I just love getting back into Sargent. I mean, Sargent is the most brilliant painter that America produced in the nineteenth century as a painter. You know, he's just so interesting. So in this handout—you probably would appreciate it—in my handout, I quote from various people, and one of them, well, two of them—well, one of them—is Stanley Olson. You remember Stanley Olson.

WA: With great fondness.

PH: So he died. So it's a way to pay homage to Stanley Olson to quote him here—

WA: Yes.

PH: —so that his memory, you know, still stays with us. And also Gary Reynolds, who was a curator and was also involved—they were involved in a show that I did in 1986 at the Whitney.

WA: At the Whitney, sure.

PH: I loved doing that show, and I just think that Sargent is sort of [inaudible-  
"endlessly fascinating"?], you know? I mean, who else in American art? I mean, I know the whole Roger Fry argument, you know, because we read Roger Fry, and you know, he didn't see Sargent as a modernist, but in a way, Sargent *was*, you know, in terms of just responding to the—responding to the spontaneity of the light and the shadow and the spectacle, you know, and then getting that down in his own way.

WA: Well, I of course agree with you, and I think it becomes even more apparent in the current watercolor show at the Boston Museum, because certainly in a number of those—so many of those pictures, the ones that pop into my mind are the Carrara pictures of the blocks of white marble and the mountains and these tiny figures around them, but they're essentially abstract compositions, and Sargent is having a great time playing with [inaudible]. It screams out at you that he wasn't, this wasn't about recording nature, this was about making pictures, and it always was.

PH: Right. And he was a very disciplined person. I mean, in terms of—

WA: He was. He painted all the time. He painted all the time. He was like any great artist; it was a full-time job.

PH: Just—I mean, not that this is going to go into the interview, but I'm just curious as to your take on Trevor Fairbrother's general, sort of, thesis about Sargent being a gay man and the sort of homoerotic quality of his art. What's your take on that? This won't go into the—

WA: I don't know. Maybe he was, maybe he wasn't. I don't really know for sure. I think drawing male models was, in the studio, from a social point of view of current mores, it was easier to do that than have a naked woman in your—and these were still Victorian times. So whether these were lovers of his, or just he got some kind of thrill out of it, I think you could, you could, there probably is a spectrum of possibilities of how he responded to men. I know that there is no evidence that he had relationships with men. He seemed to have had very tentative relationships when he was younger with a few different women when he was an eligible bachelor. Whether he was overtly gay or closeted or—

PH: [Inaudible.]

WA: I don't know, and it really didn't matter a whole lot to me in terms of the way he was painting and what he was painting, because they're not—it really isn't relevant to him as an artist [inaudible].

PH: I remember Stanley Olson told me—Stanley Olson, who went through every single privately funded memoir of that time, in London—he said he never, ever found anything that even hints of Sargent being a gay man or homosexual or whatever you want to call it. I mean, I agree with you. And also, the definition of

what a gay man is is very different today than what it might have been then. You know, a lot of people repress their sexuality. Whatever their yearnings, they repress that. Men and women. ["Men" or "they"?] didn't marry. It didn't mean that they were having affairs with other women.

WA: Yeah. So I think it's a difficult call to make. And I think—I don't know that I've ever heard Richard come down on one side or the other.

PH: Well, Richard told me, when I brought it up, about Trevor's, you know, he said, "Poppycock!" [Laughs.] That was the word he used. No, it wasn't "poppycock." It was another word that's very much like that.

WA: So he didn't buy into it.

PH: He didn't buy into it.

WA: And I think strictly on—from the point of view of the evidence—

PH: Because of evidence.

WA: There really is no evidence. Most of his letters were burned when he died, and one could say that that was proof of something, but the fact is, when Sargent died [laughing] there was so much stuff.

PH: Right.

WA: They were overwhelmed with stuff.

PH: Right.

WA: I mean, aside from art, there was juvenalia, there was his library, there was piles of photography, family stuff, that they just dumped whatever they felt would never have any value. So I don't know that that says anything. And then as Stanley told you, there was never anything—I mean, for instance, with Frank Millet, the

painter, I know that Gerdt's discovered this whole cache of letters between Frank Millet and this other painter that were homoerotic, homosexual letters. So Frank Millet seems, was, went in that direction, and that seemed pretty definite. He was a married man with children. No such thing was ever found with Sargent. So, I don't know.

PH: Yeah.

WA: And I sort of gave up caring quite a while ago, 'cause it didn't seem very relevant to me.

PH: Right. So you right now are going to be opening up another gallery, in New York City on 57th Street, in the Crown Building, you said.

WA: Yes.

PH: So when is the big gala opening?

WA: I think April 2014. I'm not sure. We're not opening, we don't have a show scheduled yet for the opening, so it'll be kind of a softer opening. And we're going to do what we've been doing, and we're going to be doing some other things, and I'd like to get further into the 20th century, possibly into postwar things, and perhaps into some other contemporary artists that I like, and maybe some things Adam likes, and see what we can do.

PH: Is Adam going to join [inaudible] in New York?

WA: No, Adam's here, in Boston—

PH: He's going to stay here.

WA: —with his sister.

PH: OK. [To Adam.] You're going to stay here.

AA: I plan to, yeah.

PH: So we're not losing you. [Laughs.]

WA: He's going to stay here. And his brother Alan is going to work with me in the gallery.

PH: And your daughter is [inaudible].

WA: Alexa works here. Alexa works here in Boston.

PH: Good. [Laughs.] That's nice.

WA: It's amazing.

PH: Well, that's good that they—I mean, Adam is here, it's hard to talk about him when he's sitting here. [Laughter.] They love him at the Danforth.

WA: As well they should.

PH: Katherine [French] is just really pleased to have both Adam and this other younger person.

WA: I met her. Yes.

PH: Yeah. Right.

WA: And it's a great thing to have that young point of view on a board, to get that other perspective.

PH: Absolutely. And Katherine has been doing a great job—

WA: She is.

PH: —on a shoestring. I mean, there's nothing—you know. But the other—let's see, I think we're still going? OK. One last question: Do you have any words of advice to our graduate students about the field of American art, and about being a gallerist?

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WA: Well, I had the privilege of speaking—and it was thanks to you that I had the privilege of speaking at the graduation a couple of years ago when Adam graduated, and I spoke to some graduating art historians, and I feel that—what I told them, what I've told my kids, is to follow their passion and to do what they feel works the best for them in terms of their life and their taste and their interest. And that you're a rare and lucky person if you're able to do something that is fulfilling and stimulating and can also support you. I met a couple of weeks ago an Adelson Fellow, a young woman—I'm trying to remember her name.

PH: It was Rachel Tolano.

WA: Rachel.

PH: That was at this meeting that you had at BU?

WA: Yes.

PH: Rachel was the person who ["was there"?].

WA: Rachel, and what an impressive young woman. I mean, she was really an impressive young woman. And when I was talking to her to see what she was going to do, whether she was going to go into museum work, or research, or—she said without hesitation she wanted to teach art history. That was what she liked to do best. And, terrific. That's great.

PH: She's also organizing this exhibition on Gentry, Herb Gentry?

WA: Yes. She told me about that.

PH: And that's, you know, coming up very soon. So I've sort of been working with her, as her teacher. I mean, she is my student. But also, part of the whole Adelson Fellowships was to get them all to do these exhibitions, and so she's doing this. So

we're trying to fundraise for that now. She's just, you know, very, sort of, interested in the whole show, but I can tell that she really wants to be a teacher. She's not involved in, you know, the kind of hunt, you know. I mean, I always think of myself as both an academic, but also as a curator, and that idea of, you know, "Well, there's one more picture I have to see." And somebody will give me a reference to a picture. "OK, I have to go see it!" Even though it's maybe far away, or very difficult to get to [laughing], it's that "I've got to see it to see if it's going to work in the show."

WA: Sure.

PH: And I've had some of the Adelson Fellows like Stephanie Heydt, Mayer Heydt, curator at the High Museum, Atlanta.

WA: I've met her, yeah.

PH: So that's great that you met Rachel. So are there any other things that you would like to say [inaudible]?

WA: Well, we've covered an awful lot of ground [laughing] in terms of—I think that one of the great thrills of my career has been able [sic] to follow Sargent's trail, because not just—it's not simply about the art history I've learned, but the people that I've met. And I had the great fortune of, over the years, of meeting a number of Sargent's sitters that were very young when they were painted, and to hear their stories, and certainly meeting the whole Ormond-Sargent family, it has been an experience of visiting the gene pool by seeing—I see Sargent's bits and pieces in various relatives. There's one, Alexandra Hughes, is a great opera singer, so that great musical gene went to Alexandra. And there are others, Ian Hughes—

PH: What's her name? Alexandra?

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WA: H-U-G-H-E-S.

PH: Alexandra.

WA: Her brother Ian is a wonderful painter. And there are other family members that are involved in all facets that interested Sargent [laughing]. Tim, Richard's brother, is, among many, many, many talents, he's a brilliant man, but he's a great connoisseur of wine. And so many of the Sargent descendants have bits and pieces of Sargent. So in a way I've met him. In a way.

PH: Right. ["Puts it all together. That's good."?] OK, so—

[Recording stops. Side B continues, blank.]