

3-6-1973

Interview no. 66

Jan Herring

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Recommended Citation

Interview with Jan Herring by John H. McNeely and Patrick Quinn, 1973, "Interview no. 66," Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso.

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

INSTITUTE OF ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEWEE: Jan Herring
INTERVIEWER: John H. McNeely and Patrick Quinn
PROJECT: El Paso Area Artists
DATE OF INTERVIEW: March 6, June 5, 1973
TERMS OF USE: Unrestricted
TAPE NO.: 66
TRANSCRIPT NO.: 66
TRANSCRIBER: Patrick Quinn
DATE TRANSCRIBED: June 7, 1973

BIOGRAPHICAL SYNOPSIS OF INTERVIEWEE:

Artist.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW:

Autobiography; Ojo del Sol Art Gallery, Art as a field.

2 hours, 52 pages

Jan Herring
by John H. McNeely and Patrick Quinn
March 6, 1973

M: We usually begin these just asking where the person was born and when, if they care to say.

H: Well, it doesn't really matter as far as age--you can't hide that anyway. I was born in 1923 in a sheep ranch in Harve, Montana. It seems like an awfully long way from Texas, and it is. I never cared to go back up there, that part of the country.

M: It's too cold?

H: It sure is.

M: How long did you live there?

H: Well, about five years. Then my father moved us all to South Dakota. We lived there until I was nineteen. And that's just the same kind of climate. But I thought everybody lived that way. That summer is six weeks out of the year, and the rest of it you bundled up in galoshes and long underwear. And then, during the war I trained as a nurse and I served all during the war, and then in a Veteran's Hospital after the war for a short time.

Q: Did you get a chance to go overseas?

H: No, I served here.

M: Well, where did you go to school, Jan? In South Dakota?

H: In South Dakota. I had some college work there but all of it was science and pre-nursing. And then I finished my Nursing Degree in Ohio. And then I married a Texan; we came to Clint. But what can you do in Clint? Spend my life cooking and weigh 300 pounds or paint or do something. And then, too, I married a farmer, which makes it very long hours.

M: But you'd had a farming background, though. What was the name of this place in Montana?

H: Havre, which was a French Trading Post.

M: Oh, yes, like LeHavre, the port. Harbor is what it means. Then in South Dakota, where was it you lived?

H: In Aberdeen.

M: Aberdeen. Did your father have a sheep ranch there?

H: No, he was at that time working for the railroad. In fact, he homesteaded in Montana. And after he proved up his homestead, he sold it and started working for the railroad. And that was about the time of the Depression and he was pretty fortunate to be able to feed his family.

M: What was your father's name?

H: Brice Mantel.

M: That sounds kind of French, too.

H: No, it's German. The last name was originally Mantle. But he changed it to Mantel, which is a German name.

M: Was he born in the U.S.?

H: He was born in Ohio.

M: Is he still alive?

H: No.

M: And how about your mother?

H: Well, she was born in Arkansas and she's been dead about two years. I have a sister and brother living, and that's all of the family.

M: But Havre, and then the town in South Dakota--Aberdeen--about how big is that?

H: That was 18,000 when I lived there and it's probably about the same. Nobody lives in South Dakota, if they can help it.

M: It's not a place where there were Indians, was it?

H: Oh, yes, we had lots of Indians.

M: What kinds of Indians?

H: Well, I don't know what they were, as far as tribes, but we went to school with Indians. There was a Reservation quite close to us. Of course, the government buses them in and pays all of their expenses. They're just wards of the state is what they are--and college educations and so forth. I've been interested in this Wounded Knee controversy, coming from that country up there and knowing how well the Indians were cared for there. I think it's just the most ridiculous thing. Maybe they have a gripe, I don't know.

M: Aberdeen, is it down in southern South Dakota?

H: No, it's northeast, near the Minnesota line.

M: I don't know just what Indians would be up in that part. You went through high school at Aberdeen?

H: Yes, and part of college there.

M: What is the college that's there?

H: Northern State Teachers was what it was then. I don't know if it's changed its name or not. It was a nice little town, a little college town with a good atmosphere. If you like winter sports, it's great.

Q: Skiing?

H: Well, there wasn't any hills, it was just flat country. There was nothing but a picket fence between there and Alaska. That's it.

M: Well, it's up in those parts that Hubert Humphrey comes from.

H: He sure does. He's from Minnesota and McCarthy is from South Dakota.

M: Did you go to some kind of a nursing school?

H: Yes.

M: Where was that?

H: Well, I started in Aberdeen, in St. Luke's Hospital. [That's] what it was at that time. And it was just at the beginning when the government was training doctors and nurses and paying them a stipend. They're doing it on a much larger scale now. But they were training these people so that they could have adequate medical people to care for them, the war wounded.

M: Well, you were coming along there during the Second World War.

H: The Second World War. I was 19, I guess, when it all broke out.

M: Are you a Registered Nurse?

H: Yes, I am.

M: But you haven't done any of it for a long time.

H: A long time. I worked in surgery here in El Paso when I first moved here.

M: At Beaumont?

H: No, at Hotel Dieu. I did some private nursing after that, then I got very intrigued with painting, which I have done all my life. But I really got an opportunity to do some studying. Also, having children and raising a family and...

M: During the Second World War, now, you were in the military services as a nurse?

H: Not actually military, but it was a government program where they trained us and we served a certain length of time in either the Army, Navy, or Veteran, but always under the nursing service. Now, you could go into Armed Forces, you could actually join the Army, if you wished. Or, you could just serve out your time as working for the government in Veteran's Hospitals or as a civilian in Army and Navy Hospitals.

M: And where were you sent then? Or where did you go?

H: I did my train for the government--or payback work, it was called--in

Dayton, Ohio, at a Veteran's Hospital there. I worked with quite a lot of young veterans in the Psychiatric Ward, which was the most interesting thing that I did in that service. And a lot of the boys was shell-shocked and we had a whole ward of paraplegics which was very sad, but very interesting, too. But at that time there had been no work really done with these boys. And they didn't know what they could do, how long they could prolong their lives. It was really a Research Center there.

M: Then you came from Dayton to here?

H: Well, pretty much. I was married in Columbus, Ohio; when my husband got back from overseas, we married.

M: Where did you meet him?

H: I met him in South Dakota. He was an Air Force Cadet there while I was in Nurse's training. They sent boys up there because the land is so flat; they felt it was a good training area, a pilot training area.

M: Was he from here?

H: Well, he was born in Kentucky, but he has lived here since he was about 13 or 14 years old.

M: His father was a farmer then? So, then after his service, you were married and you came here and have been here ever since?

H: Ever since. In fact, there are not many people that go to Clint on their honeymoons and I wouldn't really recommend it. Well, there used to be a theatre here. That's before your time.

Q: Yes, my mother told me about it. There was a hotel, too.

H: Yes, that's right. And a drugstore. And a bank.

Q: Remember the old railroad terminal they had, too?

H: Oh, yes. Of course, this settlement's about 100 years old, so at that

time, it would have had to have pretty much. You just didn't get into a buggy and run to El Paso twice a day.

M: Who was it named for?

H: Well, I understand--and now this is just strictly hearsay, but the old folks say that the first man to settle here was named Clint, and consequently the town got its name from him. And he lived in this house. At that time, it was one or two rooms.

M: Well, it's about the oldest house in town?

H: It is the oldest house in town. Which isn't terribly old, but its old for Clint. And the house next door...these two houses were built at the same time.

Q: The one we live in used to be the school. It's across from the Catholic Church.

H: Oh, I know that one.

M: Well, did your father-in-law own this house?

H: No, his farm is east of town.

M: You and your husband bought this house then?

H: Yes.

M: But these Clints have long since disappeared?

H: I think so. In fact, no one seems to know anything about them, except that that was the name of the man who first settled in the area, or built the first house.

M: Well, Jan, how did you happen to get interested in art?

H: Well, I'm just very talented and I've always painted, and it's an expression that I've always used to let out my feelings.

M: Did they have art in your high school?

H: Yes, they did. In fact, as a younger child than that I was given some special education by the high school art department, and of course it was limited art all over at that time, except in big cities.

M: This was in Aberdeen?

H: Yes, back in Aberdeen. And so I had special classes with the high school program at the time I was in grade school. It kept me interested and I just really loved it.

M: Well, you've really been painting since childhood then, but after you married you became more interested in it?

H: Well, I got some serious study. Before this all my training was in nursing and I was very involved in the war. Everyone was trying to do something. And then I happened to...this sounds really silly. McCall's Magazine was putting out a design competition, and you had to decorate a room that you had in the house. So I took a room and designed a nursery, using the building that I had and the furniture and rugs and draperies and so forth, and designs that I would use in this room. And I submitted it to McCall's Magazine and I won first prize. So I had \$150.00, and at that time we were very poor. And I'd heard about this very famous teacher who was teaching in Cloudcroft, New Mexico a couple of weeks during the summer. He's world famous now, his name is Frederick Taubes. And so I thought, "I'll just take that, it's only \$50." And I had two babies at the time. "And I'll just go up there and I'll study for two weeks." Well, I got so excited with this man. He was a fabulous teacher and he was very encouraging to me, so I began to really take it seriously. And he encouraged me to believe that I had a good chance of being a good painter. And even 20 years ago, women still were not accepted in the arts to any degree. I did

two, three summer sessions with him of two weeks apiece. The rest of the time, I spent painting at home. Then I'd take work to him every year when I'd come back to the area. He'd give me a critique and tell me what I was doing. And then I began to teach with him. I taught with him for about three years when he'd come here.

M: Some of those who have studied with him seem to very much affected by his style. It seems like you have developed a very independent style from his.

H: It's really more French than it is anything. Well, it's unusual because there isn't any French influence that I'm aware of.

M: Well, I was thinking of ones like Pat Swallow and Dorothy Haye. Do you remember her?

H: They've both been students of mine.

M: But their work isn't particularly like yours, is it?

H: No. I would say not at all. The beautiful thing about this man's Taubes knowledge and technique was that it was a technique of masters and not individual. However, he had himself a definite style. There are so many people studying with teachers who will pick up that style of the professor. This is true in any kind of education, especially with a strong teacher. Then they don't have the creativity or individuality of expression to take that same technique and say what they have to say. So, consequently, we see a teacher who has strength and influence, with many, many copyists.

M: Of course a really good teacher will urge an individual student to develop their own style.

H: There are very few students really capable of doing that.

M: You feel he was your main influence?

H: Oh, yes, very definitely.

M: Have you had any other people that you've studied with?

H: Well, here in El Paso, I studied with Wiltz Harrison in enameling, and I found him to be an excellent teacher. He knows his craft very well. And he taught me a great deal. Of course, he's not a painter, but I do lots of other things. And outside of that, I've taken some art drawing classes at Texas Western, which is...the best way to learn how to draw is to get into a life drawing class and just work for two or three years.

M: Who were the instructors?

H: Massey was the instructor then. It's been a good number of years ago, 18 I guess.

M: In developing your own style, what have you particularly tried to emphasize? You seem to have certain types of things, florals and portraits.

H: I do a lot of figure painting too, other than just portraits. Well, I really paint landscapes and street scenes and flower paintings, and I paint a great deal for the market. I earn a lot of money every year. People can criticize me what they like but you have to make this thing pay. So a lot of this is what you know. For instance, flower paintings are bread and butter paintings. You can never have enough flower paintings for the market. And then the same thing with street scenes--they're just always good and make you money. I don't think that because they're doing for a market that they are particularly bad or good for that matter. If you turn out 10 or 12 really good paintings a year, you're exceptional. And the rest of them have to fall in the mediocre class.

M: Do you have a group of galleries that you deal with?

H: Yes, I've got eight galleries that I try to keep supplied, mostly in Texas. In fact, all in Texas. Of course, I have a studio in Cloudcroft, New Mexico,

and we show up there all the time and I have a show all the time at the lodge up there. But I've gotten more and more localized. I've had two New York shows. But I feel that that is a...I hate to say racket, because that sounds paranoid. But the situation in New York is such that you practically have to buy your show. That is, you buy your space and hang. In other words, anybody can hang in New York. It didn't used to be that way. So to have a New York show now doesn't mean anything. In other words, if it isn't a special privilege, why go to New York?

The truth is, and I'm not the only one to feel this way, the center of the art movement in this country is moving to the Southwest. So, if you can show in Ft. Worth, Texas, it is one of the best places in the country or the western civilization to show your work. And of course with the new Kimball Museum in Ft. Worth, this town is going to be on the map, art-wise. They've got four museums. It's fantastic! And the people there know what they're buying. So if you ever show in Ft. Worth, you're showing to an intelligent clientele. They are more knowledgeable than any place else that I have observed. I don't know how I got off on that.

M: Well, I hear some of the galleries in New York are charging up to two-thirds commission on the price of the picture.

H: Plus, you rent your space. You're not making anything. In fact, it's going to come out costly. The only reason that you would do it at all would be for prestige; just snowing the public. And if you need it, that's great. And if you can afford it, that's all right.

M: But you'll be able to say ever afterwards that you showed in New York.

H: That's right. But in both cases that I showed in New York, one was a prize for national competition, which was a one-woman show, and the other was an

invitational show. I felt, at the time, that it was a worthwhile thing to do. Of course, it didn't cost me. It isn't that way anymore.

M: You have a gallery in Ft. Worth that you've dealt with for a long time?

H: A good number of years at The Patio Gallery there, right across from the new Kimball Museum.

M: There's a number of galleries around that place, then. Well, you say you're more or less limiting them now to Texas, though. Is there any particular reason for that?

H: There's a very good reason for that. Art in this country is getting more regional. You build a reputation. Like here, it's a tri-state thing-- New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas; if you can build a good name here and get some good prices. But, if you move to the northwest, even if you carry your biographical material with you, you still have to start at the beginning, to train the eye of the people to buy your paintings. So, it takes another 15 or 20 years unless you're being promoted by a big national art market of some kind. Also, art has become so regional because there are so many museums now in the region. It's no longer just New York, San Francisco, or Los Angeles or Chicago. So now in Roswell, New Mexico, you have a museum, or the Sand Hills Museum in Monahans, Texas, a museum in Beaumont, Texas. Who knows about Beaumont? Where's Beaumont?! Everything is becoming centered around these art centers and becoming the nucleus for the surrounding region. For instance, El Paso. The stimulation that this Museum in El Paso has made has been unreal; it's been so tremendous. Now, people outside of the art family wouldn't know that, but the artists certainly feel it.

M: Do you think this could be a possibility, too, that the people who buy art,

the middle classes, would like to have original paintings and do they tend, perhaps, to buy local artists?

H: They buy what they see and what's available. And wherever you go--east, south, north, west--I would say these artists are more regional artists than local artists. This region is where they are showing and where they represent, and people buy it. I think, too, that there's a great deal to say about training the eye to look at a kind of expression. People are seeing that and are accustoming themselves to that and they like it.

I had a really peculiar experience during the last year I was teaching at Oklahoma City. They hired me to teach and I found that there are some very talented people there, as in any place. Talent is a cheap commodity. These people were painting in a style of all triangles. All their paintings were built in a diagonal composition and they would even strike through one corner to the other, which is very poor composition. Yet, so many of these people were doing this that this was maybe a phenomenon. I had a discussion and it came from the local teacher who had been teaching these people for so many years, and it brought up a whole new group of painters. And they trained their eye to the point where they actually like that. I had a show there and sold one or two pieces of it. And from that point it went to Eastman, Texas, which is a very small community of three or four thousand people. We sold the show out there. It wasn't very far away from Oklahoma City. But these people in Eastman were used to going to Dallas and Ft. Worth and various other places. The Texas painters are a very fine bunch of painters. The people in Eastman never went to Oklahoma City to buy a painting. In other words, the style of the area or region attracts the people who will purchase--good or bad. As I said, even the

poorest artists now are making a living at it.

M: Well, of course, here in a region like this it would be particularly desert paintings. /For instance/, Eugene Thurston.

H: That's true, but that's an old school here. You're not seeing very much of that anymore. It isn't continuing.

M: Louis Teel and _____ Boone.

H: Desert used to be the only thing you could sell here when I first started painting. But I've never painted a desert, so I didn't do too well those first few years.

M: Don't you think there's a problem here, though, in El Paso, that it's always seemed to be kind of a weak place to be interested in art?

H: Well, I think that's only because it's so isolated. There just isn't anything coming in from outlying areas. It's small, there's a small population. So, if you're going to depend on El Paso to support you, you never will do it. But there's no reason why you can't look at the whole of Texas and New Mexico and Arizona if you like--I would prefer that to Oklahoma--as a market.

M: Well, these contacts you've made now in these various galleries in Texas, you can make a living and support yourself as a professional artist.

H: I do support myself. Plus I make ten or twelve thousand dollars teaching just whenever I want to. Three months out of the year, I suppose, I teach, but only maybe four days here, a week there, and two weeks someplace else. The way I teach is that a group will organize and hire me to come in at a fee.

M: But that's outside of El Paso?

H: Outside of El Paso, I don't teach here. I teach in Cloudcroft, New Mexico.

Now, the El Paso Art Association contracts me.

M: I was still thinking about art galleries here in El Paso. Have we ever had a really successful one?

H: One that made money? And I guess you have to count its success that way. I don't know of one.

M: You are the owner of the one.

H: Yes.

M: You always have been?

H: I was part-owner at one time.

M: Oh, but now you are the full owner of it.

H: Of course, this whole La Villita thing was put up with the Civic Center in mind, as a tourist center. And of course the Civic Center is so goofed up, I don't know if it's ever going to get on the ball. And I don't know how long we can stay open.

M: You sound like you're thinking of closing?

H: I am. As far as a successful gallery, it is gorgeous. There's beautiful people represented there. As far as aesthetics; yes, it's a success. That's something I really enjoy doing. And it's one of the biggest galleries in all of the southwest.

M: What is it you call it?

H: Ojo del Sol. But it doesn't make money and it's kind of an expensive hobby.

M: You have to pay someone to run it for you?

H: Yes, I even have employees down there. Of course, the whole property is pretty expensive, the whole operation is expensive down there.

M: You have to pay rent?

H: Yes, the property is leased by the La Villita Association. It's an association

and I'm not sure who is in there.

M: It would seem like once the Convention Center gets really rolling that it ought to bring people.

H: It ought to, that's the whole purpose of the thing. But when is that going to be? It's a year late now and the theatre is not going to be open for another year, and then it takes another two years to get everything really rolling. The whole La Villita project, seems to me, was five years ahead of time. El Paso's not going to support anything like that. It hasn't supported it, and it isn't going to. It's too small an area, and the buying public in El Paso is smaller than most cities its size. There are more low income people here than other cities of this size. So, I don't really see any hope for it within a couple of years.

M: Well, Downtown El Paso seems to be kept alive, mostly, by the people from Juárez. I don't know if they would be interested in an art gallery. But I have been down there to some of those places at La Villita. You know Víctor Navarro? He had a place there, which he doesn't anymore. But there did seem to be a continuous flow of people.

H: I think, had it opened now... So many of these people went in and they're just trying to hold on with expensive rent, explosive overhead; and three or four years of that is impossible for most people. And even if you do stand it, as I have, when it does start making money, will you ever get your money back on it?

M: Well, it seems that the galleries here are run by people that don't really have to make money on them, like Nancy Crook. And Cita really isn't in desperate shape either, Cita Platt. Schuster it is now.

H: And the Marlborough Gallery. I don't know if that's still open or not.

- M: No, Mrs. Schlusberg...I'm sure the rent was pretty heavy. She was trying to go. I don't know whether she has a gallery in her home or not. Some people out there were protesting that it's not commercial property.
- H: She probably has enough clientele. She just might make it that way. Now the Jinx Gallery is open in El Paso, up there on Mesa.
- M: Oh, yes.
- H: They're making it. But the reason they're doing it is not in the gallery, but they make picture frames and have a gift shop. Also they teach classes there. They've got a pretty nice operation there.
- M: Oh, they've even enlarged it.
- H: My daughter teaches there.
- M: Well, tell us something about your children.
- H: Well, they're just wonderful kids, of course, first of all. They're all involved in the arts to some degree. My daughter majored in it in college. She's done more with it than anyone and she's serious about taking this quite a bit further.
- M: She mostly does these enamels?
- H: She paints also, and teaches painting.
- M: She teaches at the Jinx?
- H: And she teaches with me at Cloudcroft sometimes. Enameling is a very specialized and almost unknown expression. The reason that people know up here, of course, is because of the College and Wiltz Harrison. He has taught it 25 years now and has built a following for it. People know what it is, but it's a very ancient art and very few people do it in this country. Of course, she's been at it for ten or 12 years herself and she's getting very, very good in it.

M: She went to UTEP, then?

H: No, she's a graduate of Texas Women's University.

M: In Denton?

H: And then she studied with me, of course.

M: But she studied with Wiltz?

H: No, I studied with Wiltz, and taught her what I knew. And she, as an undergraduate at Texas Women's University, was teaching an enameling course.

M: What is your daughter's name?

H: Helen Fay Green, now.

M: Your son is interested in art, too?

H: Well, he's very talented and he's done quite a bit of illustration and this kind of thing in his school years. But now he's farming with his father. But he's also asked for a drawing book for Christmas and he's doing some work on his own. With him, it'll be a hobby, something that he can use as a relaxing...well, you never know. He's a very talented boy. But now he's interested in raising calves and cattle.

M: And what is his name?

H: His name is William. And then our little one, our eleven-year-old boy, is named Brice for my father. He's also been enameling for three or four years and he's done some real cute things. I don't know that he'll continue on. I haven't tried to force any of the children into it. I feel that they need to find their own, what they want to be. But it's here if they want it and they have enjoyed it.

Q: But they can't help but be influenced.

H: Right. But it's their life and whatever they want is what they're going to do, so... We were really amazed that this boy came back, and he's a

graduate of Texas A & M.

M: Your eldest son?

H: And now he's farming. He was a political science major. We find very few people that are working in the fields that they study. And I think that's quite amazing. But it's true all over.

M: Well, if food prices keep going up, that may well be the thing to do, be a farmer.

H: Well, food prices are going to go up some more. But you know, that's interesting because it seems to me that instead of griping about food prices...of course I'm a farmer's wife, of course the farmers are making the money, yes -- the first time in years and years. The farmer is on his feet. But still the average American income, only 16 percent of that income is going for food, which is the lowest in the recorded history of the world. But you never hear about that. But now instead of just buying food and clothing, food and shelter, you have to have a tv set and three cars and a European trip, here and there. Our standard of living is so high that people think 16 percent of our income going for food is too high. It's never been lower.

M: In comparison to other things.

H: Some people spend almost 100 percent of their salaries for food in other areas of the world.

M: Well, the Secretary of Agriculture was here recently and the papers quoted him as saying all of that.

H: Nixon was talking about trying to put a ceiling on beef. Well, of course under a free enterprise system, when a farmer stops making money, he's going to stop growing food. And there's no imports available anymore. It

used to be that you could import from Australia and South America. But now, those people are short also. We're not importing meat anymore. There's no way that you're going to make the farmer grow meat for less than it costs.

M: I was thinking, Jan, out there at Cloutcroft, in the summer, is that where Frank Gervasi is teaching?

H: Yes, now he teaches with the Raymond Froman School. Froman's been there 20 years, and this man works in his school of painting there. I think there are four or five teachers that teach in that group. My school is separate.

M: Are there more than these two now?

H: Well, last year there was a young man up there teaching jewelry, and several crafts were going on during the summer. So it looks as though it might grow into kind of a summer art complex.

M: Well, at Ruidoso, there's a series of classes.

H: That's right, they go all summer long up there.

M: Kolliker and Cogar and all those. Summer's a big time for artists.

H: And that's a great place to go in the summertime.

M: There is something in connection with art that I always like to ask artists about. It's the matter of what artists should charge for his works. It seems to me, some professional artists that I know have charged so much that they almost price themselves out of the field. And others who seem awfully good, their prices are too low. So there's a problem of charging.

H: Well, it's a matter of charging what the public will allow, and depending on how much production you have, and how strong is your ego. But if you want to make money out of it, you've got to meet the competition just like any

other kind of business. If you go at it in a business sense, that's the way to do it. So the artist is very foolish, in my opinion, to out-price himself, if he's got a production line coming. But if he stops producing, that's another thing. There's just a limit to what he's got. If you have a good reputation then you can go up. I advise my students to keep the prices as low as possible and raise them very slowly. Don't make any big jumps--10 percent, maybe over every two or three years. As they build their reputation, they can raise their prices.

But if you want to compete, this can be foolish, and I've seen a number of my friends do that. You know a jump from \$3000 or \$4000 for a painting. Well, says it's not worth it, but in the market today where you're selling to a limited clientele, you're not selling to collectors. Like this guy who came by to see Manny. There's a guy who's got four or five million dollars but he still wanted to pay \$300 for a painting, because everywhere in the country you can get a good painting for \$300. What are you doing charging \$3000, unless you've got a national reputation or an international reputation? And that's a very hard thing to get.

M: Well, Manuel Acosta is one that I particularly have in mind. It seems to me that he has gotten his prices too high.

H: He's in trouble. Because he's got to know that if he's going to sell he's got to compete with me, and my highest price is \$1500. \$1600 is as much as I would have gotten for a painting. And they are not very often.

M: Do you have any particular paintings that stand out that you could talk about?

H: I have a number. I'm trying to place them in my children's collections as an inheritance to them, and also into museums. I have a number in museums.

I kept these because I felt that...well, I have sold some very good paintings, but I've kept a good number that my children especially like and they're old enough now to make their own selections. And I've given them a group of what I consider some of my best paintings and then let them choose from these. That's if I ever do have a reputation of any merit, outside of a regional reputation, they'll have that at least, they'll have that pleasure.

M: Of course. Well, these that you have kept, are they displayed here in your home?

H: Some of them are. And some my children have. My two older, married children have them. And then I have a storeroom built on, in back, that is also full of paintings.

M: You say you have some in museums?

H: Public collections. Many, many private collections but also public collections. The Roswell Museum, Pocatello U. has one, and New Mexico. Pocatello is in Idaho. I teach up there about a couple of weeks out of the year, in the summer. I'm in the Grumbacher National Collection.

M: Just what is Grumbacher?

H: Grumbacher is a manufacturer of paint. But they also have collected and grouped up paintings of American painters in their private collection. It's a young collection, but it's a good collection. Of course, I'd like to be in the Metropolitan Museum.

M: Well, they've been having a tremendous controversy there.

H: Who cares! It's about the greatest museum in the world.

M: It's about the present director, you know. Selling and disposing of some of the special treasures they've received over the years, whether he should dispose of them or not, and all that kind of controversy. Well, you've

had many one-man, or one-woman shows, haven't you?

H: Yes, I do about five a year, some at galleries and invitation shows.

Well, I've shown at the Tulsa Art Museum, the Santa Fe Art Museum, and the El Paso Art Museum, and several more. There has been a number of university shows. I feel that this a good place to build a reputation. And also I don't compete anymore in competition shows, only in shows of that nature where I have an invitation--in other words, when it's an invitational show and I've been asked to exhibit with a group. It's not so much that I feel I'm just so much better than anybody, it's just too much trouble. And I don't need it, prestige-wise, so I don't compete. I keep enough paintings on hand all the time--my better things--and I can send out a show within a month. That's if I get an offer that sounds good, a university or a museum. So, I'm always ready to exhibit.

M: Well, I remember, maybe it was six or seven years ago at the museum here, there was a four-woman show and then a four-man show. Weren't you in on that? I've forgotten who the the other three were. It was from New Mexico.

H: Louise Easley, wasn't it? A very fine painter. And Ruth Sheer is from Dallas and she's now deceased.

M: And Creeman Crainan, I think she was the fourth. I remember that show very well. And then the four men replied. Somehow, we haven't had, here in our museum, one-man shows particularly.

H: Well, it was originally against their policy of having local one-man shows. And the reason for that, at that time--I was sitting on the board--was that they were afraid that they would be so harrassed by everyone that could paint much, to have a one-man show. They just made the rule that there would be none. And so to get around it they could group it and it

wouldn't be specifically a one-woman show. And this is how they get around this kind of thing. And of course they made some special exceptions, which they should, when they had a Lea Show.

M: Tom Lea?

H: Yes. So he should have all the recognition possible in the museum.

M: You say you were on the Board of Directors?

H: I was in on the Board at the time this policy was made. That's why I happen to know it. And I had always been resident at that time with the museum.

M: Would you care to comment any, particularly about the museum? You say you feel it's a help.

H: Well, it's been a tremendous help. And I think this is true in art. I've talked to a number of other artists where this situation has come up, where they have open museums in the area. And it stimulates the whole population, which consequently stimulates sales--that's good if you're trying to make a living of it--and all kinds of interests and activities that center around it. It's an educational building. Now, as far as how it runs and how it's operated, I would like to see it done well. But I think the mere fact that it's there and we have the Kress Collection, personally that's enough for me.

M: I remember clearly, when we voted on the bond issue when we got the offer of the Kress Collection, it wasn't at all certain that it would go through, but it did. They seemed to have some trouble though, in the running of it and getting directors.

H: well, now, every museum has troubles. It was nothing unusual for us to have problems. But still it doesn't take away from the value of our

institution. And we have one very good thing there: we have open galleries. We have room to bring in shows. We've had some good shows there, and we'll have some more good shows. So many museums are closed. That is, the building houses the collection and they have no galleries that are open. They are completely filled with the collections. This museum has two big open galleries and another downstairs. I guess they could use it if they had to. They are opened to travelling shows. For instance, a craft show will be there. This is an excellent show. But this is a regional show too, of craftsmen in the area. And this is just excellent. And the Sun Carnival Show is always there. This is national now. It used to be regional.

M: Well, it gets to be a regular institution in the community. And then the art classes there, do you feel that that's efficient?

H: Well, I certainly do. Again, whether you feel that they have the right teachers or the right program, the mere fact that they have it and something's being done that's a continuous program has got to be of value.

M: You've never taught.

H: Yes, I have taught. I taught high school kids. This has been 10 or 12 years ago. It seems like ages. I don't think that I ever had so much fun in my whole life. And so many of them went on from there. They had no intentions when they started that class of making art their profession, but so many of them did. I still hear from some of those kids. I really enjoyed them. They enjoyed me and I enjoyed them. That's great.

M: You taught them about once a week. And what would be the title of your course?

H: I don't remember what it was called, but it was a painting course. I taught them both drawing and oil painting. And at that time it was sponsored

by the Junior League. And it was very inexpensive for them, of course; they didn't pay their teachers anything, but I just got a real big kick out of it. I love that age to teach because they're like sponges and they're so interested and vital. They can do some of the most creative things.

M: Do you have students that come here to your studio?

H: No, not anymore. I used to teach here some but I got really lazy. The only teaching I do in this area, unless it's a specific job, is at Cloudcroft. And I draw people there from New York and Canada and Washington and México. I get them from all over the country. I teach for four weeks up there in the summertime.

M: That's wonderful. You have your summer home and studio up there, too?

H: Yes. Really, it's also a winterized house. And the studio is open...well, the gallery part is open when we're up there.

M: Well, Jan, are you a member of the El Paso Art Association?

H: No, I'm not at the present time. I just haven't paid my dues. But I certainly think that it's a good organization. And I have been a member and have been very active in it for the last 15 or 17 years.

M: Were you President of it?

H: No, I never was President.

M: What use do you think that type of organization is in the community?

H: Well, in a community, it is a nucleus from which raises an art element, not only interest but education. Now, I know that these associations sometimes have a bad reputation because all of the Sunday painters belong to it. But there are a few of those Sunday painters that develop into very fine painters. And the reason they do is /because/ we got these groups organized and got some money. Now, they're even getting national

funds and they bring in teachers from all over. For anything they want to study, they'll get together and enough students will pay \$50 and bring this teacher in and have a workshop, five days, six days, ten days. And they're able to do this, where, for instance UTEP doesn't want these people. They really don't want these people. They're not set up to handle this kind of an educational program. But by doing this, the art organizations can teach themselves, and through some of the finest instructors in the country.

Now, true, probably 60 percent of these people will never make...many of these people don't even have the talent. But it stimulates the interest. Every person that picks up a brush is influencing somebody else. Maybe not to pick up a brush, but interested in art. And this increases the market, the painting market. And it educates. It gets people into galleries. People will see it in street shows, and eventually, their taste improves. If they're looking, and the artists are improving, and if they're making these classes available to themselves they're going to improve. But they're also going to improve if they do nothing but just paint. They'll improve without any instruction. So, I think these organizations are certainly a worthwhile thing. Myself, personally, I don't belong to one. But I don't need the stimulant of a group to work. And I've put in enough hours in community efforts. I've done all those things. And I'm through with all those things, you know, on that scale. I'm personally not interested but I think they're very good. But I was active in it and I was also active in the museum.

Q: Jan, on your last tape, you were talking about the El Paso Art Association and some of the workshops that you were teaching. Would you care to go into what they were like and who you taught?

H: Actually, I have taught one workshop for the El Paso Art Association. I've lectured for them several times, but it was sponsored by the Association and there were two classes a day for a week, which is a pretty concentrated teaching program. We had about 20 students, I guess. It was pretty successful as far as I was concerned. There were some semi-professional people there.

Q: What was the age group?

H: Oh, we had them from about 30 to sixty.

Q: What were you teaching?

H: I was teaching oil painting technique--well, as much as you can get in in that short of a time. It had to be pretty concentrated. In teaching composition, which is a specialty of mine anyway (which even the professional painters don't understand composition), if they can get some ground work, this makes painting so much easier.

Q: Composition as far as colors are concerned?

H: Well, composition dealing with the whole scope of the painting. That's the structure and the rhythm and the color. It has to do with many things in the balance of the painting. It's quite complicated, obviously, because there are only about five percent of the people who are painting who understand what it is or even attempt to do something about it.

Q: What is the biggest problem that they have?

H: Well, the fact is, is that they don't understand composition in that they are thinking more motif than they are design. And design has to be the

foundation of every good painting. You can call it anything you like. You can say it has to be balanced or it has to work. Some people say that it either works or it doesn't work. But the whole key to it is beginning with the abstract pattern rather than, say, a vase of flowers. When you want to paint a bouquet of roses, you get so intrigued by the bouquet of roses that you aren't tying up the design elements of the composition. With good composition it doesn't make any difference what the subject is. You can put anything on top of good composition.

Q: Do you find that most people start out with something that they want to draw and just put it on the canvas and don't really think about composition?

H: This is inspiration. You start out by visualizing something in your mind that you want to paint. So you first begin with an idea. Now, it doesn't necessarily have to be a subject, a realistic subject. It can be a non-objective pattern that you are seeing. But you really begin without any thought of composition. And when you start to put the thing together, you have to tie it up. Primarily, this is why I wrote this book. It deals specifically with composition. And it's interesting because it is a new approach to composition. It isn't that it has anything new to say as far as the constant principles of composition, but it is the way that it is presented to the student and to the teacher in giving them a symbol to work with so that they have a foundation to approach.

When I was a student, it all began way back then. My teacher who was a very fine technician and craftsman, which we discussed on the previous tape, actually was unaware of how to teach composition. I remember asking him one time, "Well, how do you know whether you are right or wrong?" He said, "Well, you don't. You have a sensitivity about it. And you either

have this sensitivity or you don't. And if you don't have it, you can't be taught composition." Well, for a number of years, I went on with this idea. Of course, I was one of the fortunate ones in that I did have this sensitivity of balance, you could call it, so that my percentage of good paintings was probably more than the average. But in teaching, when I got really involved in teaching, I felt that there had to be a way of making the student more aware of his problems and a way of teaching it to them. And I had been watching a guy in New York. He had been working with Chinese letters, and he was really using this letter as an end result or an end purpose. In other words, the painting came out of this abstract Chinese symbol, which of course, was abstract to us. And it is to anyone unless you understand Chinese or read it.

So I began to think, if you had some kind of abstract symbol that everybody understood that would work with all the principles of composition, you could begin in this way to teach a student what is abstract pattern. So, because I have already tried this in my classes, I say, "All right, instead of drawing that bouquet of flowers, we're going to just draw an abstract pattern." Well, I still got only five percent of the class that could do that. In other words, that is still not a basic enough a teaching principle because you have to teach abstract pattern first so they'll understand.

Q: So, in other words, they couldn't draw an abstraction; they were just confused.

H: They didn't even seem to know what it was except for this five percent that seem to know anyway. It comes out this way in class. You get five percent of your class that understand it. So, anyway, I decided to try this other

system. So I gave them the whole English alphabet. Everybody knows their abc's, so we'll start right there. And as I was working with this, I realized very quickly that you couldn't use all of the letters. But you could use a few of them. So I broke it down and eliminated it so that it came down to the "I" and the "L" and "T", "X", and the "Y"; using all straight line symbols. And then I categorized them into paralleling symbols--that is "H", and other symbols like the "X" that run in a diagonal pattern. I then set up rules to go with these various symbols. And I put the constant principles of composition with this--that is, these laws that have come down through the ages of what is composition. And one of them is that you must equalize light and dark so that you have this imprint of the abstract pattern on the paper. And another very important principal is that you have to use the total space in this given area.

Q: Don't waste your space, but center your pattern.

H: In other words, you tie it up just like a string. So if you take a letter, say an L, and you stretch it through the entire surface and you equalize your light and dark enough--that is, you make the L dark enough and wide enough so that it assumes half of the space in dark or half of the space in light--you take care of two principles right there. You have the abstract design you have the light and shade, and you have use of the total space. And then to help with this balance and to understand focal point and entrance and all these things that are very confusing to a student, mostly because they have gotten a lot of wrong information about it, I use the S and the C, the curved symbols, put together so that they are placed in the central area of the surface and don't touch the outside areas. And then by using the color on these specified rhythms, you're carrying color through the

Whole thing and locating focal point in its proper place. And it makes it so simple that a student can begin, say with the letter L, and a vase of flowers and a color overlay with the symbol and they've got half of their problems licked right there.

Q: So the whole idea is to get the students to get an abstract design for better composition.

H: You have to have composition. See, without composition you haven't got a painting, no matter how well you put that color on there. In any university before you can take any kind of drawing classes or painting classes, you have to have design classes. And this is what they are talking about; trying to teach a student to balance things and make it work in a given area. But previous to this book, for instance, they all say, "You have to have so much positive and negative space," which I disagree with, right there. I don't believe that you have to have any negative space. But just telling them what this is and explaining it to them doesn't give them an effective way of handling space. Until you get 10, 20 years of experience, well, then, of course, you know it. You do it by trial and error. There should be a way of teaching it. And I have had very rewarding results with this book, especially from the teachers all over the country who are using it in their classes. Because this gives them a way of teaching composition to their students which they are very grateful to have. And it works, beautifully. But once you understand... You know, it's amazing. If you talk to a professional about this theory of composition, you immediately see the advantage for the beginner who doesn't know anyway. He is just stumbling along and has no idea about what problems are involved. But especially the teachers run into this problem all of the time: "How do you

get this across to the student?"

Q: What has been the circulation of your book? I mean, how has it gone over, generally, all over the country? Or is it just a regional circulation?

H: Well, we published and printed it ourselves. Guynes printed it for us and we published it. So the first edition is 5000 copies and we've sold a little better than half of them, most of it is personal contact although we have advertised in The American Artist several times. We happen to have an ad running now which is reaching all over the country and into a lot of foreign countries. [This] catches the students who are trying to do it by themselves--Sunday painters or teachers. This gives you immediate contact.

Q: Does this book mostly talk about composition and design, or does it have anything else in it?

H: Primarily composition, although there're three chapters in there devoted to painting techniques. These relate to the classics but also do with modern materials. But the old classic glazing and scumbling techniques [are included].

Q: What kind of techniques are these, glazing and scumbling?

H: Well, for instance, take Goya. He worked on a cloth canvas surface and he covered the whole surface with what he called a toned brown. He put a red color over the whole surface. Then he just drew the cartoon of his painting or his figure on the surface and then he fixed that. Then he started in with all of his glazes. Colors come this way; about half of your available colors are transparent colors. And a glaze means that it is a transparent paint film. And he'd cover the surface with these transparent colors which are dark. He was building his darks on the surface. He got

his red color underneath which is coming through because all of these are transparent. So then he lifts off to the middle ground again and this red color acts as a middle tone value for the whole surface--background, flesh, and costumes. And then, the last thing he does is put in what is called a scumble, which is the opaque paint put into a wet glaze. And that's a very simple way of explaining the classic technique.

Q: Do you use this technique at all?

H: Oh, yes.

Q: Do you have a favorite color that you use behind it?

H: No, I don't. Sometimes I use a multicolored ground. Of course, Goya made this red color famous. But Edgar Degas used a brownish tone ground. And everything he did has this brown color which is a middle tone value. And he worked the same way. This is technique, but this is classic technique because it was established long before these boys painted. It goes back to the first guy that painted in oil, and that's Belini. The museum at El Paso has some of his earlier work. He used tempera and oil painting. But he worked out this system of using a complete oil painting, which had never been done before. It's called Flemish. And what they actually were doing was working on a wooden panel. And they put a white, jesso surface on this wood, and then on top of that they would put a transparent varnish glaze on the surface. And they used varnish because they didn't want to add the oil to it, because the principle you work from lean to fat cause oil doesn't go over oil. So they were using color and varnish so you would get the same effect as you would get in an oil glaze. Then they toned the whole surface with, say, ocher. For instance, Peter Broidle used a kind of greenish color. And then he used this color as the middle tone value.

But he was working on board rather than canvas. But then he came with the cartoon and put the drawing on it. So you can see that this began long before Goya. But at that time painting was taught in a studio and the apprentices would learn from the masters and go out on their own. [Information on classical techniques not transcribed.]

This technique didn't change at all until the impressionists began to work, and they threw out all the glazing, they threw out all the dark colors. And instead of using a toned ground, they worked on white canvas and built their paint up with opaque paints. And that's the difference between the classic and the impressionist technique. But then there was also the technique developed by Rembrandt, who underpainted. Instead of using a tone ground and working a la prima, which means that he intended to finish the painting immediately, he would work from lean to fat and underpaint the whole subject in what is called a grizi or understatement, or a pale rendition of what he expects to do finally. And then he would use glazes over the underpainting. For instance, talking about composition and the equalization of light and dark, well, he pushed the dark values much further than equalization. Sometimes as much as three fourths of the canvas surface is dark and one fourth is light. But this is quite unusual. Now, you see, the contemporary painters, sometimes as much as three-fourths of the surface is light and only a fourth dark. You see the change through the centuries.

Especially since this book is out I've observed...let's take Broidle, for instance. He used what I would call the X composition--that is, the big cross that would run through the total surface. The light cross patterns his canvas more than he did anything else. But he would put different

subjects on it. And you find this true of contemporary people. They may work with an L and an O pattern. They are not aware that this is what this is, but they do know that it works. They'll use the same structural balance of light and dark. And this is what Edgar Degas did, too. He is supposedly the best guy in composition. And you can tell when you study his work that he really gave this a great deal of thought. Information on classical composition not transcribed.

Q: In your book, do you have any pictures or color plates?

H: There are 16 color plates and I think 200 and some black and white illustrations in it.

Q: How were the color plates put into the book?

H: They were fastened into it as it was put together.

Q: They're more expensive.

H: It's more expensive to do a book like that than one that's in black and white. But when you're talking about painting technique it's awful hard to talk just black and white because a student can't visualize color. Of course, painting is color and without it it's like you're working in the graphic medium. So I felt that even though it would make it more expensive to do the book that way, it was a necessary thing. However, now we're thinking about taking the color chapters out of the book and doing a paperback edition with just the black and white, which has to do with strictly composition and doesn't get into technique.

Q: You could use that more widely.

H: Much more so. We've sold a lot of these to public schools and universities and so forth, and many to libraries. But to get it really into a system where it can be taught, you really need a paperback copy and you need to

talk specifically composition. We have great hopes for the book. It's such an unusual thing and it's had such good results.

Q: Well, doing that in a paperback would really go over for the university students, because most of the courses use paperbacks. There would be better circulation.

H: Well, there's no reason why it can't be done that way, but you would have to drop the chapters on technique, which would be all right.

Q: Use it for a composition course, beginning design.

H: That's where it should be. I'm working on another book right now.

Q: Is it basically on the same track as your previous one?

H: Well, in a sense it is because I have felt that there is no reason to write a book if it's already been written. That's just foolishness, unless you have such an ego that you have to get your name in print. But there's a tremendous need for a really sound and simple portrait and figure book. There must be 25 anatomy books on the market, but none of them really deal with specifically what the painter needs--which is, that he has to know the topography of the body. He doesn't have to know the bones or muscles or veins or anything. He has to know what this is going to look like, and how to design this symbolically--written symbols such as the curved line and the straight line and how these are put together to form the symbols of the body.

Q: What do you find is the hardest part of the body to draw? A lot of people say that it is the hands.

H: Oh, the hands, by all means, are extremely difficult. But, again there is a system where this can be taught and grasped very quickly. If you can break all of these patterns...you see, if you look at the hand, and if you

look at the rhythm of the joints that come together, one finger is shorter than the others. In other words, if you had a straight line you know that you would have to drop it back. So the third finger becomes the key in drawing the whole hand. So if you can see a simple way of structuring this down so that it becomes a pattern... This is what I mean by a symbol, a drawing symbol, so that the student can hang on to the fact that this is the finger that you have to design, and that you balance everything to this. It makes it rapidly simple to understand. You don't have to go through all this trial and error. Everything can be broken down into a symbol. You start with the very simplest shape. And this is what I would like to do in a portrait and figure book. You can break these shapes down, understand them, and put them together in the drawing. I've been teaching this way myself so I know that it works.

Q: Are you going to do it the same way that you did the other book?

H: Well, I don't know. Probably I may stay out of color if I just get into the design. It would be cheaper, but it's not really any easier because everything has to be photographed and you still have to do illustrations whether it's color or not. So it really doesn't make any difference there, it's just a matter of cost. In distributing this thing yourself, you tie up an awful lot of money in the immediate stage of publication. And it may take four or five years to get this initial cost back. It would be a lot less if you didn't go into color, but it would be a lot prettier book if you had it.

Q: Do you intend on aiming it toward the beginning students or everybody in general?

H: Well, of course, both of these books are primarily teaching books. And I have found out that a student who has no background and just wants to paint

has a difficult time understanding, even though I put it in extremely simple language and have a glossary for word meanings. And they still have so little understanding about what painting is about that it's almost impossible for them to understand it even though it's written very simply. It's just kind of a one-two-three thing. And you have to have a little experience; either self-taught experience or formal education to understand it. But I think that is true of anything that is this technically oriented.

Q: It's less technical than anatomy books, which aren't that much of a help.

H: No, they're not. It's really silly, and I'm a trained nurse so I already had a great deal of background on that. And in my training we had to do a lot of dissecting and drawing, you know. Much of this is very useless as far as the artist is concerned. But then you get into another problem and this is that there has been so much interest in art and so many people want to paint. And they have been given the wrong information when they say that anybody can really learn to paint. Well, it's my opinion that if you don't take the time to learn to draw, you will never be able to paint. And this is another problem in trying to get the student to understand that he's got to spend some time drawing instead of putting the color on the surface.

Q: Many people say that a person has to have a special talent that's inborn either to draw or to paint. Is that true?

H: I think that's true. Now I would say this; that you learn the technical skill, the craftsmanship of it, and a great many people do because they're interested in it. But it takes that certain something, that little special quality. Of course, talent is an almost unmeasurable thing. And to say that one has more than the other doesn't have anything to do with success or anything else. But I think without that spark or whatever you want to

call it; talent...

Q: Inspiration?

H: Well, no, because you can be inspired without having the talent. I really think that it takes talent. And what that quality is, I don't know. I mean, I don't know if you're born with it; I guess you are. And you are aware of this from...I don't know. I know that I've been aware of it ever since I was aware of anything, that I could draw.

Q: Tell us about your trip to Washington.

H: I'm leaving on the end of the week for it. It's a week seminar and there will be about 20 students in the group and we will have two classes a day-- one a lecture series and the other actually painting for about three hours a day on what they were taught to do. It will deal primarily with composition and underpainting techniques. This is the fifth year that I have been invited up there to teach. And so I have some students up there that I have been working with for that length of time and they're getting pretty good. In fact, several of them are coming down in the summer for the Cloudcroft workshop.

Q: When are you leaving this summer for Cloudcroft?

H: Well, classes start on the ninth so I'll be up there a few days before.

Q: The ninth of July?

H: Yes. I'm building a new studio up there this year and the roof is not on yet, so I'm getting a little concerned about it. But I think it'll be ready.

Q: You can always paint outdoors.

H: Not up there, you'll get soaked. But it's really fun to work up there. And I get a lot of professionals and teachers in that group in Cloudcroft. I really find that the most rewarding class that I do.

Q: Do you get some teachers from the local universities, say, UTEP or New Mexico State?

H: Well, I haven't gotten any from those specifically but we have a lot of people coming from California, Chicago, Washington, Alabama, Ohio; of course a lot of Texans and New Mexicans and quite a number from Oklahoma. Another one, I've been teaching in Idaho for a number of years and they have made tremendous progress because they have elementary art teachers and the high school teachers and the college teachers in that art class there. And so they go back and their contact with the students is tremendous. And we've sold a lot of books on this compositional thing into the school districts in Idaho. Idaho, you wouldn't think so, but it's a very progressive art state. And the teachers are in the class right along with the kids. We have some twelve-year-olds in the class up there and we have their teachers in the class.

Q: Do you find any younger kids that are better than their teachers?

H: Oh yes, sure you do. You always find this. Young children can just do some fantastic things. And I think the class is a little too technical for them but they get a great deal from it, even so. And the experience in painting and having a teacher there telling you what is right and wrong and painting all day for a couple of weeks really does things. We've had some remarkable students come out of that group. I've been teaching in that area for about 10 years. But these are all short seminar kind of things, not more than two weeks. There's 10 days of classes.

Q: Do you do most of your teaching in the west or do you go to the east?

H: Yes, all of it in the west. This fall I'm going to go to Houston. I've taught some short lecture courses in Houston. But I'm going to a painting

and lecture course this fall working with the Houston Art League. There's another art league. You know, you think of these are associations as being really amateurish and pretty screwy. But there're really a lot of good people in them. And a lot of good students come out of those organizations, people that don't want a formal education in the arts. You also find that a great many of the universities do not want the older student.

Q: Have you found this at UTEP?

H: This is true at UTEP and pretty much all over. They would just prefer to keep the old heads out of there. Which seems pretty odd.

Q: It's a little foolish, really.

H: It is foolish. But they just have this attitude. Why they have it, I don't know. Maybe they feel that the older group is harder to teach. I think it is. You get out of the habit of studying and it's harder to get on the ball. And they miss more classes. So they discourage the older student from going to these classes. But I really think that the universities are in so much financial trouble that they should do more of these programs for the adults. The adults want it and can afford it and will spend the time doing it. If they don't get it there, they're going to get it someplace else.

Q: Do you think it's better to be taught in a seminar type thing with the art association or at a university?

H: Well, that's a different set of problems. First of all, there's a great deal of discussion right now as to whether or not art should even be taught in a university. And the reason for this is that the student has to have so much studio time that it's impossible for him to get as much studio time in so that he can really develop in four years. He can't do it.

He comes out, really, an unfinished product. And yet he's got a degree that says he's a finished product. And there's no way that he can get enough painting time in to have any kind of a development here. So all he's getting is a background on what's going on today--a smattering of this and that and so forth, but no real time to develop any craftsmanship of his talent in anything else. He's got facts and he's got a source of where he can go to get them. So the question is whether this degree that they're giving to them--say a painting degree in fine arts--is a legitimate degree. And I doubt very much that it is. There's no way to begin to even specialize. Now there's some schools opening up--say, California Arts and Crafts which deals with nothing but arts and crafts, and in there you have to specialize. You can't take all the program because it's such a tremendously wide field.

Q: You can actually call it a graduate school in art.

H: Yes. But what they're doing now is that they're setting this up instead of the university program. So you would be a graduate of California Arts and Crafts, and you would have a better foundation than you would have in most universities graduating with a fine arts degree.

Q: Would it be longer?

H: Yes, four or five years. I think it's set up the same way except that it is a concentrated thing. You have to decide on a field and stay in it. For instance, if you were taking a masters in art, you might actually get six hours, at the most, a week of studio time. And it should be at least three hours a day. For instance, the Art Students League in New York sets up their classes that way. You paint all day and the teacher comes in for maybe 15 minutes and talks. By the time you had two or three years of that,

you know something.

So then you asked, what do I think is the best. Well, I think the university system has a great deal lacking in their program, but they still give the student such an exposure of the various art mediums that they have a better idea of what they want to do by the time they finish a four-year course. Then they should study with the professional painters or the professional etchers or so on, whatever they are. You also find another thing that is discouraging to the students is when he gets into the university system, so many of the professors, teachers, or instructors are not working artists; they are just teachers, and they can teach theory but they can't do it themselves. So a student does need some time with a successful professional in his chosen field. And in these type of seminars, which are becoming so popular all over the country, you find a great many professional people doing this and they are getting tremendous results with it. The student, then, will study with the professional and actually get the studio time plus the practical experience of working with a professional. It's a different thing when you're working with someone who teaches it and doesn't do it and when you're studying with one who doesn't teach it but is a working professional. So you find many of the professionals like myself who are spending two or three months a year teaching on this kind of program, just five or ten days to a small group of interested people. And it's very successful. It's stimulating for the professional and it's very lucrative, money-wise. You feel that you are giving so much to the student.

Q: Some of the other artists have talked about being exploited by certain galleries. Would you care to comment on some of your bad experiences with them?

H: Well, I don't particularly like to rehash bad experiences but I will say that before you get into a gallery, you have to check them out and be sure that they are a sound business. A reason a gallery can do this to the artist is because they can open a shop and have so little capital to do it, because everything is on consignment. So what happens is that they sell the paintings and then, instead of paying the artists, they put the money either back in the business or in their own pockets. Now they might even hold the artist's money for two months. Well, the painter over here has to borrow money, either to live or to carry on his business that he's doing and so forth. So the painter is paying the eight and one half to nine percent interest to a bank, and this guy over here is using his money free. This is a bad deal. When you're working with a gallery you have to expect within 30 days from the time that painting has been sold and the money collected on it, that you will get your money. But to work with a really legitimate gallery it costs you at least 40 percent commission, which is a big percentage cut out of your profit. Plus that's not all profit because you still have the costs of the frame, and the cost of the materials, and the insurance, and the holding of the painting until it sells. There's a great deal of cost here that's hidden cost.

Q: So you can wind up making less than 50 percent profit on your painting?

H: Oh, well, yes. You'll probably make about a third of the sale price of the painting, which isn't bad if somebody isn't taking 100 percent. But this is the reason that there are so many crooked galleries. It's because it costs nothing to get into the business. And painters, usually their ego is such that they think if anybody'll just show their work, they're just so thrilled and excited. This is ridiculous.

Q: What about here in El Paso?

H: There are lots of very good galleries here. Now, the 222 has been in business for years, and it has a very good reputation. I'm talking about the relationship to the gallery. That's a good gallery. Of course, I operated one for several years--Ojo del Sol--and recently sold it to Louie Dole. It was in La Villita. And the Marlborough gallery, I don't know if that one is still operating or not. The Jinx gallery has been open for about four years. I have done business with them and I have found them to be very good, very reputable. And the big trouble that the painter gets into is operating in galleries out of his area where you can't really check on them often enough. So you have to be very careful of galleries that you get into, say, 1000 miles away. And so many galleries now in the big cities such as New York, it used to be that if you got into a gallery there, it meant something, reputation-wise. Now it doesn't. Now what you do is, you're actually renting space. And you can get a show with any New York gallery if you want to pay the rental fee.

Q: You can just invite yourself up there for your own show.

H: Then you pay a fee--say, \$2000 for two weeks to show there. So you supposedly have this credit on your brochure. But now it means very, very little. And the same thing is happening to competitive shows all over the country. Not the same thing, but I'm saying that they no longer have the credibility of meaning anything if you take a prize anymore. This is because the professionals have almost quit showing completely. This means that this is just amateur competition, which means nothing. And it's so kooky that it doesn't have any value. Also these competitive shows, for some reason, are five to ten years behind what's going on right now.

Q: Is that because they have the amateurs in it?

H: Primarily because it is an amateur show. The fault is really with the amateur. The professionals are the ones that have developed their own style and their own way of painting, can't make it because they don't have a school of painting that they can be classified in in the big shows. So this has been so discouraging to the professional painter that they practically don't show, unless its in an invitational show. An invitational show is controlled. That is, it doesn't allow the amateurs in. You have a different kind of show when you have an invitational show. And if a show has a good reputation, there's usually money in it. But I really think that there should be more invitational shows around the country, as far as what the public is seeing. For instance, this Sun Carnival thing is usually a pretty bad show. And the reason it's a bad show is because they're amateur painters. The professionals won't touch it even though there's big money in it. They won't touch it because it's to expensive to show and to get the slides and go through the whole hassle and then be rejected because you're not falling into a specific school of painting.

Q: I thought it was pretty good when it started.

H: Well, but see, when it started years ago I had something to do with the Sun Carnival show. But at that time there were professional people competing. It's just all amateur show now, which changes the whole look.

Q: Well, we were talking about Mr. Farral. How many paintings did you lose there?

H: Well, he was just a crook. He sold paintings and didn't pay the artists. I went and took him to court and got a \$2500 judgement against him, which doesn't mean a thing because I can't collect it.

Q: He just skipped the state then. Any idea where he is?

H: No. In fact, these income tax people came by a year or so after this happened. It taught me a great deal about how to check out galleries. The income tax people were looking for him, so I decided if anyone was going to catch him, they probably would. I try and chalk these things up as experience, which it was. And it was a good experience in that it taught me a great deal about galleries and professionalism. And if you get taken these days with that kind of experience back of you, it has to be your own stupid fault.

Q: What do you look for in a gallery in order to sort of give you confidence in it or in an art dealer?

H: Well, first of all, if you're interested in the gallery, then you want to see the kind of paintings that are being sold there to see if you are in this same price range or kind of paintings that are being shown. For instance, I would be lost in a western gallery; say like the Baker Gallery in Lubbock. There would be no point in me even being interested in it because their clientele wouldn't be interested in me. They've established a reputation for western paintings.

Q: These are the Baker brothers who have the gallery up there?

H: I think Manny Acosta is with that group, isn't he?

Q: Yes.

H: See, his kind of painting really fits what they are selling and what their clientele want, too. So he's in a good position there. But they wouldn't move a painting a year from me, probably.

Q: What do you try to specialize in?

H: I don't specialize in anything. I just paint.

Q: It's not western or desert scenes or anything like this?

H: No, it's not. What it really is would have to be classified as abstract impressionism, or expressionism. It's very hard to define a style like this. I just paint my own way and don't worry about those things. I have a tremendous market.

Q: I noticed that you do a lot of portraits.

H: I do. I also do a lot of figure painting. And I'm interested in both commission portrait work and just painting a figure.

Q: The florals?

H: The florals are really your bread and butter. I enjoy painting flowers. People will buy a flower painting before they'll buy anything else. I think it's because they are so unsure of their taste. And it's a decorative thing, which is what they need in their homes. And so they feel they are perfectly safe in investing this kind of money into a floral painting. So you have a tremendous market there. You can eat from now on, on just flower paintings if that's all you want to do. I love to paint flowers. It doesn't bother me at all to meet that market. Now, I think it's really foolish if you know what the market is and you don't paint at least part of your time for that market. Money is lots of fun to have.

Q: Many of these artists do specialize in westerns. They don't do any other things and they lose quite a bit of the market.

H: Well, but they have a good market of their own and it's improving all of the time. So, you know, I don't think that's bad, either. It's just up to what the individual does. But I paint everything--landscapes, portraits, figures, still life, nudes. I'm just interested in all of it and can do all of it, so I do it.

Q: I notice that quite a bit of the painters do specialize in desert scenes and westerns. Are they moving away from that here in the Southwest now?

H: No, I don't think so. There's still an awful lot of desert painters, just like there are bluebonnet painters in south Texas. There is a tremendous market for it and I think there is an awfully lot of them sold. To me the desert is unpaintable. I've never painted a desert. I think cactus is ugly. I mean, I love living here and all that and I love to look at it, but I can't imagine anybody wanting to paint that. To me that's uninspirational. Of course, this is a big market for the amateur painter and so is the bluebonnet market. Now you see, you have so many different classes of people that are buying paintings.

Q: What is the bluebonnet market?

H: It's tremendous. Lots of money in it every year.

Q: What do they paint?

H: They paint bluebonnets. The Texas bluebonnets.

Q: That's all?

H: That's all they paint--green trees and fields of bluebonnets. And they just sell like crazy.

Q: Here or just in east Texas?

H: Well, in central, south, and east Texas. You don't see a lot here. You see the desert scenes here. What this is is colloquial painting. This goes on all over the western civilization. It goes on in Paris at the Montmatre. The painters are out there all of the time, painting that scene right around there and they sell it like crazy every day. In fact, I went there with an art group of painters. We thought it would just really be fun to go out there and paint; so we did. And they called the police and thought we were

going to be arrested because we brought our easels and everything. Evidently, we didn't get the whole thing on it, but they evidently buy their spaces from... But anyway, they were allotted these spaces and they don't want any tourists or any other painters moving in on their market there, because this is a business with them. They sell to the tourists, and they sell these local Paris street scenes. Now, that was interesting. And they actually called the police and we were told to pick up our things and move.

Q: They wouldn't even let you buy into a space there?

H: No, they had it all pre-allotted. And we packed up and moved down the street about one block and they came and made us move from there.

Q: Did you even get to paint there?

H: No. We thought it would be fun to set up and paint there a couple of hours. We had no idea that we were moving in on their commercial interests. This is what they objected to, they thought they might have competition. They didn't know that most of the group couldn't paint as well as they were painting, or about the same quality anyway. So they weren't any real competition. But they didn't want to lose any market. This was the whole thing, was talking about the market for local subjects, such as the blue-bonnets and the purple mountains here. Well, in Idaho where I've been teaching up there for several years, the local regional painters there paint mooses on the snowy Teton slopes, and usually with their mouths open--terrible, terrible stuff. But you go to the east coast or the west coast or south Texas, anyplace along the coastline you get the coastline painters. There is a tremendous market in these areas for these people, which would never buy my paintings for instance which is really no locale to it.

Sometimes I go to Oklahoma and paint because the scenery there is very

paintable, but I don't say that this is the Oklahoma landscape and I don't sell it to Oklahomans.

Q: I figure your paintings would sell almost anyplace because of the way they're not specialized.

H: They do. But for the people who are buying colloquial art, they're not interested in my kind of painting. It's a different group that I sell to than the western artists sell to. All of these people have their little group of patrons, or people that are interested in that specific kind of painting. So if you go to California for a holiday and you want one of those seacoast paintings, you go to the local galleries and you just find them by the tons. But you wouldn't find them here. Here it's purple mountains and cactus. And in Austin you'd find bluebonnet painters. But then there are painters like me who just paint and don't have a specific area. They don't paint areas, not regional painters.

Q: Do you think that's been better for you in the long run, or more enjoyable for you?

H: Well, more enjoyable. I would just go crazy painting cactus. Well, I wouldn't do it. I would play golf or something. I don't want to put these people down because I think that there's a place for them and a reason for them. And if people enjoy that kind of painting, that's fine. It's their money and their house and they put in it what they want. So I'm really not a crusader as far as raising the tastes of the public. I just can't get excited about it. I can't get excited about crooked gallery dealers. There's just too many valuable things to spend your time thinking about it and doing anything. None of the various groups of western painters take away from what I do. There's no reason for me to be upset or jealous or worried

about the public's taste. Enough people buy it so it makes you a great deal of money.

Q: To me it's more like decorative painting.

H: It is. It's really interesting because paintings have to be categorized. In other words, Remington and Russel who really, in this day and age, would have to be classified as illustrators, are also classified as historical painters now, because they painted the history of the country. So they have value for two reasons: one is their general appeal in the west and the other is for historical value. And of course, it's a limited edition; there aren't going to be anymore of those. But there are many imitators out. And so for the people that don't have \$6000 for a Remington but they enjoy it or they would pay \$300 for a contemporary work of the same subject. So it has a great market value.

Q: Okay. It's been a enjoyable interview, really. I want to thank you very much for it.

H: Well, you're just most welcome.