Chronology

Duane Street - 1, 25, 38
9/11 - 3
Last Gogo show - MBarney 2; Murray 2; Varnedoe 5; Wingate 1 (prices), 2

Bio
Parents - 5,6; 55; Pton 1-2; MOCA 27
Brothers - 5-6
Sports - 6,7
Sand dunes/di Suveros - 6-7
Drawing - 7; Pton 2

Berkeley and Santa Barbara - 7-8
Jazz Workshop, Mingus - 8; Pton 6
Steel mills - 8, 54
Yale - 9-10; Close 1,2; Marden; MOMA 18
France & Italy - 10, 11, 17-18; 56 (Prado) Close book (Nancy G.) 20-25; Glass 1; MOMA 18,28

NYC in 60s (Process) – 11-16, 19; Glass 1-2; MOMA 17
Minimalism - Texts 1; Varnedoe 3, 4
Bellamy - 12, 14
RS and Nancy Graves - Tworkov 1
Max's K.C. - 12, 20; Close book 62; Close 3 ; Holt
Jasper Johns - 13, 43, 46; Blum
From rubber to lead - 13, 18; Close book 62-65; Close 2-3; MOMA 17 ; Pton 11
Doubts about work - MOMA 19-20, 47; Pton 9
Verb List ({Process) - 18; Pton 6-7; *Interviews* 9
Castelli Warehouse - 14; 56; Glass 2; Koshalek 1; Murray 1, 2
The possibility of collapse - 14; Pton 9; Glass 3

Steel (end of studio art, 1970) - 14, 15, 54 (*Strike*); Quotes 4; MOMA 26, 44; Pton 12
Spectator as subject - 14, 46 , 3 (Kimmelman intro)
Space and time - 15, 19
Smithson - 4; 15; Varnedoe 6 ; Holt 1-3 2
Spiral Jetty - 4, 15. *Amarillo Ramp* - 22
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Heizer's *Double Negative* – 20
Pulitzer piece - 21; Quotes 1; Close book 67; Helman 1; Emmy P.; *Interviews* 70 ; Pton 13
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Sight Point (1971-75) - MOMA 48-49 ; RS 57
Cape Breton (1971) - 22; Glass 2; Gluckman; Tworkov; Clara
Castelli - 25-26; Quotes 13-14; Brundage; Helman
PADC Project - 22-23; Tworkov 1-2; *Interviews 171-2, 184-7*
1st Pompidou proposal - Quotes 3; von B. 1 ; RS 57
Alexander von Berswordt - 28; von B.; Clara
Terminal - 28; Quotes 3; von B.; Pton 16-17; MOMA 49-50; *Interviews* 174
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Tilted Arc - 28-30; Quotes 3; Pton 16; Close 4; Marden; Clara 2; MOMA 53; *Interviews 166 ff.*
Work in Europe post-*Arc* - 44; von B.
MOMA Retrospective - 60

Intersection II - Varnedoe 1-2; Wingate
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MOCA show (1998) - Koshalek 1
Spirals & Spheres - Texts 2
New Zealand piece - 1, 2, 5
Other current projects - 1, 5, 17, 38, 54, 55; Gehry 4
MOMA 2005 - Varnedoe 6
Charlie Rose - Trina 1

His sculpture - 3; Quotes 1-4; Helman 2-3, 4; Koshalek 1; Shapiro 2; Varnedoe 3-7
Graffiti problem - Brundage 1; Clara 1 ; RS 59
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The play element - Pton 8
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His fame - Clara 2
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19th century industry & 21st century art - 53-54; Varnedoe 4-5

Serra's character - von B.; Close 2, 4; Gehry 1,3, 4-5; Gluckman 1; Helman 3-4; Koshalek 3; Murray 1; Emmy P. 2; Shapiro 1; Varnedoe 1; Wingate 1

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Chronology

Chronology

1939
Born Nov. 2, San Francisco. Father (Tony) from Majorca; mother, Gladys, a Russian Jew. Memory of ship launching, with father (MOCA, 27; Princeton talk, 1-2). Begins drawing, "to compete with my older brother for the affection of my parents." Jazz Workshop and Mingus.

1957-61
Studies at UC Berkeley and Santa Barbara, graduating with BS (?) in English literature. Works in steel mills to earn a living.

1961-64
Yale – B.A., M.A., and M.F.A. degrees. During last year works as instructor. Works with Albers on his book *The Interaction of Color* (1963). (See Krauss in MOMA, p.18) Meets NY artists Philip Guston, Robert Rauschenberg, Ad Reinhardt, Frank Stella.

1964-65
Year in Paris on Yale Traveling Fellowship. Meets Philip Glass. Their encounter with Giacometti.

1965-66
Hitchhikes from Athens to Istanbul. Spends year in Florence on Fulbright. In May has first one-man show at Galleria La Salita, Rome. Anticipates arte povera with works involving animals. (Krauss, MOMA, p. 18) Travels to Spain and North Africa. Moves to NYC.

1966-67
Rubber and neon-tubing works, scatter pieces. Meets Carl Andre, Liza Bear, Eva Hesse, Nancy Holt, Jasper Johns, Joan Jonas, Donald Judd, Philip Lieder, Bruce Nauman, Steve Reich, Robert Smithson, Michael Snow. Furniture moving with Reich and Phil Glass and Robert Fiore. Writes verb list (1967 – see *Interviews*, p. 9) In group shows at Noah Goldowsky Gallery (1966, 67, 68) and at Yale, Purdue, Cornell.

1968-69
Splashings and Castings at Castelli Warehouse (*Nine at Castelli*, Dec. 4-28, 1968 - see Princeton talk re first splash piece, p. 11) In Helman's *Here and* Now show at Washington Univ. Gallery of Art, St. Louis (Feb.1969). Lead rolls and lead props – props shown at Guggenheim in May 1969.* Also in group shows at MOMA (*New Media: New Methods)*and Whitney, and in Europe (*When Attitudes Become Form*). Doubts about the work, as being pictorial (Krauss, MOMA, p. 19-20; Crimp, MOMA, p.47; Princeton talk, p.9). First films, first linear drawings. Begins to work in steel – LACMA Art and Technology Program arranges collaboration with Kaiser Steel in Fontana, CA. – Skullcracker series. Cut and sawed pieces. Collaborates with Joan Jonas on video, film, and performance pieces. First one-man show in US at Castelli Warehouse. Makes *Splash*

* One Ton Prop (House of Cards), 1969, whereabouts ?? Now owned by MOMA

Piece: Casting in Johns's studio. *Strike*, first piece requiring riggers. (See Crimp, MOMA p.44; Krauss, MOMA, p. 26; Princeton talk, p.12)

1970
One-man show with Joseph Helman Gallery in St. Louis (January). Helps Smithson and Holt stake out *Spiral Jetty*. Travels to Japan with Jonas, appears in Tokyo Biennale '70, which travels around country. Studies Zen gardens in Kyoto. (See Princeton talk, pp.13-14) Piece with sawn logs at Pasadena Art Museum, Feb-March. (Krauss, MOMA, p.26) Does street piece in Bronx; Whitney Annual documents it in catalog. (Princeton talk, p. 16) *Pulitzer Piece* in St. Louis inaugurates large-scale works (see *Interviews*, p.70) ~~Shows in~~ MOMA's *Information* exhib., July-Sept. (Serra not in This)

1971
Begins summers at Cape Breton. *Shift* (1970-72) in Canada, with Jonas (Krauss, MOMA, p. 30) *Sight Point* wins Wesleyan competition, but rejected by architect; later installed at Stedelijk in Amsterdam (see Crimp, MOMA, pp.48-49). *Works for New Spaces* at Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (May-July). Minneapolis accident in November.

1972-74
After death of Smithson, completes *Amarillo Ramp* with Holt and Tony Shafrazi. Travels to Peru with Rudolph Wurlitzer.(1974) But "I have never shared the romance of building works in te remote landscape..." (Princeton talk, p.16) ~~Minneapolis accident, date?~~ One-man show at Castelli, October.

1975-76
Delineator at Ace Gallery, LA (July-Feb 76). Films *Railroad Turnbridge*. Plans first curved piece, for Pompidou, which is rejected. *Terminal* at Documenta 6 (1976), later transferred to Bochum. Meets Clara Weyergraf.

1977
Mother commits suicide. One-man show at Galerie m, Bochum. Shows drawings at Stedelijk. Accepts commission for Pennsylvania Ave project (Wash. DC), from which he withdraws in 1978. (See Interviews, p.171-2, 184-7).Works at Thyssen steel mill in Germany on *Berlin Block for Charlie Chaplin*, for Berlin Nationalgalerie. Installs *Terminal* in Bochum, after exhib. at Documenta – "first work that functioned in an urban context." (Princeton talk, p.16-17 -see also *Interviews*, p. 174; Crimp, MOMA, 49-50)

1978
Shows at Blum Helman, NY (Sept-Oct).

1979
Father dies in June. Commissioned by GSA for Federal Plaza sculpture.

1980
St. Johns Rotary Arc and *T.W.U.* installed in NYC. *Wright's Triangle* at Western Washington State Univ. in Bellingham.

1981
Tilted Arc installed. Marries Clara Weyergraf. *Slice* at Castelli (Feb-April), a continuous curve of steel plates ten feet high and over 120 feet long (Crimp, MOMA, p.46)

1982
Twain installed in St. Louis. Travels and works in Italy and Spain.

1983
Travels to Japan. Shows at Pompidou in Paris, and installs *Clara-Clara* in Tuileries, the first in series of using conical sections inverted in relation to each other to form an enclosure. Shows with Blum-Helman in NY and Gagosian Los Angeles
(see October, p. 88-89, 91)

1984
Installs *Slat* at La Defense, Paris.

1985
One-man show at Museum Haus Lange. Krefeld. Public hearings to consider removal of *Tilted Arc*. (See Interviews, pp. 166 ff; Crimp, MOMA, 53). French gov't commissions sculpture for 16th century cloister at Bourg-en-Bresse; named Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. *Clara-Clara* installed in Square de Chosy, Paris. Installs *Carnegie* at Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh.
(Mitterand names Serra a chevalier in l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres)

1986
MOMA Retrospective (Feb 27-May 13). Serra brings $30 m. lawsuit against G.S.A.
1988 – Sculptor collapses at Castelli Gallery St. (Oct.), worker loses leg
1989 – Tilted Arc removed (March)

1991
Afanger series (Iceland) – drawings shown at MOMA.

1992
Shows at Reina Sophia, Madrid. Shows at Matthew Marks Gallery: *Drawing and Etchings from Iceland*. Shows at Pace (sculpture). Shows at Tate and Serpentine.

1993
Intersection II at Gagosian, March-April. (MOCA 129-131)

1995
Shows at Matthew Marks, at Galerie m in Bochum, and at Marc Blondeau in Paris.

1996
Gagosian in NY, Oct-Dec.

1997
Torqued Ellipses at DIA (Sept. – June 98). *Round Drawings* at Gagosian.

1998
Retrospective at MOCA, Los Angeles.

1999
Bilbao

2000

2001

2002

Sima Ivins

Richard Serra - 1/10/02

First interview, at Duane Street. He meets the elevator at 6th floor, gets in and says let's go downstairs to the studio first. Wants to show me the drawings he's been working on at Cape Breton. Studio is on ground floor. Big room with long trestle tables on which are about a dozen models for large sculptures, spirals mainly, done in cardboard (?). The far wall has three rows of large oilstick drawings, also spirals. Heavy, fierce, thick lines, ground into the paper – or rather, as he explains, gouged into it with metal from the back side – I don't understand how. About twenty of them are recent, done since Christmas up there. (He just came down to New York yesterday). He's very pleased with the work. Serra's manner is hugely energetic, friendly, almost manic. He's wearing the uniform – jeans, work boots, hooded gray sweatshirt.

Upstairs again – a big, clean, somewhat bare room with two skylights. Fireplace, and big stack of firewood next to it, with an ancient, medieval-looking hatchet leaning against it. Hand-hewn handle, long blade. Comfortable, deep leather chairs, and a long table in back. Other rooms, not visible, to left and in rear. I ask first about the New Zealand piece.

"I went there about four years ago, at the invitation of Alan Gibbs." He has large piece of land, and has commissioned LeWitt, Snelson, and others to work it. Serra went there four years ago and found a very large piece of land to work on. Spent rest of that year deciding what site would be. Had topographical map made. "And then I made an elevational map out of cardboard, which I always do. The land drops ninety feet, over three hundred feet. There are valleys and swales. I haven't actually been back there for two years. What happened was, I went there, we started to mock up the piece – I had a feeling that everything I was doing wasn't pulling the perception of the field together…At one point, because the land undulates, I thought, why don't I take just one contour line, and follow one contour line. What would that be like? Well, it so happens that the contour line goes over the valleys and up the hills and around, and makes a very elongated serpentine form, like two inverse curves. You never see the piece, other than if you stand at a specific elevation….Because the land is always shifting, the piece appears and disappears within the field."

"I was there for about two weeks, and we mocked up one section of it. Maybe a twentieth of it. I said, look, in order for me to understand the piece I'm going to have to see the whole thing mocked up. He said, well, we don't have time to do that right now. So I get back to Los Angeles… It involves something like 57 or 58 plates, twenty feet high, and each plate has to be curved a little differently. And because the land is on a downhill slope, the pieces are all leaning… It's an enormous kind of serpentine, curvilinear piece following one elevation in the land, which tends to appear and disappear in the land because the land has hills and swales. From below, you can see all of it. But anywhere you are above it or beside it, it appears and disappears."

Largest piece he's done? "I built a piece in Iceland that takes up an entire island, but it's made up of six pairs of stones, twelve stones. Afangar. I'll give you a book on that. But this is the largest continuous piece I've done."

Afangar piece was done on island in bay of Reykjavik, where the first settlement was made. It's a national historical monument. "I had a great time there." Judd went to see it, to Serra's great surprise.

We talk about my coming to New Zealand. He says it would be better to come at the very end. "The reason this piece has taken so long is that at one point we had all the plates finished, and we had space in the boat. We had told the ship's captain not to stack them more than four high. They stacked one stack about ten or twelve high, they cascaded before the ship pulled out of port. That was their fault. They impounded the ship, the captain went to jail, and we had to rebend a lot of the plates. It was supposed to go up this time last year, and it's just getting back on track now."

"There's a lot of work going on right now." Gives me a schedule. A vertical piece in Fort Worth, near the Kimball – not sure yet; they would like the piece to be up and built by October, so they want to get their ducks in a row by February 8th.

He talks about pieces which "without having an explicit, rotating, curvilinear critical movement, have implied vertical passage that rotates as it conically moves upward." Cites Matisse and Picasso (ask about this).

New Zealand "is the biggest continuous thing I've ever been involved with. When it got sidetracked for a year, I just decided not to dwell on things I couldn't change…So it hasn't been in the forefront of my mind, like it was. But now it's back on."

He leaves Saturday for NZ, will be back in Los Angeles toward the end of the month – will phone me then about when to come. Installation will probably take four or five weeks in all. Around Feb 5th? He asks Clara – she says second week of Feb.

Charlie Rose tape – "I was very happy with it, and I'm not usually happy with things like that. I thought it was very intense all the way through. There were certain things I wanted to say and he gave me space to say them. I was pleased with it. I think it's one of the better things I've done publicly. I did a tape for David Sylvester's funeral that I liked… Charlie Rose, you had to bring him along somehow. He really didn't understand the difference between architects and sculptors…"

People to talk to about him: "I have a very private life." But, Kirk Varnedoe. Frank Gehry. Rosalind Krauss. He'll come up with other names. Steve Oliver, in California -- has a piece of Serra's, a friend for some time. Larry? "You can talk to him, but -- . If Leo were still around I'd say talk to Leo. The person who really helped me the most, in terms of support, was Leo. I went $500,000 in debt – never expected to sell anything. I really liked Leo, and he did more for me than anyone." After the accident in Minneapolis, Leo stood by him.

New Zealand is very lush. "It's like California in a way, but it seems fresher, newer, like something that just came up out of the water. It's innocent, in a way. The ozone layer

there is open, so you have to wear baseball caps – you can't take the sun like that." The site is "like a farming field." Patron is Alan Gibbs. "I think when he was younger he was in politics… He really thought the country ought to de-regulate, and he started a third party there…" (need more). "He's very well known there. He's helped shape the country in some way. He also has his bizarre side. His wife has a very big collection, probably the biggest in New Zealand. They recently divorced, and she got all the work. But you can talk to her – she's very nice. "

"I don't have any big secrets. You can ask me anything you want." [END INVU]

Serra/Kimmelman @ CUNY (NYT Series)

Serra talks about 9/11, watching the plane hit the tower, going down to the street and hearing people yelling "Attack!", watching second plane hit, seeing people jumping out. He and Clara stayed in their apartment for the next two weeks, with no electricity; afraid they wouldn't be allowed back in if they left. His show was delayed several weeks, but then there were 1,000 people at the opening – very moving to him. (Kimmelman says 3,000).

"There's something a little indecent about all those architects" talking about what to build there. "That hole down there is not a ruin…they're responding to a need that doesn't exist…aestheticizing an atrocity."

The plant in Germany that does his steel work, "doing things that have not to my knowledge been done before." The Borromini church in Rome, "a perfect ellipse that rises." Gehry's designer saying they're busy with Bilbao, "can't play with you now." But then did help. Serra had never made a closed form before the new pieces at Gagosian.

Talks about early work – rubber – House of Cards, etc. The trucking company with Steve Reich, Phil Glass, Michael Snow et al, to support selves. His closeness to dancers, Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer, the Grand Union. "A very interesting moment to be in New York, one continuous intense interaction…"

Jasper Johns asked Serra to build a piece in his loft, one of the splashed lead pieces – this was the one in which he put a plate in the corner, and it became free-standing (???). Newman's interest in his work – became a big supporter and a big influence on Serra; his work represented "as big a break as Mondrian's, I think."

Judd - took me in like an older brother – saw self as leader of a movement. "All of us wrote then – Smithson, Judd, Andre. We were writing mainly for each other. We had our own language, so we didn't need Greenberg."

"Steel was not something foreign to me."

Younger artists he likes? Matthew Barney. Serra has just spent a week being in Barney's new film.

"The subject matter of my work is people walking through the piece….an experience that's outside nature and outside architecture…the space and the void become part of how people know about time."

"It came as a surprise to me that there was an audience for the [most recent] work." Talks about seeing an old lady in a wheel chair get up and walk through it, and how this moved him.

Art "changes how you see things…mediating reality in a way not done before. The thought is not in the work, but in the dialogue of response to the work…a way of understanding the world that nothing else provides."

His relation to Gehry – "I've known Frank for 30years.I go to his office a lot – he's a model maker, and I am too. He's always had a close relationship to artists." But the problem is that "architects are the high priests, and artists are the sideshow. Architects parade around as artists – although, without Mondrian there probably would have been no Mies. Sculptors feed architects."

A withering diatribe against Herbert Muschamp, for talking about Issey Miyake in the context of 9/11.

Question about the basic issues that his group of artists, dancers etc shared in the 1970s – "Process, anti-composition, trying not to be influenced by what had been done before." The huge influence of Morton Feldman, and his different way of thinking about experience.

"Smithson was my closest friend. I helped stake out Spiral Jetty. He had an exquisitely bizarre mind."

Judd: "Courageous, druggy, nasty…"

"A lot of my work is about anticipation and memory." [END]

5

Serra 2 and 3 2/6/02

Serra dressed as usual, in turtle-neck sweater, jeans, construction worker boots. He picked up a cold in New Zealand, but it doesn't seem to affect him. Throughout the interview he talked rapid-fire, racing through descriptions of pieces and buildings and complicated ideas, bambambam. Just back from New Zealand, where they had a lot of problems. Torrential rains, which held them up a lot, and a very inexperienced crew. They'd expected to set two or three plates a day, but did one at most. RS had brought the German rigger he's worked with for thirty years. But the crew was short on equipment and on manpower. A lot of mud. The 56 plates were all laid out in advance, over 4-5 acres of land. The rigger had to teach them everything. After two weeks, they'd set only ten plates. RS had to come back. He'll go over again when they're finishing, or re-landscaping, maybe in March, but he has to be in Europe for part of March so he may not get back until April. In meanwhile, he has six pieces going up at DIA in Beacon, which will take precedence.

He stopped on return trip in Los Angeles, where he has several projects pending. A possible piece for Gehry's Disney Hall, which is finally going up; RS to make a proposal. Went through bldg with Frank, and feels the interior box is best part of it, may be Frank's best interior space with terrific acoustics. One for the new Tadao Ando museum in Fort Worth. A piece for Glackman-renovated train depot in San Diego, half of which will become a museum; RS working on proposal for interior arcade for train depot, with eleven big arches. San Francisco, where there's a possibility of building a piece for a Univ. of California extension – he got stuck in the security breach at SF airport, when man's shoes tested positive for explosives and the man disappeared. Also a long-planned piece for CalTech, which is being finalized now – landscape elevation piece, with nine units, 20-40 feet long. (A little like the piece he did recently for Pinaud in France). A big new torqued ellipse for UCLA, which is ready to go – Richard Meier is renovating the building which RS's sculpture fronts, but no collaboration there.

The one he's most eager to bring to conclusion is the Fort Worth one, which will mediate between the Kimball and a new museum there. "I really hope that one gets built. But you never know."

"I've never built a piece for any museum in southern California. I had a show out there, but they didn't buy a piece. I thought it was never going to happen. I have built some pieces in northern California."

Bio

"My father came from Mallorca. He came around the Horn, and met my mother in Los Angeles. They were married. Mother's a Russian Jew. Father's completely Spanish. I have two brothers, one older, one younger. Older brother is an attorney. He's pretty much a criminal defense attorney, third world attorney; sort of a San Francisco counterpart of someone like Kunstler here. When Kuszcinsky, the unibomber, was arrested, he asked for my brother to defend him, but the Feds didn't let him do that. Tony Serra. They made film of him, with James Woods, called 'True Believer,' about one of his cases…He was

defending Sara Jane Olson—he did to the point where she decided that she wasn't guilty, after she pleaded guilty. She reversed herself. My brother tried to convince her that she was putting her sentence in jeopardy, but she wanted to do that, and so my brother said fine, and handed it over to the other attorney in Los Angeles and got out of it…

"My other brother teaches sculpture at Rutgers – teaches art, I think mostly sculpture. He's about ten years younger. My older brother is three years and nine months older. I was very close to him while I was growing up, but because I was away at school I wasn't as close with my younger one. I'm going to have to say something here that sounds a little like a dysfunctional family. At one point my family was relatively tight. And, my mother committed suicide. That pretty much conflicted the relationships between the siblings. It's never been as tight since. My older brother and I hardly ever speak, even though I put all five of his children through college. Because basically his practice is pro-bono, so someone had to make sure they got an education, and I did that. I have a very close relationship with these children – he has twins, and another boy. The two girls are in Los Angeles. I see them [the boys] a lot. Their father, since my mother's suicide, I've hardly talked to at all."

Why did mother commit suicide? "I don't know. I was here at the time. I don't think anybody saw it coming. Within the next year, my father died of lymphoma. I hadn't been close with him since I went away to school. I returned to San Francisco and spend a lot of time with him in his last year, and he used to come and see me in Cape Breton. He'd been a pipe fitter during the war, and then he worked in a candy factory – foreman in a candy factory. Sierra Candy."

"My mother was really keen on giving us an education. My brother went to Stanford. She was very much about the necessity for an education. My father was totally into sports. I played a lot of sports, my brother played a lot of sports, and ended up going to Stanford on an athletic and football scholarship – great athlete. Physically he doesn't look like me at all, he's about six two and two hundred pounds, big man. I played a lot of sports in high school, played at Cal and broke my back playing football. I started playing baseball when I was six or seven. It got me out all over the city.

"My father and Mark di Suvero's father were working for Marin Shipyards. They gave people a dispensation for the war effort, in terms of housing. There's a space out there on the ocean between the Zoo and the Cliff House that was nothing but sand dunes. They built two kind of experimental tract houses on these sane dunes, and it was di Suvero's family and my family. I've known Mark and his brother, who went to Harvard and became an attorney, since I was five. It's amazing, two sculptors coming from this little sand dune in the middle of nowhere. Mark's mother was a big influence me. They had lived in China. His mother would take me upstairs in the back room, and spin the globe, and point to a country; then she would open a stamp drawer, and point to the picture-gram on the stamp. She was keen on educating me in terms of the geography of the world. I think that between my parents and di Suvero's parents, being out there in the middle of this sand dune, they understood that they were kind of isolated; they also knew they were first generation Americans; so they took it upon themselves to educate these

kids daily. I think that had a lot to do with it/ The ocean was very close. That's how Mark started – he started dragging driftwood up from the beach and building things. When my mother came to New York for first time, she went to the Modern Museum, there was a piece in the garden called Hank Champion; she said, 'Oh, that's one of Mark's pieces'. I said, 'How do you know that?' And she said, 'Oh, he's been doing that since he was seven." [But diSuvero was Tony's age; RS was the little brother who tagged along with them.]

Playing sports took him all over the city. "There was a certain independence that was established from playing sports at an early age." And "there's something about walking on sand dunes when you're a kid that really hones your eye, in terms of perception. It's different from walking around in an urban landscape. You measure yourself differently. There were no blacktop streets then. There was one, called Tarrago, which had a streetcar, and then a couple of miles over there was one called Judah. People would get off the streetcar and walk into the dunes. Then, within a period of five years, they built tract housing all the way down, black tops – part of my education was watching all those houses go up every day. Maybe ten blocks by fifteen blocks."

He went to public schools. Junior high was way across town. He played baseball, football, soccer and track. Then to Lincoln High School, where he played football.

College

At 17 he went to Berkeley, and was out of the nest. Broke his back playing football (halfback on offense, linebacker on defense) in freshman year. "I loved the physicality of it, I loved staying in shape, and I liked the camaraderie, but when it was finished for me it was over. Sports teaches you a certain kind of discipline, about how to handle yourself in competition or being prepared for an event – which is very useful."

[Backtracking – drawing as a kid] "I'd do that every night. I would draw, and then my parents would critique it. That was something my brother couldn't do. There was no way I could compete with him. He was bigger, he was stronger, he was taller, he was older, he was very smart. My mot her really encouraged my drawing. I think maybe she wanted to be a painter, it was something that she always wanted to do, and I think she saw that I had an ability. I loved to do it. I had a certain hand-eye facility. I was drawing airplanes and cars and baseball players and shipyards and boats. Myself in the mirror. And they both encouraged me."

[He goes and pulls out a sheaf of drawings done by a group of gifted school kids who come to his shows and draw there. He's had the same group for three years – he meets and talks with them.]

When did he get serious about art? "I think I've always known I could do it, and would do it. But I felt, this is something I can do. If I'm going to go to college I might as well take advantage of what college has to offer, so I majored in English." But after breaking his back in freshman year at Berkeley, he transferred to UC Santa Barbara. Niebuhr was there, and Margaret Mead, and Christopher Isherwood. It had just changed from a

teaching college to a university. There were 2800 students then – his high school had had 3600. "I was a relatively good surfer. I'd broken my back, couldn't play football, and I wanted to go to a university where I could major in English and surf." Used to pass thru Santa Barbara very summer, en route to his grandmother's place in Oxnard, so he knew how idyllic a place it was. [END SIDE A] His years there were "one of the happiest times of my life."

"I majored in English, but there was a man named Howard Warshow, who was from New York. He was a gifted draftsman, and he took a personal interest in me. I really studied pretty much with him. He was a friend of Rico LeBrun, a mural painter. Howard was a LeBrun student, and when I was there they were painting a mural in the Santa Barbara Library. I went and watched them. I was so interested in what they were doing, I made a trip to Mexico and went to Guadalajara and saw the all of those painters, the Orozscos and Siqueroses. At that time I knew very little about easel painting, and I actually thought that what these people were doing in Mexico – because I hadn't been in New York, I'd never seen a Cezanne – I thought what these people were up to was entirely fascinating. They were taking on whole walls, they were melting them with fire – that if anything sparked my imagination in terms of wanting to go and continue. Going to Mexico made me understand the tradition that they were trying to follow."

"When I was seventeen the whole Beat thing was starting. But I didn't think the leotards and candles and coffee shops had much to offer. But there was a place called the Jazz Workshop that I used to go to. I'd order a bourbon and water. Mingus was there, and Mingus was an enormous influence. I had never seen anybody in process make their work like that. I remember one day he just jumped over the bar because the bartender had shut off the fan, they were cutting a track and that was one of his instruments, and he'd just blown a recording session. He paid attention all the time to everything that was going on. Mingus was over 300 pounds, and to see him jump over the bar and practically strangle the guy for turning off the fan on a hot afternoon – when you're seventeen and you've got a fake ID, this was like a whole other world here. I thought those people were the most radical people in town… Ginsburg and Howl had just happened, but there was something about the rapid commercialization of that scene that put me off."

"Every summer I worked in a steel mill. I worked or US Steel, and for Pacific Judson and Bethlehem – that's what I did. You made the most money in the least time, and if you were in shape and could handle the job they'd hire you." He caught rivets. Learned how people managed their own survival in a huge plant that "wanted to burn you out and hire somebody else. That was a big lesson. I've always had an interesting relationship with the working class. It's probably why I do what I do, because I started very early doing that. I;ve worked all my life. Started working when I was about fifteen – started rolling ball bearings in a little plant where I lied about my age. It was very useful. It wasn't even that my parents wanted me to do it. There were things I wanted. I wanted a car – a '47 Chevvy… I respect the working class. If you're making art you don't know what class you're in. But if you're working with the working class, you're part of it. And I think about the generation that I came through – Andre worked on the railroad, Morris worked in the stockyards, Glass also worked in steel mills."

Yale

RS was planning to go on from Santa Barbara to Stanford, to do grad work in English. But his faculty advisor said why don't you try fine art? "So I sent to Yale twelve drawings, and Yale sent me a letter offering a scholarship and saying we think we can teach you something. My older brother had had a choice of going to Harvard or going to Holt, California's law school; he chose to stay in California and go to law school. When I was growing up, I was always known as Tony's younger brother, and I really wanted to get out of that shadow.\So when I had a chance to go to the other side of the country and go to Yale, I thought, Aha. That was big for me. I had a big competition with my older brother." The drawings? "I drew cows – a lot of cows. Self-portrait. Hands. Figures. They were all either people, animals, or parts of bodies, all figurative. I was amazed I got in."

"The class I was in was Brice, and Chuck, and Nancy Graves, and Rackstraw Downes, and Mangold was the year before. It was kind of an extraordinary class. I was there three years. I got a BA in art history, and then an MA, then I got an MFA."

"The first week I was there, they had an open seminar taught by a guy named Neil Welliver, in the evening. There was a guy named Gelber who came up, that was doing a play called [The Connection.] He got up and explained that we had actors on the stage, shooting up, and the people in the audience talk to the people on stage and that becomes the dialogue of the play. There were all these art students in the room, maybe fifty art students crowded in. And the guy right behind me says, 'M-m-m-mister' – he went on like that, and everybody was very embarrassed, with long pauses while this guy tried to get the words out. And then after doing this for about three or four minutes, the guy said, 'Is this what we're doing?' [145-6]* The question that he asked completely deconstructed Gelber's play. And the guy asking the question held the students's attention for at least four minutes. I thought, if I'm going to be, I have to learn how to ask the intelligent questions, because that 's one of the most intelligent questions I've ever heard anyone ask anybody. That's what Yale became. A way to learn about art through dialogue and asking questions. That was the value of being there, the interrelation with the other students, and with the people Yale brought in – Rauschenberg, Stella, Guston, one after the other...And we got to pick and choose what we needed. Everybody would discuss after, what did Rauschenberg say, or what did Tworkov say? And that became our education."

"Albers had left, but I became friendly with him, and one summer I helped put together a book with him. Albers hired me to do that. The 'Interaction of Color' book. Tworkov came my last year." RS had set up a tribute to Rauschenberg, a live chicken in a cage; when Rauschenberg came he lifted the lid and the chicken flew up and spewed feces all over. Tworkov was furious, and threw RS out of school for two week. But that didn't matter, because he and others were in a separate studio by then, on Crown Street. out of the A & A building.

RS got the Yale traveling fellowship at the end of his last year even so, and went to Paris.

* See p. 17 →

At Yale, "I was going bad de Koonings. And I knew they were bad de Koonings. Brice was more advanced in painting than any of us then, in terms of having a direction. I didn't know what I was doing, so I decide just to emulate what was going on the best I could. But I had no illusions about thinking that was my identity as an artist. Ad Reinhardt came up – he interested me a lot. Richard Brown Baker had a collection that he showed at Yale. There was a Johns target in it, and that really threw me. I liked it a lot. And Duchamp's 'Tu 'm' was there. It's a pretty good collection. I would walk by 'Foxtrot' every day, one of the best Mondrian's ever painted. It becomes part of the reality of the steps someone had to take, to arrive at a position that allowed him to do a kind of abstraction that is that far removed from nature. I thought that was *very* interesting.

"I personally liked Guston, liked listening to Guston. At the time he was doing great painting. Stella was interesting because he was already on the scene in New York, and just a couple of years older. Tworkov finally showed a little film clip of Warhol to us, and said he thought Warhol was going to be more influential than any of the abstract expressionists. For him to have played that card – he understood that Warhol was a break from abstract expressionism, and even tho we were being spoon-fed with the older generation abstract expressionists, Warhol was in advance of people like Rauschenberg and Johns. We were probably a little too early to understand where Warhol was, but Tworkov was already asking."

"Yale was heavy on practice. They really wanted to see something every week…I liked that. Brice always had a very good work ethic, and Chuck also. And Yale was fiercely competitive. We used to throw chairs at one another, but it was finally very helpful."

France and Italy

RS and Nancy Graves started going together in his last year there, and they both went to Paris afterward – RS on traveling grant and Nancy on a Fulbright. They got married in Paris. Hadn't planned to, but their Swiss landlady was scandalized by their living together, and was going to throw him out, and he didn't want to lose his studio. (See Nancy Graves interview in Chuck Close book, p. 20–25)

"I had a hard time in Paris. There were riots then, and I had long dreadlocks and I got thrown in jail twice. When I went to Italy, on the other hand – if you're an art student" you're in heaven. He had a great studio. In Paris he didn't speak French – Nancy spoke French. But met Phil Glass there. "Phil took me to see Buster Keaton, whom I'd never seen before, and I took him to see Brancusi's studio. The main thing I did during my year in Paris was go to Brancusi's studio, which was intact in that old museum there.* I used to make drawings every day in Brancusi's studio. That was the first time I really looked at sculpture seriously. The reason I made drawings there, was that Brancusi draws on the edge in terms of holding a volume, better than any sculptor I'd ever seen, and I thought there was a lot to learn just by eyeballing Brancusi's sculpture. The way he would hone down a form.

"And then Phil and I used to go and sit in front of Giacometti in the evenings, at La Coupole. That was like a big empowering groupie thing for me to do. In Santa Barbara I had written a thesis on existentialism. At Yale, even though you had all these people

* Musée de l'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris

coming in, I had never really seen a practicing artist like that in the flesh, who had just come out of his studio at one o'clock in the morning with plaster in his hair, at the height probably of his output. I'd just sit and stare at him. One night I think he actually said something – he must have noticed us staring at him – and I asked if we could come by and see you tomorrow. He said yes, come at such and such a time. We went by and he wasn't there."

"Basically, what I did in Paris was to draw every day." But Brancusi and Giacometti really got him interested in sculpture. (He'd never been before that). Giacometti was real to him in a way that the artists who had come up to Yale were not.

Italy – found a big studio but couldn't move in right away because it was still occupied. "So Nancy and I went to Greece, and hitchhiked from Athens to Istanbul, then hitchhiked back to Florence. I had this great studio, and I was studying painting. At one point I had reduced the canvas to 64 squares. I had paint buckets on the floor, and I had a stopwatch, and I was trying to fill in the squares as quickly as I could – I'd give myself a minute to fill each square, and if it wasn't filled in it wasn't. I ended up with these rectilinear, kind of paint-chip colors, and I remember I went to the American Library there and I saw a Kelly, which was exactly like what I was doing. The next week, I went to Spain, and I saw Velasquez. And 'Las Meninas' really stopped me. I don't know if I'm ever going to be able to challenge this stuff – that's something I hadn't seen before, and it scared me. I had never seen anybody put themselves in a painting from where they were painting in the room – hadn't even conceived of anything like that.

"I went back to Florence, and I started experimenting with sticks and stones and wire and cages and live animals and stuffed animals. I wanted to be as far away from my academic background as I could. Then, there was a Fulbright show in Rome, and I showed two of these cages, stacked, with different things in them. A guy named Liberani who had a gallery there, La Solita, asked me if I wanted a show, and I showed them in Rome. I knew it was student work. An interesting thing happened. All the Italians who were kind of playing around the fringes of that scene – which probably had a lot to do with Rauschenberg and Samaras and a lot of other people anyway – were very interested in that work. The following year, the whole Arte Povera thing really blossomed. It was in the air, but I didn't know it was in the air."

New York

"I came back to New York, and my old teacher, who had heard about that show, was very angry about it. He said you can't have spent those three years painting at Yale and ended up playing around with live animals. So I felt kind of estranged from that group.

"I had to find my way in New York. I started a little moving company called Low Rate Movers. Chuck worked with us, and Michael Snow, and Reich, and Glass, and we moved furniture. I had the truck. [He'd driven it across the country]. We got to the point where if each of used the truck two days a week, we would have five days off. So everybody could work two days a week and make a good living. [About eight people in all]. The truck was always operating, and it kept us going for about a year… "

Nancy Graves was stuffing camels then. She had a show of them uptown long before Serra showed, on Madison Avenue. Serra was dealing with rubber by then, hanging and draping it, for about a year and a half. "Enacting verbs in relation to different materials. Then I got into lead," which led to a misunderstanding with Nancy. "She said that's not art, and I thought this relationship's not going to last, and it didn't. That was the beginning of the end anyway." Two people working in different directions, representative and abstract – that became insuperable. But "we were not competitive, we were very supportive with each other."

"I was seeing Snow and Glass and Reich every day, and they were really interested in time and process. We could discuss that for hours." Also seeing Eva Hesse and Carl Andre and Bob Smithson. "I think what happened in New York at that time – if you did something that caught the attention of somebody, you went from not knowing anybody to knowing everybody. T he first week I was here, I walked down to Canal Street to buy a screwdriver, and Larry Poons was out on Church Street fixing his motorcycle. Poons was an enormous figure then, he was considered a rival to Stella. He had put a kind of lyricism into American painting that hadn't been there. I asked are you Larry Poons, and he gave a gruff yes, sort of put me off, and I thought, this is either a traffic accident or a castle, and I've got to figure out what I want to do. And the person who was the most helpful was Dick Bellamy. I'd met Bellamy in Europe, at the Venice Biennale – the year Rauschenberg won – and he said when you're in New York look me up, and I did. Dick started to come by and look at the work. He would lie on the floor and read poetry or something. He was so different from anyone else I'd ever met, and so completely supportive, and so laid back. And a really refined eye, and a belief in people. Dick became kind of my eyes and ears to what was going on in the larger scene. And finally Dick put me in a group show, with de Maria and di Suvero, at Gollowsky. I showed those belts on the wall which are in the Guggenheim now.

"After a while I showed at Castelli Warehouse, and then some pieces at the Guggenheim – all within nine months. If you showed ten pieces in a period of nine months everybody knew who you were. I knew Smithson very early on, and Smithson introduced me to Andre. Smithson became my closest friend; he knew the whole scene because he'd been here for years. We'd meet at Max's Kansas City every night. Smithson, Andre, Judd – Judd was like the godfather of everybody. The arguments would do on – was Andre's brick more interesting because it was one after another and serial, or because it was physically a brick? Those kind of discussions would go on for hours. It got hot and heavy…but friendly. The dancers were a big part of it, and they were ahead of it. They were dealing with space and time and material in a way that other people weren't – particularly Yvonne [Rainer], and Trisha [Brown], and Simone Forti. I went to all of their performances, I was a junkie. There were more ideas being turned over there than anywhere else." [END SERRA 2 – BEGIN SERRA 3]

The Dogs - RS currently has three Chesapeake Retrievers, a mother and two pups: Emma, Freda(the mother), and Maple. Has always had dogs, as a kid, in college, etc. A real dog person, big dogs.

NYC in late sixties – "Nobody wanted to do anything that had been done before, and there were people who were doing things that hadn't been done before. Andre and Judd were already on the scene doing things that were totally radical, and I think the younger group realized – in relation to that work, how do we deal with how to deal with the objectness of that work and get around it? Judd called them specific objects…but that was one possibility coming out of the flatness of painting and dealing with the gestalt, and there seemed to be other ways of getting around that situation. Andre had pointed to one; Andre had pointed to place…It looked like openings were coming out of that movement, where you didn't have to go back to previous sculpture. That you could use that language and take it somewhere else.

"The group I came with was Nauman, Heizer, Smithson, Eva, and then the conceptual part of it, Kossuth and Weiner. That was as a resistance to the orthodoxy…of Lewitt, Judd, Morris, Andre. Judd was very supportive of me, maybe because he wanted to use me as a foil to Morris. But Judd embraced my work immediately, and we became friends…There was a big rivalry between Judd and Morris then. For me, Morris always dovetailed back to Duchamp, where Judd seemed to be a break in that entire tradition. Where something like Johns tied Cezanne and Duchamp together, and that seemed like a very intelligent thing to do. I think Johns's relation to process – when I first started making pieces, Johns asked me to come to his loft and build a piece. He'd seen a piece in the Whitney, asked me if I'd do one in his bank…" Johns invited Cage, and there was lunch.

"I remember at one point I was heating up some lead, and Johns came by. He had been painting on a painting, and I asked him how long he'd been painting on it, and it was something like eight years. Orange and green target. And when he was flipping over a piece of fish, he turned on Joe Cocker, and then he came by, he had a ladder under his arm because he wanted to open the skylight…and I said, Did you like doing that? And he looked at me and said, Which part? Wo-o-o-o. Johns is the kid of guy that actually pays attention…in a rhetorical way even, to everything that's said and that he sees and that he's doing. T hat was very interesting. Somehow I thought about that a lot. After thinking about Pollock a lot, I thought about Johns a lot.

"I was late in seeing Newman, who was the next really big figure for me… It was easier to understand Reinhardt than Newman."

Getting from rubber to lead – "I think I wanted a material that I could deal with in terms of compression and weight, and also a material that was malleable. I guess I thought lead was pretty synonymous with rubber that way. I started tearing it and folding it to begin with. And then I thought if I made it thicker I could stand it up and make it self-supporting – that's how we got into doing the House of Cards. Then I thought if I put something on top of it, by compression I could hold the plates underneath with a roll on top…I got into a whole series of lead pieces that way. It was a way of finding a material that was synonymous to rubber, as flexible as rubber that I could hand-manipulate, but would give me something that I could ---."

Bellamy was very hot on the rolled lead pieces, and "I really trusted Dick. His whole life, even after I stopped showing with him, he followed all my shows, came to all the openings…I had an enormous affection for him. Leo and Dick, I couldn't have asked for two better people to start working with…I haven't found anybody like that since." (Has had a falling out with Matthew Marks, after working with him for a year).

Hostility to this early work – at the Stedelijk, some artists tore it off the wall, and took over the projector showing Snow's film.

Castelli Warehouse show - "It was a show that signaled another way of working, and it seemed like it bracketed minimalism." Morris did that show, with Leo, and then the Whitney did a similar show, a year later, with Marden and Glass and many others. Guggenheim show was just before it. A big three years for RS. Somebody wanted to make a film of him putting up House of Cards, "so I thought I can do that, and I got a camera and a piece of lead and my hand, and used it show filmically to show what people what that process was all about. Later I made some bigger films, including one of a steel mill…"

The possibility of collapse as an idea in sculpture – "I think the House of Cards was the first one we built where you felt if someone touches this it's going to implode." But not part of the idea. "I wasn't interested in that at all. I was interested in the fact that it was self-supporting, and that everything was interdependent on everything else, and anybody looking at it can understand that. Certainly if you pushed on it you could knock it over, but if you pushed on a Giacometti it's going to fall over, and so is a Brancusi. It wasn't called House of Cards, it was called 'One-Ton Prop' and then in parenthesis 'House of Cards.' People got the idea that these pieces could collapse, but that wasn't my interest. I didn't want to make that the content. I definitely wanted them to stand up. But I wanted them to reveal the principle that they were all interdependent and self-supporting, and that they weren't bolted or welded."

Nasher did weld one of these pieces, to Serra's anger. More recently, someone at MOCA wanted to drill holes in a piece on loan from Eli Broad; "I said, you don't drill holes in Brancusi, why drill holes in my piece? If you want to put it up, put it up the way it's supposed to be; if not, don't put it up, but don't drill holes in it."

The first steel pieces in 1970 - "That's when I left the whole studio idea behind. I started figuring out how to do pieces for places. That was a real sea change for me, after the Johns piece. I was more interested in declaring the space of a room, or dividing space of a room, or making the fact that when you entered into a space you were entering not only the context of the space but the content of the room. So the whole behavior definition of walking into and through and around became part of how you knew the piece over time, rather than looking at a object. And I think the first piece in the corner was the big break for that. I think Newman probably responded to that piece because…he came back two or three times, and it makes sense that he would respond to that work." At that point, the spectator became part of the piece – not before. "Before that, pieces were axiomatically based on gravity, and how they were held together…From 'Strike,' then they started

occupying a bigger interior space, and they became about time and how you moved through them. That was one of the limitations I saw in minimalism, that even if you walked around the object, once you saw one face of the object you could fill in the gestalt and read it…There wasn't any notion of a bigger field going on."

"Smithson was already plugging away at that. When he died I was very angry, because I thought this is someone I'll play with for the rest of my life. I've been with a lot of very intelligent people, and Smithson, who was self-educated, was one of the most interesting minds I've ever come across. He was hysterically funny. He was courageous. He was inventive. And he had a mission, he was really going to change the nature of art…A lot of people feared Smithson because he had a quick tongue, and could be outrageously cruel. I liked him a lot."

Staking out 'Spiral Jetty' - RS went out there, saw Smithson had started to stake it out with a straight line in the water, and it looked like a question mark. He pointed that out problem, and they decided he had to do it a different way. They staked it out, walking it all one day in the lake, with dead pelicans all around.

RS got on with both Smithson and Judd, who couldn't stand each other. He also admired Oldenburg, whose idea of gravity was very big with artists then. (The soft fan, etc.) RS took Smithson's article on entropy to Phil Lieder, who was a big part of the scene then; he put a lot of the under-thirty artists on cover of Artforum.

Kaiser Steel pieces – this was before the lead show at Castelli Warehouse, right in the middle of all this activity. "That got me curious about moving back into steel again. After I did the lead pieces I went right back into steel. Until then I thought steel was such a traditional material that I wasn't going to get near it. But then I thought, well, I can use steel in a way no one's used it. I can use it in the way industry has used it, technology has used it. I can use it for its weight, for load-bearing, for stasis, for friction, for counter-balance…and I thought, why not? If you know something about it, why not? I thought that Picasso, Gonzalez, Calder had done great things with steel, but that was not the way I wanted to use it. I thought [David] Smith was an absolutely great sculptor, but I wasn't too keen on Smith's burnished pieces. I thought that was a kind of optical copout. I really liked 'Australia.' And I liked the Voltri series, and the Agricola series…On the other hand, I didn't like Judd's plastic pieces, or a lot of what Judd was doing with color, either, and I told him."

"Smithson was extremely smart and competitive and nasty. I liked him. I hadn't met anyone who I thought had that kind of range. Literary range… When Eva and Smithson died, that was a big loss for my generation."

Carl Andre was also close to Smithson. "I liked Andre and admired Andre and liked to listen to Andre. He's an enormously important sculptor. But my relationship to him wasn't as close as my relationship to Smithson."

"When Eva Hesse died, she'd also been making work with ephemeral materials, and I thought it was too bad that a lot of that work wasn't going to survive. And maybe it makes sense to take another kind of responsibility for your work, and so I began giving the work more care and more thought about maintenance."

Japan

"I got invited by the Mainichi newspaper to be part of a group show in Japan. Andre was on that trip, and I went there with Joan Jonas. We did the show, and then I wanted to stay on. I went to Kyoto and stayed another four weeks there, and I really got involved with all those Zen temples, spend days and weeks in them. I was coming out of painting, and I had some understanding of how to relate things in space in terms of perspective and placement. But I didn't understand that you could also see things simultaneously, in relation to how they're placed and in relation to time. That really gave me a whole other way of thinking about placement in relation to an open field, and walking in relation to an open field, and protracted time, and what it meant to walk and look at something at a different elevation. That was enormously influential. I could never have done the Pulitzer piece if I hadn't gone to Japan… I think going to Japan tied up a lot of loose ends for me, about what does it mean to be in the moment, to look, to see, to place, and to walk through. That little story about Johns? It's the same kind of thing, where Johns is saying 'Which part?' Johns is really seeing the whole thing simultaniously as he's doing it…And that goes back to Mingus and turning off the fan. All those things you thought were important to you, sort of came together, meshed, in Japan.

"It was partly because I just stayed there and did nothing. I was with Joan… I smoked a lot of grass in the sixties. And I think smoking grass and taking time – because it really does slow you down – I smoked a lot of kief in Japan, and I took a lot of time, walking in those gardens daily. I think it gave me a different kind of sense of how to control space over a given distance in relation to time. I 'm not big on alcohol, but for a certain period in my life grass was quite useful. It never made me paranoid. But it rooted me in a certain kind of complacency. And I tend to be hyperactive anyway, so it was something I could use."

Re Matthew Barney film – RS didn't really see himself in it – "I was he."
[END SERRA 3]

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Serra 4
(Feb. 8,2002)

Starts with two projects pending Qatar, one of which, for an Islamic Museum, he's been working on for two years. RS has suggested Dan Kiley as landscape architect. "They have to build a landscape that's going to accommodate the curvilinear aspect of this work." RS will be working with Kiley's office. Also working on a very big project for city of Brussels, which "seems like it's going to happen." More current projects than he's had in a long time, and more in this country than he's ever had. "Tilted Arc caused so much controversy that people just didn't want to get involved…" but no longer. The DIA show that went to LA, and then the Bilbao show built a certain momentum. Qatar is owned by one family – "looks like Miami Beach at this point," with many buildings going up by name architects. "Qatar is one of the few countries that's given women the vote, and it doesn't seem too oppressive."

Backing up – what was the student's question to Gelber at Yale? "'Is what I'm doing right now what you're doing on stage?'" In other words, a person in the audience capturing the content of the dialogue – "This guy did a straight parody of audience participation. I think he meant, 'Is this all you're doing?' That was the question. And Gelber didn't know how to answer it. Everybody was embarrassed for Gelber, and everybody realized the poverty of that position. All of a sudden it was demasked for basically what it was, that anybody could take it over at any time. What it did for me was, this is a place where asking questions is as important as what you make. And if you're going to ask a question, you'd better ask one that's serious in its relationship to what you're trying to anticipate a response might be."

Brancusi Studio - He went there every day, to make drawings of the sculpture in relation to the arrangements in the studio (as reconstructed in Musee de l'art Moderne). "I really got hooked into looking at his sculpture. I would spend hours doing that, I made notebooks full of drawings. It was an enormous surprise to me that I responded to the strength of the work – I'd never really looked at Brancusi. I really responded to the strength of the work and the simplicity of the work and the abstraction of the work. If you're a young student and you want to get into sculpture, there are so many different touchstones that allow you to move into Brancusi. Whether it's figuration, whether it's animals, whether it's abstraction, whether it's stacking, whether it's elongation, whether it's horizontality – Brancusi offers a refined notion and a poetic notion of how to move into the discipline from various venues. It's very easy to move in and find a direction because it's so very rich in what it attempted to explore. What you find is that he always circles back to earlier work. Brancusi became the first sculptor I took very very seriously. Up to that point I hadn't taken sculpture seriously at all. At Yale, Albers' problems were mainly ice-cream sticks – they made serial sculptures with ice-cream sticks, which was pretty boring. In France, I stopped painting pretty much, and made a lot of drawings." Also did a lot of walking and looking. "I found myself daily being drawn back to that studio."

Giacometti – "A romantic notion of what it meant to be an artist. I turned into kind of a groupie, I was star-struck. The way you want to look at somebody because you think you might learn something just from looking. He would come in, and often he would talk to Becket. And Becket looked like this hawk, this beautiful thin man with these piercing eyes. Parisians are quite cool about it, but young Americans come in and gawk."

RS bought Sidney Geist's book on Brancusi – he goes and gets it to show us, tattered with use. "That became a handbook for me."

NYC - Verb List: "If you want to get away from strategies of making art that are hand-me-downs from former generations, you have to kind of make up your own. I was very involved with the physical activity of making. And if you're involved with that, it's basically a kind of transitive verb, like how you do something, to cut, to roll, to fold. And I thought that rather than think about the residue, of what the thing is going to be and how you're going to do it compositionally, what if you just got involved with those verbs in relation to a material, and didn't worry about what the result was going to be? I'll give you a much later example – Matisse, when he's cutting out those figures, he doesn't make a drawing first. He's cutting in the air. It's not a Kelly. The pieces are on the floor. I think what the verb list did for me was a strategy to release me from assumptions about composition, about fitting things together, about how parts related – it took all of that out of the picture. It just got me involved in a very straight idea about what an activity would be in relation to a material, in relation to a place, and maybe sometimes in relation to time – like tearing lead between four and four-thirty, or whatever. And then you can talk about whether the residue was a work of art, or what it was. Half the time it wasn't anything, it didn't amount to anything. Other times, it did…

"For me, that was one way to sort of loosen up and not worry about results. Not be able to foresee a conclusion. If the question doesn't involve a resolution, if it's just an activity, there isn't any resolution. For the most part, we used to make a lot of nothing, but every now and then we'd find something interesting… If you take a piece of rubber, and just lift it up, and it held its form, we could spend weeks looking at it. We thought, that's an interesting proposition. Just take a piece of rubber, lift it up, and have it free-standing in a way that it was bilaterally symmetrical, it made an interior and an exterior in volume, it was continuous from inside to outside – we thought, well, that's an interesting thing to do.

"Then we did a series of propping things against a wall… We did a whole series of lead props, maybe thirty of them, and six or eight were really resolutions that we thought would stand together as a group of work, so that became the group we showed. But we went through a lot of them that were completely meaningless." Could he tell right away? "No, no, I'm very bad at telling right away. I think things have to sort of seep in. Sometimes, what you think is a solution is just a wow; sometimes what you don't think is a solution, just sits there and says come back and take a look, and it's usually those which are more…significant. Sometimes you get one that's just like that [snaps fingers]. When Phil and I were in Paris we used to play the pinball machines. If we did one that did that we'd say, 'Tilt.' But that was rare.

"Another thing we'd do – we used to work for a given period of time, like from two-thirty to five, and then if you really wanted to think through a problem that we couldn't find a resolution to, we'd go down and ride the Staten Island ferry, or ride the subway. We found that if we put ourselves in a situation where we didn't have to move but were moving, that we could talk to each other and probably come to some conclusion in this trapped moving space in a way that we were unable to if the work was right I front of us and we were dealing with it. We \used to do that. I think a couple of pieces came directly out of that. Phil is very interested in time, and in the progression of time. He was also interested in process, and not in relation to what the result was going to be. So I would try to be his ear and he would try to be my ear. Basically what we needed from each other was somebody to really listen. So there was this shared dialogue, and understanding about what issues were, apart from the material."

Mark di Suvero - "He was part of the Park Place contigency. I was more drawn to things that were coming out of the Fischbach, more drawn to what Eva was up to, and Bruce, and other people on the downtown scene who were trying to break a different kind of ground. We were coming behind Judd and Morris. Mark substantiated a scene that had more to do with an extension of other ways of structure, and making forms that I thought were coming out of Russian Constructivism, via abstract expressionism. It wasn't anything I was interested in at the time. Although, at that moment in New York the Park Place – there was Grosvenor, di Suvero, a lot of interesting people." But RS did look up di Suvero as an old friend. "He had recently had the accident. I went to see him out in Brooklyn, where he was building his pieces from a wheelchair. I think he's a heroic figure, someone who remade himself. Mark for a lot of people became an enormously empowering figure because of his courage. But I wasn't interested in the direction his work was taking."

Di Suvero, Oldenburg, Morris, Judd, Flavin had all been involved with Bellamy, all the artists who made Janis and Castelli. By the time RS got to NY, the Green Gallery was defunct and Bellamy was at Goldowsky.

The avant-garde film scene - "Michael Snow lived on Chambers Street. In the summer, I used to walk around and get a hot dog there. One day, it must have been about a hundred degrees, I went in to get a hot dog, and there was a guy in there with shades on, in an overcoat, and tennis shoes, and no socks. He was sitting next to me. I said, 'What are you up to?' He said, 'I'm a film-maker, and I've been up all night looking at film. I'm from Canada.' I asked him what kind of film he was making, and he said if you're really interested come up and take a look. So I walk up the stairs, and he puts on the film, and it's 'Wavelength.' I was so taken with it, and so completely floored by it, I went back to see it several times. Then, I had a possibility of going to Europe for this show at the Stedelijk, this Round Holes and Square Pegs. I took Michael's film and showed it there – that's when they tried to knock over the projector, they got so outraged. But then I showed it in Germany, and two or three other venues, because I thought people had to see it. So I became really close friends with Michael Snow. And I went to Jonas Mekas's screenings regularly. I would work during the day, and like between six and eight I would go to see what Jonas was showing, have my dinner right there. I watched almost his

entire cycle. If you wanted to learn about the history of film, that was better than Paris. Being there so many times, I met Annette Michelson, and Rosalind [Kraus]. And the I started going out with Joan Jonas, and she knew Yvonne [Rainer], who had just started to make films also. I saw Warhol's early films. And I started making very small studio films. The first one was in relation to the House of Cards, and I just made my own little hand film. I made six or seven small films – it wasn't until later that I got into bigger films.

Warhol - "I thought that Warhol and Yvonne, in terms of artists making films, offered something very very different from what was going on in Hollywood. It had to do with time. You looked at 'Empire,' you looked at 'Blow Job…' there was a really big dividing line between what Brakhage was doing. Brakhage looked like abstract expressionism. Warhol looked like he was dealing with time, and the protraction of time, and image, in a very different way…Brakhage had an enormous following among the younger film-makers in New York, but not among the artists…"

RS knew Warhol, but not well. "His crowd would sit underneath the Flavin lights in the back of Max's…[RS and his friends sat one table away] Warhol had a way of looking right through something and reducing it to its most simple, cynical form. Everybody had a tremendous admiration for Warhol. I think we all understood that he was an enormous figure. I had a lot of conversations with him, but none I would call serious. At one point he wanted to trade a work, but somehow it never happened." This was late sixties. A lot of people met each other thru Micky Ruskin. The gallery scene eventually took over and drained the energy from that scene, but Max's was a real nexus for a while. "I think something happened in the 80s, and the focus became more on the artist's personality, the artist as performer. A different kind of art was being made because a different kind of person was making it."

Joan Jonas - "I was married, and had said to my wife that I was going to St. Louis. I didn't – I went and spent a couple of nights with Joan. Came back and told Nancy that I hadn't gone to St. Louis, that I'd been with Joan, and she said, 'What do you think that means?' And I said, 'I guess it means I'm moving out,' and I did. Then I was involved with Joan for about a year, and we did a lot of work together. She has a very interesting poetic imagination. I was very interested in her relationship to video and to performance. She worked very hard. When I went to Japan I went with Joan, so we went to Kyoto together, and that was an enormous learning experience for me… The first piece Joan had done was with mirrors, and I thought it was a terrific piece and I wanted to meet her. I went with Smithson, and we both thought it was very good, it brought the whole audience right into the reflection of the mirrors as they were moving the mirrors in front of the audience." RS arranged for one of her video pieces to be shown at Castelli.

On return from Japan in 197? He stopped in California, and Phil Lieder invited him to drive to Nevada and see Heizer's 'Double Negative.' RS thought it was a powerful and romantic piece, whose fundamental issues came out of Judd. But :I had always worked in an urban situation. I liked the activity of people, I wanted my work to respond to people, and the most ideal thing I could do was to put some pieces in the city and let people

interact with that and be open to that, no matter how vulnerable you're going to be in relation to that. That's the way I wanted to do. There was something about going out to the desert that seemed – I won't say elitist, but it was a little too rarefied and refined for me."

Pulitzer Piece – "When I first staked out the Pulitzer piece I got so nervous about its consequence in relation to what I was building in juxtaposition to, I went to Canada and built a big piece called 'King City,' which deals with the same proposition as the Pulitzer piece, in concrete, and then I came back and finished the Pulitzer piece. The King City piece, I was working for a man named Roger Davidson, and I gave him – this is where I was economically at the time – I gave him three sculptures for an exchange of land to build the piece on, which was then his! Times have changed. It was a potato field. There was about ten or twelve acres in the middle of nowhere [END SIDE A] – it was an opportunity for me to go out and build a big big piece. It was related to the Pulizter piece in how it dealt with the elevations, with the fall of the land…how walking and looking really measured yourself against the curvature of the earth. It gave me more confidence to go ahead and build the Pulitzer piece.

"To tell you the truth, I was very anxious about concluding the Pulitzer piece. I wanted to make damn sure I was doing something I was going to be proud of, because that was a real big opportunity… I knew Emmy Pulitzer, maybe through Joe Helman. She wasn't married to Joe Pulitzer at the time. I knew her as Emmy Rauh, I knew her as a curator at the museum. We did a show out there, with Helman, in the university, Washington University in St. Louis. Emmy came to see the show and liked it, and Emmy was dating Joe Pulitzer. We used to kid her about why are you marrying that old man. And then she invited myself and Phil to come out and meet ~~Phil~~ Joe and spend the day there. I did, and had some terrific conversations with Joe. At that time his was the first newspaper in the United States to come out against the Vietnamese War, and he wrote the editorial that did that. Very elegant man, handsome man, very thoughtful man with a wry sense of humor. Emmy was telling him what I was up to, with propping things. I had just come back from Japan. He just said, would you like to build a piece here? I asked where, and he said, wherever you want. So, I got a topographical map made of the entire field and decided to take it on. And then I went to see their collection, and that's when I had an anxiety attack thinking I'm really in over my head here. Their summer house is in suburb of St. Louis, and a big field surrounds the house. And their summer house has the Water Lilies, a beautiful Kelly sculpture, a Matisse sculpture, there's Rothko in the house, Brancusi in the house, Cezanne in the house, and all of this you see every day… They're all at a very high level, and you just don't want to go there and make a fool of yourself. I took it as an enormous challenge, and it caused me a lot of anxiety. I was unprepared to finish it at first. I staked it out with strings and poles, and looked at for about three or four months. Then I went to Canada, finished the piece there, came back and finished St. Louis."

(Story he would prefer I don't use: RS was a pallbearer at Joe Pulitzer's funeral. Chuck Close wanted to interview him afterward. RS talked about his relation to Joe and Emmy. He said he'd like to edit the manuscript, but was not allowed to get rid of a remark he wanted out – stopped talking to Chuck as a result. What he'd said was that he liked Joe

the way he liked Cary Grant, because of a vanity where you understand that he likes himself.)

Cape Breton - Went there first in 1971, with Joan, to stay with Rudy Wurlitzer (script writer) and Phil Glass. They'd gone there in 1969 and bought a place, and wanted RS to buy in. He went back the following summer, and thought it was one of the most beautiful places he'd ever seen – eagles and bears and spectacular landscape. He went looking for his own piece of land, and found one on a mountain, owned by an elderly woman who lived thirty miles away and didn't have a deed. House and a barn, the house falling down. He located the woman, and said if I get you a deed will you sell the land, and she said, maybe. He went back every day, hung the lady's laundry out for her, talked to her, and finally she said yes, honey, you get me a deed and we'll see. He contacted a lawyer and got the deed, and after thinking about it for week she sold it to him, with provision that she could always have access to the property if she wanted to. So he bought a house and a barn and about 160 acres. He'd just received a Guggenheim, and Joan Jonas had some money, so for $20,000 they bought the whole place jointly, but never lived in it together. They separated, and flipped a coin for the property, and RS won. He paid her ten grand back, and she bought a piece of land on the other side of the hill, and built her own house there. RS lived in the barn for about 15 years. Finally moved into the house, renovated both barn and house, then moved out and built another house – this was with Clara. Now he spends five months a year up there, more time than he does here. Usually June-July-August, plus one month in the fall and one in the spring. He just spent all of December there.

"I do more work there than I do here." No distractions, a different kind of time. A lot of time to read, to write, to think. More drawing than he does anywhere else. Over 50% of his sculptures are worked out there. "There I work continuously." Gluckman built the second house.

"I like the light. Northern light is like pencilled light, it's like light after it rains. It's a clear light. I don't like southern fat light, lazy light, I don't like Mediterranean light. I like Munch, the light in Munch. I like the light in Dutch paintings. I like the measure in the Renaissance but I like the light in the Dutch paintings. What I really like about going north is the light."

Built himself a lap pool there for exercise. Can't run any more, bad knees.

Amarillo Ramp - Went down there with Nancy Holt and Tony Shafrazi to finish the piece after Smithson was killed. Shafrazi had been there when the plane crash, would have been in it if he hadn't slept late that morning. The piece was all laid out, an arc of landfill extending out into a lake, and they just filled it in, with truckloads of earth. Had to empty the lake, stake the piece out again, then learn how to handle the trucks. Took about a month. Piece was commissioned by Stanley Marsh, near his Cadillac Ranch.

PADC Project – 1975 or thereabouts. Govt commission came thru Castelli, to do a piece for Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation in D.C. Venturi was given the

blocks closer to the White House and Treasury Dept., RS was given the plaza up the street. "An enormous fiasco. I designed something, and then Venturi decided he wanted to be on the plot of land I was on, and designed two pylons that framed the Treasury Building. They asked me what I thought about that, and I said I didn't think there was any need to direct people's attention to the Treasury Building. They said they didn't mind Venturi's pylons, but they were a little austere and could I make them a little more democratic. We came in after lunch and they just happened to have a watercolor with stars and stripes on the pylons, and they asked me what I thought of that. I said you might as well put a swastika and an eagle on top, and I was fired immediately." RS had designed a ten-foot vertical piece that you could walk into, open to the sky. Helen Tworkov worked with him at the time on his project.

The resulting plaza "is basically mediocre," according to RS.

Clara ~~Carla~~ - When RS's mother committed suicide he went to Germany. His dealer there, Alexander von Berswordt-Wallrabe, sent him an airline ticket to come to Germany. "He has helped me more than anybody, more than Bellamy or Leo or anybody, ever, who's supported all my work in Europe, really got me into the steel mills, got me working on a bigger scale, really gave me confidence to do things I probably wouldn't have done, went out and made situations happen. Most of the work I was doing in the 70s and 80s, eighty or ninety percent of it was in Europe and he was responsible for all of that. ~~Carla~~ Clara was working for him, in his gallery."

RS had used the airline ticket to go to Paris, instead of Germany, but he felt guilty about that, called Alexander to say so, then flew to Germany. ~~Carla~~ Clara had a PhD in art history, had worked for the museum in Monchen-Gladbach before joining the gallery. She spoke very little English. RS got a commission at this point to build a piece for the National Gallery in Berlin. He went to a steel mill to see about building the piece, and found ~~Carla~~ Clara and a lot of other young people outside, protesting the conditions there. He talked to her, and they ended up making a film together about conditions in the steel mill. She interviewed the workers, RS shot the film. Second part of film shows building of RS's piece. The film won awards at art festivals, and also got them living together. (See Clara's version →)

"When your mother commits suicide, it pretty much changes your relation to women. It just does. Most men understand primarily their relationship to other women thru the mother. I realized that there was a big part of me where I didn't listen that thoroughly. When it really came to listening about feelings, I had a deaf ear. Clara and I used to have very long conversations, political and otherwise, and because she spoke very little English and I spoke no German, to argue one point sometimes we'd go on for four or five days. I would lose every conversation…She had sounder ground than I did. I thought, this is one of the most intelligent women I've ever met, and one of the nicest people, and a person who can cut through a lot of nonsense and see what's interesting and what's superfluous, much quicker than I could…We fell in love, and then it was just phone calls going back and forth. I wanted her to move here, and eventually she did, I think in 1979 – we met in 1977." His father died soon after. "If my mother hadn't committed suicide, I

don't think I would have been that open or that vulnerable, to listen to something I should always have listened to, because I have too many walls and safeguards up."

He'd been in analysis before – eight years in all, starting after the accident in Minneapolis. Found it enormously helpful, in terms of what was probably a self-destructive frame of mind. [END INVU]

Serra 5
(14 Feb 02)

The pots on the high shelf in the living room are Cambodian, 3-4th century BC. (B. Chiows) Very well preserved because they were in the mud at the bottom of a lake. RS found a group of small ones in Germany; found a woman in Los Angeles who had several – "I bought a couple. And then she said she wanted to retire, and I offered her a price for all of them. And I'm not a collector like that, but I really like these pots. I like pots, I collect pots; I have American Indian pots, African pots, Chinese pots…I really see them as [sculptures]. These are Lobi pieces, very good examples." He jumps up and runs into the other room, comes back with two more.

Several African figures around the room. A monkey with a marvelously articulated back. Four TK figures on a table. A big iron cross that he says is African money.

He's having a show with DIA and the Modern, probably in 2005 or 2006, not the re-opening show but right after. DIA is doing the early work., MOMA the later. Has lined up Benjamin Buchloh as one of the catalog writers, "but I don't have a curator yet. We've asked Kynaston, and he's not sure he's up for it. Kirk was the one who first came up with the idea…" He likes how DIA deals with artists, putting no pressure on them, "unlike any museum I've ever dealt with." The Eva Hesse would be a good show for DIA to take, he says; he'll talk to Govan about it. An important part of the NY art world, and a tremendously important touchstone for several generations of woman artists.

(Interview)
How he hooked up with Leo - "I knew Leo, because I used to go to the shows uptown. He came by to see the show at Noah Goldowsky's, when Bellamy had the show of myself and di Suvero. I didn't know him well, just to say hello to. Then when Morris did the warehouse show, he got very interested. Prior to that I had done the show with Rolf Ricke in Germany [Cologne], and Ileana Sonnabend wanted to bring that show to Paris. Basically what she wanted to do was to buy all the pieces from this German dealer…I didn't like it, so I said no. Maybe I was naïve. I thought Ileana was kind of acting as an interloper – on the other hand I could have seen it as a compliment. Anyway I never showed with Ileana consequently. But Leo liked the work. And then the warehouse show, and Leo invited me to a dinner at Morris's house. Johns was there, and Rauschenberg was there, and Naumann was there, a lot of people. He took me in the kitchen and he said, 'Look, Richard, I have a first baseman and I have a pitched and a catcher and I have a center fielder, but third base is open…' He said if you want to join the lineup let me know, and you've got three years to have a show. It was too good to be true. So I showed about a year later. I just couldn't believe it…I liked Leo enormously. Leo never expected to make a dime off me, and I don't think ever cared really. I think Leo liked me, and Leo cared about how the work was going to develop… Basically he was like a gentleman, meaning that Leo sold most of his work to other dealers. He could see that wasn't going to happen with me, because the work was too problematic and too big to move around, so he never even tried to sell it.

"And then much later, after I'd been with Leo for a long time, I was about to have show at the Modern in 86. Helman had left – Helman was helping to bankroll me along with Leo, but Helman had pulled the plug, and Pace wanted to step in and pick up the ante. I remember Leo didn't see any way out, so Pace did step in, and Leo said to me, 'Richard, for the first time you'll probably make some money.' And it was true, I did. Up til that time I hadn't made a nickel. I'd sold a piece every now and then, sold some drawings now and then, but hardly anything. I was $500,000 in debt [to Leo]. Ordover, who was both representing me and Leo…Jerry thought he had to get me out of the hole, so as I started making a little bit of money, Jerry gave me a living allowance and figured out how to get me even, over the next five to ten years. He took care of getting me leveled out with Leo. At that time he was kind of the lawyer-mensch of the art world."

Jasper Johns got interested in RS's work when he saw the piece in the Whitney show (1970 Whitney Annual, Sculpture).

Leo treated his artists like a family, in which he was like the older brother. Every artist in the gallery would always show up for the other artist's openings – that doesn't happen any more. "There was a kind of cohesiveness that had a – I don't want to sound corny – but it had a brotherly or sisterly feeling, which I thought was quite helpful. And not in a heavily competitive way. I think people in that gallery really respected each other and looked forward to seeing each other's work. I liked the space uptown better, I thought that was a really magical space."

"I think Leo's great strength was that Leo realized if he had Judd, he needed Morris. And if he had Lichtenstein, he needed Warhol. If he had Naumann he needed me. Leo saw history as evolution, and he understood who was breaking ground in languages that were different – these two people are different in kind but unlike other people. Leo was very clear about the potential for people to evolve in historical mediums and make influence that way, and I think he nurtured that. I think he liked me because in some way I fit into how he saw the evolution of his gallery and the evolution of art history in the second half of the century developing. I think I fit into something that he saw he wanted to pursue. And then I think personally he liked me – I know he did. Bellamy had great eyes, but Leo had his ear to the ground, had a great antenna, and foresaw what needed to happen. And very generous, Leo's incredibly generous… And Leo had a statesman quality. He'd go to a party and he'd know everyone's and the names of their children and maybe even the dates of their birthdays. He had great style. At the end maybe he was taking too many bows and couldn't get off the stage, but I don't care, let him have it."

"After the accident in Minneapolis, we had a meeting at The Kitchen – Ordover was there and Leo was there and a few attorneys and whatever, and Leo took me aside and said, 'Look, Richard, no matter what happens, no matter how this thing comes down, I'll always show your work and I'll always stick by you, and I thought, Jesus, you couldn't ask for anything better than that."

The Accident (1971 or 1972)
"The crew that put it up at the Walker was the same crew that took it down. But you don't take it down the same way you put it up, you take it down in the reverse order. And it said specifically on the plan when you take it down, to prop the element that's remaining – before you remove one element you prop the remaining one. And they didn't do that. In not making one of the plates stable, the piece jacknifed. What came out at the trial was that the foreman on the job could not read. That's what happened. No, wait. It's the same crew that had put up a former piece at the Walker and taken it down. The same crew that had put up Joplin and taken it down, and sent it to St. Louis. Another piece came – the first piece was a three-part piece, the second was a two-part piece, and the same crew, and they couldn't read the instructions on how to put it up. They thought they could put it up the same was as the first piece, and they couldn't…The two-part piece, they had to prop it before they put up the second plate, and that's what happened, they didn't prop the first plate. It was a two-plate, pole-and-prop piece. It's up now, and stable."

Martin Friedman didn't show up at the trial. RS had expected him to speak to speak on his behalf. "My relationship since then hasn't been very good with Martin."

He remembers that the people who put it up were found responsible for the accident. (See Helman's version).

"That thing isn't supposed to happen in the art world, and when it does there's a lot of getting off on bloodletting. People can be quite harsh and unthinking. I found it very difficult. And it put me into analysis for eight years, or longer. If I hadn't gone into analysis for that reason, I probably wouldn't have learned how to deal with a lot of other skeletons in my closet…That was probably a watershed event that broke the dyke and let everything flow out. I went into analysis maybe three to four times a week when I was in the city, and that was very very helpful. It wasn't about guilt. I don't think guilt is the right word. Sadness. Because the buck stops with you, and somebody else died. Even if you're not directly responsible, you're responsible in some way…"

How did friends react? "About ninety percent supporting. Some – for who knows what reason? – were not. I think it frightened some people… Strangely enough, it happened to Calder, prior to … Calder was putting up a piece at Princeton, a mobile; a plate fell, killed a guy. Same thing happened to Beverley Pepper. Nobody said boo about it. Somehow my piece became more public, and it became a New York art world event. One of the things I found particularly heavy – there was a writer for one of the local rags in the city, that really got off on me in a headline and called me a murderer. I really thought that was out of bounds."

How did it affect his career? "It put me on the road. I went to Europe and started building as much as I could, and pretty much stayed in Europe. It pretty much cut off a lot of possibilities for me to build here. Altho I kept showing with Leo regularly, but I became sort of a marginal, taboo issue here. That wasn't true in Europe. I showed more in Europe than here for a good fifteen years. Built a big piece in the Stedelijk, built a big piece for

the Kroller-Muller, built pieces in France, in Germany – permanent outdoor pieces. It kind of established a whole vocabulary of work. Europeans are much more familiar with my work in the seventies and eighties than the Americans. Did more museum shows. The person who really supported my work in Europe, really got behind it, was Alexander von Bernswordt. Helped me in a way no one's ever helped me before. He got me into the steel mills in Germany. Some relative of his was a trustee in one of the big mills, and he got me working in the mills, took me in there and three, four in the morning. That's a big door to open."

Terminal - Von Bernswordt saw a photo of RS's 'Delineator,' got in touch and sent him an airplane ticket. He wanted RS to do a piece for Dokumenta, and asked him where he'd like it to go. They were in a car, driving through the city of Bochum, and RS pointed out the window and said, "Right there." It was a train station in Bochum, a steel town where he lived. It was going to be a 40-foot piece, why do a temporary exhibition at Dokumenta? Von B. took it seriously, and got it placed between the streetcar tracks and the train station, in middle of street. "It got completely trashed…but it's had a life of its own. It's become like a football for political parties, but it's [also] part of the dialogue of the city. I'm sure in another five years they'll leave it alone. You know, the CDU said take it down, the SPD said – it became like an issue of what art was in the city." Graffiti, circus posters, etc. "At a certain point you become part of the mix – if it happens it happens, and eventually it'll go away." This is probably his first public piece.

Edy de Wilde let him put up a 30-foot piece outside his window at the Stedelijk. It's been down for about a year while they build a new building there, but will go up again.

"If you're really interested in another dimension of sculpture, you have to find another intervention. I was certainly more interested in an urban intervention than I was in an institutional intervention. But before any of this ever happened, before the accident happened, Geldzahler offered me a show at the Met. When the first five prop-and-pole pieces came out, that group. And I said no. I think I was twenty-nine at the time. I said, I don't want to up against Cezanne right now, I want to protect myself a little longer. I'll pass on it. Maybe that was too self-conscious, too defensive, I don't know. But I passed on it. I think you have to have sense of your own work unfolding…I felt I was moving through a lot of work at that time, and I didn't want to stop and say let's frame this at the Met." He's shown drawing there since, but not sculptures

RS taught at Yale, on and off, for about ten years. Has also done some lecturing here and there. Also taught in architecture dept atYale when Frank Gehry was there. A lot of crits in both art and architecture depts.

Tilted Arc – Tilted Arc, T.W.U, and St. Johns's Rotary all came around the same time. For Arc, 'The GSA asked me to make a proposal. I did an analysis of the people in that building, where they walk, what the piece would be. They came to the steel mill and saw the piece in the mill. They knew exactly what they were getting. I mocked the piece up with strings and plywood on the plaza at its exact height. [Koshalek wrong about his wanting to do it on other side of the building]. GSA never had any objection, no one had

an objection, until Judge ~~Ray~~ Re* wrote a letter. He's one who objected. And then this woman who wrote for the Times didn't help. Grace Glueck. She came out and said it was the worst piece of public sculpture ever perpetrated, or something completely obnoxious. So the GSA used that as their battle cry, and they decided to call a hearing. But basically it was this Judge Ray who wanted me out of there. It wasn't the people in the building – the people in the building didn't care. [END SIDE A]

"I think what the GSA wanted to do was change their policy… It was a foregone conclusion that my piece would come down. Basically, I was set up to go through a procedure whose outcome was already written – not unlike the skating competition! I thought we had a small chance to prevail. I thought it was worth the argument. And I found an attorney who thought it was worth the argument, Gus Harrow. He had worked with Lefkowitz. Javits came out for the piece, wanted the piece to stay there. The person whom the plaza was named after… Basically what they did was set up chairs and table inside the building, and all those people who came in for Immigration, they kind of made them sign up. Of course they're going to sign up! The day of the hearing – you can check his – as many people came out for the piece as were against it. I don't think people in the building ought to be voting on whether the piece came down or not… That wasn't the way the GSA policy was set up. If they wanted me to do that before, then they ought to have presented it to the people in the building before…

"They got a judge who said it was causing a rat problem, Judge ~~Ray~~ Re. Of course it wasn't calling a rat problem. That's like the fascist technique… Then he said, and terrorists could be hiding behind it, and could use it as a blast wall to impact the building. Now you wonder about the judge's motivations for doing that, what kind of apprehensions does he have about American citizens… how paranoid is he? That's a kind of governmental insanity. A lot of people sat on the fence. A lot of people said tear it down. A lot of people said to leave it up. But I think it was a foregone conclusion… It was a total nightmare that just went on and on – five years. And in the middle of it my attorney, Gus Harrow, gets a brain tumor and dies. So I went to Paul Weiss, and got Jay Topkis to take the case, pro bono. He wrote a twenty minute brief. I really liked Topkis, very smart man, terrific guy."

After Tilted Arc, "I was never offered a commission here for years. Just until very recently. UCLA, Caltech, University of California, a possibility in San Francisco – I talked to Frank about it this morning. A proposal for MIT. Colby College. Princeton – I did a piece in Princeton, right in front of the football stadium. It just opened about a year ago. The architect Vinoly was very very helpful. I think it's really a good building, it has good scale." (RS's Princeton lecture there was done right after the installation, last summer.)

Right now Von Bernswordt has a heart condition, so he's not working in Europe so much. But has more work here, more than he's ever had.

"I've kind of had a marginal relationship to the art world. Even though I know a lot of people, socially my relationship has been marginal, in terms of my reactions to

* Judge Edward D. Re of the United States Court of International Trade

hierarchies that participate in the structure of what they call the art world. I don't think it's wrong for artists to belong to the art world, I'm not saying that. A lot of people have found in the art world a sort of surrogate family… And then a lot of people thrive off the competition and the interchange of ideas in the art world. I think I did that at a young age. I got my nose snubbed because of an accident, and it put me on the road and put me in a more wait-and-see attitude about people…In another way I think it protected me. It gave me a certain sort of interior strength… and made me know who my friends were and weren't."

Pulitzers - Emily Rauh was a young art historian just coming out of Harvard. RS and Phil Glass met her when they went out to St. Louis for the Helman show. "She understood the implications of the work and became very supportive."

Current projects - Installing six big permanent pieces at DIA: two ???s, a double and a spiral; two pieces from the last show at Gogo, the closed piece and the cut-floor piece; and a big scatter piece from the Judd Foundation.

Usually the first piece in a series is the most didactic, the solution of a problem, but the later variations may be more complex, better works of art. Sometimes you don't know how a series is going to develop. "Usually the first piece and the last piece are the best."

In the torqued ellipses, the radius never changes. No one had ever done this before, "in the history of form-making. It's hard to get your mind around this." He's still working on the series – the Fort Worth proposal is one. [END INVU]

Serra 6
(15 Feb 02)

Re Frank Gehry – talking to each other through your work
"I think that's Frank's gift, that he's been able to put his own signature on how he's collected influences from the art world, so that it comes out Frank Gehry. But I don't think he was just having a dialogue with me…I think Frank and I, unlike his relationship to those other artists, probably have a more continuous interaction. That's definitely true. I don't think he has a continuous interaction with other artists, other than maybe… Oldenburg. I talk to Frank a lot. Sometimes not for a couple of weeks, other times every day."

Went to see his house with Phil Glass, early 1970s. "I remember being completely knocked out. I think Frank built a great house, with a lot of ideas in it. Some of the internal language had to do with the art world, but the move that Frank made on the house – that was an architectural move. A very important architectural move. To take the inside and the outside and put them together like that, and reverse them. Sure, he used a lot of materials that he bought cheap, and the artists gave him license to do that; but still, the structure and theory behind doing that comes out of architectural necessity, not out of art… Frank uses what he's learned from art for specifics, but I don't think for larger structures."

"Let's say Frank has a relationship to Oldenburg. And Oldenburg did those knees – remember when Oldenburg did? And the nose? Kind of like surrogate buildings. Frank may have looked at that, but prior to that, you've got Picasso's funny-shaped houses, you know those in drawings? Frank knows 'em and I know 'em. That was always there, the building as either anthropomorphic shape or shape that is a little askew. Frank has a big antenna which can vacuum all that stuff in and digest it and it comes out Frank Gehry. That's his gift. There are very few other architects who have been able to assimilate the complexity and the diversity in the art world. Frank would be the first to tell you he does that – with relish! And I think Frank and I have had a continuous dialogue, but I can point to other people that he's actually been influenced by more apparent. Stella. Particularly with the birds. That whole idea of the overlapping parallel frontal plane that comes out of painting, not out of sculpture. Pictorial ideas. The frontal, parallel, curvilinear plane recessional – Stella's been there a while. Chamberlain was there before. You go to this Issey Miyake up the street, the trouble is it's a bad Chamberlain, that's what's wrong with it."

"I tell Frank what I think and he tells me what he thinks. I built the piece for The Gap that Frank did not like at all… He told me so. I laughed."

The Marcia Weisman story, his version: "He built a spiral staircase coming out of Marcia's bedroom down to the garden…A grand staircase, Hollywood staircase, it was overbuilt for the back yard. Then Marcia wanted me to build a sculpture, and I figured out what to build. And the day we set the piece, either Frank or Marcia or someone decided it should be turned around the other way. I couldn't turn it the other way. It had

to sit on a certain pad on the very very soft grass, to support it, otherwise it would have sunk. It couldn't turn the other way. I'm in the yard with a walkie-talkie trying to set this piece, and Marcia is screaming at me, telling me to turn the piece around because Frank Gehry thought it ought to face the other way. I told her it was too late in the day for that, we can't turn the piece around the other way. So we set the piece. So then Marcia says, later in the day, she wants to have an opening for the piece – she says I want to have a champagne bottle, and hit the piece with the champagne bottle. I say, Marcia, it's not a ship, you don't do that. I said I'm not going to put up with that, I'm leaving. She said, if you don't do that, I'm going to pull his piece out of here. I said, Marcia, be my guest, if you want to pull it out, pull it out. She pulled it out the next day! That's the piece that…Cramer just sold. Marcia had it for eighteen hours! Complete insanity."

I tell him what Frank said – that as the piece was coming down on the crane, RS changed his mind. "Absolutely not! I could *not* turn it around…That's all hogwash. Frank wanted the piece to face the other way, and he kept telling me and Marcia to turn it the other way. It could only go that way! So I think when it's finally set down, and it's set the way it was supposed to set, Frank said, oh, that's probably right. But it could not have gone another way. There were two sonopieds [?], and it had to hit those sonopieds (?). It was probably even have been coming down the way Frank thought it ought to be, but the pylons were set so I had to turn it…I told the guy to turn it and then he set it.

"Marcia was pleased with the piece. But she wanted to have a big party, and she thought the way to set the festivities was to hit the piece with a bottle of champagne. I told her that I wasn't interested in hitting the piece with a bottle of champagne…

"Part of Frank's success is that he's a very charming person – with everybody. Have you ever met anyone who didn't like Frank Gehry? No! You will not. Frank's learned how to get along with everyone. He had to placate Marcia. I was kind of sore at him because I think he had told Marcia it ought to be set the other way, and Marcia thought I could actually turn it around that day, which was impossible."

Dodie: "Isn't she dead?" RS: "I hope." (laughter)

"The roses? What roses?" (after I tell Frank's story about them). "Did I do that? I don't think I did that. Oh, to him! I may have done that, that sounds right. (laughter). I can tell you why. Because where is Frank Gehry taking Marcia's side on this thing? He calling me up and telling me to placate Marcia – I don't have to put it there. It was Frank telling me, after Marcia Weisman has just offed one of my pieces, to call her up and send her some roses. Get serious."

Bilbao - "I thought when I saw the initial models for it, and then when I saw it being framed up in steel, that it was incredibly fascinating. I thought the way that it occupied the site was great. I thought he did away finally with the whole tyranny of the right angle. Somebody had to do that. Somebody had to mark the 20th century with another kind of movement. It will influence architecture in ways we can't even foresee yet. People will misuse it, and the re-use it and reduce it, but Frank's work is going to be very very

influential, that's for sure. I think that building probably updated the practice of architecture in a way, also. Thirty years ago you had Wright and Mies and Corbu, three big architects. I think theres's been more interest focused on that building than any building in the last 25 years, so it helps all the architects. It puts a big light on architecture being a viable, cultural, useful thing. It's helped Koolhaas, it's helped a lot of them. If they think that's going to happen again – if Krens pushes the Bilbao effect – it's not…Sorry. Doesn't happen like that."

RS's show there - "I liked it. This isn't to carp on the building in any serious way, but I was never really convinced by the ceiling in the whale building. I think the ceiling is still a little problematic, and Frank may even agree on that. I think it could have been beefed up a little more, it's a little too broken up…I think the upper part of the building is too busy, and I don't know how you resolve that." RS says his show looked the best at DIA, because "as you entered the room you entered the space of the work. You were either inside or outside of it. The work wasn't pieces in a room, so to speak. I think the hardest part of dealing with Bilbao was that it's linear; you walk one way and you walk back, so you don't get any way of really transversing the space…It becomes a destination. DIA, you walk into the room and that was it, there wasn't any other move to make. You were just there with them. That was three pieces. And DIA, to their credit, took all three of them. I couldn't believe that happened. To keep those pieces together was very important for me."

Taking slaps at Frank in public (Charlie Rose)? "I think if you really analyze what I said on that tape, I didn't take a public slap at him. I had said art is useless, or something like that. It's purposely useless, that's what I said. So he said what's the difference between what architects and sculptors do? And I wanted to make the most absurd metaphor I could make…so I said plumbing. Because plumbing really puts the finger on it in the most crass way. I wasn't calling Frank and LA plumber, and I wasn't saying Frank, I was saying that architects have that constraint. The constraints they had to answer to were program, client, and everything that goes along with the utility function of the building. Art is purposely non-functional. Its significations are for other things, they're symbolic, internal, poetic – a host of other things…Architects are programmed to particular needs, useful needs. Now, let's not confuse the two. So, when now we have architects running around saying, I'm an artist, I don't buy it. I've always told Frank that. I don't believe Frank is an artist. I don't believe Rem Koolhaas is an artist. Do those people every now and them make sculptures? Sure. Frank makes sculptures. That's OK with me, I know how to grade that. I know the convention that fits into. But he can't have it both ways. He can't say I'm an artist in my architecture, and then when I make sculpture I'm an artist also. I don't buy that…If you ask me, are there comparable overlaps in the language between sculpture and architecture, between painting and architecture, sure there are…There are overlaps between all kinds of human activity and architecture. But there are also differences that have gone on for centuries. If Frank gets credit for being an artist, where does that leave Don Judd and Carl Andre? I don't believe it. And I don't think that's bashing Frank in particular…

"I know that if you're an architect, and you come up for a government commission, the architect is higher in the pecking order than the sculptor. We all know that. And that's how society sees it also. Sculptors have always been marginalized. But they can't have it both ways. That's ridiculous. Let us at least have the fact that we're artists...Let's keep those distinctions clear. . I like a lot of diverse kinds of art. I like a lot of installation art, I like a lot of young art, but don't try to tell me that what architects are doing is that. What architects are doing, they've used artists and manipulate their work through artists in a most mediocre translation of art and artists for years.

"Look at the history of monuments that architects have built. They're all horrible. And that's because they are given the priorities to rebuild the monuments...Look, do you think there would have been Mies van der Rohe without Mondrian? Come on. Every sculptor knows that...I do have a bone to pick with that. There was a whole hour on Charlie Rose that kind of got edited out, where Charlie Rose was trying to make me an architect and Frank Gehry an artist. That part's not in the interview. But that's how he wanted to take the conversation. The guy said to me, what do you think youhave to do better if you're a sculptor than an architect. And I said, for one thing, you've got to draw better. And then he said, do you think you draw better than Frank Gehry? And I said, sure I think I draw better than Frank Gehry. Absolutely There's no doubt about that...So what's wrong with saying that?

"But Frank's kids were so protective of Frank, they told him not to look at the tape. I said Frank, you're a big boy, watch the tape."

(I read him his quote from the Princeton lecture). "Yeah, I think that in a lot of Frank Gehry, there's a scenography that borders on the picturesque, that points to the decorative, because it has nothing to do with the structure of the building. Then, there are a lot of people – the Japanese do it a lot – who deal with overstated architecture for a look of art. Frank overbuilds columns all the time, not for any load-bearing support or engineering validity, but for the look of the beefiness of the box...T hat's just a minor detail. But a lot of architects build megalith structures to make the tectonics look like it's an art function. They over-emphasize the detail, like how the joint goes together Venturi did that with a joint that was non-functional. How absurd is that?...I think architects often, in terms of post-modernism or tectonics or scenography do things artists would never do, and do things...for effect, and only for effect. When it gets to be only for effect, when it gets to be wow architecture...that's when I meant by scenography, and the difference between what Mies does and what Frank does. And I think Frank's building in Bilbao is a good building, but I'm not convinced of overblown scenography, and I'm not convinced of wow effect."

The 15% line - "Did Frank give you the 15% line? OK, I've got it. I'm building a functional building for a client, that has a particular purpose, which happens to be a shoe store, but 15% of it is where the art is. Come on, are you going to buy that one? He's been trying to sell me that 15% number for years...Oh yeah, I'm really making architecture but the truth of the building is in the 15%. So what's he saying? I'm an architect but 15% of the time I'm an artist? I'll never buy that! [voice rising] Is that 15%

not connected with the rest of it? He wants to claim art as part of his process? Oh, take your ego and put it on the table and leave it there. Just be an architect and be happy you're an architect. You don't have to be 15% an artist. You don't need that and we don't need it!..."

A lot of artists have taken on the idea of a room and used it to make art – Turrell, Irwin, Nauman, even Brancusi (column). "But don't give me the reverse of it."

Ronchamp? - "Ronchamp has a space that I relate to. Because of the way the light filters in, the space becomes palpable. But it's still a function of the building. Ando does the same thing. Do I think that Corbusier is making sculpture there? No, absolutely not. Actually it's one of the most hallowed places I've ever been in, because it has a function. Have you been into the church? I've been there seven or eight times. The first thing you know is you're entering into a place where people pray, that's what it's about. You don't go there and think this is a great work of sculpture...Corbu wouldn't have said that, either."

"I think Frank's 15% is just jive. And needy. It's like he has to convince himself of his profession because he's not convinced of it..."

The Purpose of Sculpture

(After some thought) "I think that perception mediates reality. If you can, to some degree, in a way that's open and accessible to people, to mediate that perception in a way that changes how they perceive and what they perceive, no matter how minuscule, it can be a catalyst to thought and other things. Do I think it's an enormously significant thing to happen? Empowering? I don't know. But I think it serves a function in that way, that's not useful like utilities are useful. It has a very different kind of afterlife. The art you grow up with, the art you go back to, the art you reject, the art you look forward to seeing, the art that you live with and when you go see it again it changes again – it has a whole other poetic dimension to it, a whole other experiential dimension to it. And it's different in kind and different in quality, and in what one takes from it. And everybody's always known that...now why does everything have to be art?

"I know why. We have Armani and we have the motorcycle in the museum. Maybe that's the new. If I follow that argument, than we don't need any art. [END SIDE A].

Painting - "Ryman forces you to look at your process of perceiving, not at things in the picture. So does Johns. As soon as you forget that the Johns is a flag or a target or whatever, you look at how the Johns is put together, that becomes primary."

Sculpture coming off the pedestal "was the biggest move of the century, that's for sure."

"What Newman and Pollock did in terms of scale had not happened in painting, and hasn't happened since. The interesting thing, the only guy that has really taken on big scale and you don't think of him that way is Twombly. And he took it on with low tech – a pencil and a piece of crayon."

"The expanded field has happened, where things came off the wall, things have gotten into the space… I think the field has pretty much opened up. I don't think that means painting as an issue is dead. I think anything that has paint on it is probably painting."

Duchamp - "I think Duchamp was pretty much about the indifference to selectivity…But when you get down to it I've never believed that he didn't select. I thought he selected with purpose and poignance. They're pretty much all parts of machines, like the bicycle part, or tools. I understand the argument, but I've never really bought it… I think what Duchamp was asking you to participate in, like Warhol, is the larger social consciousness of how this thing came to be considered as art. I'm not even interested in going to look at Duchamp objects again. They don't contain enough complexity for me to think about when I'm looking at them. I can think about them when I'm not looking at them as well. And there's a lot of art I like to think about when I'm looking at it – I can look at Matisse's Red Studio (?) for a long time. The experience factor is art has always been very important to me.

"Often what I found is that when I go back to look at the work of art that I was thinking about, what I thought my mind's eye [held] was always wrong… I was really knocked down by some Giacomettis this time, I didn't think that was going to happen. I thought the surrealist work was drop-dead great. Particularly 'Woman with her Throat Cut,' 1923, which is basically a woman cleaved in half. If you think about it, you're walking through her entrails. And then, 'Palace at 4 A.M.' Those works, more so than the figures for me, will be fruitful to another generation and another generation. Those works still contain something you can't quite put your finger on."

This also applies to Eva Hesse. Munch. "Does architecture do that? I don't think so."

"I think Pop Art was kind of cynical and rhetorical, about bringing popular objects to the fore. I think Koons said, let's really make them commercial. Which is like an end run around Oldenburg… Koons says let's just make these things commercial products. It's really taking Pop Art back – like post-Warhol in a way. Warhol always had this underlying cynicism, and it's nasty. Warhol pleases after the effect, not initially. Koons is made to please."

Cage? "Phil and I read the whole book aloud in Paris –'Silence.' I think he was an empowering person. Very few people we knew who had that eternal flicker in their eye, that kind of life force in their eye. Kind of happy health. Did you ever see John Cage frown? No! Never. In some way Cage was like a rare spirit of some kind. You hardly ever see any person that light. That open, and that light. A really interesting guy."

Play - "Frank's very playful. And Frank also allows the effect of his playfulness appear in his work, where I don't… But I may be able to do something of that with Frank at MIT – that work is particularly playful. It's just come up as a possibility, of building a piece at an MIT building that Frank's putting up now. I think it's the best thing after Bilbao before L.A."

Torqued Ellipses - "I had made cones. If you think of a flower pot, it's up this way. If you think of a lampshade it's this way. So, if you take one section of a cone and turn it upside down, you'll have two pieces leaning this way. I made a piece very early, called 'Olsen,' that you could walk through like that. Then I made a bigger version called 'Ishmael.' Then I took this side, and I put it on this side, so you had two pieces leaning out, the same two pieces leaning in like this. You turn the other one upside down and you have a piece leaning this way. Two like that, two like this, and a section in the center still going like this. That piece was called 'Intersection.' It's at the Modern, I'm very happy about that. After I built that piece, I thought, is there a way to make an enclosed vessel, where you can really be contained in it. I didn't know how to do it. I tried to do a couple of times – I've got a roller downstairs – but I didn't get very far.

"Then I went to Rome, and I walked into Borromini's San Carlo on the side aisle. And basically what it is, it's an oval that's made of a cubed circle. It's called a Borromini ellipse. That repeats itself at the ceiling. So it's on the floor and on the ceiling. But I walked in on the side, and as I was looking up I thought that it was offset, just because I didn't walk in on an axis. I was seeing it kind of askew. When I got to the center and realized it was straight, I thought, it's more interesting askew. Most people wouldn't be interested in that. I thought, I wonder if I could turn this regular thing on itself. Things that are regular in elevation, their radiuses don't change in elevation – cones get smaller. I talked to an engineer in France, and he told me it couldn't be done.

"Then we came back here, and we phoned Rick Smith, who works with Frank. I told him this is what I want to take a Borromini kind of regular ellipse, like an atrium, open to the sky, and I want to take that same shape on the floor, and figure it as a right angle to the one that's on the sky. And what surrounds that, we'll call the vessel, whatever that is. I need to figure out how to draw that template… He said, 'I think that can be done. I think you can make a continuous skin around an oval at a right angle to itself, but I'm not sure how that works. Bur we can't play with you right now, we have to build Bilbao.'

'So I was downstairs with Alan… and Alan, who's a smart guy, said Richard we can build this ourselves. Make the form on the ground as a solid, put a shaft between it, an axle, and make the form at the top, solid like a wheel. We did that, and put it on the ground, and you know if you had a tricycle and the back wheel is broken it goes like that? Well, when you roll it up that's the way it rolls…Before we did that we made it in paper to see if it would actually work. If you do that, what you get is a form, a sine wave like that…with the ends cut. I sent that template to Rick Smith. I said, is this close to what you'd be making if you could play with us? He said, Did you do this on a Cad II? I said no, we made a model. He said, Oh, we can work with you tomorrow. It really piqued his interest that someone could have done that. So he, who was like an independent contractor in Frank's office, was very interested in the problem. He then figured how we could make the bending lines on this template – because we didn't know how to make bending lines. He could figure that out in a couple of days, on the computer. We could have done it, but it certainly would have taken a long time.

"Then we had to find a place to make it. We sent his Catia program out to companies all over the United States, all over Europe, and finally we found a company in Korea that said they could make it. But they could only make it with 12-foot-high plates – they make sixteen-foot high plates in Europe and America. I wanted to get the pieces up at least ten or twelve feet high. Finally a place here in Sparrows Point, a shipyard, said they could make it, and we went there. We put the first one in the press, and they thought the way it was laid out, it was one cone and another cone reversed. We told them that's not what it is…We said don't do it that way. But they wanted to change our layout, so they laid it our their way and they broke the plate right in half. A two-inch plate forty feet long – it sounded like a lightning bolt. The machine was about sixty feet long.

"To get the first three built took a year and a half just down there at Sparrow's Point. And probably two years just to figure out how to get them built. So that was a long haul. Larry had to pay for that when we got the steel together, but before that was pretty much on my watch."

[We go to his studio on the ground floor – long tables with lead models of pieces] Model for Fort Worth piece – "as the plates go up, they lean away from you, and as they lean away from you they spiral upward. Every module is different on this piece, so it means the template of every plate is different. The template is the widest right here, at the lowest point, and as the template gets wider as it goes up, the piece turns. It's the same form, starting from the same place, but the curve keeps moving up… So as the piece rises in elevation. It not only leans in but it torques and turns upward, corkscrews upward in its elevation. It goes from a 20-foot width to a ten-foot width… Since then they've built a steel model in Germany…"

UCLA piece - Los Angeles proposal (Disney Hall, not yet in model stage) - Bellamy and Sylvester, etc. He's given most of his models to DIA, about fifty models. "I don't think of the models as works of art. If you start making models as works of art, you start thinking of the market, and then it gets very very confusing. They're working models, and I think of them as models. I don't want to confuse the issue. The only time I've ever sold models was when I had to raise some money for the Tilted Arc fiasco – I sold a few models to keep the court case going"

Model for DIA installation in Beacon, the closed piece that was at Gogo. Some models for pieces he's never made. Models for variations of torqued ellipses yet to come. And many drawings. "I made 96 drawings in about the last – how long was it, Alan? 2000 to this Christmas I did 96 drawings. Of those 96, we're probably going to pare it down to about 35 or 40 [for show at Larry's.]

Large model for piece at Toronto airport which has been in negotiation for over a year and a half, may never get built. Would go right thru roof of building. He's working with part that Moshe Safdie is doing (head architect is David Childs, "who went out of his way to save it when the project fell apart.") [END INVU]

Addenda to 2/15/02 interview:

RS continued his diatribe against architects who say they're artists, in a conversation with Dodie on the 'phone. Said this was really a "hot button" issue with him, and that he'd got the impression that I believed the 15% line. "I never bought it," RS said.

Talked about his reading George Kubler's "The Shape of Time," and its influence on him and others.

"Ad Rinehardt used to say that any use is misuse. I've always believed that."

DIA installation: One single ellipse; two double ellipses; one spiral…" (tel. 808-223-2566)

He's going to Europe on March 16th – Naples to look at a site for summer exhibition, Germany to check on steel, etc. Then he goes to New Zealand, some time in April.

Serra 7
(27 Feb. 02)

RS: "What color are you eyes? Pale green or pale blue?" (When we came in he'd commented on my always looking as though I had a tan.) Today he's crippled by a stiff neck, having pulled a muscle while doing exercises on the floor.

Theater – "I just went on Saturday, to see the Wooster Group at DUMBO. Very good. I majored in English literature. If you do that you read a lot of Shakespeare and Chaucer and you go to a lot of theater. I don't go as much now. I went to a lot in France."

Happenings? "I though Happenings were kind of artsy-fartsy. People holding candles in churches and things like that. I never really bought into that. That idea of art-is-life, I always thought was not something I connected to, because I always thought that art was an artifice, and nature and art weren't ever going to get together… I went to the Judson in the sixties, and to everything that was ever done by the Grand Union. When I was in Japan I went to all kinds of performances – the Bunraku, the Noh, Kabuki, all of it." Robert Wilson asked him to be in first production of Einstein On the Beach, "because I just happened to be a good dancer. When I was growing up I not only played a lot of sports but I used to dance a lot… I was always thought of as a good dancer. The kind of dancing that was coming out of Lucinda Childs – all that found-object movement -- was something that I could connect to. You make it up as you go along – I was always good at doing that. I really liked to dance." But he didn't accept Wilson's offer. "I didn't want to start confusing what my contribution to art was going to be." Some people had crossed that line, including Bob Morris (with Yvonne Rainer) and Bob Rauschenberg, but not RS.

Rauschenberg - "We've been friendly since I've known him. Not friends, but friendly. I first met him out in California, at Gemini, when we were in the same shop together. And if anybody knows how to work a print shop, it's Rauschenberg. It's just amazing to watch. Probably the most gifted guy that's ever been in a print shop. Really knows how to put all the printers to work, get all the presses working, and knows how to move with a great agility. Probably one of the best printmakers of the half-century. I think Johns is a great printer, coming out of overlay that goes into Johns's paintings, where Rauschenberg has a facility for invention that allows him to do things other people don't do. I think he's extended invention in printmaking more than Johns, although Johns has made probably qualitatively better prints."

Re breaking down barriers between art and life - "I think that's cant. Bob talked about the work you're looking at pointing to something outside of the frame, and he said he broke it down between art and life, but I never thought about Rauschenberg as dealing with everyday activities as art. If anybody's been very conscious and deliberate about where the bracketing of the art was, it was Bob, even if he were doing performance. I would say that Bob extended the vocabulary of art in ways that hadn't been extended before…but Rauschenberg is an artist who makes artifice, he doesn't make life. I mean, his goat's not real. It's still assemblage. If you really look at Rauschenberg, the basis is Schwitters…

"Collage is never been something I've been interested in at all. Still am not. But if you take the minimalists, they were not, either. In the history of American art almost everyone has been, other than say the minimal sculptors. Collage right now is still the dominant zeitgeist. It accounts for a lot of spectacular superficiality, because you can juxtapose things and get an easy, kneejerk response. I think one of the refreshing things about the Richter show is no collage. Collage is very permissive in what it allows people to do. My problem with it is, it too easily implies metaphor and literature by its juxtaposition. Let's put this silly thing next to that silly thing, or whatever. Surrealism is loaded with it. It's never appealed to me. I think because it's more about selection than about serious content, more about selecting things that are out there and juxtaposing them. Rauschenberg is really gifted at selection, that's the basis of his work."

Cage - RS and Glass read Cage's "Silence" aloud when they were in Paris. His playing around with live and dead animals the next year was probably related to that. "The live and dead animals, I took as student work. I took it as a way of getting out of the academic constraints I had been laboring under. What it did was, it got me into thinking about poor materials, or cheap materials, materials I would not have assumed had the potential of making art. So when I came back I started using rubber. If I hadn't taken that diversion into complete play, with animals live and dead and all that – I knew it was student work and wouldn't amount to anything that I was going to pursue – but it turned my head my head far enough in one direction that once I turned it back, I knew I wasn't going back to where I was. I wasn't going back to painting."

"Cage had this eternal light, this twinkle in his eye. He probably never said a bad work about anybody. He had an enormous sense of humor. He was like a spirit, as a person, that I've never come across before or since. Cage was like this marvelous receptacle, that when you met him he breathed good will and he had this grace and he seemed free in ways that most of us aren't." Felt bad on hearing Cage got mugged a couple of weeks before he died, and suffered great psychological damage.

Meditation – Buddhism - "I don't know if I want to talk about that issue… What I can tell you is this. For about a two-year period in my life, maybe longer, I got seriously involved in…in meditation and hatha yoga. And I was never in better physical shape in my life. But I wasn't able to sustain it, because I could see that there was a divergent path there, where I was going to have to spend too much time doing one and not the other. I couldn't keep the practice going. On the other hand, I realized that if you really want to center yourself…and to deal with your anxieties, and to slow the whole process down, there are a lot of tools out there. You can go to a psychiatrist, you can do a lot of things. But one of the best ones you can possibly learn is meditation. I tried to tell Kirk that, because Kirk was under a lot of stress. And I think he did it…"

"The whole group of people that I hung out with – Glass, Wurlitzer – all of those people became Buddhists. I was always too skeptical of the heirarchy of the male dominance tradition there, so I never got into it. I just thought it was another religion…I was never interested in buying the Buddhist religion. Glass speaks Tibetan," and influenced many others. "Helen Tworkov puts out a book called Tricycle which is basically a Buddhist

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journal. It became very trendy for a while, then it phased out. Most of the friends I had have been with it for twenty or thirty years, and I see these people all the time, it's just that I've never partaken of it. I learned my own form of meditation, studied with a guy, and stayed with it for two or three years. This was in the early seventies. The person taught me meditation told me I had to give up smoking grass, and I said you can't be serious. And then I realized how attached I was to smoking grass. So in order to get into meditation I had to stop smoking grass, which was a big thing for me to overcome. I did…"

His parents had told him he could pick any religion he wanted when he was a kid. He tried them all. Went to Catholic church, then synagogue, then Protestant church, didn't like any of them.

RS interrupts to ask if we've seen the show at the Met of Qing Dynasty. "If you want to see some great drawings, go there. One of the better shows I've seen for a long time…The concentration, and the sustainment of concentration, and the acuity of the line or the dot or the mark – it's just a breathtaking thing."

Serra's Drawings – "The black canvas drawing first started in Nova Scotia. But I do drawings that are wall installations, interior to a room. They divide the room…You put two black canvases in a rectilinear room, and they'll contract the space. There are ways of declaring and dividing the space by an imposition of a black element in the room, by its placement, that's a kind of architectural drawing… The first time I showed those was when I first showed with Leo uptown. One was called 'Abstract Slavery,' another was called 'Zebekians.' They were oilstick on Belgian linen, cut right in place on the wall. I would cover Belgian linen of a given length, take it to the gallery, roll it out on the wall; then I'd decide exactly where I wanted to put it, cut it right there, staple it right there to the wall, and then resurface it right there. Then I started making oilsticks into bricks, and I'm still doing that. We take the oilstick, we melt it down, we pass it through a screen, we make it into a brick so you can deal with it with both hands rather than one hand.

"I think the whole idea about drawing really comes down to strategy that you can invent to allow yourself to mark or make some sort of relation to thought and line in a way that's not known or practiced. Think in Matisse's later life, he's cutting forms, in the air. He's not making a shape a la Kelly and filling in the paint. He's cutting the form out…in the air. He cannot see what he's making. If you look at Matisse's scissor drawings, the line is not like one he would make if he was drawing a figure. I think Matisse cutting with a scissor is a better line, a more inventive line, a quicker line, and a more comprehensive line in terms of seeing than what he does when he's marking… That doesn't mean everybody should pick up the scissors and draw with scissors…You're not going to rebuild the master's house with the master's tools . Every artist has to find their own tools. What's very empowering about Matisse at the end of his life was he learns to draw in a new way. He can't see what he's drawing, he's drawing in the air as he's trying to articulate in his mind's eye. Albeit it may have come from fifty years of drawing. But they end up being some of his best drawings ever. I think every artist needs to challenge the strategies of drawing, to allow themselves to see newly into what they're making/..

When the Manchus Ruled China: Painting under the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911)
February 2–August 18, 2002

The most comprehensive exhibition of Qing dynasty painting ever mounted in the West, this selection of nearly 70 works focuses on painting under the brilliant reigns of the Kangxi (r. 1662–1722) and Qianlong (r. 1736–95) emperors—a period when the Manchus embraced Chinese cultural traditions and the court became a leading patron in the arts. On view are major works by the three principal groups of artists working during the Qing: the traditionalists, who sought to revitalize painting through the creative reinterpretation of past models; the individualists, who practiced a deeply personal form of art that often carried a strong message of political protest; and the courtiers, the officials and professional artists that served at the Manchu court. The works are drawn primarily from the Museum's outstanding collection of 17th- and 18th-century painting, supplemented by select loans from local private collections.

The exhibition is made possible by The Dillon Fund.

If you talk about the difference between Rauschenberg and Johns...Johns has taught himself how to draw. Rauschenberg has taught himself how to continually reinvent. It doesn't matter what he's inventing, you can like or dislike it. Rauschenberg's empowering because he's so experimental and so inventive... His form of collage has become so infiltrated into the world of commercial art right now that everything you see, you don't even know that the prime mover is Rauschenberg. He's infiltrated the entire world in the last 30 years. When see an advertisement, when you get on a plane, when you watch TV – that fuzzy little collage is Rauschenberg...

"Johns is much more rigorous in terms of the brush stroke, the pessimism of the brush stroke, the nature of making over a protracted time. We don't see experimentation in Johns so much. But in a way I've been more influenced by Newman and Johns and the way they think than I have by Rauschenberg. I've always been interested in process, and if there's anybody who taught one how to think in terms of process it's Johns, who goes back to Cezanne and deals with the conceptual aspect of making and pull them both together, so that's always been a very big appeal to me.

"Newman has been an enormous figure to me because I think he opened up a way of thinking about space, even though it 's coming out of painting, that no one had before. About dividing the space simply with a line. I don't think there's been two bigger figures since Pollock and Newman. Maybe Warhol... Just in what they set forth as a potential. There hasn't been anything quite like that since then. I mean, you can like Warhol for a whole other way of dealing with the irony of culture and its consumption, but it's a different substance. Campbell soup cans aren't good painting, it 's a different kind."

How RS draws - "Usually I start from the inside out. I don't start with a definite shape. I start in the center and work out to an edge. I have some general idea of the directionality I'm going in. So I try to find the edge in the making. Take this drawing on the wall right here. One summer I did a series of 19 of those. But I had worked up to them by doing some very small drawings... I thought what I was stepping on on the floor was more interesting than what I was working on. I kept stepping on stuff on the floor and looking at it. So then I started making drawings by putting the screen down, starting from the center, walking in a circle, and making circles with my foot. On paper. It took me about three years. I worked up to...fifty by sixty inches. And the following year, I thought I'm going to really take this on and do it seriously. So I got some very big Japanese paper, seventy-four inches by eighty inches, and did a series of nineteen pieces, and all of those were done...with my feet. They started from the inside, and I found the edge to work to the outside." Combining intense physicality with complexity. He's not doing it that way any more.

"Now I'm drawing on the backs of paper that's face down. I'm showing a series here with Larry. I put the paintstick on a board on the ground. A large board, and it's wet. Put a screen over it. A window screen. Lay a piece of paper on top of it, that I've had hand made. Then with a tool, a piece of metal usually, I draw into the paper. The drawing is pressed into the paper, almost like if you were making a print, so it's incised in the paper. When you pull the paper up, you have a drawing on the other side, and the drawing is the

result of the pressure going through the screen, and picking up through the screen the wet paintstick that was on the board. When you look at the drawing, it looks like it was made right on the surface, you can't tell unless you really go up and look. But I think it's irrelevant. It's irrelevant that the drawings were made with my feet, and it's irrelevant if I'm making them on the back side of the paper. Finally the drawing itself has to be intense enough for you to be involved with it…"

He talks about the drawings of Susan Hartnett, whose work he really found and championed. He likes the great concentration in them, and the deft way of moving her arm. Nothing like his. Guston made great line drawings. "I like to d raw because I find it's the most self-sustaining thing I can do…it's a self-regulating, gratifying thing for me to do. Artists probably have always and will always draw for the gratification in the act of making." He also likes Tuttle's drawings, refined and elegant lyricism, and "completely the opposite of the drawings I make."

"I used to throw them away ten to one. Then they got better. Sometimes you have to go through a tremendous amount of work to find out what you don't want to do."

Do his drawings ever lead to sculptures? "No. The drawings have nothing to do with the sculpture. People want to force the issue and say they do. It's not my intention to do that, nor do I see it that way."

"I think Picasso sees three-dimensionally, and translates two-dimensionally, very quickly. But I think he sees three-dimensionally all the time. So for Picasso to make sculpture, is something he does with a great deal of aptitude. He's a natural sculptor. And the range is fairly great. And underrated, because he probably hasn't been too useful to many people. What Picasso's always had is this wit and brashness that you don't see in a lot of people." Has Picasso meant lot to you? "Not his work in particular, but Picasso as a figure. The breadth of his work, the amount that he was able to accomplish in his life, the diversity… Here was a guy ~~doing~~ simultaneously doing diverse work all his life… But I tend to look more to the Russian Constructivists, Malevich, Mondrian, Newman, Pollock. But if you ask me about the bigger figures behind that, also in a way pointed to abstraction without being abstract – Picasso and Matisse."

Clara Clara - Was originally to have gone into the pit at Beaubourg, inside the museum below the ground floor. Dominique Bozo decided to find an outdoor venue instead – RS says maybe because of weight load or problem getting it in. "I said fine, that's OK with me. I liked him enormously, he became a really close friend of mine. He asked me if I wanted to put it at the end of the Champs Elysses, on that axis. [END SIDE A] I said fine, absolutely." It was later moved to another arrondissement; subsequently removed from there, may be relocated again soon. Commissioned and owned by City of Paris.

Bourg-en-bresse – Commissioned by French govt , and still in place. Very happy with piece. "You'd think it was there as long as the building, even though it's steel…The French provide the support and the kind of recognition that makes people want to work there. I think one of the biggest thrills I had in my life, I became a knight there. I was

knighted…and I was standing next to Kurosawa. I was completely knocked out, I felt like a little puppy dog, I was so fucking happy." Happened right after Clara Clara, and same year 'Ran' came out. "Basically, no one wanted to touch me here after Arc. And that was all right. I went on the road, and I learned how to exist on the road. I found support in Europe.

Current Scene - "There were other artists then who didn't find much support in the States, namely Ryman and Nauman." The artists of his generation and the generation before had changed the game – Judd and Warhol were really the death knell of abstract expressionism. Just like Warhol finished off Stan Brakhage. Ab-Ex, with its "find the subject matter in the doing, had filtered into poetry, into Happening, into Brakhage. When Judd and Warhol came along, it cleared the air…The corner had been turned. A historical epoch had come to an end. I don't think that's happened for a long time. I don't think post-modernism is a paradigm change, I think it's just like re-shuffling the furniture. Nauman is probably the most influential artist alive right now, but it's still a continuation of Duchamp, Cage, Johns…But that still goes back to the sixties. I don't think there has been a figure that has changed as much since then. I don't think after Judd, Warhol, and my generation, I don't think the thing has revitalized itself – I wish it would – again. That generation still seems to be feeding the current scene, unless I'm wrong, unless…there's something going on I'm not seeing."

Koons? "Maybe. But I see that as a commercialization of Warhol, of pop art. Warhol and Judd changed the form of what was being made. One guy saying a box is sculpture, one guy saying a silk screen pushed through a photograph with some paint is painting. Koons, with his delectable objects – there's no great invention there. It's all about iconography, about subject matter, about the play of giving the audience what they want. But there's no real invention in terms of form, the way you would say there was invention with Andy or Judd… Koons is very very clever about doing art as business. You have to like the puppy dog, there's no way around it."

Photography as art - Robert Frank a great photographer. "He's been able to stay outside the main stream and make a contribution to photography for about 50 years now. A lot of photographers have been working out of him for years." (They are friends).

"[Photography] has been the big movement in figuration in the last half century… I think Warhol does it better than anyone else, more clearly and more directly, with a bigger range of color and everything else than anyone. But that has been the subtext of realism. If you're really interested in abstraction, then you can't really be interested in photography, as being the prime mover. I think one of the problems with painting right now, figurative painting, is that if you're dealing with photographs, the composition of the photograph doesn't give you a lot of wiggle room in terms of invention in and out of the picture plane. One of the problem of painting is how are you going to reinvent in terms of the picture plane, and there certainly have been a lot of people who've been able to do it, from Matisse to Pollock to Newman and whoever. If you take a photograph, and you have to stick to the dictates of the photograph, *the composition is given*. Once the composition is given, you can do a lot on the surface, you can cheesily, commercially

deal with how you put the paint on, you can deal in sarcastic ways with how surface is seen or codified in the commodification of advertisement, but in terms of the structure of the field, photography pretty much sets up what you can do. Then you're left with what you're going to do on the surface. There's not a hell of a lot of invention between Richter-Morley-Close-all of those people...

Richter's Pessimism - "The people who've tried to find a way out of it, because they couldn't draw very well, aren't very good – namely all those German expressionists. Or the bad eighties people in America. So people who didn't use photography as subtext, didn't learn how to deal with invention in the picture plane, or they didn't draw very well, or they didn't put things together in a new way... I went to the Richter show and I liked it, but I'm finally not interested in it. I felt the Baader-Meinhof paintings are absolutely great. I don't think there's an American painter alive who could deal with that kind of political subject matter and pump that much feeling into it... I think one of the subtexts of Richter, is that...even if you choose the most sentimental, romantic subject matters to deal with, whether it's a landscape or a seascape or a candle or skull, and it's all so cornball, the making has this pessimistic edge, between some sort of commercial making and the need to make. I think what you come out of the show admiring is the possibility of making, and this underlying pessimism. It goes back to something Cage said: 'I have nothing to say but I'm going to say it anyway.' If Richter's doing anything, he's doing exactly what Cage is doing in that way. That's what makes Richter interesting...other than the Baader-Meinhof paintings, is a certain kind of anxiety of making that's also in Giacometti, also in Cezanne. It's not in a lot of American art, because American art is much more arrogant and assertive and progressive and self-consumed and self-satisfied. It doesn't have that pessimism of Richter. Maybe a little bit in early Johns. But that kind of pessimism of making isn't something that's got into the American grain... It's not all the different styles of making in Richter, it 's the pessimism of making and the need to make even facing that pessimism. Which isn't very far from Giacometti actually. It happens to be European after the war, and not American after the war. There's a sentiment there that's unlike the optimism of American painting.

"I asked Johns once if he was ever involved with pathos, and he said no. In early Johns I see a little of that also. When I first met Johns I asked him how long he's been painting on this target, and I think he said something like seven or eight years. I found that a little hard to understand. To sustain the painting for seven years...that's another kind of protracted time, that has a built-in subtext of anxiety."

"I really admire Johns. He's an enormously admirable figure. My generation took more from Johns than the current generation is taking from Richter."

Duchamp re spectator – "If you're implying by that that the spectator is part of the creation, no, I think the work of art is set in motion and the content is received in part by the spectator, or it's misread by the spectator, but that doesn't matter." Somebody has to be there to receive it, so there's always a dialogue. "My pieces are really about behavior, so if there's nobody to walk through the pieces, there's no behavior, there's no content. Each spectator bring to the piece their relation to a whole host of things. But I think

there's an aspect of my work where you don't have to know anything about sculpture, to walk in and have a private experience that's different in kind than other experiences, and particular in terms of feelings it may arouse, that has nothing to do with other works of art… But I don't think that's any different from most things… With Cezanne, the subject may be the apples on the table. With my things, it's more the person walking through."

"One of the interesting things about looking at a Ryman painting, is you perceive not only the Ryman painting, but yourself perceiving. So you become kind of the subject matter of the painting. This is different from a lot of other abstract paintings. Ryman takes you down to the particular mark, so you look at yourself experiencing…how it's been made in the painting."

"There's a lot of realism that closes in and of itself, because it doesn't take you back into a need for a prolonged looking. You don't have to look back at Andy Warhol's soup cans more than once, it won't do you any good – you won't learn any more there. And that's not the intention. Where a Ryman painting, you can go back and look at it again and again… Some novels you read over and over again, some you never read again, because they're not meant to be over and over again. I think that's true. It's certainly true of poetry."

"I'll tell you what I was floored by, when I was in Venice. I had never seen the Giottos before. That was one of the big aesthetic experiences I've had in my life. I'd seem 'em in Assisi, but it's a very different thing. The Brancacci Chapel. That's something I could not have imagined. It's so hard to take in – not only the volume of the figures but the invention, and the setting up of the narrative between figures looking at it, and the psychological doings of the figures. I was a big Mantegna fan, but this is so much earlier! And almost more advanced. It's very very hard to understand how great that is… And there's a lot of joy. The blue is just enveloping. Artists give you different things that you lack. And I think that if you want to keep challenging yourself, you have to go to those people who challenge what you lack. That doesn't mean I'm going to start looking at Paul Klee…"

"I only invent because I came up with a very interesting group of sculptors and painters in the sixties, that really fed me. A great deal of really intelligent people. If it wasn't for Nauman, and Smithson, and Judd, and Andre, I wouldn't do what I'm doing. I couldn't have done that alone. I had to filter through those people and find my own position to advance my work. But it was because I had a lot of really empowering, competitive, intelligent people around me. Some of them were very close friends. It's true of every generation. No one does it alone." He doesn't have that now, in his sixties. "I think artists find what they need, in order to sustain their need to make. I happened to be very lucky in this century, of being in New York where there was just a flowering of good sculptors. These are big figures, and the figures that came before – we were pygmies on their backs. Newman and Pollock are enormous figures. They'll be prominent two hundred years from now, that's so clear."

[END INVU]

Dinner 3/4/02 (not taped)

RS talked about how he got along well with Judd, Smithson, and Andre, even though they didn't get on with each others. I said that's interesting, sine you're perceived as such a difficult character. "That's true in the world at large," he said, "but not among artists. I listen well, I pay attention…"

He asked about other profiles I'd written. Then said I had to do Johns. That was a gaping hole. And I should approach it through Aggie Gund. He told me just what to say to Jasper.

Artists's contracts – very \rare now, but in 20 years all artists will have them. "Now artists are still treated like horses in a stable. Give 'em a feedbag and a whip." Most artists don't know their rights. Did I know that a dealer does not have the legal right to hold an artist's work as collateral for payment due?

He corrected what he'd said in previous interview, about the Giottos. They are in the Scrovegni, he said, not the Brancacci chapel. (The Arena chapel in Padua, which was originally part of the new demolished palace of Enrico Scrivegni.)

Drawing – He said all artists love to draw, because of the immense gratification it gives. The immediacy of the connection between eye and hand, and hand and brain. A tremendous pleasure to draw – that's the only reason. Le Corbusier's diaries are full of marvelous doodles, which are much better than he formal drawings, and a great insiht into his mind.

More detail on the story about Jasper – RS was working in Johns's studio, on the piece Johns had commissioned. He watched Jasper do a number of things – heating up encaustic paint, talking on 'phone, putting a Joe Cocker record on the hi-fi, etc. He reached into the pot with a brush, and laid one stroke or orange encaustic on the target painting he was working on. RS asked how long he'd been working on that painting, and Johns said, 'Oh, eight or nine years.' He went to the bathroom, came back carrying a ladder, which he climbed to open something in the ceiling. "Did you enjoy that?" RS asked him. Said Jasper, "Which part." Answering a question with question…

RS said he'd always been a good dancer, and I should ask Rauschenberg to confirm this. When Elvis Presley died, RS was in Cape Breton. The radio played Presley songs, and RS and Helen Tworkov danced to them for four hours. Helen was at Black Mountain as a child.

Library books at Yale – says he kept them out for two years. Brought back a box full, and told librarian he couldn't pay the fine. She said that was OK, now she could order new ones. No problem about the paint spilled on the pages etc. He clearly felt entitled to them.

Serra 8
(8 Feb. 02 – Beacon)

70 minutes to Beacon by car, past the train station, and down to what used to be the National Biscuit Company's main packaging and printing plant, a huge complex of buildings which are relatively unchanged on the outside by their conversion into DIA's new, 300,000 square-foot space for art. We get hard hats at one of two construction trailers, and are directed to the railroad shed adjoining the main building, where Serra's pieces are being installed. This is where the boxes were loaded onto trains for the run to NYC. The rusted steel monoliths fill the shed, which is open at both ends, leaving just enough room on the side to squeeze through. Richard and Clara are at the other end. Richard in jeans and a scuffed parka over a hooded sweatshirt, as usual, looking indistinguishable from the riggers. Black wool watch cap. Neither of them wearing a hard hat. "I'm allowed to get damaged," Clara says.

Clara points out the German rigger, Ernst Fuchs, a short, stocky man with whitish hair and mustache and buck teeth. Ten or more husky riggers from Budco (Long Island City). The piece they're installing today is a new torqued spiral, made in Germany and shipped over last week. Four elements are already in place, more or less, although still suspended from the huge dolly by steel clamps so they can be moved. The fifth element has just been lifted from the flatbed truck on the road below and hovers above the loading dock outside. They weigh 22 tons apiece.

RS in his element, moving quickly, conferring with workers. He greets us cordially, and offers sunflower seeds.

We ask RS about Oteixa – "He's probably the most significant sculptor to come out of Europe in the fifties. He won the Sao Paolo Biennial in '55 or '56. He anticipated a lot of what Tony Smith did, a lot of what LeWitt did. He's not well known. Under Franco he was completely ostracized, but he's a national hero. He's ninety years old now, we're very close friends." The sculpture by the fireplace in the office at Duane Street is by Oteixa.

RS starts to walk us through the pieces, starting from the other end. He points to the main building, where The Union of the Torus and the Sphere will be in a room of its own – cordoned off right now by plastic sheets. Wedge piece that was at Gagosian will be nearby.

There are four pieces in the shed. They're spaced between 12 and 13 feet apart, as they were at DIA. "This was where the train pulled in and unloaded all the cardboard. The tracks came right in here, we just ripped the ground up about two feet and put cement down." [Clara interrupts to say they are bringing in the next plate – we go to watch]

The big slab comes down slowly on the crane. Workers adjust its descent with gloved hands (one rubs grease off a corner with his glove). Three small wheeled dollies, like car jacks but bigger, with plywood pieces on top to protect the steel, are shifted and re-

shifted by foot to take the load. Gradually the slab is lowered until it rests on them, and a worker mounts a stepladder to unhook the two clamps at the top edges. It hasn't dawned on me until now that these 18-foot high, 22-ton slabs can stand by themselves, without supports of any kind, in spite of the fact that they ~~seem to~~ lean ~~out in different directions.~~ way out from the vertical. RS runs down the hill to the crane, comes back and says he went to thank the crane operator. "They brought in another crane operator. We probably would have preferred the first crane operator they had here, but every local has their own idea about how to handle things. If you want to have relationships with these people, and you want to cover the crane operator – his boss just came. I went to thank the crane operator, he said don't thank me, go tell my boss and save my butt, so I did that. That's part of what you do. It's like working a team."

I ask about the pieces standing on their own. "They're all free-standing. The tendency to overturn is always inside the line of their balance. A lot of the plates lean simultaneously two ways, which means that they curve both back and forward…But all of them when you put them on the ground are stable. In order to satisfy codes…every now and then you have to put in tack weld or something, but it's cosmetic, it has nothing to do with the structural integrity of the piece."

RS suddenly asks Dodie, "Are you Spencer's mother?…I was wondering, because you're too young to be."

Two of the guys working for Budco today he's known for 25 years – they're sons of a man he worked with then.

RS carrying his sketch book – he opens it to show a quick sketch of a worker pushing a plate with his foot. He still draws every day, to keep his hand in.

We go back to look at the other pieces with RS, starting with the spiral. "This piece is called '2000.' When DIA first came to look at the spirals, they had their choice of all the beginning spirals. The very first spiral I made went to Emmy Pulitzer – that one runs parallel-parallel-parallel. This one was the second, it's called '2000.' It was actually conceived in 2000. But then they had the choice of 'Bellamy,' 'Sylvester,' all those other spirals, but they stayed with this one. I think they reason is that in some ways it's closer to the double they had, in terms of its volume." 'Bellamy' has been sold, 'Sylvester' has not. Two of the spirals, 'Bellamy' and one in Venice called 'Upright', "set the boundaries of what was possible with those pieces."

Then back to the first one, a single ellipse."This is the first piece we visually worked out with a template and a model, the piece we sent to the engineer and he said it couldn't be done, and so we made a little model to figure it out. It's a right angle to itself. This floor is at a right angle to what's overhead. This one is lower than the others – it's probably only eleven-ten or eleven-twelve. The spiral may be fourteen-two."

The next one, a double ellipse, has a very different patina, more metallic and less rusted. It seems to have no name. "I've always just called it 'Ninety degree right-angle,' but the

name they gave it is 'Torqued Ellipse Two,' I think. All of them have been sand-blasted except this one. This one still has the mill scale on it, that's why it's gray and leaden. When we sent them over, this one got a little bit of water on it, but we didn't sand-blast because I liked the lead and the mill-scale –with the other ones it was impossible to do."

"These three were still made in the States, at Sparrow's Point. Everything after here was made in Germany. This is the piece that was shown at DIA. It's a very different volume than the piece we were just in. The piece \we were in turned more and leaned more, but this piece has something much more stable and elevational about it. Much more planted. The effect of the water cascading over it, coming across the Atlantic, these vertical rushes – eventually they'll oxidize out and it'll become dark brown. But when they look as good as they look like this…! This piece, it's very difficult not to engage what's happened here." (Streaks of blue and many variations in the rusting). "It's a kind of color that you just don't see anywhere. I have a particular fondness for this, it 's the first double we made. We made one double after – it went to Leon Black – that's tighter inside, and probably a little more psychological, but this piece remains more satisfying to me.

"Until we got to the spirals, I thought that the whole early series was a pretty tight series. Usually in anybody's work this is true – the opening series and the last of the series are usually the best. These three pieces came out first and DIA said we're going to take all three… I'm really glad they stayed together, because you see one piece and you don't know the progression of what's occurred, and seeing three here gives you the continuity not only of the concept but the execution." This is the first double ellipse. "They went from single ellipses, to doubles (one inside the other), to spirals… In the singles, if you make an axis of the long part of the ellipse and the small part of the ellipse, there's always a center point. That never occurs in the spiral. There's no center to a spiral, because the outside configuration as it turns in on itself, like a nautilus, is always changing."

The spirals can be altered by installation – the walk space can be narrowed or widened. "This piece, we've always had a problem with the outside, which was very scarred up. It came back now on the boat, and for the first time the surface is very even. The problem with setting this piece right now is that the floor is uneven…in a couple of places you can see the light coming in underneath it."

"There's a couple of other singles, one called Number 5, and then Leon Black has one, and these are much more elastic in what they do, in terms of the lean and the space, than say the first one you were in. Here the form acts like a kind of band, being stretched…There's no vertical section in these, which means that the form is always leaning toward you or away from you. Except in the very first piece, the four tangent points run vertical. But everything off of ninety degrees is either leaning out or in. I 'm not sure how relevant that is, to tell the truth. Even if you tell a person there's a vertical section in the first piece, I'm not sure they could tell where it was."

The three ellipses have all crossed the Atlantic twice, from LA to Bilbao and back to NY.

Now he wants to walk us through the inside of the main buildings. He gets James Schaeufele, the DIA guy who seems to be in charge here, to come along. He tells us the factory was built in 1929. They've changed very little inside. Long, long spaces with great lighting from vertical skylights, each one devoted to a DIA artist -- Judd, Flavin, Beuys, Heizer, de Maria, Warhol et al, mostly artists of the 1970s. RS: "It's going to be a kind of equivalent to what the Jeu de Paume was in Paris, I think a period piece of important artists in depth. American art of the second half of the 20th century, pretty much based in the sixties…

"I think one thing that's very interesting about this building is it doesn't have any big architectural signature on it. It's got beautiful lighting, great space. And there's very few places where you can see one artist in depth…"

No problems with Serra installation. "It's really a great crew, they're having a good time. We'll be finished Monday around one."

Interview with Ernst Fuchs

Met RS in 1976, 25 years ago. He worked on the Berlin piece (Charlie Chaplin). "I never had contact with sculptors before. The gallerist Bochum asked me can you build a sculpture…"

"He has changed. Ah, now he's more relaxed. Now it's a higher level, his sculptures. I like working with him. He makes always big projects which go to the end of possibilities. Every time I am thinking, now can be no more coming, but the next project is incredible again."

Now all his pieces are made in Germany. The company is small, but has the biggest press in Europe. It is near Bochum, where Fuchs lives. He works for other artists as well as RS, but the company "makes only art installations, we do nothing else." Started with Richard's small pieces.

'Terminal' controversy – "It was terrible. People come and say to me, 'You great fucking guy to install such things.' But I think especially in Germany it's very hard to work in a public space and install art. If I work here I never hear that." Have people in Bochum accepted the piece by now? "I think the next generation, maybe. The old generation always says that's shit… But it's a symbol of Bochum." Isn't Bochum a steel town? "Was a steel town, now not. It's changed totally. We now computer, technology…" 'Terminal' is now a free-standing piece, because the bolts and welds to secure it have all eroded from weather – he checks it every month, to see if there is any movement, but there hasn't been any.

His favorite Serra piece? The one in San Francisco, on Donald Fischer's office property. Four vertical pieces, twisted, that go up 22 meters. "It looks so beautiful, and the color is so good." Sprinkler was installed so it would rust quickly.

Coffee Break

RS says they crew wants to finish tonight, so he'll stay. That way, they won't have to keep the crane over the weekend, will save them money. They get paid by the job, not by the hour. He likes to accommodate the workers. We decide to go for coffee, which means the next town, Cold Spring. RS and Clara go in his big black pickup, we follow in rented car. [END SIDE A]

"For me, the possibility of building pieces around New York has been very difficult, so to have a group of six or seven pieces together – I'm very very happy about that. I owe a lot to DIA. When we first started building the series, they were delayed a year, just for production problems. And they stayed with me. They stayed with the project, they were smart enough to keep them, they've always been very generous and extremely supportive…And I think they're really interested in art, and not in other things." Nothing by RS is on view in NYC now – MOMA has several, the Whitney has one, the Met has zero, Guggenheim has several. [RS talking quietly now, relaxed]

DIA will have and show RS's first scatter piece, which hasn't been seen ???

The spiral being installed today was the second one conceived, but it was made only recently, in Germany. First came the Pulitzer piece, second was this one, called '2000,' which has never been seen, even by Serra, who got his first view of it today. Are there surprises for him? "Yeah, they're never what I think they are, ever. It's very hard to extrapolate a physical space from a model. This piece has primarily to do with movement. You get no real sense of it from a bird's eye view…And what's great about this place is the way the light falls. Have you registered it? The light in the afternoon there is just --." Doors at ends of his space can be opened on warm days. He wanted to keep these pieces separated from the museum, but today he wondered whether it would be better to be able to look through from the museum into the shed.

I suggest the paradox of late19th century industry being co-opted by 21st century art – the Nabisco plant becoming a DIA museum, the steel mill in Bochum that works exclusively for artists, his own work with heavy steel etc. :

"A lot of what was done in the sixties came out of the latter part of the industrial revolution. So the kinds of spaces that the pieces were built in were lofts. Artists built pieces in loft spaces, and then sold it to the loft space which became the well-defined box. And then the well-defined box, like Panzas's collection box, a transportable box with the work in it, or it became the industrial frame that stayed permanent. This is like the industrial frame. The new museums that have tried to design spaces… so far have overridden a lot of what people are able to put in them. So a lot of the new museums that have gone up, have been successful as architecture, but either they have had poor selections of work or they haven't been very interesting shows, because it's hard to think – of all the new museums that have been made, from the Guggenheim to the Tate to all of them, the shows haven't been very good so far."

I say Bucky Fuller used to talk about the movement of technology from the track to the trackless, the wire to the wireless, etc.: "Dematerialization. Like, the dot com is going to get rid of the brick and mortar. That's not altogether true, either. I think both those things always go on simultaneously. In some sense, in my work I'm antithetical to all that. I'm using tons of steel to make the situation look lighter. But I think in theory that's right. Spinoza said it, that art would dematerialize. To a large degree it has. But then simultaneously, other things go on still. As things dematerialize, the scale has gotten larger."

He really got into large scale with the Pulitzer piece. "I guess so. I hadn't thought of that. But I think what happened, the very first piece that I put in the corner, 'Strike,' got me away from the studio, because I couldn't handle physically putting up an eight-foot by twenty-four-foot plate that would free-stand. I had to use industrial riggers. And as soon as you start to use industrial riggers, then you start thinking about the potential of dealing with space and placement another way. The studio really became the steel mills. In some sense I've never left them. And because I've worked in steel mills all my life, they know I know what they know. And because I've worked with riggers all my life, the riggers know I know what they know. I have a very easy relationship with the working class. I don't live with that class, I don't socialize with that class, but that's a class that I admire and I work with. I have a very good working relationship with them.

"In some sense you don't ever really leave your origins. If you think you do, it's probably a pretense. I have always admired people who do a hard day's work, whatever it is."

Re Fuchs: "He's maybe the most cautious worker I've ever worked with. Americans tend to be a little more free-wheeling…The Germans tend to be more by the book."

Fort Worth – "I talked to Michael Auping this morning, and I think it's going to happen."

RS and Clara leaving for Europe on Thursday (14th). Going to Naples, London, Paris, and Germany. Naples is for a show in the central plaza. London – will do mock-up for piece. Paris – possibility of building something. Germany – doing small piece for a Jewish cemetery. Back in NY on the 25th, for a couple of weeks, then New Zealand. Later in spring (May) he's staking out a piece for Aggie Gund in Connecticut, "on the most beautiful piece of land. Big lake, huge elevation, very beautiful." [END INVU]

Serra 9
(4/5/02)

Just back from Europe -- Naples, Germany, London. He's been asked to do something for the central plaza in Naples, "probably work something out from the toruses and the spheres, maybe something into a spiral, not out of the language I'm working with right now. I've got a couple of years to work on it." The city of Naples will pay for its transportation and erection, then will try to keep it and place it in another plaza. Serra has another meeting with them in September. To Germany, to site piece for a Jewish cemetery. Then to London, and mocked up a landscape piece for a client who was having trouble understanding the piece, because he was looking at the elements as pieces in themselves - "it's all about reading the curvature of the land in relation to your walking and in relation to the elevation. The sculptural elements relate to pure movement primarily." Serra has doubts the piece will really happen, because client doesn't really know the language of abstract art. (It's in what is now a parking lot but will be a garden, southwest of London).

CalTech piece -- was off track for a while. David Baltimore in favor of it, but will have to convince other board members how to see it. They hadn't understood the scale would be as large as it is.

Yesterday he was at Yale, talking to Frank Gehry's graduate seminar in architecture. The Disney project looks definite now, and this month he and Gehry are going to MIT. He doesn't go much teaching now, though, because it's too draining. Gehry had given them a good project -- taken them all to Istanbul to see Hagia Sofia, asked them to think about the sixteen acres here at 9/11 and to make some sort of project that would deal with what's needed down there. A big space that's like a one-room pavilion. One student had done a Richard Serra, "which looked kind of like a spiraling armadillo with a tail." RS said OK, if you want to use the idea, fine.

Fort Worth? "I think it's on. Model's done… I think that's going to go up in late September or early October at the latest. I'm really happy about it. A vertical piece with seven curvilinear plates, sixty-six feet high. The space you walk into is twenty feet across, and it's ten feet at the sky."

Sand pile story -- "My father, if I 'd done something wrong, he'd say, 'OK, see that pile of sand? I want you to take that pile of sand and move it over here by the time I get home.' So I'd be out there shoveling sand all day… He'd come home and look at it, and depending on how big a problem he was having with me, he'd say, 'OK, tomorrow I want it over here.' It certainly gave me a long time to think about what the hell I'd done wrong and why he was angry with me. He was an interesting father that way." RS used to say why a lot, as a kid. Once his father said 'I want you to do this and not ask why,' and RS said, "Why? I couldn't help myself."

Castelli Warehouse -- RS had a pole-prop piece, a splash piece, and a big rubber scatter piece (the one that will go into DIA/Beacon; RS had traded it to Judd, but never got a piece from Judd in return -- it went to the Judd Foundation, which will eithet give it to DIA or put it on permanent loan there).

Prado - first visit. "I'd come out of Yale as a painter… My painting was more related to drawing. It didn't have anything to do with content or subject matter or anything you'd call figuration. Then, when I was in Europe I experimented a lot. I got a stopwatch and so forth… I didn't know quite how to move painting on. I'd been quite taken with Brancusi and Giacometti, for different reasons, in Paris. And then I made a trip… to Madrid. [With Nancy and a friend named Jerry Weiss]. When I saw Las Meninas In thought that there wasn't any possibility of me getting close to that -- the viewer in relation to space, having the painter in the painting, the whole reversal of object-subject in relation to viewing, the masterfulness with which he could go from an abstract passage to a figure or a dog [END SIDE A], the cosmology… obviously this painter was a man of his time who could also devote his gift to the social conscience of the time. It pretty much stopped me. Cezanne hadn't stopped me, and Guston hadn't stopped me, and de Kooning and Pollock hadn't stopped me. I thought I could deal with all that. Velasquez did seem like a bigger social order to deal with. It bothered me. When I got back to Florence, I took everything I had and dumped it in the Arno. I started screwing around with sticks and stones, I thought I really better start from scratch. That sort of nailed the coffin on painting for me, because I really did stop, as a direct consequence of being there. I'd lived in Florence for a while. I lived around the corner from Masaccio (?), so I pretty much knew what the painting game was. It didn't seem out of reach. Velasquez seemed out of reach to me." (When he first got to Florence, the studio he'd engaged wasn't ready, so he hitchhiked from Athens to Istanbul, came back, got the studio, then went to Spain.)

Peru - RS went in 1974. "First time I ever did acid. I had a great time there. There was an article in the Smithsonian magazine, about a man named Oscar Achizo, who was considered to be some sort of shaman. I was friends with Rudy Wurlitzer, and Rudy and I happened to see this magazine, and we said let's go down and check this guy out. I wanted to see the sights in Peru and he wanted to see Oscar, who was in a town called Chanchan, on the water. First we went to see Macchu Picchu and all the sites, and then we took a car north and went to the sites I wanted to see, which had to do with irrigation, and then we went to Chanchan, a city on the coast where it never rains, where they have sunken gardens made of sand. Because it never rains it never decays. There was a young man who became the person that all the elder tribesman had restore the iconography of the hieroglyphs in the sand. He really knew how to draw. And he became their shaman as he got older. Rudy, who was interested in a lot of alternative ways to think about spirituality, wanted to see what this guy was up to, so I thought I'd go along for the ride. We went through an initiation ceremony with this man, where you had to cross a lake and take a lot of mescaline and get totally wacked out and the guy would tell you who you were incarnating…it was very interesting, actually. Did I take it seriously? Not really. Did I think it was a worthwhile experience? Absolutely."

Sight Point - Wesleyan didn't want it "because it was higher than the building." RS went to see Edy de Wilde at the Stedelijk, right after building a piece for the Kroller-Muller, and Edy invited him to do a piece there. RS drew Sight Point for him on a postcard, and he said go ahead. Sight Point came right out of House of Cards. "I thought of you got up in scale, you could really have an open shaft to the sky. I'm still doing that."

Pompidou - RS proposed a curved piece on the side of the museum, facing the Tinguely fountain. It was about twenty feet high, and the width of the building, and it didn't interfere with anything. He got the phone call from Pontus Hulten inviting him to do it while he was at the Stedelijk, and was very excited about it. "We went as far as making a mock-up. The steel had been ordered, and was to be rolled. The model was presented to Bordaz, who was kind of non-committal about it. And Piano walked in and said, 'I won't have that in my museum.' I didn't know what Piano's problem was. So Pontus Hulten [who told him about Piano's demand] said to me, can't you take this piece and move it somewhere else? I said… it's not a tree, you can't move it. He said, 'Richard, we're all civil servants.' I said, 'I'm not.' Stella happened to be there the same day, and… he really went to bat for me. He said to Pontus that this was outrageous, this piece ought to be built and you couldn't have some architect deciding what was going to be in the museum, that was the director's prerogative and that Pontus Hulten should back me up. But Pontus Hulten kowtowed to Piano. And after that Pontus Hulten started bad-mouthing me, about my temperament. I went back to the museum one evening and I went right over the wall of the little cubicle where he was and told him to button his lip…That was the end of our little conversation. If you really feel you've been fucked with, you might as well just get it settled, rather than letting it stew. I really believe that. It's probably gotten me into a lot of trouble over the years, but I 've always done that." He never talked to Hulten again. Bozo became a good friend after Hulten left Beaubourg. "But in an article like this, I think a one liner saying I've had my difficulties with architects and put a lid on it."

Abstract Art - "I think in the 20th century, abstraction is in correlation to the sociological, democratic institutions. It seems to be a language that doesn't deal with depiction or illustration or topicality or social relationships, but is open enough to encompass or evoke feelings and sentiments that only can come from a language that's evolving, where its expression hasn't been understood yet. And I think that in this country, it's obvious that you can't call Newman a geometric painter. It's not about that. It's about evoking a kind of sentiment that can only come from painting. If someone makes a field of painting ten feet high and twenty feet long, of one color with a stripe of another color, you have a physical and emotional reaction to it that you don't have to apples on a table or a figure or a guy doing a videotape or a Campbell soup can. It's just very very different. I would say this also -- I think that people who are going to torqued ellipses, that's not like going to Campbell soup cans. I just saw the Warhol show in London, and I loved it. But it's very, very different from having the experience of walking through a torqued ellipse. It's different in kind. I'm not saying it's different in quality, but it's different in kind. When you go see Campbell soup cans, you're playing a whole strategic game of the relevance of painting in relation to figuration, in relation to media, and how we consume media, and who really is the object or the by-product of

commercialization. You walk into a torqued ellipse, or you walk on top of a Carl Andre sculpture -- it 's different in kind. Your relation to the experience is different in kind. Abstraction is a different kind of protracted contemplation than other things, and it means something specifically different. And it puts the spectator in a different relationship to his emotions than do other things. That's for sure. Do I think because some people aren't doing it now it 's going to die out? Absolutely not. I think it's in its infancy. It's been going on for a century -- that's hardly anything.

"I think art tends to go in cycles. The minimalists made us look back at the Russian constructivists. The abstract expressionists made me look back at a lot of bad European painting and pushed somewhere else, or at a lot of American landscape painting and take it somewhere else. Basically it was a kind of romantic landscape tradition that ended up doing big-scale work. Those painters -- I don't think American painting has reached that height since, in terms of invention or broad scale or potential. That mural scale isn't going to be done again. But the experience of that work hasn't found a parallel in works that deal with media. No matter how relevant you might think Warhol is, it ain't Pollock. Even if it's presumed to be equal to Picasso or to Pollock, I don't believe it. If you look at the evolution of Warhol -- one of the great things he was able to do was to take trashy things from magazines and make them into very elegant paintings. That was kind of a genius stroke. But if you think after the initial silk screen invention…the guy takes a whole grid of Marilyns or coke bottles or whatever. But after those initial moves -- the silk screen, the icon coming out of popular culture, and the grid of repetition -- after those three or four moves early on, there's not much evolution. Then it's just selection of subject matter. Warhol gets a lot of credit for having done a lot of things… in relation to society, but I looked at that show, and I thought one interesting thing -- and it's one of the problems of American painting per se -- the subtext underneath it all is Matisse. Matisse is behind Warhol, it's behind Kelly, a lot of Stella, Newman. The dominant figure in American painting in the second half of the twentieth century is Matisse… Matisse's relevance is in chromatic color harmony. No one dealt with it better. What struck me about Warhol is what a great colorist he was, and how close to Matisse he was."

(Addenda on abstraction, from next tape) - "What I think is, it's in its infancy. If anything was a great movement in the 20th century it's been the abstract movement. If you point to the great figures now, they certainly are commensurate with... and as I see it more relevant than a lot of the figure painters. If I have to put up Mondrian and Malevich and Newman and Pollock next to whomever you want to pick out in terms of figuration, I'll play that game. I think that abstraction has been able to deliver an aspect of the human experience that figuration has not. It's different in kind, if not in quality. It's much more open-ended. You fill in a lot more. Your subjectivity has a lot more to do with the experience… If you think about what came before in this country, in terms of figuration -- Ben Shahn and those others, it's pathetic. There's a lot of figuration going on right now, in terms of photography, but I don't know as there are any great figurative sculptors. There are not a lot of young abstract painters, but I'm sure there will be. I'm sure that's going to be revitalized. The current figuration out there…has reached a new low of mediocrity that I think everybody is pretty tired of. The cannibalization has kind of gone overboard.

Serra's audience - in 1980 he said his audience was very limited. "I think in 1980 that was true. I think it was true until maybe six or seven years ago. Maybe the audience started to get bigger after I started to show with Larry on Wooster Street. I had shows with Leo, which I thought were really interesting -- I had a piece called *Slice* that cut right through the gallery -- never even got reviewed. No one could care less. It wasn't until Larry built that space that enable me to really stretch, that people began to rally around the work. But it may have been something else… It could be the fact that the language is there, and it's being offered year after year… people don't like it, but it's there. I thought it was important for me to continue to show as much as I could, even if there was hostility to the work, because it was important that the language continue to be seen…" [END TAPE]

"There's always been an audience that's had, let's say, a lesser emotional response to the work, and continues to have that. Then there were people who were hostile to the work, early on, and continued to be hostile. Then, there were people of a different generation, who had a different option about that. They came to it with a blank slate, and they related to it as they found it. A younger generation responded to the work in a way my peers or people who'd come before didn't… But whatever the work is evoking in people, I don't dictate that. So I don't know how to account for it. I recognized it happened with DIA, but when DIA went up, both Clara and I thought we were going to get bashed as much as we'd been bashed the time before. We were very, very surprised. You can say that the pieces are more sheltering or whatever . On the other hand, there's still a hostile reaction to the work in some quarters. Artforum has a website where…a woman went on and said the show at Larry's was the most threatening, claustrophobic thing she'd ever seen. Some people are always going to say that because of the nature of the work. It's big, it weighs a lot, it looks like there's a lot of machinery behind it… They would have no problem if an architect did it. They would applaud Koolhaas for doing something called 'Extra Large,' in Lyon. If a sculptor does something big they say boo-hoo, because we're stuck in a boutique culture. If you go to Chelsea, basically that's what it is. It's a ghetto-ized boutique culture, already. And the galleries are indistinguishable. That's one of the reasons abstraction and particularly sculpture gets a hard knock, is that is doesn't satisfy the demands of the commercial boutique culture. What do you think the popularity of photography… in the last twenty years is all about? It's about the availability of the reproduction to go global instantly. That's not true of other forms of making art….

"Is that saying I'm not part of the commercial world? Certainly I 'm part of the commercial world. But it's different in kind from what I would call the boutique culture."

Intersection came out of *Olson* and *Ishmael*, same size, just taking two more cones and inverting them. Big shift was that MoMA bought it.

Graffiti problem -- they now have a transparent material to put on the pieces, and if they get graffiti you can just blast them off with hot water. It depends on the local population. Some have never been graffitied: *Carnegie*, for one. If one person tags it, others will follow.

Pinaud -- has a big landscape piece at his chateau beyond Versailles. Also, the six-block piece, a big curvilinear piece of six plates, and one of the spirals, which he bought last summer from Venice. Also a few "really great drawings." The landscape piece is one of Serra's best, according to RS.

The MOMA Retrospective - "The work wasn't that well known at the time. The reviews were very good, which was unexpected. I only showed ten pieces. I liked the catalog… I thought the Modern treated me exceedingly well. I'd never had people really let me do what I want to do and give me that much support… Through the years the Modern has been my biggest support, they've been behind the work both critically and in terms of acquiring work. With a really hands-off policy…" The show came right after the hearings on Tilted Arc, was being planned during the hearings. Bill Rubin said 'It's up to you, and then he just stepped away. It was saying, we want the best thing you can put together. And I thought, well, good for them."

Matthew Marks - "Is this going to deteriorate into art-world gossip?" RS was going to do a show at DIA, and he didn't want two dealers funding the show. Matthew wanted to fund some of them, Larry wanted to fund all of them. Also, RS felt that at his last show with Marks, he didn't get all the support he needed. "I know Larry very well. I know Larry doesn't get in my face, he's very hands-off about what I want to do. I thought it would be easier for me to do a show with Larry…" But he realizes that Matthew took the fact that he went with Larry as a big insult. "I just want to do my work."

PS -- RS had two books of Paul Celan poems on the table in living room. He said he reads mainly poetry and non-fiction. If he reads fiction, he likes to read all of an author's work. Peter Handke. [END INVU]

Sara-Quotes

RS – Quotes

"The crucial problems confronting sculpture today are the avoidance of concerns properly belonging to architecture and painting…" *Interviews*, p.16

"I'm not interested in looking at sculpture which is solely defined by its internal relationships." (ibid, p. 26)

"I think the significance of the work is in its effort not in its intentions. And that effort is a state of mind, an activity, an interaction with the world… ibid, p. 36

(Re *Spin Out*) "First you see the plates as parallel; when you walk left, they move right. As you walk into them, they open up, and there's a certain kind of centrifugal push into the side of the hill… right now my pieces are mostly involved with walking and looking." (ibid, p.36-37)

(Re 1970 visit to Japan) "I lived in Kyoto adjacent to the temple complexes of Myoshin-ji. …The necessity of peripatetic perception is characteristic ot Myoshin-ji…Six weeks in the temple and gardens opened the issues of how one perceives and experiences space, place, time and movement. The gardens demanded a clarity of attention." (ibid, p. 48)

(Re Brancusi) "Stella's black pictures and Judd's serial relationships are indebted to the *Endless Column*. But the problems of the *Endless Column* didn't interest me at the time. I was more interested in Brancusi's open pieces, like *The Gate of the Kiss*. (ibid p. 49)

(Re what sculpture means to him - 1976) "I guess it means a lifetime commitment…It means to follow the direction of the work I opened up early on for myself and try to make the most abstract moves within that…To work out of my own work…What I'm interested in is revealing the structure and content and character of a space and a place by defining a physical structure through the elements I use." (ibid, p.58)

(Re *Sight Point* - see *Interviews* , pp.60-61)

"As a kid when I was fifteen I was in a ballbearing factory, when I was sixteen in a steel mill, seventeen, a steel mill, eighteen, a produce market, nineteen, twenty, a steel mill…MORE (ibid, p.62)

"In 1970 there was a convergence of events that made me rethink scale. I had completed a series of large-scale stacking pieces at Kaiser Steel; I helped Bob Smithson stake out the *Spiral Jetty* and later visited the Zen Gardens at Kyoto…and upon my return I visited Heizer's piece [*Double Negative*)…I was en route to build a piece for Pulitzer in St. Louis. The *Pulitzer Piece* is the first piece where I thought about shaping or giving definition to a large area with the simplest most expedient means at hand." (ibid, p. 70)

"Drawing is a way of seeing into your own nature. Nothing more." (ibid, p. 76)

"In Germany right now [1980], my sculpture is being used by the neo-fascists to suppress art. In St. Louis, my piece was dismissed by the architect because it did not satisfy the needs of their urban design. In Washington, D.C. the work was defeated because it did not attend to the notion of elaborating on the democratic ideologies that this country thinks are necessary in terms of the decorative function of art, or the political function of art... They wanted me to put flag poles on top of pylons." (ibid, p. 130; see also pp.184-187)

"Smithson and I shared a general empathy, he for my splashed lead pieces and the notion of collapse in the early lead props and I for his notion of site and entropy – sticking a rock in the mud and letting it sink. When I arrived in New York the critic-gallery-museum system was completely closed to me. My work was not directed toward the reigning authoritative, pedagogic, dogmatic and powerful institutions anyway. I...found sympathy and encouragement from other artists in the same straits, namely Bob Smithson, Eva Hesse, Bruce Nauman, Michael Heizer, Phil Glass, Joan Jonas, Michael Snow. What was interesting about this group of people was that we did not have any shared stylistic premises, but what was also true was that everybody was investigating the logic of material and its potential for personal extension – be it sound, lead, film, body, whatever." (ibid, p. 136)

(Re Davis Smith) "I was not involved with Smith's work...The real heirs of Smith and Newman are Judd and Stella, whereas Bob Smithson and Eva Hesse took their cues from Pollock ..." (ibid, p. 137)

(Re Minneapolis accident, resulting in worker's death) "After the accident the reaction against me personally was incredibly vicious. I was harrassed, ridiculed, disgraced, and was told by friends, other artists, museum directors, critics and dealers to stop working. It did two things: it put me into analysis for seven years and sent me on the road. I worked in Japan, Canada, Italy, France, Holland, Germany; anywhere where I could find support." (ibid, p. 147)

"Placing pieces in an urban context is not synonymous with an interest in a large audience even though the work will be seen by many people who wouldn't otherwise look at art. The work I make does not allow for experience outside the conventions of sculpture as sculpture. My audience is necessarily very limited." (ibid, p. 149 – 1980)

"I don't think of my work as being monumental." (ibid, p. 164; also p. 178)

"Usually you're offered places which have specific ideological connotations, from parks to corporate and public buildings andtheir extensions such as lawns and plazas. It's difficult to subvert those contexts. That's why you have so many corporate baubles on Sixth Avenue, so much bad plaza art that smacks of IBM, signifying its cultural awareness...Sculptures by Noguchi and Calder fail for similar reasons. They have nothing to do with the contexts in which they're placed. At best, they are studio made and site adjusted. They are displaced, homeless, overblown objects that say, 'We represent modern art.'" (ibid, p. 167)

(Re *Terminal*) "It is located on a traffic island between the street car tracks in front of the railroad depot. It was conceived for that location, but originally shown at Documenta VI. I was offered sites for it next to the Cologne Cathedral and in Kassel. Both were picture-postcard sites that suggested conventional public sculpture, whereas in Bochum the piece interacts with the main artery of the town, with streetcar and bus traffic as well as people going to and from the station." (ibid, p. 167; see also p. 174)

(Re Federal Plaza, NYC site – 1980) - "I've found a way to dislocate or alter the decorative function of the plaza and actively bring people into the sculpture's context…The intention is to bring the viewer into the sculpture. The placement of the sculpture will change the space of the plaza. After the piece is created, the space will be understood primarily as a function of the sculpture." (ibid, p. 168)

"There is one condition that I want, which is a density of traffic flow. I wouldn't go to a leftover, picturesque pier." (ibid, p. 168)

"I made a definite decision when there was a possibility of working in an isolated site by saying, 'No, I would rather be more vulnerable and deal with the reality of my living situation, which is urban." (ibid, p. 170)

"If you reduce sculpture to the flat plane of a photograph, you're passing on only a residue of your concerns. You're denying the temporal experience of the work…denying the real content of the work." (ibid, p. 170)

"I'm not interested in impermanence, in the performance-like character of Christo's work, for example. Nor am I interested in Oldenburg's satire of the monument. I'm interested in following the sculptural language I've developed through building works." (ibid, p. 171)

"In most cases where my works have been rejected, it has been by architects." (ibid, p. 173, re Renzo Piano nixing his piece for Beaubourg)

"I think my work relates to an earlier period in which sculptors understood the public spaces for which they were building." (ibid, p. 179)

Re early splash and prop pieces - ibid, p. 181 (splash piece for Jolas)

His outdoor sculptures "point to the indeterminacy of the landscape. The dialectic of walking and looking at the landscape establishes the sculptural experience." – ibid, p.72

"The structures are the result of experimentation and invention…The part of the which surprises me, invariably leads to new works." (MOMA, p. 13 – 1985).

"In all my work the construction process is revealed...My works do not signify any esoteric self-referentiality. Their construction leads you into their structure and does not refer to the artist's persona." (MOMA, p. 47)

"The biggest break in the history of sculpture in the twentieth century occurred when the pedestal was removed." This placed it in "the behavior space of the viewer." (quoted in Foster, MOCA, 18)

"The history of welded steel sculpture in this century – Gonzalez, Picasso, David Smith – has had little or no influence on my work...The models I have looked to have been those who explored the potential of steel as a building material: Eiffel, Roebling, Maillart, Mies van der Rohe. Since I chose to build in steel it was a necessity to know who had dealt with the material in the most significant, the most inventive, the most economic way." (ibid, 23 – see also p. 24 with links to Duchamp, Whitman, Hart Crane).

"To work with steel not as a picture-making element, but as a building material in terms of mass, weight, counterbalance, load-bearing capacity, point load, compression, friction, and statics has been totally divorced from the history of sculpture. It has, however, found direct application in the histories of architecture, technology, and industrial building. It is the logic of towers, dams, solos, bridges, skyscrapers, tunnels..." (MOCA, 53)

(Re forging vs casting) "I have a reluctance to cast in steel or iron because the perforation that occurs in the surface of the cast during the cooling process gives the material a soft and porous look." (MOCA, 71)

"What struck me most on a trip to Egypt were the temples where light, space, and measure all contribute to an impression of weightlessness which reinforced my conviction that there are ways of building...where weight...can be transformed into weightlessness." (MOCA, 99)

"Weight is a value for me...I simply know more about weight than about lightness and therefore I have more to say about it." (MOCA, 107)

David Sylvester Interview (MOCA Catalog, 1998)

Re Torqued Ellipses: "They are vessels that you walk into. There is one opening. The vessel is made from steel plate that has been bent under a tremendous amount of compression to form a skin which encircles an elliptical form, and continuously either leans in or leans out. When you stand inside the vessel, the shape on the floor is similar to a Borromini ellipse; so is the shape overhead which forms the opening to the sky...there's never a vertical line in the topology of the sculpture...The piece either falls away from you or the concavity reaches up over you. On the outside, the exact reverse occurs." (187)

Seeing Borromini's San Carlo, working with Gehry's CATIA program – Germany, Korea, and finally Beth Ship in Maryland (188-190)

"It's not a space I've ever been in. It's not a space that anyone's ever been in...these pieces are totally destabilizing..." (190)

"You find yourself wanting to make something you haven't seen before." (191)

"On a very simple level these pieces are about walking and looking." (191)

"They are not site-specific pieces. Nor do they need to be. On the other hand, I would like to, if possible, place all of them once and once only, so that they can be seen the way I want them to be seen. And if, after the initial installation, they eventually go somewhere else, I would like to have as much say in that as I can; I'll probably insist on it. I *will* insist on it." (194)

"Each one is being specifically invented. So they're all different." (194)

"Work comes out of work. I can't think my way through a problem. I have to work my way through a problem."

"I think the significance of the work is in its effort, not its intentions. And that effort is a state of mind, an activity, and interaction with the world." (195)

"I just don't like to interfere with the material. I don't like to add anything to the material; I've hardly ever done that...I'm not interested in truth to material, it's not some axiom. It's just the way I think about material...It's a question of preference...The reason I don't want to interfere with the material is that I don't want to make it purport to be something other than what it is." (201)

"I think they [torqued ellipses] implicate you in their movement. They have a torque, and when you walk into them, in order to understand their torque, you move, and as you move they move, so you're always playing catch-up with them." (203)

"Philip Johnson came in and walked around the interior with his arm stretched out and his finger on the plate adjusting his movement to how the plate moved in and out. He seemed to be having a good time." (204)

Possible parallel to Ronchamp (204)

RS not interested in emotional impact. "On the other hand, I do know that pieces can release you and not be oppressive, and there are ways that pieces can be made claustrophobic and threatening. So, to a degree, you try to make the pieces accessible, and try to have the pieces allow for the possibility of a complex experience, without being heavy-handed about it." (205)

"The thing about the Torqued Ellipses is that their time and your time are not the same..." (206)

Interviewed by Chuck Close, 1995

Yale - art books to "get the history of art into my head…I went through every page of every book." (p. 52).

Gehry - he works with models, "a very hands-on, inventive way of dealing with programs…I've always had a lot of fun visiting him." (p.54)

House of Cards – erecting first one in the studio – "Let's get Carl Andre up off the floor." (p. 55)

Naples - working with animal skins, with Nancy (p. 58)

Brancusi - "like a painter seeing Cezanne for the first time." (58-59 – also Picasso and Giacometti)

The Accident – and the reaction to it (pp. 60-61)

Max's Kansas City - the arguments; Janis Joplin, etc.(p. 62)

Early prop pieces - the gang; pieces falling down; Warehouse show (pp.62-63)

Lead - watching Phil Glass cutting up lead for a repair – why RS liked it (p. 64) Splash piece at Stedelijk was first site-specific work (p.65)

Pulitzer Piece – Emmy and Joe – their response to RS – Joe's vanity, "like Cary Grant" – "I always thought I had an inability to deal with people in the world, but once I got out of the studio and got on the road, it became easier." (. 67)

Dealers – and not needing them (pp.67-68)
Contracts - (p. 70)

Jasper Johns – very supportive, introduced him to Cage and Cunningham, etc. (p.72) – also Rauschenberg, Newman and their influence.

Choosing the photo for Close's portrait - only person he's let do that – "dumb, tough, and ugly" - the missing tooth that kept him from smiling for photos (p.74-75)

Princeton Belknap Lecture (October 2001)

"There is nothing cheaper than cheap surrealism." (4)

"I have always mistrusted collage, with few exceptions, Picasso's early collages being one." (4)

"To see is a way of thinking, and conversely to think is to see." (5)

"I depend on walking and looking, simple observation. Observation later melds into memory." (6)

"I wanted to be able to involve myself in a process of working without having to project an outcome. When you deal rigorously with process, you don't concern yourself with the end result; it's not about making personal statements, it's not about subjectivity, it's not about psychology. I decided to write down a list of verbs and enact them as designated activities in relationship to material, mass, gravity ground:" [list follows] (7)

"I cannot over emphasize the need for play, for in play you don't extract yourself from the activity. In order to invent I felt it necessary to make art a practice of affirmative play or conceptual experimentation…Free from skepticism, play relinquishes control. However, even in play the task must be carried out with conviction. It's how we do what we do that confers meaning on what we've done." (8)

"I began to realize that working with gravity as a force was a way to attack the stability of form…sculpture had never been constructed with the apparent potential for collapse where the proposition to do also contained the condition to undo." (9)

"'The things we truly know are those that we make ourselves, or discover or experience ourselves' is an axiom that I subscribe to." (10)

"I am not concerned with engineering tectonics for art's sake. Spectacular tectonics either fetishize detail or overemphasize the scenography of structure as an end in itself. A comparison of the work of Mies van der Rohe and Frank Gehry make this statement self-evident." (10)

"It is the function of art to open up unseen ways of seeing." (11)

"In all my landscape pieces I want to establish a dialectic between one's perception of the place in totality and one's relation to the field as walked. The result is a way of measuring oneself against the indeterminacy of the land…Meaning arises from the perception of a viewer moving across and through the context of the land…Space and time become functions of each other. Space and movement become inseparable from each other." (14-15)

"I learned in the Federal Court that property rights supercede an artist's right of protecting a work from destruction. Yet I still seek opportunities to realize site-specific projects and continue to live with the contradictions and problems that they pose. I have never shared the romance of building works in the remote landscape...No, I would rather be more vulnerable and deal with the reality of my living situation, which is urban." (16)

"I consider space to be my medium. The articulation of space has come to take precedence over other concerns. I attempt to use sculptural form to make space distinct. This requires that I employ the practices and procedures of the industrial process. [Why?] I admit the work is disruptive..." (17)

CLARA WEYERGRAF-SERRA

Dear Dodie,
Dear Calvin,

Richard would like you to read what he said about Frank Gehry on the occasion of DIA honoring him at one of their galas. This text might prove you a more objective understanding of the relationships.

Best regards
Clara

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When I was asked to give this talk to honor Frank Gehry, I immediately said yes, for Frank is an old and dear friend and it makes sense for Dia to honor him as much as any architect I can think of for a lot of good reasons, although I hope that Dia doesn't make a habit of honoring architects.

Those who know Frank know of his love for art. Artists are his friends, his peers and his ghosts, and Frank probably listens to artists as much as he listens to anyone. No architect that I know has absorbed the history of art as thoroughly as Frank, maybe out of fear to invent the already invented. Whatever the reason, he is as versed in the history of art as he is in the history of architecture. How many architects do you know who can discuss Borromini's San Carlo and Mike Kelly's stuffed animals in the same breath. He devoured all of us. Rauschenberg, Stella, Johns, Ellsworth Kelly, Judd, Oldenburg, whomever. Any and every artist's work, living or dead, has peeked his curiosity. He's digested our work with relish. By now it's all translated, re-interpreted and transformed into his own language. Frank's buildings never smack of watered down artistic inventions or conventions. He is not opportunistic in his relationship to artists. He has too much respect. His connection to art is a different one. He is one of the few architects of this century that has brought the procedures and thought processes of contemporary art making into the world of architecture. He's in effect dovetailed art practice into architectural practice. This is the main reason that artists respond to his work, that's why artists cherish him. He's the artists' architect.

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Frank has always exhibited the freedom to disobey the authority of architecture, to question all of its historical conventions and assumptions from its tectonics to its skin. He is bending steel beams in a completely unprecedented manner and is wrapping huge surfaces with 3/16th of ~~a~~ titanium. I don't have to tell you about Frank's introduction of the fish into the hopper of architectural ideas , but I want to tell you a fish story that one of the engineers in his office told me. Rick Smith who came out of the aerospace industry with all its bureaucratic rules and regulations didn't know what to expect when he started to work for Frank. On his first day, Frank sent him to the fish-market to buy a carp. When he came back, Frank twisted the fish into shape and put it in the freezer. Once it was frozen stiff he told Rick to slice it into vertical cross sections from head to tail, then to feed the data bits of fish into his catia computer program to digitalize not only each cross section but the whole of the curvilinear volume of the frozen cadaver. In a later collaboration with Philip Johnson they digitalized a pear. Franks' fishes and pears and loads of other assorted phenomena have become the organizing systems for his architectural structures. I remember sending him the freeze-dried skin of a sturgeon. It goes without saying that Frank has a different fantasy than most of us, an imagination that is distinct if not unusual, and he imposes this faculty upon us in the form of spaces and places and visual messages that accord to an intrinsic logic of an imaginary preoccupation that we are not always privy to.

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Frank never bought into the purism and reductionism of a disintegrating modernism nor into the cannibalism of post modernism. For Frank, each movement is as repressive and conservative as the next. Frank's work doesn't adhere to the assumptions of movements, which places him in a peculiar position as the century winds to an end, for he is not a synthesizer of the achievements of a tradition past, nor is he the articulate rebel who reshapes the edges of the present. Frank's an original. He is only interested in the ruleless game of possibilities. He is a precursor laying out the foundation for new meanings in architecture for the next millennium. If one remains at the mercy of movements or trends out of fear of being 'out of it' or 'not with it' one can easily lose the substance of one's conviction, one's need for self-realization. This is not Frank's problem. Frank's inventiveness is in the unexpected, often disturbing connection of an astounding variety of spatial configurations and rhythms that collide in his buildings. In Frank's architecture, bad taste breaks historically sanctified expectations as often as formal invention ruptures the established tradition. When I say 'bad taste' I mean it in the good sense of the word, in the sense that Frank uses cheap, heretofore non-architectural materials. His work departs from the agenda of the new high minded classical formalism in that it is bound up with the 'low life' of a raw materialism. As hard as it might be to swallow, Frank's architecture is a manifestation of both bad taste and formal invention. It's great because it is experimental, ridiculous, audacious, dumb, original, inventive,

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inspired and wonderful all at the same time. If Frank's museum in Bilbao teaches us anything, it teaches us that being cultivated in architectural presumptions does not condition us sufficiently when faced with something truly original. It is impossible to maintain an aesthetic disinterest in Bilbao, to remain distant and detached in one's response. Bilbao is provocative. You have to recognize that Frank has created different values for architecture. We respect Frank Gehry for what he has gotten rid of and what he's refused to do, but we judge him by his contribution, by what he has done.

Richard Serra, November 4th, 1998

Serra - eulogy for Leo Castelli, at MoMA

(13)

I only wish Leo had written his autobiography, for all I can offer is what I remember about him. What we call a life is, in the final analysis, all our combined recollections, all our memories, and I am certain that there are others here who could fill in the mosaic of Leo's life better than I. What we must contend with is the random, disjointed fragments, the broken shards, the chronological snapshots, the anecdotes; and sadly even these do not convey the energy, the passion of the man. Leo had a great antenna and he constantly had his ear to the ground. He always knew what was going on and what was about to happen. In fact, he made it happen. He understood the historical necessity of movements. When he exhibited Rauschenberg he would follow with Johns, Lichtenstein with Warhol, Judd with Morris and Flavin, Kosuth with Weiner. He consciously laid the ground work for a new language to emerge, to take a foothold to grow.

Early on I had splattered and splashed lead against the wall at Leo's uptown warehouse, scattered heaps of rubber and propped lead plates. Leo took a particular interest in the work and invited me to a party for his artists, amongst whom were Johns, Rauschenberg, Stella, Warhol. The nervousness, insecurity and uncertainty that I felt were quickly alleviated when Leo casually said:" Richard you can exhibit when you are ready, this year, next, whenever. I'll put you on a stipend, don't worry", and he patted me on the shoulder. Memories are retained in proportion to the emotional subjectivity of the event. Leo, in effect, changed my life. For me the working process has always taken precedent over the result. Leo perfectly understood this and was willing to support my obsessions no matter which form they took knowing that there was hardly any hope of return on his dollar, in fact, he would ask every so often "Richard, think you could make

me a table-top piece" and we would both laugh.

I did not go to Leo for praise or approval. I believe that like his other artists I was drawn to him because he set us in motion, because he was our friend and ally and because we could count on his enduring support. An ally, a friend, enduring support, these are not empty words. There was a time in my life when that was what I most needed. About thirty years ago a workman was killed in a rigging accident during the installation of one of my sculptures. Without any accurate information as to the cause for the accident accusations began to fly. People blamed me and shunned me, and to tell the truth, I was frightened. I did not know what to do and how to deal with the situation. Leo took it upon himself to call a meeting with professionals to sort things out. I was in shock, watching the film of my life as if underwater, holding my breath with an occasional involuntary sigh. At one point Leo took me into a separate room and said: " We are in this together, Richard. No matter where the chips fall I'll back you up and stay with you. Just try to hold on."

How forgetful we are in everyday life, how retentive in death. I never let Leo know how much I loved him, appreciated him, was thankful for his enduring support. In an early interview, Leo referred to me as the most aloof of his artists; I wish it could have been otherwise.

Richard Serra
October 1999

Texts on Serra

RS/Misc

Minimalism

"Minimal objects redirected consciousness back upon itself and the real-world conditions which ground consciousness. The coordinates of perception were established as existing not only between the spectator and the work but among spectator, artwork, and the place inhabited by both…Such a reorientation of the perceptual experience of art made the viewer, in effect, the subject of the work, whereas under the reign of Modernist idealism, this privileged position devolved ultimately upon the artist, the sole generator of the artwork's formal relationships." (Crimp, MOMA, 43).

"Serra not only refuses to perform the mystical operations of art but also insists upon confronting the art audience with materials that otherwise never appear in their raw state. For Serra's materials, unlike those of the Minimal Sculptors, are materials used only for the means of production…" (ibid, p. 45)

"The sheer force of Serra's intellect, and its physical manifestation, is unparalleled by any other sculptor of our time. In every era there are a few artists – very few – who universally command the respect and admiration of other artists because of their stunning originality and uncompromising conviction. Serra is, without any doubt, one of those rare individuals." - Koshalak and Brown, MOCA, Foreward to catalog.

Serra's work is "not a fixed category of autonomous objects but a specific relay between subject and site that frames the one in terms of the other, and transforms both at once." (Foster, MOCA, 17)

"Often his sculpture 'works in contradiction' to the architecture of its sites…But it can also be subtle, complementary, even reciprocal, whereby sculpture and architecture frame one another." (ibid, 21)

Torqued Ellipses

"…that rarest thing in art, something new. Because these works could not be grasped from any single vantage point – because the effect of the bent steel varied depending on whether you stood inside or outside the shapes, or at one point or another around them – you had to walk and look at the same time." (Kimmelman, NYT, 11/23/01

"In part the torqued ellipses were inspired by a visit to Borromini's San Carlo Church in Rome." (Serra quote follows on Borromini). "Serra then applied the computer program CATIA to calculate the necessary bending of the projected ellipses at full scale – a bending that only a few steel mills in the world could execute." (Hal Foster, Gagosian cat. P. 14)

Torqued Spirals, Toruses and Spheres

"Finally reaching the interior is akin to stepping onto the deck of a pitching ship, space rushing away from you. A pitching ship at the end of a roller-coaster ride." (Kimmelman, NYT, 11/23/01)

"Mr. Serra's latest sculptures, with their baroque and mysterious elements...move in a new direction: toward more psychologically disorienting shapes. A result is tension between order and (seeming) disorder, triggering wonderment, the ultimate goal of art...These are democratic works, in other words, universally accessible as formal propositions, and unlike anything else." (ibid)

"...even more so with the spirals, one feels that each step produces a new space, a new sculpture, even a new body. Sometimes, as the walls pinch in, you feel the weight press down...But then, as the walls open up again, this weight is somehow eased: it seems to be funneled up and away from you...In this way Serra has opened up a psychological dimension new in his sculpture, and almost surrealist sense of spatiality." (Hal Foster, Gagosian cat . p. 16)

"Even as the torqued ellipses and spirals evoke archaic, psychic spaces like the labyrinth and the omphalos, they also conjure up futuristic, technological spaces like the virtual architecture of computer design." (ibid, p. 18)

Re *Ali-Frazier*: "...these blocks absorb space through sheer mass, like so many black holes, rather than define space through steel planes, as in the arcs." (ibid., p.10)

Other Intvws

27 JAN 2002
PO BOX 1001
NY NY 10276-1001

TO: CALVIN TOMKINS, THE NEW YORKER
FAX: 212-988-8808

FROM: CARL ANDRE
FAX: 718-218-6079

DEAR CALVIN TOMKINS:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FAXED QUESTIONS ABOUT RICHARD SERRA. AFTER SERIOUS REFLECTION I HAVE REALIZED THAT RICHARD & I HAVE HAD VERY LITTLE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER OVER THE YEARS. I DO RESPECT HIS MASTERY OF LARGE-SCALE SCULPTURE WHICH PLACES HIM IN THE LINE OF MARK DISUVERO, HIS BOYHOOD NEIGHBOR. RICHARD IS VERY MUCH A "MAXIMALIST".

I KNOW WE BOTH FEEL GREAT ADMIRATION, LOVE, & RESPECT FOR ROBERT SMITHSON & NANCY HOLT BUT I CANNOT RECALL ANY OCCASIONS WHEN WE SPENT ANY LENGTH OF TIME TOGETHER. READING OUR TWO INTERVIEWS IN DAVID SYLVESTER'S NEW COLLECTION OF CONVERSATIONS WITH AMERICAN ARTISTS MAKES VERY CLEAR HOW DIVERGENT OUR TEMPERAMENTS ARE.

BE WELL,
@, carl andre

P.S: YEARS AGO I SAID, "RICHARD SERRA PUTS MATTER AT RISK & I PUT MATTER AT REST." @

31 JAN 2002

TO: CALVIN TOMKINS, THE NEW YORKER
FAX: (212)-988-8808
FROM: CARL ANDRE
FAX: (718)-218-6079

DEAR CALVIN TOMKINS:

YOU MAY USE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT BY ME IN YOUR RICHARD SERRA PROFILE.

"RICHARD SERRA PUTS MATERIAL AT RISK. I PUT MATERIAL AT REST."

PLEASE USE THE STATEMENT IN THAT FORM, ALLOWING FOR CONVENTIONAL CAPITALIZATION. SOMEONE ONCE WROTE THAT RICHARD'S SCULPTURES WERE VERBS & THAT MINE WERE NOUNS. ALSO NOT BAD.

I REMEMBER VIVIDLY MY MANY LATE NIGHT CONVERSATIONS WITH BOB SMITHSON BUT NONE WITH RICHARD. I DO KNOW THAT RICHARD & BOB SPENT A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER VERY PRODUCTIVELY.

BE WELL,

@carl andre

Matthew Barney

His "Cremaster 3," which he's just finishing, has Richard Serra as a main character, Hiram Abish (?), the architect of Solomon's temple. "The story of Cremaster 3 sort of takes on the mythology of freemasonry, in the sense that Hiram holds a secret that the apprentice wishes to learn, and the apprentice" kills the architect in order to learn it. In the film, the Chrysler Tower is being built from the foundation upward. "Richard's character sort of sits at the apex..." RS looks very corporate in a double-breasted gray sharkskin suit and fedora hat.

"Here is the apprentice, who after being judged at the bar, his teeth are removed, and the architect comes into the dentist's office and puts in a denture. The denture is the remains of the 1938 Imperial, which has been reduced by five 1967 Imperials. I got interested in the fact that in Demolition Derby, the Chrysler Imperial isn't allowed in competition, because it's sort of invincible. It can run without fluid for quite a while, its chassis is really overbuilt...We found a thirties Imperial, which is sort of in the center of the space...and it's reduced down to the size of a denture by the sixty-sevens, which all have these unique battering-ram tools on the back end. So, once that denture is deposited into his toothless mouth, his colon relaxes and his teeth come back out of his intestine."

There are five separate stories. One shot in Saratoga, with teams of horses wearing suits made of spandex. A parable of two giants, one in Ireland and one in Scotland, creation myth of the Isle of Man – the smaller giant tricks the larger one, throws a stone at him which misses and lands in the Irish Sea and becomes the Isle of Man.

Richard "definitely had his own ideas of what that character ought to be. It's sort of elusive – the main characters don't really become clear. But he brought a lot to the table."

Film is being released May 1st, and will then go to Germany with Barney's show.

He first asked RS to play a role in one of the five games taking place on different levels of the tower (?), RS to be throwing hot vaseline (echo - hot lead).

Barney met RS about three years ago, when RS was making prints upstairs in this building. Barney was making Cremaster 5 then. They "started a dialogue. He was incredibly important to me" when Barney a student, and after. The thrown lead pieces especially, "at a time when I was trying to bring my own experiences as an athlete, trying to take an action and using it as a way to generate form. Some of the principles that one thinks about as an athlete, like the way muscle masses develop through sort of breaking it down, through an essentially destructive process that you tear muscles down, they become engorged with blood and lactic acid, and then they heal stronger and larger. That process of resistance creates form. I guess the thrown lead pieces have a relationship have a relationship to that in a certain way, for me. The violence of that action is sublimated into a form. It might have been one of the first pieces that really clarified that idea for me."

Serra had seen Barney's work, and was encouraging about it. "I think he has – Richard's quick, in a way that some of your stronger professors had. Like a knife, comment on something in the face of it. He understands something very quickly, and offers constructive criticism."

RS's new show at Gagosian – "I think I was most moved by the closed piece. I loved that piece. Seeing how those two pieces married so perfectly. This body of work had that lightness that overcomes the brutality of it. I think for me it's even more exciting and more elegant in the marriage of those two plates. I found it so beautiful that they met so perfectly. And that something so baroque in a way can function as a fact."

A lot of people are asking him now why he's using the Chrysler tower, rather than another. He thinks "there are a number of reasons that have to do with the production of automotive vehicles, and the fact that it's a mirror of some kind…I think this keeps bringing me back to that arrow…"

RS read through Barney's brief synopsis of the film—a page and a half, for a 3-hour film. "Not a very concrete description of what we'd be doing." He agreed right away. And the killing of the RS figure? "What will happen simultaneously in that scene is that the tower kills the apprentice, so the story turns back onto itself. And the novice dies within the game. That scene cross-cuts with the game which fractures the story into five elements. I think what was understood from the beginning that it wouldn't end with an Oedipal confrontation. That it would instead fracture into five possibilities, or at least send the story into an ellipse that it was intended to be. I'm definitely interested in there having to be a very strong binary conflict within a piece, and spend the rest of my energy trying to overcome that. Trying to bend that arc away from its predictable end."

"Certain characters who are essentially playing themselves in these films do come from a similar place, and I think it has something to do with that notion of how a very strong physicality can be sublimated into form. In certain cases how style can be sublimated. That would be something that would be common to all the characters."

The characters in his films are either concentrations of his own history, or external forms or personalities that are sympathetic to this experience. No criticism involved.

(Barney agreeable to a New Yorker profile of himself? Yes. This project now being finished, after eight years. He'll be traveling with it from June into next February, might stay in Europe, so might not be here much. The whole cycle of five films will be shown in sequence.)

RS in Cremaster 3 plays dual role, Hiram and himself. All his scenes are in second half of the film, after the intermission. He worked in three separate production blocks, of two or three days each. [END INVU]

Alexander von Berswordt-Wallrabe
(19 March 02)

Saw Serra's work in the late sixties in Germany and then was "overwhelmed" by the piece in Documenta in 1972, 'Circuit,' with four steel plates bisecting the four corners of a room (see MOMA catalog, p. 102). "It impressed me deeply." In 1975, in an art journal, he saw a reproduction of 'Delineator,' and was again struck by the power of the work. He talked with Edy de Wilde, who had just installed a Serra at the Stedelijk. He read in the papers that it was very hot in New York, a real heat wave, and on impulse he called Serra and said why not come to Germany for a visit, I'll send you a round-trip air ticket. Serra accepted. Serra came to Paris, where he was negotiating with the Pompidou about a commission, but he called Alexander from there , and Alex arranged to pick him up at Dusseldorf airport.

First impressions – "It was a difficult meeting. Richard was completely pissed, because Hulten had told him his sculpture for the Pompidou was not being accepted – because Renzo Piano was completely against it. Also Richard had a deep suspicion about art dealing. I am a gallerist, interested in art not in dealing. But it took time until we came together." They agreed on a show at the gallery, though. But then Richard's mother's suicide put him into a deep depression. He was drinking heavily, and seemed unable to come to Germany to make the show. Alex finally called and said that unless he was on the next day's flight to Cologne, Alex. Was coming to New York to get him. Richard was on the flight. He was still deeply depressed, but Alex took him around to steel mills in the Ruhr (there were many then), and they got the steel, and made the show.

Kassel, Documenta, 1976 - The show's director, Schneckenberger, wanted to demonstrate that sculpture had gone horizontal. Richard was still in bad shape, and had not prepared a proposal when he arrived. Having lunch in a restaurant, a waiter dropped a tray of drinks that went allover his only jacket. Furious, he drew four lines on a beer coaster and insisted on presenting that to Schneckenberger. This was the design for 'Terminal.' Alexander said he would raise the money to build it, which he did. The piece stood in front of the TK BUILDING in Kassel, and then Alex sold it to the city of Bochum, where it became a political issue. The CDU based its whole campaign on opposition to the sculpture, people called up Alex and threatened him, etc. Many people were offended by the rusting steel, which seemed an affront – "unbelievable hostility." For years it was defaced by graffiti, until Alex threatened to sue the city; now the graffiti problem has declined, and it's fairly clean most of the time. More acceptance, and more people feel pride in having Serra's first public piece.

Richard's acceptance in Europe – a result of fact that museum directors there have deep knowledge of art history and can connect his work with the past. Alex knows most of them, and has communicated his deep certainty about the work. But public institutions in Europe are more open than they are in U.S.

Access to steel mills – Alex himself had worked in steel mills when he was young, and his first father-in-law was a director of Krupp – that's how he got Richard in.

The steel mill that produces the big plates now is a huge mill and does not work exclusively for artists. But the bending and shaping of the plates is done by another mill which does. It is in Siegen, near Frankfurt. The owner, Pieckhan (name of firm). Alex looked all over Europe when the Baltimore mill went bankrupt, and finally found this one, which was going broke. Pieckham agreed to take a chance, and worked exclusively on the Serra pieces, completing them for the show at MOCA, and saving his own firm, which is now in business with von Berswordt and works only for artists.

Clara – had been co-director of the museum in Monchan-Gladbach, but hated the administrative work. "Clara is a great woman." He agrees that she has helped Richard in many ways. "Richard does not have a bad character. He is a deeply honest man, interested in his work mainly; he works without any compromises at all, and this isolates you from society. When he calls people a motherfucker that doesn't help, of course. But he rarely does that without a reason. He has no facility for putting things diplomatically."

Favorite works? 'Circuit,' which Alex gave to the university in Bochum; 'Tot,' the piece he did after his other's death – it sinks into the ground; and 'Terminal.' All three are key pieces, and the basis for all of them is 'House of Cards.'

When Richard was awarded the Kaisering, he went to Goslar for the ceremony. He came straight from Los Angeles, and arrived very tired. At this time there was controversy over a nuclear buildup in Germany, and on the trip from the airport they passed many American troops. Richard slept for most of the drive, but kept waking up and seeing soldiers. He asked how Alex felt about this, and Alex said that Germany was still an occupied country. At Goslar, Richard spoke to a class of students who were about to take the baccalaureat. He asked the teachers to leave, and then asked the students how they felt about the troops and the nuclear issue, and about the demonstrations against Gen. Haig, the American Secretary of State, who had just canceled his trip to Berlin. Later, he was awarded the ring in a ceremony attended by the director of the National Gallery, the mayor of Berlin, members of parliament, etc. When Richard was asked to speak, he stood before the microphone for about a minute without saying anything. He talked about how grateful he was to Germany for accepting his work, and then he talked about seeing the soldiers, and talking to the students about it, and went on to say that he could understand why there had been demonstrations against Haig. At that point, all the politicians got up and walked out. The dinner afterward was half-empty. To von Berswordt, that was a really brave thing for RS to do, and entirely characteristic of his honesty.

Feels a very deep friendship with Richard. They've had some confrontations, "some big huge scenes," but Richard is a deeply honest man.

Irving Blum
(10 Feb 2002)

Serra's huge piece at Pasadena Art Museum in 1970 was a sensation. Involved twelve fir trees, sawed in lengths. (Feb 28-March 1).

There was a buzz about Richard from the beginning of his career. His intellect, his dynamism, his inventiveness. And then, Jasper Johns commissioned a piece from him, the thrown lead piece in his studio at the bank. In those days a few people established the consensus: Dick Bellamy, Henry Geldzahler, Bill Seitz, but most important were the other important artists, and Johns as the most important of all. For him to single out Serra that way had a tremendous impact.

Joe Helman and his wife and three daughters lived in a tract house in a suburb of St. Louis. (He had made money as a land developer, and opened a gallery). He had a Serra 'House of Cards' in the living room. One evening, while the family was having dinner in the kitchen, there was an enormous crash – the sculpture had collapsed, taking out an entire wall.

Irving and Brooke Hayward were having dinner at the Odeon. RS came in, high on coke. He came over to their table, pointed his finger, and said, "You know what you are, Irving?" Irving said yeah, yeah, we're just here to have dinner, please, Richard. "You're a trinket salesman," Serra said. Brooke got up from her chair, and said, "You can't call my friend a trinket salesman," whereupon Serra hit her in the face. Irving and Brooke left, went to Barocco instead. The next morning, Irving called Brian McNally, who said they'd had to call the police to get Serra out. [Ask Brooke?]

Two other Blum stories:
At Ferus, a more than usually elegant woman came in and looked around at the show: twelve Elvis paintings by Warhol. Irving asked if she needed any help. "This is a joke, right?' she said. Irving said it wasn't, and talked for a while about Warhol's work, and what it meant to him and to other people. He said he had three portraits of Liz Taylor in the back room, and would she like to see them? She said she would. After looking at them, she asked the price. He told her it was $1,200 apiece. She said that was more than she would pay for a piece of furniture. But then she said she'd buy one. Irving told her that wasn't necessary, but she insisted. Two weeks later she came back. There was a big problem. Her husband hated the painting. Her children hated it. Her friends thought it was awful. What do you think? Irving asked. "I think it looks as though it was ripped out of the Daily News." Well, exactly! "I couldn't possibly give you a better explanation." But she brought it ~~back~~ in and got her money ~~returned~~ back.

Ed Janss, Irving's most important collector, called him to drive out to the house and see his new Rauschenberg. He did so, and found Janss and his wife in the living room, where Janss had installed 'Odalisk,' the combine with the chicken on top. Janss told Irving to tell his wife about Rauschenberg. She said she wasn't interested in hearing about

Rauschenberg. "It's very simple," she said. "That thing goes, or I go." Said Janss, "The picture stays." She walked out of the room. They were divorced soon afterward.

Susan Brundage
(21 Feb. 02)

LeoCastelli's relationship with RS - "Richard being the difficult person he was, Leo admired his work. Leo always managed to get along with the most difficult artists, mostly because he gave them whatever they wanted. From my point of view, Richard and Don Judd and Dan Flavin always sort of took advantage of Leo, but in a way Leo always knew what he was doing... The fact that they weren't necessarily going to sell and they cost huge amounts of money, what gave Leo the pleasure was making it happen. Richard and Don and Dan had such a high regard for themselves and their ideas and their work that no one could ever do more for them than they expected. In a certain way they were grateful, and Richard certainly gave – at the memorial service Richard gave a very touching speech. Richard was a very complicated person, very bright, I think underneath it he was appreciative and he was loyal as best he could. But he was always looking for someone willing to do the next big project."

In early days Leo shared the RS stipend with Joe Helman. Then RS did shows with Pace, Gagosian, as they got more expensive. Dan Flavin left the gallery and went with Paula Cooper. So did Judd. Leo never closed the door on him, or anyone. But when Paula insisted on exclusive representation they both left her.

RS's New York pieces got treated badly. People threw their sneakers up on T.W.U., spray-painted graffiti on Rotary Arc, etc. RS bitter about American rejection of his work then. And Leo did show favoritism to the two artists he was most enamored of – Jasper and Roy. Bob R. was closer to Ileana, and a little jealous of Jasper and Roy's success. As long as RS, Judd and Flavin could do what they wanted, "they didn't really give a hoot about the others."

Frank Stella needed a lot of financial support, and Leo shared him with Larry Rubin. No great closeness with Leo. For 20th anniversary show party for Leo, Stella volunteered his house – which ruined the surprise because Leo knew something was up – had never been there before.

When RS started being shared by Pace, he became much more demanding about money – any discounts came out of the gallery's share exclusively.

Jerry Ordover was the perfect lawyer for Leo, because he never wanted to fight about things. He wanted everybody to get along (as Leo did), and worked to make both sides reach agreement. John Silberman was more art-savvy, and tougher. Made a strict point of only representing artists; knew which side he was on.

RS "antagonized clients from the get-go, when he was doing a piece. Every step of the way was difficult. The piece would have to go where Richard wanted it" [even if client ad wanted it somewhere else]. Everything had to be in Richard's control. "He took the offensive with the clients, as if somehow they were thwarting him – he wasn't going to compromise." But he didn't have many commissions through Leo.

Greene Street accident – litigation went on for ten years afterward. The person who lost a leg and the person who hurt his back got exactly what they asked for in the end, from the insurance companies. This didn't really seem to hurt his reputation. It was the same rigging company he had used.

Tilted Arc – two camps: one felt it didn't really look very good there. Rotary Arc was such a success, it looked great when you came out of the Holland Tunnel. The experience of Tilted Arc "didn't bring out his best side, but then again, he hadn't been a nice guy before and become a pain afterward, he just acted himself."

Leo shared other artists with Joe Helman. Ellsworth Kelly, Richard. With Serra it was always about the money. Joe wanted Leo to retire so he could take over that position, as top dealer. But Leo wouldn't. Joe used to badmouth Leo sometimes. When they had final falling out it was over the whole group, not just Richard. Susan went out to lunch with Leo and Patty (Brundage) and Judith Goldman, who was quizzing Leo about Joe Helman and their relationship. She said something about Leo and Joe having all those fights, and Leo said, "We did?" He never held a grudge, or even remembered one. Only one he really didn't like was Arne Glimcher, because he didn't respect him. Thought he was just a businessman, not in it for the right reason. Leo had an instinctive dislike for Arne, who was fairer with him than most dealers.

Stipends – at first Leo just gave artists a certain amount per month, but later on the gallery would buy a certain amount of work and pay them for it, in lieu of a stipend. Leo and Joe probably split those payments for certain artists.

Richard never really left the gallery, even after starting to work with Pace. Leo would always agree to share an artist, rather than lose one. Leo's game plan from the start was to spread the artists's work out through all the satellite dealers. When Joe Helman moved to NY, things got more complicated."

Suggests we talk to Patty, who worked with RS on the films. 752-0625.

①

Chuck Close
(27 Feb. 02)

Yale summer school, the grad art program at Yale. Same class as RS.

"He was a very intense guy from the word go. He'd been a surfer and an English major in Santa Barbara… He didn't want to start all over as an undergraduate in art. He submitted drawings to Yale – whether they were his or not is another question! Anyhow, when he got there, I think he knew he really had to prove himself big time. I've never seen anybody devour art history the way he did. You could always tell who Richard had been – Richard's always a real slob. If you'd go to the library and find a book all stuck together with paint, you knew Richard had been working on it. Ferocious energy. When you say someone is focused, very often what you mean is they're narrow. Don't have a lot of other interests. He just distinguished himself by the intensity. And he always took it more personally in some way than anybody else. Huge fights, smashing of chairs, throwing loaded brushes around, and when he thought you were wrong, you were an idiot. But the good thing about it was, as much as he would argue for whatever he believed in at the moment, he'd always come back the next day to see how you were doing. There was something very supportive about his negativism in a sense.

"I remember he walked out on Frank Stella, when Stella came up to lecture. Got up and called him a fake and a fraud. He was just outraged. You couldn't just dislike the work, you almost had to dislike the person."

Their first year, Bernie ~~Chiat~~ Chaet was running the school. Albers had retired. Their class included Serra, Nancy Graves, Rackstraw Downs, Jennie Fisher, Newton Harrison, etc. Jennifer Bartlett was in next class. "The great thing about Yale was always the student body. Since it was the premier art school, it got the cream of the crop. And there was no undergraduate program feeding into it, so it got 35 to 40 kids from all over the country, each with a different attitude and different gods and mentors. It was more the mix of students than the faculty. We asked more of each other than the faculty asked of us."

At first, RS "was painting pretty much like Hans Hofmann. My work was more like de Kooning and Gorky combined. Rackstraw was painting like John Held. Nancy was painting like Matisse. In fact when Rauschenberg came up he said the place reeks of Matisse. I think the really good thing about the program was we knew we were students. There was no confusion – you couldn't take your graduate work and come to New York and hope to get a show with it. I don't think there was pressure to make a consistent body of work. You could be all over the place. Yale didn't have a school style, in the way that RISD did and University of Chicago did, where you could identify a graduate as being from that school.

"I bought a Lichtenstein print from his second show, and I was attacked unmercifully for bringing it in. They were very suspicious of it. Abstract expressionism still reigned supreme in the school."

"Recently when Richard sued me and tried to stop the publication of this book of interviews I'd done, John Silberman, his lawyer, said, 'You can't sue Chuck Close. He's in a wheelchair. Half the art world already hates you, you want the other half to hate you?' But I don't think Richard has ever cared what anybody thinks…I went to Bilbao to see his show, and Richard wasn't speaking to me. I thought the show was fantastic… So I saw him at Elizabeth Murray's birthday party, and I went over to him and said, 'Are you speaking to me?' No. I said, 'Well, I'll just talk. I started to talk about how wonderful the show was, and he said, 'You think I give a shit what you think?' Turns and walks away. Richard is sort of like high-quality pornography or something, he has redeeming social values. It's important to know him even though it's difficult."

Close had sent him his interview to edit, no reply. Send them again, no reply. Again. Finally the publisher said we'll send one more notice, if we don't hear we'll publish as is, which they did. "He was furious." "I think – Nancy had just died, a week before, and he was in a very sentimental mood. My thought was that the interview was too soft. IT showed a warmer side. When I painted him, he lobbied for the one that he said made him look dumb, tough, and ugly." That's the one he used. "I still consider Richard a friend, someone extraordinarily important in my life. I think he's certainly the best sculptor working today, and maybe the best artist working today."

"We all came up in the late sixties. Everything was going crazy in the world then. Those of us who became the artists of the seventies never were superstars in the same way that either the artists of the sixties or the artists of the eighties were. And I think that we had the opportunity to mature outside of the white hot glare of the spotlight. I think that's why – whether it's Brice, Elizabeth Murray, Joel Shapiro, whatever – the people are making some of their best work right now. That couldn't necessarily be said of most of the artists of the sixties or the eighties. It was a truly good time."

RS and women? "Women liked him. Women love bad boys. And surrounded by all those Yalies in their button-down clothes, he cut a wide swath…

"If you think of what happened later with appropriation, I think nearly everything from 1980 on has been appropriation of one sort or another. Neo-expressionism, neo-geo, neo-conceptualism, neo-minimal, all this stuff. But we wanted to approach our work without any reference to anybody else…" Richard didn't want to work with anything that had already been done. "I remember something he said early on, which always stuck with me. He said, 'Oh, it's easy to decide what to do. Every time you come to a Y in the road, and you don't know which way to go, just choose the more difficult path, because everyone else is taking the easy one. I think problem-solving is greatly over-emphasized in our society, and problem creation is far more important. If you ask yourself interesting-enough questions, and personal-enough questions, the solution is more likely to be--.

"I think he was always aware of his place in history. What role he would play. I remember when we erected House of Cards for the first time…actually I was inside that thing, with a harness around my waist, through a block and tackle. Four people lifted the plate, and then we'd bring it together and touch the first corner. Finally we'd erected this

thing in the middle of his loft, but the last thing that Richard said was, 'Let's get Carl Andre up off the floor!' Always before that his work had addressed the wall – pinned to the wall, leaning against the wall, splattered against the wall. He was trying to take on walk-around sculpture and take it someplace, off the pedestal, in the middle of the room…He was aware of the importance of taking on art history. And then, after they pulled me up out of it, the whole thing collapsed."

"They all collapsed…" The whole crew helped install the prop pieces at the Guggenheim in 19?? – Chuck, Steve Reich, Phil Glass, Rudy Wurlitzer, Bob Fiore, Spalding Gray. "He was smart enough never to have a sculptor as an assistant…We were all able to extend his ideas because we weren't sculptors. We would sit in that cafeteria which is now Odeon, and draw possible prop pieces on the backs of cocktail napkins. We could all run with his ideas. It was a really interesting mix of people, and we could do it without any ego problems. We put all the lead props up in the Guggenheim, right up at the top under the skylight. At that point he hadn't mixed antimony into the lead to make it stiffer. They closed the museum over the weekend, a very hot weekend; turned the air conditioning off, and they all came down."

"I helped him install the pieces at the Castelli Warehouse show. Whenever he'd sell a piece we'd move it into somebody's house. It was a wonderful time."

The accident – "I really thought Richard got a bum rap. Richard made some enemies on the way up, and they were looking to take him down a peg or two. When it happened at the Walker, a lot of people really attacked him…At the same time, a Calder stabile, a happy piece of sculpture, fell on some workman, and nobody said anything because it was a happy piece of art. I think it 's the fact that Richard's work looked dangerous, that it was aggressive, confrontational, and tough…"

Wasn't the possibility of collapse part of the aesthetic? "Only to the degree that they weren't fastened, so there was always the potential. I remember when we put the first lead piece up, it was two pieces of lead, one rolled into cylinder and one pinned to the wall. It was wrapped around a piece of pipe, and we talked a long time about whether or not to leave the pipe inside, make the piece very rigid. It just seemed so against the aesthetic… But he did things like, he put a nail in the floor, to keep it from slipping. I don't think he was reckless. It's been a bum rap."

Max's Kansas City - Warhol was always in the back room, with the Flavin – Rauschenberg would be there, and the superstars, Chamberlain, that generation. There were banquettes along the right wall opposite the bar, and that was where their generation hung out. RS, Nancy, Smithson, Dorothy Rockburne, Mel Bochner, Brice and Helen. "We'd argue like crazy after the openings, and Richard would always push. Once Helen became so frustrated trying to explain why she liked Rauschenberg's chairs piece…Richard wanted to know why, and dug in deeper, and got her more and more rattled – when Richard argues with you he sometimes appears to be out of his mind – and in frustration she threw a drink in his face and walked out. I took Richard home, and he just kept saying, 'Why did she do that? What did I do? What did I say? Was it so bad?

All I wanted to know was why she felt the way she felt.' You had to take a position and you had to be able to defend it. We learned that at Yale. After he fought you all night, though, the next day he'd be back and it was how've you been. With him, it was extreme intellectual curiosity bordering on being a psychopath."

"He didn't like much [art], but it was spread out a bit. You were constantly in jeopardy of being pushed out. He told me at one point he could no longer support my work."

His involvement with the October group – "Ros didn't really like much, and she loved Richard. She really doesn't like paintings, she likes ideas. She was totally comfortable with Richard's work. But I don't know – ."

"I think Richard always wanted to see himself as an individual and not part of something."

RS very kind when Chuck was in the hospital, but then he seemed uncomfortable about it later. "I don't think Richard likes what I do." (RS said he couldn't support his work at time Chuck asked him about getting into the Castelli Gallery).

"It's a god damn good thing he's a great artist, because a lot of this stuff wouldn't be forgiven. But I don't feel Richard's a bad person, not at all."

Chuck was in Europe at the same time as RS and Nancy, on a Fulbright. Saw the show in Rome with animals in cages. Nancy got idea for her camels from this, buying fur to work with. [END SIDE A]

Tilted Arc - "I'm not a big fan of public sculpture. I think there's something to be said for having to choose to go look at art – that it's a major component in the dialogue between the viewer and the work of art. I agree with Duchamp that… the viewer completes the cycle. I do think there's something about not having to bump into it when you choose not to, that's important. I did support Richard in it, and I would have testified except I was out of town. I don't know if Richard is pissed off that I didn't." Once you go through the process, it should have stayed. "He actually thought it was going to bring down the Reagan Administration, that it was going to be Watergate for Reagan."

"The guy likes confrontation, he's always liked it."

Lynne Cooke
(13 Feb. 02)

After Tilted Arc, there was very little happening for him in the US. He worked mostly in Europe.

Why the enthusiastic response to Torqued Ellipses, which were seen first at DIA? "It's a kind of spatial experience that one has never really had before. There's an excitement to it which is exhilarating. It's lighter, it doesn't weigh on you. In some of the other pieces it's about a building of tension, there's a kind of anxiety…"

The DIA show was not related to Koshalek's in LA, where there were more pieces.

The new work – "He'd never made a closed work before."

Beacon – 4 ellipses, a spiral, another couple of works, plus the models of ellipses. The space is still being renovated now. The Serra's will be installed over the spring and summer, but the rest of the installations will take place in the fall. Will open as a museum in May of 2003. The Serras need to go in early because of construction needs. They'll be in former train station, whose floor is amply reinforced.

She's never experienced any difficulty in dealing with RS – no temper outbreaks etc.

Talks about wonderful Serra piece in Porto, Portugal, installed about two years ago.
[END]

Sidney Felsen

Richard began working with us in 1972.
At that time Gemini felt that Richard, Bruce Nauman and Keith Sonnier were the three young artists' most interesting to us to work with as Gemini artists.

Throughout the 1970's Richard did 8 prints - all lithographs - all with flat surfaces.
Throughout the 1980's he did 40 editions. By the mid-80's he began making editions using paintstick pushed thru screens (silkscreens) and most of these 40 were done this way.
Throughout the 90's he did 67 editions, all (or mostly) were etchings.
In 2000 and the first 4 months of 2001 he has done 27 editions, all etchings.

Included in the number of editions above, are 3 metal pieces (paintstick onto metal) and 2 very large pieces of paper with paintstick applied. One is 19 1/2 feet x 21 feet and one is 14 x 14 feet.

Richard was invited to be in 'Schwarz' a major exhibition in Germany of works all black. He asked us if we could do a huge piece of paper and we innocently said yes. This took hundreds and hundreds of gallons of pulp - it took a space much larger than any we had. Ron McPherson of La Paloma worked with us. It tooks days and days and days of Trials without success.
It was the only time Richard got mad at me. He felt we had said yes to being able to do it, and the time of the exhibition was nearing and there was no completed paper. I drove him to site of where the effort was being made - he saw the many people involved, the space it took and the amount of pulp needed. He apologized. We finally completed a good sheet, Richard applied paintstick and the piece was installed in 'Schwarz.' It was a success.

Collaboration is the key word at Gemini. The collaboration is between artist and printmaker (artisan). The artist does all the imagery and the printer does process. Whether it's etching, lithography, screenprint, woodcut, etc. As accomplished as each of the artists are that work with us, they need the skills of the printer to help them achieve what they are seeking in their prints.

Being a printer is a difficult/demanding job. It's very physical, much stress and requires a certain degree of intellect. One of the best rewards to the printers is the opportunity to work with great or accomplished artists - to be a part of the actual making of the art - and to feel appreciated by the artists. It can bring smiles as well as tears from the satisfaction that's felt.

Richard is a great collaborator. He's a communicator, is compassionate to his fellow-workers, and is as hands-on as you can get. He is able to bring the printer into his printmaking to the point where the printer feels he or she is an important part of the whole process. His kindnesses to employees extends to concerns about their pay scale and working conditions.

Some of Richard's great work attributes are concentration, focus, determination and passion. My regular feelings are to just get out of his way when he begins. He's a locomotive charging full speed ahead. I've never been around any other person with this same feeling of energy or momentum.

Throughout the first almost 20 years of his working with us he certainly did good work, worked hard and created beautiful images, but it seems to me the arrival of the 1990's changed his attitude. He became turned-on to printmaking that made it feel more like an important part of his art making process.
His visits to Gemini can be 3-4-5 times a year as it has been a few times when he's in the middle of a project.

(212) 308 0924
Wyndham Hotel
IN Chicago

He seems to have a bubbling well of ideas for images. He may draw as many as 70 or 80 images - we proof them - then begins the editing process where the 'final cut' may end up being 12 or 15 images that become editions.

He makes images - we print(proofing) - he accepts or rejects. It either lives or is relegated to the trash pile. IF accepted, he will probably change and often change again. He edits and re-edits his work.

Gemini's workshop is a very clean/pristine almost hospital type atmosphere. We work at keeping it that way.

For Richard Serra we take 100's of small sticks of litho crayon or paintstick, melt them into large bricks, using small cake pans so that Richard can then use these bricks to do his painting or drawing onto copper plates (to do etchings). The residue (or mess) he creates is fierce, tears up the place way beyond what any other artist does and has forceed us to create methods that will minimize these effects.

Prior to Richard's arrival we take heavy brown(butcher) paper, tape it to all the floors of the artists studio, along the side walls at least 3 feet high (wainscoat) as well as all walkways in the shop plus all the offices in front. The residue consists of small and large chunks of the material he's using, it obvious black, and is a concentration of grease. All tables, chairs, tables, presses are fair game. After Richard leaves we spend 2-3-4 days cleaning up and in spite of all cleanup and all the preparations done, we still find clumps of this black grease here and there - sometime months later.

Richard is very giving to causes - political, educational, human rights. It's an every day event that artists (and publishers) are asked to give art to these causes. Richard is very involved in helping the ones he believes in.

Joni Weyl(my wife) had breast cancer 7 years ago. Richard showed great concern for her well-being. He called regularly as a concerned person. Offered help in any way. His constant 'checking in' was touching.

Richard is extremely bright. One evening with John Powers (collector), Richard and myself, John asked the question: What do people see in Cy Twombly's work ? Richard proceeded to explain the importance of Twombly for 15-20 minutes in as well thought out a 'lecture' as I've ever heard.

Richard is a great photo subject. I've been fortunate To be able to take 100's of photos of him (maybe thousands). As he begins working I'll always ask if it's ok to be in the studio with him , sometimes the answer is yes - sometimes no. Very definite responses and each day is different.

He is currently involved in 3 project in the Los Angeles area:
- Cal Tech
- UCLA Sculpture gareden
- Disney Music Hall - Frank Gehry.

The work in 1990's and 2000 + has been etching - much concern about surface textures. Deep bites - thick paper (made in Spain, Mexico or England). Heavy inking. 16 guage printing copper - industrial grade.

Intensity.

Richard said : 'The more you refine art, the more you ruin it.'

Very demanding - extremely challenging. Pushes you beyond what you've ever experienced. Always pushes the limits, whether it's paper, plates, all materials.

He does appreciate what we do for him.
Many problems arise in his projects.
Takes you places you've never been.

- -

Critical, but critical of his own self.

Now - now - now!

He's extremely generous but much is about what he wants.and wants it now.

- -

Bold energy - constant work - to the point - doesn't stop.

Methodical creating - he sees it - likes it or doesn't.

Step by step progression as he works on an image. Almost each plate changes as he works.

Witty, interesting things to say about art and life. He's really an observer.

Fun to be around - tries to get the most out of you. He asks you for ideas of how to make it better.

Very playful. Treats me as a lifelong friend. He's interested in me.

Messy.

(1)

Frank Gehry
(14 Feb.02)

He's in town for a press conference on Disney Hall. Is meeting RS afterward, at 11am.

(Not taped) "What to say about Richard. He's my friend. He's difficult, thorny...You just have to make up your mind to accept Richard the way he is."

(Taped)
"I told Richard I was meeting you and I was going to get even for your TV show, and he said yeah, go for it."

"I think Richard and I have been talking to each other through our work for many years. I guess my relationship goes back to 1978. I knew his work before then. He came to my house with Phil Glass, I remember, and he was very complimentary. He was friendly with the Grinsteins, who were friends of mine; he'd spend time there and we'd spend time there with him. He was difficult to get close to. He was thorny. I remember an incident when he was staying there. On the kitchen counter there was a drawing book of his that was open. Berta innocently walked over and looked at it, and he came in and trashed her, and made her cry. It was open on the counter, but he said you shouldn't look at other – she was stung by him. That was the first time I understood you got to be careful, this one bites. He didn't even realize that he did it. I think if you bring that to his attention – he really likes Berta – the fact that she would have these feelings would be puzzling to him."

"He started coming around to my office, and I let him have access to it. He'd just come in and walk around and look at the stuff, and then pass judgment always. He was always, 'This is terrible,' and 'that's great' and that kind of stuff. His criticism – I liked it. I'm a harsher critic of myself than he or anyone else could ever be, but I like hearing another point of view, and quite often it was relevant and interesting to me, and I learned from it. One can't be critical of him easily. I think the amount of criticism he levels at me over time can't be tit for tat. It's not a fifty-fifty deal. I learned that a long time ago. If you say things against his work --- I once did. (Not against Tilted Arc; I told them they should tear down the building). You know, he's so tough about art is not on a pedestal. When he was doing Canal Street, I went to it and they were pouring the foundation. I said, Richard, this is a pedestal. He said, well, I didn't intent to have it there but the building department did it. Then the second time I saw them doing that, I said something about it and he said that's the building department. I said, well, the first time you were innocent, the second time you were complicit. He didn't like that at all."

"Whatever I say, he'll get mad. Even the good stuff."

"I have fun with him. We gossip about the art world a lot. He's a perfectionist. He demands perfection of himself, and he therefore demands it of everybody else. What I feel vis-à-vis me is that it's not in his bones and his consciousness to understand what an architect goes through to produce a building. So what he dismisses as plumbing, he hasn't

done it, he doesn't know what all those --. For me, building a building is like berthing the Queen Mary in a tight little dock, it's like a production on Broadway, or doing Mahler with all the chorus and everything, pulling it all together. It's all these forces, and you're doing it in real time. You've got to get the plumbers, and the electricians, and all the building department, and all the people that are involved together. There's a lot more room for imperfection in that process, and as an architect you learn to work with it and use it as a part of the language. Richard gets some of that when he delivers a piece of steel that's fifty billion tons and the crane is lowering it and he's got all these people, it is a production. He sees some of that. But he's not very forgiving of me, I feel. Maybe he feels differently. I let it go.

"It's hard for me to argue with him. For instance, the thing about art and architecture – I started a discussion with him the other day on the phone. I tried to say to him that an architect solves the client's problems, solves the building department, solves all the issues, and then what? There's this something that takes it from just a building to architecture. I said, that's like about fifteen percent of the effort, but it 's the most important. And it's there where our decisions are similar. I'm dealing with context, form, surface – all the things that he's dealing with. He wouldn't let me finish. He jumped on it, and I bet if you talked to him about it now he'll rattle this fifteen percent, without adding all the other stuff I say. He thinks that's irrelevant. I don't care what he says. It is what it is, and certainly some architecture is art. Maybe mine isn't, but some is.."

Re sculpture being higher than painting – "In my own life I've always put painting on a pedestal. It's an unachievable thing. I'm too reverent of it, probably. But I've learned more from painting than from any other discipline. It's been more inspiring, more relevant. I try – I never will achieve it – I try to make a painterly building. If I tried to capsulize my quest, that's what I'm trying to do. It's impossible to do, because you can't have brushstrokes, you can't have infinitely changing surface, you can't have fuzzy edges, so at the best I can do a hard-edge painting, which is not what I want to do. The tricks I have available are surface and light, like what the titanium does in the light, gets painterly."

"I've always felt that it was give and take [with Richard], and he's told me that there were times when he's learned stuff from me. Not just technical things. I think that when I was doing the Lewis house, working with a computer trying to create those cylindrical forms, he helped me do the windows. I was struggling at the windows in those forms, and Richard came in and just drew a cut, and then I realized it was like his pieces, you just cut the opening. But it really worked, and I did it. And I think that my playing with those forms probably inspired his torqued ellipses – he said that at the time. Not that he copied it, but I was doing something that he got him going on something. And then I gave him Rick Smith. What he said on Charlie Rose, that Rick was too busy working on Bilbao – he took a slam at me over that. Rick traveled with him to Baltimore, helped him work out the program that was able to roll the steel – because every ten or twelve feet the rollers had to shift, and the only way he could do it was with the computer, and Rick programmed all that for him. But I think he was very happy about that, grateful…

"I just think it's how he characterizes things from time to time, in moments of frustration about something else, or anger. I think he feels, like a lot of artists, that the architect gets more money. Like I know he was upset when Peter Lewis gave sixty million to Princeton for me to do a building, just after he'd been given two or three million to do a piece – somehow in his mind that becomes, wait a minute, something wrong with this…"

"I think you take Richard as Richard. He's sometimes angry, he's jealous, he's critical. I think he was worried about what I would think of the Charlie Rose thing. Because he called me. I'll tell you exactly what happened. Larry Gagosian called and asked me if I'd seen Charlie Rose. I said no. He said, wait'l you see it. I said, well my daughter saw it and called me, and she was upset about it. That's all I said. Thirty seconds later, Richard called me, and said, 'Larry called me and told me you're whining about the Charlie Rose.'" Frank explained – daughter called, upset, it didn't sound terrible, but I'll get a tape and watch it. "I watched it the next day. I called him and said, 'Richard, I love you more than ever. I'll tell you why. Because this is the first time I've seen you show your underbelly. You exposed your feelings in a way I've never seen you do, publicly. I've seen it privately but you've been guarded in the public realm. I think it's wonderful because people can see that you're a normal human being…it makes you very accessible and in a way lovable. And I really believe that. If you know Richard, and you know how he is, and you watch that, he was very honest. He let it hang out. I think that's the Richard that his friends know, and that makes it possible for us to be close to him, even in the fact of sometimes difficult whatever."

There was an article by a woman in Der Spiegel last week, attacking Gehry from top to bottom. RS was talking about some critical piece on him, so Frank sent him this. "Two days later he called me, and started yelling at me that he agreed with her! Do I need that from a friend? "

"When he gets like that there's no arguing with him. In the last year he has been doing things like that, to me. A whole series." Why? Jealousy? "Maybe, I don't know."

Tilted Arc – RS was in real pain. But a lot of people came to his defense, and maybe made him realize for the first time that he was loved. "You know, he makes it hard for people. Then he goes back to Cape Breton island and he cools off, and he becomes sweet again. He swims every day…"

Tate Competition - "It only shows that he doesn't completely understand what goes into a building. He called me on a Thursday night at five o'clock, and he said he just met with Nick Serota and Serota asked him to please enter the competition for the bridge in London. And he gave him one sheet of requirements. He faxed me the sheet, and he said, we gotta enter this." Sounds great, when can we get together, etc. "No, it's due tomorrow." After a lot of screaming, Frank said OK. But there were certain criteria – clearances for boats, etc. – that were not specified. Frank did a sketch, Rick Smith did I on computer, and they sent it in. A simple beautiful arc of a footbridge. Got selected for the final round based on that. Had two weeks to produce the final proposal. Found they couldn't do the nice simple arc. When the submitted the real thing, with some

misinformation that Serra had been given, it didn't look as sleek and clean, and they picked Norman Foster. But in the end he couldn't deliver on his design, and the bridge doesn't work. "For me it showed his [Serra's] impatience with those kind of details and that kind of issue – it's not the way he deals with things. It's his impatience with all the issues that architecture has to deal with. He calls it plumbing. He dismisses it. But he got really involved with it, and we had a good time."

"I don't think he takes the time to focus on those issues as part of an art process. He sort of dismisses them. It's how he feels about architecture – it's plumbing, he says. I've never really been able to focus on this with him in person. He doesn't want to deal with it."

Bilbao – "After I won the competition, the model was in Krens' office, and I came in one day and Richard was there. Richard asked me if I was looking at – what's the Futurist? Boccioni. I said no, I hadn't been. You know how Richard is, he walked around it saying yeah, yeah. I couldn't tell whether he liked it or hated it…I think he was supportive. I never was able to resolve that big room, because Tom wouldn't listen, and Richard put a piece right in the middle of it, and the Basques won't move it. This is the temporary gallery, and he's got piece that's there permanently that destroys the possibility of another artist being there. Rauschenberg said it was OK for him – I think another artist might not. When we were doing the motorcycle show there we had to work around it…I've heard Clara say to him, Richard, get the piece out of there. He thinks his show looked the best of all in that room. I loved the show at MOCA in LA, but I think that room overwhelmed his pieces, that's what I think. I begged him to let me put in some walls, but Tom wouldn't let me. I could have made his show ten times better by just a few subtle walls that wouldn't have taken away from the pieces, it just would have been a scale thing and would have made them look better. He would have no part of it, and Tom would have no part of it. That's what the guy ragged me about in the paper yesterday, and I agree with him – but somebody please tell him it's not me!"

"I always thought there should be some well-placed walls…I've designed them. I've made them in the model, and they look great. Nobody will do it. I even offered to pay for the god damned things myself."

Disney Hall – Frank has always wanted Serra and Oldenburg-van Bruggen to be part of the ensemble there. Has been fighting to get more space out in front. "I realize my building is bigger… I got the plaza widened, and I asked Andrea van der Kemp to see if she could fund raise for a Claes piece and a Richard piece. Claes and Koosje made their piece, I have a model of it… I'd always seen them at one end and Richard at the other…I think Richard will really be commissioned to do a piece. I'm meeting with Richard at eleven today, with Andrea. I've also requested at MIT – they asked me which artist I want, and I said Richard. I'm afraid to call and say Richard, I want you to do a piece at MIT, because I know he'll start yelling at me…"

"This is Richard. He's impatient, he's perfectionist, he's demanding, he's difficult – doesn't listen to some of my problems in doing stuff. With all of that, the people that like

him, love him, say oh well, that's Richard, we love him. I don't know if he understands that, how the people who support him put up with a lot of stuff."

They had one falling out, after which they didn't talk for two years. "It went like this. I was doing a small addition to Marcia Weisman's house in Beverley Hills. It was nothing, just a little pimple on this terrible house. I did a second floor study, and I put a stairway out of it into the garden, the first time I did a sort of S-curved stairway. The house was here and the curve was like this [shows with hands]. She was going to do sculpture in the garden, and she was afraid of Richard. I begged her, I said, Marcia, he's the great, you gotta have him, it's worth it to deal with him, he'll produce a great piece. So reluctantly she commissioned him. She was very proud of herself. And they got along pretty well. She kinda liked him – she was irascible herself. He made the piece, which was like this [demonstrates curve in opposite direction to the stairway] The day arrived, the steel is being delivered. Angelo Drive, Beverley Hills. I was called to come out, to be there. The crane is putting the steel over the top of the house, big chunk of steel. It's coming down slowly into the garden. And at the eleventh hour, Richard reverses it, so that it does this [shows two congruent curves] Marcia starts screaming. 'That's not the way you showed it on the model…' I tried to comfort her. I said, 'Marcia, you've just witnessed an act of genius. In this very precarious moment, Richard realized that it would be better the other way' – which it was. I was just flabbergasted, it was dramatic as hell. She would have none of it. They got into a big fight, he went off yelling and screaming, she was yelling and screaming. I went home. He called me on the 'phone, and said it was my fault. I said, 'Look, Richard, Marcia is a nice lady, she means well. Let her calm down. If I were you I would send her some roses and tell her you'd like to come over and talk to her about it. Two hours later, two dozen roses come to me, with a note, 'Shove 'em up your ass.' And then he wouldn't talk to me! Finally Krens put us together at a dinner one night, and it all thawed out somehow."

Gehry went to the office after the roses, really angry, and three a glass ashtray at a poster for a Serra show. "That piece sold for a lot of money recently."

"I do feel that Richard and I have been talking to each other through our work. I don't want to lose that. I don't know what he's taught me and I've taught him. It's been going on for a long time, and I like it. I don't like the tough parts, but he usually comes around, he's usually sort of puppy dog about it."

"I think he has mellowed. I think his work has gotten more accessible – beauty. And he as a person has become more accessible. Most people who saw the Charlie Rose thing liked him. I think he showed his underbelly, his vulnerability, and he doesn't do that often."

He's antagonized a lot of potential clients. Also on Martin Friedman, who helped him a lot. [END INVU]

Carmen Gimenez
(5/7/02)

Started working with Serra in 1980, a sculpture in Madrid. Then in 1982 an exhibition, his first in Spain. Sculpture project in Barcelona, 1982-1984. She became head of the Reina Sophia, and for opening exhibition Serra did a special piece which became part of the museum's collection. Etc. Joe Helman introduced her to RS in 1979. He spent vacations in Ibiza, where Carmen went too. This was after the death of Franco (1975), and things were opening up.

Serra's work was "immediately received very well" in Spain. His Spanish heritage.

The Reina Sophia is an 18th century hospital transformed into a museum by Max Gordon. RS had an enormous space in it, brought in many big pieces.

Problems? No. Richard is extremely professional. Everything gets done on time, "I think he's an ideal person to work with."

"He made me understand the relation between the sculpture, the body, the place very well… He has been very important for Spanish artists. I think at the time he came to Spain he had problems in the United States, and for him to come here and find the people very supportive, that was extremely rewarding for Richard."

Bilbao - when he went there it was truly a city of steel. He did a piece which is now outside the Fine Arts museum.

She is doing a new museum in Malaga, a Picasso museum endowed by the Picasso family. Will open next year. Richard Gluckman is converting the building into a museum. Museo Picasso Malaga. She is also working on a Brancusi exhibition for the Tate Modern.

"I consider myself very lucky to meet Richard at a young age…He is a very generous person."

"He doesn't like people who make him lose his time. He is anti-commercial. And his sculptures are very like him. [END INVU]

Phil Glass
(14 Feb. 02)

They met in Paris. Glass was there on a Fulbright, and so was Nancy Graves. He met her first, coming over on the Queen Elizabeth. RS and Nancy spent that year in Paris and the next in Milan. They lived near each other in the 14th arr. RS was taking drawing classes at the Grande Chaumiere. Saw each other frequently. (See Glass interview in Chuck Close, p. 38)

"I'd always had very strong connections with visual artists. By the time I went to Paris I'd already been hanging out in New York with all kinds of downtown artists."

"To be truthful, Paris was a rather spent environment for art. The younger people would have been the film-makers, like Godard and Truffaut. What was really going on in Paris in the sixties was film. There would be a new film almost every three weeks, and it was the language of art in Paris."

"Richard was very interested in the generation just a little bit older than him – the people like Frank Stella and Sol LeWitt. Clearly Richard was going to find a place for himself in the art world. He was interested in what they had done, in the fact that there were all these openings in the world of art in terms of ideas. I was very envious of that, because you didn't find it in music. It was the time of Warhol and Jasper and Andre. He knew all that work, and we talked about it. He talked about it fairly obsessively. I think Richard's always liked me because I wasn't an artist, we didn't have a competition of that kind."

Did they talk about music? "Not much. He came to my concerts, and he was always very helpful about my career."

"I was his studio assistant for three years. He got back to New York before me. When I got back a year later I inherited his truck. Then I moved on from that into another business – I was helping some guy doing plumbing in Soho. Richard had just gotten his first show at Leo, at [the Warehouse]. I was working full-time for Sidney Goldstein, and Richard asked me if I had time to work with him. I didn't really want to do the plumbing, it was very hard on the hands. Gene Highstein was my partner. At any rate, I said Richard, I'm making $200 a week, and he said okay, I'll pay you that. So I said okay, and I quit and began working for Richard." This had begun with Glass just helping him as a friend, after work; he worked on a lot of the rubber and neon pieces and scatter pieces. "And the lead pieces. Don't forget, lead is a plumber's medium, and that's where it came from. He was looking for material, and he was involved with the idea of process – it was process plus material. It was very similar to what we were thinking about in music, in terms of form and content. The idea was to collapse the idea of form and content so that they became identical. When you talk about process and material, that 's really form and content. It means theres's no inside and outside. And that's really that Jasper was doing, if you look at the American flag painting." Also Eva Hesse, Keith Sonnier, etc.

"What I was doing, and the people in dance were doing, I really think it came from John [Cage] and Jasper. It was getting rid of the idea that form and content were separate

items. There was no pedestal – the pedestal was gone. That's what it was about." They hand "endless" conversations about this idea.

"My job was to go over there in the morning, take him out to breakfast and talk about what we were going to do for the day. It was a great job! Calvin, you would have loved that job. Anybody would. But I was the perfect apprentice, because I could talk about sculpture but I wasn't a sculptor. There were no ideas that I could take to my studio. Besides that, it was important for Richard to educate me in terms of sculpture and history, because what I knew was haphazard. We would go to shows, he would give me books to read. I had a complete education on 20t century sculpture from Richard."

RS took Glass to Europe in 1970 or 1971, when he was having exhibitions at The Stedelijk and elsewhere, and arranged for Glass concerts to take place in Amsterdam and Bern – his first in Europe.

Cape Breton – Rudy Wurlitzer and Glass bought an abandoned summer camp, with eight cottages, and got a bunch of their friends to come up. Richard came up with Joan Jonas. They continued coming for a number of summers, three or four, until they bought a place nearby.

The house for Helen Tworkov – "We would show up in the morning, and he would say, look, I got to go look at this car. He came back in the afternoon to see what I had done. I had an assistant at the time, and this kid and I built the house. He probably put a few nails in here and there – but he probably thinks he built it." It wasn't her real house, just a one-room cabin. "We did it in a week." RS eventually bought that property, and pulled the house down.

"Richard is the best friend you could have. Extremely generous to his friends, and very loyal to them, very concerned about them."

They made movies together – on the hand-dropping-lead film, the hand dropping is Glass's, the hand catching is Richards's.

The lead-splash piece – came out of his verb list, all the things you could do with lead. Melting, splashing, etc. "You had to be very careful – at one point, I think some water got into the molten lead, and there was nearly an explosion. Lead is very volatile." Lead was too malleable, so they began putting antimony in it, and eventually got to steel. Putting up those early prop pieces was always dangerous, but none of them got hurt. "People came to that Warehouse show – the things could have fallen down. In fact, the night before the show opened, a number of pieces did fall down. We just walked off and shut the door, came back the next day and put them back up. It was scary, people didn't realize. They thought it was tacked together – it wasn't tacked together. They were leaning, and people were touching them and everything. Eventually they began to cordon off the pieces, but at first you could walk right up to them. Nothing ever happened – until the Minneapolis show. What we were doing was far more risky… But I think part of the adrenaline you got from it was from that. Richard was very much against artifice.

"All through the seventies, people thought the work was aggressive, that he was aggressive, which I feel wasn't true. But it was an easy accusation to make. It wasn't meant to be dangerous." But wasn't part of the aesthetic the possibility of collapse? "We discussed that. I don't know what to say about that. That wasn't true for all the other work, for the scatter pieces it certainly wasn't true, for a lot of the rolled pieces it wasn't true. There was a theatricality about those pieces, let's say, and there was certainly an element of danger, but I don't think that he meant them to be dangerous. Yeah, we talked about it. I don't know that we came to the bottom of it. I don't think he meant danger to be an element of it, altho they were dangerous... I don't think the element of danger was ever resolved...That work is very much on the edge in many ways. It was seriously on the edge!"

Pulitzer piece – "He was trying to extend his work... Other artists had begun to work that way, but it really came out of his experiences in Japan, looking at the gardens. When he came back he was very excited, he talked about pieces that you could never see – you could never see the whole piece, and they were built that way. Richard was very intrigued by that... He always began by getting a topological map, and a lot of it had to do with measure. The interesting thing about them is that they were sensual experiences [taken] from intellectual experiences...That's why his pieces have always had such a strong emotive character to them...When abstract art becomes emotional, it's not abstract any more."

What would you do for fun with him? "Make art!"

"I'm sure he doesn't expect anything of other people that he doesn't expect of himself – which of course is impossible."

[END INVU]

Richard Gluckman
(7 Feb. 02)

Met RS in 1987. Subsequently worked with Max Gordon on his loft. "He'd lived in that building for a long time, and had some pretty clear ideas about how he wanted to reinvent it. He can visualize space extraordinarily well, so he in some ways is an ideal client. Clara we worked closely with as well. The only thing that Richard was fanatically explicit about was recreating a bathroom that he had. He's very direct, a linear thinker, makes decisions quickly and well. We never had any problems…"

"He loves architecture. And he also loves the way his work relates to architecture, whether it's in conflict or in sympathy."

Also did his house in Nova Scotia, the Holocaust competition entry in Berlin, the studio in Long Island City. "And every time we do a gallery for Larry Gagosian we think about it in terms of Richard Serra."

"He works very fast. He thinks very quickly, decides very quickly, and doesn't look back…We had several very interesting discussions on his house, about orientation, about context, and about detailing. Once the decision was made, we moved on. He works very concisely. He listens…I felt it was a collaborative relationship. The house was conceived as a guest house, but I had a feeling it would become the primary house fairly quickly, and it did. He'd been on the land for 25 years."

In placing his work, at Gagosian and elsewhere, he worked on a different, much less collegial level – "He was on his own in that regard. Placing the work seemed to be as much part a part of his work as the work itself." He is even more intense in that situation. (But he can also be relaxed, contemplative in other situations.)

What did he say he wanted in the house? "First, he wanted a house that could be built by a local guy, who understood the climate, understood the nature of construction up there. He wanted a house that was more contextural, that was related to other types of architecture in the place. He wanted a house that was low maintenance, and that could withstand the severe climate, so it's a fairly simple, straightforward structure, and there's not one piece of sheetrock in it. It's wood and stone. They were thrilled up there when Richard offered to purchase foundations from barns or farm buildings that had been blown down in the last 70-80 years. We bought three foundations, of mostly brownstone. I think he wanted a house that didn't say look at me."

"He's a phone fanatic. When he's got something on his mind, and he's up in Nova Scotia, you talk with him about it three or four times a day."

"He thrives on argument. And I think one of the reasons he does it is to learn more about what he's arguing about. He's not didactic, and he's not absolute. He'll argue to draw information out, and I've seen him then shift his stance…He can be quite intense, and he doesn't suffer fools gladly."

Gluckman was working on his loft when the piece collapsed at Leo's and took off a man's foot. "I was asked by the Commissioner of the City of New York to supervise the removal of the piece and the stabilization and reconstruction of the building. So I was there every day for a month, and at the same time I was working on his loft. And we both kind of quietly agreed not to discuss it. So we didn't. It was extremely hard on him. He spent time with the guy."

Richard's work is somewhat like architecture in that there are other people responsible for certain aspects of the work, and he can't possibly control every aspect.

Berlin competition – RS one of ten artists invited, and he asked Gluckman to collaborate. Before their presentation was judged, it was reviewed by the engineers of the city of Berlin. The brief said that no project shall extend more than two meters underground. They went thirty meters underground, to sea level. So they were disqualified. ("A lot of competitions have been won by people ignoring the brief.")

"I kept hearing about this adversarial personality, but I never really experienced it. We've had a couple of disagreements, but they were insignificant."

[END INVU]

Joe Helman
(20 Feb 02)

Saw RS work for the first time at Dick Bellamy's (Noah Goldowsky Gallery), in 1967. Had gone there to see Nauman. Saw rubber-and-neon piece he liked, or rubber belting, went down to Serra studio to meet him. "We started talking immediately, and kept talking for the next twenty years." RS even more tightly wound than he is now.

At the Pulitzer's dinner in St. Louis a few years later (1970), Smithson egged RS on. "He knew about Richard's frailty. Richard was emotionally critical, to the point of being self-destructive when provoked. He was pretty easy to provoke – it didn't take much. Smithson was jealous of Richard, because Richard had gotten this great commission from Pulitzer and Smithson wasn't getting anything like that.

Helman arranged for the commission. He'd made his money in real estate development, and started dabbling in art. Arranged a show called "Here and Now" at Washington University in 1969 that included Serra – this was before he had a gallery. (It opened after the Castelli Warehouse show and was more diffuse; included Ryman, Tuttle, Saret, , Bob Graham, about a dozen in all.) Show had the Serra piece that's now in Helman's dining room, a tube of rolled lead leaning against the wall. Also a big orange rubber piece. Leo's show was a process art show, this one more wide-ranging.

RS drank a lot in those days, and got in a lot of trouble for it.

RS didn't want to use steel in those days, because he thought it was too associated with Anthony Caro and David Smith. He wanted lead because Jasper Johns had used it. But the lead pieces were always falling over. "One fell over in my house, and took out the back wall. That was later." A guy who was head of R & D at a big company in Pittsburgh told them that a process they were using to make lead harder without antimony, and arranged to sell them four lead plates (4' square) at 11 cents a pound; these four made two sculptures for private clients who'd bought lead pieces that fell down (including Aggie Gund), one for MOMA, and the fourth for Helman.

Emily Rauh's scupture show at St. Louis Museum included Lucas Samaras, George Segal, Ernie Trova, Don Judd, Mark di Suvero, Oldenburg, Marisol. It was about a year before Helman's. "This was the height of formalism, remember."

Helman got Pulitzer to commission sculptures from both Serra and Judd. With RS, "the piece became the place, and that was very important to Richard." On the evening of the dinner at Pulizer's, Richard "was anguishing about the commission, and he didn't know quite what to do with it. Smithson really provoked him into attacking the guy who was commissioning the work. He attacked everybody. This was not the first time this happened – Richard did the same thing on his own, without Smithson being there – in Pasadena, at Tom Trubell's house. He attacked Bob Rowan, saying he didn't have the right to call something a piece of sculpture, it was Richard's right to determine that. Rowan screamed back at him, and it was just awful. The party broke up. Richard's a

bully, no doubt about that, but he was the one who would have to go into therapy afterward. His worst victim was always himself. He would go into a bar and get beaten up…" His emotional fragility may have had something to do with his mother's suicide – she walked into the sea. (Helman was the one who had to go and tell him). That evening in St. Louis, they couldn't get up from the table until three in the morning, nobody could leave, it was really awful. The next morning, Helman took Richard (who had been staying there for about a month, with Joan Jonas) aside and told him he had to go into therapy, and he went back to NY and did so.

The lead pieces all fell down. The one he did for Helman had 3 plates, with a pipe across the top. Four feet square plates. It fell over in the gallery (St. Louis) when they put it up. After they got the stronger lead from Pittsburgh, they decided to rebuild that piece, in Helman's living room. About 2 in the morning, talking in the kitchen – "we'd talk incessantly – he'd often call me twenty times in a day" – there was a loud crash. It took out the back wall of the house, into the patio. That's when he started doing notched bar pieces.

The Minneapolis Accident - (he thinks it was around 1975) The piece required a steel bar with a notch in it. The guy who fabricated the piece, instead of notching it the right way, saved money by cutting the bar in half, taking a slice out of it, welding it back together, going over the whole thing with acid so it looked solid, but it didn't have integrity. (The piece was reconstructed correctly after the accident and is now in the Dallas Museum). The crew was composed of two brothers who were illiterate. Instructions called for propping one plate while adjusting the other, but they were steel workers and they thought this was a notched bar which was strong enough to hold. But it wasn't notched, it was cut. The plate fell, and killed the foreman.

Federal court in Minneapolis, they're suing the contractor, the fabricator is suing us, etc. Helman testified in the morning, and afterwards their lawyer embraced him, said he'd really told the whole story and it showed Richard was not culpable, and these people (fabricators) are going to have to pay. Helman went back to New York. Richard calls that night, Helman says how'd it go in the afternoon? "He said, 'I told those fuckers where they stood.' I said, 'what do you mean?' He said, 'Well, they asked me a lot of questions I didn't like.' I said, 'What happened, Richard?' He said, 'Well, I did what I should have done. I got up and I left the courtroom, and walked around the courthouse. I had a joint and I told them all where they stood.' So the lawyer calls me up, and says 'I don't know who your friend is, but he's nuts. You had this case so wound up for him – all we got was one dollar in damages. The guy was so offensive to the judge and the court and so self-indulgent that he blew his own case.'"

'A lot of it [RS's thinking] comes out of formalist ideas. People were dealing with different kinds of space. Cubist space, neo-plastic space, surrealist space. Kelly comes along, puts a panel on the wall, and you're no longer dealing with pictorial space – you're dealing with literal space. So now we have literal space. By that I mean, there is no picture that you're looking at. You coexist with the image. Johns says the same thing with the flag. Richard didn't want his work adorning a space, he wanted it to be the

space. And so he did a piece called 'Strike.' I thought it meant somebody who didn't want to work for somebody else, but a lot of his titles have ambiguity – you're very clear about the meaning but then you find it means something else. In that, he takes the space, and he declares the entire space simply by dividing it. A plate coming out of the wall, out of the corner, and you then have to go to the left side of the Serra or the right side of the Serra, but it's Serra's space. And then he wanted his space not to be just something you put up and take down, he wanted it to be permanent in the space. But that aspect of the contract came after the Tilted Arc controversy."

Johns - RS told Helman that when he was at Yale he decided to do "a four-minute painting, after Roger Bannister. I've got a bunch, little canvases, and I wanted to see how many of them I could paint different colors in four minutes." Helman asked what did it look like. "It still looks like Kelly." So, Kelly was his influence, more than Johns. The commission to do a piece in Johns's studio was not that unusual – "Jasper anointed a lot of people."

In those days it was about the discovery of forms, not the making of beautiful pictures. A lot of emphasis on who got there first. Invention.

Financial Arrangements - When Helman first came to NYC in the mid-sixties it was to buy something by Johns. Ivan Karp showed him a painting that belonged to Ileana, and said it might become available. Later it did, and he arranged to buy it for $7000 - $1,000 down and the remainder in monthly $500 installments. But soon enough he sent in the other $6,000 to pay in full. His next trip to NY, Castelli said there was a little problem, they hadn't received the $500 that month. "But Mr. Castelli, I paid you six." "You did?" He called in the bookkeeper, who confirmed it. Leo said, "Oh, I'm so sorry, I was counting on that $500 a month for a stipend I pay a young painter named Frank Stella." Helman said he was going to send $500 a month anyway, because he was going to buy a lot of things there. He did that for years, and when he opened his gallery he continued doing it. Shared the stipend with Judd, Stella, Serra, Nauman.

Serra was his first one-man show in St. Louis, in 1970 – after group show of Lichtenstein, Warhol, Albers, and Johns. "I had kind of retired early, and opened my gallery as a dilettante. It became successful – I was lucky." He took his family to Rome, and stayed there until Irving Blum called in September, 1973, and asked him to come back to NY and go in business with him. Helman came back for the Scull sale, and they opened the NY gallery. Their first one-man show in NY was Serra – shared him with Castelli from the start, and this continued until the bad evening at the Odeon in 198? Helman and Ursula were having dinner with Brooke Hayward and Irving. Richard came in after dinner, with Alfred Pacquement (curator at Beaubourg). "They sat down at our table, and Richard started attacking Irving as being phony, and lying, and a trinket salesman. And then Brooke started to defend Irving, and I think Richard attacked her for being an alcoholic and a lightweight, and Brooke slapped him. Richard caught her hand – I don't think she actually hit him. There was no striking of Brooke – that's not true. And I remember, Richard and I walked over to the bar, after that, and I said, that's it, kid. You went too far with me this time. I can't deal with you any more. He left the next day or the

day after, for Europe…" Helman said he'd continue to support him financially, but would no longer work for him. RS responded "hysterically. Every day a phone call." [At this point Helman chokes up and has to leave the room – surprising himself as much as us.]

"I guess I still feel guilty about it."

The relationship with RS was "the sense of discovery in our dialogue, which was ruthless. Not just about our personalities, but histories and philosophies and other people."

"Richard didn't want to make things which you could pick up and move around. He wanted to build places. He wanted the place to be the thing, and the thing be the place. The only architect we liked then was Ed Barnes, who had done the Walker, because he was sensitive to art and artists."

"One of the reasons I wanted out with Richard was that I was setting up deals for him, and if there were any way to cut me out of a deal he would do it. I went to Spain, and I said I'm going to make you a hero in Spain. I'm going to sell a lot of work in Spain, but I want you to know that that's all work based with me, is that a deal? He said yeah. So of course after a few deals he cut me out, he and Carmen [Gimenez]. He has a tough quality."

Helman spoke for him at the Tilted Arc hearing, and helped to get a statement from Javits who was very ill.

One time they were having a conversation, and Helman said, "'Richard that's just not true.' Richard said how do you know it's not true? I said, 'You made it up.' Richard said, 'Look, I wouldn't have made it up if it wasn't true.' That's Richard. He built the world according to Richard, which was keeping people off balance, threatening, big things in small places, wanting to be bigger than life."

RS and Nancy Graves – "I don't think they had much affection for each other. They got married and then they got unmarried."

Helman has a drawing RS did when his father was dying – it shows RS as a demon. Will show it to us. The drawings are much looser and more gestural now than they used to be. Once Helman said something to somebody about a Serra drawing, said it was very beautiful, and RS called him up and said, "Never say that about my drawings. You don't have the right to talk about my drawings." Typical.

Ursula Helman describes an incident where a group of people were coming down from a high place, and she, who is afraid of heights, panicked. RS was the one who immediately understood, and helped her down. That's typical too.

"I once had an epiphany about Richard when I was coming back from a bullfight in Spain. It struck me that his drawings were big and black and all about death."

Helman says that since the lead pieces Richard hasn't been involved with his hand except in the drawings. Also, that when he's drawing, "this is what he's doing, but he's not really there." He's not really "in" the drawings. [END INVU]

Odeon (Brooke's version)

Joe Helman + Ursula + Irving + Brooke

Later, after we left, RS threw [illegible] thru window

Insulted Irving - shitty dealer etc.

I said "You're talking abt my best friend - please be quiet."

He came around behind my chair + put his hands around my throat. We left on spot.

He didn't slug me - physically put hands around my neck - Irving stood up - we fled.

He first put hey hand on my neck - not choked - don't remember he said anything, but he probably did.

A gesture - can't even say his hand closed on me. I didn't take it that seriously, but Irving was upset.

I think he's a great artist.

Nancy Holt (must check quotes with her)
(3/26/02)

Someone brought Serra to meet her and Bob Smithson in 1969, at their loft. "I just remember him filling the room with a lot of energy, and being kind of impulsive and competitive. Trying to provoke conversation and get responses… Richard was always very interested in meeting everyone important. He's very strong, and of course Bob was extremely strong. It was like these two strong forces meeting each other. Bob was somebody he had to take on, challenge him, he's going to learn what this guy has to say… I also had the feeli(ng that he was a little nervous. He had heard a lot about Bob. People that he respected – he had a bit of awe. He was hyper, and all excited, there was this sense of being on edge and trying to get the most out of the situation."

Rivalry? "Oh, yeah. I can't imagine having a relationship with Richard where there wasn't competitiveness. That was his mode. He competed with everyone. Bob could withstand his barrages, and give it to him back."

She and Richard "became friends, very close friends. I was like a confidant." (This was after Bob died – they became much closer.) "His relationships to women weren't as competitive. He was very supportive of my art. We spoke on the phone every day for years. At a certain point, though, he became threatened by my art, and from that point on there was more competition. I became more like a male artist than a friend. At a certain point he had abandoned all his male artist friends – he said, 'You know, you're my only sculpture friend now,' which was true. That lasted a while, and then finally he couldn't bear that either…[laughter]."

Max's K.C. - Bob the leader? "That's probably true. He went there to engage people and to work out ideas. He had so many interesting ideas, and he would kind of push people beyond what they were normally capable of. He was a catalyst."

Spiral Jetty – RS did not influence the configuration. "It was partially built when he came out. Bob first built it in a certain configuration that wasn't the final configuration. There's a picture of them together, and Bob is showing Richard how he's going to change the jetty. I think he talked to Richard about why he was making that choice, changing it, and I think Richard agreed with him."

RS and the urban context - "I think Richard had to work within his own limitations. He was more or a rebel and a bad boy, not a revolutionary. He wanted to work within the system, and just be like the bad boy of the system. Bob wasn't interested in that – he wanted to undo the system, take it to a whole new place, transform the establishment. Richard was happy pressing against the walls of the establishment…" Did they argue about this? "Yes. Bob was always attacking Richard, and telling him he was just a mere reformer. Richard was always angry about that. But it was his nature. He's a very immediate personality, he's not really a thinker. He couldn't think far enough… To really change things you have to see ahead, have a vision beyond what is. Richard could only

deal with what is. He was like raw energy. Couldn't see beyond things as they were, and he didn't have any notion of what might be better."

The St. Louis dinner at Helman's - "I was there, but you know, it didn't make much of an impression on me. I was used to Richard by then. It just seemed like one of Richard's antics. I don't remember what was said. He could be breathtakingly blunt, and very rude, but in my mind if you chose to be with Richard you had to be prepared for that." Was Smithson egging him on? "It could be… Joe Helman's house was like wealthy suburban America. We hadn't been in a situation like that, maybe ever… The feeling was of rebelliousness."

How did Bob feel about Richard's work? "He just always felt Richard wasn't going far enough. That he was toying around within these structures which should be questioned. Propping those pieces against the wall was just using the different structures that the establishment gave him, and this to Bob was very limiting. He thought the works were very strong, but only within those limits."

Amarillo Ramp - "I think that to express his grief through action was the very best thing he could do. I was very happy to have his support. People like that can be very aggressive and competitive, but also very protective – they protect the people closest to them. I really needed it at that point." Tony Shafrazi was a conceptual artist then, a gentle, sweet guy, the perfect antidote to Richard. They got along because they were so different. The three of them stayed in the oldest house in town, which Stanley Marsh had bought. There was a rattlesnake fence around it, and several times they saw snakes caught in it, August being rattlesnake month. "I did a videotape with Richard, called 'Boomerang.' Which was a collaboration, but I decided it wasn't – I said since this was your idea, it's your tape, and he shows it as his tape."

Richard "had these curly dreadlocks then. I have some wonderful pictures of him and the Amarillo ranch, where he looks really wild… We really loved each other. He's a man of extremes, and some of those extremes are hard to take, others are not. He has a big heart, magnanimous. He's supportive of younger artists… but if you became his equal in his mind, then the problems started. That's what happened in our relationship.

"I was

with him through all of his relationships with women…I was friends with Joan Jonas before he went with her. And then he went with Susan Black, and Lou Mayer (???). When he got with Clara in a serious way, that was the other reason we stopped being friends. He didn't want me telling her about him." [laughter]

After Amarillo, he went to Peru and became part of some shamanistic thing. Came back with his hair shaved. He'd done some psychedelic drugs down there and had visions. And at that point Tony Shafrazi wanted to become Richard. He started acting like Richard. When he spray-painted the Picasso at MOMA he was identifying with Richard. Nancy and RE and other artists went to the police station on a Sunday, with enough cash to get Tony out of jail.

"When a friendship is over with Richard, it's over. It's pretty absolute. For years, after talking to him every day for quite a few years, I didn't talk to him at all. And then, suddenly, when Ana Mendieta fell out the window, I get a phone call from Richard, saying we need to meet with Carl. I was friends with Carl, whom Richard of course hadn't talked to for years. He said this is a tragedy, and we're old friends, and we need to get together. So I arranged for the three of us to get together. It was very beautiful, very harmonious, and Richard was just really lovely. It was all very warm and friendly and loving. I couldn't believe it, because those two used to fight all the time. So then, Richard calls me up maybe a week later, and says we got to do it again… I said OK, so we all got together, and the second time was a disaster. Richard got up – I had given him some books that he wanted, and he threw them on the table and stormed out of the restaurant. I think it was about my work, and some of my ideas really irritated him; we were having a tiff about that, and then Carl said something wrong… Then I didn't see him until about two years ago. I called him about something, and he was so happy I'd called! I feel I have a very good relationship with Richard, even though we rarely see each other."

"Richard never wanted to be out of the public eye. He used to ask his friends whether they thought he had slipped in the public consciousness. He had to constantly be producing, and be out there being talked about and written about, or he didn't feel valid. It was all part of that driving personality. He always had to he the focus of attention."

"Bob wanted to meet Richard's brother, Tony, but Richard would never let him. He just absolutely refused…" Same with Rudy Wurlitzer.

"Richard was very good for me, because he was one of those people who'd say, just do it.

Jasper Johns
(3/27/02)

He saw a Serra splashed lead piece at the Whitney Biennial (he thinks it was). "It was one of those pieces where he melted lead and poured it against the wall and the floor. I just remember it was it was impressive and beautiful, I loved it. I asked Leo if I could buy it. Leo said it had already been sold and I couldn't have it. So the solution was to have Richard come look at the studio and make a piece there. And he made a very different piece." (But it was a splashed lead piece). Does he still have it? "No, because you can't move it. It was part of the building."

Jasper doesn't remember Richard coming to lunch at the bank. Was Jasper in the habit of commissioning pieces from other artists? "I'm still not in the habit! As far as I can think, that's the only time it was ever done."

"I'll tell you an anecdote. When I moved from Houston Street I spoke to Richard about the piece. I asked him did he have any thoughts about it. Part of the piece was a metal rectangle against which some of the lead was thrown. It was positioned against the wall, at right angles or at an angle, and then the lead was thrown, and when the lead hardened it was moved, part of it. And the metal sheet was moved to a different position, and more lead was thrown. Richard said, you should keep the metal rectangle, and if you have a place sometime where I can make t he piece I'll be able to make it again. So I did that. And at some point, someone called me and said that the San Francisco Museum was making a room of Richard's work, and would I like to give that piece to them? I said yes, I'd be delighted to, since I have nowhere to have it… They said that Richard would make it there, in that installation. Later, I discovered that what Richard made was the piece I originally wanted, and not the piece that he made for me." [END INVU]

Joan Jonas
(21 Feb. 02)

Met RS in late sixties, thru the art world, just before his Warehouse show. She saw the show. She was doing performance then; started doing video at end of sixties. Everybody knew each other then, went to each other's shows.

"He's always been a high energy person. Intense. He was as intense as he is now... He was very interested in other people's work." A lot of people were talking about getting outside the gallery system. Marcia Tucker show at Whitney was very important. ("Anti-Illusion: Procedures/Materials," May – July 1969.)

Jack Smith was very important presence then, although totally underground (unlike Warhol). Artists would go to his performances, which began after midnight in his loft on Greene Street. The ceiling of the first floor had been burned out – his space was therefore a two-story theater. Audience sat on two-by-fours, about ten people a night on weekends. Each one lasted about four hours. RS was very interested in theater and performance and dance – that was one of his many sides – but not performing in public himself. They did some things together, collaborating. Portapaks had become available to artists. It was natural for Richard to get involved.

"We discussed everything together."

Japan – Richard was in a show there, so he did a piece there. They spent five weeks. Went to Noh or Kabuki almost every night. RS loved the spare, abstract quality of it, and the movement and sound. Visited the gardens in Kyoto. Remembers going to restaurants and having to point to the food they wanted.

She thinks that post-Japan, they went to Las Vegas with Phil Lieder and saw the Heizer piece, then went to see Spiral Jetty which was being built. Worked on the drawing with Smithson. She went to St. Louis with him for the Pulitzer piece, was at the dinner party but doesn't want to talk about it. Confirms RS was anxious about the piece. "Richard always says what he thinks."

The accident in Minneapolis - "Richard is extraordinarily sensitive. It was horrible....The art world reacted against him. Some artists told him he should stop making work."

She confirms that RS and Joe Helman were very close, talked a great deal on phone. "Richard was always very concerned with his place in the history of sculpture, so there was a lot of talk about Anthony Caro and others.

They broke up around 1974, but stayed friends on and off. [END INVU]

Richard Koshalek

"If you want to ask anyone about Richard Serra's work, ask Richard. He's his own critic, his own curator, his own art historian, and he really does understand the work. Very few artists can really speak about their work as Richard Serra does. Also nobody understands what's happening right now in the work of art or spends more time in studios, and thinks about the work of other artists, than Richard Serra… I remember him talking about Bruce Nauman, and saying Bruce Naumans's work really accomplishes what it needs to accomplish when it stays close to his own body… Serra really understands the history of art. Talk to him about Giacometti! Incredible conversation. Very few artists have that ability.

"Also about architects. I think there's a wonderful relationship between Richard and Frank Gehry, but there's also a certain amount of tension."

K. first met Serra when he was at the Walker Art Center, in the late1960s. It was at the Castelli Warehouse exhibition. "I think that's where the anti-formal element entered the world of contemporary art. I think it changed our thinking about art totally. It was a breakthrough at the time."

"Richard's work has had such intensity, from the beginning. He's one of those few artists who's been consistently advancing the cause of contemporary art over a very long period of time, and that's very difficult to do. I also think there's more to come. We thought we knew the work of Richard Serra in the mid-nineties, and then you see this incredible breakthrough with the torqued ellipses."

Serra was always intrigued by the idea of the Temporary Contemporary in LA, the warehouse where artists would make large-scale things in situ. He saw a connection to his work there. One day he called, and said he'd like Koshalek to go to the Beth Shipyards in Maryland – did so, and saw three torqued ellipses and the big machine that formed them. Perfect for the T.C. – crystallization between the architecture and the work. "It was one of those perfect moments." A tremendous commitment – cost of shipping pieces from Germany and Maryland, making sure the bridges would take the weight, etc. K. cut a 30-foot door in the T.C. to bring the plates in: 7 torqued ellipses, plus all the other works for 1998 exhibition. K's feeling was that once you select an artist for an exhibition, you do whatever's possible to provide the technical means to do it. "And I've always found that the artists who are very demanding produce the best work."

The Accident in Minneapolis

"When we opened the Walker Art Center, we did a piece called (???). It was in the opening exhibition, which I worked on, and it was in the atrium. It was a steel piece that had a bar, one steel plate, and then two plates coming off it. It was fabricated in Brooklyn, and shipped from Brooklyn to Minneapolis, and reinstalled in Minneapolis for the opening of the museum. And then Emily Pulitzer bought it for the St. Louis Museum. It was taken down and shipped to St. Louis by the same crew, who installed it in the St. Louis Art Museum, where it is today. And then, we sent the same crew to New York, and

we got another piece which the Walker Art Center was most likely going to acquire, and that same crew brought it to Minneapolis, and while they were installing it in the atrium, it collapsed and killed a man. There was a lawsuit. Richard was not there, but I was there. I actually went to the hospital with the man, and helped the firemen try to bring him back to life; the fireman said I want you to hold on to his head while I try to get his heart started. But he died. There's a story that Carl Andre called Richard and said – I don't know if it's true, ask Richard.

"The piece was totally engineered…It was an industrial accident. Every day you read in the paper about industrial accidents. The Walker Art Center was totally out of the lawsuit. They were professional riggers, who had done it before… The man was pounding the wedge between the plate and the bar."

"I find Richard demanding. I find him intense. But he's somebody who knows exactly what the hell he wants and how it's going to be done."

"The widow would come to see me. She'd say, 'Why couldn't it be plywood?' Why did it have to be steel?' So we dealt with this for a long time." But a Calder killed somebody, a Lipchitz did, a Christo, a Beverley Pepper…

"In a way Richard is a very sort of sensitive, emotional individual. I think Richard really does care about humanity, more than most people."

"What the T.C. gave Richard was a chance to work indoors on the scale he works outdoors."

How did RS's big piece work in Bilbao? "It worked OK. But it seemed to me just a little lost in that space. Richard does need context. More than any other artist I know. If you look at that great piece in St. John's Rotary, there was that extraordinary context – the surrounding buildings were of a certain scale, the distance between the site where the work was installed and the scale of the work in relationship to those buildings was just one of those great moments. I think St. John's Rotary was one of the great things Richard's done. Everything was in balance. The movement of people through that space…There is this completeness to Richard's work, when it's right, that brings all of these issues together, and St. John's Rotary was one of those pieces.

"I was also sort of slightly involved with Tilted Arc. I was at NEA at the time. I think, if I remember right – you'd have to check with Richard – but I have this strange feeling that we walked the site, and Richard initially wanted the other side of the building…because of the context…He could have that kind of tension and friction between the context and the work. The GSA people said no.

"You see this in the piece in St. Louis. The piece is extraordinarily placed, and the scale is right, but the context never came up to engage the work. There's the Arch, and then there's the court house, and then there's this large mall, and they were going to develop the mall at the time."

Nearly the whole Serra show at the TC in 1998 went to Bilbao, via the Panama Canal. At tremendous cost.

"Richard's got a long way to go. I think the most intriguing thing about Richard is what's coming next." With both RS and Gehry, everything comes out of what's gone before. "There's no fear in him, no fear of the future. No fear of what the work will evolve into, in terms of scale, complexity, provocation, whatever. There's just a pure determination to do masterpiece work. There's nothing tentative about Richard, in making decisions about his own work."

He's working on three big commissions now, in addition to the New Zealand piece. One is for a Richard Meier building in LA. Pinaud has bought a huge piece for his new museum.

Is he ever not working? "No, it's 24 hours a day."

RS had to give up football in high school – he remembers the play, a draw play, in which he injured his back. He was in the line.

"I always think Richard really wants people to deal with the work. He likes to sort of mess with people's sensibilities, perceptions…He says the subject matter of the work is that search for understanding and comprehension, of your search to understand it."

He has a brother who's a lawyer in San Francisco – defending Sara Jane Olsen. Also a brother who's a doctor.

"I really believe he had a very high purpose for art, and I think he has a very high regard for humanity, which is in the work. He's a true original in the art world."

Get him to talk about the Prado – the art in it that matters, and what it means to him. He has a real grasp of art history. (Conversations with RS, as structure for piece?)

Richard brings his things to a state of completion, more than anyone else.

Brice Marden
(30 Jan.02)

Was at Yale with Serra. Marden came from Boston Univ., via Yale Summer School of Music and Art. Says RS was about the way he is now – "independent, strong, really smart. He got his own private studio at Street Hall. It was just amazing." Albers had left, and they were rotating the directorship.

Did he seem sort of apart from the others? "Yes. He seemed to be on his own independent property…his own quest." Marden studied with Alex Katz, Jon Scheuler, Reginald Pollock. Tworkov came in as visiting critic in his last semester.

"Richard was working his way through the history of art. He'd take a book out of the library…" Didn't have that much contact with him.

When Marden had his first NY show, Richard moved the paintings in his truck.

Helen Marden got mad and threw a drink in his face once. RS being aggressive and rude.

"He didn't give a shit for anybody. He knows what he thinks and that's what he does. He doesn't pick on people… "

The accident in Minneapolis - the reaction was colored by the fact "that Richard is so aggressive." It's hard to separate Richard from his work. "He's a difficult guy, he makes it difficult for a lot of people. It's just that no bullshit."

Marden felt there was a big change in RS's work when he did that piece at the MOMA with two big curves, and you walked between them – a big step.

Who really knew him well? Ricky Landers, a minimalist musician, was a really close friend of RS. He's now married to Tina Girouard. Also close to Phil Glass. Chuck Close the best source.

Tilted Arc - Richard was so hurt by that, "almost as though he'd lost a child, it was that kind of emotion. That I wouldn't really have expected."

[END INVU]

MATTHEW MARKS on Richard Serra
(off the record, unless checked with Matthew)

"We had a falling out."

Matthew had Serra in his first show of artist books, and MoMA bought Serra's book out of that show. Matthew then had a show of his drawings, and then gave over his new gallery on West 22nd Street to his sculpture "To Whom It May Concern."

"I feel like I got him the Dia show and he gave Larry the pieces to sell. I think he was jealous of my attention with Brice and Ellsworth. I was the one who went to Dia. I proposed the show at Dia. I went to Michael Govan. Larry doesn't do that. I was the one who was close to Govan."

(What happened was Serra gave the pieces in that Dia show to Larry to sell. Larry had paid for the fabrication. Matthew had wanted to split the fabrication cost. When I said that must have been a lot of money, Matthew said he had said that he just needed a little time. Then Richard just gave it to Larry to do.)

"I told him to fuck off. He knew that he was an asshole. He's never spoken to me again. I refused to go to the installation of To Whom It May Concern, which I sold to the Walker (check this). I had never been screwed by an artist until that moment. I remember Ellsworth and Brice saying to me that he's crazy. He's a great, great artist. I'm sure that Picasso was that way. He really is an asshole. The day I stopped working with him, my life improved (a thousand percent). He called a hundred times a day, at home, too. All the great artists do…He's a monster. He beats his wife. He was arrested when he was on the train from Scandanavia or some where. They got into a fight and he got arrested when the train stopped. I know this is true because who told me."

(Who told you)
"John Silberman. He may deny it now, but he knows it's true."

(Did you see the last show at Gagosian?)

"I can't bring myself to go…He's a great artist. I also don't regret that I don't do it anymore….He shows with Larry. He had a choice and he chose it. He could have chosen the good guy, like Ellsworth and Brice did. But he chose the sleazebag."

Trina McKeever
(6 March 02)

She does most of the things a gallery would do and also deals with the galleries. Since 1989. "He's great to work for. Richard's very black and white. He knows what he wants, and he's good at articulating it… I work with Clara as much as I work with Richard." She worked for Jerry Ordover before coming to RS.

She has three boys, age 10, 7, 4. RS very involved with their lives. She and her family rent a house in Nova Scotia in summer. "Richard doesn't take vacations. He does all his drawing up there." Very little socializing there, same as in NYC.

RS much busier in last ten years, more work in US rather than in Europe. But "Richard is Richard," doesn't change.

Charlie Rose – RS called the shots. Wanted Charlie to go see the work at the gallery first, really give it the time. "They spent a Saturday morning walking through, and talking about it." Originally it was just going to be half an hour in the TV studio, but it grew to a full hour (off the record).

Clara makes a lot of the business decisions, such as how to price things, a lot of the mechanical details.

Fort Worth – looks all set. Michael Auping told her they are going to make a formal announcement. It's a double-plate, twisted vertical piece (outdoor).

The process - there are two contracts, the proposal contract and the purchase agreement. When someone wants to commission a piece, RS goes and looks at the site, and if it's agreeable to him he draws up a proposal contract, under which a fee is paid and he has up to a year to come up with his proposal. RS often goes back to the site several times, makes models, etc. Very rarely does a client reject a proposal. The client's responsibilities are the shipping and installation costs, including the foundation. Richard's price includes fabrication cost .

Prices – the range at the last Gagosian show was (off the record) $2.4 million to $3.3 and a half million. (Wedge piece was less).

Alexander von Berswordt is less active now (heart problems) but he still orders the steel for RS's pieces, and organizes the shipping from Germany to Antwerp to the US or wherever. NYC harbors are not deep enough for the big pieces, which come in to Camden and trucked from there. For the Gagosian show, they were put on barges and towed to Red Hook. The DIA pieces were trucked across country to LA MOCA, and from there everything was loaded on ships and taken to Bilbao.

RS is in Beacon today, installing the double TE. [END INVU]

Elisabeth Murray
(6 Feb 02)

She came to NY in 1967. She was married; had child two years later. Hadn't seen Richard but had seen his work at Castelli Warehouse. "I walked in and saw this lead splattered around the floor, the corners. I had never seen anything like that, ever, and it just blew me away. I saw it was by this guy Richard Serra. On the one hand it infuriated me, and scared me, and I hated it – I was a painter. But on the other hand, I knew that whatever I was going to do with painting, it was all over. There was something else going on. It was a real turning point. And the power of that work immediately just got to me." (see p. 2)

"You would always see Richard around. There would be an opening of a young artist at Reese Paley or somewhere, and I'd see this man across the room, just talking in this animated, dynamic way, always really focusing, and I wondered who it was. Somebody told me it was Richard. In 1975, I was teaching at Cal Arts. I was standing on a corner in Venice, California, and I saw this guy with Stanley Grinstein in tow. Richard can't stand him now, but the Grinsteins were collectors who used to have artists over to their house all the time, really nice people who love artists. This guy was charging up the street with Stanley. Stanley came over and said this is Richard Serra. I was so pleased to meet him, ' but completely tongue-tied. I didn't know what to say, and what came out was 'Are you still making sculpture?' He looked at me like I was totally crazy, but if I had wanted to get somebody's attention I couldn't have said a better thing. He was like, who are you, why did you say that? But we became friends…Richard doesn't ever have something light to say, and I'm not that into small talk either. And the thing about Richard, he always wants to hear what you have to say. He really wants to know what you think about things, even if he doesn't like it or agree with it."

A chauvinist? "No, no. I don't think people know this about Richard. Richard was one of the first people to tell me he thought my painting was interesting, and to talk to me about it. I don't think – Richard is not interested in gender. There are men all over who just can't deal with women's work. Richard, Kirk, Brice, Rob Storr, Michael Kimmelman do not feel gender, who knows why? You just feel they're open in a way that a lot of men aren't. Richard liked strong women."

"Clara is a brilliant woman, as smart as Richard. She's been a hundred percent behind him, but she has her own thing. Very political. Fun to talk to. She's not abrasive, the way Richard is. Richard's like sandpaper, and Clara's not like that.

"I would never say Richard's a person who's softened by success. Because I think he's so driven from deep inside. The thing I find amazing about Richard and Richard's work, and I think the reason his work comes across is because of the power of his conviction is so strong. It comes across with everything he does. Everything goes into that work, and it comes across in a very pure way. I would not call Richard confrontational. He's looking for a response."

RS will come into her studio and make suggestions – why not try this? Very generous that way. "He really sees and understands painting as well as he does sculpture."

Was he ever scary to you? "Honestly, no." People have a very distorted impression – "He comes across as this macho guy, a bulldog almost, and he is that, too. But he isn't just that, and the other part is just as strong. Richard needs information. He really goes after it like a bulldog. I can understand how Richard goes overboard…"

"He's really a lot of fun. You know, there are always little combustible minutes…He gets carried away in his passion. I think that's the word for Richard – passion. Sometimes you think, why does he care so much? But he does care that much. Let him care. I don't know anybody like Richard, who goes as deeply into it as Richard does, and that can work in a negative way for him sometimes, that's true. And you know, we all drank a lot. (This is off the record). Some of the negative things with Richard just happened when he had too much to drink."

She's heard the rumor about his being arrested in Copenhagen for hitting Clara, but she doesn't believe it. "There's nothing of that kind going on between them. It's just not there. You can feel that from a man, and Richard is not that way. I think I know who started that rumor…"

Tilted Arc - "It really worked. I could also understand why the people who worked in the building…hated it. To them it blocked off their plaza." She hates the Martha Schwartz piece there now. Elisabeth spoke for the arc at the hearing, saying it was really beautiful and it belonged there, and people would eventually accept it and be proud of it.

His new work at Gagosian "feels less controlling to me, in a way."

Back to splashed lead in 1969 – "It made me feel I had to take it in, and deal with it. I had to do something with it to really stay afloat."

Minneapolis – With someone whose work is as powerful as his, there are always people who want to undermine it. It's true that some artists were unsupportive re the accident.

Success in the 70s wasn't about money, but about showing.

"I don't think he's controlling – but he's the most curious man in the world." [END]

Emily Pulitzer
(13 Feb. 2002)

Joe Helman, then a real estate developer and collector in St. Louis, did an exhibition at Washington Univ. Gallery in 1968 that included Nauman, Serra, Ryman, Sonnier, Saret – none of whom had had one-man shows in NY. Emily, then curator at St. Louis Art Museum, had just done a sculpture show of Judd, Segal, Oldenburg, di Suvero, Christo and Trova that was thought to be avant-garde, but the work in Helman's show "I was completely unequipped to deal with. I went back to that show over and over again, and ended up thinking Richard had really important work in the show. It was very, very tough. Then Joe Helman started a gallery, and had a one-man show of Serra's lead prop pieces. In connection with that show I invited Richard to come and speak at he art museum, to the contemporary art society. Richard arrived with matted hair to his shoulders. He had just broken up with Nancy Graves, I think he hadn't slept in two days. I thought, of my god, what am I getting into? He gave a lecture, and afterward we went to a nice old lady's apartment, and Joe [Pulitzer] was really fascinated. Joe Helman had suggested that Joe P. commission Richard. He had previously commissioned Judd to do his first site-specific piece – this was also at Helman's suggestion. Joe P. told Serra and Judd, basically, here's our place, do whatever you want to do.

"Richard was both enormously appreciative, and very challenged. He had just come back from Japan. He had seen 'Double Negative,' by Michael Heizer; he was very impressed with that, and he wanted to do better. As he said, he walked it every day, passing Monets. As he has described it, it was like putting a rookie in an all-star game and saying bat a home run. That same summer he was working on the piece of Roger Davidson's in Toronto. He spent about a month in St. Louis, coming and going at all hours of the day and night. This was before we were married – the summer of 1970. Basically what he chose was a field where nobody went, in front of the house. The house, which was basically a summer house, had been built on what had been a pasture… That's the place he chose. It was not the most prominent, it was not in your face at all…

"During the course of the month, Richard was very generous in explaining what he was thinking about. One night, Joe had a party. He mixed up Trova's attitude toward Newman, and Richard's attitude, and Richard was so furious he got drunk. He was so angry that Joe had misunderstood his attitude – for god's sake don't quote that. Shortly thereafter, Joe Helman had a dinner party at which Robert Smithson and Nancy Holt were there, and Richard and Joan Jonas, and Ronnie Greenberg. Joe and I were there. There was a living room and a family room. During dinner, Richard got more and more abusive to everybody. Smithson kind of egged him on. What he did was to say the most devastating things about each of us, that were true – they weren't the whole picture, but they were true. And the next morning he left. I've never spent a worse evening in my life. Joan played no role at all. What he was doing was really escaping. He hadn't come up with a solution that was good enough in his mind – it was his way of getting out. About six months later, he came back with his proposal, and Joe said fine…"

"I bought corner lead piece from that first show – Joe Helman's first one-man show. For myself. That was in 1970." In 1973, the mayor applied to the NEA for grant money for a sculpture commission. A committee was formed (Emily was on it), and RS was the unanimous first choice to do it. Emily spent seven years raising the money and getting approval from businesses involved with the site. Three mayors in the period. They raised $200,000, from a lot of different sources. "Richard was not good with public officials or with the press – we kept him very much away from the press. He was fabulous as he always is with the workmen." At that time there were two papers in town, the Pulitzer-owned News and Post-Dispatch, and the Newhouse-owned Globe. Joe never wanted to appear in his paper; not even for their wedding announcement. The Globe art critic gave the Serra sculpture a positive review, but on the front page the paper attacked it; included comment by local artist who said he'd love to take a welder's torch and draw on the plates, thereby encouraging graffiti. Caused a big stir. "There was a lot of hostility about the piece in St. Louis."

Through the years, she and Joe bought a number of other pieces. 'Twain' was the first permanent city piece of RS, after 'St John's Rotary Arc' but that didn't stay. "It is the last of a series in which our field piece was the first. In between was the Kroller-Muller 'Spinout' and the Davidson piece." (She commissioned the first torqued spiral, 'Joe,' for the Tadao Ando building in 2001.)

What changed RS's uncouth behavior was psychoanalysis, Clara, and maturity. RS was really the one who made it possible for Ando and Brad Clark (?) to work together successfully on the Foundation project. Afterward, Emily said to him, "I'm not sure you could have done that a few years ago." "I was thinking that, too," he said.

"I think he's the most brilliant person I've ever met…And with all his toughness and aggressiveness, he's such a warm… When Joe was sick, he called me once a week. And he sent music that he thought Joe would enjoy listening to…It's not conventional generosity. He doesn't give gifts, he doesn't give you a drawing. But he does the things that really count."

Phil Glass – he had a job working for a plumber. Castelli offered Richard a show, and Richard needed help – he offered to pay the $100 a week Glass was getting for his job. Glass says RS came to lead through his experience using lead as a plumber.

After Tilted Arc controversy, RS got no more work in the US, concentrated on Europe. He speaks no German (or French). [END]

1

Joel Shapiro
(28 Feb. 02)

Met Serra in 1967 or 1968. They used to see each other at the dairy cafeteria that became Odeon, and were in shows together. "Richard had a greater degree of clarification about his work than I did then, and a greater sense of self. Mine was still forming." Never close friends, altho they spent time together. "I've always liked Richard." A much smaller art world then.

"His enthusiasm for sculpture is contagious, and his commitment is contagious. He's always been intensely vocal about his interests, in a way that's interesting. That's one of his great strengths."

"He's volatile, yeah. But look at the work. The work has a lot of character and strength and it's very insistent and intelligent, and those qualities are the qualities of the person."

He agrees with RS about architects not being artists. "Architects are not sculptors. Every attempt they make to make sculpture is generally catastrophic. Maybe it wasn't during the Renaissance. Corbusier is the best… but they seem to be empty of any kind of real passion. I don't think there's a great interior need to make the form, and I think artists have that. It generally fails because it has no pith, no core, it's about design and product and not about some real necessity." But some architecture has the emotional impact of great art – "I don't see that as so cut and dried, whether it's art or not."

Serra's work not really minimal in sense that Judd or Andre's was. It's more involved with the haptic, with the making, the hand. He was a major proponent of reducing art's baggage in the sixties, much more assertive than Andre.

"As a young artist it's very hard to make a form and believe in the form. When Richard did his House of Cards, the form justified itself through its own weight… It was coming from a certain lack of faith, a certain disillusionment in certain institutions and beliefs. To some extent Richard believed in structure, and that had a real effect on a lot of artists. There were other people investigating that, but Richard had a very strong, pronounced voice. Carl is a very important artist, but his work never had the level of ambition of Richard's. Carl is about collapse…"

"Sculpture is about asymmetry, and it's about fighting against gravity. It's not built rationally the way buildings are… One aspect of sculpture is that it does have this explosive immediacy, and there's a certain risk involved… As soon as you stick something up in the air, it's under stress and it could go…It scares the shit out of me every time." He's had some close calls, but nobody ever badly hurt installing his work. (Two workmen banged up installing piece in TK building when ladder collapsed.)

"Richard's a guy who searches for meaning in his work, and that's why artists respect him."

A lot of art in the seventies was influenced by the general questioning of authority, the Vietnam War, etc. In 1969 Marcia Tucker did a group show at the Whitney on this theme. A breaking down of the old guard everywhere. The Castelli Gallery lost its relevance for artists of Joel's generation – Leo was devoted to Johns, Lichtenstein, and that generation.

Smithson was pushing the edge of minimalism in a more radical direction.

"My work's not threatening to Richard... But every artist is competitive with every other artist." [END SIDE A]

Richard's work becomes "more and more expressive over the years," and has actually "gotten better." "The kind of precision he has with the obdurate material he's pushing around, that's tough to do."

"I think Richard is really honest as an artist, and that's what remains."

"His strength leaves lots of room for other people to go in other directions." [END INVU]

John Silberman
(22 Feb. 02)

(Talking with us because Serra asked him to – wouldn't otherwise).

Started working with RS around 1990-91. RS was at Pace, wanted a lawyer. Today RS has no exclusive relationships with any dealer. He works with many dealers, does many projects without a dealer (probably the majority). Silberman closely involved with all projects. There's a contract with every piece, and a lot of negotiation takes place.

When work is finished, the buyer is responsible for costs of transporting it to destination and for installation. The German rigger whom RS likes to work with is hired by the buyer.

Contract also specifies what the buyer is permitted to do with the work. This differs from work to work, and the location. Some are site-specific, become part of the landspace and the landscape becomes part of the work, so once installed it cannot be moved. For gallery works, RS has to approve of the buyer, and of the proposed siting – he will go out and visit, and choose where it goes; contract says you can only move it with Richard's approval. And after RS's death there are parameters within which work can be exhibited. It may have to be on flat land, or maybe it cannot be on grass, must be on hard surface.

Not true that some contracts say work cannot be moved even if owner leaves or dies – "That is a myth. Absolutely not true." If it's site specific, it cannot be moved and still be a work by RS; you can take it with you if you sell the place, but Richard would have to come and place it, and if Richard's not around, you must observe the parameters in which it must be placed. If not, it's no longer a Serra.

RS gets paid a small fee for making a proposal – he studies the site before even committing to a proposal. If he agrees to do a proposal, he makes a model and states a price. (Gives himself a year to do this, on average) The complete contract is then drawn up. Usually a third of the payment is due on signing, a third during fabrication, and a third on installation. Same with public or private. Most commissions come to fruition.

He would rather not talk about prices. Suggests we ask Richard. [END INVU]

Donald Sultan

He used to see Serra in the 70s, often at Barnabas Rex, the artists's bar. Says he did a lot of complaining in those days – his mother's suicide, other bad things that happened. Quite often he would go into towering rages, which could be pretty scary. There was always the potential for physical violence. But he was not the alpha male – "all of us talked a lot then."

John Torreano knew him better, has stories to tell about him.

Everyone knew about his getting arrested for beating up Clara on a street in Copenhagen, and spending the night in jail.

But Donald says he liked him.

Serra was doing a lot of drugs.

Helen Tworkov

Dear Dodie and Calvin,

I leave tomorrow for Canada. But when I get back, I am moving, so there's not a lot of flexibility in my schedule for a while. I hope these notes are of some help to you. With nest wishes, Helen Tworkov

Richard Serra

I don't remember meeting Richard. I know that he came to a party that I had for Christopher Wilmarth on my loft on West 23rd street. It was 1968. He was with Nancy Graves and I knew who he was, but I don't remember how. Y'know those bulky, frizzy-haired Ed Koren characters? That's what Richard and Nancy looked like. They were both dressed fatigue style with big boots and bomber jackets that they didn't take off, and hair that looked like it'd got zapped by a bolt of lightning.

A couple of years later Richard and Joan Jonas were part of a group of people that started going to Cape Breton.

In the early seventies Richard and Philip had, I think (?) stopped working together. But they always talked about their careers to each other. There was a running commentary between them about how far into public view they were extending.
The "house" was a cabin—a 12' x 16' frame with no plumbing and no electricity. This was 1977. The summer before, separated from my husband, I had camped on top a mountain with just my dog. So these guys got together, in the best of the old-fashioned, brotherly, protective way and built me a cabin that was much closer to town and to other houses, including Richard's. Philip designed the cabin and did most of the building. Richard cut all the boards for the siding and put those on. If there were any strains during that time between them I was unaware of it.

That fall, and I think, for the following two falls, I moved from my cabin into Richard's house. Richard would go back to New York leaving behind an old farmhouse that was in an advanced state of dilapidation, but it had a very good coal-burning stove that always kept the house warm.

At some point, 1978? or 79? I was at Richard's house in Cape Breton, and he asked me to come to New York and work for him. It was for the

(2)

Pennsylvania Avenue project. I worked for him until Clara moved to New York and took over. The p?? (Name of project) was the first time I really got a sense of Richard. We went down to Washington several times and rented ? (those machines that are electric ladders that let you climb up). We had to get police permits because it was right in front of the White House and we had to work only on Sundays and be finished with our work by 8 in the morning. Something like that. But I got to watch Richard look at things. He's a talker y'know. Never stops. But there's a generosity there too. So he'd always include you in on whatever thoughts he was having about the spatial relationship between the corner of one building and the height of another. Richard sees things that most people miss. And I can understand my own limitations when I am looking at things with him and then maybe move beyond them.. But in Washington, I also learned how extraordinarily smart Richard is. We'd go to these meetings with Carter Brown (? former head of the Nat Gallery) and Venturi and (Richard will remember all these players) and Richard would make a presentation about the piece that he wanted to build—and which was never built—and I could see that these architects and city planners were just asleep at the wheel compared to Richard. Richard talked circles around them and he had done his homework. He even brought in photographs that he asked me to find of pillars framing the Third Reich to show how much it looked like one of the other proposals in which pillars framed the US Treasury building. He talked about the relationship between America and money and power and asked if that was what everybody (the extremely contentious planning committee) really wanted. Well see, nobody was even prepared to discuss issues of power and money and art and what it meant that the US Treasury might look like Hilter's seat of power. But also, nobody had walked those streets like Richard had. No one saw every angle of every single building and juxtaposed them in his mind's eye

Some of those people treated him in a very condescending way. (Venturi's wife, the architect Denise? once turned to Richard at a meeting and asked him if he could design a piece with water. Richard said, "I don't work with water') Richard could get very heated and speak very passionately and very bluntly. Of course, he got kicked off the project. I'm sure a certain number of those people said "I just don't want to deal with this guy." But to my mind, he was both the best artist and the smartest person involved.

Then I started to work for Richard in New York. Actually, I may have started working for him on Duane Street in 1977 and then the following year returned from Cape Breton to work on the Penn. Project.

(3)

Once we were having breakfast in the cafeteria that became the Odeon and I saw a puppy trying to cross Broadway. It was a miserable morning, sleeting, rain. So I got the puppy and we took her to Richard's. I already had a dog who came to work with me everyday. Richard was pretending that under no circumstances was this puppy going to stay with him, but I could see right off that he liked this dog and had already named her. He called her Nellie.

But Richard refused to walk Nellie. And he didn't clean up after her in the loft either. So I'd come to work and right off I had to clean up dog shit and then I'd start yelling at Richard. Then he would threaten to take her to the dog pound. It became quite an operatic situation. Then one day I said I wasn't cleaning up anymore dog shit and he could take the dog to the pound and I walked out. But really, I never thought he'd do that. He loved Nellie and a year later she had eight puppies and he kept two. But by then, thank god, Clara had arrived.

Yes, I think Richard is much more relaxed in Cape Breton. To the best of my understanding he and Clara walk a lot and swim everyday and he works out on the bike and does stretch exercises.

Kirk Varnedoe
(14 Feb. 02)

His Nature - "From what I hear, Richard was a bar-fighter. He was the kind of guy who would go in in a surly mood and pick fights with people at pool tables. He's got a real nasty streak, that if anything seems to have mellowed a bit. Maybe he's turned it to intellectual combat. I would say this of Richard. One of the things that's astonishing, he has such an abrasive, tough guy image. But when I got sick in '96, and came home from the hospital, one of the first people who insisted on coming by to see me in person was Richard. He came by to see me in order to convince me that the thing I needed to do was get to involved with meditation. He personally contacted people in the meditation community, and either paid for them or forced them to come talk to me and give me lessons in meditation, which he said was so important in centering him. He sent a drawing to the hospital. There was no grounds to expect this, I'd never done anything for him, or been particularly close to him. This time again, when I got sick, he called me in the hospital, he called me constantly from Nova Scotia to find out how I was doing. I know he was the same way with David Sylvester – he flew to be with David when David was dying, he talked to him on the phone all the time. There's this side to him that's extraordinarily caring about people he cares about, and incredibly compassionate."

But why the attacks on Gehry? "Well, Richard has a history of bad connections with architecture. The whole incident with the Centre Pompidou, where he's down on Rogers for rejecting his commission – he has a real chip on his shoulder about architects. The whole Tilted Arc issue – he has a dim vision of architecture in general." Pompidou incident - as Helman says, RS always trying to place something big in a space that's not quite big enough, always closing off space, stopping flow. He proposed to put a big arc of steel right across the main entrance, on the plaza. Serra always blamed Rogers for rejecting it, altho it may not have been Rogers who did that (get story from RS).

Elyn knew Rudy Serra in Tribeca, and they probably met RS thru him. "Rudy has exactly the same mannerisms, the same speeded-up way of talking, the same kind of intensity and focus…a similar temperament." His brother Tony, whom they've never met, is the real-life model for the character in the James Wood movie "True Believer." A notorious maverick.

RS has told Kirk that he bonded with him when Kirk went down to witness the destruction of Tilted Arc. Very few people gathered that night. He didn't work on the MOMA retrospective, which came when he was an adjunct curator; it was done mainly by Rosalind Kraus and that group.

His Achievement - "I can't think of an artistic experience that I've had in the last few years that's been any more powerful than seeing that show at Gagosian, or indeed the show before it, or the show before that. For the last few years, it seems to me, Richard has managed to stay within a very strong vocabulary that's clearly his, but never appear to be resting on his laurels. To push the thing further and further every time. We bought 'Intersection II.' I came home on a Thursday night…[in 1992 or 3] and I got off the

subway and walk around – I knew they'd been doing the installation [at Gagosian]. I turned the corner at Wooster Street. It was one of these really weird nights where it's a little too warm, and there's something odd in the air – in fact there was a big snowstorm coming the next day. This very odd light. They'd rolled up the door at Gagosian, and had all the lights on, so the photographer back across the street could take a picture of the thing. It was like something extra-planetary. Light was pouring out, and this kind of Queen Mary had been berthed in the space. I was staggered. I just couldn't believe the impression. And then I went in, of course, and walked through it, and it was so exciting to be in that sculpture, to feel the central spaces of it. I felt at that moment that so much of Richard's previous work had been based on – menace and threat, it was threatening to fall on you, or to fall over, and this constant sense of a kind of aggression, a hostility. But in this piece he had a central, seedlike space which was in some sense nurturing. It was ovoid, and the sublimity of walking through the two tilted spaces on either side – it was two arcs this way nestled into two arcs that way. You could walk through the passage on the narrow side or you could walk down the middle, and the middle was so panoramic, it was like Monet's Waterlilies in a way, a huge vista of this beautiful rusted steel surface, which was so painterly and delicate and superbly coloristic instead of a tough piece of steel, a velvety gorgeous surface…Your peripheral vision wasn't enough to hold on to te whole thing, you were surrounded by these walls of rusting color, and then to go through the narrow space, and the one closed over you and the other one opened up. There was some edge there between shelter and menace. Suddenly the pieces had a whole different dimension. Watching kids play in it, I felt that these pieces now were some step away from the brutality and the raw aggressive menace of some of the early things, into something you could properly call sublime. Because the sublime is involved with terror. And you were in some sense terrified, you wondered how these things were standing up. But the way they tilted against each other…I just thought that was really a breakthrough piece. The kind of classic moment where he shifted from the straight steel plate-and-rolled work into the curved planes, and brought the curved planes up to this architectural dimension. And from there then began the greater and greater complexity.

"I called Ronald Lauder, and said, I'm just not going to ~~see~~ say anything. You go down and see this. We've got to have this piece. And Ronald went down, and in an instant agreed to buy it for the museum. Bang. As usual, there was a contract with Richard. In this case he was worried that Ronald – Ronald was talking about building a museum in the Israeli desert and stuff. He sold the piece on condition that it go to MOMA within a fixed number of years. Ronald could own it under progressive declining percentages until it went to the museum. And Ronald was generously willing to agree to that.

"Anyway, that was a moment when I really felt that the kind of astral flight that you see now, when the rocket took off. He then began to move into the ellipses…Every show I've seen since then has had this amazing, push-it-further, push-it-further, and the level of complexities with which he's dealing, technologically, much less formally, never ever get in your way. He seems completely in command of what he's doing. The work is just incredibly authoritative and never repetitive. Last show at Gagosian, that eight or ten part piece that created all the different passageways…he's gotten even more sensual, even more powerful, with the swell of these curves in different dimensions. I just think it's

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breathtaking, what he's done over the last six or eight years. For an artist who was already established as a major man of his generation. He's just entered another class. Twombly said he thought Richard was probably our greatest living artist. I think that's an argument to be made. I can't think of anything that's rivaled this, for the combination of authority, inventiveness, sculptural power…If you took what Serra was doing five years ago, you couldn't predict where it's gone.

"The other thing I think is that these works work much better indoors than outdoors. That they depend on the pressure of the container against them. And the rustication of their surfaces and the power of their forms is enormously dissipated when you see them in outdoor spaces. I don't think Richard necessarily agrees with me… And I think it's tragic when they get graffiti, because the surfaces are almost impossible to get back to their integrity. I'm all for keeping them indoors and protecting them, myself.

Minimalism - "The whole promise of minimalism, that you would stop having a sculpture composition of metaphor and have one of intense immediate experience, the orchestration of the space between you and the object was going to be what you – and the post-minimalist generation tried to take that out of the clinical and move it into something that had more gripping physicality – the move away from Judd and Flavin into Smithson, Hesse – that's when Richard comes in, that moment in the late sixties."

The closed form in last show "I don't know where Richard's going with that, but I'm glad he tried it. It was sort of a conceptual taboo, that seemed to be going back to an older idea of sculpture. A lot of people, for reasons of ideological purity, would have denied themselves that experiment. It was an interesting thing to see – I don't know what he'll do with it. It's the first piece that has a secret, inside of it. The whole idea of the Judd boxes and the Tony Smith cubes, that there is something internal, that you couldn't see – Richard's work has always been about utter and complete transparency. That there is nothing concealed. That these are volumes that interact with you and your body. That there is no hidden space that you are denied access to. It's a very strong ideology of not having any metaphor, any association, pure abstraction, that you see everything, there's no illusion, and no reference to other things in the world other than the thing it is. That was so important. And to actually enclose the volume…was a rejection of the dogmas of that ideology. I'm sure some theoreticians would find it regressive, or conservative.

"I'm very enthusiastic about the recent things, of course, but I think some of the earlier work – I think the Cutting Device Base Plate Measure that Philip Johnson gave us, which is a series of layered things on the floor, as if you'd taken some giant cleaver and cut through, so the central portion is like a layer of felt, a layer of rolled lead, and everything on both sides is cut clean, and fragmentary, as though you'd chopped off the remnants and they'd scattered around the floor. The sense of violence and the sense of exactitude, the sense of rigorous, demanding, of an art of measure. But the conceptual idea of measurement made manifest. That's what's so interesting about Richard's work, that it's so utterly imbued with the theoretical concepts, but never didactic. The elements of balance, gravity, are not demonstrated, they are vividly felt. That piece, 'Delineator' – there's a big steel plate on the floor, and a big steel plate on the ceiling, and you don't

know how it's connected to the ceiling, and to force yourself to walk on that plate, the sense of the danger of that space and the weight involved – the act of intellectual courage it takes, and the way you feel when you're in it – that always struck me as one of his most vivid pieces. And so central to this idea of the power of metal which involved threat, and that's so ironic and terrible about the accident in Minneapolis. There was something always latently dangerous about the work, but nobody ever thought of it in terms of real world problems."

"He's always had a leadership in the integrity of his vision. The premises of minimalism were so austere and monastic, and the post-minimalist generation put the texture back in it, but the really astonishing thing is how people grounded in that aesthetic – and Judd is a perfect example – wound up producing epic work, the Marfa scale thing, the huge operatic sense, how you start with premises of extreme reductionism, extreme paring down ad isolationism, it's like Phil Glass's operas. Who would have thought Phil Glass would produce operas? And Richard is producing his operas in a certain sense here. The enormous monumentality and grandeur, and the evocation of the biggest form men make, like steel ships, in these recent works, was nothing you could have predicted with the sort of down-and-dirty, lower Manhattan loft aesthetic of the late sixties, which seemed to be so much against power, against heirarchy. The very fact that sculpture didn't stand up, that it lay on the floor in relationship to gravity. No pedestal. A very leftist position against authority. And to aspire now to something that 's sublime, demanding, authoritative in the best sense, and yet it's totally organic growth."

"I think that whole generation was responding to Pollock. All those scatter pieces on the floor… I think the 1967 retrospective of Pollock at the Modern, coming in the heyday of Judd and the kind of austerity of minimalism – the idea of the all-over field, the idea of letting materials, especially industrial materials, like house paint, find their own form, in the splatter and the drip, so that the nature of the material defined in some sense the look and aesthetic of the work. All of those things had a big impact on Smithson, and on Serra as well."

The Post-Industrial Age - "When I lectured on the lead-flinging piece at the Castelli Warehouse, I talk about – there's this moment in the late sixties when Sartre goes to the Renault factory, where he had this dream that the new left and the old left would get together. The new left wants the accoutrements of the old left. That's why folk songs bring up I Dreamed I Saw Joe Hill Last Night, all the labor songs of the thirties that became Joan Baez songs. The new left wants the authority of the old, blue denim union labor sense of the left. So that, moving into these light-industry lofts in lower Manhattan, and working with toxic materials. It's a hardware art for a software age, a rust-belt art for silicon valley age. And Richard's involved in the romance of labor, of difficulty, of mean materials and tough working conditions and grubby, gritty, uninhabited parts of the city. I talked about it in relation to the Grateful Dead album, the whole idea that rock music is going to meld with the working man. There's a whole idea that the young avant-garde and the new left were going to form a union with the hard-working, honest proletarian, And I think Richard was very much a part of that ideology. And from that comes this deep investment in the sense of industry, of things fabricated and the processes of

fabrication. Also in those days, in Smithson and Serra, a real interest in refuse, trash, detritus, the left-over materials. But what's already there too is, that's so Whistlerian, right? That beautiful, silvery lead, it 's pure Jasper Johns. It has this wonderful, liquid touch. It's not slag, it has this silvery beautiful quality, this lead, so though it's toxic and dangerous it also has this lovely patina. And when you get to the big, beautiful, rusting booms of the late sheet metal, you have the same sense of an aesthetic here which on the one hand is macho, tough, but on the other hand has this amazing poetry and feel for materials."

His pieces have become "more baroque and less stately. Intersection II is very stately, and immediately called to mind an ocean liner…But I used to compare Koons's bunny to Richard, in terms of Koons's acid satire against the kind of Leger-Brancusi sense of the optimism of metal, and the curse that bunny puts on the idea of the utopia. Where now the gleam of that chrome is more like a trashy new car or aluminum packaging, and less like the utopian vision of the future that you got in the investment in shining metal in Brancusi. Richard's stuff is so consciously rustic, rusted, that I always feel it has a kind of elegiac feeling to it. A profound nostalgia for that kind of substance, weight, that literally rusts, and playing on that rust to make something very beautiful. But it's still not a utopian, forward-looking vision of the material, it's backward looking."

When RS's works are being installed at a museum, you have to move them into an empty space and then build walls around them. New (German) technique of moving plates around on hydraulic boots, which allow you to skate them across the floor. "When we gave the specs to Taniguchi for the new Museum of Modern Art, one of the conditions was, you have to build a contemporary space whose floor is strong enough to hold these pieces, and open enough to hold these pieces, and you have to figure out a way to get them in and out of the building. So there is a special wall on the side of the contemporary gallery that opens – the whole gallery wall opens to the outdoors, so that a crane can bring in something the side of Richard's work."

Leon Black has bought three Serras – a double torqued ellipse, a single torqued ellipse, and another piece, for his property in Bedford.

RS has the self-discipline to insulate himself against anything mediocre. Unlike Rodin.
[END SIDE A]

Remembers going down to DC for the DeKooning show with RS. "He really wants to argue the point…to press the issue, you know, what's the strongest picture? Is this picture as good as that picture? When was he really strong? What are his strong attributes? How would you compare him to Newman? To Pollock? Richard is challenging you. Often I've been in conversations with him where he's read piece I've written, and he'll tell me which ones I liked and which he didn't and for which reasons. He's always encouraging people to think in terms of getting better. We were both disappointed by that DeKooning show, which didn't include works on paper. He was dismayed. He's constantly looking for peak experiences.

"Another thing about Richard, he's gotten himself in the circle of the October crowd, so that he's the enfant cheri of Ros, and Hal Foster, and Doug Crimp. He's happy and comfortable with those people, because they're deeply serious intellectual, because they're ideological, and he still likes to think of himself as a man of the left. The academic left. But I wonder if in the long run he 's doing himself a favor, because I think the work is so much larger than that crowd is getting out of it. That's why if I'd stayed at the Modern – given a second retrospective \at the Modern, and the power of that, he might have been willing to cede some of that authority and let a different vision get into the work. You know he is doing a big show at the Modern. Shortly after the museum reopens. The first big temporary show out of the gate will be Serra, which will be done jointly with DIA. DIA's going to do the early work, and we're going to do the big late stuff, in our big contemporary gallery on the ground floor. Why do I keep saying we? They are going to… That's five years off. The big gallery can hold at least the three Serras that we own, simultaneously…"

Smithson - His writings are very important, and the aerial image of Spiral Jetty is burned into our consciousness. "But the thing up close, the actual sculptures that he made – he was a terribly fabricator. When he just piled dirt on the floor I had a certain amount of poetry, but all of those metal sculptures are all poor, and I think he was a clunky draftsman. I think of his work as being much more didactic than Richard's. Much less immediately physical, much more conceptual and didactic, and to me much less satisfying."

RS Drawings - "I've always loved the big oil-stick drawings. I think the sheer smell of them, the physical presence, is wonderful. Great, powerful surface, and I love the way that after a while they bleed out into the paper…Also, the relationship to things like Barnett Newman, where you get a similar kind of feeling, the massive feel versus narrow shape. But in Richard's case it 's always about pinching, pushing, crowding etcetera, so the envelope frame of the paper being compressed, stretched, pinched; the white space is always being activated by the shapes that he makes. I think Newman's been important for Serra. But again, Newman's work seems almost ethereal in comparison with the physicality of Richard's. And his choice of using the oil-stick medium – I think those big round drawings, which he actually stomped on, they're like grape crushers. He got on top of them and did them on the floor, stamping stuff through screens for the splatter effect. The feeling of Richard's work has always had something to do with the process by which it's made. In the oil-stick drawings is isn't just the power of the shapes, it's that sense of the intense labor, the physicality in a dual sense – both as to the materials and their presence, and the sense of what he had to do to get them to that state." Kirk and Elyn once considered buying one, but decided they couldn't live with it – too powerful, would take over their life.

"He's very self-critical, and thinks hard about the intellectual content of what he's doing, but the work never feels self-conscious, somehow. It's an odd combination to have an artist who's as intellectual as he is, where the work is as little self-conscious.'

No Irony - "After the Pollock show, I asked myself, can you find anyone who aspires to this level, this scale of achievement, and has no irony? Nauman is saturated in irony. Johns is saturated in irony. The idea of reaching for the monumental scale without any sense of the undercutting subversion of irony – it's very hard to find in contemporary art. And in that sense the line from Newman to Serra is correct. But Serra is without the piety, the mumbo-jumbo about mystic religion. It's an art that doesn't compromise with irony."

"I think of Richard as having literally zero contact with Duchamp, who was so important to Jasper." [END INVU]

(1)

Clara Weyergraf-Serra
(6 Feb. 02)

Met RS in the gallery of Alexander von Berswordt, where she worked, in 1976. RS story about the steel mill strike is not quite right. Clara was very involved then with post-1968 leftist politics, and "I probably talked a lot about that." No strike at the time. The film they did together was made in the forge, where they forge huge pieces of red-hot steel (highly visual images), the workers in protective suits. [END SIDE A]. They juxtaposed images of the forge with Clara's interviews with workers – two-part film. Clara did speak English, which she'd learned in high school. "I never liked the language very much. I was fluent in French, I had studied in France, I did not like to speak English and I definitely did not speak it very well. But I understood. Communication was – well, it was minimal." But they fell in love.

Terminal became a political issue in Bochum, but that was not really painful for Richard because he wasn't involved in it. A local political battle. Alexander did a lot to get the piece there and to deal with the politics. Graffiti – not just there. "Richard has a piece in Basel, one of the most anal cities in Europe, and that piece is continuously graffitied. It still happens." Very annoying but not upsetting. "If you decide to put pieces in an open context, then that's something you have to deal with. In Basel, they found you can cover the steel with a solution that does not prevent the steel from rusting, but protects it in that if they put graffiti on top you can wash the graffiti off. But then you have to recover the whole thing with another protective coat. In Basel they do that every so often."

RS and Alexander – neither paternal nor fraternal relationship. Much more than a relationship between a dealer and an artist. "Alexander is, apart from Leo and Dick Bellamy, probably the most important person that Richard has met. He has enabled Richard to do things that otherwise would be hard to imagine happening. He has opened the door to production facilities in Germany…which are not easy to get into." In US, you are like a tiny fly in the crowd, they couldn't care less about Richard. His pieces require a degree of precision that is not available. Alexander "really did understand when he met Richard how he could really help him by introducing him to the most important operators in the German steel industry. There is no other place in the world that can make plates in the world as big as Richard needs them, for the ellipses and the spirals. The large plates all come from Germany. It is a very specialized production. Richard started in Maryland, in Baltimore. He did the first couple of ellipses in Maryland, but they were in the process of going bankrupt. Because they were already in the way of closing down, they made the first few pieces but they were not terribly good – it was hard. There was another shipyard in England that could have done it, but I think they ended up saying no because of the production problem. Richard's pieces are very labor intensive…to get involved in a highly complicated, labor intensive process which also has to be very very precise, they are not interested. They don't make enough money." Now he works exclusively with a small place close to Frankfurt.

Much cheaper to ship across the Atlantic than by land across the US.

Tilted Arc and its removal – "Look, public commissions are rare. It was a public commission in New York. It had taken a long time" – long and painful process to get it there. After all he went through, with review after review, "He never thought the piece would ever come down. And Richard felt he had been assured the piece would be there forever, so to speak. I really think he felt betrayed." The decision to take it to court – "I think it was worth fighting, but given what I know now, in terms of how the law stood in this country, it was a battle that was lost from the beginning." Jay Topkis, who took the case pro bono after Gustave Harrow died, told them that he would do what he could to help them, but "he was pretty clear it was not going to…" "Gus Harrow was totally dedicated, and put his whole being into the fight. He was convinced that we had a chance, and convinced us that we had a chance…The good part of this process was that we ended up with John [Silberman].

If they'd had a lawyer like John, Richard would never have signed the contract he signed with GSA, with no reasonable protection. "Property laws are the strongest laws in this country. If you decide to sell your property, and you have a piece of art on your property, you cannot restrict any buyer of the piece to guarantee…" But as result of Tilted Arc case the GSA changed its procedures – now there is community involvement, but also the GSA has a specific right to dismantle anything they put up.

For a while afterward, Richard was angry and emotional. "Richard has emotions which I simply could not share. I am German, I have never had a deep love for my country. I am the first generation born after 1945 – the notion of 'my country' is so foreign to me!"

Clara-Clara (270 ff) – moved to 13th arrondissement, got graffitied with spray paint, moved to storage. May be re-sited in near future.

Cape Breton - Not so different from NY, what with phones and computers. Richard is a nine-to-five person, "very regular life," and he keeps to that schedule. Clara goes to the beach every morning, no matter what the weather's like. Richard draws, Clara does what she does here. Talks to Alexander by phone, about operations in Germany, etc.

Clara was trained as an art historian – specialist in Mondrian. She soon discovered that with Richard she could not do anything else, so she dropped writing. She makes it clear that she is in no way a collaborator in Richard's work, but she is totally involved with it. The DIA installation was one of her favorites.

Richard's increasing fame - "You know, Richard doesn't think about it, and neither do I. I think Richard feels a great responsibility towards his work…and that hasn't changed. I think Richard is very sane about that. Whatever Richard does, he doesn't worry too much about the audience reception… Look, Richard is very happy about that [the expanded audience], but does it change his attitude? No. No."

Is Richard a happy man? "I don't think there is such a thing as a happy man. Are you a happy man? You know, I think that there are moments of gratification, but they come and go. And then it is on to the next problem. The nature of the work goes so much

beyond the studio walls. I don't know if he mentioned that he just signed a contract to do piece for the airport in Toronto. That contract took a year and a half to negotiate… Richard gets very impatient…" Architect is Moshe Safdie.

It has never yet happened that a client has turned down one of Richard's proposals. He gets paid a certain sum to do the proposal – enough to cover his expenses and a little more. (Before he developed the proposal concept, there were many bad experiences). Once a proposal is accepted, the design does not change. It's set. He has usually made a full-scale mock-up on the site, surveyed the site, during the proposal stage. The current system is clear, and relatively simple. [END INVU]

(1)

Ealan Wingate
(7 March 02)

Met RS in the seventies, when he was working at Sonnabend Gallery. Richard was a friend of Mel Bochner then, they'd shoot baskets together down near Tribeca. Mel was with Dorothea Rockburne, Richard with Joan Jonas. The artists all used to come to each other's openings then – Richard still does, but many others of his generation no longer do.

With Richard, "it's always about the art, about his art. When you see him gleeful, like a seven-year-old, and literally jumping up and down, is when an installation is going well, and a plate goes up right, and it does what it's supposed to do…I can remember when we were installing a piece on Wooster Street – the only other way of putting it would be to jump age groups down to something like seven or eight years old, in which the best truck had just been delivered! And sometimes, if a measurement isn't just right or something isn't working, it's just catastrophic… it's like taking away the truck."

"It's this extraordinary focus."

RS had made shows with Larry Gagosian in California, before Larry returned to NY and opened on 23rd Street. Gagosian opened downtown space here in November 1991, with Serra's 'Two Forged Rounds for Buster Keaton.' This was first time Ealan worked with RS. Since then, there's been a show every other year. The art world was still in a recession then (Ealan had closed his own gallery because of it), and the extraordinary thing was that the Serra show brought in 2,500 people a day. "We were amazed. There were long stretches of time when the swinging front door wouldn't get a chance to shut because of the flow of people. That piece took from seven to eight months to sell, after the show's closing." It went to the Meyerhofs in Maryland, which means it will probably go to the National Gallery.

"The next piece, which was in 1993, was 'Intersection II.' That sold while the show was up. [to MOMA] Two years later, in 1995, we did a show of the six blocks. That didn't sell immediately, each of them weighing around 22 tons. [They were sold to Pinault just before the 1998 show there]. But what I'm getting around to is that by now, the shows are selling while they're up…" The new space opened with 'Switch,' which is now at MOMA. The last show had 'Sylvester,' 'Bellamy,' 'The Union of the Torus and the Sphere,' the elevational wedge, 'Frazier and Ali' (made for a show in 1991 at the Tate; by reconfiguring their installation it becomes a different piece). The prices ranged from just under $1 million to over $3 million, and everything sold. (tape #619, side A).One buyer acquired the third large Serra for his property.

"Richard is somebody at the top of his art." And yet he's constantly asking himself (and others) what about this idea, would this work, etc etc. People talk about aggression and so forth, but his pieces "are all about Richard's drawing, articulated. They are and remain very much about drawing, and that's why they're such a repository of intelligent [thinking]."

The opening for last show - after the terrifying events of the fall, they had no idea how many people would show up. The show was supposed to open October 11th, but had to be delayed a week, until the 18th. The streets in that area had been pretty empty since 9/11. How do you celebrate an opening of six new Serra sculptures at such a time? (They'd given the whole month of September to installation, because it was so complicated. By Sept 11 they had the two blocks in, four of the six plate pieces, and the elevational wedge – everything but the two spirals.) Several other galleries were opening shows on the same date, Oct. 18. They got Le Zinc to cater theirs, and they were prepared for 1,500 people. "Everybody was bathed in antidote. It was an extraordinary feeling of gift, a sense of abstraction and monument over the mundane. Everybody was up, but it wasn't silly giddy – it was somber-giddy!" The show was somber in coloration, austere in the number of pieces, and presenting a very radical approach to abstraction. Around three thousand people came, between 6 and 8 p.m. They estimate that 75,000 saw the show, in eight weeks (closed Dec. 16).

In other words, the gallery gave four months to the show. "But what you can't forget is that the invitation to Richard resulted in six new pieces, that would not have happened otherwise. Look at what we collectively – all of us – got."

"Richard is never cavalier – there's never any, 'Trust me, it'll be fabulous.' He has to see it every step of the way." [END SIDE A]

The popular response to his work now - "I think they find that it is larger than they are, more meaningful, and more fun. Gives them a thrill and a charge, and in the case of the spirals or the torqued ellipses, when you walk around and you have this sense of understanding and lack of understanding – it 's not the fun-house thing of Damien Hirst, it's much more that there's this a priori knowledge of the world…and this is something that becomes… When David Sylester gave that talk, one section of it was just about the look of steel, how it 's like water, and like solid, and it's clear, and all these various sensations. There's the thrill of the shipyard, the thrill of the scale, it gets us outside of ourselves." The response is highly visceral. At the gallery, Ealan and others spent a lot of time with the six-plate and other pieces, just absorbing them.

Sense that they might collapse? "I think the best pieces of Richard's play with your sphincter in that way. When you look at a good prop piece and you go, 'Oh, my God!' and you walk back very quietly and hope that it will forget you're looking at it. But I think that is very positive. I think there is some of that [in the big new pieces.] Hearsay information meant nothing with that show, you had to go through it. We even had a wedding in one of the spirals. Just for three people, minister and wife and husband – it was all of ten minutes."

Larry gave the original of the New Yorker cartoon to Serra as a birthday present – the Barsatti one of the dog inside the spiral and his master called for him outside.

RS and Clara live a very quiet, very private life.

"Richard is a lot of work because there's a lot of him. T his is no shrinking violet. He doesn't whisper on the phone."

His drawing show was scheduled to be uptown, but Richard wanted it at the Chelsea Gallery. Not a retrospective – four different work periods. "He struggled greatly in the first two, and in the last two he came to kind of the payoff. He's been looking at them, and interweaving them. They are very experiential. They're not so much about following a line as they are following a track. You wonder if you are dealing with something that involves walking, that is circular or oval or spiraling kind of way, and what it is like to do that over and over again. It's about the eye going over something. It goes from very delicate drawings to drawings that seem to be absolutely Mack trucks. Fantastic range within one body of work, of maybe two and a half years, three years. Up in Nova Scotia. Again, a commitment to the focus. The four work periods resulted in something like ninety sheets." They're whittling it down – now at fifty but will be fewer. They'll be shown the space where the spirals were in last show."

[END INVU]