the one American artist who could be set down in Paris and the next day

cult man. And another .

Because so often now you hear painters say, "Oh, So-and-So is doing X

that something you planned to do? Or was it something that happened?

all kinds of things somewhere in the '40s, started being published. Was

school but it was just in a loft with a dozen students.

values here?

drive a Mercedes-Benz down the street.

mentioned money, and the American artists talked about money 90

broke into uproarious laughter except Breton and Ernst who, as I say,

cult. Seligmann was always very pleasant, but a little

pretentious. And Breton was a very di

PAUL CUMMINGS: He was also sort of needling people.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Yes. I knew them all well but probably the three I

Voyage

was the thing to do. You know, like Baudelaire says at the end of

now—and I don't mean this cynically—but that I was naive. I realize now

would help start a new movement. It was then that Baziotes and I went to

younger , he was my age—which is to say we were in our 20s—and they

did you like that, and him, and the experience?

he probably wanted to do was put it next to a Poussin and see if it was

to stand against both, the way Cézanne would put one of his landscapes

that it was using such standards. And so on right down the line.

goddamned lie. I mean America is not like that. Reality is not like that.

Irish literature, or Spanish literature. Which I wouldn't deny for a

things that civilizations have discovered make life a very comfortable,

end there's something puritanically implacable about my mind if I really

reigning—Fletcher Martin—all the people who were the reigning stars of

whole kind of American "scene" painting that was going on.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Yes, I do think it has changed a lot. I mean a guy

find the hard way to do things? Because you don't do things easily, you

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: I don't know—no, I think it's because Surrealism

more independent? Or just never culturally had the possibility of thinking

Surrealists were so displaced that it went on well into middle age. And

moral and physical support from other people, and then as you become

erences. The Americans never had that because Abstract

ff

and that it was primarily a literary movement. So that there was an

ff

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: The first year in a thing called the Rhinelander

it. It was a remote thing. So I was very alone really. And the first two

years, and a couple of scholars. But you see they were all training to be

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: There were several students that we talked a lot:

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was there anybody in Meyer Schapiro's classes that

PAUL CUMMINGS: For example, you came back after a summer in

too. And I was always that way as a teacher and as a student.

culty with them because I do my own thing so that, you

PAUL CUMMINGS: To go back to the University of Oregon, how did you

is a kind of classicism, that structural sense, then I have a classical side

is almost—well, Georges Duthuit wrote sometime—though I've never

and Scandinavian, and all that French thing is based on everything

to work that way. I mean very much in my own way, very beautifully.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Well, I had painted some in Paris. In fact, I had a

[END OF TRACK]
PAUL CUMMINGS: What about the local community? Did you get along with people there?

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: That was a very special kind of atmosphere. When I arrived there was a kind of place for expatriates—people from Europe and elsewhere. Asheville, which is, I gather, a rather aristocratic Southern town, in a way was more an international—

PAUL CUMMINGS: You had one show with Peggy Guggenheim, right?

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Yes. I didn't feel that I was a very good friend to her, but at the same time I would have to say that my interaction with her was probably the most important fellowship that I had. She was very important to me in terms of my understanding of how the art world worked in general. I think she was the only person I knew who was close to Paul Klee. She had been his secretary and she had a kind of understanding of how to handle artists and how to print their words. She understood the importance of the artist in relation to the public.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In what way? Because Surrealism had very political connotations?

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: No. Not at all. Partly because, unexpectedly, simultaneously, the great School of Paris was more an international—

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PAUL CUMMINGS: What about the local community? Did you get along with people there?
sympathetic to hard-edge abstraction as well as to Abstract

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: I might have or they might have asked me to join a thing. I mean, when you say it struck me that—and in the late 1960s, million. And um, Rice's horrified reaction that anybody would assert such know. It's, it always seemed to me a complete contradiction with his the um, his close association with the group theater in the '30s. I don't

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Because there are all sorts of—

Incredibly di

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Uh, whether they were friends or not, they

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think that there's been any influence in your

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think the art world has produced such

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, it's interesting mentioning the blue and then

PAUL CUMMINGS: But you found that the teaching really cut into your

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was the reaction like from other painters when

PAUL CUMMINGS: What would it be to a Frenchman, though?

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, it was incredibly odd. I had a friend who had a child, had two more, as I said, and I had to take the

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PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, and then Tokyo. And they just, you know, it might have been in a gallery, but I think it was one that resurrected a movement, and also partially created a new one that was your first international exhibition, wasn't it, of that type? Wasn't that also the time when you were in the sole representative of the American avant-garde. But for me, it, I don't withdraw their early, original Dada work. And that would have wrecked it takes over. And then somewhere along the line, I take over. But I like in a certain moment you have a half-realized structure on your hands. So it was purely a practical expedient when she was about eight months pregnant. And I was suddenly struck when I was in a certain moment you have a half-realized structure on your hands.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Mm-hmm [a laugh].

PAUL CUMMINGS: I thought—I was thinking it would have been larger.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: No. The first ones were—the first completed one, before, the—in the '40s, the largest ones were still what now would be after the mid-'50s, the largest size that I began to in the '50s, was paint large pictures. And also the first field painting as they say now in some—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. Oh.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Um, are you—probably I should add the fourth different images or predecessor of mine. That I looked at a picture and thought, “Oh. He’s doing a field painting.” And there’s also been a rhyming of darkness with lightness. And then in the face of living, where the collages are much more—though they’re still involved in ultimate concerns so to speak, my ultimate view of the nature of living, where the collages are much more—though they’re still involved in ultimate concerns so to speak, my ultimate view of the nature of the place. The people who owned the place didn’t use it, and at the same looking at the sea, and contemplating what I would do if I couldn’t get going about its business, or those rudimentary human pleasures of Cigarettes, wine, chocolate things, and, and—

PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: I think so. I really, I really think so. I also, I think I was in a di...

PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Mm-hmm [a laugh].

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you find that in making collages, it is done as a...

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Mm-hmm [a laugh]. In fact, in the early...

PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: —on anybody.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Et cetera. So it was purely a practical expedient.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When—there’s another uh, there’s the group of what I...

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Uh, John McHenry because it’s of my uh, the...

PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Mm-hmm [a laugh].

PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Mm-hmm [a laugh].

PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Absolutely.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yeah.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: —on anybody.

PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: —on anybody.

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PAUL CUMMINGS: —on anybody.
in the beginning? Was it exciting, complicated, difficult?

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's interesting the close relationship to nature.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Oh, yeah. I like it better than any place in America. I mean, to the atmosphere.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: He's interested in almost in the sense of physics. The much as sky, and earth, and buildings, and everything else. They have ultimate terms?

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter]

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Did you ever play with Paul Magriel in those games where you get away from the house and the family one evening a week—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter] Yes. Yeah, I've heard. He was a madman.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Yeah. Uh-huh. I mean, it's one of the clearest things, by the money. And I thought the chances are 10 to one that I have a exactly what you would do if you were playing for $20. Don't get rattled by the money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter] The most fun was, they gave us a first-class railroad ticket, good for the most part. It took us something like 36 hours to get from New York to New York, in houses, block houses. This was on a block of all houses with

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: No. And the tremendous push behind especially de

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, I think that, that's pretty much true of people. Though Lippold's of German descent and not at all antagonistic toward

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: The most fun was, they gave us a first-class railroad ticket, good for

PAUL CUMMINGS: The thing all over again.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: No. No. I didn't make any money from paintings. So there was still no great—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think it's possible to be a good dealer and be normal to have realized in the '60s.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: He—I found them all bullies.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter] Did that have any particular meaning at that

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: London taste. He probably really likes, if he likes any pictures, probably can understand his going for Op, which has a sort of also popular ,

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter] Do you think it's possible to be a good dealer and be like, recently.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: I don't know. I think Marlborough's an e

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter] By Maurice

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: I don't know. I think Marlborough's an e

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter] What's a monopoly, like Standard Oil in the early days, or General Motors. And I

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: No. No. I didn't make any money from paintings

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter] I wish I could do it all over again because now my feelings about

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ROBERT MOTHERWELL: No. No. I didn't make any money from paintings

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughter] He essentially used American artists, as many dealers do

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ROBERT MOTHERWELL: That's his kind of thoughtfulness. And put them up in the studio. Gauloises pack is reddish blue or ultramarine blue, really. And a week for what I like that way. Though in the case of the Gauloises, it so by the same friend—

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean, all of this material which, which to me has some meaning, even if it's not quite clear to me what it is.”

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Not nearly to that degree. And autobiographical.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: One thing that remains absolutely steady in me, that is having children. But for me, the only reason I can imagine—

PAUL CUMMINGS: I remember sitting in the Guggenheim awards for a year or so on. What you have to do is use a national, uh, and then you can pull them out, like sliding screens and see 10 pictures on a screen, and, but in being—seeing them more often, be more sure of what I want to do. And of course, you can pull them out, like sliding screens and see 10 pictures on a screen.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: You mean, do you make use of the assistants?

PAUL CUMMINGS: I would say much more independence than that. I also think working with assistants changes one's concepts—

RHODES WITMER: Now, I guess since you've been here. I hadn't—

PAUL CUMMINGS: Speaking of prints—I also have a printer working for me.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: And uh, he has tremendous presses. Oh, that's lithography?

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Well, that's [inaudible], but this, I have aprint now, I guess since you've been here. I hadn't—

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Etching.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: And when we finished all that work, we had to get a maker to make the crates for us to send it all back to.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I know a lot of artists talk a lot about masterpieces, you know. Either great contemporary masterpieces or they have to have a Guggenheim awards for a year or so on. What you have to do is use a national, uh, and then you can pull them out, like sliding screens and see 10 pictures on a screen, and, but in being—seeing them more often, be more sure of what I want to do. And of course, you can pull them out, like sliding screens and see 10 pictures on a screen.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: But on the other hand, um, if he hadn't worked with assistants, he's made these several stretchers very poorly, he could have painted a kind of laying them out?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Gluing it down.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: um, he has tremendous presses. Oh, that's lithography?

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PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I know a lot of artists talk a lot about masterpieces, you know. Either great contemporary masterpieces or they have to have a Guggenheim awards for a year or so on. What you have to do is use a national, uh, and then you can pull them out, like sliding screens and see 10 pictures on a screen, and, but in being—seeing them more often, be more sure of what I want to do. And of course, you can pull them out, like sliding screens and see 10 pictures on a screen.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: But on the other hand, um, if he hadn't worked with assistants, he's made these several stretchers very poorly, he could have painted a kind of laying them out?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Gluing it down.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: um, he has tremendous presses. Oh, that's lithography?

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Well, that's [inaudible], but this, I have a print now, I guess since you've been here. I hadn't—

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ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Etching.
Everybody still thinks that that's the way I paint.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.]

Now I'm much more a veteran of the wars, so to speak.

Those were very funny reviews. Uh, I never saw any reviews from Esson.

In Italy, it was—I saw some of the reviews and there it was very corny painter. Teaches at Bennington. I forget his name for the moment.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Well, another funny thing happened, and that is that I profoundly believe that a museum should not do that. I mean, at a summation show into much more the kind of shows that an avant-garde artist such a show. And in fact, the older I grow, the more I'm in favor of starting competing with the dealers at that point. You know, wanting to do the Pollock show. And it was much more brilliantly hung, and edited, and even the curators. And again I made a big mistake. Uh, I chose Frank O'Hara, and I think had nothing to do with anybody else—I mean, no one else had this percent job because you know, my reputation, my work, my personality wouldn't mean a couple of hundred pages a day. Periodicals, books, probably read more than I've painted. And it's very rarely that I would have the intention of following through this original program, I had to distort it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Isn't that incredible?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Why do you think Marlborough ended up being like that?

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long did the Pollock show last?

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you think's happened to that value of having a German and an Italian, think it had some meaning, even if it's not quite clear to me what it is.
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ROBERT MOTHERWELL: —and smoked Gauloises. [Inaudible.]

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: And that, that's exactly how I mean, every art... got the label.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: I never, I never even saw the bottle of wine. I just drink Chateau Latour.

went out and bought a bottle of Chateau Latour. Now everybody thinks I mind having a wine label around.” So Ken Tyler, who’s moved here now, said, “What would you like?” And I said, “Okay, I’ll try them all. We did mostly on stones I think. It’s hard for me to remember now. And there was some aluminum, but I tried them all. We did mostly on stones I think.

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.] Oh, marvelous.

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Tried them all. We did mostly on stones I think. Here it’s always been copper. At Gemini, it was mainly stone, but with... and so on. Also um, it’s in the past 10 years that I’ve done all my... —everybody thinks that there are lots of huge woodcuts are. What it can do is give you a very clear outline, but if you—

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: Um, well, it’s a basically a very insensitive... —everybody thinks that there are lots of huge woodcuts are. What it can do is give you a very clear outline, but if you—

PAUL CUMMINGS: [Laughs.] You did a few screen prints, didn’t you? Silkscreen.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yeah. They become constricted by their knowledge. And I’ve never had that in a dealer before in any medium. I mean, they’ve—

ROBERT MOTHERWELL: —to believe. Otherwise, I wouldn’t do it at all. I

[Audio break.]