

Diana Kamin (DK) and Marvin Taylor (MT) interviewing Gary Schneider (GS) on August 2, 2016

DK: This is August 2nd, 2016, Diana Kamin and Marvin Taylor interviewing Gary Schneider at Fales Library. So you were telling us about your personal relationship with Tom [Rauffenbart] and David [Wojnarowicz].

GS: Yeah, Tom and David. I mean, it's interesting that it was really about us four. And I haven't seen Tom in a long time. I would love to see him. But it's funny how those things shift, and he's now in Inwood and it's a little tougher.

DK: When did you first meet David?

GS: Oh my god. I don't know. I'm now going to be contradicting some of the information in Cynthia's book. [all laugh] My memory's not great. And of course, I don't have John [Erdman] with me, my partner. And he's got a better memory. I'm not exactly sure when, but it was definitely through Peter Hujar. And Peter was infatuated with him really early, and so I went to some of the early performances of 3 Teens Kill 4. Where David was in the back doing, like, graffiti on the backdrops.

DK: Could you tell us more about those performances?

GS: I don't; I mean, that's what I remember. [all laugh]

DK: Graffiti using stencils? He talked about

GS: Do you have any of that work?

MT: We have the stencils, a lot of them.

GS: The stencils from that.

MT: Yes.

GS: But he also used those around town.

MT: Exactly.

GS: The same stencils. The burning house and the running figure.

MT: And the falling man.

GS: Falling man. Oh, so you have the stencils. Ooh; can I change the subject briefly?

DK: Sure. Of course.

GS: Sorry; I know you have questions. Did you find the negatives?

MT: Oh yes.

GS: Do you have the negatives from the *Sex Series*?

MT: You know, I've never looked. We have the negatives.

GS: They're large format, so they're not like any of his negatives. They would be 8x10. Each one would be the negative, which was a copy negative; that's what I did in those days. Well, we can talk about it when we get there.

MT: No, this is important. Let's.

GS: Yeah, because I really would love to locate them, because my entire collection of David's work, and it's large-ish, is now a part of the printers proof collection at Harvard University Art Museums. And they're doing a show in 2018. And if you have the negatives, I'd love to borrow them. Well, they would love to.

MT: I don't think we do, because I know the negative boxes that we have and they're all small. I've never seen

GS: It's all 35 millimeter; right?

MT: Yes, exactly.

GS: Oh, what a pity.

MT: Yeah, because we found the negatives in with the contact sheets in folders that Aperture had labeled.

GS: Oh.

MT: So we had both

GS: When did Aperture get hold of them?

MT: When they did *Brush Fires in the Social Landscape*.

GS: The original one.

MT: Right.

GS: Damn. I wonder if the negatives went to California, because they were going to maybe, they did actually, edition them, with Nash Editions. And nothing sold, so nothing ever was made. I don't know; it's worth researching.

MT: Yes, absolutely. That's one for us to actually check in the archive. But I don't remember ever seeing it.

GS: Yes, if you could.

DK: I didn't see any negatives that size in the finding aids, and that would have been listed. Even if the content wasn't recorded, the size would have been recorded.

GS: Yes; there wouldn't have been any contact sheets with it.

DK: Right.

GS: They would just be in 8x10 envelopes.

MT: Right.

GS: Oh, what a pity. They're doing a show of, it's a series of great authors, but also they're doing kind of ephemera. It's sort of a teaching show, and so, we'll talk about process. And the copy work I did for *Sex Series* I'm the most proud of, actually, even though I did a lot of copy work for people like Richard Avedon and Francesco Scavullo, people like that. Bob Gober.

MT: I actually have a question about David's photographs.

GS: Okay, yes, sorry I interrupted.

MT: No, it's fine.

DK: That's okay; we'll come back around to everything.

MT: So we have 5x7s and 8x10s, usually of the same images, and then on occasion, there are large prints.

GS: By large you mean what? 16x20, right?

MT: Yes, exactly. And so, did David print the smaller ones himself?

GS: Yes.

MT: At Peter's, I'm assuming.

GS: I never printed smaller prints, for him.

MT: Okay.

GS: Twenty by 24 and larger, the *Sex Series* was 20x24 that he made, which I don't know how he did it. He sort of probably rocked them in Peter's 16x20 trays, because he inherited Peter's loft and darkroom.

MT: Right.

[0:05:05]

GS: In fact, you probably have, he made this amazing print just after he moved in there. It was a photograph of Peter. It's actually reproduced in Cindy's book, of Peter trying on a pair of glasses.

MT: Yeah; yeah.

GS: Do you have a print of it?

MT: Not that I know. I don't know where she got that one. I have not seen it.

GS: I have a copy. I know Lynn Davis had a copy because she donated it to the Peter Hujar thing which is happening now, unfortunately not here but also – it's kind of interesting what's happening with you guys, and like, the community of it; right? But it's at the Morgan, the print, I saw it there. And I thought, oh my god; I thought we had the unique print. It's not signed. It's the only, yeah, so it's not a

DK: And he gave it to you and John as a gift after Peter died?

GS: I think he kind of, yeah. Because we weren't at the funeral, and so. We were in New Mexico, and those days, no one could contact us. So we arrived back to discover Peter had died and the funeral had happened. And between that and the, he had like a wake at the loft, yeah, he came into the lab with that print. Which is really sweet; it was really sweet. So yeah, David was very sensitive that way. I mean, he was very thoughtful. Sorry; I keep diverting.

MT: I was always curious about that, if David actually printed the smaller ones, because I assumed that he did.

GS: Yes, he did. He did.

MT: And there are solarized images, as well.

GS: Really?

MT: Yes.

GS: Oh my god; I would love to see some.

MT: Yes.

GS: I thought he was a great printer, by the way.

MT: And he played around with emulsions on some of them, too; experimenting.

GS: Really?

MT: And so, yeah, it's interesting to just look through the binders. We have, I think, 5,000 prints or something like that.

GS: Oh my god! Oh, so he loved the darkroom.

MT: It seems; yeah.

GS: But do you think all of these prints were made after he inherited the loft from Peter?

MT: I don't know because there are a lot of Rimbaud photographs.

GS: There are?

MT: Because he never really put that together in a systematic way. And then people afterward have tried to bring all of them together. And I think that, was it Roth? I've forgotten his first name.

GS: Yeah, yeah, yeah; Andrew.

MT: Andrew.

GS: He did a book.

MT: He did the book; it's pretty good.

GS: And then he printed a lot. And I didn't print those. I mean, they came to me like, gave me like a week's warning. So I didn't get to print those.

MT: But there's a lot of material that's never been seen, within the collection.

GS: Wow. And the Whitney hasn't come – [laughing] this is all being recorded.

MT: We're working together with them on the show.

GS: You are. So might they borrow some of these Rimbaud?

MT: I don't think they're going to show any of the archival material. They asked us to do a show at the same time.

GS: Will you?

MT: Yes. And so I've hired a curator.

GS: So that's very good; at Grey.

MT: No, here.

GS: You have a gallery now.

MT: A little gallery, yes.

GS: Oh yeah, you do.

MT: Yes. Grey's already booked for that time, and so.

GS: But it's kind of nice here because you can do some programming around it maybe.

MT: Exactly.

GS: That could be really interesting.

MT: Adam said, when they moved downtown, that he was going to do more with us. And they've kept their word. So I've spoken there a couple of times. It's nice, because we share a lot of similar interests, and so it's nice to have them back downtown.

GS: It's that sort of '80s, '90s community that everybody is sort of – I mean, I think that's why this collection went to Harvard, is that it kind of does, it sort of spans an interesting community.

MT: And it's a period that people are now paying a lot of attention to.

GS: Well, it was a weirdly changing cultural moment for America; right? Very interesting. Messy.

MT: Mm-hm. [all laugh]

GS: I know; it's not easy. It's not an easy one to untangle. It's not untangle-able. It's always sad when a curator tries to, because, why bother? Just kind of present it.

MT: Right. Just let it be a mess.

GS: Let it be a mess.

MT: Because it really was. And a lot of the work is very messy. Which I love.

GS: Yeah. I love that, too. There are sort of weirdly unresolved edges to it.

MT: Yes; David's work especially.

GS: Especially.

MT: But I'm talking too much. You have the questions.

DK: No, that actually brought us to the idea that Wojnarowicz started working in the darkroom for the first time himself after he moved into Hujar's loft. [9:53]

GS: No, that's not true, I discovered, because he actually did study photography. So like, as far as I can tell, and I'm not an expert on his history; right? Because you don't have these kind of conversations exactly. I mean, the photos that he used in paintings before he inherited Peter's darkroom were very scrappy prints; right? And I never made any of those for him. But I did processing for him. He came into the lab and then did a lot of film processing. And then, he wasn't printing those things, as far as I know. Although maybe you can tell me something else. Because if Tom has kept all of these things together rather than sell them, which is interesting that he did that; that's really sweet. Where did he print them? Do you know?

DK: I think that's then a big mystery, because at least according to Cindy Carr, that was when he began using the darkroom, regularly at least.

GS: Yes.

DK: Perhaps it may have been that he

GS: Oh yeah but no, but that's when he started showing photos as themselves. He didn't show photos before. Did he show the Rimbaud? Do we have history of him having exhibited the Rimbaud prints?¹

DK: I don't believe so. I believe after he moved into Hujar's loft he reprinted that series and showed them for the first time.

GS: Now I printed a few, but I think I printed them posthumously. I'm not sure if they're signed.

MT: The appeared in '81? It could be '83, in *Soho Weekly News*. There's an issue of *Soho Weekly News*.

GS: Oh. Of how many images?

MT: I don't remember.

GS: Do you have a copy?

MT: We have a copy of it, because people are always coming in to look at it because it is the first appearance of the Rimbaud images in print.

DK: I think that was, just another citation in, I believe it's *Fire in My Belly*, that they hadn't been shown in a gallery, perhaps, and he showed them for the first time, so it would have been in '88 or something, maybe, at PPOW.

GS: So there must be, because my prints, I never noticed which things are posthumous. I think they were. They were only a few, though, shown. Right? Do we know? Do they have the checklist, PPOW?

DK: We have a bunch of their checklists. I'll check that.

GS: Yeah. Okay. So he came to me to print those. I don't know why. Maybe he never exhibited his prints. Maybe he wanted me to make the prints for exhibition. That did happen sometimes.

DK: So, even at smaller sizes he would have you make prints for exhibitions?

GS: Yes, because he, for example, when I printed the Buffaloes, he had already made the 16x20 edition, actually, that, Penny has one of the 16x20s. I'm not sure if Tom still has a copy. They're really beautiful. It's on Peter's paper. They're on Portriga Rapid. They're gorgeous. And the paper didn't exist any more, so Peter left a stack of paper.

MT: That's really important.

¹ Nice article on the Rimbaud at <http://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/david-wojnarowicz>

GS: That's interesting; right?

MT: Yeah, that's really important for us.

GS: And in fact, the portrait of Peter that he printed is also on Portriga Rapid 11x14.

MT: Oh, that's really a wonderful detail.

GS: Very interesting; right?

MT: Yes, totally.

GS: It's an interesting aspect of this. So there was, you know, David was very much into the meaning of location or the notion of it, so Peter's paper would have been very, very important to him, that it was Peter's paper, Peter's darkroom, Peter's loft. But he didn't want me to copy those. He didn't want me to use them as guides, the buffaloes. When I made the 40x48s, he wanted me to print them without it – he never wanted me to use his prints as guides.

MT: Fascinating.

GS: Which is kind of curious; right?

MT: Yes, it is.

GS: It's very unusual for an artist.

MT: Well then, because he was so meticulous with other people about everything.

GS: Was he?

MT: Yes. That's what we've learned.

GS: He didn't just delegate. He delegated with me.

MT: Marion taking the image of his face coming out of the dirt.

GS: Maybe she owns some negatives that are hers, too. Is this true?

MT: I assume. But he was meticulous about every detail of that. And so that's one of the things she said. We also learned that the blue paint that he used, because one of the things we're interested in is, as we go forward and doing conservation, what kinds of things do conservators need to know. And it was called Ultima Blue. And it was just a paint that the store nearest his

GS: Like a house paint?

MT: Yes. Ultima Blue.

GS: Oh. [laughing] He didn't think about that. I mean, you know.

MT: So, it's interesting.

DK: Also he actually wrote about, in his description of the installation at Mnuchin, he wrote about the symbolism of blue and the healing blue light and the importance of the color blue to the sort of larger symbolism he was working with. So. [15:10]

MT: And that's something that's just come out in the work that we've done. Nobody's ever talked about the role that blue played. But it's there, especially in the painting. It's so prevalent.

DK: The question about this initial, whether or not he had maybe done some forays into printing before moving into Hujar's loft.

GS: I think he had.

DK: He had the time and the space to do more sustained experimentation at this time.

GS: Yes.

DK: And I guess in your previous interview with Cindy Carr, you and John had said that you encouraged him in his photographic work at this time.

GS: Yes.

DK: So I was interested to hear more about what that encouragement was like, what those discussions were like, if you talked about what his goals for photography were, or if he had technical questions that you worked with him on.

GS: I don't think I ever had to do any demonstration for him. I can't remember, actually. His photography is among his strongest work; isn't it?

MT: It is.

GS: Which is curious. You know. He died so young, and Peter died in '87; he dies '92. So there's that very short period, and he has two exhibitions, right? That include photography, before he died. So, a lot of photography. Oh, I love that you have that; John Erdman; that's my partner, at the bottom of the Schiller McLoughlin poster. [all laugh] Sorry; I'm sorry. God! You can tell I'm having one of those days! [all laugh] I just noticed it.

MT: That's from Ira Silverberg's collection.

GS: Oh, so, his archive is here, too?

MT: Yes.

GS: He's a neighbor of mine on Long Island. I've known Ira, from David, through David, actually, rather than Lynne Tillman. So it's Ira rather than Lynne's collection. Where's Lynne's archive? Here too? [laughing]

MT: Yes.

GS: Oh my god; this really is old home week, isn't it. It's extraordinary!

MT: The home is by John Fekner. And this is a Carl Apfelschnitt.

GS: Oh, that's wonderful.

MT: It's *High Risk*, which was done for that anthology that Ira edited with Amy Scholder.

GS: [laughing] It's all really a kind of community.

MT: This is an unfinished Wojnarowicz.

GS: Is it really? What was he thinking? It's like, oh, that's so curious. I would never have guessed that. Maybe it's sort of an under thing.

MT: Exactly. That's right. He would have put stuff on top of it.

GS: An image in the middle of it, like a painting in the middle of it.

MT: Right. But it's this incredible sense of letterform. Right? It's really beautiful. And this is from Fashion Moda, it's the sign from the Bronx.

GS: Oh, really? That is kind of extraordinary. When are you going to do like a huge show? That would be really wonderful, on like really strange ephemera; right?

MT: Yeah. Dennis's papers are here, too.

GS: Wow.

MT: And the most valuable painting in the room is the least interesting; it's a Duncan Grant.

GS: I don't even know the work. Weirdly enough. I know the name; I don't know the work, though.

MT: Duncan Grant is Bloomsbury.

GS: How come it's here?

MT: It was given to one of our collectors who was a close friend of Thornton Wilder, and so that's how it ended up here.

GS: I should actually keep it focused; I'm so sorry. [19:00]

MT: Sorry.

GS: I know, we have a problem, both of us. [all laugh] And Diana's not getting what she needs. So, encouraging him in his photography, in a way, since he started exhibiting his photography after

Peter died, we would have had a lot of conversations about photography. We would have, I assume.

DK: About things like paper and exposure, or more

GS: No, no; not technically. Just like the meaning of it in the context of his work, I imagine.

DK: And so you encouraged him to show it.

GS: Because the work changed, show to show his work changed quite dramatically, actually. No, he wanted to show it.

DK: Okay.

GS: I mean, he made – what's amazing about David is, he made those *Sex Series* montages. They're technically extraordinary. I mean, they're very crimped up and everything. Where's the unique set; do we know who has it?

MT: No.

GS: PPOW must have that information; no?

MT: I don't know. We have the mock-ups for a lot of things but not the *Sex Series*.

GS: But there were extra prints.

MT: There were.

GS: That they also do sell; right? I mean, they have. They have like __[20:25] proofs and things.

MT: Oh, they probably do.

GS: They are proofs; they actually are proofs; right?

MT: Yes. We might

GS: I'm dying to see some of them to see how different they are from the actual *Sex Series*. But if you think about the technical, like, how to work out positive and negative space in them, or even just, when you're printing from a slide, what does that do? Like, what is that contrast? How does that function? And then to balance it within a composition, right, is kind of extraordinary. I mean they're technically really kind of amazing.

DK: Well maybe since we've circled back to it a couple of times, that's one of my questions.

GS: I must tell you, of all the work that I made for David, the *Sex Series* was the most poetic of our relationship, because I could bring this technical thing to it and he had made these, like, masterpieces of the darkroom. Forget about politically, sexually, whatever that was, because I think they're his most important work, myself personally.

DK: So then maybe if you could walk us through. Because from my perspective, I have no idea how that montage was put together technically in the darkroom, and then what he did himself in the darkroom and what he brought to you, and then how the artist's prints were made.

GS: With the *Sex Series*. [22:00]

DK: Yes, with the *Sex Series*, specifically.

GS: Okay, I'm not going to try – I mean, to unpack them, is not -- well, I suppose I could have pulled off something of that technical prowess. But I think he had a kind of systematic mind, and he'd been making these, you know, he'd been making stencils from the beginning. And so it is very much reliant on the kind of negative space of a stencil. Right? And like how a stencil functions, like, what does that mean? How do you cut a stencil in order to have that image on, you know. So it starts with that. There are a lot of cut-outs in it. And then if you look, when there's a circle, there's usually a black ring around the circle to kind of in a way control the difference between the held-back light and then to impose light on that. And so it's a series of stencils. So I'd love to see the proofs to see the screw-ups, to see how he kind of worked out making that final one set that he thought was acceptable. And the one set that I copied, that I re-photographed for him.

DK: So he brought in a sort of master set that were re-photographed in order to make the

GS: The 16x20s, the smaller prints. What actually happened, and I think it's told in Cindy's book, and now I'm going to forget the sequence without John here. But he was very anxious about giving them up. I think they had, there was so much interest in them, he was going to lose them. You know how that is with a gallery show, it's like, you know, it can't be not for sale. I assume that's what happened. But what I remember is that I suggested to him that I make a copy of two of them in order to make an edition, and if he thought they were good enough, then we would go ahead with all of them, like all eight; right?

MT: There are a couple of attempts at *Sex Series* that never were editioned, as well.

GS: Well that's what I'd love to see.

MT: There are some others.

GS: I would love to see the sort of attempts, or the earlier versions, like the less complicated versions. Because they have to be states. In a way, they have to be states, because they're so – some of them are quite simple, but some of them are quite complex. Like the laying down of the text, that's simple stuff, on top of the image, like burning it through the print, burning the text through or holding it back. But he understood – did he make photograms? In the studio, too? Because it's sort of understanding of photogram, too. Yeah.

MT: I don't know what that is.

GS: A photogram is a camera-less print.

DK: So like an object on top of the exposed paper.

GS: Yes; yes. Like Man Ray made or yeah.

DK: You would think, because there's something stencil-like about that kind of, but I haven't seen any. I don't know if he

GS: They are kind of – he understood how to make a photogram very well; right? And also really complex moves. Which means, you have to remember all the – it's very systematic, those. They're like, huge system there. So they were really extraordinary. He was really happy with the results of the tests, and then I went ahead. So, if you put my 16x20s next to the original set, well, they're a different size because I told him we would have to do that in order to preserve the uniqueness of the original set. Right? But also in order to make the texts legible in order to separate – so I did a lot of work. And that's why I would love to get a hold of the negatives, to see what kinds of masks I made to exaggerate certain things, like some text, like some of the parts of the images.

DK: So that would have been the way that a complex print like that is made, is through techniques like masking, burning.

GS: Well he did masking directly under the enlarger. Right? Like, directly on the print.

DK: On the print.

GS: Yes. On the paper. So he would have a bunch of stencils that he worked with.

DK: That would create the insets.

GS: Create the different, like, in order to hold back areas to print something else within that held-back. Because the emulsion is what sticks.

DK: So I see what you mean by the graduated process.

GS: Yes. He'd have to know that in order to, like, put one image next to another image, he'd have to mask out the second go-round, then he'd have to locate that. It's not so easy. It's very layered. The *Sex Series* are really layered.

DK: But it's a layer on a single print.

GS: Yes; it's like montaged in the darkroom onto one sheet of photographic paper. What is the date on the? Is it like eighty—it's not late, I don't think.²

DK: [laughing] I have the same catalogue in my bag, too.

² *Sex Series* 1988-89

GS: I'm sorry. I really should have studied; I should have kept my dates. Maybe it's at the end. Although, we could just Google search it, I suppose; couldn't we. Oh, you have a hardcover. I never knew there was one.

DK: This is from the library.

GS: Okay, so they rebound it.

DK: So they have the illustrations but no – usually the captions appear on the page -- oh here we go, checklist, if he showed them in this.

MT: I want to say it's '87.

GS: I think so, because then the show is '88, isn't it?

MT: 1990.

GS: 1990. Oh, okay. So it was in the – when was that show? Was that show '91?

MT: This one?

GS: No, no, the show at PPOW where they were first shown.

MT: That I don't know.

DK: '89.

MT: '89, so it's wrong in here.

GS: Is the date on them? My god; there's a discrepancy.

DK: No, is the PPOW show.

GS: But they were shown at PPOW while he was alive.

MT: Mm-hm.

GS: Yes.

DK: It's so funny. Everywhere else in the book the captions appear on the facing page. And it's just for this series – it makes me think that they were '89 because maybe he was still working on them. Interesting.

MT: Well, this is from MoMA, saying 1990.

DK: Okay.

GS: The date on them?

MT: Yes. But I'll tell you

GS: My god; maybe my date is '90.

DK: That might be.

GS: The date for the editioned prints. Maybe.

DK: That might be.

MT: Yes; could be. Because

GS: And they must have the 16x20s. Do they have a full set, MoMA? [30:00]

MT: That I do not know. These are from Wagstaff's collection.

GS: Oh that's interesting, too. Wow.

MT: Theirs is 14 7/8 x 17 3/16.

GS: Oh, that's very interesting. So yeah, in order to do that circle, right? He would have had to have

DK: So he would have masked it on the first exposure.

GS: I don't know. He could have actually done, he could have done the circle first, of course. I don't know. [laughing] Right? And then covered it. You know?

DK: That's interesting. But it would have been in two exposures.

GS: In several. Because then, actually, in most of them there's like a black ring sort of separating the circled image from the ground.

MT: We have the pornography that he used for these.

GS: Oh, you do? They were from Peter's collection; right?

MT: Were they from Peter's collection?

GS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Apparently.

MT: That's interesting.

GS: I don't know any of these things.

MT: Well, see, that's fascinating.

GS: It's like, this is interesting stuff.

MT: One thing that's never been clear to us, and maybe you know, is, we have books and videos in the collection, but I can't tell what were Peter's and what were David's.

GS: You mean what was owned by whom.

MT: Right.

GS: Oh, that's interesting.

MT: Like, I have no idea if David was a Maria Callas fan?

GS: No, it was Peter.

MT: It was Peter. That's my hunch, when it's stuff like that, that it has to be Peter.

GS: [laughing] He was a huge Callas fan. But do you know that Vince Aletti inherited Peter's books?

MT: He did? Interesting.

DK: Aah.

GS: So maybe he could help you. Have you interviewed him yet?

MT: No, we haven't talked to Vince.

GS: I don't know if he's such a David person, exactly.

MT: Right.

GS: But I think he inherited Peter's books.

MT: That's interesting. Because a lot of the books in David's collection are source materials.

GS: For him.

MT: Yes. Things that he cut up.

GS: Oh really?

MT: Yes.

GS: So they've been vandalized.

MT: Some of them.

GS: Oh, really? Ooh, that's so interesting.

MT: And then others were ones that he photographed and then used images from.

GS: He re-photographed from the books.

MT: Yes. *Meet the Primates*, a book about monkeys, where they're all dressed as humans.

GS: Wait a sec, was that one of the images that was going to be, like with text on it, right at the end? Like, When I Put my Hands On.

MT: Yeah, that image is from, he broke in

GS: That's from a negative, though.

MT: Yes. He broke into the Indian burial mounds in Illinois.

GS: Well he told me at the time that you could go in but you weren't supposed to photograph; right? Is that true?

MT: Yes.

GS: That's in his memoirs?

MT: And he took the – and Barry remembers it. Barry Blinderman's one of the other people we've interviewed. Barry remembers him going out – Barry took him out there.

GS: Oh, so he was with him.

MT: Yes.

GS: That is about to leave my hands. I have a print of that one, like with the text, and it's about to, they're picking up on Monday for Harvard.

MT: It's my favorite of his works.

GS: Yes, me too, me too.

MT: It just rips your heart out; it's beautiful.

GS: Totally. Because if you think about when it was made and who he – I mean, in a way, Face in the Dirt does that, but that text is just like; oh. I start crying every time I read it.

MT: I get goosebumps.

GS: I get goosebumps, too. It's amazing. It's like one of the great texts. Yeah. If you're gay, [laughing] it's very moving.

MT: The One Day This Kid is good, too.

GS: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. I wish I had, actually, I wish they would re-reproduce that thing. I wouldn't mind living with that. That's an amazing poster.

DK: They did another edition in 2012, actually.

GS: They did?

DK: Yes, as a benefit for Printed Matter.

MT: After Sandy. I bought one. [34:00]

GS: You bought one from the Printed Matter thing.

MT: Yes.

GS: I wish I had known about that.³

MT: They're small, and they're letterpress.

GS: Oh, they are. How do you read it? And you can read it?

MT: Mm-hm.

GS: It's readable. Oh, that's interesting.

MT: So they set it letterpress, which is interesting. Yeah, I can't afford the real one.

GS: Is it like it's very valuable?

MT: David's have gone up in value.

DK: It's not a huge edition. It's a small edition.

GS: Oh, it is a small edition?

DK: Ten, I think.

GS: But it's large, though, isn't it?

MT: It is.

GS: Sort of a poster size?

DK: Yes, 30 by 40, something like that.

GS: Really? It's that big?

DK: Yeah, poster size.

MT: The Buffaloes, a copy of it sold last summer for \$145,000, which is a good price for a Wojnarowicz photo.

GS: I had to sell mine early. [laughing] There are a few Wojnarowicz's, you know, it's like he was -- He actually said, he gave me permission to sell it, he said, "Wait until I die before you sell it. Sell things if you need to make ends meet." And so we had to. So I had a painting of his we sold, one

³ As of August 2, 2016, the print is still available at <https://www.printedmatter.org/catalog/32472/>

of the big maps with a big head on it and a meteor. That we sold; well, we couldn't store that any more. That went to a museum; Newark. And then the Buffaloes. [laughing] Because I had a posthumous one. I had the 20x24 that Tom and I put together for a posthumous edition. So that's going to Harvard, too. So, okay, back to the *Sex Series*. What else about it? So yes, so he was able to print very complex -- because that's quite early. Look. He inherited the darkroom, I suppose he inherited it in '87. And you're saying it's either '89 or '90, the *Sex Series*; right?

DK: I think '88-'89 is stuck in my head, and it might be, I think probably MoMA's print is maybe printed '90.

GS: So yeah; maybe. I don't know how to look that up exactly. We didn't keep exactly great records. But actually, if we look -- yeah; maybe they're dated on the print. Anyway. What else about *Sex Series*?

DK: I guess as long as we're talking about other text works as well, just to sort of confirm technique, so you were saying that's a simple technique, that's just burning out the text in order to add a layer of text directly to the print.

GS: Yes. But it could have also been printed with a cel, with just one shot, like an image with a text often would have just been

DK: He could have re-photographed

GS: Would have just laid it down directly on the paper.

DK: And he would have had to have that cel typeset somewhere else?

GS: He could have just had it either screen printed or, I don't know, in those days. It could have been printed on cel, no? You could have made a Xerox onto a cel, possibly. I don't know. I don't know how the text happened. Do you have any of the cels?

MT: We may have some of the cels in the oversize material, in the map case. I vaguely remember that there is.

GS: So the show that happened up at, just happened. It was like a group show that had a valise of David, like one of his cases opened up. [laughing] Tell me the show.

MT: The show that Julie Ault did.⁴

GS: Julie Ault did; yes. Did that come from you, the case? Oh, I see. How many cases like that are there?

MT: We have only one.

GS: That one.

⁴ at Galerie Buchholz, NY

MT: Yes.

GS: I was like amazed at it.

MT: We have other objects that didn't make it into the Magic Box, that he collected.

GS: What about the elephant's skeleton, the baby elephant's skeleton?

MT: Karen Finley has it.

GS: Oh.

MT: Here's a question. Do you know anything about the child's skeleton?

GS: No. [laughter] Tell us about the child's skeleton. That's a bit scary.

MT: Well, it appears in some of the photographs. And it's usually dressed as a child. And there's a set with Peter and somebody else and David, and they're out in Jersey. And they're walking the skeleton around as though it's a child.

GS: Is it a real skeleton?

MT: It is.

GS: Are you sure?

MT: Oh yes.

GS: It's not like a plastic thing.

MT: No. No.

GS: How did he find that?

MT: He bought it in Paris in the '70s.

GS: Wow.

MT: Marion remembers. There was a shop near her house which is where he purchased it.

GS: That's an interesting one.

MT: Deeply problematic for us now, because it's human remains.

GS: Oh, it's in the collection.

MT: Mm-hm. It's dressed, and it's in a casket. And he used it in other installations.

GS: Did it live in a casket with him?

MT: Yes. He created, I'm sure he made the casket for it.

GS: I wonder if this is sort of influenced by Paul Thek in some real way. You know?

MT: That's interesting.

GS: And why – god, that's shocking. Whew! I don't remember, maybe I knew about it at the time. You know?

MT: He used it in installations. We have a fair number of bones, actually. But I'm asking everybody about the skeleton thing because nobody remembers.

GS: No one remembers it? Maybe we all blocked it, because it's so problematic.⁵

DK: Or it was something private, maybe.

GS: No but if they walked it around.

MT: Right. And it's in installation photos.

GS: He used it in shows?

MT: He used a lot of skeletons.

DK: And it wasn't the one that was used in the New Museum installation of the Decades, the America: Heads of Family Heads of State, because that one I know he picked up '89, because he has a note: Go pick up child skeleton. [laughing]

MT: Really?

DK: Yeah.

MT: Oh, where's that?

DK: It's in the phone logs. I have a scan I'll send you.

MT: Send that to me.

DK: But I assumed it was not the one that we talked about as being purchased earlier.

MT: Well, maybe Marion's wrong.

DK: Okay, yeah, I'll send you that.

GS: Some people – I mean, I don't know, I can never remember dates. And I don't remember names. Was Marion really good at that?

⁵ When it was displayed, people would have assumed it was fake, and not been shocked at all, perhaps even found it somewhat hokey, obvious, or trite.

MT: She remembered some things.

GS: Some people can; some people remember all that. That's why I always need John with me. He's very good for remembering dates and all. I don't remember a child's skeleton. I would imagine I would remember a child's skeleton, though.

DK: Maybe going back to When I Put My Hands on Your Body, it's been written that he had planned two more works in that series.

GS: Yes, and in fact, the prints – do you have a copy of the other prints here?

DK: I'm not sure.

GS: Because Tom did, I did give them to Tom after he had died.

DK: Because you were in the process of working on those?

GS: Yes. And he just couldn't couple text for those. I had finished printing those because he wanted them all in the last show. And he just was too sick to do it.

DK: Because he was basically writing the text for it?

GS: Well, he was choosing text. I don't know if he was writing them. Like, did he write "When I put my hands on your body" specifically for that image, or did he couple it?

MT: I think he wrote it specifically, because there is

GS: What about the one with the bound hands?

MT: There's a proof of One Day This Kid that has Nan Goldin's image instead of David's, from one of her childhood photographs.

GS: Really?

MT: Yes. [42:00]

GS: Oh that's really interesting.

DK: He also had work in progress for One Day This Kid, the text typed out and he's editing it directly on the paper.

GS: Oh, really.

DK: So even if perhaps it was collaged from an earlier writing, he may have edited it especially for the print.

GS: So maybe the same thing happened with the skeletons, only because it's so, the image itself is just so rivetingly intimate, with the couples lying there. It's a really amazing thing. And there are

only three prints of it. Which is bizarre, right? So I don't think he ever expected it to be like a saleable thing. Was that the last thing I did for him then? Those two. I think the hands came a little bit later than the skeleton. I think the skeleton was the first of those like image-text things.

DK: Yes.

GS: The fall, and then the hands, and then there was one of a parade, and then there was another one. I don't remember. Like a Chinese parade, I think it was, but I don't have them, so; not in decades.

DK: And had you discussed the work before he brought in the image? Or would the discussion around a work begin usually when he brought in a finished image.

GS: So, this is the interesting thing with David. He never wanted to bring in an image. He would just have me print it.

DK: Okay. So he'd bring in the negative.

GS: He'd bring in the negative. Yes. And if I had questions, I would of course call him in. I mean, he was just up the street. But no, he didn't want to interfere with – it was interesting; it was a unique relationship in that way. Because it was going to be a different size. I'm assuming this. He understood that the translation of the scale would have to happen in the darkroom, and he didn't want to be in the darkroom with me. Do you know what I mean? He wanted me to do that job. I mean, it's very flattering. It's really flattering. Because you said he was very controlling of his other collaborations. Oh really. So you've interviewed some of them.

MT: Mm-hm.

GS: Oh. Hm. Interesting. He wasn't at all with me. And in fact, with the Buffaloes, I think he was going to just do a small edition, like six or something? What is it? It's not large. But it's a very straightforward negative to print; right? And so once I got it I just made more, and so there's like this edition but there's a huge number of proofs. I don't know if you know this. [all laughing] [45:00] It's kind of interesting because he just liked them all. And he never paid me for anything. He didn't want money to ever pass between us. He had his very, he had to kind of, you know, psychological reasons for it, whatever. And I didn't mind, because I loved him so much and I loved the work, so we did just an exchange. It was always just an exchange.

DK: Interesting. So in the way he was hands off, he didn't express preferences for paper or?

GS: No. I know you asked that originally.

DK: [laughing] Yeah.

GS: You know, once I saw the 16x20 Buffaloes, and I'm not quite sure if I saw it before or after I printed the big one, like, I thought, well, I could have done, I could have done, I could have done. Right? Because I printed it on – and actually, once everything is at Harvard, I have a set of

prints with one negative by Gilles Peress on, like, it was sort of a competition for Photo District News. But at the back of each of them, I have the name of the paper. Right? And so, I'm going to try and identify the papers that I used for each print. And I probably came up with a very tonal silver paper for that, because it's printed very tonal. I mean, it's not a graphic print, the Buffaloes, at all, the 30x40. And then his wasn't, really, either. So maybe I did see the Portriga. I'm not sure. I can't remember. But the same thing happened – is Nan Goldin's archive here too? No.

MT: No.

GS: Okay. Because the same thing happened with her where she really didn't want me to see her prints when I printed for her. Yeah, it was interesting. But with her I insisted. And then we borrowed – this was all the early, early black-and-white stuff. So we borrowed stuff from David. He actually had some of them, like, the small prints she made as a student. Yeah.

MT: We also have from him a large print of Nan with the black eye.

GS: Really? I love that image.

MT: Yeah, I do, too. But I have always assumed that she gave it to him.

GS: She must have. Maybe they did an exchange. They could have. Yeah, they were really close, How many photographs of him are there by her? Or we don't know.

MT: I don't know.

GS: I don't know either.

DK: Several, though.

GS: I wonder if there are some in the – I should go look at the latest version of -- but apparently this version of – I'm sorry; I don't mean to keep changing the subject. Of the Ballad. [48:00]

MT: Right. Because he wasn't in it, originally.

GS: No, no; it was too early, the original one. And it had some of the black-and-white work in it, the original one. And now it doesn't have any. I saw it at the Whitney when they showed it as part of the first installation. But I'd be curious to see how much David or Peter there is in the Peter Hujar there. So okay, back to -- so he didn't, he didn't. And it was unusual for him, with me and him, because I remember clearly, with other artists, very specific conversations about papers, about toning, about proofing. There was none; I don't remember any with David.

DK: That is really interesting.

GS: I know, I know.

DK: Or framing? I know that with the *Sex Series* he had those colored frames.

GS: No. That was his; that was his.

DK: Added by, I forget the name; Stephan Petrik.

GS: None of the prints I owned were framed in that way.

DK: That was perhaps for an exhibition.

GS: No, no, no; he chose that frame. PPOW are calling it artist's frame.

DK: Yeah. That's what Wendy said.

GS: So obviously there was this relationship, but others __[49:23]

DK: There was a color relationship maybe, because I think they were different colors.

GS: I don't know that part. [all laugh] Sorry.

DK: Did he by any chance talk about the types of cameras that he used?

GS: No, but he must have had a camera before – did he inherit any of Peter's cameras?

DK: I think initially Peter gave him a camera early on in their relationship.

GS: Oh. Yes.

DK: And the first camera he used somebody also had given to him, so it seems there's a sort of a serendipity as to what cameras he was using, rather than an active ⁶

GS: Well he was very poor. Well, Peter was probably poorer, actually, I imagine. Anyway, they wouldn't have been competing like who was going to be the poorest. [all laugh] But they were very poor. And it's interesting to me Peter could give him a camera, actually. Because actually Peter owned a Leica, a really amazing one that he then had to sell because he needed money. And he immediately regretted it and then tried to find another one of the same quality. It was extraordinary, the first one. And so I can't imagine Peter being able to afford to give him a camera.

DK: I should, especially since this is on record, say maybe that should be fact checked as well.⁷

MT: Yes, because Cindy talks

GS: But you're not writing a book. Are you writing a book?

DK: No.

⁶ My first camera was a stolen camera... In *Close to the Knives*, pp. 141-143. Before (and after) age 18.

⁷ This has not been backed up with further research.

GS: Oh, okay, this is just really an oral history.

MT: Right. Cindy talks about him giving her a camera just before he died. So there must have been more than one camera floating around. But she may remember. So I would verify with Cindy.

GS: Have you interviewed her yet?

DK: There are also notes that he borrowed a camera from other people at times to shoot something.⁸

GS: But there was a lot of film early on before he made – no, I have no idea. There was enough film processing that, at the time of the Civilian Warfare show, he came in and said, well, you know, you do for, like, to choose something. Because I remember going into that show to choose something, and it was already sold. And so then he walked in with this huge map. [laughing] I don't know. In its box, it was probably the size of the wall behind you.[52:00] It was really a big school map, you know, those like roll-up school maps. I mean, it was kind of an amazing thing. And I talk about it in Cindy's book. It's kind of a nice little anecdote. And I wish I still had it. But, you know; we didn't have the storage at the time.

MT: Well he had been photographing early on because the early journals are filled with photographs.

GS: Yeah.

MT: So he had to have some manner of camera.

GS: So where did he print those? So he always photographed, I think.

MT: One of the things that's fascinating in the journals is, he goes back again and again to photo booths and has his picture taken, and then pastes them into the journals.

GS: Oh my god.

MT: And there's one of him when he was a young boy, as well, so clearly this is something that he picked up from his mother, probably.

GS: Did he keep doing that 'til the end?

MT: Not really to the end. The journals trail off at some point because I think he was just too sick to write. Although we did just find

GS: So, I mean, they keep going until he got diagnosed, then.

MT: Right. And after that, I think they trail off in '91.

GS: Oh, so they go very late.

⁸ "Borrow camera from Andreas" appears in a c. 1989 phone log. (Fales Library, Wojnarowicz Papers, Series 4, Box 7, Folder 18)

MT: But we did find what we believe to be the last note that he left, and it's from the day before he died.

GS: Wow. Yeah, he was really an amazing patient, truly the most amazing. Because he kind of, I don't know, he was sort of a great teacher, in a way. I think he thought of his life as a kind of, I don't know. [all laugh] He was very generous as a sick person. Really generous. Interestingly.

DK: You mean with his time, emotions, availability?

GS: With his time, and yes, with his emotions, and accessibility. I mean, I think he was very careful who he was accessible to, but he was very generous to his friends. Emotionally.

DK: And he was working up until the end?

GS: Well, as you say, I think it trailed off. At a certain point he probably assumed he couldn't make the right decisions. I think that's really what happened. But he worked as late as possible. You know what I mean, he kept working. So, for example, *Aperture* wanted to use *Face in the Dirt* for, I think it was some anniversary issue of the magazine that he was in. Or was it the magazine that was him?

DK: The *Aperture*, the *Brush Fires*.

GS: Didn't that happen posthumously, the publication?

DK: They were working on it.

MT: And he died.

DK: I think it came out, like a couple of months after he died.

GS: No, no, no; I think *Face in the Dirt* predates the *Brush Fires* book. And magazine. They did the magazine first.⁹

DK: But the special issue of the magazine that then became *Brush Fires*

GS: Yes, but that was all David.

DK: That was all David; exactly.

GS: But there was something else where they used the *Face in the Dirt*. He was in the hospital. And I remember sitting in the waiting room with Ira, actually, and we were sort of getting to know each other. We were just hanging out. And I was bringing him the print for reproduction, to sign off on. And it's lost now, apparently; right? It's not anywhere. It was small. It was like an 11x14

⁹ <http://elizabethavedon.blogspot.com/2013/07/aperture-40th-special-issue-fall-1992.html> *Face in the Dirt* appeared in *Tongues of Flame* in 1990 (approx 8x10); in *Aperture* magazine in 1992 in the 40th anniversary issue, and in *Brush Fires* in 1994.

probably. Now it's not around. So yeah, he did actually – because the edition is posthumous, the 20x24 edition. That's posthumous.

DK: Yeah, I was going to ask, and you printed that posthumous edition.

GS: Yes.

DK: Okay. That's the one that's in MoMA's collection. It's like '93 or '94, something like that.¹⁰

GS: Is that when it was printed?

DK: Yeah.

GS: It's an amazing image.

DK: Yeah.

MT: It really is.

GS: I would love to hear, I would love to read, the story around it, like Marion's story. Are these going to be available?

MT: Mm-hm.

GS: Are they? Oh. Oh.

DK: Oh yeah, we should do a release, actually.

MT: Yes, absolutely. I'm glad you reminded me. [all laugh] We'll do that after.

GS: Yeah, yeah. You can even sign it for me; I don't care. [all laugh]

DK: Did you have also, just to make sure that we're—did you have a time that you need to finish by?[56:43]

GS: No, no, I love talking. [laughing] I can talk forever. I just have a dinner date. [all laugh]

DK: Okay.

GS: What else?

DK: That's interesting. And I didn't know that it was printed in *Aperture* before it was printed in that special issue.

GS: It was. Actually, I should find out what that was. It was some anniversary issue of *Aperture*. Yeah, they would know.¹¹

¹⁰ 1992-93. <http://www.moma.org/collection/works/192669?locale=en> 28.5x28.5

DK: And that was before you made the test print for reproduction.

GS: Well, it was made for it.

DK: Oh, okay.

GS: That print was made because of the *Aperture*, they needed a print for reproduction, and David chose that, actually. So that was, you know; that's interesting. So he had selected that specifically before his death. I would love to see the small print, but if you don't have it.

MT: We might have it.

GS: But you would know. Believe me, you would know.

MT: There's a lot of stuff that I've never looked at.

GS: You mean, there's so much material.

MT: Yes.

GS: Really?

MT: Although that one I would remember if I had seen it.

DK: I tried looking for it, too.

MT: You did? It's not there.

DK: Well, I wasn't able to look through everything, either.

GS: So maybe the negatives might be able to be found. I wish that were possible. Are you looking through stuff?

DK: As much as I can. The problem is, Fales is closed next week.

MT: That doesn't mean anything for you.

DK: That's good to know.

MT: You can come down.

GS: I would love to know.

DK: Yeah, if I get down to that material.

GS: Then Harvard would just approach you and you would negotiate the possibility of borrowing it. Okay. Because it's probably the most – I mean, even though I did copy work for so many

¹¹ See also your Melissa Harris interview

different people, and some really important things, for me that's the most important. And maybe the most complex, actually, because of the – in a way, the scale is critical to, literally, how do you read this thing. You know. It's an interesting thing. So there had to be the shift in scale.

DK: How is your body positioned while you're reading it, as well. Because of that scale decision. [58:57]

GS: But also though, literally, just legibility. Like, the size of the text, the size of the, like, the contrast between the text and the ground. That stuff had to be amended to the size of the print. It was an interesting process. It wasn't easy. And he was definitely involved in that. Right? Because it had to function in a particular way. Because the print already existed, the 20x24.

DK: So it wasn't about adjusting the size of the text, for instance.

GS: No, no, because the print already existed. Yes. I re-photographed the big print, and then I started to like manipulate the new print to function, literally, to be readable.

DK: And so the manipulations were density, contrast,

GS: Yes.

DK: The exact size, or if you were printing it a certain size, you were printing it that size.

GS: Yes. It was just that size.

DK: Right. Okay. So, density, contrast.

GS: It's interesting; right? So it would be wonderful to put those, as I said earlier, to put the 16x20 next to a 20x20, or, to see how different it is. At this point, it would be really interesting to see, actually.

DK: Well, we can definitely, if they're 8x10 negatives, that narrows it down. So.

GS: They're the only copy of things that I made so they're the only big negatives that would exist. And I don't know where else they could be, other than at Aperture or in California with Nash Editions, because they're made.

DK: Why were they printed out there?

GS: They were doing, you know, they had one of the only Iris printers, and it's now at the Smithsonian, their printer, actually. [all laugh]

DK: Interesting. I didn't know that.

GS: Yeah, yeah; well, I know all of those kind of ephemera. [all laugh]

DK: Thinking about the sort of milieu and shops he may have frequented, do you know where he may have printed his photostats or gotten things typeset?

GS: I have no idea. Because it would just leave me. And then all of a sudden a print would come back with a text on it, you know, screen printed. And luckily it was done very well, because it hasn't really shifted over time. You would imagine ink on silver emulsion might have had funny --. So obviously, he was doing things very carefully. He was like really researching conservation, sort of, storage problems and so on. Even though he did print on posters, and those seem to have survived. Right? So he did really well with, like, archival issues, like how to archive something. Right? What is the story? It's not such a big thing. Now.

MT: The store posters will eventually all deteriorate. They're very fragile. He loved yellow notebooks, yellow note pads, and he used magic markers. So there's nothing we can do to preserve them.

GS: There's really nothing? What's happening to them? What happens to magic marker?

MT: It's very acidic, and the yellow paper is really acidic, on the legal pads. And so they'll slowly -- the magic marker will fade, and then eventually fall out. So there will just be holes in the text.

GS: Literally. Oh. Can't they be put into, like, vacuums? I mean like literally.

MT: Right now, the acidification process is aqueous, and so you can't put these into water or else they'll fade. So it's really impossible at this point to preserve them.

GS: Wow. So the only way really to preserve them is to re-photograph them actually. Have you done that?

MT: We've digitized the journals.

GS: Well then in a way, they're conserved.

MT: Right. Because they're the most requested thing that we have.

GS: And so they're on line?

MT: Yes.

GS: Oh, that's amazing. The entire? Anything you've digitized? Oh, it's all controlled.

MT: Yes.

GS: You have to ask permission.

MT: Well, Tom's been really good about that.

GS: Tom's amazing about stuff like that, it seems.

MT: We've digitized all of the film fragments and all of that material.

GS: Wow; that's incredible.

MT: And all of the audio that we had, the interviews that David gave that he had kept copies of.

GS: Ooh. What about his readings?

MT: We have some of them. Yes.

GS: Really? Oh, wow. You don't have the reading of that text without – it had some music track put onto it at some point.

MT: I don't think so; I'd have to ask our media specialist.

GS: Oh, okay. Because I was at that reading; it was at, I think, the Drawing Center. That was pretty amazing.

DK: There was music playing over?

GS: That was after the fact. There was no music playing at the time.

MT: That's when he read the thing about Jesse Helms, as well. It's so powerful.

GS: Yeah. I can remember his face doing it. Did you know David?

MT: I didn't know David.

GS: Oh, okay; you're too young or something.

MT: No, I was here, but I came in '88, so it was, you know. And I loved his work, I sort of saw it around, but I was working at Columbia, and so. [RS laughs] Even though I was coming down here all the time, I was a little, I wasn't upon the scene.

GS: Yeah, that reading was very memorable.

MT: There are other readings that stand out?

GS: The other performances, but not like that one. That was like, oh my god, that was devastating, that performance. Was the whole thing recorded?

MT: It was. They record everything. Yeah, it's film.

GS: Oh, they record it?

MT: The Drawing Center.

GS: Oh, So you have a copy of that.

MT: I don't know that we have a copy, but it's out there on the Web. It's widely available.

GS: Through the Drawing Center.

MT: I think so.

GS: Okay, I'm going to look for it. Because I would love to remember, see what my memory

MT: It's really over the top powerful.

GS: That's was the most memorable. But he did something, he did several readings. Because Peter was so obsessed with him, we would just go to all of his – I would go with Peter. [laughing] To all of his events. But by the Drawing Center time, David and I were very close already.

DK: So the performances, there's 3 Teens Kill 4 performances, The Kitchen performance, there's readings.

GS: What's the date on the Kitchen performance?

DK: Is that also '89? ITSOFOMO at The Kitchen? Around '89, with Ben Neill.¹²

GS: And Drawing Center is?

DK: Drawing Center I don't know off the top of my head.¹³

GS: Maybe even – like, late; it's late.

MT: It's late; its' very late. Because he's clearly ill.

GS: He's already – yes; yes. It's an effort; right? You feel the effort.

MT: Yes, you can; yeah.

GS: So maybe it's really late. When in '92 did he die?

MT: He died July 14th of '92? It might be July 16th?¹⁴ There's an incredible photo of Tom and him on his deathbed, that's just.

GS: Oh wow. I mean, it could have been as late as '92, like somewhere in '92, sort of February, or. It could have been. It is very late. You feel that this is that effort. Oh, I can't wait to. Oh, maybe not [laughing]

MT: Yeah. It's tough. It's really tough.

GS: I have to really be – I'll prepare myself. [laughing]

¹² December 1989

¹³ DW read at the Drawing Center October 26, 1991 <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/25/arts/the-spoken-word.html> and spring 1992 <http://www.worldcat.org/title/david-wojnarowicz-readings-1992-including-funeral-procession/oclc/269676551> Video at <http://vimeo.com/158812165>

¹⁴ July 22, 1992

MT: I've watched it.

GS: I can't imagine. Because even that one piece of reading – I've only seen it with the sound under it, and the sound really kind of interrupts it, I think. So it's not – yeah, it's tough.

DK: I was just thinking about that, because we're gathering these first-person accounts of the performances or site-specific installations that may have stood out to you. Are there installations you saw with Peter or?

GS: I remember going to – I would go with, like, when Peter photographed at the piers, I was with him. Right? So I was always like the eyes in the back of Peter's head, like when he was doing self-portraits on the pier or photographing them. We would go on tours of when there was all that mural work done at the piers.

DK: Yeah, the Ward Line Project.

GS: Yeah, I remember that very well. Do you have a lot of those images?

DK: Of the piers? Yes, there's pretty good documentation of the piers. Marion Scemama took photos, Andreas Sterzing.

GS: You have those.

MT: We have some. Andreas

GS: Did David take photos?

MT: He did.

GS: He did. He didn't print them, though. Did he print them?

MT: We have some; we have some images.

GS: Oh, there are some prints. But small – did he print them like 8x10?

MT: Some 8x10s, some 5x7s. I just saw – where did I see that? I just saw a bunch of photos by somebody, photos of the piers that I had never seen. Now I've lost where it was. Too many things going on.

GS: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Reproduced somewhere; right?

MT: Right. Very recently.

GS: Like, really good. Maybe even out of Leslie-Lohman.

MT: Yeah, I think that's where it was. [1:09:09]

GS: I think so. I think it was like kind of amazing, actually, this one of Peter, like, having sex by someone else. Right? And then I think you see some like wall paintings around the event. Well, the piers was quite fabulous, really bizarre. [all laugh] I mean, for your generation, there's no way to conceptualize what Manhattan was like at that – you know. Because now it's so cleaned up.

DK: So I think that's such an interest in that now, of people in my generation.

GS: Yes, because it's not possible to really understand.

DK: Like the last Greater New York had all the Alvin Baltrop images. And there's a fascination, I think, specifically with that kind of space, that post-industrial sort of cathedral-like spaces.

GS: It's sort of post-apocalyptic. I mean, there were really, like the East Village and sort of Alphabet City, was very burnt out. I mean it was dangerous, it was really dangerous.

MT: It was really dangerous.

GS: And exciting, because nobody had any money and there was all of this activity, and none of it had to do with money. And now it's like, you know, Manhattan is so much kind of an entertainment center, in a totally different way. It's weird; right?

MT: And sexuality was different.

GS: It was pre-HIV. Yeah, it was a different moment. Hah. [he laughs]

MT: And it was all analog.

GS: And it was all analog. Actually, that's the title of the show at Harvard, it's called Analog Culture. It makes sense.

MT: Sure.

GS: That's so interesting. Yeah, that's what they thought, too. Even though like the Peter Hujars are printed in ink, they're printed digitally. And there's some Guber printed digitally. But it was a different way of thinking, too; right? Because of that.

DK: I think that's why I'm sort of interested in surfacing some of these technical processes that were intuitive, or just, oh yeah -- you just could get a cel printed at Kinkos – that aren't necessarily accessible now, because people aren't using those processes any more.

GS: Well I imagine that's sort of what he did do, because even, I mean, I still remember going from print store to print store to print out my articles. Because if you had a show, there wasn't a file of digital, of like the reviews and the CV. You actually made a book, you made a folder. You made a folder! I wonder if I've kept one of those. And it was a lot of energy, because, you know, this one store reproduced color well, and that one did black-and-white better. It was really a problem. And oh god, how much time we had to spend. [they laugh]

DK: A lot of face-to-face and networking.

GS: And then you made slides for reproduction of the work. Like, PPOW would order a set of slides of the show so they could send it out for press and so on. Do you have all that stuff of his? Do you have all of his slides?

MT: Yes.

GS: His show slides. So he didn't throw that out. Well I suppose, in a way, because he was, 1992, it kind of predates digital, big time. Digital only really came in full time, full on, like around 2005, I would imagine, 2006, maybe even later. Right? Not so long ago.

DK: Yeah. I was still working with slides when I first started working in a museum in 2006. People would send slides.

GS: Really? What did they do with their slide archives? Did they digitize them? Which museum?

DK: At the Whitney.

GS: Oh. What have they done with it?

DK: They still have them.

GS: They do! I can't throw them out. It's really a problem. Thousands.

DK: I think MoMA still does, too, but they're not served any more, so you would have to go out to the warehouse.

GS: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's so bizarre.

MT: We have tens of thousands of slides. It's a real issue for preservation, because they're all deteriorating. Rapidly.

GS: Well, it depends who made them. If they're Kodak they are; right? Yeah. Oy. If they're Kodachrome – which is the ones that are very stable? I think it's Kodachrome.

MT: Is that the ones?

GS: I'm sorry; I'm forgetting.

DK: It should be stable, but then there were, like, bad years. That's what I've heard; "Oh, that was from that bad year."

GS: When I did the Paul Thek that Peter photographed, he'd photographed him making the tomb. They were sort of close at that point. And those were shown at the Whitney. Those slides are really faded. They're very pink. And so it's interesting; right? But of course, it's very easy digitally to, kind of, in a way, excavate them. So they need to be digitized, but there are thousands. It was a culture. I mean, that really was how we communicated, was through slides. You made

slide sheets. [laughing] Time consuming, and expensive. It's a very expensive, like, James Dee was the person who was the most – do you know who that is?

MT: Yes.

GS: I wonder what happened to his archive. Because he photographed every show. He was the go-to photographer. And he had a studio on Wooster Street, a big loft, and he just sold it.

MT: Oh, I remember this. Right.

GS: He just sold the loft and moved to Florida.

MT: Right. There was a *Times* article, about what to do with it.¹⁵ Because he had so many hundreds of thousands of slides, that nobody could really take it on. I thought about it, but it would have overwhelmed us.^{16 17}

GS: It's just too big; right?

MT: Yes. And I don't

GS: And they were not small. They were like 4x5 and 8x10.

MT: Right.

GS: I used to, I ordered 8x10. I mean, I used to make 8x10, but I ordered 4x5 from him.

MT: And I don't remember what happened to it.

GS: Wow.

MT: I want to say Yale.

DK: Did it go to the Getty? I think I remember that article.

MT: It might be the Getty. Yes. Yale got Larry – this guy went around from like 1968 on, photographing every show, uptown, downtown. And so Yale got that collection. I can't remember his last name.

GS: Wow. And it's all slides as well?

MT: It was both slides and prints.

GS: But not black-and-white?

¹⁵ Article from the Times http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/arts/design/d-james-dee-plans-to-give-away-his-modern-art-archive.html?_r=0

¹⁶ They went to ARTstor <http://artsbeat.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/07/23/a-trove-of-new-york-art-images-finds-a-home/>

¹⁷ Who is doing the digitization <https://picturae.com/projects/296-negatives-digitisation/3528-picturae-digitizes-james-dee-archive>

MT: A lot of black-and-white.

GS: Oh. Yes, those archives are going to become very useful. Right? Documents. They're amazing.

DK: So thinking back to the sort of analog moment – we'll go another 15 minutes and end at 3:30. What sort of services did your shop offer? We've talked about making copy negatives and making enlargements for Wojnarowicz. Were there other services that you did for him?

GS: For David? [1:16:50]

DK: Yes.

GS: Well, we processed his film, made contact sheets for him, and I don't know what else. No, that's it, for him. But we did a lot of other things. Like, we did corporate annual reports, I mean, we weren't making money from artists, particularly. [all laugh] I did all of that printing because I wanted to. But we did commercial work, as well. So a lot of artists, like the Magnum photographers, would also be doing, like, they needed to make money, too. So they would be doing corporate annual reports, and we would do that. It was huge quantities of film, and then these prints for reproduction. It's interesting for your generation. We'd have to make a print for reproduction, so that the print would then be re-photographed for the reproduction. I know, pre-digital is almost difficult, it's almost impossible to conceptualize; right? I know.

DK: And so then when he was working on the *Tongues of Flame* catalogue, were you making prints for that book?

GS: No. Um, but the *Tongues of Flame* catalogue; what date is that?

DK: That's '89 or '90. I guess '90 is when it came out. He was working on it in '89.

GS: Yeah, he wouldn't have been really involved with that. Would he?

MT: He was. Yeah, I went out actually to see Barry Blinderman, because he's got the documents about that show.

GS: What would David have provided for the catalogue?

MT: Almost everything. A lot of text, slides. There's a whole binder of slides that David sent to Barry to look at.

GS: For reproduction.

MT: Yes.

GS: Yes, it could have been reproduced from slides.

MT: Right.

GS: You could do that as well. You didn't have to make prints.

MT: And they did it out there. The university at Illinois State did it.

GS: I wonder if he had slides of the black-and-white as well. Do you think that was re-photographed as slides?

MT: I don't remember. I looked at them quickly and just realized that I want the stuff because it's really detailed about the show.

GS: Oh yeah, yeah; that was such an important show. You see, PPOW would have had slides made for reproduction for him.

DK: I think because it was a retrospective, he was also going back to other galleries and gathering the slides that they had.

GS: Like Gracie, and, yeah, yeah.

DK: Exactly. So that's why, how, he was involved, because he was invested in this as a retrospective.

GS: It was like his first big show.

DK: It was.

GS: Though in Normal. And he loved being there. He spent a lot of time there; didn't he.

MT: He did.

GS: Like, really a lot of time. He was like in residence there, wasn't he?

MT: He was.

GS: Yeah, yeah, yeah; for how long?

MT: That I don't know but yes, he stayed with Barry. So he and Barry's son, who was like six or eight at the time, drew cartoons for each other. And Barry's got these hilarious little cartoons that David was drawing for him. It's a wonderful story.

GS: So sweet. [laughs] So yeah, so we were like a, we were a small lab. We were maybe, it was John, me, there was another front person, and then a few people in the back, someone processing film, and at one point, two other printers, and then one other printer; well, two other printers. So that's quite a few people, really. So we were not big, but we were a functioning business. Not surviving well, [laughs] but we did it for a few years.

DK: So it was for a limited period of time?

GS: Well I would say the lab ran from – well, I'm still printing. But the lab as a functioning lab was 1980 through, I'm not exactly sure of the end date of it because it sort of petered out, but through, like, the end of the century.

DK: Okay. What was the address? [1:21:18]

GS: It was 32 Cooper Square. [laughs] On the third floor. It's now very fancy. It wasn't so fancy before. [all laugh] But it was a great loft. It was this huge, beautiful loft. And then I lived on St. Mark's Place. Then we lost that and moved into like the ground floor basement on 54 St. Mark's Place. And it was very large, like 2,000 [square?] feet. So I had a darkroom in the basement and then I bought a big darkroom on line to do very large prints. So I continued it.

DK: So the large prints were made

GS: They were made at 32 Cooper. I had a wonderful darkroom at 32 Cooper, really a great darkroom. Huge sink.

DK: And had you seen the darkroom in Peter Hujar's loft?

GS: Well, what's sort of sad about Peter's darkroom – yeah, yeah; absolutely – it got built for him. And I'm trying to remember the guy's name now. Once Peter was sick, the new darkroom got built. But before that, he had this really grungy little darkroom that was sort of – I'm trying to visualize where it could have – because it's changed around. It was behind a black curtain. It was a really small darkroom. And he would squeegee his prints on his blue kitchen table – he would wash his table and he would squeegee his prints right there. So David inherited a pretty much unused new darkroom that got built for Peter. It had a real door, a real sink, and you know, it had all that stuff. It wasn't sort of put-together. Interesting.

MT: Totally interesting.

DK: And he could print up to 20x24.

GS: No, he could print up to 16x20. Because that's what Peter did. And the 20x24s he would have had to have, like, printed in a 16x20 tray. So he would have printed them like sort of going in and out of the chemistry. And so actually, those 20x24s of the *Sex Series*, the surfaces are not perfect, if I remember correctly. Because they're so manipulated. It's curious; right? I know; I'd love to see them.

DK: Yeah. We've talked about the *Sex Series* in depth, I think, and a bit about *When I Put my Hands on Your Body*. Are there other projects with him or collaborations with him that stand out, that either required a lot of back and forth, or required particular technical challenges?

GS: No, there were never technical challenges with his work. Actually, he was a really good photographer and he really knew how to make a negative. Which is interesting in retrospect; right? He must have been trained. Actually, that did come out. Didn't that come out in Cindy's book? That he had studied photography in high school. Right? He had gone to like an art school. Yeah. So he did have photography. He knew what to do.^{18 19}

¹⁸ *Fire in the Belly*, p. 181, on his high school training and early apprenticeships in commercial photography studios

DK: It had been a long time prior, though.

GS: And then, maybe Peter taught him, also. I imagine Peter coached him.

MT: We have a note that says “Peter’s Instructions for Printing,” and it’s in David’s hand.

GS: Really? Ah, so he had a recipe.

MT: Yes.

GS: That’s amazing.

DK: That is amazing. When are all of these things going to be published so I can see them? [he laughs] See, I love stuff like that.

MT: Yeah, I love those, too. Because it’s proof that Peter taught him how to print.

GS: And I love that he kept it, that it sort of sits there as a recipe. I see you’ve made a note for yourself to look it up.

DK: Yes, I’d love to find it. If we can scan it for the Web resource.

MT: Yes, we should. It’s in magic marker on yellow paper.

GS: Oh, it is? Well it has to be scanned, quick.

MT: And it’s a single sheet, so it’s not in a notebook or anything.

GS: So magic marker

MT: That was his favorite.

GS: Is the devil.

MT: Yeah. It’s evil.

GS: Really; because it’s acid.

MT: It’s really acidic; yeah.

GS: Wow. And the yellow paper specifically is acidic. Really? It’s so popular.

MT: Yes, it’s the dye. It’s the coloring in it.

GS: Wow. Does regular notepad

MT: It deteriorates, but

¹⁹ <http://www.interviewmagazine.com/art/david-wojnarowicz#> [In 1979], an ad agency trained him to print photographs . . . C. Carr in *Interview* magazine article on DW’s Rimbaud series.

GS: Not as fast.

MT: Not as fast. Right.

GS: Wow, that's sad; huh?

DK: What's the best paper to write on if you're keeping a journal?

MT: You should get something that's acid-free. Or something that's hand made.

GS: And use a Pigma pen. [laughing] So Julie Ault just went through the collection and found that box?

MT: Well, I've shown that box to a lot of people.

GS: Oh, it's like your pride and joy. It's a fabulous collection of things.

MT: It's what made me rethink how we archive, how we keep collections. Because most places wouldn't have kept the Magic Box. Right? It's not a work. It's an object.

GS: It's ephemera.

MT: And archives don't really like to keep that kind of stuff.

GS: They just want the art; right?

MT: Or they want the documentation. And it's this funny thing; we actually describe it as its own object. We didn't put it, really, under "Objects;" we put it under "the Magic Box."

GS: I think it was kind of magical for him, to put certain things together.

MT: Yeah, and he wrote "Magic Box" on top of it.

GS: [laughing] Oh, he did; it is written on; I forgot that. Because you showed the box itself.

MT: Right. And it's physical representations of his metaphors.

GS: Oh, that's very interesting.

MT: Yes, one after another. And it's essential, I think, to understanding the work. But he never shared it with anybody. Cindy wasn't able to find anybody who knew anything about it.²⁰ Tom has told me that David kept it under the bed, and that he would take it out and play with it once in a while, but he never talked to Tom about it. It was very personal. I've said this, several times. I think it goes to his sense of spirituality. It goes pretty directly there. And he was very Catholic, in a whole lot of ways, and nobody talks about it. They think that he was really rabidly anti-

²⁰ See p. 18 of Diana's interview with Sur Rodney Sur.

Catholic because he was against the – but the work is really, really filled with spiritualism, I think. And a very Catholic sense of the spiritual.

DK: Yeah, sort of icons.

MT: Exactly.

GS: But making his own icons.

MT: Exactly; right.

GS: So maybe the child's skeleton was so – I mean, the metaphor is so intense.

MT: I know. It's very David.

GS: [laughing] It's like, oh my god.

MT: Barry Blinderman says that if you had to pick one object that depicts David Wojnarowicz, it's the burning house.

GS: Yeah. Well, it's one of the first images.

MT: It is, and it's so

GS: Is it the first?

MT: It's one of the very early images.

GS: That's one he did on the street.

MT: Yes, and it's there again and again and again.

GS: Well, he kept all of his images again and again and again. So they start out having incredible import, and then they remain. But it was such a short life. Like, now that I'm this age, I realize, you know, you die in your thirties, like, what does that mean? It's such a short, like, how many years of real production were there? Like ten? Right? Maybe a little more?

MT: And he couldn't seem to stop creating. The collection, he kept a phone log. And the phone logs, he's sitting there drawing and doing all kinds of other things while he's talking on the phone with people.

GS: Are these also on yellow paper?

MT: No, they tend to be on spiral-bound; don't they? Or a little bit of everything.

DK: On everything, yeah. There are some yellow pads in there. There are lots of spiral-bound notebooks, and some scraps.

GS: So do you have full-time people like documenting to digitize these things?

MT: We haven't digitized very much.

GS: You need to get interns. [1:29:45]

MT: That's a topic we can't actually

GS: I'm curious about Fales because in a way, it's grown so fast. Is it just pouring in because you're now so famous for this particular kind of archive; right?

MT: Maybe we should

GS: Oh, we have to stop?

MT: Yes.

GS: Okay.

MT: Because then I can answer your question.

DK: This is a good time, anyway. So thank you, so much.

END of interview at 1:30:14