

NYFAI

Interview: Carol Stronghilos interviewed by Katie Cercone

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K.C. This is September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 and it's Katie Cercone interviewing Carol Stronghilos. When did you first become involved with NYFAI? How did you learn about it, from a friend or a newspaper, and why did you become involved?

C.S. I didn't hear about it, we founded it . . . Nancy and I. I would say – and I'm not clear exactly but you probably have other sources – but Nancy and I both were teaching at the Brooklyn Museum art school. We raised certain questions, some things came up, I don't recall the reasons any longer but we both lost our teaching jobs. Both of us were friendly at the time and I think it may have been Nancy who suggested that perhaps we could start a school of our own. I think that I have been sensitive to women's issues for as long as I can remember as an artist and as a teacher. That went into the mix immediately. Nancy of course felt the same way. We formed it. We were out on our own and we gathered four or five other women and formed a core group and got to work. Initially I don't recall whether I was terribly involved in changing imagery as an artist in order to express my feminist leanings. I think I was more concerned with what happens to women in being artists, how they function, where they can go and how difficult it is. As we went along, of course we became concerned with the search for women's imagery. I wish it was a photograph because there are gestures that I make, it was a tough one. It's tough to give up the old approved way and reach out to something else. So, we started in '76 or '77. It was quite awhile.

K.C. How long were you active at NYFAI?

C.S. I was only active for the formative years and a year once we opened the school formally in the space that we rented for that whole year which was the major year. That was it. I don't think I was active more than that.

K.C. How would you describe your relationship to art at the time? Were you an artist, teacher of the visual arts, art student, or interested in the arts?

C.S. I was an artist. I was showing at Bernice Steinbaum Gallery. I was at the Whitney. I was in a number of shows and I also was a teacher.

K.C. Art teacher?

C.S. Yes, I was teaching painting, drawing, life drawing.

K.C. Describe your experience of art as a woman artist prior to NYFAI. Experience in exhibitions, publications, studio . . .

C.S. I have been drawing and actually in school since I was 13 . . . doing art. As a matter of fact I discovered much to my surprise that when I applied to colleges I didn't have a high-school degree, academic degree. I had an arts degree, which was an unusual degree that was given, by a couple of schools in New York City that meant that you concentrated on art.

K.C. At the high-school level?

C.S. Yes. My pleasure, my concentration was making art for many, many years. I never thought of any division, that there was a woman's art. I went along with the art world. The big guys were the abstract expressionists and the major stream of art were the artists of the 30s. I did have one connection at one point after I got through with high-school and took a job . . . in my world at that time – this was a long time ago – women were encouraged to go into work and then get married and have children and that was important which I did. So I gave it up for awhile and then when I came back to New York married with two little kids, I had to go back; so I took a class at the Riverside Museum, which is on 104th Street, and Riverside Drive. And who was teaching there, Anna Wolenska, a delightful, eccentric, wonderful looking woman who it turned out was Louise Nevelson's best friend. They were young women together, teenagers together. They were a lot of fun. She was encouraging in lots of ways. I had never had a woman teacher before. I did have a woman teacher in high school but that was very different. It was then beginning to touch on the fact that women did their own work. But if you think of Louise's work, it's not particularly "women's imagery," it's her own. So I don't think that I had any questions about . . . did women see the world differently, or express themselves differently. I just expressed what I thought and went along with the larger stream. That you made paintings a certain way, that you use certain – it was very limited by the way – material. It's a whole other world now . . . and that you painted and you drew. It was when we started the school, when Nancy and I started and we started meeting with these four or five women including Miriam Schapiro and Lucy and Selena, and we began to raise the question very seriously. Is there a woman's imagery and what

would it look like? Mimi was doing lace napkins and all sorts of things that were very, very foreign to what the usual stuff was like. Then it became a question of, maybe there's another way to work, another way to look at things. IT really didn't hit me until we started the school. Personally, I tried. Oh, how I tried. There are things on the wall that now seem very self-conscious and silly. I cut out different things and pasted paper and put glitter on stuff. I did all of that and it just didn't fit well with me. I had to follow my own muse. I couldn't transform myself into something that I wasn't. I've continued the same way. What hits me and what's important to me is what I do. If there's a female aspect to it, great. Susan [Bee] does wonderful fairytales and images in her studio that are fantasies of little girls . . . that's just not where I can. Also, I'm 83 and they had many years to program me to the way guys paint. . . . many, many years. They were like 40 years of painting. There were many years of making art the way everybody else did . . . with structure and form and macho and all of that. It's hard to break that one down.

K.C. How were you involved at NYFAI? Student, teacher, administrator, organizer . . . did you work as an organizer/administrator? Please describe. Which classes did you take, were you involved in other programs, open houses, panels, did you exhibit or participate in the annual salon exhibitions at Ceres Gallery?

C.S. I was an administrator, we all were. We had to form it. I was the one who found the place to rent. That was something that I had to do. But as a core group, we had to figure out programming, what we wanted to offer students, what our philosophy was, administrative work, how we would set up money and how we would make it float and how we would invite people to be on our board. I think we all did that in different ways. That's what the task was. I think when we left Spring Street that that was all in place. It must have been in place. I was never a student there. We were teachers at the same time.

K.C. What classes did you teach?

C.S. Currently I teach painting, drawing, inside-out . . . I'm about to have my class do a piece on the lawn – a one day sculpture that we're putting together. We're also doing a project for one day "global warming." I don't care what they do but they have to do that. And I've done things like larger than life, the new one I'm doing is organizing this group which will be similar to the group that started . . . you can't call it consciousness raising anymore but it's raising something.

K.C. Did you participate in the annual salon at the Ceres Gallery?

C.S. I never did at Ceres. I think once, maybe at the very beginning . . . the first time but that's all. There's a history there that's unpleasant and that's why I wasn't involved after that first year.

K.C. If you want to talk about that conflict you're more than welcome to.

C.S. There was a terrible, terrible conflict with a misunderstanding. I don't even know the origins anymore. It wound up with Nancy holding one position, myself holding another and Mimi in the middle. For some reason there were a lot of things. Mimi got me tossed out of my gallery and went into my gallery which broke the fairytale for me that women were wonderful, that women were wonderful to each other, that we cared about each other and that we would nurture and support each other. The first thing that happened to me was that I found myself without a gallery and Mimi – who I had introduced to the gallery owner – was in the gallery. However that worked it was very unpleasant and very painful. So I began to be much more suspicious . . . the ideal that we had was not quite the reality. Nancy on the other hand felt that Mimi and I lined up against her. We only cleared this up only a month ago, just recently. Mimi went off – wherever she went, I backed away like a wounded animal, there was some question about which direction the school was going to go . . . Nancy obviously stayed with it. She had at that time met Darla and they went off with the school and I just phased myself out and went to New Jersey with my other friend and paid attention to this other school. What happened was that Nancy was under the impression that Mimi and I were very tight and aligned and we remained that way and she was absolutely sure that we were like this against her forever. And she told me just recently that she had gotten in touch with Mimi and asked Mimi how I was and Mimi said, what do you mean, I don't know how she [Carol Stronghilos] is I haven't seen her in 25 years. That sort of brought some reality into what happened. That schism for me was painful. Nancy and I were friends and suddenly we were no longer friends. Nobody was talking to anybody. And Mimi was hopping along very successfully and I was wiped out. It took a long time – and I had lost a husband at that point – for me to calm down and be more forgiving and become less involved and recognize that women are like all people. We're not perfect and we're not only nurturers, and there are women who are excruciatingly ambitious and I mean it that way . . . their

ambition is more important than anything else and if you're in the way, that's too bad. And those are very devastating realities to me. However, you live through it. So I just disappeared from that. I'm very glad that Nancy called about NYFAI, here at Rutgers because it cleared up something. We were very close for a long time in the early years when we were at the Brooklyn. It's good to know that we're at least understanding of what happened. And more than that I don't remember. I'm happy I don't. I don't really want to remember the details of awfulness.

K.C. The next questions related prior to the split. Do you want to talk about experiences at NYFAI, tight sense of community and friendships in the studio?

C.S. It was wonderful. It was really great. The first step was that Nancy, Selena, Irene, Lucy, Mimi and myself, - 6 of us - met constantly to form it. There was a sense of a tight community and we had a great purpose and it was exciting and full of energy. We met at each other's houses and lofts and studios. Everybody saw everybody else's work. It was very exciting and then that picture I have of that opening ceremony . . . we had a great time. We had this incredibly long narrow space – it was huge – on Spring Street that I rented from UPS or something. They have that whole building down there. I made a deal with them. So we had this long, long, block long thing from Houston Street to Spring Street. 14,000 square feet on the top floor for our school. But it was a disaster so we painted it ourselves. Those were great moments. Moments when we went there with the paintbrushes and the rollers and spent days painting the rooms so that they were white and sparkling . . . and getting furniture, whatever we needed. All through that we were very unified and those were great memories. I looked at the flyer we had. We didn't have specific classes, we had discussion groups, and facilitating groups and they were great. I think we started off with 12 or 15 women and they came from all over. They came from out west, from the Midwest. There was an absolutely great sense of purpose and excitement and exploration. There was absolutely no censorship of work, no criticism. It was just the place to nurture and grow and experiment with new ideas and imagery. Nancy was doing this wonderful stuff of visual diaries, getting the women to do it. I really liked to go into the studio and paint. So I ran groups and we went in and we drew and we painted and we talked and we saw what we were doing. Those were great moments. Moments where we had dinner together. I think we had big, big crazy dinners.

It was a lot of fun. It was exciting and the sense of purpose was good. What we didn't know really, and I suppose I don't know if anyone really knows when you're making history that you're making history. When you read about – as I am, as I continue – you read about what happened in the 40s and 50s and it sounds like DeKooning and Pollack, they all knew. Once they got those paintings out, they knew they were revolutionary. Guys, and oh boy, they walked around and sat in the bars and drank. I don't know if that's true. I don't know if when you're working or in concert or by yourself in your own studio whether you're aware if you're changing the direction of art, but we were. We, and several other groups at the time. There was a lot of excitement. All different groups . . . The guerilla girls – I don't know if they're out right now but I think they are - they had a couple of meetings. There were guerilla girls, there were a whole bunch of groups like NYFAI. We were very busy trying to push things along. It was a very exciting time. It was great to have an idea to put up a whole school and have people come from Michigan and god knows where they came from all of them . . . it was really great fun. For me it was fun. My own daughter, Meredith Lippman, was involved. There were some young people who I really thought were absolutely wonderful. They were just great. Lots of dinners, lots of open Chinese cartons, it was really good.

K.C. Can you describe the visual work you produced at NYFAI. If you were an instructor how did the experience influence your work?

C.S. The experience was that if I was going to ask people coming in to try to go inside themselves or to try to be as faithful to what they felt and know that we weren't going to say that that was silly work or anything. If I really, really, really believe that – and I still do – if I do that, I have to do the same thing. I have to in some way search into myself and see if there's something that I've wanted to do that I couldn't do. So I made these idiotic things and they were very funny. They weren't at the time. I don't know how you work or how anyone else works but when I'm working, I'm involved . . . that's it. That's great. I'm working and I'm working furiously and I don't stand outside of my work in a way that is that critical. I am really involved in it. So I made these cutouts and things that stood on boxes but I'm essentially a painter, and a gestural one, an expressionist as well. After all these years I've come to recognize that even if I do slash and burn paintings, they are expressive of how I am. Except for these. Something hit me with the dragons and

the witches and I can't seem to stop. It'll be going on for hundreds . . . god knows how many . . . until I paper the walls. So, yes, I did. I think you couldn't help but be influenced by what was going on.

K.C. What was the most important aspect for you of your experience at NYFAI?

C.S. I would say . . . two things popped to my mind right away. That is becoming a part of a group of people, women - this core group that we were very tight with. Then the surrounding art community that was really incredible - our advisers that we met with occasionally. What was really good was having a group - instead of working alone - which everybody does. . . Just knowing I always had a group of friends who were serious artists in the city . . . but this group - this idea of group, a community - was quite different. That was very rewarding. The other part of it was having all of these women come in hungry, hungry to make contact, to explore and to verify some of their internal feelings and their images. I was in the middle of it. That was wonderful. It has never left me, or I wouldn't be doing it again, 25 or 30 years later. Sitting and reading with some women on Monday, and we're going to start looking at each others' work. It's exhilarating. You work here alone which is wonderful - I don't mind working alone, I like it - but the contact, the exchanging of ideas, the patting each other on the back . . . and I think we need to be patted on the back . . . you need to have your back rubbed now and again and say, it's ok, you're doing fine, go ahead. And I find women, and the women I teach in Jersey . . . they range from 30s to 70s and 80s. They have the same hesitation that I've had, the same places where it's a little more difficult to put your foot in the water. I love that. Those were the most remarkable years . . . that bustle and hustle and being with all those women in a good tight community with a purpose. I'm going to repeat it. You'll hear from us. We're going to . . . I don't want to start a school because that's too formal . . . if they want to do it, that's their business. I've already described my job as a facilitator. I'm going to go in . . . all I want are a bunch of different opinions and they take over and I'll be there. But I've suggested many different possibilities . . . gallery possibilities, shows, larger things that they can do. It was exhilarating. It was really, really exciting. I wish I could describe to you the evening . . . everybody sitting on the floor, and laughing and talking and drinking wine and forming this. It was really very wonderful.

K.C. How would you describe your relationship to feminism at the time? Feminist, radical feminist, lesbian feminist, interested in feminism. Were you a feminist activist and/or activist for women in the arts?

C.S. I think I'm a feminist after this. I've always been on the other side of every fence. I've always been civil rights . . . all of that. I have a great compassion, I understand and feel for the underdog and that includes all of that. I came up in the 50s and 60s. My house was the drug center of the world, the teenage flop joint because there were things that had to be said and that was an important time and movement with Vietnam. I had been with my husband in the service in Korea. I've always been on that side of the fence. So I'm a feminist and that includes the whole rainbow of lesbians, whatever anybody wants . . . as far as women artists, yes, that especially because I'm an artist. I'm not a politician. I place my energy with the women in the arts but essentially I'll become an activist on the streets of all this no matter what. I just will because that's the way it is for me. It's been that way for a long time. You have to fight. I'm thinking now how I'm going to use the computer because of that idiot in the white house and what he's doing. I just discovered that it's going to cost each of us 2,000 dollars to bail out these guys who are walking away with a lot of money. My blood pressure rises for that one. But you know, you have to pick your fights. You can't really go crazy over everything. So women artists have been this place where I decided to put my energy, and I have.

K.C. Did NYFAI contribute to your development as a feminist and/or art activist? Please describe.

C.S. Yes, period.

K.C. How did your experience at NYFAI further your development as an artist?

C.S. I don't know if it furthered my development. I went in different directions and came back as myself anyway in the end. I can't say that I became an artist in a different way at NYFAI. It didn't happen that way. I just kept on the same river going along. For me personally, that wasn't the place that made the change. I guess it's reflected also . . . it's an internal change of community, then it's going to be reflected in what you do. But I don't see that it was something particular.

K.C. I'm interested – you were talking about how at NYFAI there was only positive criticism versus male teachers in art school, maybe it's more negative criticism – do think

that affected your work in a different way or a positive way? Is there something good about the negative criticism too?

C.S. Funny you should ask that. I just left the students Friday. He was very hurt by what I told him.

K.C. It is complicated.

C.S. Well first of all it was a guy and I had to go back over what I said and how I talked about it because I have a habit of being much more gentle with the women in the class. And I only get one guy and they're usually about 65. This is a suburban school . . . and he had a real . . . boy, we both didn't make it at all. So, he walked out and he left. Because of my history and because of how I really bought into the idea of how women should be good with each other, that we should care about each other and help each other. I don't mean coddle or make us into helpless creatures without it, but encouragement. More women than I can say – and I can say now at 83 – with friends of mine who are in their 70s and are alone and have raised families in different ways with or without men, but now are alone for many years . . . no matter what the persona is on their outside, they are women of steel. They've done it, they're great and I admire that. I'm one of them but I do admire that . . . and the pitfalls and everything. When I'm in a class, I'd rather say something positive about the work that I see first. And then if I can find a way to say what I think needs to be handled differently or thought about differently or helped in terms of technical stuff, I'll come in. I don't like to be gangbusters. However, there are exceptions. I have a woman in one of my classes . . . she's just a la dee da lady but always whatever she does is terrible. It's no good, it's no good, it's no good. She's just knocks herself to pieces and I've tried every darn thing with her – I've known her now for several years – and her work has gotten wonderful. And then finally, I got to the point where I knew her well enough to say; I don't want to hear any of that anymore. I'm through with it. I'm not going to be nice to you anymore. This is how it is. It's a good painting and if you can't see it, then get out of my class. I got very tough. She stayed. But generally, you can take apart a piece of work if you need to do that – I don't know but if you do – in a way that doesn't send somebody to the basement. You have to know who you're dealing with. I don't like it done to me and I don't like it done to somebody else. I'm also very careful as a teacher, or not careful, I'm focused as a teacher to try to help

the same thing - it's all of a piece, I haven't changed that much – to help each individual in a class find out what is important to them. It's a language. What do you want to talk about? What is dear to your heart? To find that, that is very hard. It's easy to teach what I call tunic or functional or formal stuff but it's helping somebody to bring out something inside of them that they want to speak about. That's it. Yes, always encouraging. I can't go over and tear people apart. I haven't got the guts for it. It's not my way. Though sometimes I'd like to.

K.C. How do your experiences at NYFAI influence your art and life today? What is your current involvement in the arts? What is your current involvement in feminism?

C.S. I don't know, but I'll tell you I never would have done those dragons if it hadn't been for the time that we spent at NYFAI. I would have thought them silly, stupid; no purpose, nothing . . . and I wouldn't have done it. It didn't have the big thing. Some of those paintings back there are 10 and 12 feet. I can't even get them out. They're very wonderful. Even then my paintings were full of . . . I used metallic so it was gold and silver and some big thick cruddy stuff but I wouldn't have done something like this. I wouldn't have done those cartoon like things. Never in a million years. And those were just sketches and drawings that I keep up to remind myself that life can be fun. You can be silly. I never would have done that. It would have always been along the establishment. And also because you want to sell them. You want to do something that somebody can say, oh I like that. But I can knock that off in 5 minutes and so can you, I'm sure. It's nothing to make some pretty something. There is a word in my class that is forbidden . . . nice and pretty. I ask them; I asked them the other day, what the heck are you here for? I want you to work so hard that at the end you're going to be so furious that you didn't achieve the thing that you want, you're going to tear up the canvas, or step on it or . . . do that or it's going to be something that you feel, you saw something in it that's worth thinking about. But don't give me pretty pictures that go over the fireplace so that everybody at home says, oh isn't that lovely. That's not the way it's going to work. Yes, so I think that any of this stuff would never have been done by me. I would have been more establishment, more pushing towards making "great" art. And I had neighbors . . . Julian Schnabel was upstairs in my building, then down further, and a couple of others and they really . . . Julian Schnabel had more nerve than 50,000 people. I'd meet him

calling up the elevator and he'd say Carol, Carol, come and see my great painting. And I was working my gut off downstairs. I grew to hate men. I grew to hate that kind of ego because I didn't have that at that time. And he came in from nowhere Texas . . . "I'm a great painter. Come upstairs and see the great painting." And I had been lying on the floor. I used to want to . . . if I had more nerve now I would have smacked him. It turned out he's an awfully nice guy . . . 35 years later if we meet on the street he says, hey Carol, how are you.

I think it had a profound effect . . . and it was hard, it was very hard. You're so very young to me. I don't know how old you are, but you're very young.

K.C. 23.

C.S. Oh my god. My granddaughter is 23 and she's wonderful. You're so young and so wonderful and have so much and you don't have the crazy baggage that I had. It's so hard for me to explain that from the time I was 13 it was the 30s artists who did the slums – I forget their names now – the 40s and then the 50s, boy, by the time the 70s came along I had spent 40 years in the mainstream of what is good art. And I'm still fighting with it, still discussing it. What's good art? What's bad art? You show me. Is the Zulu in Africa making bad art? Is a Chinese artist making bad or is Western art the only art that's worth discussing . . . and that's where I was. It's hard after all of those years to give yourself permission to say, I want to make little doggies. It's very hard. I think you're lucky because even in school they let you do . . . or encourage . . . or do they?

K.C. I think a lot of teachers do. Maybe teachers that are women are more permissive, but it's hard to say. I tend to choose women teachers and avoid male teachers. I think some are pretty strict still.

C.S. I do have a couple of very wonderful male teachers at Brooklyn. I was there for 6 or 7 years and I spent 2 grad years with Ruben Tam who is a very fine landscape artist and a mild Asian man – American-Asian – and he was a mentor for me. He was incredibly encouraging and nurturing and wonderful. Before him an artist, Mark Samenfeld, who was a good painter and was a gentle man as well. But they weren't in a college. They didn't have to answer to the powers that be. And now I know that. They didn't have to mark people or anything else. They were in an art school. So those were two. Do they allow you – with the imagery – to play around? Is it open? How do you work?

K.C. I don't paint. I do a lot of mixed media with found objects and installations and some really alternative things but I feel like a lot of teachers really embrace that and push that and kind of let you do whatever. The teacher I have now in a mixed media class is very open to being creative and is very positive and doesn't really impose good form or bad form on anyone.

C.S. It's very difficult . . . like picking your way through brush to see how it works. I'm curious because I've been thinking about things and I think that the women's movement and some others took painting off the canvas, off the box . . . took art – never mind painting – and also made painting less important so that it becomes just one of many things that you can do to create stuff. I'm just curious because I'm not in that situation. And what do they do, do they grade you? What do they do with you?

K.C. Yes there are grades but it's still kind of vague. It is about effort and improvement but it's still hard to make a grade for a piece of art I think. Attendance plays a big role in just showing up and speaking and having a presence and producing work is more important than the quality of the work.

C.S. How can you deal with that? The quality of work? The quality is what I'd be curious about. If you're putting all sorts of found objects together – see, those are the things that I reject. I try and I've found that aesthetically they didn't move me. And I think that's because at the beginning paint moves me. I just have to try out some paint sticks because I'm teaching a class – you have to break it down in these little stools – in the spring on the use of paint sticks. My talking about it is it's like your fingers and it's like finger painting. You can really have a lot of fun and layer stuff. So I had to do a little of this on a bristle board to see if it would absorb and as soon as I do that, I get something in my hand. That's where the romance is to me. Because I've tried putting things together, putting this together is o.k. First the drawing, then the painting, then the putting it together. I find that must be tricky. Does it leave you somehow not knowing where it is or does it force you to be determined about your own work?

K.C. I kind of waver. Sometimes I feel like it's this new medium that my art isn't even art. I feel that pressure and that judgment coming from external. And then other times I just know that that's where my interest is and that that's authentically being produced by me and so I just keep at it and kind of let myself be guided.

C.S. I think it's the same no matter what sense. You make lousy paintings as you well know, and it is what it is, it's awful but you have to plug on. You really do. It's wonderful . . . Meredith my daughter is working out in New Jersey. She's not doing her own work. She's doing something different now installing public art and she's installing a piece by Chakaia Booker that's coming over from Europe to Jersey City. But I saw an ad for Chakaia Booker's work and she cuts up tires and she assembles them on the wall and they're very exciting to me. And I'd give my right arm to be able to do that because there's all sort of things in the tires . . . nettles, wires . . . but the way she cuts them up and jumbles them and tacks them onto the wall, it says the same thing that the Expressionists did some other kind of medium. That's just terrific for me. It's very pushy . . . right in your face. But I'd have to have another life. I'd have to start all over again.

K.C. Yes. Another 83 years.

C.S. I can't do that. It's too late so I have to do what I'm doing. What else do we have?

K.C. How would you describe the relationship between art and feminism in your life and work?

C.S. I think they're the same. It's all one. I'm a person and I'm a feminist and I'm an artist and they're all jumbled together. I couldn't not be feminist, that's not possible. I am and I have been and that's where . . . and I couldn't not be an artist . . . so it's intertwined. I don't think there's a separation.

K.C. How would you describe the legacy of the New York Feminist Art Institute? Is there something you would like to share with the younger generation about your experience there?

C.S. I'd like to share how wonderful it is when women put aside some of the daily concerns and get together with women artists . . . how we appreciate each others' work. I think The Feminist Art Institute was important at a time when it was important to be important. And the legacy is that women did come from different places and I will bet my bottom dollar that they carried with them the experience and in some way it influenced their way of thinking and what they were doing for the rest of their life. I don't know but I have a strong feeling that happened. As far as I'm concerned, I'm repeating it by forming another group of women artists who are isolated and hopefully they will come together and experience some of what we experienced in that. So I think all of that is

important. And what I would say to young women, there's nothing harder than to be a wonderful artist or any kind of artist all by yourself. In the city here in New York it's easy, there are loads of artists all around to connect with, to be out, to see, to go to openings, there are groups and everything . . . but there are places outside of the country, outside of the city, outside of the big city where there are wonderful artists. There are places in New Jersey where these women just show in little libraries; where there's nothing of the energy and the excitement of the centers where art is really the center. All I can say to them is, do what I'm doing. Find the others who are showing in the libraries, get together, start talking about what you're doing and what's inside and it will happen. And that's the legacy for me, to continue that process for women because boy are they isolated. Also, not only isolated but timid. If we find it difficult sometimes to look at the art that we're doing and say, is it really good? Is it art? Is it what? Can you imagine what it's like to be in a small town where you're the only artist and all that anyone ever knows is a pretty little picture?

K.C. That's true.

C.S. And you have ideas that are different.

K.C. And like you were saying with the men, sometimes it just comes a lot more naturally to them too . . . "Look at my wonderful art" and women . . .

C.S. That's what happened with this guy that left my class. What he wanted was to hold up his work . . . the best in the class, it was the most academic . . . and I can't do that because I'm not an academic art . . . They're trained in a different way. Even today and that's what we started off with when you walked in. I find there's a backslide. O.k. we've got jobs, o.k. we've got a couple people looking at high government political jobs, o.k. we have stock brokers, o.k. we're dealing with having a family and a job at the same time, and all of that. But behind all of that, just what you said, there's a return to sexist dress. I'm appalled at some of the stuff I see in the streets here. Everything is hanging out and people are walking around wiggling their rear end and it's very difficult for me because part of me says, Hey, we're sexual animals as well for crying out loud. You're going to get stiff at this age suddenly? But then there's something else because if that's what you're parading, I think a second look has to be taken. That's all. It's a funny world, it goes in cycles unfortunately. You're right, have women teachers. For two good

reasons, first of all, women need the jobs, up until recently guys were teaching more than women. So the women need the jobs and if you want women teachers, good, enroll in their classes. And also because you can somehow talk past the usual junk.

K.C. That was the last question.

C.S. That was nice. I've spoken for a very long time.

K.S. It was wonderful to hear.