MARGARET: This is Margaret Winslow Associate Curator for Contemporary Art interviewing Graham Dougherty on Tuesday May 28, 2013 in the Delaware Art Museum.

GRAHAM: Okay sorry.

MARGARET: Go ahead.

GRAHAM: You know, what’s his name? The guy that does the films, the guy with the pony tail?

MARGARET: A guy with a pony tail who does films? Here in Wilmington?

GRAHAM: Yeah they have a studio.

MARGARET: The Marquisee’s?

GRAHAM: Their son—do you know their son?

MARGARET: No.

GRAHAM: Okay well I made a huge mistake when DCCA [Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts] was first starting. In the first—in one of the first exhibits in the water department building which is not when it first started, was—what’s his first name, Marquisee?
MARGARET: Mark.

GRAHAM: His wife’s name is?

MARGARET: Georgi.

GRAHAM: Georgi, thank you. Okay Mark came in and said, “I have a wonderful son, he does wonderful drawings, they’re just terrific and you”—he was really doing a hard sell. And for some reason I was being the curator because nobody else was and we didn’t have a curator, a real curator. And I said, “Sure we’ll put on a show” this boy’s drawings. And I realized that I hadn’t checked with anybody else in the organization I just said sure because I was in this sort of friendly, we’re the new kids and we’ve got to be nice to everybody. And Mark seemed like a nice guy and Georgi was nice so sure why not. I didn’t really give it any thought at all—just dumb.

And what happened was that he had done—and I’ve never seen the boy, I’ve never see the drawings. What happened was that Mark and Georgi, and I am not sure if I ever met the artist, brought in blow ups, maybe four feet by six feet blowups of his totally cribbed, totally stolen drawings of transformer men and cartoon figures that he had just copied from somewhere else. Now maybe he combined elements of these robot type figures but they were not original from whatever age he was which I think was 12 or 14. I mean he was a kid.

MARGARET: A young yes—

GRAHAM: And I really—there were several people at DCCA that spoke severely to me about this and I felt terrible because it was such an amateurish way to do anything. And the drawings were not original.

MARGARET: Oh that’s so curious.

GRAHAM: The thing is that they weren’t—because they were copies they were bright colors and they were blowups and they were sort of big and kind of fun in decorate a teenager rooms walls like putting Farah Fawcett posters on your wall when you’re in college sort of thing, or a rock band. But it was a huge mistake. But if you’re tying in cartoons ask Mark Marquisee if he remembers that, if those big blowups are still around anywhere.

MARGARET: I’ll look for that. That’s interesting.

GRAHAM: He might not even remember the show.

MARGARET: That he did that?

GRAHAM: Yeah.

MARGARET: So if it was in the Water Works building would it have been in the ‘90s or earlier?

GRAHAM: We got a bicentennial grant in 1976 so it was late ‘70s.
MARGARET: Late ‘70s okay. That’s interesting.

GRAHAM: It was sort of ‘77, ‘78. It might have even been before. It was in the 70s.

MARGARET: Okay that is good to know. So I am wondering if today and we’ll keep an eye—you need to be back at your house at ten.

GRAHAM: Ten but I can fudge it a bit. Maybe I could come back to talk more.

MARGARET: So we may have to have another conversation.

[Crosstalk]

MARGARET: Because what I would love to do is talk to you about—because in addition to researching this exhibition this is also the perfect opportunity to talk about artists who have been active in this community for a long time and talk about their careers as well and really get this down as a recording in a transcript. So kind of thinking about the Archives of American Art, their interview project. So I would love—I think this might be a longer conversation because I would love to talk to you about your early career. I know you went to Tyler [School of Art] from ‘62 to ‘64 and then the Pennsylvania Academy from ‘64 to ‘66 so I would love to talk about that early training.

And then I would love to talk about your early career here in Wilmington. I know you have been right there at the DCCA since its founding; have had a studio in that space since it’s the institutions entire existence so I would like to talk to you about those two things, kind of looking at that earlier career. And then talk about your impressions and memories of the contemporary art scene in the 1970s and ‘80s so that’s kind of where our conversations will be going.

GRAHAM: Let me go back even further. I hope this doesn’t sound like deep reminiscence but I started hanging around the Delaware Art Museum when I was about 15 and I can remember Marion Johnson, in what was then the education wing, needing help. So I would come in and do things like mount slides and back in those days—so that was in the ‘60s I guess.

MARGARET: Are you a native Delawarean?

GRAHAM: No I moved here with my family from Virginia in 1950 something; ‘56 I think it was.

MARGARET: Okay good to know. But you moved here to Wilmington.

GRAHAM: Yeah.

MARGARET: Area, okay. So you’ve been in the Wilmington area since the 1950s.

GRAHAM: I went to a Friends School in fourth grade so that is age 11, and different schools: boarding schools, the East Coast, that sort of stuff.

MARGARET: Okay. So you were volunteering here at the Delaware Art Museum.
GRAHAM: Yeah, I remember Bruce St. John and Mary Johnson and when the studios were on the far side.

MARGARET: And were you primarily involved with the studio program or did you—

GRAHAM: I took a couple of classes and I knew Rowland Elzea pretty well and he was a wonderful man, so yeah I was hanging around here just as kids hanging around the joint at the time. And I went to Tyler and Pennsylvania Academy and then I was in the Army. And then after the Army I went to Italy for three years and came back here in ‘73. So I was really away from Wilmington for sort of from—I don’t know—1960 to 1973 roughly.

MARGARET: But what a perfect time to come back to Wilmington in regards to my research. Perfect timing.

GRAHAM: I wasn’t in a scene because I didn’t know a lot of people and didn’t really want to and I heard that Pam Richards, I was talking to at one time, and have you heard that she has developed Alzheimers?

MARGARET: I was speaking with Bill Shea and I had included her on my list, given her past involvement with the art museum as a past president and her involvement, but he cautioned perhaps it wasn’t the best time to talk with her, unfortunately.

GRAHAM: Yeah it’s really sad. I don’t know to what degree but I heard it’s pretty—it’s come on quickly and not good. Anyway Pam called me up, I was talking to her and she said there is a woman called Gina Bosworth who is trying to get an art school started. And I had been painting in my house at the time and that was tight quarters. So I called this Gina Bosworth and she said yes we’re getting people together that are interested and founding an arts group. And I said I was not interested in an arts group what I need is a studio. And she said we’re not at that stage yet and may not be for a long time, but come on down and we’ll have some talks.

And I can’t remember. I think Jane [Quartarone] was there. There were some Arden people, and there was a meeting at Wilmington College and maybe 20 people showed up. Gina was kind of the ring leader and she had city contacts and she loved dealing with city people. That’s when Mayor Frawley was in office and they were doing more community stuff then had been done previously. And Carson Zullinger and I think Jim Anderson, James A. Anderson is going whacko. I can’t remember who else. Linda Schmidt, Oh and Linda Welsh was there. She now does a lot of stuff with Cab Calloway School.

MARGARET: So she’s still in the area. That’s not a name that’s come up before.

GRAHAM: Ask Gina about her but she’s a—but she was involved. Oh and Sheila Ashby, do you remember her?

MARGARET: No.

GRAHAM: Coach at Tower Hills wife, she’s English and she lives in England now. She was a friend of Gina Bosworth. This was sort of a lady’s wing group and that is where the energy started. So finally Gina found out about the sheet metal factory down on French street across
from the original theater company which was in a converted fire house. And our place was
directly across the street from the Salvation Army which was at that time kind of a flop house.
So we would get drunks on the street and it was a dicey neighborhood. It was safe but nobody in
those days went to Second and French, it wasn’t the center of anything.

And we started in this old sheet metal factory and put in electricity which is probably illegal and
the walls were brick so we had to use masonry nails to hang pictures/paintings. And there was no
heat of course. Carson might have some photographs of those days.

MARGARET: He has shown me a few of those and a few are included in the—

GRAHAM: DCCA history that Wes Memeger put together.

MARGARET: Yes that publication which is great as well. So tell me about—you were looking
primarily for studio space and so you established a studio in that building?

GRAHAM: No there was no studio there. It was simply a shotgun, a brick studio—in a brick
building it was a cheap metal manufacturing place with open ended back. It was a marginal
structure. But a couple years later, maybe a year or two later, the space in the in the old water
department building came available and that is when Mayor McLaughlin was in office. And that
building had been used for the police department as a storage area for stolen bicycles; a drug
testing facility for the cops to do drug tests. And on the third floor was the water testing
laboratory but the rest of the building was empty and so we moved into half of the ground floor
and it must have been in ’75 or ’76 because we got the bicentennial grant money of $20,000.00
to redo the walls and the lighting.

It was all done voluntarily and then we hired [Izabelle] Izzy Mead as the first secretary, book
keeper. I hired her. She had a beautifully written resume, and I thought, “Great! Somebody who
can type.” And then of course she had it professionally done and she couldn’t type for anything.
She never touched a typewriter. But she was a body on the scene, and helpful, and enthusiastic.
Then in that building there were, I think, five studio; five rooms on set. Two on the second
and three on the third for studio space. And that’s when the studio function began at DCCA.

MARGARET: And who else was in the studios with you along with?

GRAHAM: Ken Mabrey so Ken is a fixture. Me. Linda Johnson. Colleen Zufelt—and Colleen
was doing ceramics and she rented part of her space to the jewelry girl Olga Ganoudis and there
we were.

MARGARET: So despite just looking for studio space initially you were involved with the
organization as well before the studio spaces were founded, so really assisting with kind of
construction labor but also—

GRAHAM: Group shows. And then we were doing—Linda Schmidt knew people at whatever
academic institution she had been involved with and she—we called in—there was a print show
that we did of contemporary prints. Oh we had juried shows. Larry Day from Philadelphia came
down and juried a show. One of their early shows from waterworks was a sculpture show by
local sculptors. Have you talked to Rick Rothrock?
MARGARET: I have.

GRAHAM: Because he was—

MARGARET: As well. Yes, yes.

GRAHAM: Oh I remember Rick and I were kind of the people to renovate the war department building and Rick and I didn’t get along at all. I didn’t like Rick and Rick didn’t like me and it was—he would come in with insane ideas that 1.) wouldn’t have worked; 2.) there wasn’t time to do them; 3.) there wasn’t money to do them. And it was just—he was—I’m a pragmatic, practical, right-angled guy. Rick was not, but he was there and he was concerned and involved so I don’t know what he had said, but he should have a pretty good memory.

MARGARET: Yes and he’s spoken a bit about the early establishment of the DCCA and his involvement.

GRAHAM: He might remember a lot more than I do.

MARGARET: Which he does and that’s good.

GRAHAM: He was one of the beginning presidents I think.

MARGARET: Yes. Yes. I am keeping an eye on the time.

GRAHAM: I’m sorry.

MARGARET: Oh, no, no, that’s quite all right. We can have, like I said, we can have additional conversations.

GRAHAM: After this week I’m probably free and loose.

MARGARET: And we’ll do that. So let’s see. I am kind of—

GRAHAM: Oh and we had through—a lot of the beginning shows were through contacts, personal contacts. Linda Schmidt’s sister Olinca Blair was a friend of Nancy Jurs who is married to Wendell Castle.

MARGARET: Yes.

GRAHAM: So guess what? We had a Wendell Castle, Nancy Jurs. It was all through contact. Linda Schmidt one day said—god it will come to me—in a photography show and Katherine Groover who now is in Vermont I think—I don’t know—was a photographer. Katherine Dianich Groover. And that photography show we got Susan Kaczmarek to come down and jury. She was then curating for the Museum of Modern Art. She was one of—one of that big photography guy, who is he? Modern Art? Starts with an S? She was one of his protégés.

And that was almost a national show, regional. I know it was regional but it was national and that was a big deal for us. So a lot of the early shows were sort of personal contacts and ideas that would pop up at meetings and one or two people would then pull it together and instigate it.
MARGARET: And so those personal contacts are probably fairly locally and then in the Philadelphia region as well.

GRAHAM: Yeah, like the Wendell Castle thing was there in New York and they said—and a couple of the photographers were names, well-known names, and somebody would call them up and say, “could you do two or three photographs for a juried show?” And they would say yes or no. And so it was a sort of loose and goosy organization but somehow it all functioned.

MARGARET: So that’s the DCCA. I mean of course a lot more things happening as well but what I want to shift to is your recollections, if any, of some of the activities that were happening in downtown Wilmington.

GRAHAM: That, as I said, I kept pretty much to myself. The Robbie Jones thing I never was involved in. I only met him once or twice and I just kind of stayed away because I wasn’t a party animal and he was so flamboyantly gay that it was kind of a turn off for me. I mean he would read something in a magazine that one of the Studio 54 people in New York had said or done and Robbie the next week would say or do the same thing. He was a copycat. So I went to his place on the Queen just once.

MARGARET: Oh really, okay? And so—and he didn’t have any presence really in this initial group with the founding of the DCCA?

GRAHAM: No.

MARGARET: Those were kind of—

GRAHAM: I think—was he still here when that was—he must have been.

MARGARET: He was, yes. The gallery was and the estates are pretty rough. It’s difficult to find any sort of solid dates for that time period but it seems basically 1973/74 through 1978/79. Now—and there’s some disagreement. Some people remember it being a pretty short run but I’ve been able to find exhibition details from that early and that late so—

GRAHAM: I heard his name pretty soon after I came back but I didn’t know him. I had no interest in—maybe I went down to look at the Queen and thought that this was just not for me.

MARGARET: Right. Okay. And the work—well it seems as though the work that he was presenting at Fifth Street Gallery was not necessarily anymore experimental than what would have been presented at the DCCA.

GRAHAM: I think that’s fair.

MARGARET: But I think they were pretty comparable in the type of work that’s being presented, but there was definitely that element of—that kind of party element.

GRAHAM: Oh very much.

MARGARET: That was important to that scene.
GRAHAM: Yeah there was a party that was going down at the Terminal Railroads Hotel.

MARGARET: Yeah the Sleaze Convention.

GRAHAM: Yeah and just the idea of that didn’t—I mean I am—it’s not my thing.

MARGARET: And it’s interesting. I think that that does bring up this point where there are these things that are happening parallel but they are really serving different artists and audiences at the same time.

GRAHAM: Oh very much so.

MARGARET: So kind of—it is really useful for me to hear places, where sometimes they do intersect and other places, other times, and it seems like the majority of the time that they don’t. And that is interesting; it helps me kind of articulate.

GRAHAM: Yeah there is the social aspect and there is the business aspect. I was far more interested in the work structure and getting things done than I was with anything to do with parties or social stuff. In the beginning at DCCA, after we looked into the water department building, there was a lot of emphasis of doing the social stuff, getting people in to doing all kinds of outreach stuff, and I never participated in that. It just did not interest me, but it was necessary to do it, to make our presence known.

MARGARET: And it seems like—were those some of the activities, let’s see, Mitch [Lyons] has spoken and Rick has as well about some of those—no that would have—would that have been in the other building? Those wonderful kind of audience involved kind of—I think there was a Saturday street festival kind of a thing but I think that would have been—would that have been at Second and—

GRAHAM: That was at the first building.

MARGARET: The first building.

GRAHAM: Yeah that’s right and Anne Oldach made sculpture in the street and did a head of somebody.

MARGARET: And Mitch doing his big—

GRAHAM: Prints outside on his clay tablets. And then we moved up there was one—oh we had a really good—I think it was a craft show at Willingtown Center between venues. And somebody brought in blocks of ice and we watched them melt. There was some—

MARGARET: Yes Rick.

GRAHAM: Was it Rick?

MARGARET: That was Rick. His ice sculpture kind of like, a labyrinth looking.

GRAHAM: It was like Oldenburg before anybody heard of Oldenburg.
MARGARET: So there were those early initiatives to establish kind of a public—DCCA as public presence as well.

GRAHAM: Uh-huh.

MARGARET: Okay.

GRAHAM: It was sort of seen as street festival stuff.

MARGARET: Okay. Okay I have just one more question and then we should probably break. So at the same time it’s good to hear about Fifth Street. And recollections. And I can anticipate your answer, but just to make sure I’ve asked about Tom Watkins and Xanadu Comics also downtown.

GRAHAM: I am totally blank.

MARGARET: Okay. That is fine. So Tom Watkins was involved with Rob Jones and the gallery, but he had established Xanadu Comics with Joyce Brabner who then married Harvey Pekar, American Splendor, that whole scene. And Tom Watkins along with—

GRAHAM: Is he tall and skinny?

MARGARET: He is tall and skinny. He had glasses.

GRAHAM: Does he still live in Wilmington?

MARGARET: He’s not. He’s in Philadelphia and the intern that was working on this exhibition with him made it her mission to track him down because no one had seen him. So he is in Philadelphia, we have a phone number. I have not been able to schedule an interview yet.

[Crosstalk]

MARGARET: He showed with Susan Isaacs in the late ‘80s early ‘90s.

GRAHAM: Oh yeah.

MARGARET: And what else have I found? So he was heavily involved with Fifth Street and Xanadu along with, oh my goodness now the name is totally escaping me—Anne Eder and Xerography. And so this is this other kind of—

GRAHAM: Carson knew him. He mentioned him—

MARGARET: As well. Okay so you didn’t go down to Xanadu and that kind of scene at all? That is good to know. Glad I asked.

GRAHAM: I am allergic to certain people and places and no. It’s all right.

MARGARET: Okay so it’s ten.
GRAHAM: I'm sorry.

MARGARET: That is quite all right.

[End of Audio]
Duration: 30 minutes
MARGARET: This is Margaret Winslow Associate Curator for Contemporary Art interviewing Graham Dougherty on Tuesday May 29, 2013 in the Delaware Art Museum.

GRAHAM: Did you look up to see when the museum bought that painting of mine?

MARGARET: Yes, 1987. No, that’s not right. No it was 19—that’s curious. Oh this is interesting so I'm looking at this float is from 1986, it was included in the 69th Annual Exhibition which was on view from September 26th through November 8th 1987. The curious thing is—and I'm just now seeing this—that the session number in 1986.

GRAHAM: Well I’ll tell you I think it was bought from Fred Carspecken.

MARGARET: Oh, really?

GRAHAM: It was with the local funds. The funds from—

MARGARET: The Copeland Memorial Fund which goes towards which go towards acquisitions from new exhibitions. Would you have submitted this work for the annual exhibition?

GRAHAM: I don’t think so. I think it was bought. It might have been but I think it was bought from Fred Carspecken. I just have that in the back of my head, I don’t know why.
MARGARET: That’s curious.

GRAHAM: It doesn’t mean it was but—my memory is not the best for things like that and I certainly don’t have any record.

MARGARET: Okay. I will have to look at that again. What’s curious though is that it’s listed as included in this exhibition which was in ’87 but the accession number was ’86 which means it would have been—so the first part of the accession number means it would have been purchased in 1986.

GRAHAM: Yeah, beats me.

MARGARET: I know that’s curious. I should have noticed that yesterday and did a little more research. However, this is the work. The date on the work is 1986.

GRAHAM: Okay. Well there you go. But when Rowland came to my house it was long before that so it must have been some sort of a jury show or a curated show before ’86 because I moved out of that house in ’85 or ’84. And I can remember taking things outside, leaning them against a fence and rolling. I walked around.

MARGARET: Would that have been for the 1970 for one of these earlier annual exhibitions?

GRAHAM: I wouldn’t—probably one of the—

MARGARET: ’75 or ’79.

GRAHAM: ’79. I think it’s—yeah.

MARGARET: Okay, do you have a recent resume on file?

GRAHAM: You’re the second person to ask me that, no I don’t.

MARGARET: Well because I was looking— I thought I had seen something in the catalogue for the show at the DCCA [Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts] but that just includes Tyler [School of Art] and the Pennsylvania Academy but no exhibition history.

GRAHAM: It’s so confused. I don’t know. I just stop doing it. It’s only obsessive people like you that are desperate for all that stuff.

MARGARET: I know. We want all that history. We are—so this goes to ’85.

GRAHAM: Go with the flow of time do not let myself be interrupted by these little pebbles along the way.

MARGARET: Which is good.

GRAHAM: It upsets people like you. It upsets good, nice, kind people—
MARGARET: Well tell me this do you remember—

GRAHAM: There is so much of it, it’s so insignificant.

MARGARET: Well how about this. How about other exhibitions locally that you recall so, not at—because I know you’ve shown at Station Gallery. And it’s good, we do have—I could help you or I could construct it for you because we do have—so we keep vertical files in the library so any upcoming projects, exhibitions, you can always send me post cards. I have been trying to do a lot of work on the vertical files.

GRAHAM: Oh, you're better than me.

MARGARET: Maintaining all this—

GRAHAM: There it is. So what year is this?

MARGARET: I could construct some of this by looking at the shows at Station—

GRAHAM: It’s ’87.

MARGARET: [Inaudible].

GRAHAM: Oh my God.

MARGARET: And then we have recent.

GRAHAM: Oh well locally, it’s been, locally it has only been DCCA. And then that show in Philadelphia last November and you’ve got the card for that in there.

MARGARET: And project space, we have the grant for that as well.

GRAHAM: Oh, that’s good. Yeah.

MARGARET: So, DCCA. So this goes up to ’85.

GRAHAM: And then after that it’s generally—it’s just local. Wilmington. I did one in Eastern Maryland two winters ago but that was—I wouldn’t even bother with that, that was in an architect’s firm. They had to lay off people and they had a huge space where their drafts people had been before they all had to leave, and so that was sort of a homemade exhibit. I wouldn’t even mention that.

MARGARET: So, DCCA in the Members’ gallery.

GRAHAM: Well the big one was—the one that the catalogue came from was the Members’ Gallery and—

MARGARET: And.
GRAHAM: And then at the Hatch is just an annual rotating thing.

MARGARET: How about in the Water Works building between ’81 and the move to the Riverfront?

GRAHAM: I tried not to show that because I thought it would be politically incorrect to look like the kind of bullying guy that was overly involved, so I tried to stay out of exhibits there at that time. I might have had one or two pieces in some show but I certainly don’t remember. And if there was a juried show I probably didn’t enter anything.

MARGARET: How appropriate of you.

GRAHAM: Well things like that can make for bad feelings.

MARGARET: Yeah, of course. I feel the same way. I am always trying to be very sensitive to perceived conflicts of interest. So okay between ’85 DCCA opened space on the Riverfront in 2000? Was it 2000?

GRAHAM: This is the 13th or 14th year there. I don’t know? Did we open up in 2000 or 2001? I don’t remember.

MARGARET: Right around 2000, okay. And how about other—so, the annual exhibition at the Delaware Art Museum continued until it became the biennial between ’89—the last one was held in 2000. Did you apply or were included in any of those annual or biennial exhibitions that you recall?

GRAHAM: I don’t recall. I might have entered stuff but I just don’t remember.

MARGARET: Okay, I can go back and double check those as well. Okay I wrote down all these lists—a list of questions for you. Tell me a bit about your involvement with Station Gallery and Carspecken-Scott [Gallery]. And in part I am asking because Carspecken-Scott established earlier but Station Gallery also established an active during the 1970s and ‘80s.

GRAHAM: Have you talked to Nancy Bercaw?

MARGARET: Not yet, she’s on the list though.

GRAHAM: Well I started using—well Fred—Howie Scott was a partner with Fred, Fred Carspecken, in the very beginning and she and he broke off. I was friendly with Howie and got to know Fred through her and showed there a couple of times, once or twice. And of course didn’t sell anything through them and Fred is a business man and it’s his livelihood so he needs to keep saleable items in the gallery, which did not include me—or not in any way thinking about long term. So I used him for framing, and then when Nancy Bercaw opened her place, I used her for framing as well. I think had one or two shows there, then the same situation with sales. They rely on sales and my stuff didn’t sell there either. But we remained friendly and I would use them for framing emergencies and something like that.
Then I found a small corp that makes those welded metal aluminum frames and I buy directly from them so I don’t really need a local framer. So that’s my relationship. Fred occasionally stops by the studio and says, “oh I have a project with lawyers who are redoing their offices and they were interested and I will take three or four of your pieces and show it to the buying committee.” Nothing ever happens. Nothing ever sells. And so that’s my relationship. It’s just sort of very low key, long-term, friendly personally, but no major business dealings at all.

MARGARET: Okay, and so abstraction in Wilmington in the 1970s and ‘80s in—amongst the, maybe, weight of the Brandywine tradition do you feel as though—and other artists have discussed this: the difficulty not necessarily in showing, but in regards to the reception of abstraction in this area based on that long history. Is that something you feel you experienced as well or noticed?

GRAHAM: Oh well, sure, yeah. You couldn’t not. And in the beginning it was sort of hurtful and you wondered why it was not more open. But pretty quickly you realized it’s the tenor of the locale. It’s just what’s here and you accept it for what it is. So it’s—and also Wilmington is a small town. It doesn’t have that big a market, a turnover population that are willing to buy abstract paintings. It’s just the way it is.

MARGARET: And they weren’t helped by some of the reviews I read by Otto Dekom.

GRAHAM: Yeah, he was a real jerk and a slob. I saw him at a—who had the gallery down at Bricks Mill? And Mary [inaudible] had a show there.

MARGARET: Somerville-Manning?

GRAHAM: I think it’s before—

MARGARET: Oh, it would have been before Somerville-Manning.

GRAHAM: Considerably before.

MARGARET: What would have been there before Somerville?

GRAHAM: I don’t know, maybe Hagley was putting on a show of its own. Hagley owns Brooks Mill, owns the building and he, Otto Deckham was there slurping crab dip out of a bowl on crackers and drooling down his neck tie. He was a real creep. Slobby guy.

MARGARET: And his reviews are harsh.

GRAHAM: Yeah.

MARGARET: Harsh. Certainly when it comes to abstract work, the review he wrote about when Gene Davis was one of the jurors for one of the annual exhibitions and Margo Allman’s work received a first prize and—my goodness harsh criticism. Specifically it seems consistently of abstract work. And this is consistent in the 1960s; in the early 1970s as well, so what’s being published is certainly very critical when it comes to abstraction.
GRAHAM: Well, yes, that’s true.

MARGARET: And this is in the ‘70s we’re not—

GRAHAM: Well, you know he was the bottom of the barrel and they called him “Wreck’em Dekom.”

MARGARET: “Wreck’em Dekom.” I like that.

GRAHAM: You never heard of that?

MARGARET: No.

GRAHAM: He was just kind of pathetic and a joke, but nasty. He was a nasty man. He wrote something about a show here, maybe it was one of the sculptures outside was first installed and he said then, “do you see the blue sculpture on the parkway on the curved top? It’s not a piece of art. It belongs to the United States Postal Service.”

MARGARET: He’s talking about Electroglide, the David Stromeyer.

GRAHAM: Yep.

MARGARET: Oh, I haven’t seen that one. I will look for that review.

GRAHAM: I remember that. Actually it was pretty funny, and nasty. Anyway he was bad news. But abstract stuff is—it depends where you are and what the market is. I keep thinking my stuff will sell in Florida. I have a place there and go down in the winter. I have gone to a couple galleries, and 1.) they say if you don’t have a Hispanic last name you might as well not even walk in the front door; and 2.) they say seagulls, palm trees, sunset, sunrise, there are cruise ships on the horizon, beaches with children playing. Miami these days, Rubel’s collection the local hot—

MARGARET: Yeah, the Art Fair, all of that.

GRAHAM: A lot of hot furniture sales. A lot of decorative stuff. So maybe I just haven’t gone to the right place or know the right thing and I don’t have a Hispanic last name so that’s part of it. Texas has been fine for me. I’ve got three shows.

MARGARET: And you show at DesignWorks, which was established by Steve Lanier.

GRAHAM: Yeah, it’s design works. Yeah Steve Lanier ended up in Galveston of all places with Elisabeth Pelham and they are now married and he has a gallery there. And this September I am having my third show there.

MARGARET: You’re third, okay. So we have a postcard for the show in—oh good. So 2007 was the first; 2010 and then this September.
GRAHAM: Yeah, if the hurricanes don’t come. And Galveston is close to Houston and Houston is a lot of oil money and they have bought stuff. There is a big medical center on Galveston Island, it’s part of the University of Texas Medical Center. It’s a huge place and it’s sort of the core industry on Galveston, other than tours. And nice Jewish doctors like to buy stuff. And when the hurricane went through, it’s not five years ago—four years ago—Hurricane Ike did a massive job on Galveston and houses were destroyed and people rebuild and bought paintings, bless them.

MARGARET: That’s great. That’s wonderful.

GRAHAM: It sure is. It’s horrible for the island; they lost something like 1600 live oak trees.

MARGARET: Oh, gosh, that’s hard.

GRAHAM: Anyway that’s—Texas is good. I mean it all depends on locale and name recognition and all that sort of stuff for marketing.

MARGARET: I do have to say it’s interesting given the faculty. I don’t know, maybe this doesn’t mean anything, but I’m just thinking when Julio first came to the University of Delaware and then brought in the “Cranbrook mafia”—other artists, I am thinking of Margo Allman, artists who have been committed to abstraction in this area—it’s not as though there wasn’t a strong community of artists committed to abstraction here at that time. But the public reception—

GRAHAM: Well, it was marginal. Wilmington was a corporate town, it still is. It wasn’t much a one unit directional corporation [inaudible] were the big banks came in. And people are transient in that world. I mean they come for a year or two or five and then move on. It’s a different society now.

MARGARET: Was your work included in the Sales and Rental Gallery here at the museum?

GRAHAM: Yeah.

MARGARET: Did you work with Alice [Hupfel]?

GRAHAM: Yeah, a few small things I think. Sewell Biggs bought one and then returned it. I don’t think—I don’t think if anything else sold. I don’t think so.

MARGARET: So there is one thing I admit I haven’t looked into yet, and I need to, is looking at the establishment of those corporate collections.

GRAHAM: Alice was really instrumental in that.

MARGARET: She really was.

GRAHAM: She just really set that thing going. I mean it was astonishing how much work she did and it’s too bad—well who knows why it stopped, but she did a hell of a lot of work.
MARGARET: She did. I mean supporting artists at any stage in their careers in this region and of course in Philadelphia, New York, DC as well and really shaping those corporate collections.

GRAHAM: She was on the road with a truck once a week or something. It was just astonishing. Anyway.

MARGARET: But I need to look into—

GRAHAM: I had one or two—a few sort of things, nothing extraordinary.

MARGARET: That’s good too.

GRAHAM: Have you talked to Lindsey Felch?

MARGARET: No, I haven’t talked to her yet.

GRAHAM: She is in Philadelphia I think. Do you know her or do you know who she is? Bernie Felch’s daughter.

MARGARET: She has spoken with Education and with the [inaudible] she’s talked about his work and talked about in the parks specifically, but I haven’t interviewed her for this project yet.

GRAHAM: I think you should. You would find it interesting because she started being an agent, and based in Philadelphia primarily, but she might have some insight.

MARGARET: Okay.

GRAHAM: And have you spoken with Gina Bosworth yet?

MARGARET: I have.

GRAHAM: Did you get anything from her about the beginnings of—

MARGARET: Not much. And maybe I think it was early in the process so I, gosh, spoke to her almost two years ago at this point. And I think if I had specific questions and had planned to record the interview we might have a richer conversation.

GRAHAM: Isn’t that funny I thought she would have all kinds of recollections of the DCCA days.

MARGARET: I would have thought so as well.

GRAHAM: I was thinking last night how DCCA—this is going backwards—but how DCCA started. There was a woman’s fiber group and it was Gina Bosworth and Sheila Ashby and June Jenkins and some others that I can't remember. And that was sort of the core cabal that got things moving. And one of the first shows down at DCCA in the Water Department building Sheila
Ashby curated was a quilt show of contemporary quilts and it was one of the best shows that we did of the whole things. I think because it was such a shock.

MARGARET: I wonder if—

GRAHAM: There ought to be a review of these shows by Penny Cope in the news journal archives because she helped.

MARGARET: Do you have recollections of her? She’s not still—she isn't still living is she?

GRAHAM: Oh, yeah.

MARGARET: She is.

GRAHAM: I hope so. She [inaudible] no between you and me she is similar in age. Her husband worked for DuPont and they were transferred to New England and—

MARGARET: I need to track her down.

GRAHAM: Yeah.

MARGARET: She seemed in general much more—

[End of Audio]

Duration: 26 minutes