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Full transcript of an interview with

RUTH TUCK

on 15 March 1985

by Dean Bruton

Recording available on Cassette

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A series of dots, indicates an untranscribable word or phrase.

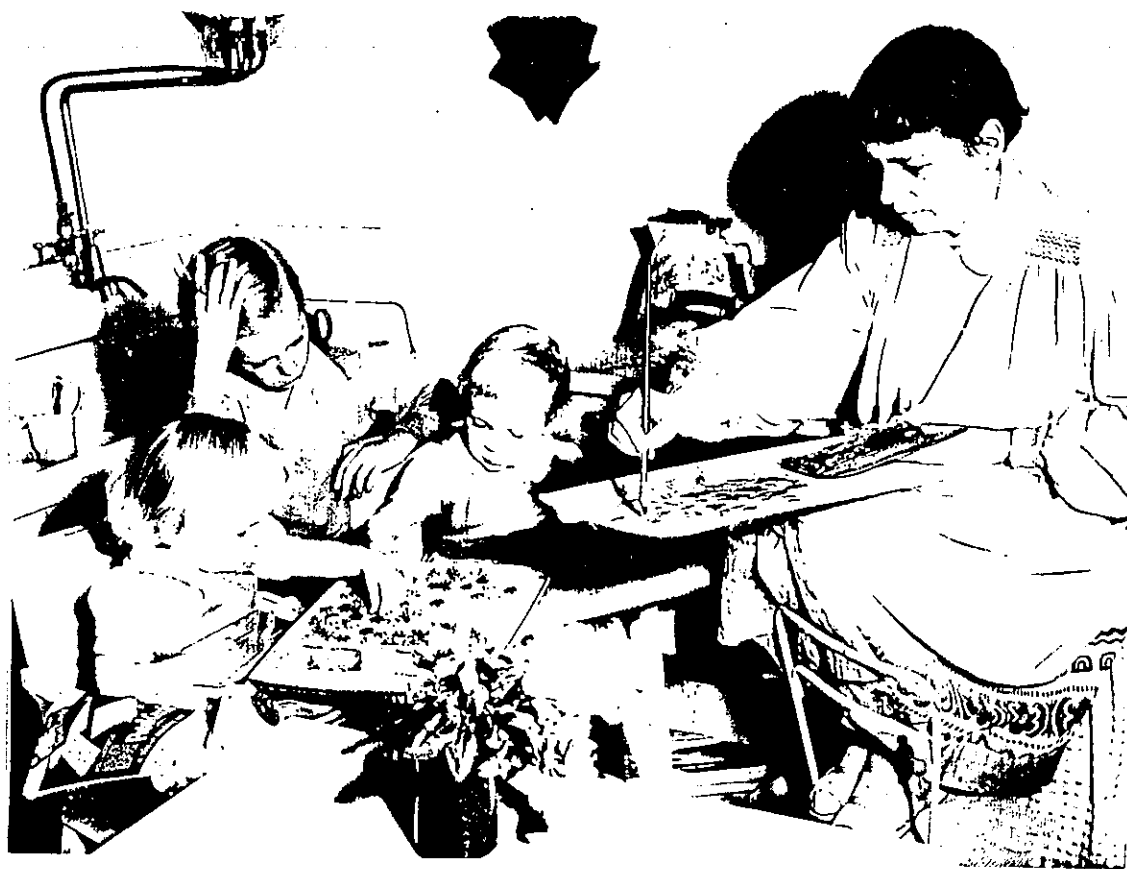
Sentences that were left unfinished in the normal manner of conversation are shown ending in three dashes, - - -.

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Contemporary Art In South Australia
An Oral History



Interviewee: Ruth Tuck

Interviewer: Dean Bruton

Date Of Interview: 15th March 1985

Contemporary Art in S.A.

Oral Historian: Dean Bruton 7 Bundarra Rd., Marino SA 5049 Tel: 2983049

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INTERVIEW LOG AND DATA SHEET

INTERVIEWEE: RUTH TUCK

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 28TH MARCH, 1985

INTERVIEWER: DEAN BRUTON

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: PARKSIDE S.A.

RECORDING: BIAS-NORMAL, GOOD QUALITY, OCCASIONAL EXTRANEIOUS NOISE.

SUMMARY: RUTH TUCK, ARTIST AND ART TEACHER RELATES HER BACKGROUND, EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT WITH THE FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

INTERVIEW LOG - RUTH TUCK

SIDE A

MIN	SUBJECT	PROPER NAMES
0	Family Background	
3.41	Settling in Adelaide	
8.30	Art School training	Howie Dowie David Dallwitz
15.15	A typical day at the Art School	Beryl Morris Ida Buttrose Jessamine Buxton
20.20	Influence of Mary P. Harris	Bonython Hall Walloscheck McCubbin Bryan

31.25	Teachers College application	Adey
37.30	Reaction to the Associates Contemporary Group Exhibition, 1942.	Henry Fuller Shirley Adams Nolan Preston Dobell Dorrit Black Lisette Kohlhagen Leila McNamara Clement Greenberg Toulouse Lautrec Gauguin Modigliani
39.05	Introduction of History of Art to Adelaide High School	Fenner Miethke Ruth Gibson Bakewell McDonald
41.30	Inspection of Art Teachers	Phil Stoward Shirley Jeffries David Dellwitz Tom Bone Reggie West
43.00	Marie Tuck - artist, teacher	Betty Davidson O'Connor Gladys Good Monet Rupert Bunny Paul Klee Botticelli Ivor Francis
46.00	End of Side A	

SIDE B

MIN	SUBJECT	PROPER NAMES
0	Value of Art to Society	Kollwitz
	Reasons for being a painter	Van Gogh
2.54	Reaction to the Herald Exhibition, 1939	Marchand
4.23	First meeting with Mervyn Smith, 1943	
6.55	Children's Backgrounds	
8.25	Occupations, art critic, artist	
10.55	The first C.A.S. Meetings	Max Harris
12.07	Aims of the Rebel group	John Reed
15.05	Impact of Immigrants, 1950's	
20.00	Changes to attitudes and values to art in S.A.	Kym Bonython
21.25	Start of Ruth Tuck Art School	Joseph Choate
23.21	Connection with India and Japan	Shankar
	Children's Art Competitions	Alcorso
27.33	Most enjoyable activities	Mandy Martin
28.00	C.A.S. exhibitions 1942	Janet Ayliffe
38.20	David Dallwitz	Glen Ash
43.04	Francis Roy Thompson	Margie Sheppherd
46.00	End of Side B	

An edited transcript of the tape follows:

[SIDE A]

This interview with Ruth Tuck was recorded on the 15th March 1985 at Fullarton by Dean Bruton for the history of contemporary art in South Australia.

What is your full name?

Ruth Tuck.

When and where were you born?

July 22nd, 1914 Cowell, South Australia.

When did your family come to S.A.?

My grandfather came in 1850.

Is there any connection with art in your family background?

My father was nearly sixty when I was born. I had a father's cousin who was a painter, and an aunt and uncle who were prominent musicians and composers. All of my father's family were well educated. There was a cousin who was the city surveyor of Unley, and one who was an expert on tides; he was the Harbormaster at Outer Harbour,- also many headmasters and headmistresses in schools.

What were your grandparents names?

Henry Tuck was my grandfather. I think my grandmother was Harriet Tuck. My mother's family was quite different. Her father was a coppersmith. From my mother I got the enthusiasm and the encouragement that I would not have got from my father, he died when I was ten. (laughs) There's not much chance that you're going to grow up with a father as old as that!

What did your grandparents do?

My grandfather was a minister of the church (on my father's side) the other was a coppersmith.

Where did they live?

My mother's people lived at Maylands S.A., and my father's father came out and was the minister of the Baptist Church at Kenton Valley. His brother opened and ran the first school at Mt. Torrens, which was taken over by the Education Dept.

What were your parents names?

My father's name was Arthur Edward Tuck, and he was a stock and station

agent at Cowell. My mother's name was Minnie Jane Tuck and she was a tailoress.

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

I had two brothers and one sister. I was the third child in the family.

Why did your family decide to settle in Adelaide?

My mother settled in Adelaide when I was ten, because my father had died. It was in a period of very great drought. A valuable property that we had at Cowell had to be sold for practically nothing, and she came down with no money. For many years she was matron of the Aboriginal Women's Home, so many of my teenage years were spent with aborigines at North Adelaide in Sussex St.

In 1924 we came from Cowell to Adelaide. My mother originally bought a house in Adelaide but found that it was so difficult, we went to live in Sussex St. in a very old cottage. The aboriginal women were housed in dormitories in a galvanised iron Gothic church. Our family lived in a little cottage next door.

A shocking thing happened to our family at Cowell. My father built for us a very nice, big bungalow, and to keep it cool in that very hot climate, he decided he would have the roof painted white, which he did, and we all got severe lead poisoning. I survived without too much damage but I was the only one, really.

Was the paint heavily lead based?

All our drinking water came off the roof, all our cooking, washing, bathing, all the water we used came off the roof! - That's why now I paint with water colours.

What schools did you go to?

I went to Cowell school where we had a headmaster who was actually mad! He only taught two subjects for which I am very glad; one was English Literature and Grammar, so I know all about grammar, and the other one was Music.

At the end of grade seven I came down to Adelaide and went to the Unley school for a few months. I passed the qualifying certificate very well, I don't know how, then I went to Unley for four years. Then I went to Adelaide for two years. My mother in the company of the various Tuck relations would've been considered virtually uneducated. She recognised that I had some talent in art, and one of the first things she did when she came down to Adelaide was go along with some of my drawings to the art

school, to Mr. Howie, the Principal, and I was given Saturday morning classes.

So, from the age of twelve onwards until I left high school, I was doing art every Saturday morning. When I finished at high school, I intended to be a Maths teacher, and I applied to get into Teacher's College and was accepted. It was one of the worst depression years, and after being accepted, I got a letter saying that they had decided not to take any students in that year at all. So, my mother very wisely said, "You're not going to sit back and waste time." She got an art school scholarship for me.

The only way however, that I, as a girl, could attend the art school was to attend through a school within a school, the Girls Central Art School, which was in many ways a very bad thing. John Dowie and David Dallwitz left High school at the same time as I did. They wanted to attend the art school, and they could go in and pick the subjects they wanted. They went to Adelaide High at the same time. They could go and start straight off at art school as ordinary Diploma students, but a girl couldn't, you had to go in within the framework of the Girls Central Art School.

Now this was very difficult for me, because the girls going to the G.C.A.S., went there, believe it or not, instead of going to any other secondary school, straight from Primary school, and they were given extra subjects such as Arithmetic, English and Botany. I don't know what else, it was outside my sphere. I had passed Leaving Honors. I was accepted at Teachers College to do the Maths Teaching course, so what could they do?

Then they looked through the rest of the art subjects, Life Drawing One, Object Drawing One, etc. (laughs), I had got those eight years ago! Although I was a member of the G.C.A.S., I was seventeen and the other girls were only say, thirteen, and I had to start off doing Advanced Antique, Advanced Perspective, etc.!

You must have felt good to be ahead of the others.

Now, I was I think a good student, I did well but most of the teachers didn't like it. Mary P. Harris was a wonderful influence, teaching at the G.C.A.S., she also taught anyone who wanted to do History of Art. The men did not do History of Art, so I was lucky there. The G.C.A.S. was in the same building, the old Exhibitions Building. I don't think Dowie or Dallwitz ever did History of Art at the Art school. I can't remember them

coming in to the class.

Some men did one called, *Composition*, with Mary P. Harris at night, later, which we all came along to. Ivor Francis came to that, but I don't remember them ever coming to History of Art.

At the Exhibitions Building the water troughs were separate, there was a men's and a women's trough. Was this typical of the separation of the sexes that occurred?

Yes. Because of my background in Maths, I wanted to do what were considered to be men's subjects. Apart from that I had done so much of what they were offering, there wasn't that much that they were offering that I could do, so I did *Geometrical Drawing* right up to the top, and I would be the only girl doing this. I've got an idea that some of the girls were doing *Elementary Geometrical Drawing*, but I was the only one doing all this.

I can remember when we came to do *Advanced Perspective*, it was a very hot day for the exam. We were in the big Design Room. We had one of our design teachers, Beryl Morris who was supervising. I was sitting in the front row. She came up to me and brought me a glass of water and said, "My dear, I feel so sorry for you doing this very hard exam, it's not fair for a girl to be doing this." She was nice to me all the way through. When the results came out there was only one distinction and that was me. Most of the boys failed, very few passed. There was a mistake on the paper, the question was wrongly asked, so I looked at the question and worked it through as far as it would go, but I suspected there was a mistake in the question. Instead of 17 it should have read 7. This was so, and I got 100%! That was my time at art school, I really loved it.

Some things the girls had to do that the men didn't,- one was Music, and so, I was the art school pianist, whereas David Dallwitz should have been, but we all used to get in there and play.

That bugged me I tell you, because on my art school report each time, they would put, "We are very grateful for her help at the piano." That report went out to all the schools that I was appointed to, and I was greeted as soon as I got there with, "Of course you want to be school pianist"! I could do what the art school wanted, Violet Buttrose was the Music teacher, and Mr. Newsham, but I had to work very hard at music arrangement and it was a jolly nuisance when I was a busy art teacher, to have to stop my lesson to go and play the piano for a singing lesson.

Can you describe a typical day at the art school?

Our lessons started at nine o'clock, and I lived in North Adelaide, at Sussex St., so I would either walk in or ride my bike. I always got there well before nine, I liked being early. Our first lesson was *Still Life* with Miss Buxton, (*Ambrosia* Buxton), I don't think that is quite right but that is what we called her. Her typical way of teaching Still Life was that you took a whole term over one painting. You got coloured papers from a cupboard. One had to be put up as the background that was a cool colour, and a coloured paper in the foreground that was a warm colour. You could pick the various things such as shells and peacock feathers and so on to come in the front. I was doing it in watercolours at this stage,- it was the only place that I could do watercolour at the art school!

You would get out last week's drawing and put it under the tap to wet it ready to start the painting. I had just got hold of my first Van Gogh book, they were very hard to get! (This was before the Rebel Exhibition at the Society of Art, in June 1942.) I was probably the only one there then who was interested in what could be called Modern Art, and I had this book and thought, I can't stand it,- and I knew Miss Buxton wouldn't be up until twenty past nine, which was the time she always got up there, twenty minutes late.

The teachers and staff down in the front office would sit there having a cup of tea. This was a winter term because I had taken in a bunch of Iris, the winter Iris, the pale delicate ones with the fine spikes, and I had taken in from home an old broken yellow jug, and I decided I wasn't going to have the papers out of the cupboard, I was going to have a polished foreground. I wouldn't do that now, that wasn't Van Gogh, but I'd always wanted to do that and she wouldn't let me, so I poured water over the table to make it look polished up. I've forgotten what I had for a background. I don't think I bothered about having one- this was when I was still doing oils. In twenty five minutes, I had painted that picture. I painted the Iris first, then the yellow jug, then the brown table, and a strong yellow at the back. Jessica Veronica Ambrosia Buxton (actually she was Jessica Victoria Alexandrina, but because she chiefly painted flowers, we made up the *Veronica Ambrosia*), came up the stairs, (a very proper little lady with a powdered face, her hair carefully drawn back, pink linen smock), walked in and said, "Who did that?", and I said, "I did". She said, "Put it away and get on with your work!"

That was the first lesson, and that would have taken up to recess time at eleven o'clock. We'd go downstairs to the basement of the Exhibitions Building. Wonderful place. We had various old radiators, on which we used to toast a bun or something and you could smell toast all over. It was great. The boys used to go down there too, we'd see them occasionally down there but they were mostly outside.

Then I'd go up to a *Design* lesson, the second lesson. Mary P. Harris was quite a good Design teacher, she was well ahead of her time I've realized; twice I've kept some of her charts. People who say she was just a sentimental old hussie, well, they just don't know what they are talking about.

Mary P. Harris seems to have been a seminal character, because it was her teachings that prompted the whole thing (Contemporary art), and started the ball rolling.

Absolutely! People who say she was a sentimental old nuisance say that because of her attachment to the Pre Raphaelites, but you have got to remember that when she was studying in Edinburgh, the Pre Raphaelites were the in thing. I didn't like the Pre-Raphaelites when she talked about them, but now I've become quite attached to them.

Then lunchtime, mine was different from the others. If I didn't go up to the Design room, (that was the biggest room), where we had our assemblies for the girls, we were allowed to go and use the piano a lot. I would meet friends at the Adelaide University Conservatorium. Our group was Ken Sanderson, later Doctor, who was from the medical school and very interested in art and a great encourager. He knew about Van Gogh (whereas my fellow art school students didn't), and the woman he eventually married, Rhonda Gehling was a great pianist. There was also Dorothy Shapley, pianist and Merle Brooks, pianist. I would spend lunch with them listening to music at the Conservatorium. We used to meet where Bonython Hall is now- that was no-man's land. I had my lunch with them quite often. I was a pianist for the women's section of the Student Christian Movement, of the University, for their meetings, but I wasn't good enough you know! (laughs)

But you were stuck with it again!

Yes. In the afternoon I did *Antique* in the Advanced room. I did Advanced Antique twice over because there wasn't anywhere else for me to go. The first year I did with Mrs. Walloscheck, who died in 1985, and the second

with Gladys Good.

Mrs. Walloscheck was a stupid woman. She could have been a good teacher. On this particular afternoon, (it was winter, it may even be the same day I painted the iris), I walked in from lunch, and in the Advanced room was *The Discus Thrower* statue, full size, and Dorothy Harvie was in there too, (she was doing Advanced because she had come to the Saturday morning class). There was a boy from the University doing architecture, and another chap who was a dress designer called Frank Bryan. As I walked in I threw my beret on to the *Discus Thrower's* head, (I was pretty happy). I took the belt off my raincoat and put it around his waist, (well that was harmless). Dorothy Harvie took one look at this, and took her scarf off and put it around his neck. (Now all of this was harmless), Frank Bryan had already started to work, painting in oils. With oil paint he painted the *Discus Thrower's* lips pink, and his cheeks red! Now, that sounds funny, but it was vandalism. Mrs. Walloscheck walked in straight on top of us, and froze and said,

"Who did that? Come on, own up!". Then she looked at me and said, "Did you do it?", and I said, "Well, some of it." She looked at Dorothy and said, "Did you do it?". "Well, some of it." she replied. (We were the only two girls.) Frank Bryan said, "Oh, Wally dear, mummy wants you to come over for a drink after school", so she didn't ask him. She marched us straight down to Mr. Howie's office. Mr. Howie, whenever he saw trouble coming, he had a dentist appointment, so we waited out there but he didn't come. Eventually we reported to him. It was suggested that he expel us and I was put down as the ringleader. Dorothy and I had to accept passes for all our work, (we were outstanding students in our year-if she wasn't top I was),- and I didn't tell on him!

Mary P. Harris died three or four years ago and I went to her funeral, at Centennial Park. I knew it would be a Quaker funeral (I knew that nobody would be up there in charge.) You get up and speak when you are moved to, and I was going to read a very favourite poem of hers, "Build the more stately mansions", by Oliver Wendall Holmes. A group of old teachers and students gathered, one of them taught Botany, Lois Laughton, (nice little woman I thought). She said to me, "Have you seen Mrs. Walloscheck lately?". "Oh no, I wouldn't go to see her after the harm she has done to me over the years". She said, "Why?" and I said, "She spread it around that I was a naughty girl, that I did things that I didn't do, and it was about time

that she knew that her favourite Frank Bryan had done this, and she caused me only to get passes." She said, "But you were a naughty girl!" But I was never naughty at the art school, I was too interested in my work.

One day, (when I was in the next room, I had to often work alone, because I was the only one doing the particular subjects), I was listening to Lois Laughton teaching a Botany lesson and I couldn't bear it, she obviously hadn't done Botany and I still had all my beautiful charts. So the next day I took them in to her and said, "Would you like to use them?" I think I must have hurt her, I don't know really. I really was never naughty- I'd tell a joke in class at times, she knew perhaps that I instigated nicknames for the teachers, and I used to draw the teachers, but that's not being naughty!

Those times seem very strict.

Oh, of course, I did things like coming earlier and painting a picture which would (because it was so good), embarrass the teacher.

The next year after that, the Society of Arts offered four scholarships, places in the Society of Arts to the four leading advanced students. The person to choose them was to be Louis McCubbin, from the Art Gallery of SA. He was a marvellous influence, I can only give him praise. He taught me in the landscape class. He had to teach a landscape class and a life drawing class, because those were the conditions under which he was employed by the Education Dept. to be Director of the Art Gallery. In those days the Education Dept. was also in charge of the Art School. So, I along with Jacqueline Hick and Jeff Smart and Shirley Adams won these four scholarships. Four works were chosen from each of us, and exhibited all along the North wall of the Gallery of the Society of Arts Spring Exhibition. We were so proud- we thought we were made. (The Society of Arts Gallery was then the most important exhibiting space in Adelaide outside the then called, S.A. *National Gallery*)- But after that exhibition we found our work was always thrown out by the Selection Committee, as was also the work of Ivor Francis and Doug Roberts, who had joined the Society. This was the real beginning of the planning for the Associates 1942 "Rebel" exhibition.

When did you begin your teacher training?

I'd applied to get into Teacher's College two years before. I'd only been two years full time at the Art School and went on part time after that. A lot of my friends received letters from the Education Dept. telling them

that now they could attend Teachers College, but I didn't! So I went to Dr. Fenner and asked why I hadn't received a letter and he said, "I don't know why, but I want you." Mr. Adey, the Director of Education, was in the next room and heard this, and said, "No, she is not to be included."

Which year was this?

The beginning of 1935.

You see, Mrs. Walloscheck had probably sent all these reports about me, and Miss Harris who was on my side of course, was a great friend of Dr. Fenner. Unfortunately I don't have any of the work I did for Miss Harris at the Art School, because Dr. Fenner took it all and kept it. Dr. Fenner said, "I insist." I had to watch them fighting, rolling on the floor fighting about me. (I was in the next room.) When I got home that night, my letter had arrived to attend Teachers College,-it had just been delayed in the post. Mr. Adey couldn't counteract that!

The next week I started at Teachers College. I was very quick,- I only went there for half a day. I couldn't stand it! It was dreadful!

"Now girls, (girls were kept separate from the boys), sand shoes must not be worn in any lecture room, sand shoes must always be put in lockers, now girls..."- I thought, "I can't stand it I'm not going to stay." Somebody came with a message from Dr. Schultz, the Principal saying, "Ruth Tuck is required to see Dr. Fenner at the Education Dept. at once". I went to the Ed. Dept. (I like to be in the middle of a fight,-I thought I bet he's going to say that Mr. Adey has withdrawn me). Dr. Fenner said, "I want you, I need you because we haven't had any teachers trained for the last two years and we are terribly short of Art teachers. I've looked through all of your qualifications, and you're far ahead of anybody in your year. The only thing you need is to go to Teachers College for Methodology and Hygiene, and I think we can do without those subjects. Would you go out as an art teacher?" (laughs)

After becoming a teacher, I believe you were involved in the "Rebel", Associates Contemporary Group Exhibition at the Society of Arts Gallery in 1942. How did this affect you?

When the "Rebel" exhibition was finally hung and opened- there was an uproar. Thousands of people attended it - mostly in shocked surprise. Questions were asked in Parliament. Mr. Abbot asked the Minister for Education, Mr. Shirley Jeffries, later Sir, "Is the Honorable the Minister for Education aware that nine teachers in his Department are exhibiting

in the notorious exhibition down on the Terrace, and that the souls of our little ones are in their hands?" Mr. Jeffries replied that what the teachers in his department did in their spare time was none of his business. (see Hansard, July, 1942) Nevertheless, the nine teachers concerned were scattered in the next lot of appointments. Mr. H.E. Fuller,

Secretary of the SA Society of the Arts, wrote to *The Advertiser* saying that the Associates Exhibition was put on without the support of the Society of Arts, and against their wishes. However in his reply, the President, George Whinnen, said that not only was it done with the full knowledge of the Society of Arts, but with their blessing.

Fuller in his letter said, "It's been threatened for a long time and it came out at last. Art has passed through many phases and has come to a stage which perhaps defies adequate words for description. The Society of Arts vowed that never again would it be cheated into another such outrageous show. " Who do they mean there by the Society of Arts? Who vowed that? They couldn't have vowed any such thing because in only six months we put on the *Anti-Fascist Exhibition*, and there were no steps taken to prevent that going on.

Would Fuller have said that?

Fuller would have said that. He was the Secretary of the Society. Whinnen in his letter said that Fuller was speaking for himself only, and not for the Society of Arts.

I realize now that we had more or less promised to form a Contemporary Art Society before this exhibition, (the Associates Show), but when we started on the exhibition we didn't have the C.A.S. in mind. We were rather naive, we, the painters concerned hadn't really thought about forming the C.A.S. here. All we wanted to do was make sure our paintings were exhibited. The four of us, particularly, who had been given scholarships, by the Society of Arts, and whose work had been thrown out ever since. We just felt we would resign if we couldn't get some results. We weren't even supportive of the Society of Arts. Our aim was simply to have ourselves recognized, that's all.

It's said that the modern section of the committee running the Rebel Exhibition, kept the others in the dark! I was Secretary, and I wasn't aware until now that I was being kept in the dark. It is said that interstate artists were being invited by the C.A.S. in Melbourne and I frankly don't believe that they were, - some of them were, the Melbourne

ones particularly, in fact I would go so far as to say all older ones were asked by the C.A.S..

Shirley Adams was correspondence secretary and she definitely wrote to Nolan, Dobell and Preston and would have I think possibly to all the Sydney artists. Dorrit Black would have helped her there because Sydney was more her art circle than Adelaide was. Dorrit Black was voted in as Vice President, but I think she didn't continue because she refused to join our local society. She was already a member in N.S.W. and I think Lisette Kohlhausen was too. I've just got a feeling that Max was trying to take a lot of the credit. He had nothing to do with the Rebel (Associates) exhibition as far as I know. He was living in Melbourne with John and Sunday Reed.

Harris had nothing to do with the Associates' exhibition?

No, but somebody may have got in touch with him to get support from people like Nolan and so on, but you have to remember that Nolan was later a Fellow of the Society of Arts.

When did Max Harris enter the story?

I remember now. We did decide before, Max must have been consulted. He must have been over here. He went to Melbourne and came back with letters from John Reed stating that we must form a C.A.S., and he did bring over the magazines of the C.A.S. in Melbourne. Actually, we weren't so impressed by this. It doesn't state it very well here, but it does say that one of the things we objected to was the "no selection committee" bit, and it doesn't give our reasons properly. It says here, (*Rebels and Precursors*, by Richard Haese) that we didn't want to exhibit with Sunday amateur painters. I think that's very mean. We wanted to feel that the people exhibiting were at least up to our standard. We were all well trained art school students,- But that wasn't the reason for the Associates Committee. We were also determined that this exhibition should be really contemporary. It's funny when I look back on it, I can't think looking at the catalogue that our work was all that contemporary, but, if you can imagine what was going on at the Society of Arts at that time, it was, by comparison. Without the selection committee, people like Leila McNamara, (she was a real gumtree type, elderly lady) could put pictures in that weren't contemporary at all, which would defeat our aims. It wasn't that we didn't want to be associated with amateur painters at all.

Did you want the Society of Arts to appreciate what you were doing?

From the Society of Arts! The C.A.S. was to have no selection committee and we were a bit worried about that stipulation, where anyone could join by paying two shillings and sixpence. Anyone could put work in—there was no selection committee!

Did you have a criteria for "contemporary"?

We put that in, that's what we insisted on, right at the start. As far as I remember, the platform of the C.A.S. was that anyone could join, but we wanted some conditions made so that we could enrol people with a contemporary outlook. The contemporary outlook was formed by the wonderful exhibition in 1939. The *Herald* exhibition of British and French contemporary art— that's what brought this about.

As students, were you affected by this exhibition?

Yes, — and Dorrit Black and Mary P. Harris were the two strengths.

Of Mary P. Harris, even in this book (Haese) they say, "her peculiar interpretation of contemporary art",— whoever wrote that hadn't attended her lectures. She was amazing. In Design, Clement Greenberg went on from where she left off! I've been getting material together to get some Design charts for our students and I use the Mary P. Harris charts we copied in those days when she gave us her *Composition* lectures.

When Clement Greenberg came over about eight or nine years ago, in a lecture at the Art Gallery to artists, a question was asked of him afterwards, "How do you judge the design of a contemporary painting?". He said, "There are two things— It has got to follow its support or figure, (the shape that it's in). One has to be aware of the positive and negative qualities. The artist is aware that he's not representing something in that space, but is aware of all shapes."

That might seem a very simple thing for Greenberg but they follow straight on from Mary's lessons. She had to give us lessons on people like Van Gogh, Toulouse Lautrec, and Gauguin and so on. The rest of the people in the class were young school girls. They had to go straight to the Art school at thirteen! There was Miss Harris out front in her Quaker grey saying, "Now look girls, we've got to start lectures on modern artists next term and I want you prepared, so I have brought these books but I don't think you should show them to your parents. They were "Sex for teenage girls"! She wasn't really a sentimental old fuddy duddy. We had to read those first, then she'd lend us books like, *Madigliani-Biography*, and so on, saying, "I think your parents shouldn't see them."

Risque?

Risque! Oh very! I think, because of her, the contemporary artists of Adelaide were actually on a firmer base in those days.

Did you find conservative attitudes to the teaching of Modern Art?

I was fortunate when I first went into the Education Dept. to have the support of Dr. Fenner and we had a very good Inspector of the Girls Tech. schools, Miss Adelaide Miethke. I suppose I might think she was good because she gave me great support. Within two years I was Senior Art Mistress at a very young age, with seven junior teachers under me. I got the quickest promotion you could get. Then things changed. Miss Miethke retired and Ruth Gibson came in. The Headmistress was unsympathetic and reported to the authorities that I was teaching modern ideas which she didn't like. She would walk into the classroom in the morning and find that I had put orange flowers into a bright pink bowl and said I knew nothing about colour. She'd ring up and report things like that!

All the art teachers in Technical schools were asked to design the school badge. We were going to have school badges at last for the blazer pocket and hat band. I was given the job of designing the Thebarton School badge. I designed a very good badge based on the Bakewell bridge (which leads down to the Thebarton school—it's on Henley Beach road), with a train running under it, and a big sea gull swooping over, all done in just swooping straight lines. The Headmistress said, "No, this is stupid modern art, I won't have this.", and I said, "I won't spend any more time on it, that is the design I want." In the end I did a book of mock up designs to please them, (laughs) which they shouldn't have treated seriously, but this was the one design that had to be accepted. I had to go up before Mr. McDonald, the Superintendent of Technical Education, and have an interview with him on this. He said, "I don't like the modern trends you're introducing into the schools. If we accept this design you will be embarrassed by it in twenty years time. This is a *Futurist* design." I looked at him and thought, dare I ask him if he knew what the word *Futurist* meant in Art, but I thought I'd better not, because he obviously didn't know what it meant. They refused to use that design and I refused to design another one.

Perhaps five years later, Phil Stoward was moved down there and she altered my design. She altered my sweeping seagull into a little sparrow with tiny wings, and with every feather drawn in, it looked silly. Anyway

I just mention this because I had this horrible interview with McDonald saying he didn't like the intrusion of modern ideas.

It was about 1937. Then I had Ruth Gibson as Inspector after Miss Miethke died, and I had no more skill marks. Ruth Gibson would come every year and look at my children's work which I think was marvellous, they enjoyed it so much. I was teaching a lot of Design in those days. There were no black felt pens, they used a brush or crayon. She would complain about the blots. I'd get a lecture each time and no skill marks. Then the Rebel (Associates) exhibition came up and I was Secretary (1942).

I was suffering at Thebarton, the Headmistress coming into the room, telling the girls that had this not been war time I would have been dismissed. She'd say that to my students! Then we had the exhibition and it's all right for Shirley Jeffries to say that it wasn't his affair; we were all called up to answer to him for our part in this.

There were nine teacher participants in the exhibition?

Yes, nine of us. All called up separately, and we were told separately that we would be dispersed around the country, so that the new society would no longer exist, he was going to kill the C.A.S.. So we knew this was coming. This was at the end of the year after the *Anti-Fascist Exhibition*. The Rebel Exhibition came first in July, and later the same year the *Anti-Fascist Show*. So we were all left wondering what was going to happen. We were a marvellous bunch. We supported each other so well. We'd met about once a week at *Mary Martin's Bookshop*, (the first one), which had packing cases to put books in. There was a little room out the back where she made coffee in a teapot, and there was always more coffee when you came. She was the most generous and wonderful person. We had meetings about once a fortnight and we'd bring our work out. Sometimes it would be at Mary's bookshop, and sometimes it would be in a little room we hired in a little street out the back.

One day in early January I had a ring from David Dallwitz to say that he'd just been down on the Marino train sitting next to Reggie West. (Reggie West was Mr. Reg West, who was Principal of Adelaide High School and I suppose the most extraordinary person I've known. He was a brilliant mathematician. I'd been to that school and he never forgot one person who had been to that school, - a prodigious memory.) So he said to David, "Will you be seeing Ruth?" David said, "Oh yes, I'll see her," (We saw each other about once every two weeks). West said, "Give her a message for me. Tell

her she has been appointed to our staff for disciplining. I don't know what that is all about but give her my love and tell her welcome home." Only two of us were left in Adelaide. the other one was Jacqueline Hick who went to the Art school to help Miss Good, (Gladys Good was the Headmistress of the Girls Central Art School) with child art classes and other classes. I'd been helping Miss Good on Saturday mornings. So we were left in town. Mind you not all the others were in the country. Shirley Adams didn't teach for the Education Dept. She was there. Ivor Francis was there, but he was not an Art teacher. Dorrit Black was still there, but she wasn't really a member of our local C.A.S.. Lisette Kohlhagen was never really a member, but she belonged to the Sydney branch. They would come to the meetings.

At Mary Martin's?

Dorrit would sometimes come there, but we had another meeting place which was *Judy's Coffee Shop* in James Place. If the meeting was at the Society of Arts, Dorrit and all the C.A.S. went down to Judy's, or we'd meet after school at *Sigalas's Milk Bar* in Rundle St.

Could you tell me about Marie Tuck and her connection with you?

Right, I'll tell you about Aunt Marie. Not really my Aunt, my father's cousin who was born six years before she let anyone know she was. She put her age back in the Art Gallery records. The Art Gallery was preparing a new catalogue and I was asked to prepare the part on Aunt Marie. We thought she had no birth certificate and I was getting very worried, until I looked further back and found she had altered it by six years! She was an extraordinary little person.

Can you believe that she, Margaret Preston, Kathleen O'Connor and Betty Davidson had been to Paris to study art. Aunt Marie went there for eleven years, and was as French as any person. I could only talk to her in French and she made me read French books. She was right against everything you could call Modern Art. Impressionism was a dirty word, but she taught us Life Drawing very well. She said how wicked the influence of Van Gogh would be. She gave us more of the feeling of what it was to be an artist in a big centre like Paris. Towards the end of her life, her paintings were straight Monet. She was a tremendous influence on me, but when I went to learn from Miss Harris, (the *Composition Class* at night), she didn't speak to me because I was going to two *Life Drawing* classes a week at night

and I dropped one of them to do Miss Harris's *Composition* Class. That was what she called the *Modern Art class* and she didn't speak to me for a long time and she didn't like me learning from Dorrit Black.

How old were you when you started lessons with Aunt Marie?

I was seventeen. I went on for ten years until she retired at the Art school. The reason she altered her age, was that there was no old age pension for single women and she wanted to teach for as long as she could, because she didn't want to depend on anybody. Well, I think that was the reason. When she went to Paris she was 34, but she put her age then at 28, the others, Margaret Preston, Kathleen O'Connor etc., were all in their twenties.

She was small, my build in fact. I'm quite a lot like her in looks in a way. I think she may have done it for that reason too. These clever women went to Paris, and who did they learn from? Rupert Bunny.

[Knock on the door,- delivery for Ruth Tuck; a bottlebrush fresh from Perth.]

Aunt Marie described the Art school to me. She was determined I was going there, to Paris, to be an artist. She paid her way in winter by cleaning snow from the pathway up to the door, and setting and cleaning out the fires from the French stoves. She would spend her summers in Normandy or Brittany where she lived with peasant families and painted them.

A year after she went to Paris she sent a picture home for an interstate Society of Arts exhibition, and sold it for one hundred pounds to the Adelaide Art gallery. I would think for the next ten years she lived in Paris on that one hundred pounds. Oh, she did sell one in the Perth Gallery, and I imagine that would be about the same price. When she finally had to come home during the war, she had an exhibition in Adelaide. The reception was very luke warm and she never exhibited again. She was very much an up and down artist, some of her work was bad and some just beautiful. She's coming into vogue. People are collecting her. I hope it's the best ones they get hold of.

What was the effect of the 1939 *Herald French and British Exhibition* on you and the members of the then, future C.A.S.?

It was part of the general effect of me being treated so badly by the Education Dept. I think all my friends were having the same treatment by the education Dept. When I started my first week at Adelaide High, Reggie

West called me into the office and said, "What is it you want to do that they won't let you do?" I said, "The first thing is I feel worried that the fifteen hundred students you have in this school know nothing about art and even when I give them art lessons they are not learning anything on the History of Art. They grow up. They travel abroad and Australians must be recognized immediately because of their abysmal ignorance. I want every student in the school if possible to have at least one lecture per term on the History of Art." He said, "Right that can be arranged." I said I want to give a History of Art lesson first lesson every day over in the Art room." He said, "Right, on the condition that the back row of benches can be filled with off-duty teachers." So I did that.

How did it go?

Marvellous! It was the only school until the days of Matriculation Art to teach History of Art. I said I want to carry that over into my Art classes. I want them to do Paul Klee exercises in Design, and I want them to do this and this..." He said, "Go ahead, fine!" He would come over and talk to me and listen to the lecture too, sometimes, when he had time.

What form did the lectures take?

I borrowed the wonderful reproductions the Art Gallery had at the time. Four boys could go to the Art Gallery to take back last weeks pictures and carry new ones around. Reggie came over to me one day and said, "I've just had a ring from the Police. A woman has reported that there are four Adelaide High School boys in uniform carrying a nude down King William St.!" That was Botticelli's, *Birth of Venus* (laughs)

Ruth Gibson came around for her first inspection at A.H.S. She came in just as the class had gone out to recess in the morning at eleven a.m. She looked at their work and said, "Dreadful, just look at the blots!" The teacher from the next room overheard this and she ran across and reported this to Reggie West who could not believe it. He reported Ruth Gibson to the Education Dept. Now I must say in her travels around the room she saw a wonderful big perspective illustration on the board that I'd got there an hour earlier to do because I taught Perspective. (Tom Bone, the chief art teacher was a lazy begger and when I came, he said, "You can teach all the boys subjects now." I liked those subjects, so I got this Perspective chart ready, and she said, "Who did that?" I said, "I did that this morning." She said, "Oh, don't expect me to believe that." Reggie rang up the Education Dept. and said that this was untenable and that they had to do

something about it. He said to me, "Have you got a lesson this afternoon?" I said, "Yes, I have to teach the Leaving boys *Perspective*," He said, "Good, because I've five men Inspectors coming. There's an Inspectors' Conference on in Adelaide and they have agreed to come." They gave me the maximum skill marks for the seven years since I had last received any. So that was marvellous!

The Secretary of the Teachers Union was on the staff and he said, "We're taking this up with the teachers Union. Then there was a Women's Teachers union or Society and the Secretary of that was on the staff and said the same but there wasn't any need to. I was married then and intending to leave anyway but I should have kept on after that victory. But the end of the war had come and in those days if you were married you had to leave. The idea was that you were keeping a job from somebody. A husband should be able to support his family, so I soon left after that. Mervyn was townplanning in Newcastle and I went over there and was teaching at the Newcastle Art School. After a couple of years away I came back and was appointed to the Art School staff here and while waiting to go there (because they started after the state schools) the Education Dept. rang and asked if I would go and give lectures for an Art Teachers Symposium down at the Croydon Girls Tech. for a week. Ruth Gibson was going to open it and she called me into the office and to be fair to her she said, "I just thought I ought to tell you that I've been to Europe, and what I saw there made me realize that if I had listened to you a few years ago, we wouldn't be ten years behind the rest of the world in Art.

[SIDE TWO]

What do you see as the value of Art to society?

I only know it's necessary to me. I must admit my own attitude to art has been formed a lot by the things that have really stirred me in art.

Why do you paint?

As a child I found that I could. It was a method of showing off and getting attention. Then I kept on drawing in church because I was bored and I didn't really agree with what was going on. By drawing I could disassociate myself. But they were my private drawings. Nobody else saw those. Well, nobody else was really interested. I wouldn't have shown my

family because they would have been shocked. What I really was excited about in my teenage years was maths and I really wanted to be a maths teacher. But through high school I used to draw all the time too. It was my mother really, I suppose, who would say to me, "You know you really have got a talent for Art. Don't think you have to wait to become a maths teacher. Go to Art School, try it." Once I got there I really loved it.

I needed somebody to stir me up, make me excited and Miss Harris with these Kathy Kollwitz prints and Van Gogh and so on, that really made me very stirred up. I wanted to do, the same sort of thing. I didn't ever much like the paintings around me. You know the gum trees. No local painting had ever stirred me up. I was never excited about paintings until I went to that exhibition. (*Herald French-English Exhibition, 1939*)

What did you see that stirred you in the exhibition?

There was life and movement and excitement, and that's what I felt I wanted to do. I really loved colour. My mother was a great gardener and grew the most beautiful flowers. She'd bring them in and say, "Look at the colour!" I loved that. Then at last looking at painters like Gauguin, Van Gogh, Marchand (You don't hear much about him but his work in this exhibition was absolutely wonderful), I realized for the first time I could use the colours I wanted to, straight out of the tube, and that's what I mostly did.

When did you first meet your husband Mervyn Smith?

In 1943. I was in a war time revue as the comic relief, and in the front row of the chorus (I did a bit of dancing). He came with an architect friend. One of my things I had to say was, "I do like a nice cup of tea don't you?" He came around after the show to the stagedoor and said, "I like a nice cup of tea, would you have one with me?"

So he took me home and, Oh God!; we had to come home on the tram because you couldn't get a taxi during the war. We were standing up in the tram with all the blue rinse ladies and he said to me, (he found out I was teaching art at Adelaide High) "As a teacher do you think that teachers use up all their sex on students?" (laughs) You could see the blushes on everyone in the tram. I thought, oh, I've had enough of him. We arranged to meet at the Art Gallery in a couple of weeks. We went and I picked out one or two of the modern pictures that were there—there wasn't that much that was exciting. That's when he said to me, "That's rubbish, that's no good, look at the Heysens." Anyway we were married

three months after that, and I didn't know that he was a painter.

Where were you married?

In St. Peters Cathedral.

Was it a large wedding?

Oh no, we were going to be married in the Lady Chapel, that was all arranged, but it had got around, and there were so many people in the church! We went into the church to Bach's *Sheep may safely Graze*, and we came out to Bach's *Toccatte in D Minor*! (laughs)

How many children do you have?

I have three children and they are extraordinary and wonderful! Mark our son is 39 years. He is a Doctor of Philosophy in Music at Flinders University. He is a cellist.

We have twins who are 30 years. They were named Michele and Angela after Michelangelo. Michele is a contemporary dancer in London and a very important one. This year their company is going to America, Canada and Europe. She is very good, and has been there for nine years. Angela is a musician, a jazz singer and a classical violinist who also helps me run my children's school.

Where have you lived since your marriage?

Here all the time in this house, except for Mervyn who was away for four years townplanning in Newcastle. For half that time I was with him but we kept this house.

What other occupations have you tried?

I was Art Critic for *The Advertiser* for a couple of years, but that doesn't bring in money, or didn't in those days.

How did you come to be an Art Critic?

People in *The Advertiser* needed an Art critic and wrote to me saying that they very much liked my style of writing in a C.A.S. Broadsheet. I said O.K., but after two years I said I didn't want to do that anymore. I made up my mind that an artist can't really be an art critic, especially with my husband an artist too. It's an invidious position to be in. You can't be honest you know, so I gave it up.

How did you feel the Media treated the Visual Arts?

Badly, quite badly. You got in if there was room. Although in those days it was better than it is today. Every exhibition was written up as it opened. It would be like the opera or a concert, the next morning the review had to be in the paper. If the opening was at eight o'clock, I'd get

the review in before eleven o'clock that night for the next day's paper. But if they were short of room they would cut the last paragraph off, things like that. They didn't consider it very important. I liked the people I worked with in at *The Advertiser* and they liked me, but that didn't mean that they had any respect for art.

My husband and I also did many theatre sets, but we didn't ever get paid for them. You'd go so far as to provide the paint yourself. That comes into big fights with local people. Peter O'Shaunnessy from Sydney finds that he can't accept the completed sets, the show opens in a weekend, and you have to do new sets! The only sucker who would do it was me.

Where were the plays put on?

The plays were at the Festival or the Union Hall.

Can you remember the first meeting of the C.A.S. in South Australia?

Yes, I can remember being down there at David's, and the low table where people sat on which these little books were. I can remember feeling that we were being manipulated a bit by Max Harris and John Reed, from a distance. Looking back now, it was a good thing that they did it. I'm not against it now, but there was no way we were in there to reform the Society of Arts. So that statement was quite wrong there. (Haese) We were in it simply to get a voice for ourselves.

What were the aims of the C.A.S. as you saw it then?

It was to bring contemporary art before the public, to get them to see it and understand. But looking back, at the old catalogues, what sort of contemporary art we were showing then, I don't know. Dorrit Black's students were influenced by her so our art was contemporary because it was treated in a sort of Cubist way, with very controlled design, and tones denoting planes being very important. It was just turning buildings into cubes and mountains into pyramids.

Did it achieve the importance of overseas movements, like *Vorticism* for example?

No. We were too thin in numbers for that. In Melbourne I think it came nearer, because they had Albert Tucker, Counihan, people who were really stirred up, using oil paint thick and big. Even Doug Roberts and Ivor Francis who I think were doing very creditable work in that field were painting quite small pictures. Nobody dreamt of painting a large picture. When we lived in Newcastle, I went to Sydney and was amazed at the size of

people's work. But they exhibited our small pieces along side them. Mervyn was getting awards for this and that at that stage.

In what way were the C.A.S. activities affected by the economic/political climate?

Politics didn't really come into it. Max Harris says he was a Communist. He did belong to the Communist Party, but I don't think anyone else here in the C.A.S. group belonged to the Communist Party. I wasn't aware of it at the time if they did.

What was the next impact made on the C.A.S., after the initial stages?

The arrival of the refugees from Europe. Some of them were refugees like the Dutkiewicz brothers, the Mareks and Dstoja Kotkowski. That was an enormous impact. I often wonder thinking back, whether the C.A.S. would have survived if we hadn't had that new blood coming in. I haven't seen Ludwik for 25 years, since he won the lottery and simply withdrew from every connection within the art world. He was a beautiful painter. The best influence of the lot was actually Wladislaw Dutkiewicz.

Do you think attitudes and values have changed in relation to contemporary art over the years?

Of course they have, enormously. Kym Bonython had a lot to do with that and not purely from a commercial attitude. Kym has been quite generous in his sponsoring of modern art. He wanted to be thought of as a modern art entrepreneur. His mother introduced him to art. Lady Bonython was quite genuinely interested in art. He wanted to be different to his mother-who was more tolerant in her attitudes to art. She accepted contemporary and ordinary art. I think to shock her a little he went out on the contemporary line. Because he was a Bonython, Adelaide people had great faith in his advice on paintings that they should buy. People only have to have contemporary paintings in their houses for a while and they get used to them. I think I've had a little bit to do with it, because I must have taught thousands of people over the years, that must have made a difference.

How did you first start your school?

Joseph Choate, the President of the C.A.S., said to me one day (the twins were quite small and I was busy with them and trying to paint) "I have a niece going to one of the colleges and she's good at art. Would you teach her? I reckon you ought to consider starting an art school" so I got Penny

Choate in and taught her with remarkable results. In fact there was an *A. Carso Competition*. They brought the two singing sculptors out, Gilbert and George. This was the beginning of their sponsoring of art. They offered a prize for fabric design, for curtains and tea towels. I got Penny to enter (she was fifteen) and she won the open section and the junior sections. Within six months I would have a class of twelve coming to the school with Penny. Within two years I had one hundred (hiring a hall) and it just went from there. I have fourteen teachers at the school now and three hundred students. You don't hear much about it. It's better known in India and Japan than it is here.

Can you explain the Indian connection?

One day when my boy Mark was twelve, he and I were in Mary Martin's Bookshop and we found Shankar's special edition *Children's Art*. We brought it home and found it full of drawings and writings by children from all over the world. He sent a drawing and a little story about his father and won a medal for each. I thought that's all right, I'll get my other students to enter. Every year there was the Nehru medal. (Nehru was still alive then and presented the medal.) After our students had won the Nehru medal several times, Shankar asked me to come to India and meet him, which I did and he was marvellous! I asked him how he judged these kid's things from all over the world. He said, "We look at all of them. We get 150,000 of them." "Do you get art teachers to help you?" I asked. He replied, "Art teachers! They are the last people I would get, they have rules. No, Nehru helps me, I get my friends who are doctors and bank managers to help me and anyone who loves children." We've now won ten Nehru medals, but I never talk about it because it's not a competition, it's an exhibition. I never say to the children when they send their work away, "You might win a prize." or "We're going to send an exhibition on to India to exhibit with all the children from other countries". Shankar has it in halls all over New Delhi, and 500 are picked for a permanent travelling exhibition. He'd be dead now I think. We were invited to his 70th birthday party about 15 years ago. His daughter runs it now. I send about 200 paintings each year. Then the Japanese started copying them. The Japanese Government started this up. For the last four years we have been sending an exhibition to Japan. For the past four years, one of our students has won the top award which is the *Foreign Minister's Award*. Every year for the last four years the Japanese have flown me to Sydney with the child

who has won it and the parent of the child. They put us up in a hotel for the night, for the Japanese ambassador to come and present the award. They put on a dinner party for the children.

Do those children go on with their painting?

Some of them do. Mandy Martin for instance, I taught from a very small child and then she came out and taught in my school, which a lot of the clever ones do, for about five years, before she went off to Canberra. Now of course she has just had a picture bought by the Guggenheim and she was one of two Australians representing Australia in the Paris Biennale two years ago. She was one of eight Australians in the *International Guggenheim* in 1984.

Has your teaching given you as much satisfaction as your painting over the years?

Equal I would say, no, not quite as much. If you had asked me what I liked doing most in the world, - I love painting best, drawing next, (laughter) teaching next, then being married and being with my family next! Oh, isn't that mean! (smiles)

What were the most memorable exhibitions at the C.A.S.?

That's hard to say because nothing can ever eclipse that first Rebel exhibition, the *Associates Exhibition*. Literally you couldn't move in that gallery at any time of day when it was on. Thousands literally went up to it. There was a fairly new linoleum on the stairs when it began. It was worn out when it was finished. I had to face up to my family and my friends, (not my husband because he wasn't there), explaining that exhibition and why I was in it.

I had to face up to the Education Dept. and explain why I was in it. So once that was over everything else fades into the unimportant distance, although we were very proud of the *Anti-Fascist Exhibition* we put on. The Adelaide exhibition was different from the one that was in Melbourne and Sydney. I was very proud because the Adelaide artists had to stand up for themselves in that. I know we did have Victor O'Connor, Bergner, Counihan and Tucker in that exhibition. A lot of them were shown at the recent *Art and Social Commitment* exhibition at the Art Gallery.

I was really proud of people like Doug Roberts and Ivor Francis in that show. I felt we were getting somewhere and people were beginning to understand. There is no way, unless you have just left Art school, you are going to change your style because people have accepted your previous

style, and you've got to show them something fresh. I admit that Mandy, I'm very proud of Mandy, but I regret that the work she sent to the Guggenheim is something new altogether. I preferred her previous work. But I have got to admit to myself that she is young enough now to try everything before she decides really what she wants to do. I'm having a *Retrospective* exhibition next year and I'm wondering whether to pull out works from the past, when there will be work that is so unlike other work, that it could have been done by someone else, but I don't think so. Some of these younger ones in the C.A.S. who thought that they should be modern no matter what, couldn't last because they had no continual development. (I'm not putting Mandy in that category) - No, probably no real sincerity.

Do you think that being connected to the Education Dept. stopped the C.A.S. becoming a national force?

No, I don't think so. I don't think the C.A.S. could ever have been a national movement. It was a national movement for a short time while it was necessary. It's not a necessary movement any more. I think personally, all that rubbing up with the Education Dept. did me a lot of good. It made me think out my own values and explain them to others. I think I could have become very complacent. I think the same would go for David Dallwitz. There are one or two artists in Adelaide who are my friends and who are contemporary and were then, but they didn't join the C.A.S., partly because they were in the army and the C.A.S. was formed during the war. They came here from other states and therefore didn't have as much opposition. I feel that in many cases their work just hasn't developed. If they had a little bit of opposition they may have. It's hard to say, I'm thinking of two people, one of them whose work hasn't developed, the other whose work has but who is painting in such a dark corner that nobody sees his work. When they eventually do see it they might think it wonderful, but if he had joined the C.A.S. in those early days he would have been forced to exhibit then and to accept challenges and to accept the fact that you have got to paint for no money. That's one of the things we all had to learn. There wasn't any money in it. By the time you reach our age you can have an exhibition and get enough to live on for the two years following, but it's taken forty years to reach that stage.

Do you still retain an anger, an anti-establishment feeling, that was there in the early days?

No, because I don't think the anti-feeling from the establishment is still

there. I still get a little angry with people like *The Advertiser*, but I suppose they are the last dregs of it, where they will give such little scope for art. The A.B.C.- what scope do they give to art? None! Nobody here I'm afraid is educating artists to work for television. I watch the British programs and their design and colour is fantastic! You put on an Australian program and it is terrible. I feel we haven't come to grips in Australia with the media and the media hasn't come to grips with art.

Who were the great names in South Australian art?

Horace Trenerry, Ivor Francis, Douglas Roberts, Jacqueline Hick, Jeff Smart and I'd say Mary P. Harris because of her influence. Dorrit Black, definitely Marjorie Gwynne, Ruby Henty, (she was one of the early members of the C.A.S.) Francis Roy Thompson, James Cant, Mervyn Smith without a doubt, the Dutkiewicz brothers, Rapotec, Ostoja Kotkowski, Dusan Marek and Mandy Martin, although I think Mandy's trying to get there too soon.

David Dellwitz ?

Do you know the highest standard of art that David produced was not painting and not music, but Calligraphy. For his seventieth birthday, I managed to get hold of a sample of his lettering of the Lord's Prayer in Roman lettering, and had it blown up to approximately four square feet. It's the most wonderfully designed piece of lettering. The design was perfect. That's what I showed as his contribution to the development of art. He was a wonderful teacher. A group of younger artists who teach for me, relayed a message through me to David at a party. Janet Ayliffe, Glen Ash, Margie Sheppherd, and Rosemary Aliokunis to whom he taught History of Art and Lettering. The message was that they wanted to thank him for his teaching and they said don't forget to tell him that we always remember when we are doing Roman Lettering, that you can only do Roman Lettering if you love every curve on the female body. He was giving a lecture on *Romanesque Art* and said, "If you want to hear the rest of this lecture you can come down to Seacliff and hear it on Sunday and have dinner with us." So a group went down there and after dinner he took them into his studio. He'd selected three of them. I think it was Glen Ash, Janet Ayliffe and Margie Sheppherd and he'd painted a picture in the style that he'd imagined they would be painting in three years time, (they were in their final year). Janet, the one who gave me the message said, "At that moment we became artists, he showed a real interest in each one of us."

People in the music field of today tell me that his compositions for flute and other instruments are really very good. He's a talented composer. People who are the authorities in Trad. Jazz tell me he's the tops, he's marvellous.

Do you recall the Dallwitz parties of the forties?

I didn't go to many because I was married by then and had a baby. Mark was very sick all through his childhood and had hardly any schooling. I really couldn't go out at night.

Do you recall Francis Roy Thompson?

I remember more the Dutkiewicz' parties. They were the later ones and followed on from the Dallwitz parties. Francis Roy Thompson who was a thorough gentleman, was a wonderful person but once drunk would strip and be found out on a park bench naked and taken by the police to the lock-up. That was the sort of party I was used to. By that time I had the twins and Mark wasn't very well, so we wouldn't stay very long but I'd hear about it afterwards when I'd have to pick him up from jail and drive him home. He was a marvellous painter. He is another one who would paint a lot of good pictures, but some bad ones. In fact he was in the hands of Anton Holzner, the big abstract painter who went to Hobart and who tried to turn Francis Roy Thompson into an abstract painter. He took him to the Flinders ranges and had him doing everything in triangles, circles and crude colours. It was appallingly dreadful! That was just towards the end of his life and he found it very difficult to paint the way he wanted to. It was more a Impressionist style of painting- Expressionist/Impressionist, - Bonnard with more punch to it.

The C.A.S. (while Francis Roy was still alive) were so disturbed that the Art Gallery of S.A. had not bought one of his pictures for their collection, that they organized a fund and collected money for one of his paintings which they presented to the Gallery.

[END SIDE TWO]