

1  
00:00:00,000 --> 00:01:08,660

2  
00:01:08,660 --> 00:01:09,305  
Camera roll 16.

3  
00:01:09,305 --> 00:01:15,960

4  
00:01:15,960 --> 00:01:16,805  
You have a question?

5  
00:01:16,805 --> 00:01:23,440

6  
00:01:23,440 --> 00:01:26,230  
Any postcards from your parents?

7  
00:01:26,230 --> 00:01:29,830  
As long as I was in Japan,  
I received postcards

8  
00:01:29,830 --> 00:01:31,760  
from my father.

9  
00:01:31,760 --> 00:01:33,370  
He had to be very careful.

10  
00:01:33,370 --> 00:01:38,390  
He just wrote to me  
that they are surviving,

11  
00:01:38,390 --> 00:01:43,280  
and that he is very happy  
that I am in a safe place.

12  
00:01:43,280 --> 00:01:47,900  
But the moment when  
Germany attacked

13

00:01:47,900 --> 00:01:53,330  
Russia, of course, Vilna  
was taken in the beginning

14  
00:01:53,330 --> 00:01:54,230  
and I didn't have.

15  
00:01:54,230 --> 00:01:56,770  
The postcard I still have.

16  
00:01:56,770 --> 00:01:57,690  
But we can't--.

17  
00:01:57,690 --> 00:02:00,195  
They were very lovely,  
very carefully written.

18  
00:02:00,195 --> 00:02:03,060

19  
00:02:03,060 --> 00:02:04,710  
We were a very close family.

20  
00:02:04,710 --> 00:02:06,050  
I was the only one son.

21  
00:02:06,050 --> 00:02:11,009  
I had very loving, loving  
parents, mother, father.

22  
00:02:11,009 --> 00:02:12,270  
And I will never forget.

23  
00:02:12,270 --> 00:02:18,900  
Maybe it was, in a way,  
the most important thing

24  
00:02:18,900 --> 00:02:21,660  
I have heard in my life.

25  
00:02:21,660 --> 00:02:24,030  
Before I left, my

mother told me--

26

00:02:24,030 --> 00:02:27,600

my mother, who was a  
rather controlled woman

27

00:02:27,600 --> 00:02:33,150

and liked to talk in a  
very direct, tender manner,

28

00:02:33,150 --> 00:02:39,010

told me something which I think  
is unbelievably important.

29

00:02:39,010 --> 00:02:43,050

She embraced me and  
told me, my son, I

30

00:02:43,050 --> 00:02:48,390

hope you'll never, never be in  
a situation in which you will

31

00:02:48,390 --> 00:02:52,880

have to sacrifice  
somebody else's life

32

00:02:52,880 --> 00:02:54,560

in order to save your own.

33

00:02:54,560 --> 00:02:57,350

34

00:02:57,350 --> 00:03:01,700

I think it's something  
which should be written

35

00:03:01,700 --> 00:03:06,060

as the first law of our life.

36

00:03:06,060 --> 00:03:08,530

And then we parted, and  
I never saw them again.

37

00:03:08,530 --> 00:03:13,510

38

00:03:13,510 --> 00:03:14,500

Is that OK, Mark?

39

00:03:14,500 --> 00:03:16,915

40

00:03:16,915 --> 00:03:19,290

I think so, because I don't  
think you're going to cut it.

41

00:03:19,290 --> 00:03:24,763

It's just a tiny fade in of  
an airplane and fade out.

42

00:03:24,763 --> 00:03:25,680

Should I check for it?

43

00:03:25,680 --> 00:03:26,490

Sure.

44

00:03:26,490 --> 00:03:28,320

But don't feel like  
you don't have it.

45

00:03:28,320 --> 00:03:29,730

OK.

46

00:03:29,730 --> 00:03:32,040

Unfortunately, there was  
an airplane going overhead

47

00:03:32,040 --> 00:03:35,040

and it came on the soundtrack.

48

00:03:35,040 --> 00:03:39,670

Do you want the airplane  
to go down in order

49

00:03:39,670 --> 00:03:40,890  
to have a conversation?

50  
00:03:40,890 --> 00:03:43,350  
[LAUGHTER]

51  
00:03:43,350 --> 00:03:45,030  
Well, no.

52  
00:03:45,030 --> 00:03:45,600  
Good.

53  
00:03:45,600 --> 00:03:46,950  
[LAUGHTER]

54  
00:03:46,950 --> 00:03:50,310  
So we won't sacrifice  
anybody for our benefit.

55  
00:03:50,310 --> 00:03:50,880  
Right.

56  
00:03:50,880 --> 00:03:52,260  
Exactly.

57  
00:03:52,260 --> 00:03:55,740  
Could you tell me that story  
when you left your parents

58  
00:03:55,740 --> 00:03:56,940  
in Vilna again?

59  
00:03:56,940 --> 00:03:59,980  
What did your mother say?

60  
00:03:59,980 --> 00:04:03,180  
Well, I mentioned to  
you that I think--

61  
00:04:03,180 --> 00:04:03,680  
Sorry.

62

00:04:03,680 --> 00:04:05,347

Sorry, you're going  
to have start with--

63

00:04:05,347 --> 00:04:08,800

My mother embrace me.

64

00:04:08,800 --> 00:04:09,887

Say when I left Vilna--

65

00:04:09,887 --> 00:04:10,720

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

66

00:04:10,720 --> 00:04:12,920

Before I left Vilna--

67

00:04:12,920 --> 00:04:17,000

You have to wait until John  
stops talking before you start.

68

00:04:17,000 --> 00:04:20,160

OK, any time.

69

00:04:20,160 --> 00:04:24,880

Before I left Vilna, I  
parted with my parents,

70

00:04:24,880 --> 00:04:27,360

with my father,  
who was bedridden.

71

00:04:27,360 --> 00:04:30,640

And I embraced him.

72

00:04:30,640 --> 00:04:33,430

I still didn't have the  
feeling that I will never

73

00:04:33,430 --> 00:04:35,210

see them again.

74

00:04:35,210 --> 00:04:38,170  
And then my mother  
took me to the door

75  
00:04:38,170 --> 00:04:42,550  
and kissed me, and  
said something which

76  
00:04:42,550 --> 00:04:46,300  
was so revealing years later--

77  
00:04:46,300 --> 00:04:52,640  
my son, I hope you will never  
be in a situation in which you

78  
00:04:52,640 --> 00:04:57,800  
will have to sacrifice  
somebody else's life

79  
00:04:57,800 --> 00:05:01,350  
in order to save your own.

80  
00:05:01,350 --> 00:05:06,620  
I think there is  
no phrase which is

81  
00:05:06,620 --> 00:05:10,430  
more ethical, more  
revealing, and more human

82  
00:05:10,430 --> 00:05:12,740  
than what she told me.

83  
00:05:12,740 --> 00:05:16,910  
And I hope, though I check  
my life and look back,

84  
00:05:16,910 --> 00:05:20,390  
that I wasn't always right.

85  
00:05:20,390 --> 00:05:21,920  
I wasn't always noble.

86  
00:05:21,920 --> 00:05:25,220  
I wasn't always on the level.

87  
00:05:25,220 --> 00:05:29,510  
But I never, never  
sacrificed anybody's life

88  
00:05:29,510 --> 00:05:32,220  
in order to save my own.

89  
00:05:32,220 --> 00:05:41,330  
So that's my consolation  
for a very dramatic

90  
00:05:41,330 --> 00:05:44,725  
and a rather painful past.

91  
00:05:44,725 --> 00:05:48,320

92  
00:05:48,320 --> 00:05:48,890  
Thank you.

93  
00:05:48,890 --> 00:05:53,850

94  
00:05:53,850 --> 00:05:55,980  
So how long did you  
live in Shanghai?

95  
00:05:55,980 --> 00:05:59,010  
And how did you get  
out of Shanghai?

96  
00:05:59,010 --> 00:06:01,980  
After I lived in Shanghai--

97  
00:06:01,980 --> 00:06:04,290  
we have all kinds  
of calculations.

98



00:06:04,290 --> 00:06:09,930  
Helen, which is my wife  
of the last 40 years,

99  
00:06:09,930 --> 00:06:13,260  
is sitting behind  
me and checking

100  
00:06:13,260 --> 00:06:16,890  
whether the dates are exact.

101  
00:06:16,890 --> 00:06:22,890  
I think I was there five or  
six years, a very long period.

102  
00:06:22,890 --> 00:06:23,820  
And--

103  
00:06:23,820 --> 00:06:24,450  
I'm sorry.

104  
00:06:24,450 --> 00:06:27,330  
We can hear your voice  
on the soundtrack too.

105  
00:06:27,330 --> 00:06:29,550  
So, Helen, you have to be quiet.

106  
00:06:29,550 --> 00:06:36,100  
And Yonia, could you say how  
long you spent in Shanghai?

107  
00:06:36,100 --> 00:06:37,460  
I need the whole sentence.

108  
00:06:37,460 --> 00:06:42,310  
In Shanghai, I  
mentioned to you--

109  
00:06:42,310 --> 00:06:50,720  
when I look back, it looks like  
a long, long night, one night.

110

00:06:50,720 --> 00:06:55,600  
But when I look at the calendar,  
it's close to six years.

111

00:06:55,600 --> 00:07:00,700  
And in Shanghai I decided  
that I'm a painter.

112

00:07:00,700 --> 00:07:03,640  
And a painter means  
not a man or a woman

113

00:07:03,640 --> 00:07:10,990  
who paints, but it's the  
bridge to the essence of life,

114

00:07:10,990 --> 00:07:14,650  
is the driving force.

115

00:07:14,650 --> 00:07:19,330  
And I decided,  
believe it or not,

116

00:07:19,330 --> 00:07:25,900  
because of American magazines  
and of Time and Life.

117

00:07:25,900 --> 00:07:31,360  
There was a description  
of Mexican mural painters

118

00:07:31,360 --> 00:07:33,610  
and of Diego Rivera.

119

00:07:33,610 --> 00:07:36,430  
And I decided that  
since I don't want

120

00:07:36,430 --> 00:07:40,930  
to be a private  
painter, a portrait

121

00:07:40,930 --> 00:07:44,170  
painter, a painter  
that decorates

122  
00:07:44,170 --> 00:07:48,160  
a wall in a private home,  
I want to paint history,

123  
00:07:48,160 --> 00:07:50,440  
I must go to Mexico.

124  
00:07:50,440 --> 00:07:54,160  
And since I have heard about  
Diego Rivera from before,

125  
00:07:54,160 --> 00:07:57,350  
and he had such a  
wonderful write-up in Life,

126  
00:07:57,350 --> 00:08:01,060  
I said I'm going  
to Mexico and I am

127  
00:08:01,060 --> 00:08:03,310  
going to talk to Diego Rivera.

128  
00:08:03,310 --> 00:08:06,760  
And I'm going to ask him,  
please give me a wall.

129  
00:08:06,760 --> 00:08:12,910  
I want to paint the history  
of the young generation who

130  
00:08:12,910 --> 00:08:17,800  
got old in Europe during  
the terrible time of Stalin

131  
00:08:17,800 --> 00:08:18,980  
and Hitler.

132  
00:08:18,980 --> 00:08:19,990  
Hold on one second.

133  
00:08:19,990 --> 00:08:22,990

134  
00:08:22,990 --> 00:08:26,170  
How long were you in Shanghai?

135  
00:08:26,170 --> 00:08:36,400  
Well, I think I was between 24--

136  
00:08:36,400 --> 00:08:40,390  
and I was 30 years  
when I left Shanghai.

137  
00:08:40,390 --> 00:08:49,110  
I got about 25, and  
I left when I was--

138  
00:08:49,110 --> 00:08:50,520  
I cannot tell you.

139  
00:08:50,520 --> 00:08:53,710  
I gave you the curriculum vitae.

140  
00:08:53,710 --> 00:08:55,750  
I was a young man.

141  
00:08:55,750 --> 00:09:00,360  
I was a very young man, very  
naive, very, very trusting.

142  
00:09:00,360 --> 00:09:06,360

143  
00:09:06,360 --> 00:09:09,000  
And dedicated to  
live for humanity,

144  
00:09:09,000 --> 00:09:12,070  
not to have just  
a private income,

145

00:09:12,070 --> 00:09:14,500  
just be grateful for my life.

146

00:09:14,500 --> 00:09:18,420  
Have you painted a lot  
about the Holocaust?

147

00:09:18,420 --> 00:09:21,210  
I painted about the Holocaust.

148

00:09:21,210 --> 00:09:23,340  
I had two shows.

149

00:09:23,340 --> 00:09:29,760  
But I painted in a way which  
later didn't satisfy me.

150

00:09:29,760 --> 00:09:35,760  
I painted what I saw,  
but I felt that there

151

00:09:35,760 --> 00:09:38,250  
was something overlapping.

152

00:09:38,250 --> 00:09:43,170  
There was the element of  
history, the element of fate,

153

00:09:43,170 --> 00:09:46,416  
the element of vision.

154

00:09:46,416 --> 00:09:49,800  
The eye cannot be a judge.

155

00:09:49,800 --> 00:09:54,690  
It had to be a close  
dialogue between the eye

156

00:09:54,690 --> 00:10:01,050  
and the intellect, between  
the heart and the senses.

157

00:10:01,050 --> 00:10:07,020

So I painted, and I  
felt that I didn't

158

00:10:07,020 --> 00:10:12,720

reach a point in which I could  
say it expressed not only

159

00:10:12,720 --> 00:10:17,230

vision, but also experience.

160

00:10:17,230 --> 00:10:22,470

In other words, as the  
great English poets say,

161

00:10:22,470 --> 00:10:26,580

the eye is a  
window, but you have

162

00:10:26,580 --> 00:10:30,540

to see what's behind the window.

163

00:10:30,540 --> 00:10:33,930

And my desire to  
go to Mexico was

164

00:10:33,930 --> 00:10:39,870

to find myself in  
terms of a challenge,

165

00:10:39,870 --> 00:10:42,990

because I didn't want to  
paint, as I said, still lives,

166

00:10:42,990 --> 00:10:47,430

portraits, walls, ceilings.

167

00:10:47,430 --> 00:10:52,660

I didn't want to be protected  
by the private elements of life.

168

00:10:52,660 --> 00:10:54,570

I want to be open  
to the horizon.

169  
00:10:54,570 --> 00:10:57,510

170  
00:10:57,510 --> 00:11:03,640  
When you look back on your  
time in Poland and in Vilna,

171  
00:11:03,640 --> 00:11:10,137  
and even in Shanghai, were  
you a different person then?

172  
00:11:10,137 --> 00:11:10,970  
Was it a different--

173  
00:11:10,970 --> 00:11:13,940  
Well, I'm ashamed to say  
the beliefs are the same,

174  
00:11:13,940 --> 00:11:16,760  
but the person is different.

175  
00:11:16,760 --> 00:11:19,520  
Now, the beliefs, I still  
believe in progress.

176  
00:11:19,520 --> 00:11:21,830  
I still believe in compassion.

177  
00:11:21,830 --> 00:11:25,700  
I still believe in  
mankind, in spite

178  
00:11:25,700 --> 00:11:28,340  
of all the viciousness I saw.

179  
00:11:28,340 --> 00:11:30,560  
But the person is  
a little different.

180

00:11:30,560 --> 00:11:32,630  
The person is more careful.

181  
00:11:32,630 --> 00:11:35,900  
The person is a little  
bit more suspicious.

182  
00:11:35,900 --> 00:11:40,940  
And the person is more private.

183  
00:11:40,940 --> 00:11:44,940  
I cannot give my  
time to everybody.

184  
00:11:44,940 --> 00:11:47,810  
I cannot spend my  
time with everybody.

185  
00:11:47,810 --> 00:11:50,600  
I want to save it for  
painting and writing.

186  
00:11:50,600 --> 00:11:52,920  
So maybe there's a selfishness.

187  
00:11:52,920 --> 00:11:55,340  
It made me a little  
bit more selfish.

188  
00:11:55,340 --> 00:11:59,060  
I have always in front  
of me my father, who

189  
00:11:59,060 --> 00:12:03,470  
was a great scholar, but he  
was so giving to his students,

190  
00:12:03,470 --> 00:12:05,075  
gives them day and night.

191  
00:12:05,075 --> 00:12:08,495



192

00:12:08,495 --> 00:12:10,760

He loved mathematics  
and physics,

193

00:12:10,760 --> 00:12:13,370

but his students were  
even more important to him

194

00:12:13,370 --> 00:12:16,340

than any scholarly  
accomplishment.

195

00:12:16,340 --> 00:12:19,790

To me, it's very  
important to save my life

196

00:12:19,790 --> 00:12:23,960

for painting and painting  
and writing and painting.

197

00:12:23,960 --> 00:12:28,580

And somehow I feel maybe you  
should be aware of the people

198

00:12:28,580 --> 00:12:29,490

around you.

199

00:12:29,490 --> 00:12:33,960

And I am aware, though  
not as much as before.

200

00:12:33,960 --> 00:12:35,940

Why do you think it's  
important to tell

201

00:12:35,940 --> 00:12:41,280

the story of what happened  
to your parents and to you?

202

00:12:41,280 --> 00:12:49,680

Because I felt that  
people should live aware

203

00:12:49,680 --> 00:12:54,750  
of the grandeur of existence,  
of the grandeur of history,

204

00:12:54,750 --> 00:13:00,570  
of the grandeur of feeling and  
seeing and making conclusions.

205

00:13:00,570 --> 00:13:03,830

206

00:13:03,830 --> 00:13:08,270  
I spoke once to a friend, a  
nice, loving person who said,

207

00:13:08,270 --> 00:13:10,010  
nothing makes sense.

208

00:13:10,010 --> 00:13:12,020  
So I said, how can you say it?

209

00:13:12,020 --> 00:13:14,240  
Your heart works for you.

210

00:13:14,240 --> 00:13:16,430  
Your brain works for you.

211

00:13:16,430 --> 00:13:18,590  
Your liver works for you.

212

00:13:18,590 --> 00:13:20,300  
Your memory works for you.

213

00:13:20,300 --> 00:13:22,130  
Aren't you grateful for that?

214

00:13:22,130 --> 00:13:24,290  
How can you nothing makes sense?

215

00:13:24,290 --> 00:13:26,891  
You just don't see sense.

216  
00:13:26,891 --> 00:13:30,650  
Sense makes sense when  
you reach out for sense

217  
00:13:30,650 --> 00:13:32,510  
and you improve a little bit.

218  
00:13:32,510 --> 00:13:38,810  
And to write, to compose, to  
paint is an addition to life.

219  
00:13:38,810 --> 00:13:40,040  
It isn't only life.

220  
00:13:40,040 --> 00:13:41,930  
It's an addition to life.

221  
00:13:41,930 --> 00:13:48,430  
It's the life on an  
level of timelessness.

222  
00:13:48,430 --> 00:13:50,800  
And I would like to  
live my private life,

223  
00:13:50,800 --> 00:13:55,600  
my private big windows,  
but the window in me

224  
00:13:55,600 --> 00:14:02,030  
is much bigger than the window I  
put in here, with Helen's help.

225  
00:14:02,030 --> 00:14:02,530  
OK.

226  
00:14:02,530 --> 00:14:05,810

227  
00:14:05,810 --> 00:14:12,860  
Do you remember the

Wandering Jew exhibit?

228

00:14:12,860 --> 00:14:14,360

The photo exhibit  
in [? Kovai ?]??

229

00:14:14,360 --> 00:14:17,260

Did you see that?

230

00:14:17,260 --> 00:14:19,500

I don't remember it.

231

00:14:19,500 --> 00:14:29,990

I was in two exhibitions  
organized by the artist,

232

00:14:29,990 --> 00:14:31,500

but this show I don't remember.

233

00:14:31,500 --> 00:14:37,468

234

00:14:37,468 --> 00:14:41,540

The shows were very  
important shows,

235

00:14:41,540 --> 00:14:46,550

but they were important as  
a resistance against despair

236

00:14:46,550 --> 00:14:47,830

and nothingness.

237

00:14:47,830 --> 00:14:50,350

238

00:14:50,350 --> 00:14:52,630

But as art  
accomplishment I don't

239

00:14:52,630 --> 00:14:55,040

think they were very important.

240  
00:14:55,040 --> 00:14:58,820  
You probably saw the catalog  
that I figured there.

241  
00:14:58,820 --> 00:15:00,530  
I wasn't happy with my work.

242  
00:15:00,530 --> 00:15:05,610  
I was happy doing it, but I  
felt that something was missing.

243  
00:15:05,610 --> 00:15:10,740

244  
00:15:10,740 --> 00:15:14,760  
What role do you think  
luck played in your being

245  
00:15:14,760 --> 00:15:16,700  
here today?

246  
00:15:16,700 --> 00:15:17,780  
What role?

247  
00:15:17,780 --> 00:15:19,400  
Luck played.

248  
00:15:19,400 --> 00:15:19,950  
Luck?

249  
00:15:19,950 --> 00:15:20,450  
Luck.

250  
00:15:20,450 --> 00:15:24,790

251  
00:15:24,790 --> 00:15:28,300  
Well, when you get up in  
the morning it's good luck.

252

00:15:28,300 --> 00:15:31,870  
When you enjoy your meal,  
when you enjoy friendship

253  
00:15:31,870 --> 00:15:34,060  
it's good luck.

254  
00:15:34,060 --> 00:15:42,270  
As a painter, I am an  
outsider in American art.

255  
00:15:42,270 --> 00:15:44,360  
I'm an outsider,  
and I shouldn't be.

256  
00:15:44,360 --> 00:15:48,200

257  
00:15:48,200 --> 00:15:55,600  
I was an outsider when the  
Russians wanted propaganda.

258  
00:15:55,600 --> 00:15:58,020  
Painting is not propaganda.

259  
00:15:58,020 --> 00:16:00,600  
Painting is sharing  
of your experience

260  
00:16:00,600 --> 00:16:07,710  
without any  
superimposed answers.

261  
00:16:07,710 --> 00:16:12,840  
I here felt that after  
the terrible, terrible

262  
00:16:12,840 --> 00:16:14,400  
disappointment in Europe--

263  
00:16:14,400 --> 00:16:17,580

264

00:16:17,580 --> 00:16:25,890  
concentration camps in Germany,  
gulags in Russia, death camps

265

00:16:25,890 --> 00:16:29,640  
in Germany, the  
Lubyanka in Russia--

266

00:16:29,640 --> 00:16:34,440  
that the artist turned  
into a more abstract,

267

00:16:34,440 --> 00:16:38,220  
a more nonobjective  
kind of painting.

268

00:16:38,220 --> 00:16:40,755  
And I found in the works  
of Jackson Pollock,

269

00:16:40,755 --> 00:16:43,860  
or of de Kooning, who had  
some European background,

270

00:16:43,860 --> 00:16:52,410  
or of Rothko, I found some  
very exciting accomplishment.

271

00:16:52,410 --> 00:16:56,960  
But I felt that there  
are other experiences.

272

00:16:56,960 --> 00:17:00,810  
There are more direct  
human experience,

273

00:17:00,810 --> 00:17:06,920  
which cannot be painted  
in the style of Mondrian,

274

00:17:06,920 --> 00:17:12,890  
or cannot be painted in a  
very subconscious manner.

275  
00:17:12,890 --> 00:17:15,230  
There are some  
experience which have

276  
00:17:15,230 --> 00:17:19,520  
a more direct, not a  
verbal, but a more direct

277  
00:17:19,520 --> 00:17:26,180  
conversation with events,  
with recognizable forms,

278  
00:17:26,180 --> 00:17:29,270  
and with historical rhythms.

279  
00:17:29,270 --> 00:17:32,780  
Not only aesthetic rhythms,  
but historical rhythms.

280  
00:17:32,780 --> 00:17:34,700  
And I painted this way.

281  
00:17:34,700 --> 00:17:37,580  
And I find that there  
can be a Jackson Pollock,

282  
00:17:37,580 --> 00:17:42,170  
and there an be a de Kooning,  
there can be a Rothko.

283  
00:17:42,170 --> 00:17:45,350  
But there should be room  
for other experiences too,

284  
00:17:45,350 --> 00:17:49,640  
because they are a  
part of a very rich--

285  
00:17:49,640 --> 00:17:51,890  
you cannot only play a violin.

286



00:17:51,890 --> 00:17:53,010  
Why not a piano?

287  
00:17:53,010 --> 00:17:54,920  
You cannot play only Bach.

288  
00:17:54,920 --> 00:17:55,850  
Why not Mozart?

289  
00:17:55,850 --> 00:17:58,700  
Not only Mozart, but Stravinsky.

290  
00:17:58,700 --> 00:18:05,000  
I felt there is a certain  
rigidity in the field which

291  
00:18:05,000 --> 00:18:08,960  
I feel has to be the  
most experimental

292  
00:18:08,960 --> 00:18:12,080  
and the most free art.

293  
00:18:12,080 --> 00:18:14,720  
So it is not luck.

294  
00:18:14,720 --> 00:18:20,270  
I didn't join the  
movement in America

295  
00:18:20,270 --> 00:18:23,840  
because I felt that  
I represent something

296  
00:18:23,840 --> 00:18:27,140  
which has validity too.

297  
00:18:27,140 --> 00:18:29,780  
I don't care whether  
it's saleable.

298  
00:18:29,780 --> 00:18:34,130

But it has a real  
validity in the roots

299  
00:18:34,130 --> 00:18:37,100  
and the experience of art.

300  
00:18:37,100 --> 00:18:37,965  
So I am an outsider.

301  
00:18:37,965 --> 00:18:40,490

302  
00:18:40,490 --> 00:18:43,220  
Do you still paint  
about the Holocaust?

303  
00:18:43,220 --> 00:18:48,140  
I paint about the  
rhythms of history--

304  
00:18:48,140 --> 00:18:56,250  
uprisings, genesis.

305  
00:18:56,250 --> 00:18:57,820  
I don't illustrate.

306  
00:18:57,820 --> 00:19:01,020  
I don't perceive paintings  
in terms of verbal,

307  
00:19:01,020 --> 00:19:03,630  
though I am not afraid  
of verbal expression.

308  
00:19:03,630 --> 00:19:06,250  
But I paint the  
storm of history.

309  
00:19:06,250 --> 00:19:11,310  
And if you ask me where  
are you, I'll tell you.

310

00:19:11,310 --> 00:19:14,400  
I'm in the storm of  
the eye as a painter.

311  
00:19:14,400 --> 00:19:16,560  
I don't paint on a very safe--

312  
00:19:16,560 --> 00:19:20,020  
I like to see myself on a boat.

313  
00:19:20,020 --> 00:19:24,750  
It goes right and left  
and is driven by waves.

314  
00:19:24,750 --> 00:19:28,590  
And I call the waves  
the rhythms of reality.

315  
00:19:28,590 --> 00:19:33,970  
I cannot paint something  
which is a static as final

316  
00:19:33,970 --> 00:19:37,180  
as classical  
painting, as Mondrian,

317  
00:19:37,180 --> 00:19:41,350  
has a horizontal and a vertical.

318  
00:19:41,350 --> 00:19:43,570  
I don't negate those paintings.

319  
00:19:43,570 --> 00:19:45,470  
I enjoy them.

320  
00:19:45,470 --> 00:19:49,690  
But they don't add  
to my development

321  
00:19:49,690 --> 00:19:52,410  
and to my sentimentality.

322

00:19:52,410 --> 00:19:54,340

I'm not ashamed  
to be sentimental.

323

00:19:54,340 --> 00:19:58,250

I'm sentimental in a  
very prosaic manner.

324

00:19:58,250 --> 00:19:58,750

OK.

325

00:19:58,750 --> 00:19:59,250

Great.

326

00:19:59,250 --> 00:20:01,810

327

00:20:01,810 --> 00:20:03,670

Let's take a little break here.

328

00:20:03,670 --> 00:20:04,610

You got more?

329

00:20:04,610 --> 00:20:06,880

Yeah, just one more question.

330

00:20:06,880 --> 00:20:12,540

Do you have any constant  
dreams or nightmares

331

00:20:12,540 --> 00:20:16,600

about your experiences  
during the war?

332

00:20:16,600 --> 00:20:26,010

I told you that to paint  
is to share the experience.

333

00:20:26,010 --> 00:20:31,230

And some nightmares  
are very haunting.

334

00:20:31,230 --> 00:20:33,870  
Not the last 10 years, no.

335  
00:20:33,870 --> 00:20:36,790  
But I had two experiences.

336  
00:20:36,790 --> 00:20:39,840  
One I was running and  
running and running,

337  
00:20:39,840 --> 00:20:41,970  
and somebody was behind me.

338  
00:20:41,970 --> 00:20:45,130  
And I was sure that  
he'll catch me.

339  
00:20:45,130 --> 00:20:48,900  
And I would wake up and  
Helen would tell me,

340  
00:20:48,900 --> 00:20:50,190  
why are you screaming?

341  
00:20:50,190 --> 00:20:53,180  
So it's an old dream.

342  
00:20:53,180 --> 00:20:55,820  
And the other dream  
was very funny.

343  
00:20:55,820 --> 00:20:57,670  
I'm in my class.

344  
00:20:57,670 --> 00:20:59,210  
I'm a young boy.

345  
00:20:59,210 --> 00:21:08,120  
And my teacher of Latin asks  
me to read a passage of Virgil.

346  
00:21:08,120 --> 00:21:10,695

And I said, I don't  
have to do it.

347  
00:21:10,695 --> 00:21:11,570  
I'm a teacher myself.

348  
00:21:11,570 --> 00:21:14,240  
He said, once a student,  
always a student.

349  
00:21:14,240 --> 00:21:15,170  
Read it!

350  
00:21:15,170 --> 00:21:18,090  
And I get scared and I wake up.

351  
00:21:18,090 --> 00:21:19,695  
So how can you  
relate it to dreams?

352  
00:21:19,695 --> 00:21:22,430

353  
00:21:22,430 --> 00:21:23,930  
I don't relate it.

354  
00:21:23,930 --> 00:21:25,420  
But they are real.

355  
00:21:25,420 --> 00:21:27,470  
That's great.

356  
00:21:27,470 --> 00:21:32,560  
What happened to  
your wife, Nute?

357  
00:21:32,560 --> 00:21:37,870  
My wife, she loved paintings.

358  
00:21:37,870 --> 00:21:38,710  
But life--

359

00:21:38,710 --> 00:21:39,460

Tell me the story.

360

00:21:39,460 --> 00:21:42,250

You both left Shanghai  
together and went to Mexico?

361

00:21:42,250 --> 00:21:43,840

We went to Mexico.

362

00:21:43,840 --> 00:21:44,605

Sorry.

363

00:21:44,605 --> 00:21:45,760

Start with Shanghai.

364

00:21:45,760 --> 00:21:46,900

What?

365

00:21:46,900 --> 00:21:49,270

Tell me the story of  
you and your wife,

366

00:21:49,270 --> 00:21:50,230

starting with Shanghai.

367

00:21:50,230 --> 00:21:54,190

I tried to make a living  
by painting and by writing.

368

00:21:54,190 --> 00:21:57,970

There was a Russian magazine,  
and I wrote about the painting.

369

00:21:57,970 --> 00:21:59,050

A weekly.

370

00:21:59,050 --> 00:22:02,260

And my wife was in the hospital.

371

00:22:02,260 --> 00:22:03,050

She was in there.

372

00:22:03,050 --> 00:22:06,595

She was a nurse also in Warsaw.

373

00:22:06,595 --> 00:22:09,380

374

00:22:09,380 --> 00:22:11,810

It was very tense

life in Mexico.

375

00:22:11,810 --> 00:22:16,040

There was almost

no moment of peace.

376

00:22:16,040 --> 00:22:18,860

But still, people

who were not single

377

00:22:18,860 --> 00:22:25,190

had a little less comfort

than people who had a family.

378

00:22:25,190 --> 00:22:27,030

And then we went to Mexico.

379

00:22:27,030 --> 00:22:30,590

And somehow we parted in Mexico.

380

00:22:30,590 --> 00:22:33,160

381

00:22:33,160 --> 00:22:35,140

And she went to America.

382

00:22:35,140 --> 00:22:37,690

As I said, she

lived in Berkeley.

383

00:22:37,690 --> 00:22:40,090

She passed away half a year ago.



384  
00:22:40,090 --> 00:22:42,370  
And I lived in Mexico.

385  
00:22:42,370 --> 00:22:46,690  
And in Mexico I had the  
good luck to meet Helen.

386  
00:22:46,690 --> 00:22:48,490  
She is my wife till now.

387  
00:22:48,490 --> 00:22:54,940

388  
00:22:54,940 --> 00:22:59,020  
When you were in Shanghai,  
you did some painting.

389  
00:22:59,020 --> 00:23:03,020  
One was of a  
[? Semek ?] Kushner?

390  
00:23:03,020 --> 00:23:06,200  
I had several paintings.

391  
00:23:06,200 --> 00:23:10,850  
I cannot show them because a  
few days ago they came and they

392  
00:23:10,850 --> 00:23:12,582  
took it to the exhibition.

393  
00:23:12,582 --> 00:23:13,290  
That's all right.

394  
00:23:13,290 --> 00:23:15,020  
But can you tell  
me what they are

395  
00:23:15,020 --> 00:23:18,800  
and the significance  
of those paintings,

396  
00:23:18,800 --> 00:23:23,255  
and what happened to the  
people that you painted?

397  
00:23:23,255 --> 00:23:25,850  
To the people who are--

398  
00:23:25,850 --> 00:23:27,830  
I don't have any portraits.

399  
00:23:27,830 --> 00:23:33,290  
I had only one portrait  
I painted of my ex-wife.

400  
00:23:33,290 --> 00:23:35,990  
And this portrait I  
don't have anymore,

401  
00:23:35,990 --> 00:23:42,110  
because Helen and I send it  
to her daughter in Canada

402  
00:23:42,110 --> 00:23:45,200  
from another marriage.

403  
00:23:45,200 --> 00:23:46,530  
Can we take a little break?

404  
00:23:46,530 --> 00:23:49,850

405  
00:23:49,850 --> 00:23:50,900  
In Shanghai?

406  
00:23:50,900 --> 00:23:55,130  
In Shanghai, beside  
painting portraits,

407  
00:23:55,130 --> 00:23:59,610  
in order to get a living  
I did many, many drawings.

408

00:23:59,610 --> 00:24:04,490

I couldn't use paint because  
the quality of oil paint

409

00:24:04,490 --> 00:24:07,760

was very bad and the  
paintings would get dark.

410

00:24:07,760 --> 00:24:11,960

So I used Chinese ink,  
which is very flexible,

411

00:24:11,960 --> 00:24:18,140

and I painted figures of  
refugees, concentration camps,

412

00:24:18,140 --> 00:24:25,040

portraits of imaginary,  
historical people.

413

00:24:25,040 --> 00:24:30,830

And when I look back at them,  
I feel they are very honest,

414

00:24:30,830 --> 00:24:37,940

direct remarks about  
my surrounding.

415

00:24:37,940 --> 00:24:42,530

The basic difference  
between what I do now

416

00:24:42,530 --> 00:24:47,090

and what I did then  
is that I was then

417

00:24:47,090 --> 00:24:54,020

aware of exciting, meaningful,  
captivating details.

418

00:24:54,020 --> 00:24:59,720

And now I have a concept

how to relate details

419  
00:24:59,720 --> 00:25:06,650  
into a moving,  
dynamic composition.

420  
00:25:06,650 --> 00:25:09,990  
My people are not separated.

421  
00:25:09,990 --> 00:25:12,200  
They are related to each other--

422  
00:25:12,200 --> 00:25:19,030  
emotionally and from a point  
of view of composition.

423  
00:25:19,030 --> 00:25:20,920  
Just one last thing.

424  
00:25:20,920 --> 00:25:25,360  
You started to say in  
Shanghai I drew pictures

425  
00:25:25,360 --> 00:25:27,970  
of people running, fleeing.

426  
00:25:27,970 --> 00:25:29,930  
Could you do that one more time?

427  
00:25:29,930 --> 00:25:31,300  
Elaborate more time?

428  
00:25:31,300 --> 00:25:32,145  
No, no.

429  
00:25:32,145 --> 00:25:35,260  
Just list what you painted.

430  
00:25:35,260 --> 00:25:36,820  
You said in Shanghai--

431

00:25:36,820 --> 00:25:46,330  
In Shanghai, I painted people  
running, fighting, begging,

432  
00:25:46,330 --> 00:25:48,820  
dying.

433  
00:25:48,820 --> 00:25:52,960  
They were always in a very  
realistic environment.

434  
00:25:52,960 --> 00:25:54,250  
You could see the sky.

435  
00:25:54,250 --> 00:25:55,900  
You could see the walls.

436  
00:25:55,900 --> 00:25:58,030  
You could see the  
chair, the floor.

437  
00:25:58,030 --> 00:26:01,090  
And you could see  
their features.

438  
00:26:01,090 --> 00:26:04,780  
I didn't have a  
chance or I didn't

439  
00:26:04,780 --> 00:26:08,890  
know how to relate them to  
something which I didn't

440  
00:26:08,890 --> 00:26:13,660  
see, but had to be invented.

441  
00:26:13,660 --> 00:26:19,030  
Not only the person, but how one  
person is related to another,

442  
00:26:19,030 --> 00:26:25,150  
and how the people are  
related to their environment,

443  
00:26:25,150 --> 00:26:30,720  
to the movement of events.

444  
00:26:30,720 --> 00:26:31,665  
Excellent.

445  
00:26:31,665 --> 00:26:35,450  
Do you guys have any questions?

446  
00:26:35,450 --> 00:26:43,340  
You feel what you imagine  
and what you actually event.

447  
00:26:43,340 --> 00:26:46,160  
You have to add something  
to life in order

448  
00:26:46,160 --> 00:26:49,970  
to come out according to  
what I feel with a painting.

449  
00:26:49,970 --> 00:26:54,390  
Otherwise you come  
up with a document.

450  
00:26:54,390 --> 00:27:01,500  
And a document is not enough,  
the inventiveness of the person

451  
00:27:01,500 --> 00:27:05,370  
should be inside and  
outside when you paint.

452  
00:27:05,370 --> 00:27:09,100  
If you don't record it,  
I'll tell you something.

453  
00:27:09,100 --> 00:27:10,980  
I had here a friend--

454  
00:27:10,980 --> 00:27:12,977

are you promising?

455

00:27:12,977 --> 00:27:13,560

We're rolling.

456

00:27:13,560 --> 00:27:15,450

[INAUDIBLE]

457

00:27:15,450 --> 00:27:18,000

I like crazy people.

458

00:27:18,000 --> 00:27:20,940

So I said, why was he crazy?

459

00:27:20,940 --> 00:27:24,040

So he said my sculpture.

460

00:27:24,040 --> 00:27:29,680

So he would say, from  
looking nothing will happen.

461

00:27:29,680 --> 00:27:30,634

OK.

462

00:27:30,634 --> 00:27:32,290

[INAUDIBLE]

463

00:27:32,290 --> 00:27:36,490

Yeah, we had very difficult  
times in New York.

464

00:27:36,490 --> 00:27:42,280

Helen felt that if I don't get  
some recognition some place,

465

00:27:42,280 --> 00:27:44,660

I will lose my mind.

466

00:27:44,660 --> 00:27:47,860

And I told her I will never  
lose my mind because I

467

00:27:47,860 --> 00:27:50,080  
don't know how to lose my mind.

468

00:27:50,080 --> 00:27:51,350  
My mind is me.

469

00:27:51,350 --> 00:27:54,410  
How can I lose it?

470

00:27:54,410 --> 00:27:58,360  
It's very difficult to come  
when the country's new,

471

00:27:58,360 --> 00:28:01,180  
when you love it, and  
it's so promising,

472

00:28:01,180 --> 00:28:03,400  
and you cannot find  
a place for yourself.

473

00:28:03,400 --> 00:28:04,750  
You cannot find a gallery.

474

00:28:04,750 --> 00:28:06,430  
You cannot find a job.

475

00:28:06,430 --> 00:28:07,750  
But I never doubted.

476

00:28:07,750 --> 00:28:10,930  
I knew that's a  
part of the game.

477

00:28:10,930 --> 00:28:15,130  
And I decided this  
is an experience.

478

00:28:15,130 --> 00:28:18,940  
And if I am going to  
handle that experience,



479

00:28:18,940 --> 00:28:20,030

I will be all right.

480

00:28:20,030 --> 00:28:21,190

And I try to handle.

481

00:28:21,190 --> 00:28:24,250

I always said-- it  
sounds like a joke--

482

00:28:24,250 --> 00:28:26,880

it's still better than  
a concentration camp.

483

00:28:26,880 --> 00:28:28,130

They don't give you a gallery.

484

00:28:28,130 --> 00:28:31,000

It's still better than to  
be in Russia under Stalin.

485

00:28:31,000 --> 00:28:34,100

And it helped.

486

00:28:34,100 --> 00:28:35,750

Because I was very young.

487

00:28:35,750 --> 00:28:38,180

You cannot take it now.

488

00:28:38,180 --> 00:28:39,530

But I was very young.

489

00:28:39,530 --> 00:28:42,650

I was very trusting.

490

00:28:42,650 --> 00:28:46,410

I had friends, good artists,  
and they liked my work.

491

00:28:46,410 --> 00:28:48,760

And they were supportive.

492  
00:28:48,760 --> 00:28:52,330  
I got my first job  
because [PERSONAL NAME]

493  
00:28:52,330 --> 00:28:54,160  
took me and said  
he is as good as I.

494  
00:28:54,160 --> 00:28:56,560  
And he already was  
selling for 100,000.

495  
00:28:56,560 --> 00:28:58,250  
So they gave me a job.

496  
00:28:58,250 --> 00:29:01,600  
And then the director told me,  
you are a very good teacher.

497  
00:29:01,600 --> 00:29:02,770  
I said, of course.

498  
00:29:02,770 --> 00:29:05,500  
He said, but you don't know  
what's the best thing in you.

499  
00:29:05,500 --> 00:29:08,470  
I said, I want to say my  
knowledge, my honesty.

500  
00:29:08,470 --> 00:29:09,930  
So I said, your accent.

501  
00:29:09,930 --> 00:29:11,410  
[LAUGHS]

502  
00:29:11,410 --> 00:29:12,790  
So I enjoyed working.

503  
00:29:12,790 --> 00:29:15,440

504  
00:29:15,440 --> 00:29:19,790  
He has always a way of  
going a step farther

505  
00:29:19,790 --> 00:29:21,740  
than the momentary.

506  
00:29:21,740 --> 00:29:26,280  
So I related my person  
to another person.

507  
00:29:26,280 --> 00:29:27,990  
So there was a relationship.

508  
00:29:27,990 --> 00:29:33,195  
And I related the bad moments  
to the promising moments.

509  
00:29:33,195 --> 00:29:37,170  
I had a way,  
experience of cheating

510  
00:29:37,170 --> 00:29:38,480  
the pessimistic thoughts.

511  
00:29:38,480 --> 00:29:41,015

512  
00:29:41,015 --> 00:29:43,360  
[INAUDIBLE]

513  
00:29:43,360 --> 00:29:44,170  
[INAUDIBLE]

514  
00:29:44,170 --> 00:29:45,220  
OK.

515  
00:29:45,220 --> 00:29:46,680  
Great.

516

00:29:46,680 --> 00:29:48,030

And you call it.

517

00:29:48,030 --> 00:29:48,660

Room tone.

518

00:29:48,660 --> 00:30:18,560

519

00:30:18,560 --> 00:30:19,230

End room tone.

520

00:30:19,230 --> 00:30:21,080

More seconds of  
room tone, please.

521

00:30:21,080 --> 00:30:36,390

522

00:30:36,390 --> 00:30:38,180

Thank you.

523

00:30:38,180 --> 00:31:18,166