

**Carolee Schneemann Oral History Interview: Bruce McPherson**

Bruce McPherson is the editor and owner of the publishing company McPherson & Co., based in Kingston, New York. McPherson and Schneemann met in 1976, beginning a romantic partnership that lasted until 1987. McPherson was the subject of Schneemann's *ABC—We Print Anything—In the Cards* (1977), which narrates the transition between her ex-partner Anthony McCall's departure and McPherson's arrival to Schneemann's home in upstate New York. In 1979, McPherson and Schneemann published *More Than Meat Joy: Collected Performance Works and Selected Writings*, which chronicles over twenty years of Schneemann's artwork. Books published by McPherson & Co. have won literary awards such as the National Book Award for Fiction, the PEN Center USA Award for Fiction, several IPPYs (Independent Publisher Book Awards), and more.

**Interview conducted by Erin Zona**

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**New Paltz, NY**

Erin Zona: We can start with you talking about where you were in your life when you met Carolee. ... Who [were] you as a person, even before you met Carolee?

Bruce McPherson: This is a tall order. This is taking "the unexamined life is not worth living" to the extreme. I graduated college in '73. Took a job at the university [where] I'd finished. ... I had already left school, [rushed] back and worked in the admissions office for two years. That was from '73 to '75, whereupon I decided [to leave] since they hadn't invited me back, because I was not the best. Let's just say, my attentions were divided and to succeed in that job, you had to be very single-minded, and it was salaried with no overtime. And the amount of time required was about 15 hours a day.

EZ: Oh, gosh.

BM: You know, [the sort of job where] you put in your eight hours and then you'd have to take work home. ... In my last year [of college], the last couple years, I worked on a small press that was operated at the school by students and I had gotten into that by virtue of friendship with some writers at the school. This was Brown. So I knew something about the small press scene, which was burgeoning at that time. It wasn't just literary. It was politics and feminism, all kinds of stuff that was happening all over the country at that moment. And it had its origins in the free speech movement at Berkeley in about '66, or '65, something like that. And so I knew a little something about publishing. In high school, I'd taken journalism. I'd always been interested in writing, and I was an English major. I had started out as an engineer and I found English much

more to my liking. ... [When I started working] I had a friend who had a novel that she couldn't get published, and I thought it was terrific. So I said to her that I would publish it. I started a little press and [brought out] the book, and it was a little bit of a sensation and it launched her career.

EZ: Wow. What is it?

BM: It was *Shamp of the City-Solo* by Jaimy Gordon. Jaimy and I were fast friends. We still are. So much so that she was probably the friend of mine that became closest to Carolee. Of all of the friends. I mean, I didn't have the kinds of friends that Carolee had. You know, an astonishing number of friends and really close. She tended to be able to really focus on people, draw them close. I don't know what it was exactly. I mean, certainly a lot of personal joy that she shared. But also she broke down barriers very quickly. She put people right at ease, they established a level of trust. I mean, it was phenomenal [how she made friends]. Phenomenal.

EZ: And retained information. You felt seen by her because she would remember little things about you and then see you and bring them up.

BM: That is true. And then she would continue on from where you had left off. She really felt present and that was a remarkable gift of hers. In any case, I went to Philadelphia in '75 to do a graduate program in communications. It was supposed to be a two-year master's program at the Annenberg School at Penn. [By then] I had published at least three books: Jaimy's and then a book by Clayton Eshleman [poet] with drawings by Nora Jaffe, who was a wonderful, self-taught artist from the Midwest who lived on Central Park West. [The third was a] book by Keith Waldrop. All of them included artwork. The very first one by Jaimy Gordon was illustrated by her former boyfriend, James Aitchison, who now lives somewhere around L.A. Still painting, still going. So I was interested in collaborations between poets—or [prose] writers—and artists. I think that's probably why, after having done Clayton Eshleman's book—do you know Clayton Eshleman?

EZ: His name sounds very familiar.

BM: He was a poet. He died a couple of years ago. But he had two of the most important literary magazines of the '60s to the '80s. The one in the '60s was called *Caterpillar*, and the one in the '80s was called *Sulfur*. He had become a very close friend of Carolee's in the '60s. I don't know how exactly they met, but probably it was on account of [Stan] Brakhage [filmmaker]. Brakhage and [James] Tenney [composer, Schneemann's partner from 1955-68] had gone to high school together out in Denver. So that's how Carolee met Brakhage, through Tenney. As usual, especially in the artist communities, you're just plus one-ing constantly.

EZ: I think that's how I recognized his name, actually, from *Correspondence Course* [*An Epistolary History of Carolee Schneemann and her Circle*, edited by Kristine Styles, 2010].

BM: Clayton published some of her writings in *Caterpillar*, as well as writings by Brakhage. Stan and Jane Brakhage were very close friends of Carolee and Jim Tenney in the '50s. I attended small press book fairs starting in about '73 or '74, in the first place to promote the

novel by Jaimy Gordon—who, by the way, I published again 35 years later and won the National Book Award for Fiction.

EZ: That's amazing.

BM: I'm relatively certain that the first time I met Carolee was that she stopped at my booth in New York at a book fair, and that she'd been told by Clayton that she should meet me or I should meet her. And I am pretty sure that she showed me *Parts of a Body House Book* at that time. Or no, it was probably not that one. [More likely] *Cézanne, She Was a Great Painter*. And she had the thought that perhaps it could be republished as a book. And I looked at it and I was intrigued. I don't know whether she gave me a copy to take with me or not, but I'm pretty sure at some point, relatively soon thereafter, I did read it through. And my feeling was, why would you want to republish this? Don't change a thing. I mean, it's an artist book. And there's no way you can formalize this without losing all of the spirit. And I already knew a bit about artist books. I had met [Dick Higgins]—probably in '73 or '74, at a little gathering in Vermont, maybe New Hampshire, with some other small press people—who had founded Something Else Press. He was a Fluxus artist, and entrepreneur, and impresario, and made conceptual performance art. And he published—he created—the artist book in America, basically as a complete operation.

EZ: What do you mean? As a maker, a publisher, a distributor or ...?

BM: It wasn't a one off. It was dedicated to performance art and the avant-garde and avant-garde texts

EZ: Okay.

BM: For example, he republished Gertrude Stein's *The Making of Americans*. But in the unedited, unexpurgated edition. And he did books by Wolf Vostell, German artist and ... who's the French artist [Daniel Spoerri]? But also Oldenburg, a big book of Oldenburg's he introduced using somewhat commercial publishing techniques, [bringing] distribution of the artist book into bookstores. [Scarcely] anything like these books [had been seen] before. And he had his European counterparts as well, with whom he sometimes collaborated. Hansjörg Mayer [artist and printmaker] in Stuttgart, and others. Higgins had been part of the early ... he'd been in on the Fluxus side of things. There was always a little contention between the Fluxus people and the Happenings people. The Kaprow [types] who were messy—and Oldenburgs, who were messy—and the Fluxus people, who were much more conceptual. Including Yoko Ono and others. But in any case, frankly, they were all a part of one really vibrant downtown scene that was breaking all the rules in all the right ways. High energy, and it included the Judson theater people, and the Judson dance people, and various other avant-gardes. It was really an astounding scene. I wasn't there, but I met all the people who made it, and I read a lot about what was going on. Someday, somebody is going to write the history of Lower Manhattan in terms of art, because it really rivals anything that happened in Paris or London in the '20s. Maybe surpassed them.

EZ: So when Carolee came to the fair and you met her with the project, did you know who she was?

BM: No. But Eshleman was enough to know. He had said to her... or maybe he had said something about her to me. I don't know. ... I can't be certain, but [in any case] I think that she invited me to come by her place on 29th Street, either that evening or [the next]. Which I did, which was—for someone who was 24 or 25—venturing into unknown territory. Had I ever been to an artist's loft before? Probably not.

EZ: And so this was '74-ish?

BM: '74 or '75. I'm not sure. Could've been '75. ... I'd had relationships with somewhat older women before, so it was not taboo or something unusual. I hadn't imagined I was going to have a relationship with Carolee, exactly. Other than a working relationship or a friendship. And I was friends with Nora Jaffe who was probably 20 years older than myself, but she was an artist I had published with Eshleman. I liked brilliant women, period. I've been kind of ruined in that way, or [at least] spoiled in a way. So anyway, I remember the first real encounter was when I went in and sat down, and maybe it was then that she first handed me *Cézanne, She Was a Great Painter*. But in any case, I was sitting and Kitch [the cat], who was on wheels at this point for her back legs. She was really coming to the end of the line.

EZ: She was literally on wheels?

BM: She had a little device that one of Carolee's friends, an artist, had created out of coat hangers and stuff, with little wheels. Kitch could pad around with her front legs, but her back legs were useless. She was just that old.

EZ: Wow. And she would use it.

BM: Yeah, she used it. She came up to me and Carolee put Kitch in my lap, and I looked at Kitch and Kitch peed all over my pants.

EZ: Wow.

BM: And Carolee, far from apologizing, was just in hysterics over this. I think she said something to the effect of, "Oh, Kitch must really love you."

EZ: Of course.

BM: I was beside myself. But we did decide that we would be in touch. Afterward, I went back to Philadelphia, and I don't remember exactly when the next time was, but I think for some time while I was still in Philadelphia, I dropped out of the grad program after the first year, so that would have been at the end of '75. It may have been '75 ... no, '76. In '76, I did a book fair in Philadelphia, and [I believe] she came for that, though I may have seen her before then. That was for the bicentennial. I'd run into some wonderful problems with that with the mayor, because the way we advertised the politics of the event ...

EZ: What did you do?

BM: I invited a bunch of small presses to come because [the city] had set up tents on the museum mile where there's a big corridor. The space where they set up these fine tents was really quite gorgeous. And somehow I knew somebody. By this time I [had become] acquainted with the local poetry scene and various people there. And they heard that ... before I left [Providence] in '75, that I'd done a book fair there downtown, and taken over a space for an evening. And so I was into book fairs and had even created a little organization of Rhode Island small presses to try to raise our visibility. Anyway, I was offered use for a weekend of these tents, that were in advance of the July [Bi-Centennial] celebrations. And so I invited small presses. Some came from quite a distance, and some of them were more radical than others, more political than others. But I thought, the more the merrier. Aren't we celebrating [revolutionaries] after all? But the mayor tried to [shut us down] ... Oh, [I should mention] I'd gotten a grant or something to do it through the National Endowment for the Arts Literature program.

EZ: Wow.

BM: Small. I'm sure it was just a little bit of money, but enough to publicize it and stuff. So when the mayor, Frank Rizzo suddenly announced that it was going to be undone, somebody at the National Endowment for the Arts called up somebody in Philadelphia and said, "You're going to let them have a small press book fair. It's not political. It's not aimed against you or the police or anybody else. It's just a celebration of books and poetry and music and stuff." And so it went on. And it was a one day thing and it was a lot of fun. And I think Carolee came. In any case, it was the summer of '76, or maybe the Fall, that she first suggested that I come and visit her in Springtown, where the [freight] trains still ran occasionally on the tracks behind the house. I witnessed that a few times. ...

I took a train to New York, took a bus up here. I had no idea where I was getting off. She picked me up in Tillson and we came over here. And we started talking about her writing and stuff. I had in mind that there would be some sort of book of her writings that I would do. But she started telling me about what she had been doing in the '60s, the performance art, the Happenings, etc. And I said, "Oh! That sounds interesting. Do you have any pictures?" And she brought out some of the albums. What can I say, really? I mean, it was just astounding what I found. Her archives were just replete with documentation, and the visuals, the photographs by lots of photographers. There were all of the drawings, notes, and it was basically right then and there that I thought this has got to be brought into the world. It's hidden. I mean, the whole idea of performance art is that it's ephemeral. There had been some books about Happenings that I'd come across, and they were almost always [represented with] one photograph—that's a Happening. Here are 100 photographs, 100 Happenings. That made no sense whatsoever unless you knew anything, or something, about each of the artists. But even then, they [didn't begin to express] what was actually taking place.

As I was looking at these notes, scripts, and scores, drawings ... I just realized that there had to be another way to recapture the importance of events that were still resonating in the minds of people who had witnessed them, and that it should be tangible in some way as works of art, just like scores for music, or scripts for plays. And yet, in this case, you're

presented with a different set of problems, because they're often wordless. And in Carolee's case, they were clearly gestural, symbolic. They were deep—they were not just surface events. They were—well, she was partly inspired by Theater of the Absurd. ... *The Theater and Its Double* ... [by] the mad man of French theater [Antonin Artaud]. It was so surprising, in a way, that we decided that we'd go swimming. So we got into her old [car].

EZ: Great plan. I can relate to that.

BM: It must have been the end of summer [or early autumn of '76. ... We drove down Springtown Road, and—I forget where she was [going]. Maybe she was going to take me to Minnewaska or something like that. In any case, we got to the end of Springtown Road where it comes to an end, not to go into New Paltz, but if you just keep going straight, it goes right into—I forget the name of the highway, the number of the highway, but the road that runs up to Mohonk. And her brakes failed.

EZ: Oh, wow. Okay.

BM: It was pretty exciting. We wound up in a ditch. We managed to avoid [hitting anything]. There was no traffic, thank God. We crossed and steered, but the brake line broke and she must have downshifted or something. I'm pretty sure she was driving. Yeah, she was driving because I felt a little bit of disapproval because she was driving barefooted.

EZ: What kind of [car] was it?

BM: It was dilapidated.

EZ: Yeah. Okay, that's perfect. So she's driving barefoot and the brakes go out. Wow.

BM: We were okay. We had not been going very fast, and we weren't thrown into the dashboard or anything. But it was a little bit of a bumpy thing, and so it was more comical than frightening. And that was sort of the beginning of our relationship. Comical and not terribly frightening.

EZ: So then how did you set the plan for making the book and how did that move forward?

BM: I'm trying to think. We didn't really begin in earnest on this until I moved in. That must've been the summer of '77.

EZ: Well, and then there's the work that's made in that period of time, too ... *ABC—We Print Anything—In The Cards* [1976-77]. I think it's just absolutely brilliant. ...

BM: Well, I think, and I really have to go back into my journals. I've never been very good about keeping journals, but I think that most of the time I would see her in New York. I know for a fact that that T-shirt came from a print shop in New York. And probably it was like a one of a kind thing that she bummed off them or something.

EZ: I think so. I think that's the story of it. ...

BM: That must've been her local copy shop. I think at first we thought that we'd work on this. She had introduced me in the fall when New York opened up again, after everybody comes back from summer vacation. After September 1st, galleries fill up and there are shows all over the place. And so we walked around on a Saturday or Sunday through Soho. And just everybody knew her. She knew everybody, basically. And so suddenly I knew everybody. I ... started going to parties with her. But meanwhile, I was still disentangling myself from Philadelphia. And so it wasn't until the spring of '77 that I came here. And then we decided I would move in. And we must have started some of the work [on the big book], but it did not really take off in a concerted effort, I don't think, until the fall of '77. But when I came, I [brought along] boxes of books that I published. That was a large part of my moving stuff. I'm sure I didn't bring a bed or anything. I did have a couple of chairs, I remember now, one of which was stolen [much later]. It was quite a nice one. Somebody recognized that it was an antique and stole it.

EZ: Stole it from where?

BM: My mother had given it to me. I think it had been her parents'. It may have already been a [fine] antique. ... And somebody rented the place one winter and nicked it or absconded with it, whatever you want to say. Anyway, in order to keep things going, we always had to rent the little [attached] house, sometimes this place as well, because she had to keep her loft in the city, which was at 114 West 29th Street on the third, top floor. Very steep stairs and tall ceilings. Anyway, [getting back to the move] when I realized that I would have to rent a van, I wanted to do a one-way thing. But that would have cost more if I left the van here. Anthony [McCall, artist and Schneemann's partner from 1971-76] had already basically moved out anyway, but he needed to get his stuff, and so that's when he suggested that we share the van, and that he would take it to New York and then it'd be returned from New York, or the fee would be much less, in terms of a one-way [rental], because New York and Philadelphia ... no problem. So that's how we did it. I came one Saturday and unloaded, and he came up [the same day], loaded it up and drove it away.

EZ: And the documentation of that—was that planned as part of it, that she would take photographs?

BM: I don't think so. No, no. [But] Carolee was always taking photographs. She had a camera, she was always taking photographs. So that of course led to the *ABC* book. Because there was the breakup on the one hand, and yet it was so amicable between us all, that it became more of this exploration of the interpersonal. What we felt, what we were thinking about. And at one point, Carolee had been typing up all of these [thoughts and conversations]. She was jotting them down in her journals or somewhere, and typing them up, and we wondered [how to deal] with them. And that's when I said, "Put them on cards and you can shuffle."

EZ: Do you own a copy yourself of that?

BM: You know, I don't own the print [referring to *The Men Cooperate*, 1979]. I own the original. The [original] cards. It's one of my little treasures from Carolee. She gave [it] to me.

EZ: I bet.

BM: You know, she was always jetting off doing one thing or another. So she went to Holland at one point, to Amsterdam. What was that space? De Appel, I think, which was a gallery that was doing unusual things, [including performances]. And that's where she met, and I think she missed her other performance, and she met Jan, the fellow who suggested that they do a book together. Then Carolee proposed, when she had these cards, that they do that and [De Appel] just loved the idea. And that the cards were colored and had this significance.

EZ: That's where they made the version that has the case that opens with the tie, right?

BM: Right.

EZ: And do you know how many they made?

BM: I don't know, maybe three hundred [in total].

EZ: Oh, a big edition.

BM: Yeah, it was a pretty big edition, but they sold out almost instantly, so they did two. They did a second printing.

EZ: Wow.

BM: I have the prototype box. [Jan and an associate visited us]. I remember they came here to show Carolee how they proposed to do it, what it was going to be like and so it [turned out to be] a nice collaboration. Try to find somebody who would think of doing that today.

EZ: ... Since I work in publishing, I'm always curious about the way that works with artist payments and productions. Do you remember any details about that, with the representation of her? Did they distribute them all or did she also distribute copies?

BM: Oh no, she didn't distribute any. She maybe had a few, maybe five or something like that.

EZ: But they did all that and paid her?

BM: Yeah. They paid her something. They're a very rare item, I understand.

EZ: They're a very rare item. I'm surprised the edition was so high.

BM: Maybe it wasn't. Maybe it was more like 100 or 200 initially. But it seemed like a small edition to me, because I was used to printing 500 copies and up of books. I actually started by



publishing a novel in a thousand copies, at a time when small presses didn't do novels particularly.

EZ: ... *More Than Meat Joy* came out [in spring 1979]. How long did you work on it?

BM: Well, we worked on it [during] the winter of '77 all the way up to when I took the paste ups up to the printer in Ann Arbor. I think I flew up there for that.

EZ: Was that a printer you'd worked with ...?

BM: Yes it was, but at the same time it was not easy sailing. What happened was this: I wanted to bring it out in the fall before the end of [1979]. I don't know why, but it's good to have a deadline. Meanwhile, I had a little office upstairs where I was clattering the keys, and Carolee was in her little office, and she would send me pages, bring me pages. One of the things I realized was that she needed to write a lot for this book about the experience, and to rewrite some of the scripts to the best of her memory, because ... it was too spare. We needed to have her presence, her experiences, even looking back. And that was really tough for her. It would be tough for anyone, frankly. It was not without tears at times. But I was very insistent. I'd have her rewrite and rewrite, and I would cut, and I would say, "No, go in this direction." We need to know this. Why this? Or who was responsible for that? Or how did this whole thing come about? But it's all hers. No matter how many drafts it took, etcetera, it was all hers.

We powered through the big stuff first, that is, the big performances. Like *Water Light / Water Needle* [1966]. And [*Meat Joy*, 1964], and *Snows* [1967]. Which was the other one? There's another fourth, I think, that I considered at least. And then we started dealing with some of the earlier ones and then the later stuff that she was still in the process of performing, or had recently performed, like *Interior Scroll* [1975]. And then it was a matter of how do we organize the [material from the] notebooks. How do we draw upon this rich stuff to make it a performance in itself? Because that was the purpose of the book. If you couldn't see them, you had to sense that you were experiencing them in some way, and more than that, that you were going through a book that had a real living presence in it. I didn't want it to be just a documentary.

And frankly, Michael Benedict had helped a lot in editing the score for *Meat Joy* and publishing it in, I think in an anthology, not a magazine. ... Michael Benedict was a ... sort of Upper West Side, New York poet, I think he might have taught at Columbia or something. He was much more of a formalist than a lot of the poets that I gravitated towards, or that Carolee for that matter, who was close with [Jerome] Rothenberg and Robert Kelly, [Paul Blackburn], a raft of others. ... But anyway, Benedict did a great job of establishing how one might bring a score alive. I thought, so it was both rigorous and alive, as opposed to a lot of the Happening stuff that I'd seen.

One of the things I [have] to say is I didn't know [exactly] what I was doing. Which was a damn good thing. While I had some experience designing and dealing with texts and publishing books. This was something where I was in a vast learning process and I remember thinking, "How do I do this?" And I'm sure I said something to Anthony, and he said, "Well, I think that you need a grid." And I did. And I did build it on a grid, but I built it on a grid... it was atypical, because I knew how I wanted to feature photographs, for example, not as illustrations, but as part of the experience.

EZ: What do you mean? Is there a way to ...?

BM: Well, I mean, ... if everything had been done with small photos, big text, then the text rules. But if you use the space so that you have to really see the photographs, then the text is secondary in a sense. Because this is visual art, so it had to be—I mean, there would be lots of places where smaller illustrations would be within a column. But what I wanted to do was, wherever possible, to show the photographs as large as I could. And also have, and now looking at some pages in which there are manuscripts, which—I don't know, were these retyped? I don't know. These were originals, I think—and presented as documents, but as large as possible so that they could be read and experienced in that way.

EZ: I'm always very curious, being a print person and working in image and text reproduction for my professional career, or production and reproduction: Did you do the photography here or where did you go? ... If you were going to reproduce a document, would you then take the document that you'd agreed on was going to be reproduced in the book and then, being rural, would you take it somewhere to photograph it or would you photograph it here? And then did you make the paste ups here?

BM: I made the paste-ups. In those days, you had mixed stats [photostat]. This particular page that we're looking at is typescript on a gray background. Well, that was produced by creating a stat and reducing it and then laying over a tint. But the tint was something that would, in the paste up, would be a [red] sheet of film. Just a solid [red that was translucent to the eye but opaque to the camera], and with positioning guides, so it wasn't entirely different... I don't even know what you'd call those now. It was a little target.

EZ: Yeah, like a registration mark.

BM: ... So we had to register all that stuff. The photos—I'm trying to remember. I think we may have had the photographs—a lot were done by Scott Bowron, who was our downstairs neighbor, and he was a professional [art] photographer for Christie's, I think. Good friend of Carolee's. Really nice guy. I know that we took a lot of the paintings and things, which he would shoot.

EZ: And so you would do that in the city?

BM: Right. Because he had his studio right there. I'm trying to remember what we did. We might've copied the photos. Because otherwise you'd have to send all the photos with the paste-ups. And they had to become half tones and put into place, which we may have done. I mean, this was a huge—for me at the time—undertaking. And everything required a different sort of design and a strategy.

EZ: So did you release on time?

BM: We did, but because of some of the photographs, I was still working on the paste-ups in order to meet the deadline. I had to get up to Ann Arbor. And I went to this printer called

McNaughton & Gunn, and they gave me a little place where I could finish the last few paste-ups. This was 288 pages of paste-ups. They're not uncomplicated. And so I did that stuff, and came home, [having] delivered everything to them. And then I got a call and they said, "We can't do this book. Our printers won't print it." And the reason was there were pictures like this [*points*]. And this is pretty much the buckle of the Bible Belt, and the printers thought it was pornographic. And it's not, of course, but it's not altogether clothed. So how did we convince them? It was some way. They went ahead and did it, but they had to let the printers who didn't want to work on it not work on it.

I saw a lawyer. I went to New York. Carolee said she knew a lawyer who could advise me. Oh, it was the lawyer for Sharon Avery-Fahlström, who was the widow of Öyvind Fahlström, a friend of Carolee's who was a famous Swedish artist. Great figure from the '60s, who he died [in '76 at 48, a tragedy]. I feel like I may be going into too great of detail with some of this stuff. In any case, I went to see the lawyer and the lawyer called the printer while I was there, and basically threatened him a little bit. And I was thinking that's not the way to do this. Don't. But there was just pushback on the phone. I was just listening to it. And I said, no, that's just not the way to do it. And I honestly don't remember how I convinced them to print the book. I know that it was all shot and stripped. And it was just a question of, I think, somehow we got around it. I think we got some sort of certification from somebody to say this is not pornographic. This is not sexual. This is art. This is stuff that happened a particular way. They were not binding it, in any case, so all they had to do was print [and fold] the sheets and get them out and send them to the bindery. It was touch and go there.

EZ: How many did you make?

BM: 2000. Which was more than anything I'd ever done before.

EZ: And then did you have them all ...?

BM: And it was \$20. My God, that was a small fortune.

EZ: For each book?

BM: No, the price.

EZ: Oh, that was the list price.

BM: Yes.

EZ: What was your plan once the books were printed and bound and arrived?

BM: Well, we had to get it reviewed. I felt pretty confident about it, but still, with 2000 books of an avant-garde performance artist in a format that had never been done before with all kinds of crazy design work and photographs, it could have been entirely overlooked. But it had one purpose in mind, in my mind, and that was to rescue her career. I mean, sure, I wanted the work to be seen in the world, but that was the way to rescue her career, because she had become an invisible artist. She had basically stopped making visual art when she started

making performance art, before it was called performance art. In the mid '70s, mid to late '70s, nobody really knew what she had done. She didn't have a gallery. She would occasionally get these performance [gigs], but they were not without some difficulty as well.

She was also still creating controversy. There was an exhibition in Philadelphia while I was still there, before I moved [to New York], that included a work of hers that had been curated by a mutual friend of ours, whose name escapes me right at this moment. In any case, it was of *Interior Scroll*, and it was a big blow up. Larger than life size. And it was a scandal. It was censored. It almost closed the show, and it had to be taken down. That was the end of this friendship. But, for all of its fierceness, the text of it is actually quite humorous. I mean, it's a work not of defiance exactly, but just saying, "If you don't understand, how can I begin to make you?"

EZ: The *More Than Meat Joy* book box? Were you involved in the edition of the plexi box?

BM: That was created by ... what was his name [Francesco Conz]? I think his little company was Multipli [referring to Edizioni Conz]. He was Italian, interesting guy. ... He mostly did stuff by Fluxus [members] or did various Fluxus editions. He had been a factory owner and was fascinated with artists. His ex-wife was a psychoanalyst who ran away with another Italian artist. [Pepe Moro]. Anyway, I think Carolee came up with the idea [for the box edition]. They were talking, how could we do a multiple? The book was already there, so he came up with a prototype. And she wanted to have physical evidence, you might say, of the performances included—enclosed—within, and then she made a collage [on mylar] that could be applied to it. I did two things to the edition. I added a little strip of film from *Water Light / Water Needle*, which I had copied. There was a little leftover stuff from that film. And then I taped it into the special edition.

EZ: So the ones that are in the box have that taped in?

BM: Right. And also a frontispiece. Was this altogether planned? Yes, it was. Forty lettered autographed copies. ... I already had 100 numbered copies [because] in those days, people were still interested in special autographed editions and stuff. Now they're kind of a dime a dozen. But they were specially bound, numbered and signed, and those are the ones that paid [the production cost] for a lot of the edition. That was the way you could do something like this. The 40 autographed copies, I had to give to him. That was part of the deal. And he would make these boxes and sell them, and pay her something for them. There was a frontispiece that I inserted here and I stamped ... her name has ten letters. So I had a stamp that said Schneemann, Schneemann, Schneemann, Schneemann, and I stamped them and I circled the letter in consecutive order in which they appeared.

EZ: Oh wow, I love that.

BM: So that's how I did those.

EZ: Do you keep things like the paste ups for books and all these things in your archive?

BM: When it came time for her to do the retrospective at The New Museum [*Up to and Including Her Limits*, 1996], of course there were no copies, and Carolee wanted to have copies and a new edition. And that was sort of a reboot again of her career. I found, not the paste ups—I don't know where paste ups went to tell you the truth; I don't think I have them—but I had the negatives. And so I found somebody who would restrip the book for the paperback edition to the requirements of the next printer, who was Rose Printing down in Florida, which is now defunct, I'm pretty sure. I added a signature at the front, for which I wrote [an introduction]. Carolee had hired a critic who wrote a piece, but I wasn't satisfied with it. It was too equivocal. I'm not equivocal about her art at all. I think she earned her place, in the most positive way. So I wrote what I wanted to see. ... However, [the printer] destroyed the negatives afterwards, or I didn't get them back. There are still maybe 50 copies of paperback to sell, but after that—I don't think it can be reprinted. At least not with the same quality. You can scan [the pages], but it would be a tough thing. I'll probably scan it at some point for a digital edition. I don't know that that's really called for. I think it's [already] in most libraries where you would look for it.

EZ: I think so, yeah.

BM: I think that it has its historical position. It accomplished, in spades, what we set out to do. It was also an enormous amount of fun [to create] and really cemented our relationship, of course, for many years to come. Oh, it was just so much fun to do it. We were thumbing our noses at the art world with this cover, sort of blatantly.

EZ: Say more about that. So what do you mean?

BM: Well, you have an image of the backsides of four people standing in water in a lake, from *Water Light / Water Needle*. And it's a sculpture but it's performance as well. It's an object and it's some ... It's a Henry Moore that Henry Moore could never have thought of doing himself. Only a woman, I think, would have seen [that possibility]. I mean, it's a perfect sculpture. It's a conceptual sculpture.

EZ: Did you work on any other projects after this one together, on any publishing projects?

BM: Well, yeah. ... I think, partly as a result of this book, the Hutchinson Gallery [offered her representation]. She was [given a solo show] by Max Hutchinson for the first time.

EZ: So that was one of the results of this, was that she started being represented there, right?

BM: I think so. I mean, it was quite a triumph in the art world to see a book like this. And it led other people to come to me with other projects. [For example] there was an unfinished Brakhage book that was brought to me, and I took on that project and finished it. Another mad project because that one had been all typeset but in four different faces, and sizes, and column [widths]. There was some sort of idea of how it should go, but even Brakhage didn't know exactly how. So I had to take all of that stuff, put it together, add [more], complete it, and it was a bit of a jigsaw puzzle. But it put me in Brakhage's good graces, and I don't think there were

that many people who stood there. We became quite good friends. And I went on and did three more Brakhage books. And I sort of became the main Brakhage [publisher].

By having done the Brakhage, the Maya Deren book came to me. *Divine Horsemen*. At first, I thought no, this is a little too esoteric, or anthropological, or comparative religion, or whatever. It's a book about voodoo. It's one of the classic, great books [on the subject]. So I turned it down and said, I really think it probably should go to Samuel Weiser, who had this great esoteric bookstore in Manhattan before moving up to Maine. But Weiser didn't want it. After Teiji Ito [composer and Deren's husband] died, Cherel Ito, his widow, his third wife after Maya Deren, contacted me again. And I [decided], I have to do it. And of course, it's been the book that I've probably sold the most copies of, the most steadily sold copies. Just a constant stream out the door, printed it umpteen times. It's a publisher's dream. The mantra is publish for the backlist. You want the books that will keep selling for a long time. Maybe not spectacularly, but solidly, steadily. Because ... when you get them, then you know that you can continue to publish. You know, because it's all too easy to have all of your profits eaten up by the storage fees for the unsold books.

EZ: Back to the gallery ...

BM: Max did two shows. Maybe more, but two shows I was involved with because I did the catalogs. And I designed the catalogs knowing that there were going to be two shows of early and recent work, so that they could be put together in a single volume as a hardcover monograph. I was involved with the editing of the essays. Basically I did those for Max. Max paid for the catalogs. I had paper cover individual catalogs for each of the shows, but found the writers, or Carolee found the writers. Ted Castlel, [a novelist] who had also published [art criticism], or was publishing at this time. I forget the years for those shows. It wasn't immediately after *More Than Meat Joy*... Mid-'80s? Mid- to late '80s? ... I've been at this for 49 years. Anyway, those are the other books. ... Also, we did a signed edition of the hardcover with a silkscreen that Carolee made that was inserted into those. It may have been late '80s? We split in '87, so it must have been before that. ... It had to have been mid-'80s.

EZ: I have a question about Ana Mendieta, if you don't mind... I'm currently reading a book called *Naked by the Window* by [Robert] Katz. The subtitle of the book is "The [Fatal] Marriage of Carl Andre and Ana Mendieta." In it, Carolee is cited quite a bit. I ended up reading it in my research around Carolee. ... I realize the book came out in 1990, so you weren't with Carolee anymore. ... [Do you know] anything about her being interviewed for it?

BM: Not at all, but I remember when it happened.

EZ: Were you the one who told her? Because in the book there's a story she tells about someone coming into her loft and telling her that Ana had died.

BM: I may have met Ana Mendieta. I scarcely knew Carl Andre. I'm sure I met him in passing. There was always something a little—I was less interested in the kind of conceptual sculpture that he and his ilk were producing. But it was a totally shocking event, and the more Carolee found out, the more she was convinced that it was not an accident. It tended to divide the art world between those who wanted to give Carl the benefit of the doubt, because they were

known to have had a somewhat tempestuous domestic relationship. So anyway, it divided the art world. Particularly the women who felt this was just a blatant example of someone getting out of control and perhaps he didn't mean to harm her, certainly in that way. But nevertheless, that was the outcome. And I know that Carolee mourned her and she [created], of course, the homage in the snow with ashes in her hands.

EZ: Did you take those photographs or were you here for them?

BM: Yes and no. I mean, I don't know that I took the photographs. I think she asked someone else to take the photographs. ... I saw her [make the images], or saw her when she was, at least, preparing to do it. I knew that she was working on a piece, but I cannot remember precisely whether I saw that exact event. ... Again, it was an ephemeral thing. It was just ... gone. But that was perhaps the point. She would conduct little rituals around the deaths of friends. When John Lennon died, she sent a cup filled with tiny bird's feathers to Yoko with a message, [telling her] to perform the ritual of taking the feathers out of the cup. I think that I took that, or packaged that, and gave it to Sara Seagull [artist and archivist] to deliver it. Sara had been the personal assistant of Yoko's. ...

Carolee had prepared me for death, in the sense that—We tended, over the years, to get together at least once a year for a picnic or a dinner. Sometimes twice, and sometimes I would see her in New York. And on one occasion, I drove her up here when she needed a ride. We had an awful lot of friends in common. I worked in particular with Thomas McEvilley a great deal. My one regret with Tom is that he and Carolee didn't end up doing the book that they had talked about doing together, which would have been phenomenal. ... He was a great, great art critic. Talented writer in his own [right], creative writer. I published a couple of his experimental novels. In '84, he took MoMA to task for their Primitivism show in which the Cubists, like Braque and Picasso's works, were exhibited with some of the primitive, quote unquote "primitive art," African art that inspired them, and an exhibition that was a huge deal for Rubin and Varnedoe—the curators at the time. Everybody was exclaiming, "What a great show of cubism." Not Tom. ...

[Carolee] introduced Tom to me at a party in the loft in the early '80s. Tom became an important friend for both of us. He was a classicist, the classical philologist who turned himself into an art critic. He was writing some of the most amazing work on the intersection—I hate that term actually, but in this case it's appropriate—the intersection of Greek and Indian thought. Tom was an expert in both. *The Shape of Ancient Thought* [2002] is a book that was published a number of years ago that was a revelation, in that he basically proved what had been imagined without proof: that in at least two occasions, there were important conversations going on between Indian and Greek philosophers, that there was transmission across the Indus River between Greeks. Basically saying, the glory that is Greece and all of that stuff, but some of their ideas actually had a foundation in Indian civilization and religion. He was able to prove, it took him thirty years but ...

EZ: He was able to prove it.

BM: He was able to prove it! And [he] really changed the way people thought about the separation between Asia and Europe.

EZ: What did he say about the Primitivism show?

BM: That you can't do that! You can't take these works out of context without some sort of acknowledgment of the fact that they themselves are works of power—artworks within their culture and religion. You simply cannot exploit them in this neo-colonial intellectual way. And suddenly, he was the most important critic in New York.

EZ: And so what was the project ... that [Carolee and Tom] were going to do?

BM: I have no idea. I just know that they were talking. I was always working with Tom on various books ... including another performance art book [incorporating] all of his writings on Marina Abramovic and Ulay. It's the best book on their work, I must say. It was fun to do, but ... it was an entirely different book. Tom and I also did a wonderful book on Yves Klein. He had done a big show in New York. A show, actually, for the Menil Foundation in Houston, that then traveled to New York at one point. It was a great, great Klein show. I had always kind of dismissed him, you know, [having only seen reproductions]. And [the actual work] was amazing, powerful, great. Tom was able to explore Yves Klein's theosophy ... his connection with Rosicrucianism, which was [*makes a comical "Oh no!" sound*]. So anyway, what exactly were they planning? I don't know. ... Tom had a place up in Kerhonkson. He and Joyce [Burstein, artist] would see Carolee from time to time. But Carolee was very busy. For someone who was sick for quite a long time, she had an enormous amount of energy and capacity and was working always.

EZ: How did the two of you divide your time between the loft and the house?

BM: Well, it varied. I'm trying to think. I got a job in the city in '79 at the Publishing Center for Cultural Resources. I was there for a couple years. That was a 9-to-5 for five days a week, so I would take an early Monday morning bus and hope there wasn't terrible traffic, because I'd have to jump on a subway downtown.

EZ: Did you catch the bus in Tillson?

BM: No, I'd drive to New Paltz and park a car there when it was still possible. Sometimes Carolee might take me in. So there was a lot of time when I would be in the city and she wouldn't. There would be some times when I would want to be up here on the weekends and she wanted to be in the city. So we were always catching each other and spending time together here or there, both. But also a fair amount of time apart. She kept a pretty busy schedule, and often we would meet for events or parties, and be together for a few days at a time. When I worked up here, it was different. After a couple of years down there, I worked across the river at Open Studio, George and Susan Quasha's [artists and poets] art center ... When Carolee and I first got together, she called George and we got an invitation to have dinner with them in the—not in the stained glass studio, but in the ... room with the Arnolfini mirror, a convex mirror. ... And their house is an octagonal house. Do you know about octagonal houses?

EZ: I do, a little bit.



BM: Phrenology was one of the inventions of the Poughkeepsie doctor who believed that octagonal houses were much better for your psychic health. That's why there are a whole bunch of them on that road [in Barrytown, NY].

EZ: That's interesting.

BM: So we went over and had dinner. It was very nice to meet them. I had never heard of George. I didn't know him, and then they called Robert Kelly and Helen, who was his wife at the time. They came over and I met them. I'd been in touch with Robert and had never met him [before], so that has proved to be a long and very fruitful friendship. I've published lots of books by Robert.

EZ: The next question I want to ask is about animals.

BM: Animals. Well, there used to be a screen on that window over there, and we had the window open one night, and we heard this sound. And it was a rat. A huge rat, clinging to the screen, hissing, making the most horrible sound. And neither of us had ever seen anything like it. It wanted to get in. I'm sure it was rabid.

EZ: Wow.

BM: I think we knocked it with something so that it fell off and scampered away, but there was plenty of wildlife here. When I first came, Carolee showed me the snakeskin that she had left hanging over, at some point, on the porch, where a black snake had shed. Wasn't the only, or the first snakeskin. This house seemed to be a way station for animals. We had a porcupine on the porch. I think it lived, one winter, under the porch. And it would go back and forth. You just had to take a look when you go out the door to make sure that you wouldn't ...

EZ: Scare it, startle it?

BM: Startle it. We had a dog. We had three dogs, actually. Well, we had one dog who had the misfortune of a close encounter of the painful kind with a porcupine here.

EZ: You had three dogs here at one time?

BM: No, no, no.

EZ: Oh, total. Who were they?

BM: Lantern. A black dog with white [blaze] on the front. I think that was the third, last one. Lantern was an Australian sheepdog. A real herder. Unlike an English one. Broad chest, really strong. Sweet as could be. Actually I guess we had four, because before Lantern—well, at a certain point, but for not a terribly long period of time, we had Lantern's girlfriend who was an English border collie, who was from over the hill in that direction. Lantern had picked [her] up and she kept following him here, and finally we would call the owner and he'd come drive over

and at a certain point he said, “Well, why don’t you just keep her?” Unfortunately, she got hit by a car out on Springtown Road, and that happened to another dog we had too, which was a terrier, pretty tall. What is the name for that? They’re kind of reddish, with close curly hair. Anyway, that was a dog that was a rescue dog that had apparently come from Arkansas or someplace, where it had been chained [up to a tree]. Somebody set it free and brought it north. Seems to happen a lot there. And that dog got killed also. I can’t remember the dog’s name. And then we had one named Telling, and I don’t remember what happened. Lantern died of a sudden heart attack a few years after I had gone. I don’t know that Carolee had any dogs after that. I took one cat when I left, at Carolee’s insistence. It was a little bit of a pushy cat.

EZ: What was the cat’s name?

BM: Tuxedo. Black with white paws. He was a very nice cat, but he liked to go out. He was fixed, but he didn’t know it. He ignored that detail, I think. He would go out a lot in Kingston. He’d be gone for a day or two.

EZ: Were there other cats?

BM: Here?

EZ: With you, when you were living here?

BM: We had lots of cats. I’m trying to remember. When we were working on *More Than Meat Joy*, we had a Russian Blue female, who got pregnant and decided to give birth in my desk, which had roll down side compartments, and she found a way to get in and she delivered a single kitten. And it was a large one. She did not have the easiest time. She would not come out, and I’m trying to decide whether that was Cluny I. I think it may have been.

EZ: The kitten?

BM: Mm hmm. And what happened to her? I don’t know. Might have given her away. But in any case, we had two Clunys. Cluny was the clan name for the McPhersons in Scotland. And also for the McCalls, which was kind of a strange coincidence. ... There are super clans, you might say, and then there are sub-clans called septs. [The historical] Cluny was actually the chief of the McPhersons, but also had these other tribal connections and stuff. The Scots are very tribal people. Afterward, Carolee had so many cats. I mean, she was a serial cat person. She never had a cat that lived as long as Kitch, as far as I know. Kitch lived to 19.

EZ: Yeah.

BM: She adored her cats. Carolee without a cat—at one point, I was terribly allergic to cats, quite frankly. Early on, I said more or less, “Carolee, I can’t live with these cats. It’s just too much.” And she said, “Well, I’m sorry.” [Meaning if it was between me or the cat, she’d keep the cat]. So I found a way to overcome my allergies. For one thing, I took to vacuuming this house a lot. With all of the floorboards and cracks and everything. Which also kept the flea population down, because living here in the country with dogs, usually the dogs lived on the

porch, unless it was terribly, terribly cold. What was that dog's name? That terrier died, I think, on the road. I brought him and it was the middle of winter.

EZ: Oh, no.

BM: I couldn't bury him. So we kept him on the porch in his little bed for months until...

EZ: Oh my gosh. Until you could dig a hole?

BM: Until I could dig a hole. ... People were kind of amazed when they would see him.

EZ: Did anything happen?

BM: Nope.

EZ: He was just frozen there.

BM: Totally frozen. It was a hard winter.

EZ: Is Kitch buried here? Do you know?

BM: ... Well, maybe. That would make sense. I wasn't with her at that point. That would make sense, that she would've had her brought up here and buried her. I'm sure she is, but where, I couldn't begin to tell you.

EZ: Under the flagstones?

BM: Yeah, probably.

EZ: Something like that.

BM: It's good mana.

EZ: Yeah.

BM: Carolee did have an aura detector, I think. I think she could feel presences from this house. Who am I to disagree?

EZ: Are there any stories about that?

BM: Nothing that really comes to mind. I think she thought that she may have seen something in the house once. But, a little Aquavit late at night, moonless, in the house by yourself. Who knows?

EZ: Who knows what you'll see.

BM: We did both like Aquavit. ... Now by the way, this table, this is a Jim Tenney construction. Solid. It's exactly the way it was when I was here.

EZ: I'm curious ... [when] you were both at the house spending time here ... what was daily regular life like cohabitating? Who made the coffee?

BM: I don't remember. But I can tell you how well we fed the animals. We would go to the butcher in New Paltz and buy ground up scraps for nothing, because we couldn't afford dog food. Most of the time we were here, we were not well off by any means. She was just not selling work. She was getting grants and little gigs, and I was pulling in, but I didn't have a very big salary. After a couple of years in the city, I came up, but before... There was a period where there was something called a CETA grant, C-E-T-A.

EZ: I know about that from my work.

BM: Right. Michael Perkins was a very close friend of Carolee's. He was a poet and a writer in Woodstock, and a critic and various other things. He had known Carolee from the early '60s in New York. He was a kid from Cincinnati, I think, originally and he had worked in some publishing and stuff. But in any case, he either founded or took over a magazine called *Ulster Arts*. ... It was local. It was a news magazine in a lot of ways, but it also would have book reviews or feature articles. They were able to get some grants at that time, which must have been [during] a greater recession than I had realized. Sometimes you just live through times the best you can and ignore whether you're actually living in a terrible time or not, financially. We were always scraping by and hoping to be able to pay for the oil for the tank in the basement. So I did get a job for the better part of a year as the designer for *Ulster Arts* magazine, which was nice because I met some good people, and became close friends with Michael Perkins and Sandra Howell, who used to work at Byrdcliffe—no, not Byrdcliffe. What's the name of the gallery in Woodstock? [The Kleinert]. That was another side, by the way, to our life. We had friends in Woodstock. We also would go to concerts at a venue there, which was a really cool bar.

EZ: What would you see at the bar? What kinds of ...

BM: Oh, we used to see great stuff. I know we saw Taj Mahal a couple of times. Great acts. It was a small venue, but very intimate. Everybody wanted to play in Woodstock. There was always great music, and The Band, too. We'd see them there. I saw The Band four or five times over the years around here at Opus 40. I think I was mostly going to Opus 40 after I was with Carolee. I think we maybe went once. ... Anyway, daily life. I don't think she trusted me to cook much, frankly. We didn't eat meat all the time. She was a pretty good cook. We also liked to socialize. There were various bars and little restaurants that we would go out to whenever we could, and [we] enjoyed that. Woody's [partner], Suzie Horowitz [local friends] we first met when she was a waitress in a restaurant in New Paltz. That was a long, long, long, long time ago. She is absolutely the same, though. It's uncanny to me. It's amazing. Woody looks pretty damn good, too at 75.

We took some trips together. Or we would meet up. She was out in L.A. for some reason, and I met up with her. I think I had some event having to do with book publishing or a

book fair or something and she was out there seeing a friend. We [also met up in] Frankfurt—the book fair—and London afterwards, while I was trying to find a co-publisher [for *More Than Meat Joy*]. It was a vain hope, but still, it was worthwhile because it got me in the habit of going to the Frankfurt Book Fair. I've probably spent half a year in Frankfurt by this time. In London, she introduced me to the Landesmans, Jay and Fran. Jay was the publisher of a famous magazine in St. Louis in the '50s called *Neurotica*. He and G. Legman, who was famous for a book [*The Rationale of the Dirty Joke*]. But they were publishing the Beats before they were fashionable. She was a songwriter, Fran. Jay came from a fairly wealthy family, I think, in St. Louis. And they were figures in the '60s in London—you didn't want to be too ostentatious, so he drove a Bentley, not a Rolls.

EZ: Wow.

BM: But otherwise, it was a bohemian city. I met Carolyn Cassady there.

EZ: Who was that?

BM: Neil Cassady's sixth wife.

EZ: Okay.

BM: You know, part of that beatnik crew. And [later we met Jay's] nephew, who was one of the editors of *Artforum* and *Bookforum*. Knight Landesman. Also in London, I met a friend of hers, Topolski, son of a famous World War II artist, and Joe Berke. Joseph Berke, who with R. D. Laing was one of the radical psychotherapists of the time. Carolee had lived in London for a year or two from about '69, '70. She'd sort of had a breakdown, and she got through that with the help of a great psychiatrist friend. ... But I met most of those people.

EZ: Can you talk a little bit about the end of your relationship with Carolee or to any capacity ... for her biography or yours?

BM: It was not acrimonious. We just sort of found that we were not together as much as we used to be. I do feel, as I think was the case with Anthony, too, that we thought, or I felt, I won't speak for Anthony, but I think I did want to have children with someone. I think that by my mid-30s or approaching 40, I was thinking, I want to experience everything in life that I can. And I thought I had fallen in love with an artist in Germany. I didn't have any real illusions that that was where I was going to be ending up or anything like that, or that that relationship was going to go somewhere. But I think that had sort of intruded, it is possible to love more than one person. In any case, I think I just felt we had done as much for each other as we possibly could. I never stopped loving her, but I didn't want to be bound to the relationship anymore. But we always knew that we had, not only a lot of friends in common, but we also had an [enduring connection]. We're not going to be making some sort of clean break. It's just like opening your arms and saying we're not losing each other, we're just not going to be in exactly the same position, vis-a-vis... It wasn't without its ... it wasn't perfectly easy to do. But it was something I decided for myself, and for her too, in a way, that would be best for us. I don't think I was wrong.

EZ: And you live in Kingston now?

BM: Yeah.

EZ: You moved there after?

BM: Yeah.

EZ: You said you saw each other once a year or so up until the end of her life. You started to say ... that she had prepared you for her death.

BM: Well, we often would try to meet up around the time of our birthday. We're both born on October 12th, and so we would celebrate our birthday together.

EZ: I had read that. I forgot that.

BM: And so I took her, in October of 2018, to a restaurant in New Paltz. She was unsteady on her feet at this time. She'd gone through all kinds of physical challenges because, for example, I forget exactly the year—2014, 2013, something like that—when she broke her hip during an event, giving a lecture in Manhattan [NYU, 2014]. Took a fall and got up, delivered the lecture and then couldn't move and had to be basically transported by ambulance to a hospital in Manhattan, and then up to Northern Dutchess. ... I saw her there. And then there was something else that happened, and I remember seeing her in Poughkeepsie, at the hospital in Poughkeepsie. Some kind of surgery. She was a bit unsteady on her feet, but [she] managed to get in and sit down. And she ... told me that she had decided upon a green burial and had just purchased the plot and made the arrangements. To sit down and have dinner with someone, and it's something that's... You don't know exactly how to react to it except to say, okay. I hope you're not planning an exit anytime soon, but if you want to make plans, go ahead.

I don't think she was telling me everything about her exact condition. Why should she? I knew that she'd gone through various traditional and some nontraditional therapies for cancer, and that she somehow carried on. But it was difficult. But she was indomitable in so many ways. I think it was that evening I came and looked at the work that she was doing. She'd been planning on doing something about ... it wasn't Lebanon. Maybe Iran. Iraq. She had been able to get some footage and some photographs and things of atrocities in Iraq [referring to photographs from Syria] and then she had them all over the floor, some on the walls. And she wondered what I thought, and so we talked about what she was doing. And frankly, I advised her against it. I didn't think it was going to add to her work. She'd already made those statements in her paintings about Lebanon. And they were shocking, so it was a kind of brutality to insist. After all, what is it? What does an artist do but show you what you don't necessarily ... can't see, don't want to see, but must somehow see, right? But there can be things, I think, that are a little taboo, that don't enlarge the perception. I don't think she ended up doing anything more with them.

EZ: How did she react when you said those things to her?

BM: She took them to heart. I didn't tell her what to do or what not to do. I just told her what I thought. She was passionate about human liberation and human justice ... really strong about that. ... On a couple of occasions, I might have said things that were not sufficiently courageous the way she was. And we may have had some words.

EZ: I loved the way that she was so joyful to speak about her green burial. There really was an element of, "I picked the best spot out there." ...

BM: I haven't been out recently, but I have been a couple of times in the past few years. ...

EZ: Where are your archives going?

BM: God, I don't know. I do need to think about that at some point in time. One of my authors is George Minkoff. He's in Great Barrington and he's a rare book dealer as well, and he sells artist and author archives. So he or his sons will probably handle my archive.

EZ: Do you keep diaries? Or is it a publishing archive or correspondence, or is it a mix of both?

BM: It's everything. I have [masses of] file folders. And I mean for every project, there are often half a dozen file folders packed with stuff. And then what do you do with your emails? They'll have to be printed out, I suppose. But there's thousands of those that have to be dealt with in some way and ordered. It's a mess, quite frankly. It's overwhelming. Every project that I do, suddenly right when I'm about to clean things up, it's out of control. It is literally a bit out of control, in the sense that I do almost everything myself. So pretty much a one person thing. But, of course, I know who to go to for what [I need]. I'm always getting help in various ways. Entropy probably should be the name of my press.

EZ: What is the name of your press now? Has it always been the same?

BM: It started as Treacle Press, and that was kind of an in-joke that attached to the first book that I did, which I thought was going to be the only book that I would do, before I then went off and did whatever I was going to do. [Do] you know what treacle is?

EZ: I don't.

BM: It's a thick sugar syrup. It's usually English. There's an old nursery rhyme. "Heigh ho! The carrion crow / For I have shot somewhat too low / I have shot the poor sow to the heart / Wife, bring treacle in a spoon / Or else the poor sow's heart will doom." Treacle is a Greek word, actually, from the bite of the wolf. A salve for the bite of a wolf. Wolf salve, or something like that. But anyway, that was kind of the idea. Most people remember it from *Alice in Wonderland*. I think it's sickly sweet.

EZ: Oh, I see. Yeah.

BM: It is used like molasses. But molasses, of course, and honey: these are the two original salves. That's what you would bind in a wound because they were antiseptic. So then I

bifurcated. I added Documentext, which became this [referring to *More Than Meat Joy*], because this was just not a Treacle Press book. And I wanted to make [a name] that was sort of trans-European for the imprint. A word understood in basically any language. [Hence], Documentext—which in a way tells what I was doing with this. And then I used it, and still use it occasionally, on other things. But after, it became a little unwieldy to have the two. So I [decided] McPherson and Company would become the overall name. And then I can use these as imprints. I [no longer] use Treacle Press as an imprint. I just keep it for the books that I did back then. But otherwise, they're either McPherson & Company books or Documentext.