

Douglas Argue
Narrator

Thomas O'Sullivan
Interviewer

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TO: It's November 19, 1991. I'm Tom O'Sullivan, from the Minnesota Historical Society, talking to Doug Argue at his study in northeast Minneapolis.

We are standing in front of Doug's buffalo painting. Doug, can you tell us a little bit about how the painting came to be when you first began to work on this idea?

DA: Yes. Actually, every time I talk about it, I come up with a different story. I started thinking about doing some history, works about history, when I spent a lot of time traveling in Europe and looking at all their history paintings. So I started to work on a book of etchings that would be sort of a narrative history of the United States. One of the images that I was working on was the killing of the buffalo, and it kind of evolved out of that.

TO: Done in a smaller scale to begin with and then grown to wall size?

DA: Yes, that was kind of bringing in the European history painting part of it, for me, was I kind of gave up on the first idea of the book of images, and thought that I would kind of play with the idea of history painting. Because most of the history paintings are on such this sort of scale, but they are a lot more glamorous. I thought, take an American theme in a sort of different consciousness of a different time and reapply that, not necessarily rethink history, but to make an American history painting of an event that kind of metaphorically sort of symbolized the kind of big change in the life and the way we are in the country.

TO: Doug, the buffalo paintings seem to be quite a departure from your earlier paintings that I'd seen in exhibits and galleries around the Cities and in a couple of shows that you're included in at the Walker, different not just in subject matter, but quite a different way of painting. Could you talk a bit about that and how you chose that different approach for this one?

DA: Yes, because, in this particular case, the reference point and the content was coming from referring to a kind of painting that was more solid, had more mass, and more readable, more of a historic sort of approach, instead of bringing the method of working or the composition of working into question. Using the idea of history painting or the content of the painting as enough of an idea and a challenge in and of itself, instead of using art and how you make marks and how you compose something as kind of the essential composition. So I wanted it to be very readable and I

wanted it to be very clearly understood in terms of the idea and how it was read, so I left those sort of artistic questions a little more to the side, I think.

Does that answer the question?

TO: Yes. It also kind of suggests that you had an audience in mind, too, when you talk about it being easily read. Do you think of a work like this as having a different group of viewers than your earlier work?

DA: Yes, yes, certainly that's part of it. I imagine, like most artists, a certain disillusionment with who the audience is and in using subjects that people already know about and can deal with and have thought about in the past can make it more accessible to them, even if the subject matter isn't something that people like to sit around and think about in a pleasant way. By referring to it, it's referring in a way to something that we've all heard about. By doing that, it makes it accessible, I think, to more people than if I was a work that was coming from a different artistic point of view, it isolates a lot of people. For good or bad, whatever the argument is, maybe you should be able to understand it, no matter what anyways, if you spend the time. For me, this was a method to bypass that sort of thing.

So, philosophically, it was probably a whole different approach. The audience was meant to be separate from the sort of artistic isolated community that usually often is my audience. By dealing with a subject that is more public, I felt that it would make it more accessible in that way. Also, it's more readable and then that sort of idea had that in mind, too, the way it was done and how it was done fits into what people think art is in a way.

TO: As a picture of something?

DA: As a picture of something. I don't look at painting that way. I never have, and even with this work it doesn't change my mind. I see it as creating a sort of reality that has nothing to do anything but itself. So if you put in a sky, you have to put the ground in, in order to make that sort of logical connection. In the same way that you can make a connection between things without that sort of logic, that's just as true in painting.

But in this case, I wanted it to have a ground and a space that moved back, and a sky, and that kind of logic to me isn't any more true than to say Cubism or something else. But in this case, to make the content and the idea come through, I had to work this way. It's not that I believe in it more, it just fit with what I wanted to do with this particular piece.

TO: You refer to this whole phenomenon, the slaughter of the buffalo, as something we're familiar with and that there are a lot of records of. What kind of historical material did you use for sources, either as pictures or written accounts?

DA: That was a lot of fun, I guess. The original image in my mind was from a textbook in grade school of somebody leaning out of a train, shooting a gun, and a handful of buffalos lying there.

Then when I started looking through and kind of looking at pictures of it, images of it, I found that picture again, and it was originally a little etching done for *Harper's* magazine.

So that kind of connection to *Harper's* magazine and it's like photographs are used in a newspaper now to kind of validate the truth of what was going on, and then to have it republished and a strong image in my mind from my childhood in terms of what happened in the past. So the image was kind of created by seeing this little image, and then the story that you hear over and over again about how the buffalo were killed and the prairie was destroyed and the Indians were—you know, all the various things that happened to them in that situation.

The other two images that I thought about a lot, there was a train somewhere out West that all it did for like ten years or twenty years or something was carry buffalo bones into a calcium pill plant or something, or a fertilizer plant, actually, I think is what it was. So all it did was haul bones for its lifetime, buffalo bones. So that image of sort of infinite death and infinite sort of—that idea of it being so massive and so infinite, what happened really was important from that image. Also, piles of photographs, old photographs of piles of buffalo skins and stories.

My grandmother actually told me a story about it was just really easy to get a buffalo skin if you wanted one. I mean people had them everywhere, just to keep warm or to do whatever. So that idea of it, like with the remnants being around and being everywhere. But I never actually saw an image of the buffalo dead anywhere.

There was one image in *Harper's* of somebody skinning a buffalo. It was more of a dramatic European picture where he was holding the skin up and he had the knife in his hand like this. The buffalo was kind of sprawled out. But that's where I saw that they left just that little bit of fur by the hooves when they took it off, just like it seemed too morbid to me. And it's a detail that added a lot, I think, when I was making the piece. It makes it readable.

TO: I've heard comments from people who have seen the painting or pictures of it refer to what they thought was the real accuracy of the carcasses and so forth, people familiar with the meatpacking industry and such. Was that part of your research, too, getting to know what buffalo animals looked like, to convey that?

DA: I really made it up. I really didn't know. Part of the whole idea for me in making what I thought was a historic painting was the idea of how something becomes something that an artist does that's imaginary. It starts getting replaced with something that becomes truthful. To me, it was a sort of challenge to sort of bridge between that imaginary and truthful thing. If people see this, then this becomes the reality of what happened, just as that little *Harper's* image did for me when I was just a little boy. To me, that idea of creating history and the ideas about history is pretty interesting.

At the Science Museum they have a skeleton of a buffalo, and I looked at that. The rest was just imaginary. I went out to the zoo, but it didn't do much good. The buffalo just sits there. It doesn't move.

TO: How about the landscape setting? Do you have a particular place in mind?

DA: That's imaginary, too, I guess. My father's a botanist, so I spent many hours walking around in prairie while he identified the different grasses and stuff. So I had a certain sense in my mind of the feeling of the area, but mostly I wanted it to feel infinite. That was the idea for using perspective to begin with, sort of to create a certain feeling of infinity. I wanted the sort of prairie in the place to have that feeling too, because that's the other sort of myth or folklorish aspect to it's only 100 or 150 years ago, whatever it was, even less, I'm not sure., but the idea of all the buffalo dying and the Indians leaving is like the infinite prairie, like the endless prairie, which is like an image of the past, too, that I have in my mind. So I guess to associate the two, sort of the infinite killing of the buffalo and the infinite space.

TO: Somehow for an image with pretty grisly subject matter and a real sad message, it doesn't strike me as a very grisly treatment of that. Can you talk a bit about how you painted, how you could make a painting that wouldn't just repel people by the fact that it's a landscape full of carcasses?

DA: I'm not sure. I mean, I suppose one thing is that I tried really hard to make the painting really beautiful. So that sort of aesthetic appeal kind of weighs against the weight of the subject. Also, I mean, I think I intentionally took any drama out of it. A lot of times, if you look at a lot of European paintings, history paintings, it's like the drama is always the center, the killing of something.

So I was thinking of this as more of like the week after. I mean. it sounds pretty gross, and I mean it's kind of a morbid thing, but it's also quieter. They're also kind of going back into the earth. It's like not the torture of the happening but a sort of, I don't know, a sort of feeling of how it's going to come back together or something. I don't know.

TO: So there might be a little bit of sense of regeneration somewhere in here, too?

DA: I mean, I definitely thought of it. That's one of the reasons why the grass is kind of overcoming them. I don't know the best way to put it. I mean, I thought about them as not necessarily--as leaving a presence and the presence being the sort of memory that we all have. I guess in a way I thought of them as kind of being there like ghosts, like still being present.

I originally had like buffalo ghosts in it, which really turned out to be pretty corny and stupid, I thought. But I really had the idea that it really seemed so recent and it's so much a part of what we think, even if we're not aware of it, I, at least for me, in terms of the sort of strong ideas I got when I was in school and even now when people talk about it there's a lot of—everybody has something to say about buffalo massacres or Indians. So the idea that it's still present, I guess, I don't know if that had anything to do with making it feel less brutal or harder to deal with, but I guess I was thinking of it a little bit like that.

I was also trying not to like overly moralize a little bit from one point of view or another. Just kind of have the aftermath of what happened in a way that makes sense.

TO: The painting is about fourteen by twenty feet and represents a big investment of your working time of over about how long a period?

DA: Over the time spent, probably over a year and a half and actually working on it about ten months, sort of nine to five hours, most of it up on the top with the little teeny ones.

TO: How many buffalos are here?

DA: I don't know. I think that there could be a little contest where you guess the buffalo and then you get a prize. I'm sure they're countable. Well, I don't know, maybe not.

TO: I've gotten up to about 120.

Over that long working time, did your conception of it change much or did you change any of the image itself as you went along?

DA: Yes, I took out more and more, mostly to get that feeling that I wanted, that there was a sort of infinite feeling and anything that broke up the sort of--I mean, it's broken up by the animals, the way they are, but I originally had a little train coming in in the corner, and I had flying buffalos with wings up in the sky.

First, I took the train out, painted the train out, because any breaking of the whole plain wrecked the whole image of it going endlessly in all directions, which is one of the things I wanted to do. But when I took it out, it was one of those old trains and the top of them looked like houses, so I painted the train out and then there was a little shack in the distance, which I really liked, because the train came, and then the people moved into the houses. Then when I took the flying buffalos out, I took the little shack out, too, all of which will slightly emerge sometime in the future, probably, little red ghosts.

TO: As the paint dries and underpainting shows through?

DA: I've been told that, but I think almost in every case I've found that most of this conservation, sort of idealistic conservation, is exaggerated. I don't know if people want to make a living or what the reason is exactly, but I have done works that are probably about ten years old where I've painted over things, and you can't see what's under them at all. So I'm not sure how many years you have to wait. I'm told it will come through.

TO: How did you know when it was finished?

DA: Well, I started in this corner, and I kind of worked this way, up this way. So by the time I had this side finished, I kind of knew what I wanted on the rest. So the rest of it was trying to get it to

look like this side. But I wanted a change in light, too, which ended up taking--because this started out green, and the buffalos were red. I mean, really, just bright contrasts, bright [unclear].

TO: You mean the first layer of underpainting?

DA: First layer of underpainting. Then the buffalos became white. Then I started painting the ground around them. And at first it was all this sort of whatever color that is, sort of a Mars orange with a cobalt blue or something, and it shifted into an umber, because I wanted the feeling like there was a shift in light, but really kind of gradual. Then the buffalos became green, and the grass grew and kind of spread across.

So I mean basically, once I had the feel in one part, it was a question of trying to make it feel right everywhere else. It wasn't really that mechanical, because it's really trying to shift everything in space without knowing what it looks like. It was really kind of probably the difficult part.

TO: Would it be accurate to say that to some extent it kind of composed itself in full size as you went along, rather than from a series of studies and sketches?

DA: Yes. I mean, I work that way because at least in this piece and in another piece I'm working on, with the idea that the more sort of inaccuracies that you make in the beginning with the bright red and bright green, and let's say the shape was wrong so you come over it with the white, and the underpainting becomes green and red. So automatically you have a shift in light, which creates a sort of shadow feeling that's really slight. But you can't imagine it when you do it. It's a sort of chaotic way of creating light that feels more realistic to me than trying to sit down and just model something. So that's probably the essential reason for that for me is that the light feels more realistic for me when it's more chaotic, so I try and make lots of mistakes. It gives me room to make more, sort of. When it becomes more subtle, it's more interesting, I hope.

TO: I get the feeling from conversations we've had and the materials in your studio and so forth that your experimentations in this piece were not so much with materials, though. Did you tend to use more traditional supplies?

DA: Yes, everything is really traditional. I mean it's a hide-skin glue because it really fit with what I wanted to do, the idea of hide, which is the traditional way of sizing a canvas. That's the way that it's been done. People don't do it that way now, because you can just throw some plastic on there. It's not a problem. So all of it is very traditional, and even the sort of underpainting with red and green and different colors, mostly complementary colors, I think, is how you're supposed to work.

But for me, not having really done a work like that, it was pretty new. So I guess that in a way it was playing around with it because tradition was something that wasn't traditional for me. I based my ideas of tradition on two years of traveling and looking at work, but I have a real inability to sit down and read a book about it. So my tradition is pretty much my own, I guess.

TO: During the time you were working on this, did you have some other works in process as well?

DA: Yes. I don't remember. Only about ten months of working on this piece, but in between I worked on a lot of other things. I did a whole series of mono prints of children and had an exhibition of those, and probably four or five other smaller oil paintings and a few woodcuts, and so a lot of other things.

When I did the mono prints, I did about three or four of them a day, which was, I think, in direct response to spending so much time on this piece, because painting the grass up on the top and stuff was inspiring.

TO: I've seen some other pieces on historical themes in the studio, some with Minnesota themes, some more general American history kinds of themes. Do you see your approach to history painting, as something will continue for a while?

DA: Yes, definitely. I guess I see myself moving towards--well, I guess I don't really ever move towards anything. I really like the idea of using history as a sort of bridge between me and the people who look at the work. I also really like the idea about what becomes the truth and how it becomes the truth, and who the messenger is and what gets filtered out. All of those things were really interesting to me, so probably, you know, I've always kind of wavered between really personal, really, really personal, and then kind of going back to more historical sort of ideas, both of which interest me.

It's just after a while, I begin to feel like I have no right to talk about certain historical issues because I don't know anything about them, and who am I anyways. So then I make a painting about going fishing with my son, something like, okay, this is my life. Then in doing that, I realize I don't have any more right talking about that than anything else, so why not. It's just like everybody. So I guess in general that's the sort of curve I work on. So a lot of themes will come back that I've wrestled with on how to do them and how to make them to be about more than the actual event or idea but try and fit them into a broader scope about who we are and what changes have happened, that sort of thing.

TO: What are you working on now?

DA: I'm working on way too many things. I'm working on one painting, about almost the same scale as this piece, of a chicken farm, an imaginary chicken farm where the walls become just cages and they go to infinity. That idea came from another image. I guess some things just stick in my mind, and I end up using them somehow. But I read a Kafka short story where this dancing dog keeps talking about his identity being related to where he got his food from. He got his food from dancing and begging. So the idea of who we are is directly related to where we get our food from, has always been in my mind. So I guess I'm looking at it from that point of view, trying to avoid a little bit the condemnation of poultry agriculture or whatever the right word is, but at the same time trying to associate that sort of farming with who we are in general.

And I'm working on some pictures of me and my son right now. I'm working on some wood blocks of a lot of different themes.

TO: Do you see these working toward a future exhibit?

DA: Yes. Yes. I mean, there've been chances for me to show a lot of the work that's around, and I've been reluctant, I guess, because I think I've had a show every year, or maybe two, since '83. I think I'm holding them a little closer right now. Also, I haven't been able to--I don't know what the word is--expand the interest in my work outside of a certain number of people. So I'm trying to work on a scale, a sort of compromise to get exhibitions out of the country. So I'm trying to put together maybe twenty or thirty smaller works that can be shipped. Because if you show a European museum or gallery this piece, or pieces on this scale, they may like them, but they get frightened, without having seen you in *Art in America*, I suppose.

So I guess that I do have something like that in mind in trying to do some smaller works. Also, it's new to me, too. I haven't really tried to put together twenty works that would go together.

TO: Do you foresee a time when some of these different strains like the more autobiographical paintings, you and your son, for example, hanging together with some of the history pieces [unclear]?

DA: Yes, that's the only way that I really see them. I mean, I don't see them as being separate at all, which is also one of the conflicts that a lot of times, depending on where you show the work, people have a certain obsession with everything being the same. It's like, well, why not just show one. Leave the whole space empty. Yes, I see it. I mean, I won't have a problem showing them, and when I do, they'll be shown together. [Tape recorder turned off.]

TO: Doug, when you started tackling the twenty-foot canvas, how did you approach it? Did you work from studies, sketches, lay out a grid across the canvas? How did you go at this project?

DA: What I did on this one was, I took a level to it right there and made a line and just drew everything in, and then kind of started in this corner and blocked in all of the shapes really simply. Like the buffalos were just flat red planes, and trying to shift them and move them in space because this one's forward. I didn't have a little dead buffalo to like move around to see, so I just threw them in as shapes at first.

Then the ground was green and the buffalos were red, and I just kind of went across all the way with that and then kind of started in this corner, just painted them bright white over the top, and they were put in really roughly so that when I came back, the underpainting was both red and green and it shifted, which shifts the light. You can kind of see where the reddish comes there off of this one.

You can feel--it feels almost like life or something, but then it shifts when it comes into the greens. It loses that sort of light. So I did that and just took actually a bright white all the way across with

the buffalo and then worked with the ground trying to get a certain shade in, a shift in light, over the top of the green.

TO: The overall lighting from this corner where it appears like brighter sunlight?

DA: Right, right. Yes, I wanted it to feel like the light was in transition and moving, without breaking it up where I would lose the feeling. If it became too dark or too light in one place, I would start to lose the feeling that it went endlessly sort of in all directions. So, sort of subtle change in browns. So the hooves were not last. [Laughter] Actually, the grass came on last.

The sky was done at the end. There were the flying buffalos. You can hardly see them, but they came over the ground, over the horizon line. So when I took those out, that's kind of when the sky started to take shape. The sky is just trying to kind of repeat the feeling of the flesh, not necessarily logical, but creates an atmosphere, I guess.

I don't know how many people notice, but I tried to make a little breeze going from that side this way so all the grass was sort of--

TO: Through the curvature of the grass in that direction?

DA: Yes. Trying to make the grass, give it a feeling of a little breeze.

TO: Those grasses, to me, seem to give it a real delicate feel, too, gentle strokes.

DA: Yes, before they were in, it set all of the dead animals back in space a long ways, because it goes over the top of them, which really changed the picture. It was really kind of exciting, because it didn't have the right feel to it at all. So originally, actually, it's coming back to me, I was thinking of just a sort of barren desertlike space or something, which was way too much. It has kind of like a starving infant with a bowl or something.

TO: Too heavy handed a setting?

DA: Yes. It also gave it that feeling that we were talking about earlier, of them going back into the earth, because I mean that must have been what happened to most of them, since nobody ate them or anything. I mean, pick the bones up later.

[Completely inaudible conversation for two minutes.]

DA: It's about the same horizon line.

TO: Did you do the etching before you began the painting?

DA: Yes. I was working on about ten etchings that were going to become kind of a book of the narrative of American history idea, and this was one of the etchings that I was working on that came

before. Has a little train coming in, and buffalo spirits. Only two of the buffalos are missing their hides.

TO: Above the head strip?

DA: Yes. I'd never made etchings before, trying to print them and make the whole project of like a hundred etchings, summing up the history of the United States. It turned into something that seemed beyond absurdity after a while, so I kind of dropped it and this is probably the only proof I have of this. But it has a lot of the same ideas. When this painting was started, it had the same things in it, but I took them out as it went along. I also saw that these had no form to them, no shape, and so I really focused on modeling a stronger shape, working with more contrast. It actually doesn't work very well unless it's on a solid board.

TO: This work in progress is the chicken painting we spoke of earlier. In terms of your working methods, is this comparable to the way you approached the buffalo, beginning with red and green underpainting?

DA: Yes, that's pretty similar. Actually, even the same kind of colors, it's like a cadmium and a viridian. So that's the same. Probably basically the same idea, because when I come back over it again, you know, I'll be able to move the shapes of the birds around and get that shift in light and stuff, not really paying too much attention to what they actually look like now.

TO: Just kind of blocking out [unclear]?

DA: Just kind of blocking out, really, kind of generally what I think might happen, and then feeling really free to just do anything I want. Then I come back over it with white. That shape is going to take precedent over anything that's there now because it sits right on top. So that's pretty similar. I guess this sort of perspective thing is pretty different. I mean the idea of using perspective as a sort of metaphor for infinity or using it to create a feeling of infinite or something is probably the same. Comes from the same sort of place.

TO: Do you foresee other things going on within this picture, in terms of human figures or a room setting or a place to it?

DA: Yes, a place. They won't let me go into chicken farms because--I'm not sure why. There's a couple of reasons. But I managed to go to the University of Minnesota's turkey farm, because they're sort of hybrid, sort of testing their grains and feed and stuff. I saw some things there that I want to put in, like lots of fans, ceiling fans everywhere and heat lamps. I'm thinking, you know, a heat lamp for every bird. [Laughter] It gives off this really weird sort of red light. So I'm thinking about that.

The ground was covered with sawdust. It was just broken up sawdust in clumps, like heavy clumps. So I'm thinking about that, creating sort of a texture for the ground. Originally, I was thinking just sterile, like in a Dairy Queen, after they clean up with all the steel metal, that sort of

thing. But after going to this turkey farm, it was like I guess I was thinking of it as like high tech and things coming from high tech for some reason, but I like the idea now more of just hunks of dirt and sod and different things, and the fans going.

Every now and then I have sort of a vision of a guy like walking, like shoveling or doing something, or of like a little fire. But I think the less, the better.

TO: Two works like this and the buffalo painting have really a pretty strong kind of social statement to the suggestion where you're kind of challenging people to look at a lot of values and issues. Do you see yourself as an activist artist or are you involved in movements for the environment, political activities, and so forth, outside of your artwork?

DA: I guess that I'm active in some things, but I don't see myself as a sort of activist artist, the difference being, the images aren't really intended necessarily to cause a change or a feeling of a change. They're for what they are, and I'm not trying to stop people from eating chickens or I'm not trying to make people feel guilty about killing the buffalos necessarily. I'm thinking about it, I guess. My favorite artwork kind of brings up those sort of human things in a public way and sometimes things in a personal way.

So I'm thinking about it in terms of what art do I like the best, and it's the art that brings up those sorts of questions. But I'm not looking at it in terms of it being an effective way for social change.

TO: Who are some artists or specific works that you think sum up that kind of approach?

DA: I guess, historically, somebody like Goya, certainly, with his etchings, and also with some of his paintings, although, those later paintings that I like the best are more sort of personal. The etchings are certainly political and historical.

I guess, contemporarily, Anselm Kiefer [phonetic], a German artist, who kind of inspired me to work this sort of size anyways and even to use traditional things like perspective in realizing that the content doesn't necessarily involve restructuring, because most of his paintings are really sort of barren landscapes that use perspective. I understand that he paints over large photographs, and he uses just the sort of lines, I guess, that kind of come with that to create the feeling of the space. But the feeling, he's definitely, definitely within that realm, sort of apocalyptic in some cases, and not so much in others. But lots of artists. [Tape recorder turned off.]

TO: I like that painting a lot.

DA: It's funny, because it's like people will look at some work. They'll come in and they'll look at this one, for example, and they won't be able to deal with the sort of anger that's in it. Then they look at this one, and it's like too cute for them. "Okay. That's how you feel. Good."

TO: Over the past year, I've seen a series of six or eight paintings that feature a man and his son. When did this series start?

DA: Right after I finished the buffalo painting, I guess. I spent three months traveling around the country, looking at historical work, mostly, was my sort of agenda. I got back and tried to forget all about it and spent a lot of time with my son and started using some of that imagery and thinking about how my father was kind of there and not there and having the same sort of feeling about myself. Also the idea of passing on information, passing on a part of yourself, but not all of yourself, so really direct personal memories where I become the adult and then I become the child, back and forth, which is kind of what, I guess, being a father does to you. You remember those situations yourself, and I place myself in them and take myself out of them. So it's about that.

TO: So in the sense that they're autobiographical, there is maybe some of Doug Argue in both generations?

DA: Oh, yes, certainly. I mean, that's where it's coming from a lot. Being able to think of times and places where I was as a kid and bringing my son there, and those places having lots of specific details, kind of getting the sort of pleasure out of recreating those spaces in my own sort of way, which is a pretty big contrast to what I was doing with more historical pieces. Actually, in a lot of cases, taking out as much information as I could.

TO: Compared to some earlier figure paintings of yours that I've seen, these seem almost to have more of the character of the historical paintings that you described seeing on your travels. Do you see some kind of cross-fertilization there?

DA: Yes, certainly. I think that I liked the impact of having sort of more solid forms, as opposed to everything breaking up into brush strokes, although this sort of, when I get to painting nature, a little of this, a little of that.

Yes. I guess in part I saw a lot of work by Philip Gustin [phonetic], too, where things would just come from the outside of the picture plane, like these sort of weird arms and legs. I mean, they were cartoonish, but they were quite readable as fairly solid, even though he uses that sort of butter paint a lot of times. So I was thinking about that, too. But, yes, I was definitely influenced by that, the way that I worked on the other piece, and becoming somewhat too obsessive with that sort of clarity. It gets to be fatiguing.

[End of interview]