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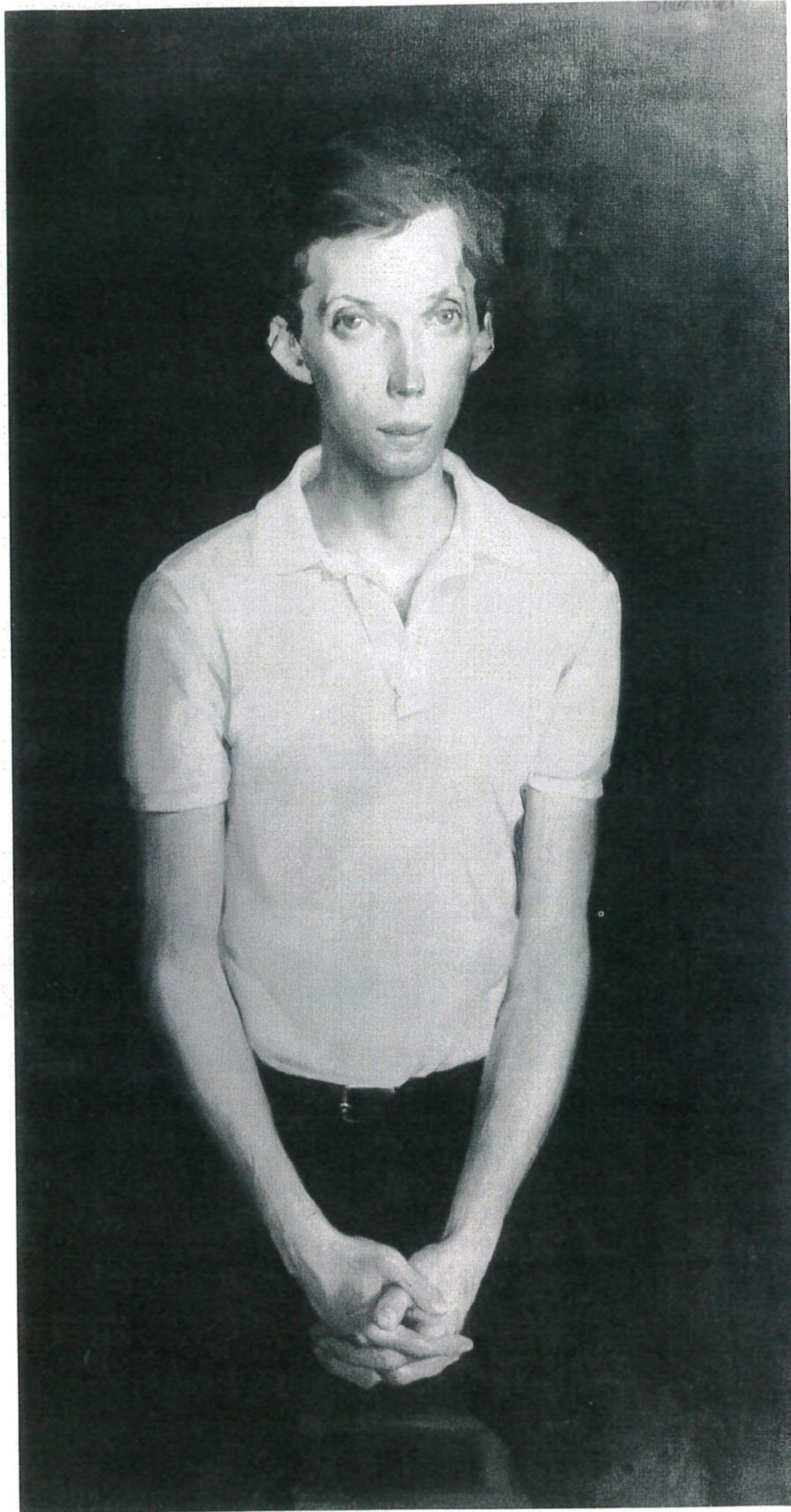

Thomas S. Buechner, "William Warmus," 1980, oil, 50" x 30"

WHAT MAKES ART?

Panelists:
HENRY GELDZAHLER,
Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, New York City

PAUL HOLLISTER,
Critic, New York

RICHARD SHIFF,
Professor, Art History, North Carolina

Moderator:
THOMAS BUECHNER,
President, Corning Museum of Glass, Chairman of Steuben Glass

Thomas Buechner: The basic idea of this panel was to try to come to grips with contentions that run rampant through this organization. There's a conversation that goes something like this: "When you were my student, I never taught you to make that terrible stuff." "When I was your student, I didn't have to make a living." And this goes back and forth and back and forth and has all kinds of implications for art, crafts, design and the various studios that the disciplines represent.

So the subject this morning is "What Makes Art?" and it's supposed to have a question mark after it. And that really apparently changes the nature of the title to some of us. Not to me; I don't see the distinction. But our panelists are far more subtle, and I'm going to introduce them and we'll see why. Starting at your far right, the gentleman with the white hair. That's Paul Hollister, and many of you may know him from his reviews of glass exhibitions in the New York Times, which we always hope will be in the Art Section and still invariably turn up in the Home Section. He has been, or has functioned in that capacity since 1978. Paul is an extraordinary figure in the glass world because his knowledge is so broad. He is an expert in so many aspects of it. I first met him through his expertise in French paperweights. He's written more

This article is an edited transcript of a panel discussion held at the 1982 Glass Art Society Conference. Since some of the panelists are painters in addition to their other professions, we are reproducing examples of their works plus David Hockney's portrait of Henry Geldzahler.

Richard Shiff, "Attending, II," 1981, 36" x 42".

than 75 articles on glass since 1965, and enjoys accepting commissions for lectures. He, incidentally, was given no advance warning of this panel and has just agreed to serve on it so that he will be by far the most spontaneous, I suspect. Sitting beside him is Richard Shiff. Richard is an art historian and painter. He took his BA at Harvard and his Ph.D. at Yale; he taught then at the Tyler School of Art and was subsequently at the University of Chicago. He is now a professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Painter, critic, author of numerous essays including *Art and Life, A Metaphoric Relationship*. He has a book coming out from the University of Chicago press entitled *Cezanne and the End of Impressionism*. And then Henry Geldzahler nearest to me, emotionally. Henry is a curator and city official. He took his BA at Yale and then Harvard; he was with the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 1960 to 1978. He did the Venice Biennial in 1966, and he's been a Program Director of the Visual Arts for the National Endowment of the Arts. Henry is now Commissioner of Cultural Affairs in the City of New York. That's known as the Cultural Czar here in New York. He has been a major supporter of the New York School, and of course, did the great New York School show at the Met which was such a milestone in so many ways. Andy Warhol is quoted as having said of him, "Every idea I ever had came from Henry Geldzahler." I don't know if that's still true. But you may know him as author of *American Painting in the 20th Century*.

So these are our panelists and . . . let's begin by asking Richard Shiff to lead off and try to give Mr. Hollister as long as possible to get himself together.

Richard Shiff: The thoughts that I'm going to present are very tentative, so I suspect that I may even change my mind as I go along. But this is what I'll begin with. We're

all probably aware that to speak of works fashioned in glass as sculptures, sometimes seems improper. For many glassmaking seems a craft, whereas sculpture is a category of the fine arts. Traditionally, a sculpture, like a painting, may function as an object of ritual or religious significance, or as a public monument or memorial of some kind. But as an object of fine art, it must also have an aesthetic dimension which seems largely independent of its functional properties and indeed seems to dominate the functional properties. This is the basis of the distinction between the fine and the so-called minor arts that we have inherited from the past.

The so-called minor arts, such as ceramics or textiles, have been associated with crafts which extended to the realm of the manufactured objects of daily use. These crafts may have had their origin in the practical skills once passed on from father to son, from mother to daughter. In addition, the crafts which are associated with the minor arts remain in practice today by many who have no intention to make art, although they may indeed wish to add an aesthetic dimension to their products. So, if one works with glass today as a sculptural medium, one must combat the fact that the material and its craft are associated with the tradition of objects which are primarily functional and only secondarily aesthetic.

The prospects I think are actually quite favorable for the glass artist today. Glass and other materials associated with crafts traditions, materials such as fibers and clays, have been employed with increasing frequency to make objects of art. A great number of MFA programs offer concentrations in the areas of fibers, clay, metals and glass. Why has this come about? I believe it has something to do with the modern concern for unconventional art and return to a naive and ever primitive vision—naive and primitive in a very positive sense. A kind of ideal return to a purer state of being.

Painting and traditional sculpture are often seen as being laden with convention. For many artists, nearly all painting and sculpture seem academic. It seems impossible to create with a new beginning within these traditions. The crafts, however, seem to offer new materials and new techniques, techniques which had never been investigated by the great artists of the past. It is as if the familiar materials of the traditional crafts become freshly unfamiliar when reconsidered in the context of fine art. This lack of familiarity may liberate artistic imagination as new techniques are investigated, not necessarily to be mastered, but to be explored. This at least seems to me to be the line of thought that has motivated the renewal of interest in traditional crafts by those whose primary concern is to make art.

> "It is as if the familiar materials of the traditional crafts become freshly unfamiliar when reconsidered in the context of fine art."

Picasso, for example, during the 1940's and 1950's—this is of course a famous example—Picasso revitalized both his own art and the local ceramic industry in the south of France when he adopted for his own purposes the craft techniques of making clay vessels. He created new forms from the traditional material, and emphasized the aesthetic dimension rather than the utilitarian function of the clay container.

There's a potential danger here. The liberated craftsman or the artist who turns to the crafts for inspiration may begin to create as if at random. His art may lose much of its control. We sometimes think of the craftsman as the skilled worker who plans out his project in advance. And in contrast, we think of the artist as the creative genius who discovers things only as he goes along as if blindly. But I believe it would be unfruitful to assume that anything at all that is new is also artistically valid; that any new form in glass or any new process of manipulating glass is worth pursuing for its own sake. Not all new developments are valuable ones, and if glassmaking is to break out of its own conventional boundaries, if it is to be used as a vehicle for artistic expression, it must be subjected to the same scrutiny as the more traditional modes of sculpture. If glass objects are to attract the attention of critics, other than those who specialize in the field of glass, these objects must be able to compete with other forms of sculpture. Glass objects as art objects cannot claim special consideration simply because the material is different. For when this special difference becomes the central factor of consideration, the criticism of glass as art will be reduced to a criticism of glass as craft.

To maintain its status as art, the glass sculpture must be seen primarily as a sculpture and only secondarily as a work in glass. Sculpture in general has a long tradition of critical evaluation, a tradition of artistic masterworks. It is my impression that glass, although it is an ancient medium, has not shared in this general tradition to any great extent. For the contemporary glass artist, newness of form or effect will not be sufficient. Like the modern sculptor, the glass artist must develop ways of setting the standards of his or her innovation against an artistic tradition that is clearly defined. Thank you.

Henry Geldzahler: This room we're in is the Georgian Room. I only hope the Royal Room is more royal than this is Georgian. The name of this panel is "What Makes Art?" which I find is a weird phrase. "Who makes art," I can understand. "What constitutes art," I can understand. "What makes art" is original enough a phrase that I think we'll each talk about what we want.

I've been thinking for many years about this kind of subject, and not with particular relevance to glass, but to the making of art in our society. And I've never come across a phrase that summed it up better than Ezra Pound's phrase of sixty years ago, "Make it new." "Make" is fashion; it's crafted. "It" is the tradition and "new" is you. The new part is you. "Make it new." I would almost have buttons made and give them out to everybody because that's really the point of everything. And "it," the tradition, is the sleeping giant which has to be tickled constantly because it's asleep; it's not dead. It's asleep; it's not awake. The sleeping giant is all the Traviatas and all the Valasquezes, all the Rembrandts and all the Parsifals which can be performed gorgeously or can be done by rote, or can be done abominably. The corpus is there. We know what the great works are of the past, and we have a responsibility to familiarize ourselves with them and to hit our heads against them because they are the best. They are the toughest. And whether it's Marinot or Navarre or Gallé or Daum or Lalique in the

David Hockney, "Henry Geldzahler," 1976. Photo by John Tenison.

20th Century, or whether it's the Egyptians or the Romans or the Persians or the Syrians in ancient times, we know who the great glassmakers were. We know what the finest examples are.

The other part that you have to know, which is so much more difficult, is who you are. And who you are not only in terms of today, but who you are in terms of your own childhood, who you are in terms of your own dreamlife, who you are in terms of your own sense of seriousness, your sense of fun. What I'm laying down is a very simplistic prescription, but if you take it seriously, it becomes supremely difficult . . . and you can't really think about it anyway. I mean, there's a certain level of bullshit in trying to objectify something as intuitive as what we're talking about. But as teachers and as craftsmen, as artists, as students, I think we all share this need possibly to compare ourselves. When I was with the Met, everybody said to me, why should the Met exhibit 20th Century art? There's the Modern, the Whitney, the Guggenheim . . . Bill deKooning said it best one day. In 1956, the Metropolitan Museum bought "Easter Monday," deKooning's great painting, and he said to me one day in the early 60's, "It's hanging 20 feet from the Rembrandts; that makes me judge myself." And he said, "At the Modern or the Whitney, hanging with my fellows, I'm at sea. I don't really know what the constellation looks like. I don't know where I am in relation to anything else. But hang my painting in the same series of rooms as the Rembrandts, and I'll tell you what's wrong with me, or I'll tell you what I'm proud of." And there's something there; there's a lesson there.

Samuel Butler said about a hundred years ago, that the history of art is a history of revivals. And that has a certain truth to it as well, and I would think particularly in glass where there are always new techniques, new wrinkles, new ways of "flashing" in all senses of the word. Flashing your aesthetic, and flashing your glass. Flashing your personality. But the monuments, the milestones, are, as I said, pretty clear. The history of art is a history of revivals. If you look around you at the art of your own times with that in mind, things begin to settle down into rhythms. There is always a reaction against, there's always a move either from romanticism to classicism, or it's from one type of organization to another. The pendulum swings back and forth. You can't really rear up and separate yourself from the rhythm of your own time because it's part and parcel of you. But there is a certain amount of what you can do in trying to figure out where you are, where society is, where your culture is at any given moment. And knowing that situates you well enough that you might even have some influence over your own destiny.

Taste and need are not often enough talked about in terms of making art or in terms of appreciating art. We all know the horror stories of the child who licks the wall and is smacked by his parents only to find out he has a calcium deficiency. Sometimes we want salt; sometimes we want sugar. Sometimes we need organization; sometimes we need chaos. It doesn't make Mondrian a better or worse painter than Pollock. It just means that the human sensibility is wide, wide enough that it comprehends both and perhaps at different times in one's life, one needs one rather than the other.

How do you tell if it's any good? That's the question. The first question I'm always asked is, "What's Andy Warhol really like?" The second question is, "How can you tell if it's any good?" Clement Greenberg, who would have been here today, is probably the top critic on that subject. And I'm not going to quote him because he never quite said this, but from listening to him over the years, I think he would say something like, there are two criteria that you can apply to a work of art. One of them is memorability. You look at it, walk away from it and you can remember the configuration, remember the shape, remember the color. It calls itself to mind automatically without you asking for it, like a tune from an opera. Then you can be pretty sure that it's good. So memorability is one of them. Does it have a formal integrity that is lodged in your grid, in your mind? The other one which I find even more interesting is a sense of narrative, in the sense that on subsequent visits, you learn more from it than you did the first time. If it's a Tom Wesselman large-breasted nude that amazes you the first time you see it, but it amazes you a little bit less the third time, then perhaps it's not very important. If it's a Matisse which has very thin washes of color on a raw canvas, but every time you look at it you see different volume, you see more light and more space. That's narrative. The narrative unfolds in your own sensibility, in your apprehension of it. The narrative can be as abstract as Lowell Dickens. But if it continues to grow on subsequent viewing, if it means more to you the eleventh time than the first time, then you can be pretty sure that it's good.

I'm going to end on a personal note. I was 18 years at the Metropolitan Museum. I was in charge of 20th Century paintings, sculpture, decorative arts, etc. I left in '78 partly because Ed Koch offered me a job as the Commissioner of Cultural Affairs here in the City. Partly also because I felt that the art of the 40's, 50's and 60's was something that I was able to write about, to think about, to make choices in. I felt less comfortable in the art of the 70's, conceptual art, minimal art, earth art. And I didn't think it was fair for there to be a curator-for-life at the Metropolitan Museum in charge of the 20th Century who didn't feel absolutely at one with his generation. In the four years that I've been Commissioner, I've come back, through P.S. 1, through some of the New Wave painters and sculptors, and I feel ready again. I feel plugged in again to the art of my time. So here I am, stranded as a Commissioner, and I want to deal with works of art again. Thank you.

Paul Hollister: When I was asked to do this about ten minutes ago, I was taking off my rubbers and trying to stuff them into a plastic coffee bag. So I've made a few hasty notes.

Craft is the skill with which art can be produced. Hard work helps to make art. Someone once said that the art of writing is the art of applying the seat of the pants to the seat of the chair. But art, if it can be made, takes centuries to evaluate up and down, on and off, popular and in disfavor. Art is a rare thing that hovers above creative people and the objects they create like a flying saucer halo. It may fly away at any moment.

Art is also something intrinsic in the thing created that makes it special. Art is both intangible and real. Robert Frost once wrote, "We dance around in a circle and suppose, while the secret sits in the middle and knows."

I would say that "Make it new" is becoming in many cases "Make it now" under the pressure of too many exhibitions in too short a period of time, which does not give the person a chance to develop. They just have to keep going on to something new. It's hell on critics and reviewers who just get adjusted to one crazy thing and the next

Paul Hollister, "Late Sun, Minister Pond." 1976, 14" x 11"

show is something absolutely different. It's terribly hard, especially if you're white haired. I also think that memorability is not a necessary ingredient or characteristic of art. Some of the best art I forget. I often think of paintings which I've seen years ago, since I've seen paintings all my life, and I can't really remember what they look like but there is an awful lot of art that I absolutely can't forget and it's terrible.

TB: Thanks very much, Paul. Bill Warmus said that if everybody was short enough I could read a statement. Everybody has been, so I'm going to.

You may be relieved to hear that the American Flint Glass Workers' Union has confronted this issue in negotiations with Steuben. Our need was to permit Peter Aldridge and Eric Hilton—and anyone else we designated—to work directly in glass themselves in developing prototypes for production of one-of-a-kind pieces for sale. The union understood our need in view of the changes wrought by the studio and agreed that *an artist was one who both designed and made his own work.*

There you have it.

But the implication is that an artist is like a craftsman or a designer or a plumber or a shoe salesman—a self-determined role. Anyone who wants to think stuff up and make it—or just think it up—can call himself an artist.

I have trouble with that.

So here is my answer to the question:

What makes art?

Stature.

Stature makes art. Providing it is expressible. Larger-than-life people who have developed the skills and the circumstances to do whatever it is they want to do or have to do.

Napoleon was an artist—so is Bjorn Borg. Although they don't make art, they live it. Having stature, being larger than life means (I think) two things:

A—*Better* (in some respect) and

B—*Different*

from regular sized people

always the two together in some balance or other. One, being better, is a matter of talent; the other, of genius. And society's preference for one or the other swings back and forth like a pendulum—the Victorians admired talent (and skill) more than change; we admire change more than talent (and skill).

Talent is a relative consideration recognizable through comparison among similar things—violinists, landscape painters, goblet makers. Sargent was a more talented portrait painter than Lydia Field Emmet, Tiffany was more talented as a glass designer than Frederick Carder. (Which is not to say that each is only a talent and lacks genius).

"Napoleon was an artist—so is Bjorn Borg. Although they don't make art, they live it."

Many good things get lost these days that represent high degrees of talent because they do not represent enough change and are thought to have been done before (*American Artist* magazine is full of them).

This seems to be because most of us would rather be called genius than talented —genius changes the rules. It is not a relative condition and its result is not better or worse but different from everything else— as Picasso was different from Sargent, Marinot from Tiffany, Lipofsky from Littleton.

The sad part about all this to me (as a representational painter of a very traditional sort) is that people seem to think that originality, self-expression and making a statement are what makes art when, in fact, it is only the *quality* of those things, the reflection of the stature of the person behind them that makes art. If they were the hallmarks of art, then the *most* original, the *most* self-expressive, the *most* poignant statement would make the biggest art—no room for Vermeer, or Dominick Biemann or the Daum Brothers—plenty for the Keenes and Leroy Neiman.

Concentrating on all this originality, difference and change dulls the senses, dulls the appreciation of talent. Confronted with so much contrast, how hard it is to even see—let alone enjoy—subtlety.

Old Polonius' advice to Laertes in *Hamlet* remains appropriate "This above all: to thine own self be true." Do not be self-conscious about self-expression—who else can you express? Or about originality—each of us is unique—or about making a statement— what does that mean? Social awareness? What we do reflects us, our stature. So the job is a matter of self-discovery and self-development—doing the best that can be done with what we've got.

No guarantees.

HG: If I may paraphrase what Tom just said, all art is self-portraiture. And one of the things I didn't learn in art history—and I went to Yale and the Sorbonne, and Harvard, and spent all those years at the Met—One thing that they don't tell you and it's exactly what Tom was saying, and that is the continuity of character with what the artist produces. After a while, if you know a craft well enough, as I know painting, it's possible to read back from the canvas to the personality. Hans Hofmann was the warmest, most generous, person I've ever known as far as being able to comprehend styles, styles of his own making and styles of his students, and through the work ethic. Somebody else like—I don't know if I dare say it—Paul Jenkins who paints a certain kind of, he calls them "phenomena," has a certain flash to it. That is the depth. That's what you get. You paint what you are. And it's something that I find life-enhancing in the sense that it makes art all the more important. It isn't just a question of the well-made object. It's a question of the well-made object in relation to the subject that made it.

TB: Thank you. Do you have a comment, Paul?

PH: One thing occurred to me when you used the word stature. I don't think that glass workers should have this tremendous goal of size increase in mind all the time. I don't think size is that important. As the technology to make bigger things increases, the temptation is to make as big a piece as you possibly can, whether you do it in a single casting or in multiples. And pretty soon we're going to get into where painting has been in the last 45 years, that bigness is great. If it's barn size it's great. And then we start doing to the landscape what the strip miners are doing, but doing it under the name of art. I think pieces have a certain size that is just right for them. Each piece. Whether it's a little drinking cup or a great big statue. And that's its size. And striving for size is not something that we should do unless the things you've been

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making you feel are really maquettes for something larger.

RS: I have a couple of comments. First, I might say in response to what Paul has just said, I would agree with that remark about size. It's a problem that can occur when there's a dominant medium which for a while might have been painting, and if that medium goes in a certain direction, the other media tend to follow it, and they may follow it in ways that are not appropriate to their own nature. So that if there are properties of a material which limit its size in certain ways or seem to make its natural means of expression founded at a certain scale, it should remain at that scale and not worry about being like other media.

The other comment that I'd like to make is one with regard to what Tom has said. He introduced a bit of an historical dimension, reflecting on the fact that at other times in our history, in our own cultural tradition, we've been more concerned with the evaluation of what I often call "craft" or "technique" than we have with change, which may have dominated certainly the earlier 20th Century and may still be the prime concern for many artists. This shift from a primary concern for technique or craft to one for something that I would really call the pursuit of excellence, to one for innovation and change, led to some very strange critical moves on the part of those who had to evaluate the work. If the work cannot be evaluated according to its craft, if that's not really the primary concern, you immediately lose most of your comparative examples, and it's hard to determine how good something is. You end up by talking about it, as many critics did, very often talking about the sincerity of the work, or the sincerity of the artist; how genuine is the statement? And as soon as you begin to do that, you get on very shaky, critical ground. And you begin to be impressed by all kinds of things that have nothing to do with the quality of the work. The artist's personality can become a very important factor. And I don't think that's necessarily a mistake, but it can lead to a kind of inscrutable criticism that we've found in the recent past.

TB: Thanks, Richard. In an effort to evoke the presence of Clement Greenberg a little bit, Henry referred to his criteria, "memorability," being a key factor, and Paul Hollister saw it another way. Richard, you know Clement Greenberg's work extremely well. How do you think he would rebut Paul? Paul's contention being that he remembers the worst stuff as easily as he remembers the best.

> "But the idea of . . . pushing for something new all the time, is a western concept."

RS: Well, that's a statement that I can imagine Clement Greenberg making himself actually. But he would, I think, be very concerned with what he calls "the tradition of masterworks," and what would make a work memorable for him would be a sense of quality that is in effect calling back something that's seen in the work that seems to suggest the stature, if I can use that term, of the work in relation to works which have unquestionable stature. And in effect, I mean, to bring this onto an almost metaphysical plain, what Greenberg would see in a great work is everything that has always been great. So it becomes a very important cultural monument. The new work is new, but its newness depends upon its relation to the past. And anything that doesn't have that connection with the great works of the past then becomes forgettable. It's only a novelty, and that's why you wouldn't remember it.

TB: Do you want to go further with that, Henry?

HG: No. It's unfair to poor Clem to argue back and forth about his ideas without him here. I'd just like to comment on something Tom said. We have talent with our genius, but it's possible also to have a genius without talent. And a genius without talent, if he's a great enough genius, can change the rules—not for all time but for a long time. And this might be extremely contentious, but it can be said that Cezanne was a great genius who did not have an instinctive talent for the kind of drawing that was going in the circle that he was in, in the 1840's, 50's and 60's, when he was a young student. He couldn't draw like Ingres. God knows he tried. He couldn't draw like Degas. He drew like Cezanne. He kept approximating the outline. He kept getting closer and closer to the quiddity of what he was doing. And lo and behold, this genius who struggled against the lack of talent, where other people have drowned in the slickness of talent, made up a new game. And that's one way of looking at it, anyway.

PH: I think Cezanne was the greatest second-rate painter that ever lived. I worship his work . . . About change. Change is inherent in human existence. You can't not change. Realism is changing. All forms of art are changing. But the idea of something new, pushing for something new all the time, is a western concept. We talked a couple of weeks ago in Canada about the basketmaker in Africa or the potter in Korea doing the same thing until he was 87 over and over and over and over, and while there are slight changes, he's approaching supposedly an ideal. That is an Oriental concept. We have this tremendous urge to change . . . There is always change; you can't stop it. We're all moving through this continuum all the time, and our work is changing all the time. You try and copy something that you did exactly; it's almost impossible.

TB: OK, let me try one question here, and it's one that I think is foremost in everybody's mind who is in this business and is concerned about art, and that is, "Who really does make it?" Is it the critic? Is it the audience? Is it time? Is it the collector? Who eventually determines whether somebody has the right to be called an artist or not? Richard's eager to get at that one.

RS: There's an easy way out to that one. Actually, I think there's something to say for all of those possibilities, and I think you can even argue that the viewer makes the art. That's actually a popular argument these days being made more by the critics of the written word then by critics of visual objects. But, there are so many different factors. Surely the maker, the artist, is the person who makes the art. But whether that work is recognized as an art work and can take its place in relation to other art works may very often depend upon factors that the artist has not the best control over. I think he always has a responsibility to try to control

those things as much as he or she can. The work is received by the public and that's very important. That work that is made, is made to be experienced by the people, not only the person who made it, but other people. And as it becomes more and more familiar and more and more people experience it, or more critics talk about it, or curators select it and show it in relation to other works, I think it really grows in its own dimensions. It takes on properties that it may not initially have had, and I think there's also an advantage once that interplay is established between the work that is made and other works, other artistic statements. There's an advantage for the original maker, too, because I think very often an artist learns about his own piece from seeing it in relation to other things, and even from reading what other people may have said about it, or listening to other people talk about it, watching how other people respond to it. There is a momentum in an artistic career. It is something that changes; it is a life. And that life needs stimulation; there has to be some kind of feedback, so the making of the work never really stops with the artist's initial gesture, the setting up of that object within the public domain. From that point on, the work still changes and still lives.

TB: Anyone else want to comment on that question?

PH: One sentence? Who happens to be around at any given time or generation makes it art.

TB: OK, hurrying on, this is a question that I think has relevance to many glassmakers. "Is directed versus self-made a critical distinction?" To add a few more words to those of you who are not involved in the glass scene directly, many people design glass and see others make it, and some make it and design it, and some only make it on the basis of other's design. So there are all kinds of combinations. But what impact, if any, does that have on whether the work should be or should not be considered art?

HG: I thought the union answered that one . . . What we're left with is a fact, an artifact. How it's arrived at is fascinating, where it goes in the future is sociologically interesting and finally will determine how the future feels about it. But I don't think there is anything inherent in an object that is designed by A and manufactured by B that makes it any less worthy or more worthy than A

"I often dream of glassmaking in various forms, and I usually tell glassmakers what I think they ought to be making."

going all the way as it were.

RS: I am inclined to agree that even though this may be very problematic for a lot of people, that it seems to me that it ought to be possible to be the maker of a great work when one is only the designer and when you're aided by people who fabricate the work. But I would think that the designer would need a great familiarity with the materials, even if he or she is not the person who actually handles the finished product. There has to be some knowledge of the process that rides behind that initial design.

PH: I often dream of glassmaking in various forms, and I usually tell glassmakers what I think they ought to be making. But I don't make them. I feel that this removes me from the scene tremendously because while as an artist and a painter, I could design a piece of glass . . . even if I were right up there next to the gaffer saying goose it over this way a little bit and so forth. I would not feel that I had really made that piece. I'd feel that he had made it with some intelligent input from me. I think there is a distinction, it's the distinction between the European system where the designer works closely with the gaffer, but he is not a gaffer—he doesn't have the feel of the glass, which might determine a different form if he did have the feel. There's a gap that's there. A good piece of work can be produced by a team, by two people, or by the one person working alone. But there is a certain gap when you're not doing it yourself. Now I would take as an exception, for example, Dale Chihuly who lost peripheral vision, he lost one eye, and now coaches the team. He choreographs the thing the way Balanchine choreographs his dances. And he's had the feel of the thing in his hands, and does take the blowpipe, and he does push this here and do that there, so he's a kind of exception. I think there are others like that, and they are exceptions too. But I think there is some kind of a gap. There isn't quite the same thing. I saw an exhibition of Orrefors glass recently, and I began looking up in books I have to see if these were in fact the unique pieces that somebody had said they were. I discovered that they weren't. And in exact copies of older forms which Orrefors was now selling, the little cuts and the little mitres and the various engraving lines and so forth, were stiff. Time passed, between 1920 and 1975 or 80, and they didn't have the same feeling for exactly whatever the design might be. But the artist, you see, would have done a completely different thing had he been able to live that long. I feel there is some kind of a gap, though the thing can still be good. It can still be art if it's done by two, or by remote control, or whatever.

TB: Thank you. I'd just like to add that from a point of view of painting, and looking at painting over a long period of time representing a couple of thousand years, if I were asked, "What is the one hallmark that seems to run through every acknowledged work of art, in painting at least?", I would say spontaneity. That certain, sure conviction that enables a creator to do something, and to know that he knows what he's doing. It's an impossible quality to transmit to somebody else, and I think that Paul's example of Dale is a very good one because Dale's creativity lies in the way he works with the people that he works with as well as in his concept of the pieces, and does not depend on crucial spontaneity. Well, we've had plenty of time to indulge ourselves here. How about questions from the audience.

Sam Wiener: I assume that many people regard the "New Glass" exhibit that Corning put together, and which was shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as the hallmark of glass art. I'd like to know how Mr. Geldzahler particularly feels about that show in general and maybe somewhat in particular?

HG: My answer I'm afraid is not very interesting. I was involved in putting that show together in the first place, and scheduling it at the Metropolitan, and rêsigned and became Commissioner in the meantime and, God help me, never saw it.

TB: I think rather than let Henry off the stool

on this, you may know, or may not know, that Henry just got finished looking at 2,800 slides of work by contemporary glass artists, designers and craftsmen from all over the world, and personally selected some 50 or 60 to be included in *New Glass Review 3*. So his exposure is there.

HG: To relate Mr. Wiener's question to my recent experience in Corning where we saw 2,800 slides three times—Dale Chihuly, Bill Warmus, Tom Buechner and I in a room with three nice ladies sitting behind us. So we saw 9,000 slides I guess. I was very impressed with the variety, with the level of craftsmanship. I don't think I was expecting to find 60 pieces that I would like to hold in my hand, that I would like to visit again and again, that over a three day period would continue to exfoliate, to reveal themselves. There was certainly not an overwhelming stylistic hegemony. There were actually some substyles that I wasn't too crazy about. One of them I think Bill Warmus mentions in the catalog introduction, I call it couture glass—bottles and shapes that somehow look like high fashion, like big shoulders, or a turban or a tuff. The other one that I saw again and again which didn't thrill me was where the spontaneity really had to do more with the effects of gravity. I call it, "I can't dance either." There was a certain freshness about it, but not for very long.

Ralph Hardy: I'm Ralph Hardy from Americus, Georgia. We have a little problem here. I never really knew what I was looking at when I was looking at glass quite a while ago. I thought some things were just really wonderful until I started blowing glass, and then I started to understand something about what glass ought to do and ought to look like. It seems to me we have a terrible problem here in that you people's background doesn't really involve handling the material. It's sort of like an insurance salesman trying to gauge the quality of surgery. Have you thought about that before you came here? Because there really is a big difference after you've worked with the material.

HG: It's not only glass; it's true of any art form. And you have to ask yourself whether you are making glass for other glassblowers or for human beings.

TB: The panel was put together with the knowledge that no, it didn't know how to blow glass, but that it had another series of views that might be of interest because of it's critical role. Most of the panels do involve people who know how to blow glass. The *New Glass Review* always involves somebody who knows how to make glass because it is a very good point. But the mix of the outside society and the inside creator has to be maintained or we are all just talking to each other.

". . . you have to ask yourself whether you are making glass for other glassblowers or for human beings."

TB: Any other questions? Yes.

Susan Stinsmuehlen: I wondered if one or all of you might tell me what you think is good contemporary glass art from your eye and from your experience?

HG: In the past six months, I have acquired two major pieces of glass. One of them is an Orrefors blue vase of 1951 by Sven Palmquist. And the other one is a Venini, equally 1951, same size, handkerchief vase. I have them on different floors of my apartment. The blue one is in my bedroom, and I wake up every morning with the light through it and it's a gift of flowers, sapphires; it's a refreshing way of confirming a sense of form and glory every morning of my life. It's interesting to me that I'm answering this in 1951 terms because how contemporary is contemporary? 1951 is a curious year. I was thinking about this the other day. Why is it that two pieces, the two pieces by which I judge everything these days—and that changes from time to time . . . I had Lalique pieces and Daum pieces before that, which I didn't use up exactly but they became so familiar that I wasn't noticing them anymore, so I traded one of them up for the Orrefors piece. 1951, I think, might be the earliest date after the war when everything had geared up again, when the sense of design was in place and it was possible not to think, not to have to think about what shall we make as new glass, but absolutely to express oneself instinctively. It took from 1946 to '48 to gear up again, '49, '50 maybe, to put your hand in, then '51 to feel so familiar that you could make something that would sing across the decades anyway.

RS: I should just say why I will not answer that question and it has to do with the reason why I think I'm here, or why I thought it was all right for me to accept the invitation to be here. I'm very unconcerned with the relationship between what people call "art" and what they call "craft," which I don't think should be a major concern to people working within a medium which for the general public is a craft medium. They think of it primarily as a craft medium rather than an art medium. And my personal experience with materials comes through my activity as a painter. But when I'm painting or when I'm thinking about painting, I do think very, very much about the way in which a technical process bears on the limits of artistic expression. How one resolves some kind of artistic intention with one's own knowledge of the craft that one is employing so that is why I felt I could say something here even though my knowledge of glass as a medium is very limited.

PH: I do not collect glass, contemporary glass. I did buy two pieces of contemporary glass about seven or eight years ago and then when I got to writing about it more and more, people were grateful for things that I said and offered me pieces of glass, and I then realized that it would be a conflict of interest to accept any pieces of glass. I don't have the money to spend on it because thay don't pay me enough to write what I write. If I did have a lot of money and were not a critic—in other words, if I were not in a position of buying this thing because I thought it was beautiful and then writing a nice laudatory piece about it and enhancing its value in my collection—if I had a great deal of money and were traveling around the world, which is what I would like to have and do, I would buy at least one piece of glass from any exhibition I have ever seen of contemporary glass. I think there must be hundreds of excellent glassmakers.

TB: I can't resist the temptation to really stick my neck out. I think it's nice to hear names and I'd like to mention one name. If I could only have the work of one person either to collect publicly as a museum, or to own privately, but I could have a range of that person's work, I would choose Erwin Eisch . . . . □