

# ALTERNATIVE PROJECTIONS

Experimental film in Los Angeles, 1945 - 1980

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

MADE POSSIBLE BY SUPPORT FROM PROJECT PARTNERS:



**PACIFIC STANDARD TIME:**  
ART IN L.A. 1945-1980

An initiative of the Getty with arts institutions across Southern California.

Presenting Sponsors



The Getty

Bank of America

**The Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Art**

### INTERVIEW SUBJECT: Roberta Friedman

#### Biography:

Roberta Friedman has had a wide and varied media career, with work spanning a large assortment of film and video productions, which have been shown extensively in the United States and Europe. Her projects have ranged from the commercial, such as her work for George Lucas on *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, to the esoteric, with experimental work – such as her interactive video *The Erl King*, which was acquired by the Guggenheim Museum for its permanent collection.

As an independent filmmaker, she has produced and directed many short films, receiving grant funding (including NYSCA, NEA, a BFI Filmmaking Grant, Australian Film Commission grant) and winning awards at various festivals (including Athens International Festival, Sinking Creek Festival, Brooklyn Film Festival, FILMEX). She had a two-evening retrospective of her work in December 2009 at the Millennium Film Workshop, and *Kandinsky: A Closer Look*, a film she produced with her partner Grahame Weinbren, was shown weekly from September 2009 through January 2010 as part of the Kandinsky retrospective at the Guggenheim Museum. Her film, *Bertha's Children*, screened at the Berlin Film Festival in February 2008, and her film *Future*

*Perfect*, screened at the Rotterdam Film Festival in January 2008. Her experimental films are in the collection of the Australian National Film Library and have been selected to be preserved and housed by the Academy of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, Calif.

Friedman has extensive production and post-production television and documentary credits. She worked with Michael Moore on *The Awful Truth*, his weekly documentary series for Bravo Channel and Britain's Channel 4 in the U.K. She has worked for HBO, Bravo, A&E, WNET, Channel 4 and more. She was the executive producer of *HERE! Family*, a television series about gay, lesbian and transgender families, currently being broadcast on the HERE! Network, and out on DVD in 2006. She produced the biography of Stockard Channing for Bravo, and produced and developed a one-hour weekly series – "*ID: It's Dance!*" – an issue-based, rock-and-roll weekly dance/talk show for WWOR.

She is currently producing a documentary film about the 1980s band, DEVO.

Source: Montclair State University Faculty webpage:  
<http://www.montclair.edu/Arts/artdesign/faculty/facultyFilmmaking.html>

#### **Filmography:**

*After 10 Minutes Lines* (1976, 16mm, color, sound, 15:30)  
*Amusement Park Composition & Decay* (1973, 16mm, b&w, sound, 12:30)  
*Bertha's Children* (1976, 16mm, color, sound, 7:00)  
*Between the Lines* (1977, 16mm, color, 20:00)  
*California Institute of the Arts 1973* (1973, 16mm, color, sound, 3:30)  
*California Institute of the Arts 1974/75* (1974, 16mm, color, sound, 3:30)  
*Cheap Imitations Part I: Melies - India Rubber Head* (1980, 16mm, b&w, sound, 5:30)  
*Cheap Imitations Part II: Madwomen* (1980, 16mm, b&w, sound, 12:00)  
*Cheap Imitations Part III: Point Point* (1980, 16mm)  
*Cross Sections* (1975, 16mm, color, sound, 5:00)  
*Crotchets and Contrivances* (1977, sound, 16:00)  
*For Norma and Her Voices* (1976, 16mm, color, silent, 14:00)  
*Future Perfect* (1978, 16mm, color, sound, 11:00)  
*Margaret and Marion Talk about Working* (1980, 16mm, color, sound, 21:00)  
*Murray and Max Talk About Money* (1979, 16mm, color, sound, 15:00)  
*Siblings* (1975, 16mm, color, sound, 9:45)  
*Terms of Analysis* (1982, 16mm, color, sound, 15:00)  
*The Making of Americans* (1974, 16mm, color, b&w, 15:00)  
*Vicarious Thrills* (1979, 16mm, color, silent, 9:45)

#### **Tape Index:**

##### **Tape 1: Pages 3 - 14**

**Interview date:** January 19, 2010

**Interviewer:** Mark Toscano

**Cameraperson:** Stephanie Testa

**Transcript Reviewer:** Stephanie Sapienza, Roberta Friedman

##### **Tape 2: Pages 14 - 40**

**Interview date:** January 19, 2010

**Interviewer:** Mark Toscano

**Cameraperson:** Stephanie Testa

**Transcript Reviewer:** Stephanie Sapienza, Roberta Friedman

## **TAPE 1: ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

**00:34:04**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Roberta Friedman R-o-b-e-r-t-a F-r-i-e-d-m-a-n. Okay.

**00:34:55**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Could you talk about where you grew up and maybe your youth. Things that you experienced, influence, school art; these kinds of things that you maybe got exposed to.

**00:35:03**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Okay.

**00:35:04**

**MARK TOSCANO**

That maybe sent you in a certain direction.

**00:35:12**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Okay. I'm from New York. I grew up in both Queens, I don't know if that is too noisy for you. I grew up in both Queens and then Long Island. Lived by the sea, the Atlantic Ocean in Long Beach. I was a hippie kid. Didn't really quite fit in to the upwardly-mobile Jewish community. I was always being yelled at by my gym teacher to go back to the Village where I belonged. And I wanted to be a dancer.

**00:35:52**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Except, I kept spraining my ankles so it didn't really work. I really destroyed my ankles. So, dancing wasn't going to be it. So, then I thought maybe I would be a musician. And I was an advanced beginner in five different instruments. I never quite, [RF: mastered any of the instruments I studied] I love music, but I never quite broke the barrier of being a good enough musician. And ended up playing the glockenspiel in high school in the marching band. That I could do very proficiently but really didn't lead to much after high school.

**00:36:26**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

So, that was sort of my early days. I used to take the train in, I'd leave Long Island as often as I could and come stay with my aunt in the Village and take dance lessons at the New Dance group, which is a major modern center every weekend. And I'd take the train, I'd stay 'til late at night take the one o'clock train back Friday night to Long Beach. Get up at 8:00 the next morning and come back to the city...

**00:36:57**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

...When I wasn't staying with my Auntie May in the Village. So, that is some of my background, right?

**00:37:11**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Did you, aside from dancing and a little bit of music, were there other arts; I mean, you ended up working a lot in film, obviously. Was that part of your youth?

**00:37:20**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Not--oh, part of my youth, photographer. I loved photography. And, oh, my father, we were probably the only family that had a 16mm camera. So, I'm probably one of the most documented kids. My father was a landlord and somebody couldn't pay the rent and left a camera and a projector. So, we had it and he was always shooting. I think that that was probably one of my biggest influences. Just, I grew up shooting film, always.

**00:37:52**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

In fact, I was just telling Stephanie, I have a big box up there of all these old films I rescued from a basement flood. And I'm going to have them transferred. Just to see if I could use them in a piece some time. But, I always shot film, I always shot photography probably from when I was about eight. I photographed everybody's weddings and they used my pictures rather than the professionals. So, I was just always taking pictures, yeah. Just from an early age and shooting movies. And making my own little films. I don't know where they are but that's what I did.

**00:38:36**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And then, I guess, I went to college.

**00:38:45**                    **STEPHANIE SAPIENZA**

Can you talk more about your parents and family?

**00:38:48**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

About what?

**00:38:49**                    **STEPHANIE**

Parent's family--

**00:38:52**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, I guess...

**00:38:55**                    **STEPHANIE**

Who your parents were and...

**00:38:55**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

because you have a large family, right?

**00:38:56**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

About my parents. Well, I guess, that comes in in a lot of different ways because my father really wanted to be a filmmaker, I think. He was sort of proud of everything I did. Not that he ever told me but apparently he was, he told everybody else, my daughter the filmmaker. And on almost every production that Grahame and I did, my mother made the sandwiches. So, my entire family participated in all of our films in some way.

**00:39:32**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

We used their houses. We used all of their resources in different ways. They were physically involved and engaged. My brother was the transportation coordinator. He thought that's what brothers did. You know, transportation coordinator. And he laughs about it now but, I don't know, he's older. But, it was a very memorable experience to work on all the films. So, yeah, my family was very engaged. Of course, they thought I should be a teacher.

**00:40:04**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

They were concerned that I couldn't make a living and I had two parents who are now both dead and two brothers who are great. They are incredible and they are very supportive and resourceful. And they always have been, in terms of the work I do. So, that's very cool.

**00:40:30**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Where are your parents from?

**00:40:31**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

My mother is Australian. She was Australian. She was an Australian war bride. And they had great stories. I mean, my father met her when he was on R&R during World War II based in Australia in Sydney. Where all of the young men, Australian soldiers were all sent out to fight. The Americans were there on R&R and he met my mother. And then sent for her after the war. I mean, this isn't necessarily relevant, though.

**00:41:15**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

They both came from families that were very inclusive. And, I think, I'm the same way. And I think that is where I got it. I mean--privacy was not a word that was in our vocabularies. We always had people staying from all over the world and as you know I have people staying here all the time. You know, I always have. Traveling musicians, performers, filmmakers, you know, coming through New York will stay here.

**00:41:46**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I get to spend time with them. But that is how I grew up. It's how my mother grew up. It's how my father grew up and then when they came together it just became one big family. But I'm learning how to have a little bit more privacy in my life, which I need desperately I think, now in my advanced age [RF: !]. But my family from my father's side came from Brooklyn. My grandmother, who I think will be a very interesting subject of a film, oh, yeah, this is relevant.

**00:42:19**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

We use my family in all our movies, come to think of it. My grandmother was a tough woman, was a landlady, she came from Russia. She owned buildings. She protected all of the other mothers, all of the Irish mothers in the neighborhood when their kids were arrested. My grandmother was the first person there to help bail their kids out of jail. They would come to her and say, they'd say, Sarah, help me.

**00:42:48**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And my grandmother would be there. The rest of my family thinks I am a lot like my grandmother, Sarah. That I am always there to help people. But she would bail them out of jail. She would put up the deed to her buildings. My father was very well protected in his neighborhood. Now, I am getting off this topic here but this is, I suppose I would say, that my family relationships really inform all the work I do.

**00:43:24**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

In fact, I hadn't thought about it quite but there was a warmth and inclusion and extension and a lot of talk, a lot of arguments, a lot of politics and I think all of that comes into the work I do. Maybe if we talk about some work I can, you know, make those connections. But I did have a large, large extended family. Cousins, lots of cousins and aunts.

**00:44:10**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Now it's sort of dwindled. It's harder. Everybody lived in proximity of each other. So, it made a difference. I think people don't live near each other anymore and it makes it a little harder to stay close. But again that's a little bit off the topic. Is there anything else about that that's relevant, I don't know.

**00:44:26**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

No, I think that that is all on topic, ultimately. Like you said, it really informs a lot of your work.

**00:44:31**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah.

**00:44:32**

**MARK TOSCANO**

It's even something that Grahame had mentioned finding really fascinating because he didn't know that about you.

**00:44:36**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No, not at all.

**00:44:38**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, so, he found that really interesting.

**00:44:42**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah, no, it is. At some point I have been intending to make a film that deals with my grandmother in some way. She used to run a bingo game in her house. And all of these people would come and play bingo and they would be all over the house and there would be Cohen the painter and then there would be the money lender. And then there would be the bath tub gin person. It would be the entire neighborhood at night saying, Bingo. Bingo, it's the stories that are really interesting.

**00:45:21**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I'm sorry she died so young. Because I think it would have been fun to know her better. I knew her through my father more than anything. But, I know there is a film there. It's something I have always wanted to do. And in addition to making ex--it's been on my list, in addition to making experimental films, it would be some kind of experimental documentary. I think it would be very interesting. I think she was quite a character.

**00:45:49**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Just don't know how to do it. And I would really like to do it before all of her children die. And that's--everybody is all in their 80's and it is getting late. [technical] Okay. Is there something else I can address about that, I don't know.

**00:46:29**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, I was also thinking about what I know some of your influences were in your work later, did--were those things that you discovered earlier like Gertrude Stein and certain music...

**00:46:41**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

It wasn't then, really. I mean, folk music for sure, string music. I loved all kinds of music. I loved it; I just couldn't play it. But it didn't mean I didn't like to listen to it. And interestingly enough, I have a kid that can pick up any instrument and play it. It's mind boggling. But I am so thrilled. Now he is playing the oud, the banjo, the stand up bass--I am trying to fit that into a movie. But it's on my list.

**00:47:15**

**MARK TOSCANO**

It's quite a list, right?

**00:47:15**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah, so, yeah. Influences came, I think, later as I got older. Gertrude Stein for sure and her writing. I loved, THE MAKING OF AMERICANS. I think that was an important piece, it's a gigantic book.

**00:47:31**

**MARK TOSCANO**

The book, you mean?

**00:47:34**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

[nods head] And, repetition and I think it was an inspiration for the, for the film that, THE MAKING OF AMERICANS. And I found it really fascinating and, I guess, I still do. When you see, BERTHA'S GRANDCHILDREN, ordinary people doing ordinary things and repeating them and repeating those gestures and repeating those words and they are very simple. I sit down. I look at my watch. I button my jacket. Things that we do all the time.

**00:48:13**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

There are features that just repeat through generations of people, I find fascinating. And I have been trying to incorporate that in film. Or find a way to look at it for me. And hopefully other people see it and it has some meaning. But that was very a strong Gertrude Stein influence. And I think as you know, Mark, I went to the University of Buffalo. I went to five colleges. I went to a lot of universities and colleges all for different reasons.

**00:48:45**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I wanted to have a Midwest experience, I grew up in New York, I went to Ohio State for a year. It was interesting to be with people that were very different than me. To meet farmers, to hear a different perspective on things. I made films there. I did, I made films wherever I lived. But, then I went to, I went to Adelphi where I was dancing. because they had a major dance department. And then I sprained my ankles pretty badly so gave up that career.

**00:49:20**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

That was interesting. And then I went to the University of Buffalo, where I graduated. And was in the English department, Buffalo had a great, an incredible English department. They considered Buffalo the Berkeley of the east and I was very involved, interestingly enough, with the music department the entire time I was there. So, I did work with all the musicians, in fact, I had asked Grahame to come to Buffalo because I was going to go there. And we both met up in Buffalo and did work there together.

**00:49:56**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I was a radio DJ. I worked on the radio and did experimental music. So, I suppose, in terms of influences; my family, very strong, and a wide range of new music that I would play on the radio and interview people. And I did that for years, four years there. And I think that was one of our first conversations, mine with Mark Toscano, that we had a similar interest in music. And Grahame and I do too. He used to play the guitar and he was great.

**00:50:31**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And we used to sing. So, we used to sing harmonies. And I used also I played the flute, my pathetic flute, and he played the violin. So, we played these duets that nobody actually ever heard, but I think it kind of helped with a kind of collaboration. Music is a real true collaboration, I think, where everybody has to work together. And, God, I am just going on and on here.

**00:51:04**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Well, we have three hours here to talk. Yeah.

**00:51:06**                    **STEPHANIE SAPIENZA**

You can back up a little bit and talk about high school and what made you, you know, how did you meet Grahame, obviously you knew him before and you can get into that a little bit more, chronologically.

**00:51:15**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah, I suppose you could look at those strands. I was--oh, I was on the radio in high school, no, not in high school. I was sort of a techie girl; all my friends were all the guys that were engineers. I come up with these ideas and they could make them work. I think my father had wanted a son, first. And it was our way of bonding so he understood cars and he understood those toys that you put together and screw.

**00:51:48**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

It's, like, he treated me like a boy. I think he did me a disservice in a way but it was interesting. I never learned to cook, clean, dress; I couldn't do any of the girl things. But I was the, you know, the only girl in high school that had a car. My father and I used to drive to school. That was a little off topic but it was I guess, both the influence with him was being interested in technical stuff, I had an FCC license. And I had a license to do Morse code.

**00:52:27**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I mean, that is what I did in school and I was a creative writer in high school. Very involved with writing and in politics, Socialist labor party, which is ironic because so is my son and I never told him that that was my interest. And now he is a Communist. It's wild. But maybe not for long, so that shouldn't be common knowledge, yet. High school, that's what I did, I was a dancer, a writer.

**00:53:07**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

A lot of music?

**00:53:06**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Music constantly and when I met Grahame I used to go to--I went to the, I picked him up hitchhiking going to the Newport Jazz Festival and he left his guitar in the car. And I brought it back to my house. He hated my friends. They were theater people. And he really hated them. So, he left us in Newport. And then I brought his guitar back to my house and he had a flight the next day and I took him to the airport with his guitar and his flight was postponed.

**00:53:40**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And he came back to my house and we were fast friends after that. So we really just got very close and I was 16. So, we've known each other a very long time. And we both wrote back and forth and we are very compatible. We had a lot of similar ideas and at that time we both loved folk music and jug band music. And so, we would go to concerts and movies. And he lived in England and I was in New York.

**00:54:12**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

So, that's sort of, that's how we met. And we stayed friends, I left school at one point and moved to London--went to London but it wasn't for me to hang out and wait for him to go to college. You know, I was a little too ambitious and too dynamic as he might have said. I, you know, just waiting for some guy was not really on my agenda. But, I came back home and went to Buffalo.

**00:54:46**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Just went to a different--no, I came back and went to Ohio because I didn't want to stay home and just had to go to a school on the quarter system. There were only two schools, Wisconsin and Ohio, that I had friends. I only wanted to go someplace I had friends. I applied to both. Ohio accepted me the day before, next day I got accepted to Wisconsin but I already said I am going to Ohio and I left. It was one of those. And I wanted to go to the Midwest and see--have another experience.

**00:55:16**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

That's how I met Grahame.

**00:55:22**

**MARK TOSCANO**

What eventually drew you to Buffalo?

**00:55:27**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

I heard about it. It had a good English department. I wanted to go far away. And, in fact, because I went to Buffalo, and it was in the late 60's early 70's, the weather was so bad, so cold, such deep snow that when a recruiter came to the English department looking for people to go to Cal Arts, which was just starting, I wanted to go to California. I had enough of snow. Four years of snow was too much. So, I went to Cal Arts.

**00:56:07**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And, oh, I know, at Ohio State--did I do enough about high school, growing up in New York.

**00:56:17**

**STEPHANIE SAPIENZA**

Yeah.

**00:56:17**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

It was a very, its--yeah.

**00:56:18**

**STEPHANIE SAPIENZA**

Um-hum.

**00:56:19**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah.

**00:56:20**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

If I think of anything else, oh, I used to, I was a bicycle person. I don't know if this is rel--relates. I was a member of the American youth hostel and I used to ride all the time, so I had a bicycle. I could drive, I had a car, I had a bicycle and I traveled a lot. And Grahame and I used to hitch hike all over England. Why my parents let me do that at that age, I cannot imagine. But going to pubs and listening to music we did that a lot.

**00:56:52**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

At Ohio I met Jim Gillie, who died recently, which is a shame. He was very interested in feature film and Grahame used to come visit me in Ohio and Jim really taught us a lot about cameras. You know, we knew some things and we had done some shooting but Jim was, like, one of those real techie guys. I don't know how I met him. I think about, I just--I don't know. But we became very good friends and he taught me everything about cameras and I've wanted to be a camera person.

**00:57:44**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

That's what I--that was one of the things that I was going to do next. And did when I moved to Los Angeles. He came to Buffalo and did projects with me and Grahame. And his interest was 35mm. So, he said, Great, we'll work in 35 millimeter. We didn't have a sense of the boundaries that I think people felt, it's, like, 35mm, sure, who even thought, you know, its expensive, you can't get a hold of it, how could we know how to use it.

**00:58:19**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

It was only for feature filmmakers. You know, we just thought the sky was the limit. Let's do that. So, we made this very big piece, I don't know if Graham mentioned it, "Three Rituals."

**00:58:32**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, we talked about that.

**00:58:33**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

You talked about that, with Lejaren Hiller.

**00:58:37**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah.

**00:58:38**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

But, Jim helped us. Jim really was in a way a driving force, not aesthetically but technically he could do anything. And he was a gaffer besides, so, he could do anything and he really gave us so much knowledge. And Grahame sucked it all up. You could say anything to him; he was a sponge. He could remember everything that Jim taught him, just Jim would talk, Grahame would learn. And I concentrated less on that although I always picked up technical stuff.

**00:59:10**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

But, on putting all of the pieces together and the look, and making the connections with the departments and the musicians. Who all became my friends. This chair does squeak also, I didn't realize that. So, that was sort of strands.

**00:59:31**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

So, the THREE RITUALS, was preceded, Grahame had mentioned and it is the first I had heard about it but it was, SLIDE PIECES.

**00:59:38**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

We used to do--that's right. Oh, we did multimedia work. My degree from Buffalo was in English and Intermedia. In fact, it was the time in the country that you could write your own major. My teachers were always telling me to leave school and go out and do things. Glad I didn't listen to them and I never tell my students to do that. But, they felt trapped and the 60's was an incredible time to be alive.

**01:00:11**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And it's very fertile. There are a lot of ideas around and Grahame and I used to do a lot of slide pieces. This was on our own. First piece I did, I did a documentary piece about insecticides and apples. Did he mention that?

**01:00:27**

**MARK TOSCANO**

He said something about an apple piece.

**01:00:31**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah. And we did a whole piece on Beethoven, just looking at his face. I think that there was probably--that probably preceded all the repetition ideas that we had. Where we played his fifth symphony and looked at every picture ever taken of Beethoven or painted or done. And it was really incredible with great sound, and you were just looking at Beethoven. We did a lot of work like that. We did a lot of projection.

**01:01:07**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Wow, yeah. We tried out a lot of ideas, a lot of projection on cloths and screens and using sensors that you could go through and maybe generate different projections to change and come on. Did a lot of slide pieces. And made friends with a photographer named Ken Sigel. And learned a lot about different still cameras from Ken. Ken became a very good friend. He had a motorcycle. I was really close with Ken. He used to call me, Rizzuto [RF: after baseball player, "the Scooter" Phill Rizzuto], which was my nickname.

**01:01:42**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

For years, people that know me from that period call me Rizzutto. I used to ride on the back of his motorcycle but he did really incredible, really wonderful photography. And at one point in his life decided there were too many pictures out there that had been taken so all the work he did was flocking on photographs or he used found pictures and worked on those. In that, he was ahead of his time with that, he became a plumber. I guess, he decided there was even too much of that kind of work out there.

**01:02:22**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

His brother, Tommy Sigel, is a major Hollywood cameraman. I don't know if you know him. But so, there was Jim that was a tremendous influence in photograph--cinematography and Ken in still photography. And then Grahame and I put it all together. And I worked on the radio and we knew all these, all these composers and musicians and we just incorporated their work into our work and we made slides for them.

**01:02:54**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And, I think, I think, I developed a real interest in new music, Steve Reich, Phil Glass and many others because we had to sit through all these rehearsals. So, when you sit and really listen to something and take that time you develop, you can develop an ear, I suppose you can hate it too. But, you know, I found a way to really listen. Who wrote in C?

**01:03:24**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Terry Riley

**01:03:25**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Terry Riley I mean, we would sit through hours of rehearsals waiting for our piece to come on. And then we would see our piece. It was amazing. So, I really feel it's all a part of me and I think it shows. It comes out in the work we did. And then we started working with individual people and I was, of course, best friends with the sound guy, the guy that did all the work for the musicians. So, I learned a lot kinda from the ground up.

**01:03:56**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And he would put together things for us, the technical stuff, which was great. So, we had a hand both in the creative side and the technical side. They really worked hand and hand and Grahame and I have been incredibly lucky to find these people. They are all still my friends and I keep in touch and that's really cool.

end of tape 1

## **TAPE 2: ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

**00:00:50**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

But it's been a really long collaboration. I think, it's interesting; we always have something to say to each other. I've never met anyone else that, we could just talk, we had just so many ideas. Even when [RF: we had disagreements and I decided that we shouldn't work together anymore] we just, somehow came back together like magnets. We just kept coming back together.

**01:22:06**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Because I think we really work well. Better now than ever, I think, that I'm more grown up. It's interesting, Grahame and my son are two of the smartest people I know.

**00:01:56**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So Buffalo. Still in Buffalo. Now, I mean, this was a really fertile community for music in the '60 and '70s nexus.

**00:02:04**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah.

**00:02:05**

**MARK TOSCANO**

How, how, how did that all work?

**00:02:07**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

All kinds of music. I don't know. You know, I went to Buffalo, I worked on the radio. And again, I had a, radio license. I was going for a first class radio license. [laugh] All my friends were the engineers. And one of them, Cliff Stoll, who, that's a whole other story worked in the music department, soldering.

**00:02:47**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And he worked with this guy, George Ritscher, who was in the music department. He was the sound guy for the music department. So that might have been one of the ways I got involved with the music department. I don't, I really don't know. It's all I did the whole time I was there though. Now I feel badly that I didn't go to any classes, but a very few. But I, I was interested in, you know, as I said, in folk music.

**00:03:14**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Buffalo was a great place. The Creative Associates brought musicians from all over the country and the world, to come do like two year stints in Buffalo at, in the music department. And Buffalo had the best blues bars on the East Coast. So I spent a lot of time going to blues bars and I mean, everybody came to Buffalo or through Buffalo. And again, it was '69. So there was just a lot going on in the country, and Buffalo was very politically active.

**00:03:50**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I think a lot of musicians tended to be very political. People would come to Buffalo. It was an interesting time to be there. And certainly for me. I learned a lot. And I couldn't play anything. I think doing work with the musicians was sort of an expression of being one of this creative group, almost like a musician playing with them. And I think that the films we did and the slides we did were not simply background for these composers, but in fact functioned as another performer in this arena.

**00:04:37**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And that was really interesting. And really interesting is one of the pieces we did in Buffalo I sent to CalArts and they assumed I was an animator, because it was animated.

**00:04:52**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Was that the THREE RITUALS?

**00:04:53**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

It was one of the, yeah, it was the THREE RITUALS. And it was geometric, big geometric blocks, that would change locations on the screen. Sometimes it would be green and red boxes that were split screen. And sometimes it would be a circle. It would be different shapes. It's very simple and very beautiful. And Jules Engel who was at CalArts loved it, I found out later. And who was the artist who paints like that?

**00:05:30**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

[technical]

**00:05:53**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Ellsworth Kelly. He looked at this and he said, this is a moving Ellsworth Kelly. And he said to me, did you know when I first got to CalArts, do you know Ellsworth Kelly? And I said, no. He said, you don't know Ellsworth Kelly? And he's bring me all of these books about Ellsworth Kelly. It was very nice. And that was my introduction to Jules Engel at CalArts. So I'm still in Buffalo. Nothing has--

**00:06:16**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

[overlapping] Still in Buffalo, right.

**00:06:17**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Nothing else more to say about Buffalo. It was cold. It was interesting. We made movies. We saw movies. I first saw Milos Forman's films there and loved them, absolutely loved them. And years later started working with Milos Forman. So that was very cool. And you know, I think maybe it's interesting to see where the seeds of one's interests are planted and how they, they kind of bear fruit later on in one's life, and how they stick. That's kind of interesting to think about that. But maybe that's part of what you're doing, you know?

**00:06:59**

**MARK TOSCANO**

[unintelligible] Now were you seeing a lot of, I mean, what were you, were you seeing much film in Buffalo?

**00:07:05**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah. Because--

**00:07:06**

**MARK TOSCANO**

[overlapping] What kind of stuff?

**00:07:07**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Well, you know, the usual, Bunuel, you know, all the European, Polanski. Mostly those films. But Milos Forman, I just had a special feeling for. Especially it was pre-Hair days. It was...

**00:07:26**

**MARK TOSCANO**

One of the Czech films or...? [technical]

**00:07:32**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

TAKING OFF, I loved. And in fact because I did, I became friends with the people that worked on that film and worked with Milos Forman. And they are fast friends even now, which is sort of interesting. I like the cutting, I like the editing of it, a lot. Though I did hear that he was anti-Semitic, which is interesting. I couldn't, that kind of put a little damper on my thoughts about Milos. But I worked on three of his movies after that. It was a great experience. But, to see how he works.

**00:08:11**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Were you seeing a lot of quote what I call experimental work?

**00:08:18**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

You know, there were a lot of experimental filmmakers around Buffalo. Yeah, Hollis Frampton I also fell in love with. I think NOSTALGIA is, was my favorite film. And also very influential. I think the idea, I've been thinking about this a lot lately. Of the idea of memory and self-referential film, self-reflexive film. I think it sort of started there too. And I was very interested in that. Yeah, Paul Sharits.

**00:08:53**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Of course Brakhage. Maya Deren. Not in any school context, just in seeing the films that were being shown. I mean, all kinds they kind of blur together. But we were so busy making things. And my brothers would come help us. Again, I don't know how my mother let them do this. She'd ship them off and they'd come work on our films. It was like we had interns, permanent interns that lived with us.

**00:09:25**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And my two brothers really participated. And it was very, very cool. They still think of Grahame as almost an older brother. They call him the Professor. You know, how's the Professor doing? But they participated in a lot of our work. So yeah, I saw a lot of experimental film. And a lot of European feature film. And I think all of that informed the work that we did later.

**00:09:49**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

We worked with different new music musicians and composers. Like Lejaren Hiller who died recently. A few years ago. And who's the other guy, the conductor? Grahame must have mentioned him.

**00:10:06**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

He lived in L.A. He conducted the L.A. Phil. And in fact, after Buffalo, when Grahame and I both moved to L.A., he asked us to do a light show in the Hollywood Bowl. And that was probably the first big thing we did in Los Angeles, this light show. I mean, again, you know, the Hollywood Bowl didn't mean anything to us. I look back later and I say, oh my God, that was like this incredible place that so many people were coming to and weren't we nervous and wouldn't we be scared?

**00:10:45**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

We just did it. We were so used to working with international musicians and composers and it didn't mean anything. We had I such a tremendous kind of confidence and bravado. And we invited our artist friends to come and we just did the slide show with the L.A. Phil. Which was pretty pretty cool. And I worked in radio in L.A. Okay, so now we're in Los Angeles. Now we, we left New York. Anything else about New York?

**00:11:11**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Well one thing I was curious about is did you, because you were making films since you were really young, and at some point, you started to see films, you know, where maybe I don't know, I guess for me or a lot of people I talked to, there's this realization where you're like, oh yeah, there's movies that I've grown up with and that I love, but then there's this whole other thing you can do with film in a sense.

**00:11:30**                    **MARK TOSCANO (CONTINUED)**

You know like when you start seeing the Brakhage or something. I'm wondering was there a point for you where this, you started to realize that what you were doing was in that vein? Like you were that you were an artist? You weren't just goofing around with a camera.

**00:11:43**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No, that's interesting. You know... Huh. I think I never made divisions between the different kinds of filmmaking, styles of filmmaking, genres of filmmaking. I know that films break down into documentaries, experimental films, feature films. But in fact, I loved it all. And whenever I made films, it didn't occur to me that one couldn't go into the other. I didn't know those divisions, because I was young. And I learned that later when I lived in Hollywood.

**00:12:48**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

But in fact, it didn't matter. I mean, it was a problem, because I couldn't fit in and in this world, you have to fit in to a category. And that's difficult. It's difficult to raise money. It's difficult to find a venue to show your work. But I realized for me as an artist that that wasn't going to stop me from making the kinds of work I wanted to make. And it is a blur.

**00:13:22**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I try and figure out, I've never thought about where the division was for me. I made home movies always. We always passed around a 16mm camera. I tried different things with it. I took still photographs that were I guess more creative. There are a lot of pictures of my feet. You know, in different positions. I don't know why. I, you know, I was just fooling around with that. But I think the influence of seeing experimental films was more subtle for me in terms of making work.

**00:14:03**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I think there's certain experimental work that appealed to me. I didn't like Brakhage at all. Now I do. I see it. I understand it. Part of it could be my age. I don't know. But I preferred Hollis Frampton. I didn't like Paul Sharits then. I do now. So I don't know at what point the work I saw influenced the work I made. But I think it all informed it over a period of time. The experimental music, the folk music, the experimental film, and the feature films, the European feature films more even than American.

**00:14:51**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I don't know what I saw here that really influenced me. I don't know when a transition might have taken place between kind of fooling around with a camera and then really being serious about making films. I don't know that I ever got serious. I'm still fooling around with a camera. And I'm glad to do that in fact.

**00:15:16**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But when you, you heard about CalArts, you wanted to go there to learn filmmaking more formally, right?

**00:15:22**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No.

**00:15:23**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Is that what drew you there?

**00:15:24**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No. I wanted to go there to have a studio. It wasn't so much to learn about filmmaking. Again, I regret it now. I barely went to class. I mean, I went there, I did animation. I had a studio. I had equipment. I had people that supported what I was doing. And I had access to musicians, to actors, to composers. I mean, that's what was incredible.

**00:15:53**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

CalArts in '72 was an incredible time to be there. The school was new. You could do anything. And that's what was exciting. What was great about Buffalo was although it was a formal university, nobody was doing what Grahame and I were doing, so everybody was happy to help. You know, you could just jump into a department and say, hey, can we do this? Can I get some money from the student body organization to do this installation?

**00:16:19**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

They said yes. They were used to supporting you know, let's bring this, this rock 'n roll group. You know, we were doing something that nobody else was doing. And we were very lucky to be first. CalArts, was a great place to be, because there were so many good people. And being in Hollywood was like wild. When I got to CalArts, it wasn't what I expected it to be. I thought California was going to be green grass and I could have a horse and a dog and live in the country.

**00:16:52**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I thought it was going to be like the movies. And it wasn't. At all. But it was something else. And that something else was about access. It was about working on an optical printer and working with somebody like Pat O'Neill, tremendous influence. He was my mentor. Working with Jules Engel taught me a lot about color and movement and how it worked. Tremendous. And a few of the other teachers at the school, I did learn some formal stuff, some technical stuff.

**00:17:26**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I worked. I was a graduate assistant there. So I worked in a sound studio. I was the recordist. I learned a lot about sound, how it worked, how mixes worked. I learned it by doing rather than taking formal filmmaking classes. And I'm sure I took a few. I don't remember them. But I'm sure I took a few. [laugh] CalArts was great. It was really great. And in fact now at Montclair, I teach at Montclair State University, they're starting a new program.

**00:17:58**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I'm trying to get it be just like CalArts. And I'm using that as sort of starting point, to take what was good about CalArts and improve on it and make it better. And do it in a different context. Do it on the East Coast and do it in a formal university setting if I can. CalArts didn't have enough academics. I couldn't have gone there as an undergraduate. I needed more.

**00:18:26**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

But as a graduate student, it was wonderful. Because it was a studio. And having that studio, having the facility to be able to work all night and really experiment with a lot of different ideas and see films and work with other artists, it was tremendous. And again, my friends were the guys that did technical stuff and they did computer programming. And I could learn from that. And of course, Grahame would just have to meet them once.

**00:18:55**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

He knew how to do it. It was great. [laugh] It was like you take Grahame, put him in a place, introduce him to the person, he'd like [makes noise] learn it all, and then we could just take those ideas and those kind of technical skills and apply them to the work that we did.

**00:19:12**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

So who were some of those people?

**00:19:15**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Larry Cuba. Larry Cuba.

**00:19:21**                    **STEPHANIE SAPIENZA**

[technical]

**00:19:23**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

CalArts was an incredible place to be because of all the people that were there. And everybody that came to this place in the '70s were like me in a way. They all had very specific interests, but they wanted to know more about other areas. And I became very good friends with people like Larry Cuba, who was there doing computer programming. There was one computer. There was a Gary, I can't think of Gary's last name.

**00:19:57**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

There were a lot of us that were interested in optical printing, in different ways of using the camera, in doing animation like Adam Beckett, Kathy Rose. People who are still working now that crossed different media. People if they're still alive that stayed friends. And I follow their work. Even if I don't see them, I follow their work. Larry and I have been working a lot in supporting abstract animation. And Pat O'Neill just became a very good friend and mentor.

**00:20:40**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I followed his work. I invite him out to Montclair. I visit him whenever I'm in L.A. I love his work and I love what he does. I don't do the same thing, but I love how he deals with space. And every artist finds people that they're excited by. And, you know, incorporates some of those ideas I think in their own work. You find where you're simpatico with those different people. [technical]

**00:21:09**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Do you know Gary Demos? [technical]

**00:21:15**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No. The Wilsons were there. But after me. Of course that starts bringing us up to Los Angeles.

**00:21:24**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah.

**00:21:25**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

That starts bring us up to Los Angeles, and the filmmaking community in Los Angeles.

**00:21:27**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

[technical]

**00:21:57**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Larry was my friend. I don't know if you call it a skill but maybe that's part of being a producer. And this is, I don't know how relevant this is, but you know, I do a lot of different things. And I'm going to just take a departure. I went to CalArts and I worked as a sound recordist.

**00:22:30**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I also worked KPFK on the radio. The whole time when I was at school, and later on. And played folk music and new music. And combined them. And looked for the relevance and the connections between early music and ethnic musics and new music. I was there, I interviewed the Oingo Boingo band and look where he went. I mean, so I met a lot of people that were very committed to the things that they do.

**00:23:03**            **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And their interests and their passions. That to me is so exciting, when you can talk to someone that has a particular passion and learn about it. And see what they find exciting about it. And again, when I could see that, that to me was going to school. I didn't have to go to classes. I could learn so many things and then apply it to my own work in some way. I was able to incorporate it. And even if it wasn't incorporated then, it's getting incorporated 20 years later, you know, now.

**00:23:38**            **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

So I went to CalArts and made a lot of friends and worked on different movies. Jim Gillie from Ohio years before also came to CalArts and I was working with Jim. I started working as a camera assistant on people's films and continued that as a career. I was a camera assistant in the industry. Spent a lot of time loading magazines. That helped support the films we made. And again, I was always interested in that.

**00:24:14**            **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I thought I'd be a camerawoman, but you couldn't get into the union. It was very hard to be camerawoman. That's another story. You had to carry too many heavy boxes too. I'm trying to think where you go from, from CalArts--

**00:24:33**                            **MARK TOSCANO**

Well, you started to get exposed to all these other people and ideas and things. Were there some specific influences you can talk about or even any other films or, or even separate from that stuff you're seeing outside of the CalArts environment? Or things you got involved in.

**00:24:53**                            **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

The thing about Los Angeles that was different than New York, New York had a lot going on all the time. In fact, there was so much, that it was almost hard to do anything. And it's still the case. L.A. had very little going on, but you got to see everything. So if there was a concert at UCLA, everybody went. You know, and there were. If there was a movie playing, there was a James Dean series.

**00:25:23**                            **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I saw every James Dean film. I saw every Humphrey Bogart film. There would be these movie series that would be playing and you'd see Hollywood movies in Hollywood. And there was nothing like that. It was very exciting to be in Hollywood. And I was told the first day I went to CalArts when I was expecting it to be this lush and green and kind of Hollywood look of Los, of California. The first person I met was Thom Mount, who later became President of Universal.

**00:25:56**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I said, look, it's not what I thought it would be. It's like all dusty and, and everything is twisted from an earthquake. He said, don't live here. This was a major influence. Don't live here. Live in Hollywood. If you're coming to California, you should live in Hollywood. I listened to him. Next day. And moved to Laurel Canyon. And didn't look back. So the people that influenced me in some strange ways were Thom Mount, were all the people that I went to school with in the film school that became my friends and that worked in the industry and I know now.

**00:26:37**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And were very helpful. Like Howard Brock and Michael Pressman just Durinda Wood, who's a costume designer. She made me aware of fabrics and how costumes really influence how people see things. I never thought about it. That was an eye opener, because she was so again, passionately involved with her area. She works on the films I do. I did a film about Cinderella not so long ago. And she came and designed the costumes.

**00:27:16**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I had no money, but she came. Oh, it had a grant, a National Endowment for the Humanities grant. But she came and did the costumes. It was great. I mean, I feel very fortunate to have such talented and available friends and kind who are willing to work on things that are a little more experimental and a little different. Not just A MIGHTY WIND, which she just did the costumes for. So in terms of influences, I think my colleagues and contemporaries were influences.

**00:27:55**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And in fact, they still are. As far as filmmakers, Pat O'Neill and Jules Engel, who were there were my biggest influences and Pat O'Neill still is. And in terms of seeing things, I just learned a lot about how artists collaborate and work with each other. And that was encouraged at CalArts to do that. To walk to the other side of the building which seemed so far away and reach out to work with them.

**00:28:36**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And interestingly enough, not a lot of people did it. But I thought it was grand to have that. And to apply it to my work at that time.

**00:28:49**                                            **MARK TOSCANO**

So you had made the, the THREE RITUALS. You were making films for many years in a way, but the THREE RITUALS was a more elaborate film project that worked on performance.

**00:28:58**                                            **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

That's right.

**00:28:59**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But AMUSEMENT PARK COMPOSITION AND DECAY this was kind of like the first piece that you guys did together.

**00:29:06**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

That's right.

**00:29:07**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Finished film. And also was finished at college.

**00:29:09**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Did you see it?

**00:29:09**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yes. I've seen it a couple times.

**00:29:11**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Did you notice I appear naked in that one?

**00:29:13**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah.

**00:29:14**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

That was...

**00:29:14**

**MARK TOSCANO**

You don't know it's you except--

**00:29:16**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

[overlapping] Well I know it's me and my father was shocked. But...

**00:29:21**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But this is a film that you finished as a--

**00:29:23**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

[overlapping] Grahame and I loved amusement parks. Wherever we went, we'd go to amusement parks. We decided to make an experimental documentary. We were very interested in the shape and the form and the motion of amusement parks. And the fact that even then when we were making it, the parks were on the decay. That Disneyland was kind of taking over from these old amusement parks.

**00:29:55**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And we went out and we shot and we interviewed the owners of all these old amusement parks. And I had a friend in the radio station who was going to do an experimental sound piece for us. I gave him all of our sound tapes. And he left them in the station next to a bulk eraser. And all of the interviews, about 10, 12 tapes, were all erased. And [laugh] so here we had this finished film.

**00:30:28**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And if you noticed, there were people sitting down in the film. Somehow that, that kind of way people sit down has always been in our films. Just ordinary people doing ordinary things. We shot their backs. We shot people in that kind of motion of sitting down. Differently, but the same. We took the film with us to California and met Carl Stone. And he was a very good friend eventually from CalArts. He did a soundtrack for it.

**00:31:04**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And it's, I think it's terrific. It turned out to be I think a really good film. It's not the film we intended. And I think that was a real learning experience. And maybe a positive one, that things aren't always as you plan them to be, but sometimes they're better. And you work with what you have. And with both the adversities and the benefits. And so that one worked out. That was the first film I think, yeah, we did together.

**00:31:37**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Aside from all the experimental, inter-media stuff, that was the first completed film. Now we did some little animated films. I don't know where they are. But we did that and we shot "Amusement Park" on the East Coast in Buffalo before we left. And we just took it to L.A. I also shot a film of Grahame a single frame film of his hair and beard growing. He had shaved his head and his beard. And then we spent about a year shooting it. I don't know what happened to it. I'm just wondering if it was in one of our boxes. I don't know.

**00:32:12**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

It hasn't come out then. I'll find it. And now I know what to look for.

**00:32:17**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Okay. I feel like I had three parallel lives. One was making experimental films with Grahame. The other after CalArts was working on the radio and working in a record store for money. But I never really made any money. And this I told Mark a while ago - I loved the music so much and I was introduced to Jazz. I really started loving Charlie Parker. I bought records all week. And at the end of the week, I would be owing the store money.

**00:32:51**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

But I developed an enormous record collection. And I worked in the industry as both a camera assistant on low budget features and I was a camera operator on one, which was a disaster. But I did that. I really got to know how feature films were made, by doing it. I was very, very lucky. And of course I got a job working for Lucasfilm. Pretty much right out of CalArts. So I learned how to do special effects.

**00:33:29**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And to apply all of the animation and rotoscoping and optical printing work that I learned from Jules and Pat to working on a big industry feature. Which was incredible. So I became very skilled. And this time, Grahame was doing something else. So he was teaching and I was working in the industry. And the two of us were making movies. And we did a whole lot of films. I started doing a lot of drawing on film. And painting on film. So some of those films exist.

**00:34:13**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

I mean, not in the normal Brakhage kind of way? But--

**00:34:15**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

[overlapping] No. No, they were much more, it was a combination of formal elements with words that we shot, focusing through clear cels and changing focus so that the words would blend into each other. Was, it was all done live, rather than on an optical printer. And then I'd paint on top of that. So you got sort of a both the rough and raw quality, combined with a very formal quality. Which I think is very interesting. I think we've always been interested in that. And I certainly am.

**00:34:50**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

So did you, when you got to CalArts, you finished the "Amusement Park" film. Did it, did it show around?

**00:34:56**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yes. We sent it, it won all kinds of competitions. So yeah, it was interesting. I don't think it's been seen since, except by you maybe. But it won several awards in different festivals, Brooklyn Film Festival, some festival in the South. You know, it was shown. And that was nice. It was sort of our entrance into the experimental film community. You know, like in that sense formally. Here we were, we made a film, we sent it out.

**00:35:29**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

It was going to be a, a documentary, but then it turned into this experimental film, which I think was great. And I think our work continued to be like that. Brakhage was not an influence. [technical]

**00:35:50**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

I, it just didn't do it for me at the time. I don't know.

**00:35:57**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

But Frampton did.

**00:35:59**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Frampton did, yeah.

**00:36:00**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Was it [unintelligible]

**00:36:01**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

[overlapping] I loved Frampton's work? Yeah, I found Frampton's work really thoughtful. And layered. It was about a lot of things. And I think one of the things I've been trying to do and I know Grahame and I have both been trying to do, is we have so many ideas that we try to pack into just this one little strand. You know, we did work I think that's very layered.

**00:36:34**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And hopefully can be appreciated on those different levels. And hopefully makes the work watchable multiple times, so you can get that, in a short period of time. You know, that's the hope. But you know what, to a large extent, we made the films for ourselves. Because we were working out ideas. And to a large extent, I think it worked. At least to some extent. I think it's why we moved into doing interactive video.

**00:37:09**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

We were also interested in interactive, that interactive component. And we tried to put that into our work by doing all the multimedia stuff we did when we were in Buffalo. We did a lot of multimedia projects. And then we tried, you know, we sort of spread out and then we pulled it all close and put it all into like a frame and then as technology was developed and you could really do a lot of work in video yourself, you didn't need to have an optical printer.

**00:37:45**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

You know, everything became more doable. We started doing more interactive stuff. So it kind of started out broad, got packed down and layered. And then now it's spread out again. Which is kind of interesting. Although I still, I make documentary films also that are pretty straightforward. And I've done that for a while.

**00:38:10**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Could you could you talk about MAKING OF AMERICANS. Because that, that was the next big project after AMUSEMENT PARK.

**00:38:18**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah. MAKING OF AMERICANS [laugh] You're keeping me on the straight and narrow, yes.

**00:38:24**

**MARK TOSCANO**

I'm trying...

**00:38:25**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No, no, that was very good. We worked in black and white. We made AMUSEMENT PARK. MAKING OF AMERICANS was actually my graduate thesis film. That I was doing. And we started it there. And very influenced as I mentioned before by Gertrude Stein and THE MAKING OF AMERICANS. And the similarities and the differences between people by looking at them. And that in fact there were all kinds of people, but there were a few kinds and there's a lot of repetitions.

**00:39:00**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I mean, it sort of made me crazy. Every time I'd look at people, I'd look at them and see the similarities. What grew out of that was a whole set of films about siblings. The people you were most like and because you're most like, you can see the differences. Which I can elaborate on another later maybe. MAKING OF AMERICANS has six different women in it. I, I personally was interested in the women who make Americans.

**00:39:30**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

A teacher, a librarian, a mother. They're the people that provide the backbone for this country. Backbone for all of us. They influence everybody and in fact they're invisible. And I found six beautiful women to read Gertrude Stein. And the opening shot of the film is long pan, which other people have since done, but I had never seen it before. It was a long pan down a table of objects that I collected from all the women I knew of different ages and those objects, I asked them for things that were meaningful to them.

**00:40:22**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

I mean, including one of my dolls, a bride doll, that I had. But things that were meaningful to them that represented different ages in their lives. And that one pan is a three minute pan. That we lit and the lighting changed as you moved down the piece. It's a choreographed piece. But I think it gives you a real sense of the making of Americans and the women who makes Americans.

**00:40:53**

**MARK TOSCANO**

You know, Grahame refers to it as the biography sort of portion.

**00:40:57**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah. And well maybe he, he was referring to that opening scene?

**00:41:03**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, the first, yeah.

**00:41:04**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Because in fact, we broke that off, added a Gertrude Stein text, for which I never got clearance, and who knew about that then? Gertrude Stein talking about people, about family living, can go on existing.

**00:41:22** **MARK TOSCANO**

No, that, and that's in, that's in the third section.

**00:41:24** **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

That's in the third section. There's another piece in the beginning.

**00:41:27** **MARK TOSCANO**

It's, the beginning is silent.

**00:41:27** **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Oh no, the beginning is silent. You're right, I take that back. You're right, you're right, you're right. [Mark Toscano laughs] The beginning is silent. And then repeating then is then everyone comes up at the end of the last scene.

**00:41:38** **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

But except, what I'm talking about is we broke that off, added the Gertrude Stein text to it and it's now in the permanent collection of the Long Beach Museum.

**00:41:48** **MARK TOSCANO**

Oh, the video version.

**00:41:48** **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

The video version is there.

**00:41:50** **MARK TOSCANO**

Oh, okay.

**00:41:50** **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

I don't know if I gave you that videotape.

**00:41:52** **MARK TOSCANO**

No, I'd like to see that.

**00:41:58** **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

It's a one inch tape somewhere. But that's in the permanent collection. David Ross picked it up. And it showed as part of a show there. But that's there. Yeah, no, that's the first part. And then the middle part is all of these women reading Gertrude Stein, broken up in phrases. None of them had read Gertrude Stein before. And they did it with such feeling. They were totally engaged in the material. It's wonderful. And here's where we had them against a black background and a white background.

**00:42:35**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And when they're against, when they're in limbo, they're just kind of hovering there and then when they're against the white background, there are six boxes. They stand out. It's really interesting. I think Grahame might have told you that Larry Cuba helped up come up with an algorithm for the women on the screen. It was all done mathematically. So we cut up each phrase and had black in between the phrases.

**00:43:02**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And the black pieces got shorter and shorter so that the women started coming up faster and faster till finally it was almost a cacophony of sound. And... it became more about the vision, about the visual part of seeing all of these women coming up quickly and next to each other. And being pairs. And disappearing and coming back. And that their sound just was all together. You know, that it just kind of became one big ...I don't want to call it noise.

**00:43:44**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Unified sound. They all kind of came together. And it goes faster and faster towards the end. And then at the very end section, it's, see I would call that the biography section. It was a piece that we, we made like a little piece of each woman. And that was little experimental films. Like pieces that told you who they were. Just by what they did. It was about their activities. So that was the activity section.

**00:44:15**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And this we showed several times. It also won several prizes. It, it was a unique film I think. Especially for its time. It was shown at Filmex and I don't know if Grahame mentioned the reaction was quite severe. I mean, people went crazy.

**00:44:33**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Do you remember there was an Altman film it was in front of? Do you remember?

**00:44:36**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

I don't remember.

**00:44:37**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

No? Okay.

**00:44:37**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

I don't remember what came, came before it. But I do know that--

**00:44:42**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

That the audience was split. Half of them were saying boo, boo, were shouting. The other said, stop, stop, you know, it was amazing. Somebody ran up in front of the screen. It, the repetition just was too much. But it was interesting because we got a lot of supporters and I don't know about the other people. I don't know who they were. But I liked the supporters. [Mark Toscano laughs]

**00:45:11**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And that was the MAKING OF AMERICANS. I love that film. You know, I think it's very special. I think it really has a place. In fact, I was going to do something similar to that again with a garden. I, I don't know, I was going to have these people telling stories in flowers. And then you'd have this whole garden and as you walk past it, with little tiny monitors, of these stories that would come together. But that's another project. Don't ask.

**00:45:40**

**MARK TOSCANO**

It's part of the list.

**00:45:40**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Part of the list, yeah. A friend called it, I have a drawer with all these projects in it. And a friend of mine called it my dream drawer. And people would give me projects to see what I thought, if I wanted to produce them. Because I also work as a producer for other's people's projects. And they would all go into my dream drawer, as he used to say. So I, in my head, I kind of have a company called Dream Drawer Productions.

**00:46:12**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I have a lot of proposals and half started projects and things like that. But every once in a while I pull out or bring up with an eye towards making them again.

**00:46:29**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Well I think a lot of us do.

**00:46:31**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah.

**00:46:32**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But...

**00:46:32**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No, I think a lot of us do. I mean, I hope some of them, if they were good ideas or maybe just didn't find their right time, they come up and maybe I'll put them into something else. Or in fact, if they were very commercial ideas, they'd go into some commercial movie. Which I'm also interested in.

**00:47:00**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So you, you finished, when, when did you finish CalArts?

**00:47:03**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

CalArts? '74. And I did a little film in CalArts, what, is something wrong with that? Did Graham say something else?

**00:47:10**

**STEPHANIE SAPIENZA**

You finished CalArts in 1974.

**00:47:19**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah. I went to CalArts I think between '72 and '74. And I made a film at CalArts, because called CalArts '73-'74 for CalArts. And again, it was very labor intensive. I took the CalArts ID card and inside of it put the heads of every department. And interviewed them about their department and had all the different animators draw animation on the faces of the people. Did you ever see that?

**00:47:52**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Mm hmm.

**00:47:53**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

You saw that. I thought it was terrific. And really was something that you could do. It was very complicated to do. They drew graffiti. And each person I added a new piece of graffiti. And so it incorporated the CalArts animating team, all the faculty, the heads of the departments, many of them who are no longer here, and the CalArts card, and it said what it told you is what was good about CalArts.

**00:48:23**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Not only what was said, but what you could see and how it was done. And that to me is the best kind of film you can make. The one that has layers, you know, that you could appreciate in different ways. And who did music? Larry Stein, who was in the department. And not only that, I knew Larry Stein from Buffalo and he was responsible for giving Grahame and me money to make movies.

**00:48:50**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

But it was great. And then we became good friends. And I used to work with Larry doing slides with his percussion ensemble. And we used to travel to all the different schools, elementary schools and middle schools in Los Angeles.

**00:49:06**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, Grahame mentioned that.

**00:49:07**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

And show slides. I'm sure Grahame helped me shoot them. I wouldn't be surprised that we did them together. Like big and little. We just applied all of our experimental ideas from stills to doing this and I would go on the road with this group and show the films. [laugh]

**00:49:25**

**MARK TOSCANO**

You still know Larry, right?

**00:49:26**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah.

**00:49:27**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But he's not called Larry, right?

**00:49:29**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah.

**00:49:29**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Is he called Larry?

**00:49:29**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah. As opposed to what? Lawrence?

**00:49:31**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Nevermind, I'm mixing up him and Zev.

**00:49:37**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No, no, Zev is another old friend. But no, Larry Stein. And in fact the connections between Buffalo and CalArts, there are, in fact there are many connections between Buffalo and CalArts for me, because Grahame and I sublet our apartment from a dancer in Buffalo. Buffalo also had quite a dance department. This dancer had a boyfriend at CalArts. She said, when you go to CalArts, look up my boyfriend, Bruce Green. I said okay.

**00:50:10**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

We went to CalArts that Christmas, just to visit the school. First person we looked for was Bruce Green. Bruce Green is now still one of my best friends. He's since broke up with that girl, very early on. But Bruce became a really close friend. And we're still friends. We never made films together. But Bruce is a film editor. He is the one that recommended me for the job with Lucasfilm. It's really interesting those kinds of connections and how they last.

**00:50:49**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And how a chance occurrence can just change part of your life. And for me, those chance occurrences were people that just knew something or knew someone. And it really worked. Grahame and I in Buffalo lived upstairs from a tuba player and we'd listen to the tuba. Even now, I think about how I'm going to use a tuba in something. Because the guy practiced nonstop. It's like you incorporate those kinds of things into your life and into your work.

**00:51:21**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Or else you become a complainer, a chronic complainer about everything that annoys you. And personally, I'd rather opt for the first rather than the second.

**00:51:34**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Well even meeting Grahame was kind of a chance thing.

**00:51:36**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah. Totally. Totally. So who knew? You know, who knew we'd be so compatible, at least verbally. I mean, we really, you know, [laugh] we really had a lot of similar interests. And because we were so young, we developed those interests together. You know, it's not like just coming as adults to someone. I think there was a point where it sort of imploded and we both went off and did things ourselves.

**00:52:04**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

We each got married, we had kids, we did different work. And then we kind of brought what we learned and what we did back to the table, to inform what we do now. And I think it's a very successful and exciting collaboration now. Not always easy, but I think it's really exceptional. I think it's really interesting.

**00:52:31**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

So you actually, I mean, after MAKING OF AMERICANS, speaking of the recent collaborations, was BERTHA'S CHILDREN the next film that you remember?

**00:52:38**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No.

**00:52:39**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

No, what was?

**00:52:41**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

After MAKING OF AMERICANS, we started doing SIBLINGS. We started doing a series on siblings. I wanted to learn offset printing. And another thing I learned at CalArts. So I was making these giant posters of siblings. And then we shot those siblings. And families with siblings, kids. Was not a successful film.

**00:53:15**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Because, you know, Grahame--

**00:53:16**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

[overlapping] And it was a color film.

**00:53:16**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Well not, not to conflict with your, I'm just, just to see how you respond to this. He, he had said that SIBLINGS came after BERTHA'S CHILDREN. Because in a way in a way what was unsuccessful about it he thought was that it was maybe trying to read the audience that had liked BERTHA'S CHILDREN and make something in that vein.

**00:53:32**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

No, I think it's exactly the reverse. Well, wait, let me think.

**00:53:40**

**MARK TOSCANO**

I have a feeling that SIBLINGS may have been '75. And BERTHA'S CHILDREN was '76. So I think, I have a feeling that you're right.

**00:53:48**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Well I'm just thinking that, that SIBLINGS we did, we might not have finished it, and that's, that could be true. We shot it, because I was still at CalArts or around CalArts and did this, these giant poster printings at CalArts. Did you see SIBLINGS?

**00:54:05**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Mm hmm.

**00:54:06**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

SIBLINGS, we did these dolly shots...

**00:54:08**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, of with the posters.

**00:54:10**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

With these big posters in the background. Which all, all have been thrown out. Which is too bad. Now. But I guess maybe what he's thinking is we were photographing siblings. We did a lot of photographs of siblings, of our friends. In fact, in fact, I just found the photographs that should have been returned to them a long time ago. And their names are not on the back, so I don't know who these people are.

**00:54:47**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

But one of these days I'm going to try and find them and give them back their photographs that I was so carefully taking care of. But I think we might have done it then. We might have not finished it. We might have shot it, put it aside, done BERTHA'S CHILDREN, then finished SIBLINGS. But yeah, SIBLINGS was a, it didn't work. And it was a first color film. I think you have to really think about color in a different way.

**00:55:19**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I don't think we did enough. And Durinda would do the costumes. She dressed the people. I mean, I think what we got out were all, we, we had all these people working with us and I think it was stupid. I think that's the problem. I, it just didn't it just didn't work. So I think BERTHA'S CHILDREN does. So he thinks SIBLINGS came later and what did he say? We were, what were we trying to do?

**00:55:55**

**MARK TOSCANO**

He thought SIBLINGS, the, some of it in a way was a response to what maybe you two perceived as the qualities people liked about BERTHA'S CHILDREN and then maybe you know, without...

**00:56:11**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

I think it's the reverse.

**00:56:11**

**MARK TOSCANO**

BERTHA in a way to, to, to work with that. Like you know, to respond to people's interest in BERTHA'S CHILDREN.

**00:56:19**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

I would say it was the reverse. I think we were too spread out in SIBLINGS with too many siblings. And then BERTHA'S CHILDREN was narrower, was sharper. It was more defined. And... had older people, which I think ultimately was more interesting in it. And was simpler in a way. And was black and white, sepia. Which I think let's you focus more on the people and less on the clothes they were wearing and the location they were in.

**00:57:00**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And they're climbing up mountains and standing on top of rocks and talking about brushing their teeth. It, I think it was a more poignant. I think, and I think we did something better. I, see I think it was the reverse. I think we in fact responded to everything that was negative about SIBLINGS and made BERTHA'S CHILDREN, which in fact also was shown and did win some awards, you know, and got some, some good responses.

**00:57:33**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And I still think it's an interesting film. And, and when you see BERTHA'S GRANDCHILDREN, I think we refined something. I think it's in color. But we were able to use color in a different way, in a more subdued way. I think we had to do something like SIBLINGS. I mean, every filmmaker when they first color, when they first start learning how sound works, you say, great, let's do it.

**00:58:06**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

You know? And we did it. And I think we did it successfully in one sense. We got that out of our systems. After that, we didn't have elaborate costumes. Except in our multimedia, in our interactive pieces. We didn't have costumes.. I don't want to put it entirely down. We learned a lot from the experience of having done it.

**00:58:34**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

But that's what it is to make movies. That's what it is to do anything. You learn. We did a lot of other sibling pieces that exist somewhere. Our sibling photographs are beautiful, the ones we took of people. And we have a few I think that are really quite extraordinary and that we just gave away to, to the siblings, to the people, and they loved them. But I think we worked out a lot in BERTHA'S CHILDREN and now what, 30 years later, in BERTHA'S GRANDCHILDREN. I can't wait to show it to all. I think you're going to like it. I love it. It's, it, now it's my favorite film.

**00:59:11**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Well, did you have a favorite before that? Just curious.

**00:59:15**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

My favorite film before BERTHA'S GRANDCHILDREN was maybe BERTHA'S CHILDREN.

**00:59:21**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Oh.

**00:59:22**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

You know, I love that.

**00:59:27**

**MARK TOSCANO**

And that one showed around quite a bit, right?

**00:59:29**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

The, it did. And BERTHA'S GRANDCHILDREN hasn't shown at all. It showed once. And I just sent it to the Videotex Festival, you know. And that's a first experimental film we've made together, like a, a film, in a long time. And I think we're making a, we're going to make another one, that was sort of a remake of No, I'm sorry. MURRAY AND MAX TALK ABOUT MONEY.

**00:59:58**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

That was my favorite film. That's, I love it. I love the way it looks and I love the way it sounds. I don't like hearing my voice, but other than that, I really love the film. I think it's very, another one I think is special. It's different. And again, works with a lot of layered ideas. And repetition and people. And forces the viewer to really think. If the visuals are engaging enough, you'll take the time I hope to really put the pieces together and see how the film works. And I hope, you know, people do that with all of our films.

**01:00:40**

**MARK TOSCANO**

You, you were making stuff on your own though as well. Right? I mean, there's FOR NORMA AND HER VOICE. Was that CalArts?

**01:00:48**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Well CalArts period. I mean, you know what, why don't we call it the L.A. period?

**01:00:54**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Okay.

**01:00:55**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

And that was all through the '70s and early '80s, which I think is a time period that, that you're particularly interested in anyway. So... it was very productive. I worked with someone I met at CalArts, Carrie Lovelace who was a composer then. Now she's a critic more and she writes plays. But I did a whole series of films with this idea of focusing through cels that had words on them.

**01:01:35**

**ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Different words. It was kind of an idea that we worked on. And FOR NORMA AND HER VOICE was part of that and I worked with Carrie. And I have to tell you, at this point, I don't remember anything about it. And I did a lot of drawing on film. AFTER 10 MINUTES LINES. We did a lot of film work with Jim Fulkerson. At the time, and this is while we were in L.A., I worked in the film industry, which helped support all of our films.

**01:02:06**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Grahame was lucky enough to be able to travel with Jim all over the world. I didn't have the opportunity to do that as much. To show our films and a lot of work that we did with Jim playing the trombone. Jim was a composer. And we did a set of pieces. I think CHEAP IMITATIONS was one of them.

**01:02:26**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Well there's the FILMS FOR FULKERSON.

**01:02:29**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yup.

**01:02:30**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Like Grahame was talking about how you use them as scores, performing.

**01:02:35**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN**

Yeah. We had done again, we'd worked a lot with still films. I, we fell in love with a Nikon camera. Which got stolen. But we did that in Buffalo. And that was Ken Segal introduced us to the Nikon. It's like that was his passion. He said this is the best camera you could get. Say no more. You know, you didn't have Google. We went out, we bought a Nikon. You know, Jim said buy a Beaulieu.

**01:02:56**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

That's the one. He did the research. He loved cameras. We bought a Beaulieu. Don't know what happened to that. But we did a lot of experimenting with blurred images. And time, time lapse kind of stuff. You know, where you held the lens open and there would be a lot of movement. And then we started doing that in film, applying that same idea. And we did that both as slides For Fulkerson and we made a film like that.

**01:03:24**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

Of course my big memory of going out at night shooting, my brother came to live with us for a few months when he was 16, [laugh] then we had a station wagon and we had the camera set up at the back of the station wagon and we would drive around Los Angeles at night, shooting lights. And I remember the back of the station wagon was down and my brother said, you know, there's a really skinny dog following us.

**01:03:49**                    **ROBERTA FRIEDMAN (CONTINUED)**

And it was a coyote. Which it was, so we all like jumped in the car and raced away. But yeah, we developed a lot of different film work that was working maybe even more in a Brakhage kind of sense. In a very non-narrative, very textured, very layered visually. And that, that was part of the work we did with Jim.

**end of tape 2**