

Penn South Archive Project

Witness: Chris Wynter

Interviewers: Christiane Bird, John Harris

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Christiane: Hi, Chris. It's great to see you and thank you for welcoming us . . . welcoming us into your apartment. Can you start by giving us your full name and telling us when you moved into Penn South and into what building?

Chris: Christopher Wynter, but everyone calls me Chris and I moved . . . first went into Penn South in 2000 with my family, two sons and my wife.

Christiane: How old were your sons at that point?

Chris: I think . . . Alex would be . . . five and eight. Yeah. They're three and a half years apart.

Christiane: And what building did you move into in and what apartment? Was it a two bedroom?

Chris: We moved into a two bedroom in Building Two and we knew the buildings very well because we had lived on, since 1988 . . . 12 years . . . on 21st Street between 7th and 8th Avenue. So . . . my boys had lots of friends in Penn South. And so, then we also had some friends in Penn South. So . . .

Christiane: And how did your life change when you moved into Penn South?

Chris: The main change was really the boys, because we lived in a very small, very charming apartment . . . 1890s building, and 21st Street and all of a sudden in Penn South, you know, we had the teen rec-room, the garden, even things as basic as getting a parking spot in the garage because lots of my friends on 21st Street, they knew from just alternate side of the street parking and then and the space . . . that the huge thing was the space . . . and . . . and light because we lived in a, like I said, it was a very charming place, you know, high ceilings and a fireplace. But it was very small, small rooms and in the back with a dog, and all said, when we first moved, I think, when my youngest son first woke up, the first day, he . . . he said, oh, we don't have to turn the lights on. We get our light from the sky, which really . . . it almost made me cry. Because, you know, before they had lived in . . . both in two room . . . and I built both of the furniture in the previous place, because three rooms are too small for standard furniture. And all of a sudden, they had a big room and they got bunk beds that actually had belonged to my brother and me. And was great. And each had their own desk,

so . . . It was a lot . . . it was a lot about the family that changed. My life, I was still going on with my art work and everything.

Christiane: So, yeah, you were already an artist when you moved in. And had you always known you wanted to become an artist and when did you start?

Chris: Well, I never wanted to be an artist. I just always made things. And my father was an artist and he started giving me extra jobs between portraits and caricatures for corporations and also especially events . . . caricatures at events, corporate events, bar mitzvahs, all kinds of things. When I was in my teens, I was like 18, I . . . when I was . . . started college, but I always drew relentlessly, so I never thought of myself as becoming something else. It's just what I did. I mean, I played music also. I was this and a lot of creative fields. Even when my parents went out when I was a kid, I remember I would always make things, my friends were watching TV shows and I'm making something while watching the TV shows. So, it was nothing I thought about as something to become just . . . I just make stuff.

Christiane: I think you said, before you had started more as a . . . you thought you were going to be a musician.

Chris: Well, I was a musician.

Christiane: Okay.

Chris: So, I could say when I was a musician. I played violin and . . . but I also . . . in my late teens I started playing electric violin, with various bands, and also, I played guitar, and all kinds of music. I did some, you know, some recording sessions and Played in some clubs around the city. And when I was making pictures, those very commercial things, jobs that my father was giving me, which led to illustration. There was just . . . that was the equivalent of my day job. I didn't know that I was building skills. You know, it was just what I did. It made me a lot of money for a small amount of time compared to my friends who were working regular jobs. And they really set me free to do a lot of different things. And-

Christiane: These were like caricatures you were doing?

Chris: I did caricatures, but I also do portraits and some from the . . . like a lot of financial corporations and Merrill Lynch, Price Waterhouse Accounting, I do all of their like VPs when they retire, they get a picture by me also I would do sometimes these illustrations for them, like Merrill Lynch is . . . sometimes I did a few annual report covers and

I think one of the corporations, they're opening up a branch, first branch in Japan, so they'd have me do this huge illustration with everybody involved in it. And their people are coming in like a comet of Harry's ship into the harbor, and there's this whole hierarchy. I couldn't . . . And then they make this . . . these copies of these which they would . . . everybody would get a framed copy of . . . everybody involved in the deal. I did a bunch of things like that. Some were lawyer, you know, law firms, things like that. Some of the illustrations, they called it artwork, but they were just illustrations.

Christiane: And this was all when you were quite young, right?

Chris: Well, it went all up until . . . into my . . . into my thirties, really, I mean into my late . . . early thirties is when I finally stopped. Because at that point, I came back, I used to live on the road in the summer and . . . then I would do caricatures at county fairs and state fairs all over the country and I'd make . . . But to me, at the time, was a lot of money . . . enough money to get me all through the winter so that way I can pick and choose the jobs and play music in the winter. And . . . but at some point, I came back to New York and I decided . . . from being on the road, people seeing my non-commercial . . . my own work, I always had tons of sketchbooks. I always was doing my own work also, but never showed it to people except, you know, friends that were stopping by and I was getting all this feedback. And I decided, you know, I'm going to jump into the art world and do my own work, not for . . . not with any financial prediction of where it's going to go, but do it just because I do it and see where it goes. And I got into this program, through Empire State College, where they present . . . it's called Studio Semester in the City. And it's for graduates or post-graduate or even some undergraduate students and you get the ideas, it's a connection between the academic world and the real functioning art world or semi-functioning art world. And you'd get a studio, there were only like ten of us, I think eight or ten of us and you'd get a studio and every . . . every Friday, there'd be . . . it was run by one person and there'd be a visiting artist who would come. He made a point of having people who were showing a lot in New York. They were not professors so not treating you with the kid gloves of a . . . know, of a professor or something like that and they'd talk about their work and what they do, and then if you're interested in their ideas, they'd go around . . . you'd invite them . . . They would go round to each studio individually and talk to you. And so, I met a lot of very, you know, relatively big-name artists going . . . showing at the time, you know, but also this . . . we were set up with assistants, working as an artist assistant. I worked for fabricating. I have no idea

that before that artist didn't make their own work. These are artists that have to do a lot of major jobs going on, and they have people fabricate their work and, Vito Acconci, I did major, major . . . you know, it's these big . . . these big operation. I'd hire a crew and everything. And that was like going to school for sculpture because also this other artist, Jene Heighstein, I . . . I did huge stone sculpture for. We did it on a barge in Jersey City because it's going by barge to Kansas. I don't know how it gets by barge to Kansas. And just me. We'd go out there . . . we'd go out there in the morning, walk through this field, this was before Jersey City . . . the waterfront was developed we'd have to walk through this field with sticks out because there were packs of dogs that lived in these fields we had to walk through and get to this barge and hid with chalk, like, let me think about doing . . . And he'd leave me and I'd just work my own and he'd come back at the end of the day and say, yeah, tomorrow, maybe we'll try taking this in a little bit here and doing this here. So, it was like an incredible education, but just through doing and I was totally surprised that people kept calling me. I didn't realize that . . . I discovered that that was a business, there were fabricators.

Christiane: Okay.

Chris: But I've said, I've never worked in this material and they'd say, oh, I heard you can do anything . . . so . . . Okay.

Christiane: But you had started in the program as a painter, right . . . or?

Chris: Yeah.

Christiane: Yeah. And that just led to all these other . . . ?

Chris: It just . . . it just . . . It's all these things. I did the first 3-D stuff in that program because I think it was Eric Fischl or Lucio Pozzi. Is that still . . . and they'd look at these paintings, and they said, these are sculpture. So, these are . . . enough of those people say that that I made stuff very architectural or whatever. But after they left, I just went down and bought a couple of hundred pounds of plaster and started doing things . . . I made these things that I couldn't even move. They were so heavy, but right away, and that was the first . . . that was my first sort of jumping into . . . jumping into that. Actually, before I had . . . before I went to that program that basically threw me into the art world . . . That was really great . . . things . . . I never looked back after that. But I had had a job for Suffolk County. I lived for a while out on a . . . a migrant workers

house. It's an old stone house in the middle of a peach orchard. I was just . . . I used to . . . Going on the road in this . . . going on the road in the summers, I was getting more and more into America and being, you know, the rural, rural parts of America. And so, I came back and . . . and I ended up living on this peach farm overlooked the Long Island Sound, you had to walk through. I was just getting out of the city. You had to walk through the orchard to get . . . you can drive to the house you had to walk through the orchard to get to the house. But I got a job there to see it for the for the . . . it was the Labor Department, Suffolk County. It was for Suffolk County doing murals. And there was a team of us. You got hired individually and it was really awkward because the person who was in charge of overseeing us, he had no artistic values, judgment, anything, you know, and if someone did something that had, you know, fruit or something, then he'd say Oh, wait, we should put that in the dining room, or, you know, it was like . . . So, you know, I did that for . . . after a while, I got out of there, I was there like six months. We did some . . . some things and then I got out of there.

Christiane: Yeah, because . . . and then you started trying to get into the New York art scene where you told me before that at first you were intimidated by that . . . that whole world. But I guess going to Empire State's program, helped it, right? Yeah.

Chris: That was . . . that was it. I mean, it's what happened. I came back . . . I mean, growing up before that, to me, growing up in Brooklyn and Upper West Side of Manhattan, when the art world was pretty much limited to SoHo. And then the more high-end galleries, they used to be on 59th Street. It was a world that I felt no connection. To me, it was a bunch of people from the Midwest who I knew nothing about and didn't feel any connection with. And I could say I was also . . . probably some fear of failure, fear of rejection, fear of not being . . . you know, accepted. You know, because I hadn't done the art school thing or any of that. And so that's why it took me like basically being out of the city, seeing America and seeing how people respond to my work, just when I'm on the road, my sketches. I don't mean like commercial work. I mean my . . . my sketchbooks. And then, said okay, I'm going to give it a . . . I came back and said, alright, it's time. I want to give it . . . I want to give it a . . . jump into it. Yeah. And at the same time, I also went to the National Academy at the same time.

Christiane: At the same time.

Chris: At the same time, I came back Empire State College. I said because being self-taught, I knew I had . . . my knowledge was like Swiss cheese. You know, the lapse, the gaps. You discover things you need to discover for each job, but there are other very basic things that you never happen to stumble across. So, I went to the National Academy for . . . I was just there for five months there . . . there was two people I wanted to basically pick their brain and, you know, and five months and then I was out of there and that's where I met my wife. She was at the National Academy at the same time.

Christiane: Is she also a painter?

Chris: She's also a painter. Yeah, she's a painter and . . . she's a painter and a poet. Yeah. And . . . so eventually . . . you've got the National Academy, it was all about skill . . . craftsmanship, nothing at all about concepts you know, or meaning or evocative quality of whatever images you're producing. So, at this point, Ronald Sherr . . . Ron Sherr, who I was studying with, he . . . and he saw that I . . . fairly experienced and had some skills, and he really took me on kind of as a protege. And he wanted to possibly even give me some of his clients. He did very high-end portraits, you know, And I said, I'm not really interested in that. You know, I told him I think . . . and he had no interest in nonrepresentational or . . . or more conceptual work at all. So, he thought I was crazy. But after I got what I got out of there, I just, you know, I left that.

Christiane: So, you—

Chris: I got what I needed.

Christiane: You weren't really interested in portraits or a representational painting?

Chris: Not as an end. Just to me, there's no end. You know, I didn't know where it was going to go. I didn't know where my ideas and where my practice would take me. You know, I know I didn't want to have an end point in mind, right? I just want to do portraits. I just want to do this very presentational work. I wanted those skills. I mean, I remember when I was like 20 . . . 21, I . . . I always wanted to be able to do everything in the art world and everything. I just wanted . . . I wanted to be able to fix my car. I wanted to be able to build some houses in New Mexico. I wanted to . . . I always wanted to have experienced everything, to learn by doing. And at a certain point, I realized, okay, you can't do it all. You got to do one thing at a time. That's one reason I stopped the music because I was getting to the art and they both take the same amount of commitment and energy and time,

Christiane: Right.

Chris: So, I said, I can't do it all. So, I had to put the music aside as a hobby, which is a strange concept to me, to do something on the side. But that's what I did, you know. Yeah.

Christiane: And painting continues to be your primary medium or what medium other medium?

Chris: The primary . . . I draw and paint. I draw and paint. And painting is the primary meeting that . . . that I . . . yeah, show, but I work in other mediums like I kind of . . . painting . . . almost painting very exclusively and then, like I say, I started doing other stuff and then I really got into expanding my mediums. I had . . . I was the Artist in Residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, and . . . it's a pretty important exhibition at the end of that residency that it comes up and there were two of us and my first son had just been born. So I was, you know, I was so into having a first son. It was like making some things that seem so insignificant compared to like making life, you know? But after a while I had to just say, okay, you got to go in there and do this, had to force myself to get . . . got to get to that studio and do some stuff.

Christiane: Wow . . . right.

Chris: And so, I was doing these very . . . they were kind of precious. There was . . . they there were small. They were precious. And then I was . . . I was really into it, what I was doing. But I guess there was some latent insecurity about it, you know, is this acceptable for the big art world, you know? And my brother bought some land upstate where the family had always gone, my parents used to rent a place up there, and we had to clear it. It was way back in the woods so we had to clear it. Clear it for a driveway. And so, I went up there and started chain-sawing and doing stuff with wood that . . . I'd cut down some trees but I'd leave the bottom like ten feet in the ground and work on like ten feet of chunk.

Christiane: Wow.

Chris: And then . . . and I did all this stuff and then I brought things back to my studio in Brooklyn at the time. And I, you know, I changed things like I put metal over things and I got more . . . I got more materials involved in these wood things. Somebody didn't see the wood at all and that . . . they had already printed the catalog at the Studio Museum, which had . . . was just about my paintings and so I brought

this truck of this . . . these big huge things to the museum. This is going to be the show. Said, we have to do both since you already printed the catalog. And basically, the work was very . . . very much related to the paintings, the imagery, you know. But it was like a forest. Everything was bigger than you, so you couldn't look at it and walk away.

Christiane: Wow.

Chris: You know, I think deep down I was . . . these little . . . precious, little, beautiful paintings, if . . . you could look at it, if it didn't grab you and suck you into it, you know, you can just walk away. And I want something that that you couldn't do that, that was bigger than you.

Christiane: Yeah, that sounds right. Yeah.

Chris: So that and then . . . so then I had another . . . this . . . as . . . I would continually mix media after that. I was painting but also my studio was sculpture and . . . but since then in the long term also the sculpture has been commissioned, public-work stuff.

Christiane: Right. You . . . you told me before about the subway station.

Chris: Yeah.

Christiane: You . . . can you . . . can you tell us more about that?

Chris: Well, that's . . . that's 2-D, it's 2-D work, it's glass mosaic and that . . . that was a commission, you know, through the MTA that I . . . like a lot of things that happened to me, it was just something that was offered to me, you know, I didn't . . . it was the woman who had been the curator at City Museum in Harlem when I was there and she's done . . . offered so many opportunities to me, she's the one who told me, she said, you need to go to Africa because of my work. And when she worked the Arts International, she said, you should apply for this residency. Now, it's not a residency, it's up for digital projects in West Africa and it was very . . . there was no conflict of interest because by the time I applied, she had left. She just said I should do it. But I got a call once from the MTA that I was recommended for this subway station by her, but of course then had to go through the whole committee, and then they followed through, and I was a finalist. You know, in public work, if you're a finalist and then you resubmit your proposal, they give you a few minutes . . . to gather your . . . a few months to put together your proposal. And it was great because it was a

block from where my grandfather lived, where my father had grown up.

Christiane: What was the . . . what's the address . . . what's the subway station?

Chris: It's the . . . Frederick Douglass Boulevard, Cathedral Parkway, 110th Street. I know it's 110th Street whenever . . . officially, it's Cathedral Parkway, which is 110th Street and Central Park West. And my father had lived on Manhattan Avenue and 111th Street and 117th Street, various parts of Harlem, and then going to Columbia also, so, I know that neighborhood very well. And it was . . . really working on that project at first, it was very . . . it was a very intense and strange period. My sister died when I'm in the midst of work and it's like a week before I had to submit the . . . my proposal. She died suddenly and I am doing this work, and every now and then it's like . . . I'm working around the clock to get it done because I'd been with my mother and family and . . . and . . . and I . . . I remember sitting with my . . . my . . . my mother in the hospital, she hadn't died yet, but they knew she was going to, I . . . I said what should I do, Ma, should I stay here, or . . . if I am going to pull this project together, I'll have to go now. Said you should go do it because it is about the future. There's nothing you can do now. And I punched some holes in my studio wall when the sun was coming up. I can see the sun and she can't, but then I just turned around and put it all into . . . all into that.

Christiane: Wow.

Chris: Then I re-did that station about in 19 . . . in 2019 because the budget . . . the fabricator was fantastic but the budget wasn't good enough to do what I really want to do. The fabricator bent over backwards, and invented the tools and techniques to make it work. But I still couldn't do the amount of square footage that I wanted. It's a very expensive process and it's fabricated in Italy.

Christiane: It's all mosaics, right?

Chris: All glass mosaic. And . . . so in 2019, I got a call from the MTA that my station was one of the stations picked to gut renovate. I imagined putting it . . . you know, make it more accessible for disabled people and all kinds of things. And it's going to be a much better budget. And I can do whatever. I can leave it as it is, add to it, or totally take it out and redo it entirely. So, I added to it. It was great . . . it was . . .

Christiane: And what does it depict or is it abstract or . . .

Chris: It's about . . . well it's . . . oh yeah, it's about what all my work's about which is basically this . . . it's abstract, but it's actually it's basically symbolic imagery. It's imagery that's abstracted or simplified, but some of the things are not affected at all. And there's the obligatory picture of Frederick Douglass in there, to keep the higher forces happy. But there're like feet walking, and hands, and then there's . . . There're things like houses on wheels and lots of wheels. Then there's a Nkisi, which are the Central African . . . that's like . . . it's like a cross within a circle. The cross is in just about every . . . every culture around the world. Between North, South, East, West or . . . Earth, you know, Earth and Sky. And it's . . . and when you're in the center of those things, you're . . . you're centered, and you're, you know, you're good, you know. And my work's always been about people finding that place internally and externally and just in their head where they're . . . they're right, you know, where they're right. People call that home, call it whatever you want.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: Yeah. I just got off the phone with Sandra because . . . that's the director of the MTA because they're putting out another book about the work. So, she was reading me what they have written about my work. And I was like, oh. So, we just had this phone call to sort of edit it. Yeah. So, when I was originally doing that, I had met with the, you know, these public . . . these city things like that. You're meeting with all these people who want to have some input. So, it's at these meetings and there's the people from the Parks Department, they want to have something about Central Park from Saint John the Divine, something about Saint John's, but this one had been . . . actually, I had been selected by a community organization also.

Christiane: Okay, yeah.

Chris: And so, I just went with what it is. It's . . . to me, that's the entryway to Harlem and Harlem's . . . Frederick Douglass . . . people are . . . his whole story with the Northern Star trying to find a place that's where they can be themselves and . . . and Harlem was always, you know, a neighborhood of immigrants.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: My father always talked about growing up, you know, like one block would be Italian, one block would be Jewish. And you . . . you can't walk down the wrong block going on

your way home from school. And that was similar . . . I had some similar experiences growing up in Brooklyn, my junior high school days. You know, certain blocks . . . no, can't go down that block. But it was, you know, it was a place where people came to find . . . And so, it does . . . after spending a couple of all-nighters doing these drawings and everything with, you know, putting some trees in for the Park Department, I said, let it go. And this is like my . . . my own concerns perfectly for this. Let me just go with that. Yeah.

Christiane: Yeah, and you had said before that public artworks in general are something that are really important to you. You like to particularly do works of public art. And . . . and why is that? What is it that . . .

Chris: Because I'm interested in the . . . every person's . . . just response and having some reaching a wider audience. And most people, most days, they probably . . . if they pass by something every day on their way to work, most days, they don't even notice it. They're thinking about other things. And some days, it'll be "oh." So . . . something they hit and click is part of their environment, part of . . . part of life, as opposed to the gallery world where it's a very small audience that goes and looks at things together. And then they buy those things and then they're in their very small world of people who can afford to buy those things. And I'm interested in the wider . . . the wider world. That first happened when I was doing Museum in Harlem and I was . . . I was doing some really nasty work with sanding . . . sanding things and working with some semi toxic stuff and . . . so, I did it outside on the street, the back, 124th Street where the loading docks were and at that time, the buildings across the street were just empty . . . these shells . . . before Harlem . . . the money came from outside. And . . . so, there were a lot of just like winos and people hanging out there, handful of junkies, and the conversation about what I was doing was hysterical. But I loved it. And really it just . . . it just drove home really clearly that people are going to see what they want to see, what's in their head. You know, they're going to bring what they're . . . it's really a conversation. So, you just put it out there and they'd think. Then I was doing this . . . this was . . . Mike Tyson was really big at the time in the news. I think he'd just bitten the guy's ear or something. He was really . . . and it was this stick with these big hands that are carved, coming out from the stick. And he said, is that supposed to be Mike Tyson? And I said, oh, I don't know. He said, it looks just like him. And it was great and I realized I just want stuff on the street that people engage with directly, you know.

Christiane: Do you have anything else that's public art here

in New York or somewhere else?

Chris: Well, I'd say it's semi . . . Oh, yeah, I have University of Connecticut, things on Long Island.

Christiane: What's at the University of Connecticut?

Chris: There's an art walk. What's it called . . . I have to remember the name. Avery Point. It's called Avery Point. It's just where they have their . . . used to be Five's Pharmaceuticals was on . . . it's still a peninsula that sticks out into the Long Island Sound and University of Connecticut has it's like oceanography or something like that. So, they have a boat there and some building there, but there's an old building that has a gallery in it it's part of the university and they commissioned all these artists to do a walk around, an artists' walk and that's a big . . . it's a great place, but it's a . . . it's . . . that was . . . I did at the Brooklyn Navy Yard with a friend who's a forger, iron-ore . . . steal . . . iron forger because I wanted everything very rough and coarsely forged. And then there's . . . it's like a pirogue which universal, around the world, pirogue, you know canoes, things carved out from a log . . . from a log.

Christiane: Right . . . right.

Chris: I was just reading something about some pirogue in Sri Lanka and whereas in Africa, I actually went to work with this guy in the village. He made the pirogues for this village. And I wasn't up to it. This guy was, you know, with skills that I wasn't up to. I never dare to do artwork . . . work with the local artists. But yeah, that's . . . and that's on steel wheels. That's really big and everything, but it's great because it's right . . . And the ferry comes in, across the Long Island Sound, and it's called "Migration." Same thing as the . . . subway station is called "Migration."

Christiane: Okay.

Chris: So, people are always . . . that's what people do. They are always on the move.

Christiane: Right. And so . . . you've done all these projects, I think, all around the world.

Chris: Yeah.

Christiane: You mentioned the West African one. Can you give us a . . . sort of a brief overview of all the places you've been or some of the major places you've been? And then is

there one project that was especially meaningful to you?

Chris: Well . . . well, I've been . . . it was basically . . . these were grants, fellowships, you know, to do . . . one was a . . . only one was a residency that was the Dominican Republic. There was a residency. You know, they invite artists to come and it's a situation that is set up. The others, I'm . . . I'm proposing what I want to do and it's really . . . I'm basically a closet anthropologist. Actually, that's what I majored in in college. Although, I dropped out because I was playing music full time, but I'm interested in the way people live. And so, most of these have been in like clan, you know, clan-based cultures, you know, not highly industrialized, where you fit in or you don't fit in. You know, it's like being family and . . . or . . . figures out their way, like everybody has to figure out their way to work with their families or their crazy uncles, and their scary cousins, whatever it is. You know, you have to be part of it, the whole. And . . . so, it was in . . . the first big one was West Africa, I was in Cote d'Ivoire and Mali, and you know, then had this plan to go to Japan to work with the . . . not to work with, but to . . . I think is to be with the Ainu and the indigenous people of Japan and that was I had to stumble across that because . . . a woman . . . I had a show in Tribeca and a woman, a Japanese ceramic artist, had a gallery in the basement. And she called me because she said sometimes, she walks through the gallery to go to the basement, to go to her studio. And she visited my work and we clicked, then I invited her to have a two-person show with me. I had a show at Barbara Green Gallery in Chelsea at the time, and then she said, you have to go. She's talking about this Asian Cultural Council said, you got to do it. So . . . so that worked out and . . . and that was very interesting. And then . . . and then . . . but before I left there, Asian Cultural Council connected me with a Taiwanese artist who was sort of an indigenous-movement leader and a . . . and a carver. And he was here because Asian Cultural Council brings more Asians to the U.S. and he was hating it. They were just taking him to fancy restaurants and to meet . . . and he went . . . all he . . . she said, all he wants to do is meet Native Americans and maybe he can come to your studio and things will click. Because I had sort of a reputation of being able to just like fall into wherever I was and work things out. And so, yeah. So, came with a translator, didn't speak a word of English, a Taiwanese woman who had gone here to college and she was a video . . . videographer. And he said okay, after . . . we just sent down to the deli downstairs and got a couple of quarts of beer and rice. He very happy. Best meal he had; we were sitting on the floor of my studio. And he said, okay, you have to come out. You have to come to . . . to come to my village. So, he's part of the . . . I had no idea anything

about Taiwan. I thought it was just factories, growing up in New York where everything was made in Taiwan. The whole East Coast is, very undeveloped. It's just because there's no flat land for farms, there's no harbors. So that's where the indigenous tribes are.

Christiane: Okay.

Chris: Each village is like a different people, basically. And he said, you have to come to my place. So . . . so, then I went there before Japan. I went there for a few months and before I went up to . . . And it's interesting because my connection in Japan had just been there. All these people were . . . came . . . this whole Pacific rim. It was very interesting. It was fascinating. And there, I did a big . . . He had this collective. He gets these young men from up and down the coast and they all show up and they . . . they work on projects together. And then, when it's really . . . after a big monsoon, a big storm, or something, take these funky trucks up into the mountain and get wood. big trees there had fallen or something or other, we'd go up there with chain saws. Things that were already fallen, and . . . and for money, they made furniture, wild, crazy furniture out of . . . Also, you get these trees that just washed out into the ocean they were based right on the ocean.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: But I did a sculpture there that's there that's like a permanent public piece. It's in this town hall. And same thing in Japan, I did a piece that's now in . . . first it was in a school. I just did it. And then they asked me can we take it to the school and then I found out it was moved from the school to the town hall in this town in Hokkaido to northern Japan, where I was. to the town hall in this town in Hokkaido, the northern island of Japan, where I was. And that was very . . . very cool one. And then . . . and then stuff in Guatemala and yeah. Those . . . those were the most, you know, eye opening residencies you know, there's totally . . . the thing and just . . . because I'm working with . . . I'm just doing this to get my juices going, you know, different ways of looking at things.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: And kind of works both ways.

Christiane: Right. So, you're doing your own work at the same time.

Chris: But I'm doing my own work drastically, drastically

influenced by where I am and whom I'm working with.

Christiane: And you're also doing things that you're leaving behind, right?

Chris: Yeah . . . yeah . . . yeah. Yeah. And so, it's really . . . yeah, it's really interesting . . . and then I come back, it . . . definitely has a lasting, you know, resonance on me.

Christiane: What did you do in Guatemala? I'm curious.

Chris: Oh, then I just did . . . I just did these carves these doors for this guy. These big carved doors. He was building this big stone wall and then these big carved . . . big carved doors. Right up . . . right up from where you've been. I know you were . . . you were right down the hill there.

Christiane: Yeah.

Chris: Yeah. Pax Nax. Yeah, that's the town. I wouldn't call it a town, a couple of houses. Yeah. So, on the . . . But you know, in . . . locally, I have work that's . . . I call it public worker but it's in private spaces. It's like commissioned. This architect, who I've worked with quite a bit I'm actually going to look at something tomorrow with him some site so they're like privately owned, you know, buildings or restaurants he does. But he'll ask me to do, you know, do something. Big thing out in . . . where is it . . . Hyde Park or in New York, out on Long Island. There, there's a big 55-foot relief and a 50 . . . 60-foot like ceiling . . . The sculpture goes all along the ceiling. It's a huge atrium. It's an atrium. It's like the second-floor relief, but it's . . . and across from a balcony that's at the same level. And I love working with him because he'll just give me renderings of the space and elevations and all these materials. The actual physical examples of all the materials so I know the context and then I just totally open-ended because we're very much in sync and . . . about like materials and things like that.

Christiane: Right. Large project.

Chris: And so, he'll just say, I need something to go here. I did one thing on Madison Avenue which was great. It was . . . was a restaurant, Pranna, Madison and like 28th Street. It was neat because it was . . . I call it "Seven Breaths." Because Pranna . . . the word "pranna," somehow relates to breathing, I think. But I think it was like 24-foot ceilings or even taller and they had the wall with all these recessed niches like all these basically floating planes, very sort of . . . in . . . you know, Bauhaus kind of thing, kind of a Mondrian thing with the walls. But they were just going to put light

boxes in so many things, they put light in . . . and it's . . . he told the client when he called me, he said he told them, you're spending . . . how many millions are you spending on this place, this multi floor restaurant and had a cigar lounge downstairs. You could have your own wine cellar and everything. Why don't we make different sculptures in all these places? So, it was really like . . . it was like a showcase, you know, and it was very cool. The place closed and I don't know what happened to the sculptures. I think, you know, the owner, they . . . I think I got a call from the owner when they were closing, but I don't . . . I was out of the city because I came back and it was just gone and the sculptures are gone. I think . . . I saw I had a few voice mails from him of like . . . and I have a feeling he wanted to know if I wanted them or what I wanted to do with them.

Christiane: So, do you do most of your work in your studio or on site, or is it—

Chris: I . . . the painting in the studio, the sculptures are totally . . . I have done all those things in my studio. Yeah. I've done . . . The only thing I . . . that I didn't do in the studio was these . . . the steel, like I say, the steel work done at the Navy Yard. I did a sculpture. I did . . . oh, yeah, a park in Dumbo. It was a park on Brooklyn Waterfront Park It's actually a State Park, but it's in the city right on the water. And there was another pirogue shape on wheels, and now that's at the Kenkeleba Gallery on the Lower East Side. They have a garden in the back there. I think most of the wood has just rotted away, I think it's probably just wheels now because it wasn't designed to be . . . last forever. It was . . . the park for a couple of years. But that like . . . that was the first metal work that I did on my own. So, I found a shop around here. It was an old copper re-finishing for... The chefs used to have the copper bottom plates and it was something . . . it hadn't been used since the twenties and this artist was like renting the whole thing and the city didn't know what to do with it. It was huge with all these incredible old equipment and I just sort of I made these wheels there, these big steel wheels for that . . . for that sculpture there. And I'm sure that's long gone probably. Probably some condominium now. I'm pretty much sure it's torn down. but I just wanted to do some sort of documentation of the place. It was so neat. But yeah . . . yeah, I totally forgot about these . . . these public places. Yeah.

Christiane: Yeah. That's wonderful. Yeah.

Chris: Yeah.

Christiane: And how long have you had your studio in Dumbo?

Was it . . . and do you go every day or . . . ?

Chris: I . . . let me see, Dumbo, I've been there since '92 or something like that. A long time. But the studio, I share . . . yeah, I share the studio with somebody. And then I had a studio, different location, a few years and then I moved into the studio where . . . I was in one studio for 21 years and as Dumbo has changed, now I'm in another space. I've been for five years. Some of the dinosaurs are still in Dumbo. So many people have been kicked out, you know, some of it's converted to co-ops, high-end residential stuff or clean Studios. That's what happened to the studio I was in for 21 years. Now it's like big, you know, startup companies, Internet web design companies, software companies and film companies . . . clean studios.

Christiane: I see. Right.

Chris: And then they can charge a lot more those, you know, those start-ups.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: Yeah.

Christiane: Do you go to your studio every day, or is it . . . ?

Chris: It depends. When I'm on a roll, when I'm working in the product, I . . . I'll go there every day. I teach, also. I'm a professor also, so, I can't go those . . . I used to go there after teaching, so sometimes I'll go there after teaching, but I'm trying not to . . . I'm trying not to like, work . . . be such a night owl. I used to be a total night owl and then when I had kids, I tried not to, but I still . . . I just didn't get to sleep because I used to come home from the studio at like one in the morning, you know, and then . . . and I'm the one getting everybody up at seven, you know, trying to get everybody . . . trying to get everybody out. But there'll be times when I'm not at the studio for weeks and then, once . . . once I'm working on something, I go, you know, very regularly. Very regularly. It's like . . . it's not worth me going if I'm just going to go for a couple of hours, you know, except if I really have some deadline. Like I just completed a commissioned piece. So, then I was, you know, I was going every day.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: And I did what I call a public piece in a private space during the COVID that kept me really busy there. And I was

just working basically around the clock and I hired one of my sons to do some of the some of the . . . the woodwork. This kind . . . all these very strange shapes, they're very tricky, lots of cutting, lots of strange angles, and all this kind of thing. And . . . and then my other son, I subcontracted to do metal, because I also designed some light fixtures and some metal work. And he did these metal screens. They're really cool. And I'm actually . . . the architect just contacted me, is he available to do . . . expand those screens to make a . . . and he just . . . and my son said, yeah but not for another month or two because he's really busy doing other stuff.

Christiane: Both your sons are artists then, also.

Chris: No, the one son that did the screens, yeah, he went to Pratt for industrial design. He's a fabricator, artist, he works a regular job but he also does lots of . . . takes his own jobs on the side, is trying to make a healthy life for himself and not work himself to death. And his wife wants him not to come home so late all the time. And my other son is not. But he likes to do things with his hand. He's a software engineer and a musician. He does . . . he was the . . . you know, I'd say composing music. He does music . . . he's studio work. He doesn't sit around plucking on the guitar but he, you know, he . . . he worked in, you know, recording studios, and did some producing, things like that. But now he's a software engineer.

Christiane: Was it hard for you when your sons were young and . . . and older balancing the family life, the artistic life, the . . . ?

Chris: The only thing hard, was like I say, time. It's all . . . time is the only . . . I mean, they were so into it. They had their own set of tools at my studio. At eleven, they'd come out . . . they'd come out there and do stuff. And, yeah, it was really a lot of fun. It was a lot of fun. Yeah. The only thing is time, even . . . even maintaining my relationship with my wife, you know, we got to spend some time together, you know. That's . . . that's the thing. That's . . . that's the perennial, apparently a balancing act,

Christiane: Everyone's battle, right? Did you ever do any artwork in the Penn South apartment or in the . . . I know there were some studios here for a while.

Chris: No, no, because the studios wouldn't be big enough for me. I'm like . . . I make a big mess, you know? And I've got so much . . . tools and all kind of things, you know. But like, where I am now is really . . . I'm really squeezed. The space where I was till 21 years was twice the size I have now.

It's still fine compared to what you know, what a lot of people have, but it's . . . it's tight. I have a lot of stuff and I'm doing these big paintings. Yeah . . . yeah. But I think . . . so in terms of, you know, the family, life, balancing time, and everything, and even as far as traveling on all these projects, I took my kids with me sometimes they were . . . out of school because I wanted them to see there're lots of ways to live. I mean, I saw that by just traveling in the, you know, around the country. You know, like New York is this bubble, New York is not America. New York's New York, you know, and . . . and it wasn't . . . you know, I didn't put it specifically, I want you to see different ways people live, but I know that my wife and I, we both lived in a lot of different situations. You want to see there're so many ways people can live and they're into that. And so, they totally understood that, you know, I'm at the studio working and they're kind of . . . I hope they have a better . . . work it out better, but that balancing act of the time

Christiane: It's hard. So, they would go to you . . . go with you to Africa and Taiwan and then Japan? That's wonderful.

Chris: Yeah, they lived in all those places. It's great. They actually went to school in Japan. We were living in this tiny . . . the equivalent if you came to the U.S and going to like Alaska or someplace, you know, or northern Montana, or something, northern North Dakota, because it was just very rural and just rice . . . rice paddies and some others, then each valley has a different thing. The next valley was cantaloupe and strawberries, this valley was rice. And so, we were living in a . . . in Japan. No . . . no story with me is simple. I had done . . . I had done pre-CGI special effects in Manhattan, like with a bunch of incredible crafts people, slash artists who could make everything . . . a lot of things for TV commercials and things like that. And one of these guys, I got to become really good friends with, he was Japanese. It turns out he was Ainu. I didn't even know what Ainu was. When I told them I got this grant to go, he said, oh, I'm Ainu. And he connected me . . . he had gone back to Japan and he was . . . he was like Ainu royalty. And he was . . . started making this traditional instrument, the tonkori and playing music. But he's really also into reggae and funk, and he would do traditional Ainu songs, with reggae and funk with like maybe bass or something like that. And he was really . . . he was a huge hit in Japan. He actually performed at Lincoln Center here. He came back here. But he hooked me up. We lived in a log cabin which . . . where he would go to rehearse with his . . . his . . . his group. They would rehearse on this farm. And so, for the farmer, I made a totem pole, an Ainu totem pole with Ainu . . . it's like a bear, a salmon, and then some bird. I forget the bird. Those are all

sacred things. And we were . . . we were really living there and there was everybody came to our house. The first night there, we went to somebody else's house. Everybody gathered. We met everybody. And very few people spoke English, but a few did, then Oki, my friend, he's like, I'm leaving. I've introduced you to everybody, told everybody that the party tomorrow night was at . . . was at my house. He had to go to Tokyo for some recording and everybody came over and they would show us how they make rice, and then invite us to ceremonies, went to these really intense, really sacred ceremonies that nobody can go to. It was really incredible. And that's why I found out what's, you know, I found out so much about their culture, and the values, and everything like that. So, at one point, about . . . I said, so . . . well, he came over and said, the landlord's wife, this is the farmer whose . . . whose house this . . . this log cabin is on his land. He said he . . . he wants . . . she wants you to make them a totem pole, he said. And like most projects, I put it off till like the last second, the last couple of weeks there and I'm like . . . I'm chiseling out this totem pole. And one of the guys who lived . . . He was great. He looked like some really chunky samurai. He was so cool. He was a lumberjack. So, you know, he said he could use his company's truck and then go up and get some wood and to . . . he's the one who got wood from where they were, you know, where they were clearing some trees, we were surrounded by forests. This is . . . these flat plains with, you know, with paddies and farmland, and then these super dense woods, you know, these hills with super dense woods. So that's all the wood that I worked. . . I did all this woodwork there. Yeah.

Christiane: And were totem poles . . . are totem poles part of their culture or was it just—

Chris: Yeah . . . yeah . . . yeah.

Christiane: Yeah.

Chris: I found so much there, like I said that whole Pacific rim from a . . . from the Northwest U.S., the whole Pacific Rim. I had no idea that that's . . . makes sense. They're all fishing. You go from one place, you go a little further, a little further, all around the Pacific Rim because the . . . when I first got there, Oki my friend, he said meet me at Sapporo, and that's the big city on the island of Hokkaido, said meet me at Sapporo It was a big Ainu festival and it's also an . . . slash I don't know . . . this Indigenous Pacific Rim People's Festival. And he's performing there and this big, big thing was in some huge theater, but the first guy who was speaking was Hawaiian and he's like the leader in this whole Pacific . . . and just from his clothes, and I saw the Ainu

clothes, and I said, oh my God, yeah, this is all like . . .

Christiane: Wow. Interesting.

Chris: They're all like . . . and it hadn't occurred to me.

Christiane: Yeah.

Chris: You know, just like the Mediterranean is this whole back-and-forth influence, you know, even from, you know, from the east end and to the west end, it was like . . . yeah, so, it's really . . . it was fascinating because at one point in Taiwan, everybody carved in Taiwan, I mean my . . . my boys and Laura and I'm looking for this big bowl that Laura carved there, my wife, Laura. And at one point, they asked me . . . we were working away and I did this big crazy sculpture, and he says, so why are you leaving? Why are you going to . . . the guy, the leader of the group.

Christiane: Yeah.

Chris: He said, why are you going to Hokkaido? He said, the Ainu are extinct because the Ainu had no right to government until, I think, ten years ago. Didn't recognize them as a people. So, they can't even like Sue for anything. You know their . . . a lot of the traditions are outlawed, like the women dye their lips black that's outlawed stuff like that. They made . . . they really did a good job of trying to make them disappear, people that became Japanese when they migrated from Korea. But I said, oh, I got this friend, Oki . . . Oki! He was here last week. You know Oki-san . . . Oki-san, yeah. So, they all . . . going back . . . yeah. Because he, at the time, Oki was in the Philippines or something, because they were all very active in this . . . sort of this indigenous people's movement.

Christiane: How long were you in Japan for . . . or?

Chris: I was . . . it was like five months, something like that . . . four or five months in Hokkaido. In Taiwan, so that was an add on, that was like a couple of months, I think two, maybe three months.

Christiane: And what year did you say that was about?

Chris: My boys were like . . . they were like eight and eleven or something like that. So, that would have been . . . 91 . . . yeah like . . . yeah, then around 2001 or something. Yeah, we were in Penn South.

Christiane: You were here, okay.

Chris: Yeah. I think it was Penn South. Yeah . . . yeah . . . yeah . . . yeah.

Christiane: You mentioned before, I'm bringing things back to a more mundane subject, you mentioned before that you're also a teacher. That's at Pratt, right?

Chris: At Pratt.

Christiane: And how long have you been there? Is that mostly teaching painting or all different medium or . . . ?

Chris: I've been there . . . I didn't go to art school, as I said, so I've . . . I basically got invited to teach there. First it was Parsons and that's because I did this residency in the Dominican Republic, that I spoke about and several Parsons' people had some connection with that. So, several people were down there when I was there and when I was there, they asked me if . . . you know, to come back if you're interested in teaching, stop by and we can discuss that. So . . . so, I was curious about teaching. So, I taught at Parsons for a few years and then Pratt happened because of West Africa, a bunch of strange conversions. And I had this show with someone when I came back. That was . . . she had also been in West Africa. We had a two-person show. And so at that opening, some Pratt people asked me if I'd be interested in teaching a color class, which was strange because most of the paintings were primarily just black, red and yellow, and they said it's how you use the color, because I said, what are you seeing that I'm . . . I said, okay, I'll give it a go. And I really like teaching and it really . . . it really gets my juices going. As I said . . . as I tell my students, I said two days a week, I have to be really lucid and make some kind of sense. You know, it keeps me on my toes, you know, and I learn from the students. It's a two-way street, you know, because you're putting out ideas and . . . in the form of words and you're seeing what comes back and then they also say things back to you. And also, it makes me really you know, it's definitely . . . I learn.

Christiane: It . . . does it inspire you . . . your work to go in a different direction ever, or?

Chris: No. That's why . . . no, it doesn't . . . but I'm sure it's influenced my work as far as color. I teach . . . I teach foundation department, so it's the freshman students. I teach this course called "Light, Color, and Design," which is color, design, composition, all these things. And we use all different media, even some digital media at the end, because it starts off very, very core concepts but then it gets more

and more . . . by the second semester, it gets more and more self-directed concepts and everything like that, using what they theoretically learned the first semester. And I teach this course called "Visualization and Representation." That's a mouthful. Just used to be called "Drawing." We changed the name of these things because everyone has to take them so it's not about drawing. It's like if you take a history class, you write in it, but you don't call it writing.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: You know.

Christiane: Since you said you were only using mostly black and white and red and—

Chris: Black and yellow . . . black and yellow.

Christiane: Yellow. Did you start using more colors after you started?

Chris: No, not because of that. No, I had started before that. But I thought it was very strange because I . . . I was mainly a person who drew when I was young. And that was . . . when I went to the National Academy, the first time I was seriously painting this, you know, with some I was terrified of color, you know, and I was so inched into color, backed into it, you know, so . . . and so it's so ironic to me that I'm teaching color. But I see that with students, I have students I . . . I think an important part is to be able to empathize and . . . and totally understand what's going on in their head and sense it, because I get that all the time. Students draw incredibly well and they're afraid that color will mess up their drawings because they don't know, you know, they don't know how it works. Yeah, it's very funny.

Christiane: I forgot to ask you earlier, when did you move into this apartment? You were here—

Chris: 2006.

Christiane: You're in a three bedroom now.

Chris: Into the three bedroom. We started in a two bedroom in 2000. And we moved in here in 2006.

Laura Wynter(off screen): Seven.

Chris: 2007, excuse me.

Christiane: Another question I have is how does the living in

New York influence you as an artist, would you say?

Chris: I don't know if it . . . I mean, I think this life influences me as an artist. I can't . . . I can't put it to the place.

Christiane: Yeah.

Chris: I say, because I've . . . lot of different places, you know, I've lived in so many different places and I'm outside of New York, even when I'm not doing some far away trip, we go upstate, like a . . . I think right, actually if I think further about it, I would say to me, New York is one reason I want my kids to . . . you're just exposed to all different kinds of people and you're aware that it's a big world and there's many ways of living and people handle it in many different ways. And I think that's . . . that's one of the reasons I want my, you know, I stayed in New York with my kids. So many people when they have kids, they go back to where they grew up, the situation they grew up in, because they think that's . . . they associate that with a good childhood experience. So, I, yeah, I think it just influenced me . . . that's one reason . . . I know my kids when they were young, they loved coming back to the city. They loved going away, but they also loved it when we'd come back. It's like all this other stuff, the other things. Yeah.

Christiane: And did they know your father and his artwork?

Chris: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. They . . . they know my . . . it's very funny because my son, before he'd even seen my father work, when he was like four or five, he would make the exact same expression as my father when he worked. He would do this weird thing with his tongue that my father always did when he drew. And it was like, wow! Genetics are crazy. And he's one that . . . he's the one that, you know, that's the visual artist. The other one's the one with the music and word artist. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, they both . . . and, you know, they both get out of town, but they're . . . they . . . they love the energy and the things going on.

Christiane: I think that pretty much covers the questions I have. Is there anything else you want to add or something you think is important?

Chris: No, I'm sure I'll think of something as soon as you leave, I'll think of something I should have said. It always happens.

Christiane: How about you, John? Do you have any questions? Follow up questions you're interested in?

John: No, I don't know, I mean, maybe just one general question about and, you know, I don't know where this would go, but I know you've kind of made it clear kind of the distinction between living in Penn South and your art world . . . at work. But, I mean, what brings them together? Where do you see maybe connecting points between your life and here, and not just your life with your family, but Penn South life, if you want to call it that.

Chris: And the art, right.

Christiane: And the art, if there is one.

Chris: There's . . . Yeah, that was . . . there's . . . there's not . . . there's not really because what I have is . . . I have a real community in Dumbo. It's gotten less of . . . most of . . . I'd say about 80% of the artists have gotten kicked out. But it's still I know a lot of people there . . . of the core people that have been there a long time and they . . . there's no . . . there's no overflow into here. And I know a lot of people in the neighborhood, but it's not as tight because we don't have this common thing. There they have this common thing that we're all artists or designers or something like that. And so, there's really not a . . . there's really not a connection.

Christiane: Not a connection.

Chris: Yeah, when I'm there, I'm there. And part of that I mean, one reason . . . when I first went out to Dumbo, I was excited about it because I can go through periods where I'm not that disciplined and I need to have a place to go to, to work.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: You know, because I had a situation, I lived once in Tribeca, where I had a studio right down the hall. I had a loft . . . at the back of the loft . . . It was a duplex I lived in, and in the front was the studio. It was too easy just to keep procrastinating, eat, take a phone call, do this and that. I go someplace, I'm there.

Christiane: Right.

Chris: And . . . and there . . . there used to be nothing there. And then a bar opened downstairs and I'd go downstairs and get something to eat, and everybody would be all like, Chris, let me buy you a beer. All of a sudden, it's like I came here to get away from that, not to hang out with people

when I need to work. But . . . but it's worked very well. It's great. It's worked out very well. But there's not really a connection. There's not really a connection. It is really two worlds I have, two very separate worlds I have.

John: Do you . . . do you not . . . do you think about your art when you're not in your studio?

Chris: Yeah, lots of times. I go through . . . yeah, yeah, lots of times. I mean, lots of times, it's in the sort of . . . it's a very subliminal way. But what's unfortunate is too often I think about my teaching. That's taken up . . . I mean I'm so into it. Sometimes I think I shouldn't care that much because, you know, I'm always looking at things. I'm thinking how I can use that in my teaching or . . .

Christiane: And it takes a lot of your time and energy, too, I would imagine teaching, right?

Chris: Well, when I'm there it is . . . But during COVID, it did. That was crazy. The stuff . . . teaching online, I had to completely redo everything. But normally, no, I just go in there. I've done it. You know, I can go in there with like two or three possibilities, Plan A, B or C, and I look at their eyes and I look at what's on the wall and I go Plan D, you know, so . . . but it's very fluid. It's very . . . yeah, there's no like preparation or anything like that until the teaching online, but that was . . . that . . .

Christiane: The mention of COVID reminded me you said you had a lot of work during COVID.

Chris: Well, I had these two, you know, those two big . . . those two commissions. One, which is that optic that I was speaking about, was Dhamaka . . . I'm not sure. I think it's called Dama or Dhamaka. It's a restaurant on the Lower East Side that's in the old . . . the new building that used to be the Essex Street Market on Essex and Delancey. And that was the one that . . . that my son did the steel work for and one did the other thing for. Yeah. And that's, they all made steel for . . . that was . . . Yeah, that was very strange because that was . . . after all the Black Lives Matter marches were going on and the streets were empty, I'm working at the studio until like 1:00 in the morning, then I go to drive home and both bridges are closed because of marches. So, I have to go like to Queens to get home or something like that. It was so . . . it was wild. And then cops coming up to me while I'm trying to get in line or something and he's got no mask on and he's hollering into my face. I said, put a mask on.

Christiane: Crazy time.

Chris: Yeah, that was . . . that was a wild time. But I mean, I was blessed with, I mean, I had some project there, it was, you know, it was interesting. It was fun. It was one that I wouldn't call artwork, because it was more of a . . . it was a commission that too many people were involved and wanted to have . . . wanted to be, so it ended up being more of like a . . . a, you know, a project, a committee project. Right, so it was a job. I said, this is a job. Relax. It's just a job. It's not a . . .

Christiane: Right.

Chris: Yeah.

Christiane: Yeah.

Chris: But, yeah, but . . . but you know what, I think it was the same before I moved into Penn South also, and that's always been like the home, the studio are two . . . two separate . . . separate things. But one thing about being in Penn South, a home became way more comfortable place to spend time. You know, because I grew up . . . growing up in the city, it was always . . . I was always out. I was always out. At home was just a place to sleep, you know. And with Laura, Laura is way more socially . . . and she keeps us connected. So, we, you know, would have parties and dinner parties and stuff, even at the old place, but still here it's so much more . . . come home like . . . yes . . . yes. And I don't feel like . . . like I have to live my life outside,

Christiane: It eases things.

Chris: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Christiane: Well, thanks so much, Chris. It's been . . . It's been really great.

Chris: Yeah.

Christiane: Hearing your stories, and your experience as an artist, and as a Penn South cooperator. Well, thank you for your time.

Chris: Thank you.

John: We need to do 20 seconds of just silence to get the room ambient sound, and we have A/C on, so that's okay. We'll start now. Okay.

Chris: The kitchen sounds, are they okay?

John: Yeah. They weren't too bad for that . . . for this, I mean.