

Clotilde Luce Interview

Kathy Hersh: My name is Kathy Hersh. I am an interviewer for the Miami Beach Visual Memoirs Project, and our interviewee today is Clotilde Luce. We are on beautiful Miami Beach, and the date is January 24th, 2018. I would like to ask you for our records here, what year did you first come to the Beach? Do you remember the year?

Clotilde Luce: To the Beach to live or just start visiting?

Interviewer: To start visiting, and then we'll talk about how you came to live here.

Luce: Yeah. It's funny, I was thinking about it last night. I was coming home from a meeting, walking down Ocean Drive, and I'm trying to remember which porch of which fabulous hotel on Ocean Drive. I had this experience, it was maybe '88 or '89, and I was working for a radio station in Paris, and I had a morning show in English, the morning drive show. This very prominent French movie producer, Toscan du Plantier [Phonetic][01:00], he wanted to do a French film festival in Miami Beach. He was ahead of the trend. It hadn't been quite, South Beach wasn't quite discovered yet. He brought us over, it was a freebie, and we reported on it. Unfortunately, the French film festival never took off. But, I'm sitting out there having a late breakfast and there are four cars on Ocean Drive. It's just lined with the, you know, the palm trees. That was in the old days when you would have maybe in the hotel next to us, you know, the Orthodox couples would be sitting out there and they'd all be chatting, and the ladies, the women at one end, and the men. It was very, very convivial. I think that's a great way to be 80 years old, is sit around and just schmooze all day, and you know, none of this loneliness. Anyway, I was thinking, had I had any brains, I would have bought the whole block, you know? My real estate brain was particularly developed. It just struck me as such a remarkable place. The architecture. I knew I was in a special place. That was a very early impression, very lingering impression. Then I started coming in the 90s. My father had an apartment here and I would bring friends over. We would go to the clubs on Washington Avenue. The clubs were very trendy, and very cool. There was no bouncer, none of that waiting in line, none of that nonsense. All of the clubs were really quirky. You felt like you were in the coolest place in the world.

Interviewer: What brought you here permanently, when you came to live permanently?



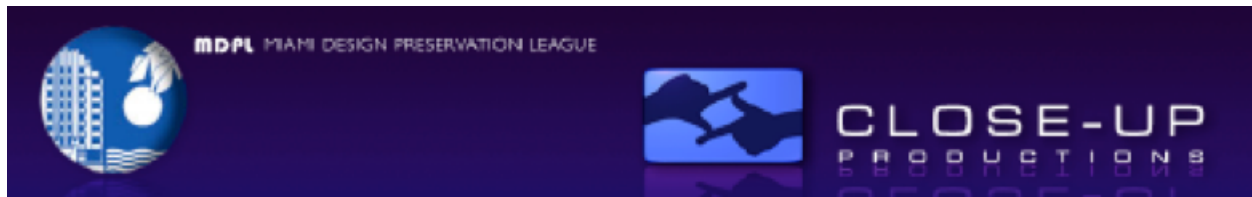
Luce: Well, it was a back-and-forth. I wasn't sure of things at all. I had been, I had had a fantastic career doing radio shows. After like 17 years, one of the shows ended. France was feeling very stuck at the time. This was in the late 90s. France felt, as they say, "sclerozay" [Phonetic][03:04], like sclerotic, you know, just stuck. Those were the years when everybody wanted to be us. Bill Clinton seemed dynamic, business-friendly, and yet humane. There were the startups. You know, the French were falling in love with us because we were so, we were a model to the world. We were getting it right, you know? Business, but not ruthless. It looked very appealing over here compared to France, which was feeling very stuck. Then I did a fantastic thing, which was do an apartment swap. I wanted to test Miami Beach. A woman who had been working in fashion took my apartment in Paris and I tested this place for a couple months, which I think is a smart thing to do.

Interviewer: And?

Luce: Had a very fortunate chance to purchase in a very cool, low-key building. I think it's a neighborhood that I hope we can protect the interesting character of this neighborhood, because it hasn't gotten as sort of cheesy and bling as people are trying to do to other parts of south Florida. That takes a lot of work and a lot of vigilance. You have to go to board meetings, you have to. You know, they try to sneak stuff in all the time, like nightclubs that would bother people. It's just the character of the neighborhood that we've, we, collectively, have worked kind of hard to keep it trendy, but not as kind of, you know, people getting ill north of Fifth Street.

Interviewer: This is the real tension on Miami Beach, isn't it, between booming tourism and the fact that this is a residential city. There are people who live here who have community and want to have a nice community, but what's paying for it are the tourists.

Luce: Well, I think it depends on which tourists. I mean, one of the things that attracted me to this place at first, I liked the fact that I would walk down a couple of blocks and I would hear four languages before I would hear English, and I liked that. I would hear, of course Spanish. I would hear maybe Yiddish. I would hear Italian and French. I like the fact that we have a lot of foreigners here. It's just, I think, there's certain types of commerce that appeal to, like selling you \$17 mojitos. That's one type of tourist. Then we have, I think a much more, tourists with a certain sensibility for what this place is, and I see them too. I welcome the tourism. I'm not sort of a NIMBY person. It's just that I think it's a



quality of life that is, that we have to. That's once again, I keep coming back to the boards in our city, because one of the things that I admired when I moved here was resident activism. Living in France, a lot of the decisions are taken top down. Usually they're good decisions, because there's not a lot of corruption, you know? You don't have the real estate industry that owns all of the decisions made for Paris. Coming here and seeing that people will stand up at a meeting. I did it once, the first time myself, I couldn't believe it. I made a slight difference in a multi-million dollar building that was going to go up. I couldn't believe it. Why would they listen to me? But they did. I think if you're sort of sane, and you make a statement, and the board is independent and willing to listen to what the residents say, you can shift and make improvements in your city, which is sort of one of the big motivations for some of the stuff, the action, I've taken part in.

Interviewer: Can you say what that building was and what the modification was?

Luce: You know, I don't even remember. It's one of the ones at South Point. I studied architecture. I'm very sensitive to architecture. I've written about architecture when I travel and stuff. One of the things that seems very dull to me, is that kind of Aventura look, which is, oh God, a million wavy, shiny balconies, OK? It's the biggest banality of what you can do when you're going to build a condo in south Florida. Miami Beach has always been very specific. Our whole history, we have never mimicked what was going on in the mainland. Even our Deco style. Our Deco style wasn't what was being done in Paris, or what was being done in New York, or Tel Aviv, or all the other places in the world. We had a specific architecture. After the war, Morris Lapidus and Normal Giller, and that whole generation, they adapted the international style to our climate, our temperature, materiality. You have light and shade that hits the buildings. You don't get that with glass. This was another, what could be anywhere. It's what I call "Anywhere U.S.A." architecture. They were going to do miles of glass, and I said, "Glass gets dirty. It looks pretty in the renderings. Three months into rainy season, it's schmutzy [Phonetic][08:40], and it looks like anywhere. Would you consider putting a higher ratio of concrete? It gives it more structure, and it doesn't look like, I'm sorry, Sunny Isles in Aventura.". They'd never heard of me. I'm no one. It must have been the Design Review Board. They said, "Hm, that makes sense.". They made the developer, the architect, shift the ratio of the balconies. I mean, you know, it's just a funny little anecdote of why I had a lot of admiration for that Miami Beach culture of boards and local activists.

Interviewer: Were you a member of the design board at the time?



Luce: No. I was.

Interviewer: Just a private citizen.

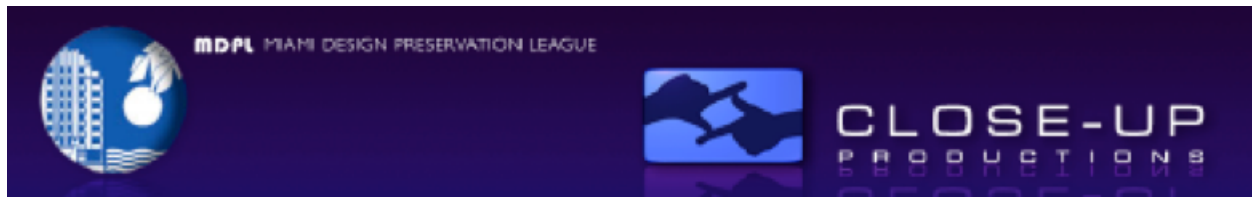
Luce: I just was, no, yeah, absolutely. I did get on the DRB later, the Design Review Board. Those were very, very, very good years for me. I learned a lot. I was lucky. I was at a time when a lot of amazing projects were coming, you know, like the New World Symphony, E11EVEN, South Pointe Park. We had a good run.

Interviewer: What were some of the things you learned? You said you learned a lot.

Luce: Well, there were professionals on the board. These are mostly men who have a practice. They're architects. They have a business, and yet, they would push back when they saw something that was substandard. I think the boards in the last few years have been very passive and very weak. They have approved really, really mediocre stuff, which is harming our city's visible brand. If you have architects or professions on either the historical Preservation Board or the Design Review Board, you don't have to be confrontations. You don't have to be offensive. You just say, "This is a very interesting start. Thank you very much. It's an interesting project. We think it could be more compatible. I believe you could make this more nuanced. Would you consider taking that down one story, and then you could, you know. Come back in two months." You get a better project. I bet if you were to do a study of the number, of just approvals on first meetings, the last couple of years under what we called "the slave", which is last couple of years under Mayor Levine, I think they were approving so often, first time around. I think the point of having those boards, once again, it's not to be offensive or confrontation, but you can get, you can extract a better project if you ask them to come back and you have critical thinking. That's what I learned from the guys who were on the DRB with me. One of them is back on the DRB today, Mike Stephens [Phonetic][11:47]. He has a really interesting sensibility. He would say, in, you know, the most courteous terms, "Please consider changing this, modifying this." We would get much better projects. So I learned. We had some amazing experiences. When Jacques Herzog of Herzog de Meuron came and made the presentation for what became E11EVEN, that's like one of the coolest 25 minutes I've spent in my whole life.

Interviewer: Tell us about it.

Luce: Well.



Interviewer: What's so cool about it?

Luce: He's cool. I thought, well, this is, you know, probably the most prestigious architecture, snooty, practice in the world. He's gonna be a little bit condescending, like, he's coming to South Beach, you know, rollerblades, and bikinis, and yeah, the beach, and nya [Phonetic][12:41], nya [Phonetic][12:41], nya [Phonetic][12:41], and so forth. I don't think he was being calculating. He started out by saying that he and his kids and wife had been coming for years. He knew who Morris Lapidus was. He mentioned Lincoln Road. He appreciated what Lincoln Road still was then. He seemed to have a real appreciation for our city. He didn't seem condescending, like, you know, "You're so lucky that I'm going to deign to do a project here.". Then, just the whole presentation was, the materiality of it, it's all that concrete and different angles, so it's always going to pick up shadow and light. It's not that wrap-around glass thing. He started out explaining parking buildings are usually these sinister places, you know, you're dark, it's enclosed, you're a little nervous. It doesn't smell good, you know. All of that. He said, 'You're in Miami. Air. Breathe. Open.". I take all of my foreign friends who come and visit, and quite a few are architects. I say, "We're going to walk up.". As you go up, each level is a different height. Slowly, the city emerges as you come up. One height, lower height, higher height. When you get to the top, the last thing you would expect to find as you get to the top of a parking lot is a bunch of dangling plants hanging over your head. You just walked through, you know, 500 cars. You don't expect to find plant life dripping down on your head. I think its brilliant work.

Interviewer: Who else is doing some brilliant work that you've noticed that you like?

Luce: I'm not too excited by, I'm worried because I think we've had this real estate push in the past couple years. I think we've had, I'm sorry to say, very uncritical land use boards. They've just been approving stuff that I think is very mediocre and is going to do a lot of harm to the city. I'm very glad to say we have new boards now. They are playing the role.

Interviewer: The mayor?

Luce: Well even, yeah, slightly before that. It started to shift recently. We're beginning to see the Historic Preservation Board make very important decisions on Lincoln Road, for instance. There was a very incompatible project that was being pushed, and, you know, the person



is very entitled, and it's well known and stuff. It would have been a calamitous kind of thing that got parachuted into Lincoln Road. Fortunately, they're going to get a better result. That takes critical thinking. It takes people who have a background in the subject who are independent. They don't have any money in the game, do they? They can say, "Please come back. Reconsider this. Let's do a better project."

Interviewer: How do you get on the Design Review Board?

Luce: Well that's the Historical Preservation Board because that's Lincoln Road.

Interviewer: OK.

Luce: I think I got on the DRB because I had been writing for magazines about architecture and then I had been involved in one very important exhibit that we put on in New York. That was the introduction at the notion of MiMo to the world. I did not invent the name, you know. You have to give credit to Randall Robinson, Terry Dimeeco [Phonetic][16:31]. There's a couple that you might want to interview someday, Don and Nina Worth. They've done a great deal, not just for Miami Beach, but beyond. They managed to pull together an incredible mix of people. I don't know. We never would have sat in the same room together. I don't know how they did it. We put on this show in New York at the Municipal Art Society, which was the introduction of the notion of Miami Modern architecture to the world.

Interviewer: What year was that?

Luce: We put that on here first. What was cool was the timing, because it was spring after September 11th. There was this kind of gloomy, you know, there was a pall in New York. Something about our launching our show in the spring. It got press because it was something kind of joyous. It was escape. This was the show, as we put it on. It was March to May 2002. Municipal Art Society. There's the Norman Giller North Beach Bandshell, right? We just got a district by the way, approved, North Beach. That's years. Look at this, what is that, like 16 years, we've been trying to get North Beach protected, and it finally happened recently. That's good news. Basically, the International Inn, we're going to try to get that protected. That it absolutely a masterpiece, and it's hanging over the water. It's the same architect as this building, Melvin Grossman. He worked with Morris Lapidus. We did the Vagabond Motel on Biscayne Boulevard. That's a great shot of the Fontainebleau close-up. It was, I think, what you have to realize is



that seen from outside, people used to always like sort of snicker at Miami Beach. It's tacky, it's, you know. Morris Lapidus, they called him "Bargain-basement Baroque", and it hurt him. He destroyed his own archives. Had he not been sort of rediscovered a few years before he passed away, he was, I wouldn't say depressed. I'm in no position to say he was depressed. It was considered, you know, tacky. It was Miami Beach. I think that we helped sort of introduction the notion that it was a very specific form of modern, post-war architecture. Once again, we get back to the fact that Miami Beach has its own style. We have never developed like the mainland. I would never, excuse me, I chose this place because it doesn't look like mainland America.

Interviewer: Did you know Morris Lapidus?

Luce: I interviewed him a couple of times. Just, can I pop up and get something and show you. No? Not the right time?

Interviewer: [Crosstalk][19:35].

Luce: OK. I'll just show you. Oh yeah. OK, Morris Lapidus?

Interviewer: Tell me something about Morris Lapidus, and his rebirth, or is.

Luce: Yes. I got to interview him a couple of times. I was writing for a French magazine, and that's actually why I wanted to have you all in this spot today, because this is my Morris Lapidus alter. This, as you could see, this is his famous bar downstairs. He had been travelling with his wife. She did the wall. They had been in Argentina. They bought this, what do you call it, pelts of animals. These are these vinyl, plastic chairs, and then the wife put all this, you know, kind of Chinese nonsense behind it. Unfortunately, when he passed away, they didn't do the right thing with what had been donated to the Bass Museum. There was like almost like a yard sale. That's what this comes from. That was the wife's hat box. There's a little tag on it and it says "Cocktail party turbans". You know, that's what, people made fun of Miami Beach, because it was that idea of the ladies sitting around the pool in mink, you know, with the cigarette holders, and the whole thing. I think Morris Lapidus suffered from that because he had been considered kind of tacky. I think the show we put on in New York with some various serious people and taking it seriously showed that it's like we had tropical deco. We had a tropical modernism. It was influenced by Oscar Niemeyer. Morris Lapidus was the first to recognize his admiration for Niemeyer. It's important that with our new projects that go before the boards, that we do not begin to import all the boring



architecture that you can find in Aventura and Sunny Isles. That's why I hope the new boards, I have hope again in our boards. I had nothing but, excuse me, contempt, for the last couple of years. I hope, I think they're beginning to show more critical thinking, and we can set a high standard. We have to set a high standard.

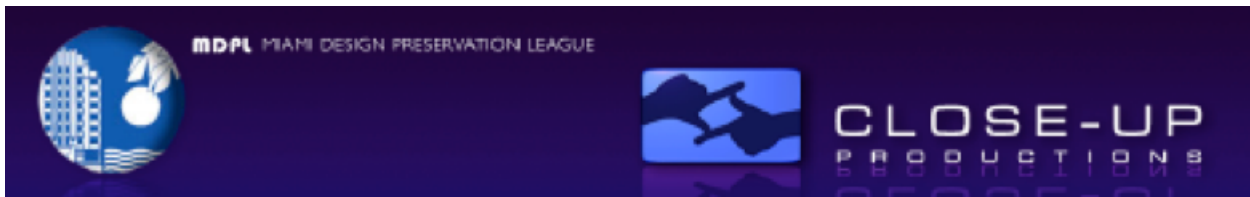
Interviewer: Do you think that maybe there's been additional pressure because of increasing knowledge of sea level rise, and that maybe we'd better get our money while the getting's good, idea?

Luce: I've heard that kind of premise that we have to overdevelop now, because then we can raise taxes. Then we'll have taxes to spend on something, we don't know what, when the time comes. I don't think that's a great argument. You want to ruin the city now? We should have a lock box. Remember Al Gore with his lock box, after we had the surplus that Bill Clinton left? He said, "We're going to put the money in it for Social Security. We're going to have a lock box. We're going to save the money. Someday we'll need it.". We should begin to have a lock box. When we have the technology in 15 years that may help us stave off flooding, and inundations, and things like that, but to say let's put up 15 more high-rises that are just investments, because people don't even live in the buildings. The lights are off. Mr. Galbut [Phonetic][23:16] wants to put in a new high tower down here at the entrance of Fifth and Alton. The last time they wanted to do it, this is funny. All the locals turned out and said, "No! Don't build a tower there, we'll never find parking! It's gonna be congested.". The architect said, "Don't worry. There'll never be anyone in that tower.". That was the selling point.

Interviewer: That was said in public?

Luce: Yeah. They had the meeting right down here. That was the selling point. "It's just an investment. Don't worry, there's no one there." You were looking at somebody's, a little piece of their portfolio on the 24th floor. It kills the businesses on the ground floor. It screws up our skyline. That's the answer of some of the people who have been in power recently is, let's just build now because we'll get taxes and then maybe, someday, we'll know what to spend the taxes on, because maybe someday we'll figure out what to do about sea level rise. I would say do the opposite. Do not screw up the city today, hoping you'll know what to do with the money tomorrow.

Interviewer: There's already the impact of seal level rise, that people are dealing with.



Luce: Well, there can be some interesting new architecture that can be considered. I've seen some examples of it. They had a conversation about it last year at the Wolfsonian. There was an architect from Puerto Rico, and he showed us some really cool stuff. It's concrete, and the water will wash through it. What they're trying to do now is, I think there's going to be a day when everybody hits the push button in these luxury towers, you know. If they miss their flight because their car couldn't get over the causeway, if they miss their flight two times, they're going to be calling their broker, you know? I don't have an answer. I just think we shouldn't do stupid things now in the hopes of knowing what we're going to be doing in the future. Do not ruin the city today.

Interviewer: What do you think about the raised sidewalks and streets?

Luce: I may be a little bit of a cynic. I think it was a little bit of a gesture. I think it was a little bit of a showmanship, but I hope at least some of the water is getting purified.

Interviewer: You think it is? Some of that water that's.

Luce: I haven't followed, I've sort of backed off from the meetings. I was a little bit disillusioned with our city hall the last couple of years. I'm glad we're in a new phase now. I kind of tuned out of the meetings. One of our commissioners brought evidence that, I think it was FIU. I don't want to go into, I don't know about the microbes in the water. You should really probably ask somebody else.

Interviewer: OK. Going back to Morris Lapidus, when you said you did a couple of interviews with him toward the end of his life, and he, we know, was very disappointed, to say the least, about his reputation. Did he talk about that with you?

Luce: Well, yes. I took lots of notes. By the way, this is my friend who did the photo shoot. She did the best photo shoot. She had a book that came out last year with Rizzoli [Phonetic][26:52]. Her name is Patty Stoker [Phonetic][26:53]. She lives in south of Fifth Street. She's a very talented photographer. No one did such a good photo shoot inside Morris Lapidus's apartment. I think we have to it an anniversary someday and bring out that photos, because that was a remarkable apartment. My favorite one was his wife's bathroom. We'd say, "Mr. Lapidus, can we go in and take a picture of your cufflink drawers in the closet?". He's say, "Eh". We spent days with him. He was adorable. I think at that point he was back on an upswing. He was eventually



going to get a prize, it was the first ever such prize, I don't know the name of it. It was at the Smithsonian. He and Frank Gehry got it together that year. It was the first every whatever it was. At that point, he was getting solicitations, you know, from the press. I think, I wouldn't say bittersweet moment. I think he was happy at that point. He had come through. He had wonderful anecdotes about growing up on the Lower East Side, no electricity. His uncle took him to Coney Island and he saw lights, you know? Talked about that neighborhood childhood and being deprived. He wanted to get into theater, and then later he was a travelling salesman, and he got so bored in these hotels with these longs, endless, dismal corridors. When he introduced the curve into that building in New York on Lexington and 50-something, everybody laughed at him. It was the cheesy Miami Beach guy doing curves in New York. You were supposed to do, you know, Mies van der Rohe dogma, and he didn't do dogma. He paid the price for it, because everybody mocked him. I love the fact that it came from his early life as a travelling salesman and thinking, "I hate these corridors!"

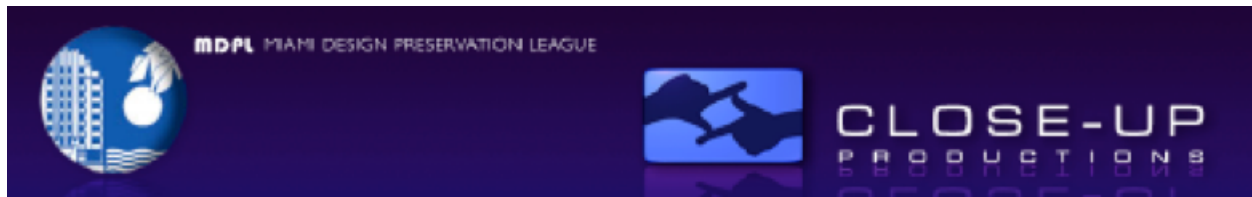
Interviewer: That's a good story.

Luce: "Jesus, what if I put a curve in there?"

Interviewer: Well, there are lots of curves in the stool. Curves in his monogram. It's very interesting.

Luce: The apartment was really remarkable. One of the things I loved about it was their travels together. Believe it or not, and you can look at other famous architect's apartments, Charles and Ray Eames, a few other people like that, there are tchotchkes in there. You know where they went. They travelled. The Lapidus's had one of those cheesy little things, if you go to the pyramids, and you know, the tourists buy some little Sphinx or something at the base of the pyramid. They had that in their living room. I know where they travelled. These are things that made them enthusiastic, you know? That was part of their life. It's not one of those sterile, you know, my decorator did the apartment for me. This was their life. The wall was some kind of mother of pearl. They'd been travelling in the Philippines I think, and he fell in love with this material, and he said, "Ship seven bags of that back to me in Miami Beach." He turned it into this absolutely, just glowing spectacular sort of elliptical dining room. All of that was donated to the Bass, and they didn't, that's a big lost opportunity. They should have done a Morris Lapidus permanent installation.

Interviewer: They did his dining room I think once many years ago.



Luce: I saw that.

Interviewer: They still have that.

Luce: Uh huh.

Interviewer: How much do they have of his stuff?

Luce: Well, they got, they inherited the bar. I won't mention names, but I met somebody who lived in his building, who was an Italian and had done a huge show in the streets of Rome for the British Museum. He fell in love with Morris Lapidus's work, and I took him to introduce him to the person who was in charge of the Bass. He said, "I love this man's work. I will do this for you for free. I will do an installation for you for free. We can do a multimedia thing, it doesn't have to take up a. I will cram all of these elements." This person said, "Well, there are termites in the bar." We lost the bar. I don't know. I'm just saying, that's as far as I pushed it. There was an inventory. I attended his service here. I know he left stuff with the Bass. I think that was a missed opportunity. This crazy Italian guy would, you know, he worked for the Villa Medici. I mean, he had this incredible background doing artistic installations. He was going to donate a Morris Lapidus theatrical permanent, like they have at the Getty Museum in L.A., you know. They have those French salon that you walk into. We should have had a Morris Lapidus salon, permanently. I think it would be tourist attraction. Anyway that's, you know, for me, it's unfortunate. I ended up like in a yard sale buying a stool for \$15. It's ridiculous.

Interviewer: For \$15?

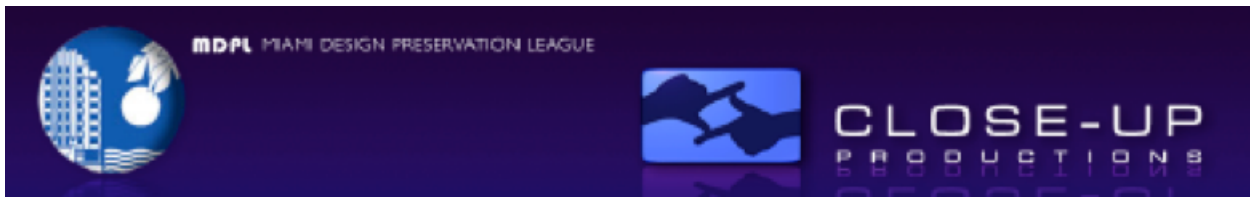
Luce: Yeah. I got lots of his stuff. I mean, it broke my heart. Randall Robinson called me. He said, "Hurry up. You won't believe what's going on over at Morris Lapidus's apartment. It's like a yard sale." That's embarrassing. Anyway, let me talk about Mr. Lapidus, because he created the first pedestrian mall, as we know, in the country. Lincoln Road. I have a question about Lincoln Road, and I think you could eventually interview these people who will have a much bigger legacy and impact on the future of Miami Beach than I will. The question is, why are we looking at Lincoln Road following the pattern of so many other places in the country, where they raise the rent, they kick people out, and then the property sits empty for two years? It's all up and down Washington Avenue. I go up to New York a lot, it's on First Avenue in the neighborhoods I go to. Lincoln Road is different. We



had, like TiramesU was a restaurant that had been there forever. They had a loyal client base. You kick them out, or you raise the rent, who are you expecting? Who's gonna show up there? Dolce & Gabbana or Tiffany? I mean, who's coming? I think it would be really interesting to ask these individuals who are now, if you go down Washington Avenue, there are three properties on every block that have been, it's like blight. They're covered up, "For lease, for lease, for lease". There's a friend of mine in New York who writes about real estate for the New York Times, and he says sometimes it's in their interest, because then they can claim that there is a loss, and they get a tax write-off. I would love for us to, oh, I asked somebody in our planning department, I said, "Do you have any data on the number of storefronts that have been sitting empty for more than six months, or more than a year?". They don't have any data on that. We should begin to collect data. Miami Beach is a pedestrian thing. Morris Lapidus' Lincoln Road was the first ever pedestrian mall in the country. People come here from Europe because they don't think they have to be in a rental car all day long. I'm not a business person, but I think if the taxes are encouraging you to kick somebody out and then declare a loss two years later, then we should change the incentives and disincentives. I don't know who's going to move in here. I mean, I know retail is in trouble. If you had a consistent tenant for years, like TiramesU, and like the guys that had the postcard shop, you raise the rent, are you happy with this result? Are we happy with this result, two years later, looking at this number of empty storefronts? I think it's disgraceful. Let's get the data. Once again, Miami Beach has always developed not like the mainland, thank God. We can begin to look at incentives, or disincentives, for just doing real estate, just being ruthless. Raise the rent on people who have been there. You have no idea who's going to take over. Then, if no one takes over, you say, "Good, we get a tax write-off." That's not good for the city. I wish that we would begin to jiggle that a little bit. At least get the data.

Interviewer: Is that some of the, one of the issues that Miami Design Preservation League is taking up with its resiliency initiative? Can you tell us about that campaign and what that's about?

Luce: I think the resiliency is much more tied, that's not the committee I'm on, OK? I'm more in advocacy, so I'm not the best person to answer the question. I think the resiliency is much more about architecture, infrastructure, and dealing with climate change. I brought this up and I don't think I was a popular person when I brought that up to the guy from, you know, the Planning Department. How many hundreds of empty storefronts have we been looking at for now for over a year? Let's begin to study this and get a handle on it. Once again, people



come here not because we want to look at like empty strip malls, do we?

Interviewer: Well, let's talk about advocacy then, and the recent victory that was pretty phenomenal.

Luce: North Beach?

Interviewer: Yes.

Luce: Yeah. It took a long time. It's a little controversial. It's a tradeoff. I think, altogether, we'd been waiting a very long time to protect that type of stock, or heritage, whatever you want to call it. It's really cool stuff. I mean, there are not many cities in the world that have that density of MiMo. I mean, OK, this was our show in New York, 2002. Here we are 2017, we finally get the district. We'd been trying for years. We got screwed over by one commissioner. It was one vote close to getting the district a couple of years ago. In the meantime, stuff gets torn down. It's trendy now, you know. The foreign press writes about MiMo. People like this stuff. It's kind of stupid to demolish your brand, you know. I like to call it "our postcard". We have a postcard. We shouldn't screw up our postcard and begin to look like Aventura once again.

Interviewer: It may be a different demographic that goes after MiMo than goes after Art Deco.

Luce: That's interesting too, because I've noticed, I have been to some of the meetings up there. Daniel Ciraldo organizes them. There's a guy up there named Kirk Paskal. He's been good at bringing in people. You go to the meetings up there, and there are all these, you know, 25-year-old, 30-year-olds. They haven't studied architecture, but they see something cool and they recognize something cool. They say, "Well, first of all, we can't afford to live in South Beach. Second, we like this. This stuff is kind of neat, this stuff that we're surrounded by." These kids, you know, they have jobs, so you don't see them. They're not going to sit for four hours at the Historic Preservation Board and get up and talk. Somebody has to advocate for them. I think they get it. I think they get it, you know. It's just, it's a certain demographic that will have the patience to sit in a land-use board for three hours and get your two minutes. I was very encouraged to see lots of younger couples who all of a sudden are enamored at this, this wonderful-built environment that they're in. I'm glad it passed. It's a tradeoff, you know. Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good. I hope, what we should have done, giving them extra height, the landowners on 71st Street, we should



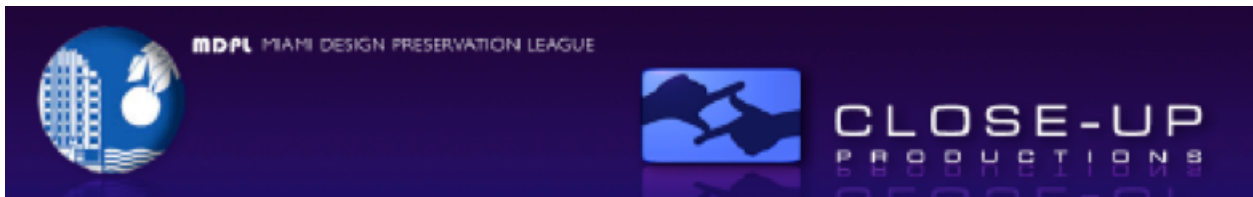
have said, “Oh, they’re doing this in certain cities now. If your property, if you kick somebody out, and your property sits empty for more than six months, you have to pay a penalty.”. We should have said, “You’re going to have to activate the street. We’re not going to give you extra height unless you keep the street happening.”. Anyway, too late, but maybe they will.

Interviewer: What they’ve been learning in, I’m a little familiar with the city of South Miami, with the two disaster of redevelopment of the Bakery Center. The mix of retail and residential is more than just convenience. It actually makes sense economically, to have residents there to utilize the very businesses in place.

Luce: Of course. Yeah. I think they’ve been doing studies on that. I mean, millennials want to move back into the city. Baby boomers want to walk now. That whole idea of getting in the station wagon and driving to the mall has, I think, lost a little bit of its luster. That’s why I don’t like certain pro-development tendencies in our city halls. It just encourage people to buy investment properties that they never live in. My favorite writer about architecture and cities is a guy who writes for the Financial Times, Edwin Heathcote, and he calls them “dead zones”. The “dead zones” are happening in London. They’re happening in Manhattan. 50 percent of the apartments you look at, like in the mid-50s around First, Second Avenue, no lights on. We shouldn’t encourage it here.

Interviewer: Those were some of those Chinese investments, were they not? Where they got citizenship for coming in and working in a marginal area and they did improvements in exchange for citizenship.

Luce: I’ve read about that. I don’t think that’s the demographic that’s buying down here particularly. From what I guess, I think we had our Russians for a while, we had our Argentines for a while. It’s always been a good place to park your money, you know, if you were looking for a nice little safe place. I just wish that they would think of something smarter to do with their money than just buy empty penthouses that screw up cities. I mean, is Mr. Galbut [Phonetic][43:01] going to try and do this again with a tower down there and come back and say, “Don’t worry, don’t worry, don’t worry. There’ll never be anybody in the building.”. We’re supposed to look at like a bank account in the sky? I mean, is that stupid or what? It’s going to kill, there’s no life on the street. We like cities. This is a neat, little, funny version of a city where we live here. You can walk to your Dominicans. You can buy your lottery ticket. You can listen to reggaeton music. They will call you “Niña”. They make the best coffee in America, and they remember me, and they’re sweet, and come on, where do you get that? Am I going to order that on Amazon?



Screw it. You know, I'm just saying, we need to keep street life going. I hope you will interview these fabulous people and ask them what their business plan is.

Interviewer: Good Question. Carl, do you have any questions?

Carl: Yeah.

Luce: Do you ever stop talking? That was one of his questions.

Carl: I was wondering, if you could project 10 years ahead, where would you see, like to see, Miami Beach?

Luce: I think, I have friends, a gay couple, and they tell me that a lot of the boys are moving back to the Beach. I didn't know that. These guys are super active. They go to culture, they play volleyball, and I had no idea. I thought that that whole era had sort of ended. There is a younger, these guys have got to be in their early 30s. Some people are moving back because they like what we're describing. They've been on Brickell. They're fed up with it, you know. They don't want that. I think we should consider that there will be a demand for a place like this as long as it doesn't ruin itself, for, you know, until Noah's Ark pulls up and takes us away. I mean, I really think we can live here if we don't overdevelop it. I would say, they should to a less-is-more. We are not going to overdevelop. The stock that we have is kind of what we're going to do. We're going to keep height limits. We're going to keep this place cool. We're not going to ruin it to hope to pay for some calamity years later. That's a strange way of saying I think, I'm all in favor of modern architecture and modernity. I'm not one of those people who only wants to keep the 1920s houses, you know, that's not my first obsession in life or down here. I think we have to keep the scale of the city the way it is. Not ruin it today to hopefully pay for something later. I think it would be viable. I hope there will be rents. I hope there will be micro-units. I hope people who work in hospitality and in Mount Sinai, what if they could afford to live here? What if they didn't have to commute four hours every day? Have you ever talked to a cleaning lady? I did a radio story on it. They get up at 4, to show up and clean a condo at 8. I think there are parts of the city that we could keep with human bodies in them, and I would not overdevelop now to ruin the city today. I think there will be bodies here for a long time.

[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]