



March 20, 1955

Dear Meyer,

In the next room Gandy's finished paintings are beginning to mount up, each newcomer either challenging or failing the challenge (which is to "go beyond") of those fortunate ones already admitted as final statements - so that it is never certain from day to day which ones really rest secure in themselves, freed from the painful persistent drive, as destructive as it is constructive, toward total realization. The result is of course that few paintings manage to escape the studio and for many of those that do, brush and paint improvisatorily [*sic*] pursue them to their final resting place so that for all that it is remarkable that there are so many finished paintings. One can only regard unbelievably, so beautiful they are, so much the real thing, half fearing they will vanish, along with all the magic wands and secret potions bewitching the senses into the belief that all this technique has been transformed into Art. Now I know what Degas meant by: "The artist must go about painting his picture as the criminal committing a crime."

But not only have I been initiated into this secretive process as it concerns Gandy's pictures, but have begun to discover with his overwhelmingly generous assistance and direction, not only invaluable technical means, but more important, how these must evolve through my own personality. The various trials and beginnings in this room where I work indicate, such a great advance over the split - which was a split in personality - between freedom and knowledge which had hampered me so much in the recent past and which is no longer adequate to my slowly growing sense of confidence. It all merely means that I no longer am a spectator of life. Gandy has suggested that I postpone my book for at least the period between now and the time we arrive in New York later in the year when I can have the advantage of all the material I need at the libraries. On the other hand, he suggests that I work incessantly on my painting and drawing which he does not seem to tire of readily. Since I consider him an excellent critic his encouragement has caused me to reevaluate what I did earlier in the light of what I feel I have learned by way of your saying "Well at least you've mastered the use of watercolor." At any rate, I have a new born enthusiasm which is kindled every time it wavers in the wind so "Vedremo"... We seem to be opposite personalities which transverse and retreat. We've quarreled often about technical matters but rarely about esthetic, I think the best thing Gandy has suggested to me is to be "patient enough to build up passion through delicacy." I think my failing has always been to sacrifice one to the other. Gandy says that he remembers your early criticism of his painting where you suggested parsimony. His pictures have become extremely parsimonious. He thanks

you for this early gift. All in all, we seem to be growing together both reinstated in that wonderful school "Life can be Beautiful". And we sent part of our love to you for being directly or indirectly responsible for the match. Please accept this expression of love until we can offer more.

Draft of a letter from Jocelyn Levine Brodie (in Florence, Italy) to Meyer Schapiro (in New York City)