**IMPORTANT**

**Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it.**

Tape 1 Side A

I think today is the 10th of June, and we're at 107 Dovehouse Street. My name's Frank Whitford, I'm interviewing Sir Eduardo Paolozzi, and it is 20 to 10 in the morning, if anybody's interested in that. What I would like to do, Eduardo, is start right at the beginning and ask you where and when you were born.

Born 1924 in Leith, which is part of Edinburgh.

And what is your earliest memory?

I think that it might be a lot of early memories conditioned by listening to your parents telling the same story, but I think my earliest memories, I think, are at the age of three being taken to Italy. Because I was a first-born, and a son, because my parents came from the same village, there is a thing about village cultures, a pride in the first-born, so I was taken to the village there to be shown off, and I think what I remember of that time was being horrified at seeing a pig being killed, so it might have been February, which makes sense for an ice-cream shop, because February be the slackest month for the shop. And the other thing I think I remember was seeing what looked to me an enormous kind of centipede being chopped up with a spade. These are about the two things I seem to remember.

Where in Italy was this?

This was in the same village that my father was born and my mother was born, called Vidicuzo[ph], which is in Frozinone, but to get there you go to Rome and you go down on the altostrada, either by bus or by car, to Cassino, and then you can either carry on, it's about twenty minutes from Cassino, up in the hills. But when my father was a boy it was by mule, more or less. Cassino was the nearest town where people could come down from the villages, and by staples that they didn't grow themselves.

How long had your parents been in Scotland by the time you were born?

Well it was not only my parents; my mother's parents were in the first wave, they came about, they came about 1900, they came. And my mother was three when she first went to Scotland,

and she, as a little girl, lived through World War I. And of course the Italians were allies in that one, so all that was all right.

So your father met your mother in Scotland?

No, my grandparents took the young Carmella as she was called to the village, and my father, this is somewhere round about 1918, after the First World War, he fell in love with her, and declared his love, but Italy wouldn't let him out till he did his National Service, and he did his two years military service before he came, and that was 1920. He came over about 1920. So he did his National Service 1918 to 1920, and I was born in 1924.

And, so he came to Scotland in pursuit of your mother?

That's right.

Do you remember your grandparents?

Very well, very well. There was a sort of...they had their own...they slightly pioneered my father's business, and I think they helped him, and my father's ice-cream shop started in a poor district called Seafield which in Scotland is known for a fever hospital, and a sewerage farm, and is by the sea. And then he moved on to another shop. But all the Italians were always on the move. But my grandfather and grandmother, they made their ice-cream in the cellar, and at that time it was just milk with sugar with cornflour, and it turned into a kind of custard; the custard was then, there was this big boiler with a tap, and that was put into enamel buckets, and then the buckets were tipped into freezers, what was called freezers, which was a stainless steel revolving drum with two blades. And what actually happened was, this custard, the icing process turned the water content, which swelled, and then this white creamy fluffy ice-cream.

How about your father's parents, they stayed in Italy did they?

They stayed in Italy, and they slightly were the better-off people, they owned land, and owned not a great deal but enough to be...enough land at that time to employ other people. There were people in the village who didn't have land, and they could only get by by working for people who had land, it's as simple as that. But they also, in the house was a post office, they also ran the post office, my grandfather, that grandfather used to do a round delivering all the letters.

In Vidicuzo[ph]?

In Vidicuzo[ph].

You also have a sister.

Yolanda, who I spoke to yesterday. She was born when I was...I was ten when she was born, so the difference is probably, there is a difference in age. Yes, she was ten when I was born, so there's a ten-year gap.

And she's your only sibling.

She's my only sibling.

Can you recall...well no, let's have another question. Did you speak English or Italian at home?

My parents, to each other they spoke the kind of, the dialect of the village, and they spoke to me in the dialect; they never spoke to me in English-or-hyphen-Scottish, so I grew up bi-lingual, and it wasn't any problem at all. But because I spoke village Italian I used to go three nights a week after school to what we used to call the Italian Club, where they had a wonderful Italian lady who was sent over from Italy with Italian books and all that, and we learnt to speak proper Italian, which is very useful, because from the age of nine onwards my father sent me to Italy for three months a year to what we call Balila[ph] camps, which was a very beautiful experience. I'm very grateful to him that he did that, because it made an incredible, it gave one an awareness that it was two cultures to live in simultaneously as a child, and it made one enormously self-sufficient in a bizarre way, so that when that tragic night when Italy declared war...

In 1934.

Going to jail, it didn't seem such a hardship, because I was so used to being self-sufficient of a kind.

I would like to come back to that a little bit later.

I will come back to it.

These balila[ph] camps were run presumably by the Fascists.

That's right, yup. I mean the club in Edinburgh was called, it was called Fasci-Italiani Alestro[ph], Fascist Italians living abroad. And the camps were for all these Italians, thousands, there were more Italians living in Sao Paolo before the war than there were in Naples. Their idea was, they had a special...a special Cabinet Minister in charge who was called Minister...of that kind of thing, and the camps were to keep all these emigrant sons in touch with the fatherland, and there was tremendous optimism at that time, that Italy would re-gain its former empires, hence the conquest of Abyssinia and Tripoli and so on.

Do you think that it meant for your father the possibility that the whole family might return to Italy?

I'm not quite sure; I think there was a sort of open question there. I think he also had the idea that he would go back and retire to the village, and I would carry on with this, and this was a pattern one grew up with. I would inherit the business and was supposed to consider myself extremely fortunate.

Did you think of yourself as Italian or Scottish or a bit of both, or...?

Well, I think it was pointed out to me among the people I used to play with, or when I used to go to school, I was slightly different, you know, but because I was usually the best in the class at the time and ran the fastest, I was kind of secretly admired. But I think if I had been a runt there would have been trouble. But when I went to Italy I found it wonderful, because I was no longer...they could pronounce my name properly, you know. And of course if you went to these camps you were treated as a little prince, you were treated as if you were going to be the future, and that was the idea at the time.

So what kind of things went on in these camps?

Well camp sounds awful, but the place I went year after year after year was on the Adriatic, and it was futuristically built, three ship-looking buildings, and there was a sort of parade ground with a flag, and there was a modern dining hall with glass and steel doors that were raised. But in the mornings we would parade, everybody, in a kind of summer uniform, and they would read out the people...the war was still going on in Africa, they would read out the dead, who had died, `morte Libia'. Alessandro Carchaporla, and so on, they would read out all the dead, and then say, `Alto la banderra', there will be a bugle call, and the Italian flag, which at that time had the monarchy in the middle. And then we would all troop in to

breakfast, which was in cafe lacte, cold, in aluminium bowls, and serviced by beautiful nuns, curiously enough.

And so it was fairly disciplined.

Yes, but nicely so. I mean we spent, we were in uniform, and we would spend the days doing gymnastics, with the idea that later on, either in front of the Minister, the appropriate Minister, but later on, when I was fifteen I became what was called an Avanguardista[ph], and I was in Rome when the war between and Germany started, but we were there to do, 10,000 boys were going to do gymnastics in front of Mussolini, and we were under canvas at a suburb of Rome called Montesacro.

Come to think of it, you were an Avanguardista[ph]...

Yes, yes...

Even now, aren't you, of a different kind.

But in that camp under canvas, talking of this camp under canvas, also had guests from Franco's Spain, but they were the cream. And they also had Hitler Jugen, with what looked to me like an SS officer in charge; he was in black and so on. And what was marked was, they were also period types, and what was marked was, they didn't dream of speaking to our raggle-taggle mob, they had nothing to do with us. But I remember when the war began, they sang a lot of patriotic songs. We were woken up with that.

Did you live in your imagination more in Italy than in Scotland?

I was very happy in Scotland, you know, and it was a kind of, in an archaeological sense it was a culture that has disappeared; it was a culture that had, there was littered with lots and lots of what was called flea-pits, they were small cinemas, and we were thinking of, they were all geared to the poorest people, we were talking about pennies, you could get in for a penny, and they had all the most outrageously wonderful American films. And occasionally, occasionally, a boring English one, occasionally. But they all had serials, and in my grandfather's shop, and there's a photograph of that, and my father's shop, they had bills, they had cinema bills, which they displayed, and you had a little blue book, and I used to go to the cinema with my mother to a cinema called the Alhambra down Leith Walk, and I remember showing the book and them stamping it. So I saw a lot of films in my childhood.

So I mean from what age onwards did you go to the movies, do you think?

Well, I must have gone from the age of five, from the age of five. I remembered my mother taking me out, because I cried when I used to think it was horrifying.

What else do you remember about Leith?

Well, Leith, I mean, it's a society that disappeared. They had Saturday markets really, and, I think we used to wander round the Leith docks, which was slightly...and there was all kinds of things coming and going, because Edinburgh had been very affluent at one time, the esparto grass for paper-making, and they used to import some kind of tropical fruit for cattle feed. Everything was very pure, and we used to call it locas. Sometimes I used to go to the docks with my mother, and she used to gather dandelion leaves to make salad.

Did you go into Edinburgh proper very often?

Oh yes. Don't forget there were tram-cars, but also...oh enormously, all the time. But I mean, our house and our shop was in Leith Walk, so that you just come into Leith Walk and something like ten, twelve minutes, there's an opening and you're on Colinton Hill, and when you're on Colinton Hill you're overlooking the whole of Edinburgh, that was in twelve minutes. And Colinton Hill gets up...there wasn't a lot, I think something like Princes Street wasn't fascinating. I think, instead of taking a right, when you came out of the shop you took a left, and you went to the end of the street, you had a street called Easter Road, and Easter Road more or less wandered up to more or less the base of the bigger outgrowth of extinct volcano called Altaseech[ph] which was a form of [INAUDIBLE]. And I've seen as a child a tremendously wide, wide space, and there are parts where you never saw humans. This was practically the middle of Edinburgh.

It's an obvious question, did you ever go as a young boy to the National Gallery?

Taken by the school once, and I remember, and I think they're still there, these enormous kind of unknown 16th, 17th century Neopolitan type paintings which are the apotheosis of chiaroscuro, and I remember the glass, you just saw one's bewildered face reflected in the glass, trying to decipher this image. But also, also it was saying, you know, if this is art, I could never get into that, if this is art. But in the National Gallery I remember it always, the last most modern painting was a little Degas of, I think Diego Martelli[ph], that was the heights of modernism. But later on in the war, they had war artists and all that. I remember going to hear a glamorous Paul Topolski talking about his war work.

Yes, you were already a bit older by then.

That's right.

You said you were very good at school.

Mhm.

Sort of top-of-the-class stuff?

More or less.

What kind of things did you...we're talking first of all about primary school.

That's right, from the age of, I think my father taught me a lot before I actually went to school; he seemed to enjoy that like, I think I remember that from the age of four, him, he had this Italian magazine called, is it `Corrère Della Sera'[ph], which always had colour lithographs of tragedies, of a circus elephant going berserk, or some terrible accident, a tram-car bashing into a horse and cart.

Could you read before you went to school?

I think I was taught to read, but I was remarkable, and I think I went to school, I think they admitted me at four-and-a-half, and I was at this wonderful school, a Protestant school, which practically had no religion at all, till the age of twelve, and then from twelve I had to go to unfortunately the worst Catholic school in Europe, which was grim, very grim. And I went suddenly from having been the top of the class for most of my young life, to being at the bottom of the class from there on. I couldn't handle, I couldn't handle the way they talk, and I didn't like religion very much; I should have really, I should really have been taught classical mythology instead of the Catechism.

What do you remember of primary school other than reading, writing, arithmetic?

I remember stuff animals very well, and I remember strange things, when somebody was sick...a lot of the children seemed to be sick, and there used to be a cleaner would come, and the cleaners were always dressed in black stockings, it was like historic images, big black...like fish-wives, and they would spread sawdust on the sick and kind of sweep it all up.

But I remember how nice all the teachers were, and a feeling of gentleness; whereas at the later school one was always being hauled out to be thrashed; whether it was algebra or whether it was the Catechism, one was constantly being thrashed with what they called the belt, which was a thong bit of leather.

How about drawing and so on in primary school?

Well I used to like it, but I don't think anybody was considered outstanding the way it was, but I think there was...and it came out of books, these standard exercises of doing a still life, usually on sugar paper, usually in chalks with a bit of white. And I think the teacher would kind of start you off, you know, and then you would carry on. But pretty standard exercises really.

Do you remember enjoying it particularly?

Yes, very much, yes.

And did you do it at home, draw?

I used to draw a lot, because in the shop, not only did we sell ice-cream but we sold chocolates, but good chocolate, and the chocolates would arrive in cardboard boxes and then they were decanted into glass, like glass vases with lids, so there was always a lot of cardboard boxes. There was enough raw material to draw, and I remember drawing on them all the time, but also other people would...at that culture you didn't throw anything away; what was to spare was given to other customers to do the same things, and sometimes people would draw, particularly in winter time people would bring their drawings in, and a lot of the drawings were what might have been called copies, things, football heroes done from newspapers and so on.

These were adults?

Adults and children. Because a lot of the families round this shop were poor, so poor, they were all gas-lit, that to have a radio meant having batteries, which meant that you had to be in employment, but if you were unemployed you had to live in a certain kind of frugal level, which meant that you never threw away a newspaper, it was either used as a tablecloth or some kind of thing for wrapping something up in. I mean that was a time when newspapers were used in fish and chip shops, nothing was thrown away.

So your home, which presumably was over the shop, was it?

Well where we slept was a wonderful flat which we just used to sleep in, but in the back of the shop, that's where all the life went on, and there was a sort of piano there where I did my piano lessons. But that's where...and there was a big barrel in the little lavatory, that held the coal, that held the coal, and the cat, you had to have a cat to keep the mice down, and the cat was trained to shit in the coals, in the barrel. But also Saturday night...the milk came from some farm in cans in churns, but the man, the farmer used to bring the milk, he also used to bring my father a live chicken, or an old boiling rooster which he used to kill on Saturday night, every Saturday night, and he used to kill it by slitting its tongue and draining its blood, and he used to, my mother used to cook the blood in boiling water and...I mean it was all sort of village nostalgia; they used to do the...sometimes my father would soak a bit of bread, hard bread, in water, and then put oil and vinegar on it, and that was all nostalgia when he could have had something else.

So, the lavatory was outside, presumably?

The lavatory was part of the back shop, we called it, but all our lives, the poor little back shop was absolutely worn out for use; everything was sort of worn out because of heavy use.

Did you have a choice of school that you went to after primary school?

No, no. I think it was prevailed on, I think, by perhaps the local priest that, it was all right. The reason I went to this wonderful Protestant school was that it was near the shop; this is the present pragmatism overriding any ideas about going to heaven, and...I mean it was very rare to see my father in church. I mean they had this classic Italian peasant's view about it, that they had to survive before they needed to pray.

Did you go to church?

Well, because of going to this dreadful Catholic school, I then had to be confirmed, they insisted on it, and when you are confirmed you can then take the holy wafer, but before you can take the holy wafer, the idea of confirmation is that in the Catholic faith you are born with original sin, which is from Adam and Eve, so that you can only become clean if you are a Catholic and you are confirmed and you confess. And of course you can only stay clean, as they point out, holy for a little bit, because the brain is always being menaced by the Devil, and you always have evil thoughts and so on, like coveting your neighbour's ass, one had to try and avoid that.

You didn't go to church much before you went to the secondary school then?

Very little, but the idea of my father putting me into this school is that he insisted that I run back at lunchtime for an Italian lunch, which might be just spaghetti or risotto, whereas all the other little boys, they just played in the playground, and they had a piece, which was really the cheapest bread you could think of, from the store.....[TELEPHONE - BREAK IN RECORDING] Well you said...are we on?

Yes, we're on now.

This thing about choice. Also when I come to think of it, from the age of nine when I was sent to Italy by my father, he didn't...it was not discussed, it was...I mean if he said, you know, you have to be in at 4, I mean it was inflexible, I mean, part of the peasant culture was a certain kind of obedience, and he said...unfortunately going to Italy was marvellous, but he made...I'm very glad he made it a decision to send me to Italy, because I think that was a wonderful counter-balance to growing up in Scotland, because straddling two cultures and speaking four languages, the four languages I used to speak was the village Italian, proper Italian, and the Scottish of the streets, and proper English, so one was bobbing about with that. No problems at all.

But your father was obviously the dominant one in the family.

Well, classic patriarch, you know, with a more than happy mother who played the feminine role. She seemed to spend a lot of her time doing just village activities, because there were very strange things, like buying old flour sacks and bleaching them and turning them into sheets, that I think, with the sewing machine, that seemed to come from Italy. They carried on doing things when they had an alternative of doing it in another way in Scotland, they preferred their own way. Like they only cooked Italian food, only, and they looked at all the...they looked at...and of course we never went to restaurants. But there was a big Italian club, there must have been about a thousand members, there was a big Italian community there, and they would have activities like dances and so on.

One of the things I'm going to ask you and forgot was the kind of things that you drew on these pieces of cardboard.

They weren't that original, but I mean they were following on, there was always people who drew what one considered unbelievably well. A lot of the motifs were, there was

always...there was even a bit of tracing; if somebody could get a bit of shelf paper, tracing film stars. There were a lot of cheap film star books around, and there was also cardboard boxes in some of the poorer shops where you could buy things for a ha'penny and penny, as you would in [INAUDIBLE] now. And football players, local heroes. And then there would be things seen on films, like battles with knights, and even aeroplanes shooting at each other, things like that.

In colour too?

Sometimes with coloured crayons. But there would be aeroplanes, locomotives and motor cars.

How broad an education did you get at the secondary school?

More broad at the Protestant school; it seemed to be terribly wide, and as one was between ten and twelve there was sort of poetry and singing and choirs, and it seemed to be at that time, oh, the teachers, they were lovely, dedicated people, rather like the corn is green, that they hoped to plant some kind of seed, they hoped to feel that they had accomplished a great deal if out of all these children one went to university, that was seen to be a thing that they would strain and hope to find the right child to encourage.

But in the secondary school, I mean did you.....[BREAK IN RECORDING] I'm just realising, I wasn't being recorded there for a minute. In the secondary school, did you do a modern language, chemistry, physics, that sort of thing?

No I think it was a rag-tag. There was too much religion, I think there was three hours of religion, as far as I remember, a day.

A day?

Yes, I think so. Holy Cross Academy. There was Latin, which I was quite good at for obvious reasons, and algebra, which I hated, and English composition, which I liked, and of course, the school was a kind of town-house with a conservatory, and the conservatory was the art room, and the art room was run by a lady in a flowery smock and she had the hair style what we used to call earphones, and she was a confused, frightened creature, and she used the belt quite liberally too, if you weren't behaving or concentrating.

Were her lessons very formal then?

I'm not quite sure. I remember seeing elaborate pen and ink drawings hung up, and they always looked like exercises, grown-up exercises of a grown-up world. And she would disapprove if she happened to glance that kind of popular art, copying football players, that was strongly disapproved of. As a matter of fact, I had absolutely no idea when I was quite young, when I wanted to go to the Edinburgh College of Art full-time I was quite naive, and I just took along the drawings that came out of all that, copies and that, and they were bewildered. But they were also very nice, and then I was put into the life room, and I remember then, my turn to be confused.

I think we can come back to the Edinburgh College of Art...

Sure.

...a little bit later on, if you don't mind. For the moment, I think we're nearly at the end of this tape, so I'll...

Do you want to check?

End of F4988 Side A

F4988 Side B

[That was a mistake, I should remember to turn the volume back you see.]

Did she seem in any way aware that you had natural talent?

What, the teacher?

Yes.

Totally unaware. I think I was also quite naughty, and I had a few friends, and I think we used to mess about at the back somehow. I wasn't much...it was slightly out of control. But it's difficult to explain, but the fact that she hated what we really would have loved to have drawn made a tension. I think she was...it's not...I won't say Miss Brodie, but it was that kind of Scottish gentility of a kind.

Morningside.

Morningside a bit. But it was the kind of person I think at that time you could...I think she used to have her summer holidays in a pension in Italy; you could actually go for three months on a pound a week, that's the classic way a lot of the teachers used to spend their summer, with all the meals, you know, and a bit of walking. I think it's in `Howards End' or one of these E.M. Forster worlds, but a Scottish version.

She wasn't interested in you as an Italian?

No not at all, no no no. No not at all.

When did you leave school then, how old were you?

Well I think I was still at school, there was no reason...I mean after school I would help my father in the shop, which meant that one never went to bed early, and to be allowed out to do something else was a privilege, so that therefore one could stay at school, and I think my father as a peasant believed in some way that you would be equipped and perhaps life would be a better advantage if your world had knowledge. So I think I was still at school when Italy declared war at 16.

That was quite unusual wasn't it? I mean, then.

Mm.

Most people left school at 14 I think.

Well, I think that 14, even at my age, I think you had to have, at that time you had to have a letter. It was when the mother professed hardship and she needed a breadwinner, I think you had to have... But I think the average was 15 or 16.

So you put in a full day...

And of course as far as I remember, all free. If the family was doing reasonably well it was considered better for you to be at school.

So, you were at school all day; in the evening you helped your father in the shop.

No in the afternoon. School would end at 4.

Ah.

And one would go trugging back, and there were always, always tasks in the shop, particularly, as soon as I arrived, depending on the season, my father would go downstairs and start boiling, making the ice-cream, and I would be upstairs and he would tell me what to do. Sometimes it would be the weekly cleaning of all the mirrors and the glass shelves, or sometimes decanting, and five Woodbine packets into singles, you know, in a wine glass. Some people could only buy a cigarette at a time. That was a tiny task, but I had cleaning to do, there was always things to do.

Your father presumably never made much money at this.

I think he made quite a lot. He used to send a lot of the money to Italy for his future, and I think he bought an enormous amount of Government bonds. You see I think if the shop was open seven days a week, from 8 until midnight, even people who haven't got much money, the limited cash they have, they've got to spend it, they would even some days on the means test, spend half his money in the pub. But there was always ha'pennies and pennies for children to buy ice-creams in summer.

Do you remember, relative to your friends, a privileged childhood then?

I think, it didn't really stand out, but I can see, I can only see it now, but I didn't feel, I took it for granted. And don't forget, one was in touch with this large Italian community, and one was also comparing oneself with them, and when you got to that, there were always Italian boys whose parents had much bigger houses. There were Italian boys who had a much higher lifestyle, and their parents, instead of coming from villages came from sometimes small towns, you know, and they were a bit more sophisticated.

But you were always well dressed?

Yes, I mean there was no problem there about fresh boots and shoes.

And you had lots of toys, or...?

Not that much, but at that culture, one made one's own toys, particularly when you got to a certain age, you made model aeroplanes from scratch. But toys were like Meccano sets, things like that. But I used to work for my grandfather on Saturdays, and sometimes during the slack season my father's best friend was a fish and chip shop at the end of the corner, and in the mornings my father used to lend me out to fillet the haddock and do the potatoes; the potatoes were put into a big cast iron machine that whirled and got most of the mud off, and then singly you would kind of take the eyes out.

So were you paid, or was your father paid?

No I was paid, I used to get half a crown for a whole morning, which wasn't bad.

Not bad then, yes. Were there books in the house?

Yes, lots, but supplied by the Italian club. There were lots of propaganda books about Abyssianian War showing poor Italian soldiers with their stumps. But, there was a public library I used a lot; there was no lack of books.

What kind of books were you interested in reading?

I used to like the Meccano magazines very much, but there was a...I think occasionally my father would get a cheap offer from a newspaper, and I remember a book I kept reading in a terrified way called `Limehouse Nights' by Thomas Burke, which terrified me. And there was a book called `The White Company' by Conan Doyle, I kept reading and re-reading that. But

one used to do that then. But there was a lot of pulps around, lots and lots of American pulps, and I think there were things like, now think...and there were the...I mean even from an early age there was `The Rover' and the 'Wizard', that was the street culture.

Did you collect cigarette cards?

Oh...I was very lucky because when somebody came in to buy, slightly grand, about 20 Kensitas, but often the man would open it up and he would say, `Do you want the card, son?' So I was quite, talking of privilege, that was pretty privileged.

Did you have a large collection of things, of cigarette cards, comics, books, under your bed for example?

I had some things under my bed. There was a kind of mahogany box with brass handles which my father gave me, because he used to make radios, and this was some discarded, like bits of a portable radio which he abandoned, but he gave me this wonderful box, and I kept bits and pieces in that. But I remember it had a Trix...one of my half crowns I bought, there used to be a kind of cheap Mecanno-type of set which I had called Trix, and the motor, I remember I used to love the motor, electric motor, with a battery, and there were things like that under the bed.

War broke out with Germany in 1939 when you were still at school.

Mm. I was in Italy when that happened, in Rome.

Do you remember how you reacted to the news?

Well don't forget we were slightly...we moved around a ring of faint doctrination, and I think at that time there was an idea about the foreigners, and even in Edinburgh, from the age of 10 onwards, the Italian community would hire a cinema called the Salon, which was the nearest cinema to the Italian club, which was in Picardy Place, which ironically is where I did a big sculpture, outside St. Mary's Cathedral. I think there was an idea, I think there was a slight muddle, because you had, the Italians had their feet in two worlds; they were already becoming a part of the Scottish community, and yet they were supposed to play another role, which was the alliance with Hitler and Mussolini was a good thing for them, although most of them couldn't quite see it.

Including your father?

Well my father probably wore his enamel badge, and I think it's because he wore this enamel badge, he was on a list, and when Italy declared war I think everybody on the list was rounded up.

In other words the enamel badge was the party badge?

That's right, yes, which was red white and green with a fascia.

How did you react then? You were still at school as you said, when Italy declared war, didn't it.

Well I think there was a count-down; you see my father used to make these radios, and because the shop had electricity it was quite...and he used to, for some reason, listen to...I don't know what the...it leaked through I think the speech that Mussolini made I think was in the afternoon, so there was a kind of...and in the afternoon, the back shop had all my Fascist certificates, I had been a...and all wonderful photographs, he thought.....[TELEPHONE - BREAK IN RECORDING] In the afternoon of that fateful day, what was the day, was it 6th of June?

I don't know.

I want to know what that day was, I think it was the 6th of June. Are we on?

Yes, we're on.

And I think in the back shop I remember my father listening to this speech, and knowing what the consequences were, and we had framed in the back shop, even a picture of Mussolini, and we had a big map of the Abyssinia, which had been supplied by the Fascist club, and every day from the radio he would put the positions where the Italian army advanced from the north and up from the south. Badolio[ph] was one army and the other one was Gratziani[ph]. And there were even pictures of these generals. So he thought by, simplistically by getting rid of all these things, that when the people came that we would be clean, so that the afternoon was spent getting rid of all that. And there was also a box of medals that I had brought back from these trips, and that was all got rid of, I don't know where it all went. And of course, that wasn't to be, I mean him and I were on a list, rather like that book, and we were just rounded up.

Well, let's talk about that for a minute.

Mm.

How long did it take before they came and arrested your father?

Well, I think there was...there was a kind of suspended period from the afternoon, and don't forget, and I mean the ordinary people, it hadn't quite leaked out to them, the people around, and I think a few people came to commiserate with my father, they were sort of friends over, you know, ever since he went there, saying that everything, comforting him.

Scottish friends?

Scottish friends, saying everything would be OK. And then, I don't know what happened, I think that we were advised, maybe, to go upstairs to the flat and wait, and while we were up there there was a kind of build-up. I think when it got dark a lot of mobs, and I was upstairs with my father and my mother and sister who was about, she was about six I think, there was a ten-year gap, and we heard this smashing and all that kind of thing. And then not that long afterwards there was a knock on the door and they took my father away.

Was the shop damaged, your shop?

It was looted and smashed to bits.

And did the same thing happen to other Italian fish and chip shops and ice-cream?

Yes, all of them, all of them. I mean it's quite interesting, one day I might, I think in the National Library of Scotland they've got all the newspapers, I want to have a look at that and I also want to see how the whole Andora Star thing was reported. But you have to remember, that the press were using phrases like `stab in the back' and so on, you know, and Fifth Columns, and also there was a lot of fear, it did look as if the Fifth Column, Dunkirk and all that, that it was suddenly coming through that maybe England might lose the war.

And presumably Edinburgh had been bombed already.

A little bit, yes.

So on the same day your father was taken away.

And I never saw him again. And then I was taken to Saughton Gaol.

Can...just...hang on a minute. By policemen in uniform, or by...?

No, detectives wearing hats.

Yes. Do you know where they took him?

No, and there was no way of knowing either.

And there was no news the following day?

No there was no news. You see there was this blanket; I mean nobody was going to look at the welfare of these...we had become the enemy, nobody was going to look after the welfare when there was much more...the Battle of Britain was just going to begin.

How did your mother react to this?

I'm not quite sure. I think there was crying, but I mean, and she was ordered, she was an enemy alien, but she wasn't arrested; she had to go and live according to an ordinance of 30, she had to be 30 miles from the coastline, she went to a place called Innerleithen. So when I eventually was released from jail I went straight to see her.

Was she given digs, or...?

She was...I mean it was quite easy to have a rented room, and she was quite happy.

Which she had to pay for though presumably.

That's right, but we're talking about maybe ten shillings a week.

But she was consummately having to live on the family savings?

That's right, but it never appeared to be like that at the time. But I remember having to go down to see her, to collect the keys, and it didn't seem to worry me at all; it all seemed fate, going back to the...it could have been...the shop was all boarded up, going into...I can't actually say if I had any strong feelings.

But she took Yolanda with her?

That's right.

And, so, when did you know that your father was going to be transported?

Well you weren't told, I mean one was...it just...it had leaked out the other way, that this ship had been sunk, and there was also my grandfather and an uncle, there was a whole bunch of them. There was quite a big Edinburgh community which was on this ship. And my father's best friend called Charlie Polity, he survived, and on the same ship with Eugene Rosenberg[ph] amongst others. And they then were put on another ship which went to Australia, they spent...

That was the Dunera[??].

That's right.

Where did the Andora Star leave from?

Possibly Liverpool.

And it was going to Canada, and everyone was going to be put into an internment camp in Canada.

That's right, yes. Simply because of the fear that if there had been an internment camp in England, the Nazis would have released them.

And it was talked that the Andora Star was torpedoed...

Mm.

And most of the people on board were killed.

I think so.

And you did not know...

I didn't.

You didn't know about the fate of your father...

I don't think so. You weren't...I mean you weren't informed with telegram or anything like that.

When were you taken away then?

I was taken away the same day. My father went off first, and then I said goodbye to my mother and sister, and spent the night in Saughton Gaol.

Even though you were only 16.

Yes.

Still at school.

Still at school.

And what was it like? I can't imagine.

Well don't forget it's not like going to Wormwood Scrubs now; it was under, I think this jail was under-populated, you know, and I think they decided, what they were going to do was, they decided to put us on a kind of category which was renowned at that time, which meant that you wore your own clothes, you could have food and newspapers sent in, and the cell door, you weren't banged up at night, the cell doors were often left open. But certainly the cell doors were open all day, and we went downstairs and played cards, or you could go out and play football.

It was mostly Italians was it?

No no, there was a rich mixture of BUF people; I thought they were a kind of small handful of Scottish aristocrats who were a member of the British Union of Fascists. And there were a few odd-balls I had never met; there was a few Scot-Italian boys in the uniform of Highland regiments, and after a couple of days they had to give them up, because of the shame I suppose.

In other words they were already in the Army, and they were nevertheless interned as enemy aliens.

That's right. Something like that, because I think they had been to these camps, like me.

Sauchton, how do you spell that? SAUCHT...

SAUGHTON.

Was that in Edinburgh, or somewhere else?

Yes, it's in Edinburgh still.

So how long were you in there for?

Not that long. You see I think after a few months when the Battle of Britain was resolved, I think Britain, it started to get back onto an even keel and it's known that some of these distinguished anti-Nazis, German intellectuals, who were in the Isle of Man, within a year they were captains in Intelligence Corps; it was topsy-turvy.

You said earlier that looking back on it, this experience in jail contributed to your feeling of independence and self-reliance.

What I was trying to say is, having been sent away a lot from the age of ten to these other camps and all that, and it I think had helped, it made being in jail seem to be part of a similar kind of process, that your destiny was being, and you had orders, and it didn't seem very difficult, it didn't seem such a radical jump from going to Italy, being in camps, and being in Saughton jail.

Is it possible to remember whether you thought about your future when you were in there?

I don't think so, because I was young enough, in a way when you're young, when you're young you think you're going to live forever, so it didn't really matter that much; I felt I had an infinite amount of time to just waste.

Did you have any notion at all of what you might like to do with your life by then?

Well sort of. I think I had gone to night classes at Edinburgh College of Art, and I had a kind of smell of wanting to do that. But when things stabilised a bit my mother was allowed to come back, and there wasn't enough to keep us going, so I had a few jobs outside.

But let's go back, because suddenly we realise that at some stage or another you decided at least you wanted to go to art school.

Mm.

Can you remember when that happened?

I think I visited a friend there, and I had a friend who was doing night...it was very easy to go and study there at night, maybe for two hours to do stone cutting, because of the kind of apprentice system, and there was also this Scottish liberal idea of this kind of connection between...that's why there are very good libraries and very good teachers, of a connection between, you know, encouraging people to go to evening classes to learn. It's like working-class, it's the learning process.

And did you find it exciting from the moment you went in there then?

I think so, yes, but bewildered, because I had never ever seen classical antiquity in my life before, and seeing these big casts, there were some pretty big ones at the Edinburgh College of Art, but seeing them, and seeing people drawing them, having as I said this background of thinking that art might be an activity of copying things from magazines. Also I thought in my own way how marvellous it would be to be a commercial artist, you know, that is, to spend every day just drawing according to people's wishes, and you're being paid for it.

Were you 15 when you first started to go there in the evenings?

Yes, about that age.

And you mentioned stone cutting, but presumably you were drawing from plaster casts were you, or were you actually stone cutting?

No, you could do lettering, you could do lettering from a piece of stone.

Is that what you were doing?

I did that, yes.

As well as draw from the life?

No I didn't draw from life till I became full-time.

I'm sorry, from plaster casts.

From plaster casts, yes. But in evening classes you didn't do that; you did something useful like book-binding, all the crafts, more or less, and if you were very junior you just did the most elementary, you wouldn't do mosaics or anything that was... Because one of the subjects they used to teach was illumination, you know, on a piece of...and you would be shown bits of vellum but they would only practise on cartridge paper. And there was a little shop in the college, and you would buy one sheet of cartridge paper and four drawing pins, you know, and you would have t hat one sheet of cartridge paper for maybe four weeks.

Here you are then in jail. There's war going on outside.

Mm. The Battle of Britain. I mean you used to read about it in the newspapers.

Did you feel that you wanted to join up?

No nothing like that, no. I was slightly numb I think. No no, there was no question. I just felt, maybe I would see my father again, and, being young, it's terribly difficult. I think there might have been a fair amount of concern about the future, but that memory has evaporated.

They let you out after how long then?

About three months, four months. As I say, this reflected the fact the tension was off. Similarly I think in the Isle of Man, I think the tension came off that, and they started to let people out of that. But there was this famous remark of, when Churchill was approached and they said, you know, he can't arrest everybody because a lot of them had distinguished anti-Nazis, but he made this famous remark, and there's a book with this title, called `Call It A Lot'.

It's a very good book isn't it, very good book, with some examples of Italian people who had been born here and had been living here for several generations.

But there were...some of these people also escaped, they weren't touched, I've been often told that.

Your mother came back with Yolanda intending to re-open the shop presumably?

Which she did, which she did.

Yes. But you got other kinds of jobs to support the family, did you?

Yes, I went, the first job I had was, it was easy to get a job, was working at a family tea warehouse, making the tea and delivering it, and I think that was about 30 shillings a week. And I remember working there, and I used to wander into the Edinburgh College at night, and I remember it was there that I said to him that I was giving up, and I was going to become full-time at the Edinburgh College of Art, and I remember them being shattered, you know, and saying couldn't I reconsider.

Did you find very much in the way of resentment? Because after all you've got an Italian name.

No, I think...I think...if I was muddled, so was the society around me. I think there was such a good record of Italians in Scotland that most people...I never remember a cross word, or even among the warders in jail, where everybody was apologetic, very apologetic.

So it was while you were working for this tea company that you made up your mind that you wanted to Edinburgh College of Art full-time.

Mm.

Did you have to apply? You said you...

No it was very easy, one just, as I said, I went to see one, I think it might have been Gillies, and I went along to see him, it wasn't even an office, I just went along to see him.

He was the director, was he?

No no, he was just one of the teachers, I don't think you even had to see the...I didn't even know who the director was. I don't know how I came to it, but I went to see him with, there was probably even a portfolio, two bits of cardboard with drawings in it, and I think he was

very amused. And he said, `Fine, you can make a start.' And I think, I can't remember money being a problem; it might have been 30 shillings for a year, it was heavy subsidised. And then I did seem to do for a bit what they now call a foundation course, which was drawing pigeons, and there was some of the Scottish greats were teaching, like Norman Forrest and Redpath, I remember very well somebody called Johnny Maxwell. And they were all nice, gentle creatures. And the Edinburgh College of Art at that time, they had a theatrical group, they had a classic society, there was a lot of people, I would have thought rather Scottish middle-class, and I mean if they had learnt to play the violin at school they continued at the Edinburgh College of Art, and they had quartets, things like that.

How did you support yourself financially?

Well, I think I used to go home. I mean my mother and I we were living frugally, you know, just go home. I mean one lived in a culture where living frugally was the norm.

What kind of things did you have to do then in the way of work at Edinburgh College of Art?

There was like drawing from the figure, but also they had their own ways of doing things, because if there was 20 people in the class, people would take, it was called five-minute drawing, you would work your way round and sit there for five minutes and people would do quick sketches. There was modelling, there was a sculptor called...I remember this quite well, white-washing, white-painted room, where they had details from Michelangelo's David, and you would then do the mouth or the eye or the nose, and Forrest was in the class all day, was working his way round every person and showing the context, and I could hear his voice now, convex and concave play... And on the walls there were what might have been called colourtypes of naked drawings by Degas, so that in a way this was sort of, one might almost say Scottish Course.

So you were doing this in three-dimension in other words.

That's right, that's right, this was all part of the first-year course.

Was there a point at which you realised you didn't really want to be a commercial artist, but you wanted to be...?

That's right, that was beginning to emerge.

So how long were you there full-time before they said, well sorry chum, you've got to join the Army?

Well they didn't say that; I mean the calling-up papers were there while I was...arrived while I was there, and it was the Pioneer Corps, and I think it might have been, I don't know, they don't have the records, but the Minister of Education had the records, because when the period was over and there was a thing called further education, I got a grant for having been...if your studies have been interrupted, you qualified for a grant, so I went to the Slade on the grant because of my interrupted military service, although I had been kicked out of the Army for being psychologically unfit.

Well, this is the end of this tape actually.

End of F4988 Side B

F4989 Side A

[This is the second tape of the interview on 10th of June 1993 between me, Frank Whitford, and Eduardo Paolozzi in his studio in Dovehouse Street.]

We had got up to the point where you got your call-up papers.

Yes.

For the Pioneer Corps.

Yes.

Given your interest in aeroplanes, which we haven't even talked about yet...

Yes.

Which went back right to your earliest childhood I guess.

Yes.

Weren't you disappointed that they didn't call you up in the RAF?

Well I think with my record, so-called, having been in jail, and also the fact that one was a dual national and all that, there was no question of that I think; and also the Pioneer Corps was the ideal regiment for all these kind of dubious people, because they had parts of the Pioneer, you weren't really trained to be a...you were given a minimum amount of training, minimum amount rather than a maximum. And also when I first went to join eventually a company of Pioneers, they were all Soho Italians, mostly from...they were all London Italians, you know, un-armed, it was called 270A, A for Alien, Pioneer Corps, and we were un-armed. We used to do digging in Slough and things like that. But also Slough was a big trading estate on a war-footing, the Royal Army Ordinance Corps had taken over a lot of sheds, so we had to service the sheds, moving boxes in and out. And we actually built our own Nissen huts in the grounds of Slough football ground, and the grandstand and offices is where the officers' mess was, and when I joined that regiment my uncle Carl, my mother's brother, he was a company carpenter, and my uncle Ben, my other uncle, he was the medical orderly, and in army language this was considered very very cushy, very cushy indeed. And both of them

had mistresses, although they were married they both had mistresses. A term was used also about getting your feet under somebody's table.

I wanted to ask you about women, but possibly a bit later on. Was this the first time you had been to England?

In what sense?

With the Pioneer Corps?

No no, of course I used to...when I was about ten my father bought a second-hand car for £16 when I was ten, and I kind of roughly think the car might have been ten years old, but there was a friend of my father's called Mr Smith who took the car apart, and re-built it for 30 shillings. And we drove down to Portsmouth in the car, and there was my grandfather, me, Mr Smith and my father, and my father couldn't drive when we set out, but he came back driving the car. But it was easy then, it was easy then.

But you didn't need a licence, did you.

Exactly. And if you more or less parked, and was more or less pointed in the right way, particularly with a driving instructor, Mr Smith. But that was quite heavy saturation of being driven, probably it's something not exceeding 30 miles an hour, all the way to Portsmouth, and all the food we took ourselves.

So, did you stay in a hotel overnight?

No no no no no, we just, as far as I know we just slept in the car.

Oh. Big excitement for you was it?

Well, no, it was a sort of rhapsodic idyllic way to have this kind of adventure, and of course, I had never been in that kind of contact with my grandfather or father, but I felt privileged, you know, to be allowed to go along.

So were you mustered, if that's the word, into the Pioneer Corps in Edinburgh, or were you given a ticket and told to report...?

No, you had to go to Bradford, there was a sort of school, a school that was evacuated, this had become a training place for the Pioneers, that particular Pioneer group. And then when the training was over, I made friends with another Italian called Marofini[ph], we were sent to a horrible place called Long Marston. But already the wheels were turning, already the wheels were turning about invading, going abroad somehow, about the great invasion.

So this was 1943 already was it, do you reckon?

I think so, yes.

And then you spent almost all your time in the Pioneer Corps, on Slough Town football pitch?

Well, we were marched out; I mean you did duties in Slough trading estate, and sometimes we would make, for the Army Ordinance Corps, a concrete thing which was full of water for tanks to be processed. But I really think at that time the wheels were turning towards D-Day, and I think I was in the Army when D-Day happened, and I was rather moved by that, and I went along with two friends to give some blood. Rather moved by that.

Did you go to London? Because after all London's not far from Slough.

Went to London a lot as a soldier, and I used to...I mean, I can't believe it, but I used to go dance halls looking for women. And we would actually scrape round the dance floor wearing boots, because we were told it was a charge; to wear shoes was not allowed, somehow. And they were always studded round the great metropolis, there were MPs, always MPs would ask to see whether you had got a pass or a chit.

Or your boots on.

And if you were properly dressed.

Yes. In your uniform you had to be?

In your uniform. And I remember staying in sort of Salvation Army hostels, a shilling a night. But there was a tremendous camaraderie, you know, there was a kind of ease in that time, if you were in uniform, you were conscious of belonging to the blessed.

This is an obvious question, did you go into any of the art galleries? I know most of them were closed, weren't they.

Oh yes, very much so. As a matter of fact while I was still in uniform, still in uniform, I had met somebody. I went to St. Martin's, they had Sunday life drawing there, and it was because I went to that, I met somebody called Derek Chittock[ph] who was up for the weekend to stay with a girl, and he said you should meet Rutherston, and maybe when you come out of the Army you could go to the Ruskin School, and I went to see Ruskin who had a lovely Chelsea flat, and I showed him some of my Army drawings.

Rutherston, who was the...

Albert Rutherston.

The brother of John Rothenstein, was he?

And it was his...and I think out of all the army drawings, what was left I've given to the Imperial War Museum, which was more or less my bunk and something else. Rutherston said, it was rather like Gillies, Rutherston said, `I would like you to come to Ruskin, and you don't have to pay any fees.' But consequently, when I realised when the war ended, the Slade, that was sharing limited space, Schwabe and Rutherston I used to see while I was drawing the cast would go sloping off to lunch at the Randolph. But I remember breaking Rutherston's heart, saying I was switching...when the forms came for the further education, I said to Rutherson I'm going to...I've never regretted this decision, I'm going to the Slade, but he never spoke to me again.

Because he thought you were so talented?

Well, maybe; no, but he thought, I think he had a view that rough blood was going to be the kind of thing that would be good for the Ruskin. But also I think he was of that persuasion, that if you had an Italian name, that you possibly had an extra gift and an extra potential.

You talk about these drawings that you did while you were in the Pioneer Corps; you did them obviously in your free time, in the evenings presumably.

No, don't forget I had been at the Edinburgh College of Art, I still had that dream, and I remember taking a sort of painting kit always around with me which I never used, I never used it. I felt, as I do now with a painting kit, I find it much too inhibiting to use; I've always

been good with a broken pencil and a bit of, I seem to be in that mould. I find it difficult ever to draw in an expensive drawing book; scraps of paper. It's even like wood, I like a battered old bit of wood.

So they were exclusively drawings, you didn't do any paintings when you were in the Pioneer Corps.

No. I mean I never studied painting, I've never been good at it.

What kind of drawings did you do then?

Well in the Nissen hut I used to draw...I mean the material was wonderful in a Nissen hut, I mean there were almost, there were always men playing cards, and there would always be a man playing a guitar, and my uncle Carl, I think I had three of them, Carl was, he used to make guitars while he was in the Army, because the strange thing, even in wartime you have an enormous, even in wartime after 4 o'clock you don't do much, even in wartime I noticed. There was an incredible amount of leisure in the Army, and long weekends of course, and all kinds of devices that gave you an incredible amount of tricks. So you could have all Thursday off if you knew how to do it.

So you drew people in the Nissen hut. Pen and ink, charcoal?

No, no charcoal, it was usually at that time sepia, and usually a mapping pen, I seem to have a thing about that. But before I went to the Army, when I had time off while I was still floating around Edinburgh College of At, there was a specialist, it was called George IV Bridge, there's a big, at that time, a specialist art library there, and I remember I used to do copies of...I've always done copies of a kind; one did copies after Leonardo there. And when I went to Oxford I found the life room, I couldn't handle the life room, there was...usually there was a fat model that came down from London and she was called Marjorie Butler, but if you didn't get a decent position on the model, and you drew with something...you know what a donkey is?

Yes.

This kind of fat model in an awkward position was surrounded by people on donkeys, but often even if you were a master, it meant you would end up with something that looked like three sausages attached to a pillow.

When you were doing these drawings in the Nissen hut, were you consciously imitating some other style?

Yes, somebody like Leonardo. And conscious, say, when I was at the Ruskin School, I consciously copied from Rembrandt and Dürer.

These drawings that you did in the Nissen hut and other places have never been reproduced anywhere as far as I am aware.

No, but there are some in the Imperial War Museum.

In the Imperial War Museum.

One was of my bunk with my name on it.

There's one drawing that has been reproduced, and it's...

The Rembrandt.

No, from the Pioneer Corps.

Yes.

It was a dry brush drawing, Indian ink, of some casts.

That's right, they were...that was, the warehouse that had Army spare parts, it was bits of motorbike engine.

Do you remember why you chose that particular subject?

Not quite sure. I think when I was in the Army, at one point it was at Buxton, and in Buxton they had a public library, and in the public library I discovered by chance this fabulous book called `Foundations of Modern Art', the original edition, and that kind of opened my eye, because it brought me back, I could see the possibility then of combining my childhood loves with the other kind of things, you know, the Bugatti wheel and the warship; that's the first time I've ever seen in a book, and it hit me...I needed a guru which didn't exist, and that book became a kind of guru, and I even gave a talk at the Tate about five years ago about that

particular experience, and it was called, I think it was called `Foundations of Modern Art Again'.

That's the book by Ozenfant.

That's right. But that's why, you asked me about the cylinder heads, that book gave me the confidence to do that.

Yes, in other words, to see what...

And it was my...I mean you were never taught things like that, either at the Edinburgh College of Art or at the Ruskin School; you were never taught anything like modernism, there was a sort of humble attitude that you scraped along and that talent would be out.

So it was a revelation that you could use mechanistic subjects as a legitimate...

That's right, that's right.

Fine art material.

That's right. That came from that book.

And that drawing is reproduced in the Konnertz book.

That's right.

And it's also reproduced in the Tate Gallery exhibition catalogue.

That's right.

I have to say that, because...

Of course, sure, sure.

Future generations, they can then...

Refer to it.

Yes. Now you mention your uncles, and you said that each of them had got a mistress. I mean they had got a mistress in Slough rather than Scotland?

They had a mistress in Slough.

Yes.

Because as I said earlier, you had an incredible amount of leisure time in the Army, and you could even, by cunning arrangement have the whole day off, as long as the sergeant was squared off, you know.

Yes. Had you been interested in girls before you became a member of the Pioneer Corps?

Well in a kind of...in Edinburgh we had these palais de danses, and that was my kind of interest, but I mean being young in Scotland, I mean it was terribly puritanical, and it was a very shifty...I mean it's rather Philip Larkin world really, it was full of complexities.

Were you a good dancer?

Fair, I would have thought, fair.

But the ballroom stuff?

But I really learnt to dance just to be able to...I thought it was an incredible thing to be able to hold a very strange woman in your arms, it gave you a licence to do that. And there were of course, as the evening progressed there were subtle body language which was quite interesting. And of course everybody, all the women at that time used to wear stockings; all the women at that time would have a special, for Saturday night a special dress which could be something like crêpe de Chine, you know, which of course as the evening wore on, everybody became rather sweaty.

Mm. And I mean you would wear a suit and tie presumably would you at these...?

Nobody would dance with you unless you looked smart, so, and proper hair cut and all that.

And how was it in Slough then, I mean were the women available for soldiers?

Well yes, but don't forget I was very very young; I mean my uncle seemed very worldly, and I was still naive and idealistic. And I mean I spent a lot of evenings just drawing while a lot of the randy men would go and patrol and see, I mean it was a sport, see what they could do. But I never, as a young man I had a vision of falling in love with some kind of highly spiritual Venus, really. But the idea of going off with some old lady aged 30, I found unappealing.

Yes. I mean was your ideal Venus another Italian?

No, never, no no, it might have been more Anglo-Saxon. But slightly, slightly the vision of the boy from the wrong side of the...rather a higher social level, who spoke proper and read books.

You mentioned earlier on something which I had never known before, that they discharged you from the Army.

Yes, that's right.

Because you were psychologically...?

Well, there was a...I realised when I was in the Army that when the war came to an end that you were going to spend another two years in the Army, because the rule was, first in, first out. And that really upset me a lot, to think that having, when the war was over, being in for another two years, and the only way, only possible way of getting out, was to feign madness, which I did. And that meant by running away, while I was at Slough, running away, which meant...because before the running away part I had tried to show certain signs; I didn't go and eat, and things like that, but nobody seemed to care, as long as...so that I had to draw it to their attention, so I went off, I actually went to Oxford on the back of a motorbike, which was very easy in uniform, and when I came back I was immediately put into arrest, and because I had been behaving badly, or abnormally, remanded for a medical report, which was normal, and I went in an Army ambulance, was picked up and taken to a psychiatrist in Cambridge. And he was a very very gentle, nice, sweet man, and I like to think he knew what was going on, and he recommended me for medical treatment at a place that's been demolished now, which was Banstead, and they had a military wing there. And I noticed there were really...I was a bit alarmed, but I went to where the padded cells were and I noticed they just kept the mops in there, and I found that reassuring, but there were genuine padded cells.

Yes.

And I noticed...but there were definite...there weren't many soldiers there; some had snapped, having been in detention, some had snapped from tropical prisons, military prisons, and they were gone for good. And then, being by Sutton it was in the line of the V-bombs coming over, Sutton was empty, and all the, half the windows at Banstead were gone, because a lot of these V-bombs used to fall short. And I would be lying in this military ward when a bomb would come over, and then you knew that there was trouble when the engine stopped. But I remember, I was the only one that got under the bed, all the other people who were gone, just stared ahead. Now a lot of them had this...nothing heroic, there was no noise, a lot of them had just more or less switched off from life, and unless they were fed they would have just shrunk away. That seemed to be the common kind of madness, that they...

But I mean you didn't continue to pretend to be mad?

Well I was given...they took blood out of my ear, because at that time some madness was inherited, through syphilis, they always tested you for that. And then, I was transferred to an open ward, I seemed to be all right. And then I had a very crucial interview where they said about me going back to the unit as 4F, which meant you just was a camp cleaner, for two years, so I did make...I was able to...I was in an odd position to make a declaration that I might be dangerous, that I was hearing voices, and fires could happen. And I think I might have been very lucky, I was discharged. And I remember that day well, and leaving Banstead, and it was a warm, nice day, and Banstead is rather high up, on a clear day you could see St. Paul's, but I remember going back to the unit with my discharge papers and everybody looking at me and nudging and saying, `Clever bastard' and so on. And then, curiously enough I had to, at that time, because I think, I think the invasion was going well, an invasion.

So it was '44 already.

But already there were de-mob suits, and I was given a de-mob suit, and handed in everything, and went instantly up to Edinburgh in my de-mob suit.

Had you been in close contact with your mother, had you been writing regularly?

I used to give, as a kind of formality, as a private soldier I had 14 shillings a day, I used to automatically give her half, and I used to jog along on 7 shillings, which was like a shilling for a bed in London, or Naafi, you know, but everything seemed to be pennies and twopences then. And there was also, you musn't forget, reduced rates for soldiers.

Fourteen shillings a day strikes me as quite good actually.

Yes, well that was the pay. I don't know what an officer got, but... But one never felt deprived, I never felt deprived, but you see, I think mentally you thought frugally, mentally. I mean you never, never thought, I mean all the, on the railways, I mean you stood, I stood.....[TELEPHONE - BREAK IN RECORDING]

So the first thing you do after you are released is go back to Edinburgh to see your mother.

That's right.

Did you stay there long?

I don't think so, because I then decided to go, when I came out of the Army I then went to Oxford, you know, to...I mean that part's rather vague, but maybe there was a thing of getting to Oxford, sort of beginning of term, or maybe it didn't matter then.

Were you still...

That must have been the, when I went to Oxford is the year...I was in Oxford when I did fire-watching, I think it must have been the last year of the war, because that's why we were able, I was there when the war ended, so that's why we were able to come up to the Slade.

You were formally enrolled to begin with at the Ruskin.

That's right, paying our fees. And no money.

And very quickly you transferred to the Slade which was in the same building.

Mm. No no, no, they were all combined at...we were all combined at...they had an annex I think.

But did you make a conscious decision to move to the Slade rather than...?

Well I realised I wanted to do sculpture; the conscious decision was, I knew there was a big sculpture school at the Slade. If I was going to do sculpture I would have to go to the Slade, so I came out.

Well this is a huge change though, isn't it?

Mm.

I mean you hadn't thought about sculpture before.

No, no, but I had resolved at that point, when I was at Oxford, I mean I just felt I wanted to make things.

It was as simple as that?

It was as simple as that. So when we...we moved into the Slade that had been more or less closed through the war, and I think there was a lot of...I think UCL had been bombed, I mean big bits of lead things, a door, there had been a big fire. But the actual Slade premises had escaped.

But then, the Slade was still nevertheless in Oxford with the Ruskin.

When the war ended, but after that, the move was started to move back.

So after you decided that you wanted to do sculpture, is sculpture all you did, or did you also have to do drawing...?

No no, I did mostly sculpture, and there was a fool who was called Gerrard, who was head of sculpture, and I didn't get on with him at all.

Can you remember his first name? Gerrard, I don't...

No I don't. He's still alive I think, a very very old man.

Gerrard was his second name?

Yes.

And, presumably, I mean knowing the inside of the Ruskin School, it wasn't very big then, was it?

The Ruskin School was where the Egyptian section is now. Do you know the Ashmolean?

Yes, absolutely.

And there was a problem there which was extremely boring, was that you couldn't work.....[TELEPHONE - BREAK IN RECORDING]

We're at the Ruskin, or at any rate we're in the Slade at the Ruskin.

In Ruskin it seemed to me there would be two rooms, and one room was kind of life, and there were Slade students mixed up with the... And then I think there was a room where I did a bad lithograph there, they had a lithography room, and there was a man called Polunin[ph] who was supposed to have been a protégé of Diaghilev who taught theatre design, Polunin[ph]. And I don't know what happened when the war...I think he did come up to London with the rest; they've always had theatre design. But as I said, when the museum closed that was...but I mean, there was a kind of wartime atmosphere, you had to just, everything had to be sacrificed towards victory, but I think once victory came I think that the nation moved into another gear quickly.

Do you remember the first sculpture you ever did?

Well, one might say, you know, I used to have to carve at that time propellers for my aeroplanes, so I think that might be the first, really.

They're very complicated things to do.

That's right.

From balsa wood?

Well, ordinary wood. I can see one up there, if you get up.

What, from that period?

I think so. Go over to where the ladder is.

Yes.

Stand in front of the ladder, and then look left on top of a book.

Oh good Lord, yes. And this is...

And that's from that period.

Have you still got this for nostalgic reasons, or...?

No, it's just survived, more or less accidentally but there it is.

It's a bit more than a foot long, beautifully carved, covered...

But it had to be precise or it wouldn't work.

It wouldn't fly, sure. Well I mean I remember trying to carve these and they'd never...

But I mean somebody would say that's not...you are really meaning something else.

No, but I mean, that shows enormous skill. I mean I know, I've tried to carve propellers.

Well you had to acquire that skill if it was going to work.

Yes. So, I mean it was mostly carving that you did rather than modelling.

That's right, and even when I made sculptures, I mean, unconventional sculpture, they were slightly carved, because I would make kind of clay moulds and I would pour the plaster in so there would be rough cylinders and things like that, and then I would carve them to shape. That was, I invented that kind of way of doing things.

So what did the final sculpture look like then?

Well, I've sold one, I sold one for £15 to a man called Davenport while I was still at the Slade, but Davenport's an interesting chapter, and it was kind of, I had this thing about bulls and bull's head, and Ernest Hemingway, so there was a kind of cryptic idea of a bull's head done in kind of cylinders for nostrils and so on. Slightly 'Picassoid'. Once again, it might be in the Konnertz book.

I was going to say actually that it...

But there is this Slade period collage in the Konnertz book.

It's a Picasso-esque subject exactly as you say, a bull.

Mm, but he was my hero, and of course, once I had been, when I was at the Slade I used to go down to...while I was at Oxford I did something unusual, which was drawing in the Pitt Rivers, and some of these drawings have survived.

That's the anthropological museum isn't it, in Oxford isn't it, in Oxford.

That's right. But I mean what's interesting, that, and I thought it was necessary to go there, particularly that the whole art that was carried on by Ruskin and Slade seemed to end up, seemed to be ridiculous that it ended up in a...that they had turned art into an activity which was just drawing a naked woman from London in a crowded room, whereas Oxford seemed to have a terrain, and it had one of the best... And the other thing that helped me to go there was once again `Foundations of Modern Art', really, the fact that there was that mixture of warships and African sculpture, and Picasso and all that; it was an ideal mix.

And you were the only Slade student at the time who went to the Pitt Rivers.

Well I mentioned it to the others, but they said they weren't interested. In the same way as the Royal College of Art now, there is this magnificent exhibition about Leo[ph], you ask any of the painting students at the Royal College if they've gone, they can live without it, not necessary; it's the same way, it's the same situation, sometimes the same situations are endlessly repeated through history.

Were there any students at the Slade at all, while you were at Oxford, whom you found interesting, or...?

Marvellously, Raymond Mason, he preceded me, and I was too scared. There was one way of living there if you had no money, which was fire-watching, 4s.6d. a night, but you were locked in by a kind of martinet. But Raymond Mason used to risk his life every night; he was a very very attractive man, and always seemed to have girlfriends, he was always on the prowl. He used to slip down a drainpipe, and I wouldn't have dreamt, I would have died, I would have slipped, but he did it every night with aplomb.

Rather than fire-watch.

And he had been discharged from the Navy through asthma, and here he is, virile, older than me, mid-seventies.

Was he aware of Picasso as well?

Oh yes, I mean Picasso was our hero. We were also anti Augustus John. Most of the run-of-the-mill.....

End of F4989 Side A

F4989 Side B

You had seen Picasso in the original?

Yes, I think, I knew somebody like, one met for example this man I mentioned, John Davenport, he had a house full of modern art really. And then of course, I think I knew Roland Penrose while I was at the Slade.

How did you meet Roland Penrose?

I'm trying hard to think. Through Margaret Gardener, he was in the house next door. And I think I met Margaret Gardener through Nigel Henderson, who had been her lover.

Nigel Henderson was...

We're talking about the Slade, but are you talking about Oxford?

I was talking about Oxford then. Because you were already interested in Picasso at Oxford.

Yes, only by reproductions.

Ah, but was Raymond Mason a contemporary of yours at Oxford, or only in London?

He was a contemporary at Oxford, and we used to do things like go up to Birmingham to hear a concert, and he had a trick of going back and forward without paying, which, I think the only time you would be challenged would be giving your ticket at the barrier, but there was a way of leaving Oxford station through the left luggage, a sort of nice little loophole.

Yes. Ian Davenport was a collector whom you met while you were in Oxford.

Go on.

That's a question actually.

Yes, Ian, I can't remember him.

You've already said that he had bought...

Oh John Davenport.

Sorry, John Davenport. That he had bought a sculpture of yours.

That's right.

Did he live in London?

No, he lived in London, in Chelsea, and I think he had lived in a wonderful apartment, but he was rather a bitter man, he had a hate thing about Cyril Connolly. And he was a defeated little man somehow.

How did you come across him?

I used to, for some reason when I was at the Slade I used to go down to Finches, I was taken down to Finches, where people, a lot of these people worked at Bush House, including John Davenport, and I think that was a reserved occupation. And used to have beers there, and I met Norman Douglas. I don't know what started all that, but I used to spend...

So you would go from Oxford to London.

No, well I'm getting mixed up here. No, well while I was at the Slade I used to...I think John Davenport was really the London period.

That was the London period, I see, because this is obviously very important, because this is your introduction to the wider world of intellectuals, art collectors.

And the need for a guru.

Yes.

I needed guidance then.

You didn't have any guidance in Oxford worth talking about?

Not really, not really, sadly, sadly.

Even though, I mean Oxford must have been full of people who potentially could have played that role.

Well that's a theory, but I never experienced that, I never went to tea with a don, or anything like that. I mean a lot of it, ironically, in Oxford, was spent locked up in the Ashmolean and doing fire-watching, evening after evening.

But you did do some drawings as well as some sculpture.

That's right. But I didn't do much sculpture, but there was no facilities for that.

Yes. And these drawings are not only copies I remember in pen and ink, because they are also repro...well, you exhibited them in 1971 at the Tate, or at any rate some of them, pages of studies of African masks, the by now very famous sheet, I don't know who owns it, of copies after Rembrandt, which you did in the Ashmolean I suppose.

That's right.

Anything else that you can remember doing at that time?

I mean it was pretty thin; I mean one would be quite happy with two drawings a day at that time, and one was still reasonably uncertain. I mean one didn't have much...I mean there was a kind of touch and go, one still didn't know what it meant really to be an artist, one didn't really know what it meant to be driven, one didn't really know about what would be the route to take, and so on. I mean one was, particularly in Oxford, unbelievably unformed, unformed, and just coasting along on instinct and intuition.

Now either we can stop there, it's 10 to 12, or we can go on a bit, but I mean that seems to me to be a natural break, because...

So do I.

You're just about to go to London.

That's right. But let's look at the diary, and think of the next time.

[END OF SESSION]

End of F4989 side B

F4990 Side A

When did you first start getting interested in art?

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

Because last time we came up to the point at which you left the Ruskin, or at any rate you left Oxford, and went to London.

Mm.

Now that was in 1946, or was it 1945?

Well I was there in Oxford for the last year of the war, I didn't know it at the time but it was probably...they ended the war in '45, I was there through the entire year of '44. I think I was even there in Christmas '44.

Where were you living in Oxford actually?

Well I had spent a lot of time, I spent...I didn't have any money whatsoever, so I did what one or two other people did, which was called fire-watching in the Ashmolean, and I think Raymond Mason used to do that. 4s.6d. a night, but it was enough, you had a bed for the night in the Ashmolean, and 4s.6d. was, you could eat on 4s.6d. a day at the time.

But where did you live, where did you have your...?

Slept in the Ashmolean for a lot of the time.

Did you really, you didn't have any address in other words?

Well later on there was some period when I moved, had a room in Beaufort Street. Rooms were very easy to get, very easy to get, I had a room in Beaufort Street for a bit. And it was from Beaufort Street, Peter de Francia was at the, hyphen-Slade-Ruskin at the time, and he was living in a thatch cottage, 5 shillings a week, outside of town, and he was married to a nurse at the time, and we used to draw the nurse, and he used to give rather a large, he used to grind his own colours, which was amazingly easy, he just sprinkled powder colour onto a marble slab and squirted the slab with linseed oil, and you just ground, you made a kind of paste, because that's really what oil paints, it's powdered colour in suspension. So I used to

help him to do that, and he used to do big buttery nudes slightly with a pallet knife, curiously enough like early Cézanne, and he had a hero at the time I think called Kurt Bacht[ph], who was a distinguished refugee he used to talk about.

He wrote a book about Cézanne I remember.

That's right. So he was, he was Peter de Francia's[ph] guru.

Oh, and he was...was he teaching at the...?

No no, he was like me, a student.

Kurt Bacht[ph] was?

No no, sorry.

I beg your pardon.

Peter de Francia.

But was Kurt Bacht[ph] teaching?

Kurt Bacht[ph] I think was living in London, and I think he was living possibly meagrely, and I'm not quite sure whether de Francia introduced me to him. But this was the Ruskin-hyphen-Slade years.

Yes. Do you remember anybody else who has subsequently become reasonably well-known, fellow students?

I don't think so, I think, well, I mean there was Rutherston who was in charge of the Ruskin, and Schwabe who was in charge of the Slade.

But no fellow students other than Raymond Mason?

No fellow students other than Mason, and Peter de Francia. There was a lot of sort of, I think some of the boys, you see I had come out of the Army, and I'm not sure whether Peter de Francia had been invalided, certainly Raymond Mason, but the rest were all mental...you could easily get in, there was no difficulty getting in to an art school, and I think the rest were

just medical rejects, anonymous ciphers really, and the rest were sort of dotty girls who have all certainly gone into oblivion.

So, you were...I've never quite got this clear. You were nominally enrolled at the Slade.

I was at the Ruskin School, and I had been, even in Army uniform I was taken by somebody called Derek Chittock, who, we met at life classes at St. Martin's. St. Martin's had Sunday life classes, there was all these things of open doors for war workers and slightly like the National Gallery concerts, there was a kind of benevolent feeling about culture at that time. And Derek Chittock introduced me to all Albert Rutherston and I took him some drawings which I had done actually in the Pioneer Corps, and Rutherston says, quite rightly, `We need a little bit of rough blood back at the Ruskin School, and you can come and I'll pay your fees.' So all I had to do was to live, hence fire-watching and some kind of pittance.

Did you form any impression of Oxford itself as a university?

Well it was wartime, but the impression I had was that, in a sense that, there was a strange man, a tutor at the Slade called Ralph Nuttall-Smith[ph] who was a carver, he had great pretensions, and I think he also used to teach perspective, which I never went to. But the impressions one formed at that time was, there was a sort of strong wartime atmosphere, the place was full of millions of American airmen, there were a lot of air bases nearby, and this rather closed life which I never seemed to penetrate, of academia.

Did you go to any lectures, any university lectures?

No, I don't think...I didn't...there was...I think the university, I'm right in saying, it appeared to me just to be ticking over during the war years, and I remember eating out, that everything was pretty austere, that if you were lucky enough to get an omelette in the evening it was always dried eggs, but that was still considered a treat. But Lyons thrived; when I used to get my 4s.6d. and was let out of the Ashmolean, I would go along for breakfast at Lyons. That always seemed to be adequate, what they seemed to serve up. I had never a feeling of being hungry.

So you didn't try to get to know undergraduates, or try to involve yourself in the life of the university, what life there was?

Well one had this feeling, you see, that even, that the drawing school, even the Ruskin School compared with what it is now, was pretty austere, just confined to a few rooms in the

museum, and the museum also closed down early because of wartime, round about 4 o'clock, which also meant that the classes ended at 4. But there were little annexes round the place, there was a very strange man called Polunin[ph], who taught theatre design, and his chief claim was that, his claim was that he had worked with Diaghilev. But he had an annex somewhere, and you could work quite late there.

Yes. But you used the Pitt Rivers Museum, as you've told us...

That was on my own volition, I think I found out about that, but that wasn't a class thing, I just went along there, I was intrigued and used to draw there. In the same way I was intrigued upstairs in the Ashmolean, there was a library with all kinds of careful colourtypes I think they were called, facsimile reproductions of Rembrandt and Dürer. And I used to find myself up there doing copies, but that was also my own idea.

Was there anything in the museum itself, other than the library, that particularly...?

Well there was a room that we slept in for fire-watching, was shelves and shelves with curtains, and that was shards, seemed to be a lot of shards. But I think there was a big sprinkling of excellent casts, ironically from the [INAUDIBLE] casts of things in the [INAUDIBLE], the dying war[??], and we had boards with, part of the day was spent drawing from these casts. But there was no back-up lectures of why we were doing it, there was this curious kind of English, of English diffidence in a way which was of course slightly the same when one finally went up to the Slade in London.

And, I mean no art history, formal art history lectures or anything?

There was, Hendy would come down, some people, I think that possibly the professor, the Slade professor, that was the chair, and I think Hendy did a lecture on Spanish painting on one warm afternoon. There was a bit of that, but there was a bit more of that at the Slade. There was somebody, I think a woman called Margaret Winney[ph].

Oh, well indeed I knew Margaret Winney[ph].

She used to lecture to us at the Slade, and also Tankred Boraneus[ph]. But of course, in a strange way we used to think of both of them as being so ancient that nothing that they said could be possibly plausible.

She couldn't have been so ancient, because she subsequently taught me at the Courtauld in the Sixties.

I know, but you know, there was that thing of, in your twenties that anybody getting near to forty was ancient.

Yes. You sub...well maybe it wasn't subsequent, but I mean one of the pictures which you have written about, which is in the Ashmolean, is a Piero di Cosimo's `Forest Fire'.

Yes. I'm not quite sure if it was on view, but I remember at the Slade, strange exhibitions at the National Gallery of war artists, and I remember a Kokoschka portrait of Maisky, which I thought was horrific, but memorable, it looked like a face covered with raspberry jam. And I remember when the masterpieces started coming back from some cave, a bunch of us went to see a Velasquez, the Venus, which was picture of the month, it was called at the time, you just went to see one picture.

And that was all through the war I think actually wasn't it, that they just had one...?

That's right.

So, you weren't aware of the di Cosimo in the Ashmolean...?

Not at the time, not that I remember, not that I remember.

So then you go to London.

Mm.

What makes you go to London, what makes you choose the Slade, or choose to move to the Slade, rather than stay at the Ruskin?

That was easy, because I was officially at the Ruskin School, and when the Slade went back I joined them, because I didn't want...Oxford appeared to me to be too stringent and the Ruskin School seemed to have no facilities for sculpture, so that decision wasn't a difficult one. Except that Rutherston was deeply disappointed that I was deserting the Ruskin School, but I've never had any regret about that.

What made you decide that sculpture was the thing that you wanted to do then?

Because at Edinburgh we had a, I suppose they call it foundation course then, and we did a mixture of drawing and modelling, and I think the penny dropped then that I quite liked making things.

So was it simply a question of you going to Schwabe and saying, `I want to you'?

Yup, that was...and what helped that was that you could fill in a paper, having been in the Army there was a scheme called further education, which meant that your fees were paid, and also you had an allowance. These were people who had their education interrupted; I think thousands of people were able to do that, I mean people coming back from the war for example. And there was a great feeling when we did go up to the Slade, the war was over, and there was a great feeling of, there was sort of people still wearing bits of battledress and greatcoats and all that, and indeed, Nigel Henderson was still wearing his RAF greatcoat when he appeared at the Slade.

Your fellow student.

My fellow student.

And quite quickly friend.

And quite quickly friend. But there were all kinds of people, even I think Edwin Heath who had been a prisoner of war, and all kinds of people, ex-Navy people and so on.

Bill Turnbull had been in the RAF.

He had been in the RAF, yup.

You knew London quite well by this time.

Not particularly; as a matter of fact the first year in London it took me quite a bit to get used to it.

What particularly did you find difficult to get used to?

Difficult to get a sense of place. For example when I did come up to London the Slade had got rooms, or a house at Cartwright Gardens, and I had one of the rooms there, but it was difficult to orient oneself, relate that to all the other places.

They were student hostels I think until comparatively recently, weren't they.

I think they were, I think they were. It's like the Royal College had residences; no more.

Mm. So, I mean do you remember devastation caused by bombs, do you remember...?

Well I remember a fair amount of, there was a lot of bits of melted lead at UCL, and I used, I took some down to the sculpture school and I did a head in lead, under great difficulties. But I remember a fair amount of devastation, except for some reason the Slade seemed to have escaped, it seemed to be in dust and cotton wool, there didn't seem to me any devastation there whatsoever. And the cranking-up, possibly I was there on the first day after the war when it resumed the term, which meant there were two life rooms, there was a life room for the ladies, for the sculpture modelling, and there was a life room for the men, and within a few months, because of how women had been part of the war, they soon mixed that up, but they were willing for the first week or so to continue exactly where they had left off.

Complete division between men and women?

Absolutely, but it didn't last long, and within weeks they had become mixed.

But was this a life room specifically for sculpture students?

That's right, downstairs.

There was another one for painters?

No no no, two life rooms for the sculptors, one just with women and just with men.

Yes, but presumably another set of life rooms for the painters somewhere else.

Upstairs, upstairs, and you could go up there and work.

Who ran the sculpture school, or sculpture department when you joined the Slade, do you remember?

That was Gerrard[ph], a man who is still, I think he's in his nineties, still living, as far as I know.

And, other than the people we've already mentioned, who do you remember among the students then?

There were some people who were like, for what it's worth, Gordon Fish, Adrian Heath, who has just died. There was a few that you've just mentioned, including Richard Hamilton.

Ah, Richard Hamilton, yes.

But I think, I was two years at the Slade, he came on my second year, and I was already thinking of going to France, and my second year Mason went ahead, because I think he had had...he was invalided from the Navy.

Richard Hamilton...sorry.

But I mean there was only a handful of notables, and this handful met all the time, and we all used to have, often gather for lunch, and rather as a rebellious group we used to go and walk to a bizarre cafe in Euston and have kippers for lunch, every day, which seemed a treat then.

You were conscious of being a group, that's you and Nigel Henderson particularly.

That's right, and different from the others.

Yes. In what way, I mean...?

Well, for example, we had a loyalty to France, we had a loyalty, and there were books, and a loyalty to the school of Paris, and indeed Mason went there, and I went there, and Turnbull went there.

But where did you loyalty to France come from? You've already mentioned this book by Ozenfant.

Yes, there was that, but there was also, there were very big seeds planted with the London Gallery, which existed, with the paintings by it, and they even had poetry readings. And they even, and I think I missed it, they had a Kurt Schwitters collage, and they had a reading there,

and so on, so, I mean that helped to make the decision to go to France and see real, what we call real painting.

There's so much I want to ask you actually, I mean, without getting too confused. When was the first time you were aware of the London Gallery for example, before you joined the Slade?

No, well, I think, I probably got through to that; for some reason I had met somebody called John Davenport who was a Francophile, and even used to go and have lunch with him, civilised lunch, and he would play, he had a baby grand and played Busoni, a big library, and he had works by De Silva and others. But I also got the idea from, one always used to...there was an open house of Julian Trevelyan, and he introduced one in a sense by his paintings, photographs, of the whole idea of the French experience.

But how did you get into these circles? This is what always fascinates me about people.

Well I mean, in Trevelyan's case it was an open house, and I think that one of the keys to John Davenport was via Nigel Henderson and his mother.

And John Davenport was a man of independent means presumably.

Sort of, not really; I think he had to work for World Service BBC, he might have been the French programme. But Win Henderson herself opened a few doors, for example Nigel Henderson[ph] also had this famous Duchamp green box of this kind of, and I thought that was indescribable, yet intriguing, of these fragments that made the large glass. But these kind of things were foreign to the average Slade student, would have been admired even in a mild way, the world of Augustus John, they were at that time too kind of groups that the minority admired Picasso, and the majority admired Augustus John.

And presumably the teachers were very much on the side of the majority.

Gwyn Jones, Colonel Gwyn Jones, and there was Charlston[ph], Charlston[ph], and, in a strange way they were nice people, but not, it wasn't so much the quality of the art, they weren't driven, they weren't driven, they were gentle creatures.

So they weren't actively hostile to modern art then?

They weren't...no, but I think the temperature was...no, not much alienation, because such sweet creatures, and they didn't demand, they didn't want to turn the world, they didn't like art that tried to turn the world upside-down.

Does that include Schwabe? I suppose it does.

Yes, and Schwabe was sort of gentle and...but they were conscientious, Schwabe in a sense would go round the entire class trying to improve their drawing. But the idea of...I mean, perhaps that kind of Englishman has disappeared by now, but there was a curious passionless, it was a passionless event, being in the life class with a tutor working his way slowly round. It was...it was kind of a sanitised experience.

And passion was clearly one of the things that you were going to get in France.

That's right. Or it's what one lusted for.

How about reactions to your work within the school, first of all among the teachers?

Well, it was through Win Henderson we knew Freddie Mayor, that I had an exhibition at Freddie Mayor's, my last month, June 1947, and it was from that exhibition, which sold very well, that I had enough...there was currency control, of course if you were worldly and had a lot of money you were able to ignore it, but if you were reasonably poor, you were lucky enough just to get the £75, and indeed with £75 in travellers' cheques one could live frugally for a year in that time, and my room in the Ile St. Louis was a pound a month.

But before this 1947 exhibition of yours, how about reactions to what you were doing in the Slade?

I think they thought one was a pretty odd fellow really, and that was it, but even one's appearance and the way one dressed, the fact one didn't go there conscientiously every day and grind away, put one... There were people who were incredibly conscientious, whereas I would go to the Science Museum and draw, and I would go to the London Gallery maybe, or sometimes, there was a wonderful cinema near the Slade called the Tolmar I think in Tolmar Street, long since demolished, sometimes I would go there in the afternoon, and that was considered appalling.

What kind of sculpture were you doing? Well what kind of work were you doing, because it wasn't only sculpture was it?

Well, having come under the shadow of Picasso, I think that I even, talking about meeting people I had met through, I think it's through this network, via Win Henderson we knew Margaret Gardener, who took me next door to Roland Penrose's, who was also a sponsor of the London Gallery, but had a prime collection of classics of modern art, de Chirico and so on, that was a good introduction. But, that, when I really think about it, all these kind of mosaics led one to France. Penrose was quite...and even when I came back from France, he picked up the threads, because by that time the ICA was established.

You see, I know some of the pieces that you exhibited in that Mayor Gallery exhibition in 1947, I mean some of them indeed are still around, and there were photographs of them and so on which have been reproduced. But I don't think I know of anything that you made at the Slade other than those...

Well that may tell you that, one of the people I met through Roland was Peter Watson, who was also a founder of the London Gallery, and I went to...he asked me...I showed him my work which he liked and said, `I'll put it in "Horizon",' and the work that went into "Horizon", written about by Robert Melville, which could even be September 1947, was all work I had done in the Slade. After the life room and these people, in my room at Cartwright Gardens I decided the last six months to spend my time drawing there, using that as my studio in Cartwright Gardens, and also making concrete sculpture in the basement. And I remember taking a cart and going, getting all the raw materials in kind of builders' workshops which have long since been demolished, but I did all that myself in Cartwright Gardens, but not at the Slade.

They were carvings rather than mouldings from concrete were they?

I used to make up an iron framework for, say a seagull and a fish, and just butter it on the best I could.

And then score lines on...

That's right, and then score lines on it. But I also did, at the Slade I did a kind of plaster...not only was one interested in Picasso, for some reason everybody read García Lorca at that time, and one also read Hemingway and bull fights, that all seemed to be around. And there are a few interesting people, it was quite literary. And I did some bull-fight drawings based on that literature at the time.

One thing above all fascinates me about all this. Here you are, you're a student, and yet you're getting what most students actually could only dream of; you get an illustrated article in `Horizon', which was the most...

Which was not planned, it wasn't...one didn't have a social strategy for advancement.

But that was the most outstanding intellectual magazine of the period.

That's right, right. But it was also in a strange way, I don't think Cyril Connolly liked it, it was slightly homo-erotic wish of Peter Watson who pushed it through.

Yes, well I mean you think Peter Watson fancied you?

I think so, yes, but also I kind of fitted in with, at that time particularly I fitted in that world with...I think I was a very erotic image for Peter Watson, because he always fell for boys like me who had no...who were foreign and had no...and were talented and so on; I fitted into some of the little...

Do you think that article helped your career?

Not quite sure, I'm not quite sure in a way, because in a way, when I went to Paris I think Jean Dubuffet, who had...at the Place Vendome, there was a gallery Devorin[ph], and in the basement there was the l'Art Brute, and I think Dubuffet, even at that time, liked it very much. But I was already moving away from that.

Yes, yes.

But I mean, being young and arrogant, I mean I often went the opposite way from what other people would have considered a good career move.

Can you think of an example?

Well, not wanting to show with l'Art Brute, because I wanted to do things that were more like, I think I wanted, the second exhibition I had at Freddie Mayor's was collage, blue and white collage, I was lent a studio at [INAUDIBLE], a big wooden studio, just for nothing, and I was...there was a wonderful fair, permanent fair there, and the fair seemed to represent all the French exuberance. And I also sold quite well, I did collage from funfairs and things like that. And the third exhibition, which has...my idea was to kind of live by an annual

exhibition at Freddie Mayor's, even if it only made £80, and the third one didn't sell at all, which was reliefs, which had come from going to St. Jean de Luz[ph], and trying to make plaster reliefs that evoked the seaside, or lunar landscapes, and there were two or three things bought. Peter Watson bought one, and Peter Gregory bought another one, and Peter Gregory was a sort of key figure in post-war, also founder of the ICA. So when one came back with one's tail between one's legs a bit, not having conquered Paris, and decided grimly that one might have to spend some time not only living in London but teaching in London, because a thing that I swore in my arrogance when I left the Slade, a lot of students were getting teachers' diplomas, they were even getting an extra year; I was offered an extra year and I couldn't get to France quick enough, but I found that having sworn that I would live in France for the rest of my life that I had to break that vow, and the other vow that I had to break was, I wouldn't teach. And of course ironically I've been in a sense teaching ever since, and still am.

Yes. I would like to come back to that, and obviously to France, in a minute or two, but first of all, Nigel Henderson, if I can come back to him, I mean he was obviously quite important for you, not least because of his mother, who was a very strange woman.

That's right, and she had actually been...I think there are a lot of references to her in I think an Antonia White book, there's a...I think she was a friend of Antonia White, but there was an overlap, Antonia White knew Alexandra Keiller[ph], and there was also a strange relationship with Alexander Keiller[ph] and Win Henderson. I think that, he could only enjoy sex by beating. But she also knew, had shared, when she was younger, before the war, a gallery with Peggy Guggenheim, in London, and that's also been chronicled with Herbert Read and so on.

Was part of Win Henderson's money in the gallery then, or was she just an employee?

No I don't think she ever had any money; I think she lived by her wits, but I think even by the time I was, when I was at the Slade, I think she had some strange job with Lawrence & Wishert[ph] who were English publishers who had published communist literature.

Yes, yes.

Which during the war wasn't considered suspect, because the Russians were our allies against the evil Nazis.

What was the Antonia White book?

Oh there are several. There's even I think two dossiers of written books, but there's an episode in an Antonia White book where she's being terrorised, locked up in a laundry basket being poked up with an umbrella, and this is supposed to be...

Win Henderson[??]?

This was supposed to be Alexander Keiller[ph] with Antonia White in the laundry basket.

Oh I see.

But I lent Emma this book and it's got Nigel Henderson in it, it's got all the people that we've been talking about, and I'll ask her for it, I'll give it to you.

You can't remember the title?

I can't remember the title at the moment.

Yes, Emma's your daughter.

That's right. Are you going to...if you're going to see her you can ask her.

Yes indeed, yes, I will. Nigel...

But Nigel and his brother and his sister, they're all mentioned in this book. But I'm sure it's under the banner of Antonia White.

Nigel was a very different type to you; he was English, he...

Officer class, slightly. Well educated, Stowe.

His father had had a lot of money.

Mm.

Because his father had something to do with railways in Argentina or something, didn't he?

Something like that.

And as you say, he had been educated at Stowe, then he had gone into the RAF, and had a nervous breakdown I think after bombing Hamburg.

Possibly.

And was interested primarily in photography.

No, he was interested in painting when I first met him, and he took up photography because he found.....

End of F4990 Side A

F4990 Side B

OK, if you would like to say...I'm a bit on the light side I think, but if you would like to say something. We're fine, we're fine. Good. So we were talking about Nigel Henderson and his gradual awareness of photography, because he was getting fed up with...

Well don't forget, I think he was, I mean I was quite naive, I didn't realise in a strange way that people could have breakdowns or anything like that, I had no experience at all, and he was married, which was unusual, he was married to Judith Henderson, and they had, which I was taken back to, this little house in Chisenhale Road, and I think that had been found for her because she was working with a, seemed to be, a settlement, and I'm not quite sure whether she had been, according to Nigel, she was very involved with her boss. But a lot of it had some Fabianesque idea about helping the deprived.

She was an anthropologist I think, wasn't she?

She was an anthropologist, but what she was actually doing was some complex form of social welfare I think, but seemed to be working all the time on social problems, and they were there because that's where all the activities were of that kind. But she had a very famous mother and father, and it wasn't for long that they had this famous King's Head, it wasn't before long that, in that strange England at the time of after the war, and...

Who were her parents then?

Stephens[ph] I think. I think her grandfather was Leslie Stephens[ph], I think it was slightly...Virginia Woolf, Leonard Woolf, uncles, and I think, both her father and mother were I think the first psychiatrists.

What was her maiden name then, do you remember?

I think it was Stephen, Stephen.

Someone like Bertrand Russell was her godfather, wasn't he?

Something like that. But anyway, they had this house which, and it seemed quite exotic from the point of view of its extreme poverty in a sense, but they rather liked all that, that had big meaning for them, the cracked mugs and so on.

South Hackney.

Well, Bethnal Green, we used to day.

And I mean they must have been surrounded by bomb sites.

But now that they were always, in a sense, and I think they had children, having children, and they were tiny of course. But I think there was always money problems, and I think that Judith's mother, I think they were already living, they had a large house in Harvey Street where they practised from, and I think that Nigel, I think it's Nigel's mother-in-law who bought him his first Rolliflex, of which he did many many photographs of life round there, but alas, he could have been a genuine pioneer.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

You were talking about Nigel, and having his first Rolliflex, and all those pictures. Well he could have been a pioneer, in fact he was a pioneer almost.

The thing is that because of this curious attitude to life, because remember, we had a cottage there, my wife and I, he was the best man, as you probably know, at the wedding, but I remember that I did a deal, I gave some drawings for, I did a deal of some drawings, and the result of that was, either a year's subscription to American `Harper's', which I liked, American `Vogue', and they were sent to the country, and of course the Hendersons in their bizarre puritanical way just thought it was a hoot, and they opened all these rolls of magazines and they thought it was all terribly funny. They were curiously snobbish about that kind of thing. But they were also very snobbish about, Nigel seemed to take great, he loved to think that the end of his bed had got broken, or that the alarm clock didn't work any more. But, I mean in a sense we're talking about being a pioneer, if he had kept, preserved all his negatives, there would have been a golden collection of really an England that, with his kind of eye, even King's Road a year after the war was quite notable for its imagery, and as time got on highly archaeological interest. But as far as I know, they're all at the Tate, and there seems to be an enormous amount of good stuff missing. I mean even when I took him to my village in Italy he had about ten rolls, and as far as I can only see is two rolls at the...and that particular Italy he took has vanished, or is vanishing. It was still very agrarian.

Did you go with him [INAUDIBLE]?

About '52, '53.

I see, yes, in other words some time after you left the Slade.

That's right.

Nigel, through his mother, had met Duchamp, who had given him a copy of the Green Box.

That's right, very generous.

And he had met presumably a number of other artists as well in London.

Mm.

Or did he go backwards and forwards to Paris a lot?

Not a lot. He came to see me when I was living there, and there was an American photographer who gave me a box, including a plate camera and all that, which I gave to Nigel which he never used, but that was rather characteristic. And what was very...I didn't quite recognise Nigel had a kind of psychosis which included that we were invited, him and I and Peter Fondauce[ph] to do a film by Denis Foreman from all the scientific films at that time, and the collection of the BFI, and we topped and tailed a lot and ran it together, and there was a point when the master copy just disappeared, and I think this was Nigel's intention that it disappeared.

That presumably was also later.

That's right. But I mean I'm talking about when we were comparatively young people.

Oh yes, no sure, I understand that, but I'm trying to give some kind of chronological guide.

That's right, that's right.

Who is eventually going to hear this. Nigel was important in other ways I think, was he? I mean did he show you the Darcy Wentworth Thomson[ph] book?

Yes, I think so, I'm not quite sure. I know that if it wasn't him it must have been Richard Hamilton who did a whole exhibition about it.

Yes.

So Nigel was important for you other than as a friend, and you obviously were very close friends.

Well I think that when he did come to Paris, when he did come to Paris, that it was him that took me along to see Peggy Guggenheim, who was staying at the Hotel Crillon at the time, and a visitor to Peggy Guggenheim then, I'm talking probably still '48 perhaps, that she hadn't decided where she was going to live...and her collection, so she was thinking about it in Paris, and was even still contemplating perhaps setting her home up in London. And there was a visitor to Peggy Guggenheim, and it was a man who I didn't quite recognise or catch his name, and he called himself Jean but it was actually Arp, Hans Arp, and he invited us to his place which was in the suburbs of Paris. Nigel Henderson and I went there, and we were told when we arrived by Arp that that wasn't a very good day, and if we could come back another day, which we did, and he took us round the studio, and he opened a drawer which had all bits of shaped paper which he showed us that he used either to have to cut shapes in wood, or use it 3-dimensionally, but it was a kind of openness which one would, was the very reason that one went to France, that here was a natural artist talking in a natural way about his natural vision. And that was in a way confirmed why one went to Paris.

Did you take any kind of exam before you left the Slade?

No, I refused to do anything like that, because there was exams for, you had to do two one-third sizes from the models who looked awful, and I refused. And I felt it wasn't necessary in the sense that I was never going to teach, the diploma wasn't necessary.

Yes, so you actually left without a diploma.

Absolutely, having been offered an extra year.

Yes. And you went straight off to Paris.

Couldn't get there quick enough.

You got presumably so little that you couldn't even fill a suitcase with you.

I took, oddly enough there were cheap officers' trunks. No I did take a trunk full of things, which was an embarrassment, and I even took a bicycle which cost £2, and I had to pay £3 tax

when I got to Paris. But I used the bicycle quite a lot, and by that time, Raymond Mason was living in a maison, what they called a maison abandonée, an empty house at St. Cloud, and I used to cycle all the way there to see him, and he was working there with two or three other people. I even remember the name of one of the artists called Serge Vincani[ph], who was painting with glue and powder colour on naked canvases, but there was an exuberant period and Raymond Mason of course was doing very very abstract sculptures, not unlike Giacometti's Thirties work; we were all influenced by that, me included.

And you were determined never to come back to England, or Britain?

At that time, particularly being there, it seemed to answer everything that I wanted in life. Mark you, one had left a very grey, austere London behind, things, London has changed a great deal, London has become much more continental and much more exuberant and much more ethnic, but it seemed to me, particularly the winter of '46, it was, whenever I read `The Secret Agent' by Conrad, that was the London that one lived, foggy, and it had moving through the fog all these lost souls somehow, it was terribly austere, and I think that even the four quartets of Ellett[ph] has that kind of atmosphere of damp astringency.

Rationing of course, everything was rationed.

Everything was rationed right up to the Fifties. And of course people had a matching life, even if people...there was no interplay or exuberance about people's relationship with each other, it was bitter and frightened in a sense, and if you read something about Soho at that time, there was these strange girls, there was, parties were bizarre. It was a world of lost souls and mental cripples.

I don't know whether it was the winter of '46/47, or '47/48 that was so bad, when there was a miners' strike and very deep snow I remember, but maybe that was '47/48, maybe you were in France.

Could well be. It was very very cold. And of course, after, when I did come back to London there were these fog-bound days, I remember coming back from, when I did come back, and I lived in Poulton[ph] Square, and I used to have, just for romantic reasons, a studio in Bunsen Street near the Hendersons, I remember trying to get back one foggy night and it was almost impossible, and I had to sleep at the Hendersons' under a thick sheet of felt, not even a proper bed.

Fog caused by all these coal-burning fires.

Absolutely.

Had you formed any emotional attachments?

To?

Women, a woman.

Yes, well my first wife, while I was at the Slade I think that I met Freda, who later became my wife.

I see, I didn't realise you had met her that early.

Absolutely, and I think I was even, I think with Peter Lascaux, I think Peter Lascaux had a cottage. Peter Lascaux was involved with a girl in Oxford who was at the Slade, and we became friends from that time.

What was Peter Lascaux doing in Oxford?

Peter Lascaux used to visit, he was working for his father, his father was a distinguished scholar, but in order to make money he invented a new formula for hair dyes, which women wanted at that time, and they had a house which was part cottage/factory making these things, and Peter Lascaux...Peter Lascaux could drive a car, which was rare among our contemporaries, and it was in this car that we went down, his parents had a five-shilling-a-week cottage in Thaxted and I spent a Christmas there with my wife-to-be.

This of course is the...

But I was still at the Slade. And then when I went to Paris she followed on and got a job. And then I came back on my own, and she followed back again, and at that time we decided to get married, which was way back in 1951. We were married, I was living in Holland Park when she was in Paris, and then we both lived together, which was unusual at that time, in sin, and got... As a matter of fact, at the time the marriage certificate, you couldn't give the same address.

Really?

No no. And we were both very poor; I think we got married on £12 with a reception of six people, photographed by Nigel Henderson in the garden of 9 Poulton[??] Square, 1951.

Peter Lascaux, for the benefit of anyone who is listening, subsequently became director of the Courtauld Institute.

Well that was after East Anglia, but that was after the British Museum. He was under Rupert Bruce-Mitford[ph] in Roman, Mediaeval and Roman antiquities I think.

But I mean he's now a very distinguished Mediaeval art historian.

That's right. And he's just had a terrible bypass about two or three years ago.

I didn't know that.

Oh yes.

So where did you live in Paris? I mean how easily did you find somewhere to live?

Well it was through Raymond Mason. Raymond Mason had found a £1-a-month room on the Ile St Louis, and because he went off to live with a rather...he always seemed to do well finding these maisons abandonées and he also had a French girlfriend, and I think he went to live with her. All very unusual. But he also had two friends hovering, one was Mimi and a man called Sven, and he later on had an affair, inevitable affair with Mimi. But at the moment he has been happily married to a kind of semi-Oriental woman for a long time.

Well he of course never came back to England full-time, did he. He stayed there.

But he also in a strange way had...his not having...I thought he might be acknowledged as a kind of master, but I don't think he is bitter, but I think he is confused. He can't understand why his sculpture in Birmingham is not praised, he can't understand why...he has also, he has made a sculpture about Les Halles, the passing of Les Halles, and I think that's been withdrawn from one of the churches and so on.

Oh has it?

Things aren't going that well.

Yes, well I mean this monument is in Centenary Square in Birmingham.

That's right.

For the benefit of anybody who is listening. And you plunged straight away into the life of Paris.

Well I was also at that time, rooms could have been requisitioned if they were unoccupied, so there was a man who had a room that he didn't want, a painter, didn't want his room to be requisitioned, and he let me use it, which was a room in 16 Rue Visconti, and I worked there until the day I left Paris.

So you had that as a studio.

That's right.

And you slept...

In the Rue Visconti. Oh when my wife finally came to Paris, my wife-to-be, she got a job looking after children for an American Quaker family in the Rue de Chanaleilles, which is very kind of up-market Paris, and I sometimes used to spend the night with her, which was very disapproved of by the concierge and the...

The Quaker family.

And the Quaker family. All that seemed incredibly...society then seemed to be very uptight about everything.

Even in Paris?

Even in Paris.

This was the first time you had ever lived abroad?

No no no, my father used to send me to Italy from the age of nine for three-month periods.

But this was the first time that you had...

Out of my own volition?

Yes.

I think so, yes.

I'm trying to formulate the next question. I mean were you aware of yourself changing, or your art changing, in any significant way?

No, what I was more perhaps interested in at the time was just the whole experience of living in France, and I had, which I had bought in Martland[ph] Street in a second-hand bookshop, an old Beideker which listed every eccentric museum, small museum, that you could think of, and Paris has just got 500 museums, and I used to plough my way through, and I used to go every year to the Salon D'Automme and I used to try and draw there, because I had a feeling, perhaps lightly tinged by the Ozenfant book about the machine, and of course I did, in my first couple of months I...Raymond Mason always gave me good tips which included going to Mairie with your student card, and you used to get a special thing from the Mairie with your student card to get into museums for practically nothing. He also showed me, I used for a little bit, I had to go back and forward to England every three months to renew my passport in a sense, because, and then he showed me how to get a carte d'identité[ph], which made open, if you didn't have much money, with a carte d'identité you used to get cheap things, cheap meals in restaurants.

Of course strictly speaking I suppose you weren't really allowed to be living there, were you?

After a carte d'identité, after a carte d'etudien you got a carte d'identité, you were all right.

Yes. So were you formally enrolled somewhere as a student?

I was formally enrolled at the Ecole Des Beaux Arts, and how you did that was, you took your work to one of the professors there and if he approved he signed a paper, then you got your card from the Ecole Des Beaux Arts, and I was formally enrolled there, but I never went there, I worked in the Rue Visconti all the time. And I made my reliefs at the beginning, which were shown at Freddie Mayor, and then I made a series of 3-dimensional sculptures in plaster which I kind of brought back and had cast in bronze. `Forms on a Boar'[ph] was done in the Rue Visconti. And the two forms between two rods, that was done there.

I mean those are already extraordinarily mature pieces. They're unlike in that respect, I think, the things that you first exhibited at the Mayor Gallery.

Mm.

And yet there's not...

Well that was because of France and the exposure, and I even remember Giacometti coming to have a look, because they were really a homage to him, his early period, and of course ironically he was already thinking in another direction.

Yes, but I mean that always happens, doesn't it.

That always happens.

So, I mean you knew Giacometti.

Very well. The thing is that I think he wasn't that popular after the war, and I knew Tzara very well, but I have the impression that they were both outcasts. If you read the James Lord[ph] book on Giacometti, I think that Breton was very disappointed in Giacometti, and there might have even been a political... All during the war Breton and the boys, including Tzara, Malreaux, were all political animals. There was the Maquis and, Resistance, and so on, because of... But I think that because Giacometti, and that might be one of the reasons, I like to be wrong about this, because he spent the war in Switzerland they thought he was hors de combat from there on. But Tzara used to come, I used to have lunch with Tzara, and he used to show me these Livres de Luxes that he...he seemed to...and he had become a bibliophile, and he also had a lot of African sculpture which were not the quite famous period of, like shuttle, looms, pieces of weaving wheels, Wonga[ph], Tonga[ph] pieces, mixed with his...and this incredibly elegant apartment on the Rue de Lille which seemed to white silver with lots of mirror.

What did he live off?

I think he was into, I think very skilful, and I think it was in his instinct, buying and selling Livres de Luxe. Paris was good for that. But after lunch we would wander about, and he would go in and out of book shops. But he used to tell me that...and Giacometti seemed to be neglected, he always seemed to have enough time, and he used to free-wheel I think during

the day, because he would work all night, he would work all night and get up at about midday and then he would free-wheel until dinner time.

This is Giacometti?

That's right, and then he would go back and work all night.

Did he talk to you about your art, or his art come to that?

Well, I mean one was young and immature, one didn't quite have, sometimes one would sit on the floor and there would be a bunch of Giacometti and his contemporaries, including Balthus, and they would talk for ages about Dickens. It was a very very literary-oriented crowd.

That's most surprising.

And then of course through, who did I meet through...I met Elian[ph], I used to see a great deal of Elian[ph], who seemed to be bien-placé, married to Pegeen Elian[ph].

That's Guggenheim's...

One of her daughters from Laurence Vale[ph], Pegeen Vale[ph], and married to Jean Elian[ph]. And of course I think all that, I think Elian's[ph] blind now. And Sinbad was married, and Pegeen's brother is called Sinbad, who I think is dead now, and he was married to a wonderful French girl, Francoise, who later on teamed up with Elian[ph].

I don't go much on Elian's[ph] pictures. They're in the Tate at the moment.

No, no I know that.

And he must have been painting like that when you knew him.

That's right, and he had a wonderful classic proper studio overlooking Jardins de Luxembourg, and he was tremendously methodical, and he had notebooks and he catalogued every statement and thought with every painting, which was kind of terrifying, because when you were younger, one was just kind of drifting upside down, and occasionally not doing any work and so on. But he must have just been a 40-year-old man at that time, but he still seemed ancient.

So you knew...did you know Duchamp? You never met Duchamp, he wasn't in Paris.

I've never met him at all, nor, I never met Matisse, and it was only when I was in London by accident that I met Picasso in '54 I think, who was en route to a peace festival in Sheffield, and Topolski had thrown him an impromptu party, and I was taken to that by Jane Drew.

Yes, that's interesting as well. You knew Brancusi, didn't you?

I used...well, I didn't know him, he was in a telephone book and I remember going to see him twice, the second time I think I took Nigel Henderson.

You just rang him up and said...

Absolutely, is it possible, is it possible?

Yes.

He said, `Trois heures,' and we would be there. But, it wasn't such a big...it wasn't such a big deal, because you didn't even go in there and sit down and have a conversation in Brancusi's case in the, I think Avenue Impasse Ronsard. He opened the door and you stood on the doorstep, and he would fiddle, take felt covers off the highly-polished things, and unknown to one he had pressed the switch and they slowly slowly went round, and he waited for you to have absorbed enough to say au revoir, and that was the...he patiently waited till the experience was...

Were you impressed by the theatre, were you impressed by the works?

I was impressed, you know, by the atmosphere, because once again it was one of the reasons that one had gone to Paris for, one of the reasons. And it was being justified. Also even the accessibility and the seriousness, because this would never have happened, this never happened to me in England, of this being invited to a studio and being shown work.

There wasn't anybody remotely comparable was there in England?

What I was very keen on, that there was, having read in some book, or even some leaflet at the London Gallery, Ballet Mecanique of Léger, so I went to the Cinematèque, and...no no, I rang up Léger and I went once again with Nigel Henderson, went upstairs, and there was a

professionalism of Léger, there seemed to be like eighteen canvases on eighteen easels, almost the same as each other, in other words en serie, and I mentioned this film to Léger who instantly wrote me a letter to the Cinematèque, and I went up there with Nigel Henderson to see Ballet Mecanique, and while we were sitting there Léger walked in. We leapt to our feet, and he said, `Sit down'. And he said, when it came to an end, it's very short, he said, `Do you want to see it again?' It was wonderful, these were all the kind of things one expected, this kind of sympathy, this kind of radiation, this kind of understanding.

What was your French like?

French came...I had had of course French at school, but having been bilingual in Italian, it came terribly easy and terribly fast, terribly fast.

So we've got Arp, we've got Léger, Giacometti...

Brancusi.

Brancusi.

Dubuffet.

Mhm.

Anybody else? Elian[ph].

Elian[ph]. Well the man who who've probably never heard of, the man who gave me this room for as long as I wanted, was called Michance[ph].

I have heard of him actually.

You think you have? And he was an odd man, lived by his wits, part Russian, married to an English woman, Scottish-English woman. But he was generous, and I went to have lunch there once and it was the first I had eaten frogs legs. But the other person who had...the reason I met Giacometti was that when I had my show in the first exhibition which I had done at the Slade, of these black and white drawings of fishermen, one of them was bought by a man called Rodney Phillips, who, it was the most expensive picture in the exhibition, I think it was £20, and he had a wife called Anna Phillips who was a beauty and had been a model before the war, a Schiaparelli model, and she had a very good friend called Isabel, and she is

the Isabel in the Giacometti book, and she had been painted by Derain, and the painting of Derain of her, it used to belong to her husband who was in black propaganda called Sefton Delmar, she was called Isabel Delmar, at the time.

Ah, now he...he was a `Daily Express' correspondent.

That's right. Anyway, it was Isabel who said that she was living off and on in France, and must come and see me and I'll introduce you to this strange sculptor called Giacometti. And I met Giacometti through Isabel.

So Giacometti was the biggest influence on you?

He was the one I had the most contact with, he was the one that I admired most, but he was the one that was intellectually and physically most approachable. The other ones were quite, I even went to see Braque, and that wasn't difficult either. Braque was in the telephone book, and he said, `Oui, come along,' we went upstairs, he opened this, I think modern architecture room near the Cité Université, and once again, not unlike the Léger experience of the 24 canvases similar on easels. But one was kind of, a glimpse.....

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Was Freda, your wife, already living full-time in Essex by then?

No no, I think at that time, when I was...there was a time when I stayed with Lucian Freud, when I think I was at Radnor Walk. I had a room in his house for a bit, and I think he was still in Paris. She hung on, there was always the idea that was that if she had met somebody else, she could stay on. But it was her desire to come back really, but she had become thoroughly entrenched in French life, and had quite a reasonable job with American Express. I think I remember her staying at Chisenhale Road when we were not married, and I think I remember the Hendersons gave us separate rooms at the time.

Where did you meet Lucian Freud, since you just mentioned the name?

Lucian Freud came to fetch me through Peter Watson, because he was rather impressed by...he was very impressed by the article in `Horizon' and so was Johnny Craxton, and they were pals at the time, and so we all got together, and we went to a dinner in Peter Watson's house which was in Palace Gate, and he was living with a pretty American young man called Norman Fowler. But I mean we were all under the shadow of Peter Watson, and indeed when I lived in Paris Peter Watson when he came over we always used to go out to dinner, which was spectacular for me, because I had been living on dried bread and tea for maybe a week, and going into a real restaurant with tablecloths and... And I remember Peter Watson taking me and Giacometti out to dinner in a restaurant I think called the Trois Cannettes, the Rue du Cannettes.

He must have been a remarkable man, Peter Watson.

He was, he was, and I think there are beginning to be references, nice references, to him in books. But there might be one day a Peter Watson book.

Did you share a studio with Lucian Freud ever?

No, I lived in his house and I used to go and see him. He had two slum rooms in Paddington, and he gave a wonderful party in one of them one night. But he had this kind of life then which is probably not dissimilar from the life that he has now, which is sessional approach to paint...he probably hasn't altered much his lifestyle and what he paints.

And still sort of hovers between the gutter and the Ritz, as I think...

Yes.

Dan Farson once put it.

Francis Bacon.

Yes, but I think he actually put it to Lucian Freud as well.

Mm.

Because I mean he does I think inhabit both worlds somehow, if not simultaneously, concurrently.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

Let me try and help you there, because I was living in Holland Road, it must have been about the year 1950-dash-51, that I was teaching I remember, introduced Victor Pasmore was teaching at the Central, and I remember we used to go to a pub called Princess Louise, and I remember Freda coming over and introducing her to Victor Pasmore, and us having lunch, and, she might have been staying with her mother, her mother had had a little house in Fulham, but we got married from Poultner[ph] Square, and I think that we were quite happy there, and I used to go down to the East End from Poultner[ph] Square to work there, which was kind of mad, I used to go by Underground from Sloane Square, and it was quite a culture shock either way. And anyway, we got married there, I must have had Bunsen Street as it was called, this was 1951 into 1952, and we were happy there till Louise was born, and then it was impossible in this small flat to have a baby and that's what precipitated the move down to the country.

Yes, I see, yes.

Three of the Hendersons had decided to live there as well. So in a way, that long episode, but then, and then they kept Bethnal Green on, so one would sleep there, during the week while one possibly taught at the Central. And also Nigel Henderson and I, when he came up we used to go to the London School of Printing and do screen printing there, make things. So, that's the early Fifties.

You were obviously working extremely hard, but did you take time off to go to private views, mix so to speak consciously with the art world?

The private views might have been more or less the ICA, or occasionally, I think the Leicester Gallery might have still been in, Leicester Galleries, and I don't know when that ended, but that could be an interesting date. But I remember you had to pay a penny to go in through the turnstyle there. And that's where they had Epstein sculptures, and I think some of these exhibitions might have been while I was still at the Slade.

But I mean, did you consciously take part in the art world?

Mainly...I don't know. I mean, you have to think, the ICA was the early Fifties, I mean that was, that took care of that I think.

Although presumably it was seen as something of an avant-garde establishment.

It was, it was, but it did have exhibitions, nice ones, it had the history of the Head, Roland used to do an annual exhibition.

Sorry, who?

Roland Penrose.

Oh yes.

He did an annual one, a history of the face and so on.

`The Horror of the Human Head' it was called, wasn't it.

That's it, that's right. And of course the London Gallery I think petered on for a bit.

Yes. The most important thing from your point of view in connection with the ICA were the discussions that you used to have, probably, as well as the exhibitions. But the discussions with people, and we've already mentioned some of them, there was Laurence Allaway, Colin St. John Wilson, Nigel Henderson obviously was there.

And a few oddballs that have disappeared, like Catlieu[ph], there was an architect called Catlieu[ph]. But that was the main place where we all got on terribly well, and it fitted, and it

was the right price, and there was...my wife was very friendly with a gay bartender called Geoffrey, they were great friends. But for people with limited means and all that, for people who had sometimes got drunk on Merrydown cider, it was a haven.

And then, somebody, I don't know who it was, decided that the younger members of the ICA weren't really getting what they wanted to get out of it.

Mm. And how did that go?

Well, what came out of that was the Independent Group.

Oh I see, yes, yes. Headed by Laurence Allaway.

Yes, I think he was the moving force, I think he went to complain.

That's right.

And said, `Look, there's nothing here of any interest to...'

I think that's...that's true. And Peter Banham[ph] a bit. And of course Tony Dorenzio[??], who is still living, was also always uneasy.

There was someone else, funnily enough I've come across, I even was given his address the other day, who I thought had disappeared completely, was Richard Lannoy[ph]. Do you remember Richard Lannoy[ph]?

I think I remember him very well, and there was also Ralph Romney[ph], wasn't there.

Ralph Romney[ph].

That's kind of, overlaps with Guy Atkins doesn't it?

Very much so, yes. And there was even a painting by Ralph Romney[ph] in...

A shadowy figure if I remember about that time, I mean there were two shadowy figures, Michael Andrews and Victor Wooling[??], but maybe that was a little later, but I seem to think of Victor Wooling[??] in ICA terms. I wouldn't be surprised if there was an early Michael Andrews picture called `Man Falling' but that might be Victor Woolling[??].

Yes, I don't know that one. And this Independent Group was a sort of informal discussion a lecture group in the ICA, was it?

It was all about that, but I think, one of the great thrusts was Tony, because Tony also lived in, Tony Dorenzio in Poulton[ph] Square, and I remember he had a great love of style, and he lived with a woman called Enid Foilonger[ph], and one wall was entirely covered with exotic photographs. Tony Dorenzio[??] and Laurence Allaway were very thick, and they were into all kinds...I feel more mature than I, into all kinds of bizarre publications, and they had a feeling for discussion of esoteric subjects.

Neither was an artist himself. I mean Dorenzio[??] never worked...

No. But I was also thinking of, which I shared, which was slightly Allaway's tremendous interest in the cinema, and particularly, of course it has become quite ethical now, a rage for B movies, you know, the horror film, the murder film, the films that weren't considered high art, films that the BFI would still think in terms of Grierson, or Robert Flaherty couldn't take in some of the vulgarity of America.

And you found that very appealing because it fitted in with...?

Oh it was part of my background, it wasn't a kind of shock, I grew up, I mean as a child. Because we used to have cinema posters in the shop, we were given this little blue book, so I was taken by my mother, and my father never went ever, always taken by my mother on slack days, it might have been her day off, to go and see a film, which in England at that time was more or less, there would be, 99 pictures out of 100 were American ones, because the whole Hollywood thing blanketed the world from 1927 onwards.

Yes. The first ever discussion or lecture or seminar or whatever you like to call it, at this Independent Group, was it Independent or Independence Group?

No no, Independent.

Independent Group. Was you?

It's possible, yes.

Well this is what all the books and all the people I have spoken to have ever said.

Oh yes, well, anyway, go on. And I think I was chosen because, rather like that scrapbook, I used to have portfolios, I brought a lot of images back from Paris which I had thought were bizarre and abnormal, and we used to have a thing, a sort of thing, `What do you think of that image?' really. And I mean even at that time, one didn't have to bring them back from Paris; down Charing Cross Road there were always cardboard boxes, I think from a shilling to half a crown, of American magazines, very very available, practical mechanics and so on, quite cheap.

And these weren't collages, these were images that you collected?

Just separate images, yes.

Which you projected through an epidiascope.

That's right, yes, that was the only way. I mean one was too poor to have slides.

Well do you remember that evening with any clarity?

Yes, I do, I do. But also, Allaway was constantly doing lectures, and possibly before me, with, I remember with big piles of books that were marked, and he would go from book to book, page to page, projecting these images. It was only the...I think David Sylvester had slides and so did Russell Hitchcock. But I mean I was just trying to express an idea of the bizarre in a way, the whole way that, through advertising the Americans saw the world.

They were mostly advertisements then were they?

Most of them were. Or there might have been one or two natural geographic images of something bizarre.

And did you just show them without any comment, or, other than saying, `Look at this image'?

Oh no, I had a commentary, but there was the same kind of commentary, because I felt I was among a group of friends that, and then there was other people. It was really friends with whoever wanted to come. But we already knew the images, the small group already knew most of the images. I mean there might be like a cover of `Life' magazine, or there might be...but showing how absolutely different it was from `Picture Post' or...

What was the response in the audience?

Well I think I remember Peter Banham giggling, you know, and thinking some of the images were just a bit not worth showing, because he was a bit more formalised than I was at the time. But I did the same lecture to a group at the Royal College of Art, the younger people.

At about the same time?

No, a few years later re-did it, and I think that went down for some reason like a lead balloon, because I think they were all determined, I think there was an Italian idea beginning at the time. But I think there was something about that, a younger generation who don't necessarily want to be taught, they feel they know all the answers. If you look at `Arc' magazine you will see what I mean. There was a fair amount of, do you know `Arc' magazine?

I do.

The magazine of the Royal College. You get a lot of clues to what I am saying there.

But, the influence of the kind of things that you were interested in, on `Arc' magazine, didn't happen for another four or five years. I mean the early `Arc' magazines which I've seen, which are contemporary with this talk that we're discussing now, are very different, old-fashioned, easy...

Well also there's an archaic flavour. Well no, I know the ones you mean, Edward Bawden-esque.

Yes they are.

No, but then there's some kind of radical ones start appearing with holes in the cover, punched with, each individual one punched with a nail, and we were kind of working up to perhaps, prelude to 19...the curtain going up on 1960 and William Green[ph] riding a bike over the wet canvas, if you see what I mean, in the `Arc'. Anti...the Sixties were really supposed to be all about kicking over the traces and rebelling against. But you see, what we were doing, like paralleling life with art and that, was great respect for systems of knowledge and so on, and even Bunk called the lecture at the ICA, was all just trying to show this rather English way, that the Americans had, a much more dynamic way of putting over an idea, a much more inhibited, much more dynamic way of doing things.

And there was also surely an attempt to redefine art, because in England it was a very old-fashioned idea of what was art and what wasn't, and there were enormous barriers between the two, weren't there.

Mm, mm.

Which you, fairly consciously I suspect, wanted to break down, didn't you?

Mm, mm. It wasn't that conscious, but it was just, I mean one wasn't that...one wasn't such a visionary at that time. I don't think...one was just making a...one was trying to make a kind of parallel and holding up a mirror to what one might have felt about certainly American cinema, and had a kind of dynamism which the English could never capture. And there was also a kind of dynamism about even American aeroplanes, somehow, there was a dynamism about the, even in the Army I remember seeing 'Damned Yankees' in a cinema in the Euston Road, and I just thought the dynamism then in, and I'm talking about the war years, it seemed to be apparent, and there was probably a kind of anger that the English were so parochial, and I mean there were still, like the curator of the Minories in Colchester was very proud he had never been in Woolworth's down the street. It was a curious kind of English. And I had been probably a bit tired of having experiences at the Slade, this kind of English self-satisfaction, and also snobbish. That was part of doing Bunk, that here was another more dynamic society and looked to it.

And of course you shared these enthusiasms with a number of other members of the Independent Group. You've already mentioned Allaway.

That's right.

The Smithsons I remember you telling me had an American Jeep that they used to go...

Well not only that, they also papered the wall of their kitchen entirely with food ads, food ads, and I think that somebody wrote a piece, it might have been Hamilton, about food ads.

Yes it was Banham I think.

Banham?

Yes. `Today We Collect Ads' I think it's called.

That's right.

That talk that you gave, and the subsequent activities of the Independent Group are of course now mentioned in all the modern history of art books.

Well reasonably well catalogued oddly enough at the, I don't know if you've seen the catalogue of the exhibition that was at the ICA, I think that was quite well done, better than the Pop art exhibition at the Academy.

Certainly was, yes. Although I must say that the exhibition which reconstructed some of the, or parts of the exhibitions that were organised by the Independent Group...

Which one are we talking about, the ICA?

Yes, the ICA, because they had a bit from `This Is Tomorrow'...

That's right.

Or maybe, was it only ‘This Is Tomorrow' they had...?

I think it was only ‘This Is Tomorrow'.

Yes. But looking at `This Is Tomorrow', the bits that they reconstructed, and also the other things in that show about the Independent Group, made one wonder just how representative the histories are, how accurately histories are, that say, well this is where Pop art came from, and nothing else, because clearly other things came from it.

Mm, that's true.

Although your talk is usually cited as being the first...

Maybe, but if you have another look at the images and that’s also talking about some old magazine, there was a picture of, a Nazi picture of Hitler, a German eagle, and it looked like a film still, there's a sort of trying to touch on certain ambiguities. And there was also science fiction, and science fiction never seemed to me, doesn't seem to have been, if you look at the history of Pop art, science fiction and Pop art never seemed to inter-link, there was a whole sort of series of things that never seemed to jell. And also there was a cover of a magazine

about with dancing girls about, jazz, is jazz here to stay? There were certain subjects, jazz never seems to have been a Pop art subject. It's interesting that it's Brillo boxes. I mean if we're thinking of the acute metaphor, Brillo boxes and the Coca-Cola bottle somehow. But when you look at Johns, who is in the Pop art books, you will see that the Duchamp thing of mystery, or even if you look at a wonderful American artist, Joseph Cornell[ph], you will see that he is into deep theatrical type and classic Max Ernst type Surrealism.

And this is how you see yourself, isn't it?

That's how I see myself, working on several levels. And I mean it's rather like the large heads I've done of Mondrian, which seems to be a successful amalgam of something I've been striving for, which is African art, psychopathic art, geometric art, art which takes care of the machine, and in addition to that, lubricated and bound together by Broadway boogie-woogie, saying in other words that you can't evade modernism; if you try to avoid modernism you're dead.

Mm. But also, locating...

Well I say all that because in a strange way, that's what I was trying to do in Bunk, trying to touch on all these levels of experience, but I was unable to kind of amalgamate. The only way I could amalgamate it, primitivistically, was by having it as a lecture or putting it later on, having it published in facsimile. But I mean the final victory is actually to embody it as a total invention in one single object, that's a triumph.

Yes. Did you call it `Bunk' at the time? I mean as you say, this...

Well, it was one of the images has got `Bunk' on it.

That's the one showing Charles Atlas I think, isn't it.

That's right, `Bunk'. But also I was trying to say, these [INAUDIBLE] at the top, these Royal Societies called ‘nulus in verba’, and that means don't take anybody's word for it, but it was also meaning that all pre-digested forms of knowledge, or history, has to be re-examined, and that's why one sort of `Bunk' is saying that what happened before, what particularly tortureless modern, bad art, one had to sort of think again, and one had been maybe tired out at dinner listening to people going on about rather bad art, bad tired art. But also the idea that images might come from unexpected quarters that might be much more dynamic than the

orthodox accepted form of art, and that as an artist one had to seize upon one's own dynamism through the dynamic that lay about one, and not reject it.

Were you particularly struck by any talks given by the other members at the Independent Group meetings?

Yes, I think I was. I think...I mean I always thought that in a strange way I felt very much in common, I can't, I think particularly Banham when he got going, and certainly I just enjoyed Tony Delrenzo[ph], and certainly I used to think that Alloway was much more articulate and refined and civilised the way he was able, he gave when he was...he went to America, and I think he gave a talk at an American embassy about modern American art, including ties[??] and things by Jim Dine, and I just thought that was superb and magnificent, and highly articulate, whereas I was sort of myself, when lecturing, emotional and inarticulate at times.
[BREAK IN RECORDING]
We've had it for, written it. But for some reason they've never got that together.

How about people, I mean we talked at length about people who were of help to you, either directly or indirectly, before you left for Paris.

Before Paris.

Before, yes before Paris.

John Davenport.

Yes, but how about afterwards, I mean did you do...

Well my great hitch, and I was actually with her the night before I got married, with Jane Drew, there was a big party for Collette Corbusier, and I was at that.

She was the wife of...

Maxwell Fry.

Maxwell Fry, who was very, I mean <u>the</u> English representative of the modern movement in architecture.

That's right. Him and, don't forget Rosenberg who I knew.

Yes.

And also York, F.R.S. York, they were the living examples.

And people like Jack Pritchard were there sort of on the fringe.

That's right, and even Leslie Martin in a sense.

Yes. But Maxwell Fry had employed Gropius when Gropius came to England.

That sort of thing.

In the Thirties.

That's right.

So Jane Drew was important. I mean was she responsible for getting you commissions?

Sort of, except I did a lot of work for her, big things, for practically nothing, you know, just through the fun of doing it.

What, murals?

Well, also the...I think it might have been a long time ago when my first daughter was born, Louise, that I was working with...Lund Humphries had their offices in Bedford Square, I remember being commissioned by Peter Gregory to do a large collage from the off-cuts of printings where the overprint and overprint, were trying the machines out. I remember working at that, and going down the road to see my newly-born daughter in UCL. But she was born in UCL simply because of Dorothy Moreland's[ph] husband, who was a consultant there.

How did you get to know...well what was Dorothy Moreland[ph] or who was Dorothy Moreland[ph] then?

Dorothy Moreland[ph] was the wife of this rich doctor called Andrew, and had a son called Francis, and I think she was simply, would have been a friend of Jane Drew. But the fact she

worked in...and she had a job at the ICA, and I went to live in her house in the basement, but we've now gone up to 1958.

Yes, I'm sorry, I'm sorry I shouldn't do this. Can we talk a bit about Ernst[??] Zweig? I mean, did Ernst[??] Zweig have any...I know he wrote a book called `The Hidden Order of Art' I think.

That's right. And also he helped me to print the, print some bizarre...I was doing counter-print, I would do a design and I would print on top, do another spontaneously, move the screen, I would print on that, and I had this in Ernst[??] Zweig's book, `The Hidden Form of Art', there's a reproduction of Jenkins'[ph] room that was done by the Smithsons, and I did the ceiling for that. Kind of batty, doesn't look at hot now. But Ernst[??] Zweig I used to go, he lived in a little house off Hammersmith but he was obsessed and obsessed about psychoanalytical; his great line was the, very Viennese in a sense, the psychoanalytical of hidden meaning in making, you know, and these classic Freudian things about phallic shapes and the utranine complex, absolutely obsessed about these theories.

And he was just a technician there, wasn't he?

Well he had been a judge in Vienna, and there was a lot of refugees who were unable to work professionally in England, and although they were capable through all kinds of reasons, and these are the same reasons that perhaps that Gropius moved on, that a certain door was firmly closed to them.

Well I think he also moved on because the atmosphere was so hostile to modernism.

That's right, that's probably quite true.

The other thing I wanted to...

Maholy-Nagy of course moved on. He used to do windows at Simpsons, I believe.

Yes he did, and I think he...well Peter Jones too; what's the one in Sloane Square, is that Peter Jones?

Peter Jones.

Yes. I think he had something to do...well he also designed the first sets for `Things To Come', which then I think they never used, and he did a couple of documentaries.

The Open University dug them out, they've re-done the film.

Ah, I didn't know that. You were already working in two, in a sense quite separate areas, three-dimensional and two-dimensional.

Well at the Central?

Well generally, I mean here you were doing 2-dimensional murals, collages and so on. You didn't see any fundamental difference between the two?

The only thing is, when I think about it, when I was at the textile school I was doing a lot of that. I was even trying to make money by doing things on order, like curtains, because the materials and the technology to do it, and as far as I remember a lot of the sculpture was just done downstairs in ceramics, small modest works. Except one of the heads that I did in ceramics I did took to a foundry that's also disappeared, Wilkinsons in Tottenham Mews, which was cast into bronze, and about that size.

Yes, that's about, what, two foot.

That's right.

Yes. What kind of sculptures were they?

Well it was still kind of natural object. This head which was like a lump sleeping head, it's also got kind of bimorphic look.

Is that in a public collection anywhere?

Yes, in Norwich.

Ah, never seen it.

<u>End of F4991 Side A</u>

F4991 Side B

So, let's just go back to Paris. I know we've been talking about London, after your return, but what other memories, strong memories do you have of Paris in 1947, 1948?

Well let me just go before that, one of the things that catapulted one to Paris, and I said, talking about my contemporaries, in Cartwright Gardens we seemed to share one thing which was a need for knowledge; I don't know if it was because we felt we had been badly educated, but we always shared discoveries. And there was a...London of course was full of second-hand book shops and it was easy, quite easy, with a very small amount of money, to get these Oxford classics, they ere sort of pocket books of all the great classics that one had never read. And I remember having a shelf at Cartwright Gardens, I remember making all the furniture in Cartwright Gardens from wartime bunks and that. The wood was incredibly hard, but I made a shelf which was tougher than my bed, which was like a hospital bed, in Cartwright Gardens, and it had all these classics. But the handful of us all knew about these classics and shared these ideas. There was also a passion through Mason, for music, and even when I was at the Ruskin School we went up to Birmingham to hear a concert, it might have been Barbirolli, but I remember going down to Fleet Street to buy an early electric, I mean we are still talking about the era of coming out of hand-wind gramophones, and I remember going to Fleet Street and buying this kind of peculiar aluminium case, electric player, and remember it was still 78s. But I remember having these, swapping with a friend in Scotland for a set of Stravinsky and it was called HMV Gold Label, Appollon chamber music, Appollon Musagète. And I think there was a wonderful rosy text written by a French scholar, talking about a quarry, drawings for a quarry which also I felt was attractive, and it might have been Anatole France who was this text. But I remember that, there was this craving for knowledge and sharing ideas, and of course, I'm not quite sure we even listened to the radio, it was very astringent. We also used to go to things as a group, after listening and reading bits out we would go down the road, Euston Road, to what was called Giant British restaurant, that seemed to specialise in three types of boiled potato with just a smattering of mince. Being young and youthful we didn't realise that the big fat ladies had had most of the mince, but we were contented. But it was all this that led up to putting some of one's favourite books into an officer's trunk, and I think I ever took a camera, that's true, there was a lost property office, I took a plate camera so I could photograph what I did. And after a while I had this room in the Rue Visconti, sort of able to walk along, about ten ways of getting to the, in Paris of going from where I slept to the room that I worked in. But sometimes it would take three hours, because there would always be these magical...it was so hypnotic, looking over the parapets to the Seine. And there were these ‘bouquinistes’ that had magazines and postcards, and it just took me ages to get to work. And there was always the different choice of either going

on one side of the river, and there's one pretty side of the Seine where they had pet birds and fishing tackle and all that, but it seemed to me absolutely incredible, that world.

What were the favourite books you took with you?

I took, there was an Elouard Picasso book I took, and I took some of these classics to read through the winter. I even had I think `Two Years Before the Mast' to read. And there were some books that Win Henderson gave me from Laurence and Wishart, quite readable, and I think there was a book written by Christopher Conference's brother, `The Illusion in Reality', do you remember that book?

No.

It was a kind of cult book.

Yes.

And I'm not quite sure whether Empson's book, Empson's book called `Seven Studies in Ambiguity'...

`The Seven Types of Ambiguity'.

I'm not quite sure, but I think I was very aware of that. But certainly I had bought an Oxford, the T.S. Eliot poem starting off with `Let us go then you and I', certainly that. And then I have still got them, an Auden book of poetry, also bought at Blackwells, and I liked them very much. And then of course I met some Americans in Paris who were quite influential and they gave me piles of magazines which I used for a collage in a timid kind of way, because when I did these early collage, nobody quite thought they were art at that time. And I remember using a lot of `Time' covers and giving them to a friend, and she just thought they were funny and she threw them all away, you know. Interesting that.

Why were you so interested in this American material?

Well because when I was a child growing up in Scotland there was always a kind of atmosphere about American films, I mean even when one thinks, the Andy Hardy films seemed to offer a totally different world, there was always a kind of shock when you came out after an Andy Hardy film that this was, you were going backwards into the real world, backwards. There was also, I mean I used to have, I used to notice even when I was quite

young that the model flying books, the American ones, were much more beautifully detailed and much more glamorous than the English versions. `The Aero Modeller' was sort of amateurish and always looked, as it does now, it always looked as though it had been printed in some garden shed, whereas you always felt that `Model Flying News' had been printed in a large, the middle of a campus, or in the shadow of a giant aircraft factory. But I mean, I grew up with the words, you know, like Paramount, or radio, just that whole image at the beginning of a film where the world turns round and there's flashing of radio, or there's even that lovely creature, or the lion: it was all glamorous even before you got to the, even before the film started. But American humour was still good, like `The Three Stooges' or Edward Kennedy, and one was very much educated by the cinema, about the American idea of life.

So did you mix a lot with Americans in Paris?

There were a lot of ex-GIs, yes, quite a lot. You used to see them at least, there was a whole particular bunch, and they took me to their bosom on Sundays, Jessie Reichhardt[ph], who used to paint in the style of Kandinsky, but they all seemed like princes, they all seemed to be better dressed, better studios, and much more at ease at life.

Well they had more money, they were...

They had more money. But they were used to a certain kind of ease, I mean, you might have found, when I was in Oxford at the Randolph Hotel there might be 18 or 19-year-old pilots, American pilots, but they might have come from the mid-West of soda-jerks, but they had a kind of social ease and fabulous women and looked incredibly glamorous, 18-year-old pilots, compared with the more austere RAF or even British soldiers. The British Army looking, the non-officer class looking like serfs, a serf army.

How conscious were you that you were making art when you were doing these collages in Paris?

Well I was consciously trying to do art to take to London for the exhibition, and then I was doing kind of amusing things. We would even, with these Americans, after dinner we would cut up magazines and play around, fool around, as a sort of after dinner activity.

Were you aware of the tradition of photo montage?

Well there were all, all round my studio in Rue Visconti there were superb second-hand book shops that had just tables piled with Max Ernst books, and of course these lovely books which

they have reprinted called Minotaur, and in Minotaur it showed you about black humour and that one could actually re-value kitsch or black humour in a different kind of way. And of course one...but the collage that one saw, the Max Ernst, were all more or less engravings, but there was a hint in some of the French Surrealism of using, the whole notion of ready-mades, even in the form of image. I mean for example in one, there were a lot of little galleries that were selling wonderful...those Miròs that had a bit cut out of a magazine and the rest would be drawn, I mean like a woman's fashion magazine, he would cut out a figure of a woman and then draw in the rest.

Of course I know you had a lot of scrap books which you filled up with...

That's right.

With these collages. Did you do any individual single sheets?

Not sure.

But you wouldn't have thought of exhibiting them then?

No, I don't think anybody... I got the impression that people weren't that...[INTERRUPTION - RECORDER FALLEN]

This is one of the scrap-books that you...

That's one of the scrap-books, but I did that one in Oxford, but that will give you the tone.

What, you did this before you left for Paris?

That's right, yes. That was from sort of war-damaged or scrap-books, from images.

Walter de la Mare. Yes.

But what I was aiming at, you see there, that might have been a clue.

Yes, I mean two highly technological photographs.

But I mean that's a composite.

That's a photo-montage, so it is. By Dr. Otto Ehrlich.

But you see what I was trying to do was re-live Ozanfant.

Yes, yes. I can see that. I mean there's a rather good photograph...

And this was a sort of prelude to what I was saying, parallel of...

Of life and art.

And if one had more confidence one might have drawn upon that a bit more. But you can see a kind of Hendersonian connection there.

Yes, this is a woman, this is a woman's behind, she's wearing a corset, but...

It's a medical book.

Her buttocks are exposed.

Mm.

But mostly the images, so far at least are highly technological.

When I went up to, when we also came up to the Slade, there was a big bookshop, which has now gone, medical, Lewis's, and they had baskets of books outside that were slightly war-damaged which were threepence and sixpence.

But, I mean this is really remarkable in view of your later interests.

That's right.

The juxtaposition...

But what I was trying to do was, I was actually searching for a way other than what was being offered up, as an alternative art, something that I could identify with even in a slightly autobiographical way.

Even Mickey Mouse.

You see this in a sense is...

Yes. These are faces which...

Popular mechanics.

Which have been divided up into three parts. Very much like portraits which you subsequently did.

That's right, that's right.

That you subsequently did. But you didn't, during the Paris period, think of exhibiting this kind of thing?

Nobody would want to see it, because I remember showing Erika Brausen some, the kind of bizarre things, and she just burst out laughing, she was into what might have been called high art.

And did you consciously try to see parallels between this sort of collage and sculpture?

Maybe, maybe. I'm not quite sure I follow what you mean.

Well, I mean later on in your sculpture you began to develop a very original collage technique.

Mm.

To make three-dimensional images.

Oh yes, that's right, yes. No I didn't see any connection. I mean this was an immature work and it's tentative, but there are things that are slightly, like in childhood, this was a childhood image, you know, looking at the world with a sense of wonder and an innocence somehow. It's all about, that book's all about trying to recapture the innocence that I thought I was going to lose while I was at Oxford.

Well it's significant that you've never lost this, and you knew precisely where it was over there.

Well yes.

Whereas, I mean a lot of your things I'm sure you've either lost or thrown away.

No, well that's rather dear to me.

Yes. I can see why. And I mean there indeed is an image very similar to one that...

Then the Wittgenstein.

Yes, I mean it's...

But don't forget, you know, even when one...I mean one hopped, right up to 1964 when I did the Wittgenstein book nobody had...I spent days trying to explain to people who he was, and now he is very much a kind of cult figure.

So he is, yes. Have you finished talking about Paris, or...?

Well I could come...I mean in a strange way, it may be difficult to do something chronological; I don't mind coming back and forward on that.

Yes, yes.

But I thought this was relevant to something.

Well I had never seen that before, and I'm amazed by them, and particularly now you tell me that you had done it in Oxford.

That's right.

And there's obviously a direct...

But I mean every...I mean this in a way, if I showed that at the time, there were people who would have kind of books like this, you know. This wouldn't be uncommon, but it wouldn't be called art. It's like day-books.

Who else would have had books like that?

Well there were things, Lord Norwich was talking on the radio about, everybody had a day-book, they used to paste sayings from newspapers and things, and it was a kind of tradition of a day-book of things that interested you, you stuck into a book.

That I know about literally, because it's sometimes called a commonplace-book as well.

That's right. But also I grew up with, I grew up with everybody, I mean every cheap newsagent, every Woolworths had things called scrap-books for a shilling, and people used to stick in there anything that they were interested in, even old drawings, or...and that tradition has gone, but that's in that kin d of tradition, the scrap-book tradition.

Yes. Just that the images aren't the kind of images...

But I mean the modern, if you ask a modern painter if he's got a scrap-book, you may draw a blank.

Yes, almost certainly I would think. Your artistic career, that's to say in terms of galleries and critical reception and what-not, took off quite soon after you came back from France didn't it?

Well, I've gone up and down. I mean at one time when I had been working at, when I was working at one point, I mean I was, from the Robert Frazer point of view, that's not...that's a long time ago which might be the Sixties, I was a sort of hot-shot with Jim Dine, and indeed, I mean taking another jump, I had to do a radio broadcast about the time when, I did a collaboration with Jim Dine, and the police came and took everything away, and Robert Frazer had his first conviction, which went against him when he had his second conviction, and he went to jail. But, that was hot-shot time, and then later on through Robert Frazer I had a sell-out exhibition in the Pace Gallery.

But in the Fifties, there are things which I remember, I mean, '57 I think you represented Britain at Venice.

'60, 1960.

Was it as late as that?

Yes, '60.

Ah.

But, there was I think an exhibition in the [...] Venice, mixed English, which Bars[??] got excited about and bought one of my bronzes, called `Jason'.

That's what I meant, that was the one that...

That's right, that was a mixed one, but then after that, maybe as a result of that there was a retrospective kind of exhibition that travelled round Europe, going directly from Venice to Belgrade, and Belgrade being the first time they had had foreign art ever, and the only thing was, they had no proper, they screwed everything back in the boxes upside-down and all that.

But there was the William and Noma Copeley Prize.

That's right.

As well. That was the Fifties wasn't it?

Could well be, yes.

But, were you taken up by a dealer?

I always had uneasy relationships, I mean after I think, for a bit with the Hanover Gallery, and then maybe a gap, and then there were three years with the Marlborough, and that's about it.

Were you...

Well I had a show with Leslie Waddington at one time.

Mm. Were you taken up by critics? I mean Robert Melville was the first to write about you.

That's right. Not that much, no, not that I can think of.

How about specific patrons? I mean people who started to buy your work.

Well Gregory was, Peter Gregory, then of course perhaps from 1960 on the chief patron was Gabrielle Keiller[ph] from '60 on.

As early as '60?

As early as '60, because that was, once again we had Win Henderson[ph], that we met each other. I think they had gone to Venice and when they came back Gabrielle Keiller[ph] wanted to see.

That's right, I remember her telling me that she had been to Venice and had seen your work there.

That's right.

The Fifties...are you still all right? The Fifties was the period in which you arrived at what might be described as work which was totally yours, totally unlike anything that anybody else had been doing.

Mm.

For the first time.

Mm.

I would be right in saying that?

Possibly, mm. I never was really claimed, wanted to claim a lot of real originality though, that always seems to be other people's. But to show actually influences and all that can be very positive, you know.

Mm. But anyway it strikes me as though those figures, those damaged warriors, really the works in which you apply the collage principle to sculpture.

A bit, a bit.

Well, they started in the Fifties didn't they.

Mm. I was doing a lot of waxes, say up to '58, and casting them myself in this garden at East Heath Road with Francis Moreland[ph], with a lot of failures, a lot of failures.

However do you cast bronze yourself without [INAUDIBLE?

Well you make an oven, you make a wax, and then you put...very hard work, and then you put investment round it as it's called, and then you burn the wax out, and then you just melt the metal and pour it in. And then after that there's still a lot of work of getting rid of the investment and cutting the runners off. It's frightfully hard graft, and yet there are people who do it every day in the foundries, and I went to one this morning.

Yes. And I mean you did it because it was cheap, that was the only way you could afford to make bronzes?

That's right.

Were you selling these bronzes, or was there any prospect of selling them?

Oh yes, Atkins, there would be a handful of small people interested. Remember Guy Atkins?

I remember Guy Atkins very well.

He bought a few.

And of course they are unique, because it's lost wax.

That's right, except that Erika persuaded me to go to Paris with some of the waxes, some of the bronzes, and they were reproduced in editions of three, and the French call that `remoulliage', doing a mould from a bronze. But I also seemed to have hit lucky at one time at that period from the waxes, I did a big St. Sebastian that was bought by Sweeney[ph] while I was still living at Thorpe, and that seemed to be a great day, somehow. I really seemed to be getting somewhere at that time.

Now that St. Sebastian has got a surface...

That's right, accretion is the word, of bits and pieces and ready-mades pressed into clay, which was then picked up by the wax.

Well now how did you get the idea for this?

Out of Surrealism I think, I think pure Surrealism of, using some method to transform an old lock or an old gear wheel, just out of...I just think pure Surrealism.

Were you aware of trying to say something specific with the method, or...?

Yes I was thinking of my endless dialogue between man and the machine, you know, what's a man's skin, or... I mean some of the heads I did using that way, I can only think when I look at them as being highly surreal or anthropomorphic, and they look botanical. It's like a mixture of strange Amazonian plant and some medical aberration at times.

There is a series of photographs taken by `Life', or was it `Vogue', of you...

`Life', `Life'.

So how did they...

Mike Kaufman[ph].

How did they become aware of you?

I don't know, I just think there was a flaw. They became aware of me through Alfred Barr buying `Jason', and I think possibly the exhibitions called `New Images of Man' by Peter Seltz[ph] which was hated, but it was an exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art of the idea that the figurative hasn't disappeared. But I think the official establishment didn't like it, but that's how it came about.

So how did the Americans become aware of you in the first place?

Through this exhibition, called `New Images of Man' organised by Peter Seltz[ph].

What, did Peter Seltz[ph] come to England looking for people to exhibit?

No I think it was the exhibition at the Biennale at that time.

Yes, the first one that you took part in.

That's right, yes. But there was that thing in the air, you know, that, a lot of it's in the air about, a revival and the young British sculptors and all that, a romantic idea. And don't forget that even Chadwick and Armitage were considered hot-shots, and they used to have, they used to have kind of wild-pack life of boozing and womanising and all that.

And you were all lumped together by Herbert Read under the phrase ‘Geometry of Fear’.

That's right, that's right.

Together with the Frenchwoman, Germaine Richier[ph], whose work doesn't really stand up to the...

That's right, exactly. And of course, I mean about that time Freud was called the Ingres of the electronic age.

Really?

Mm.

I had never come across that phrase before.

Mm. Atomic age I think.

Of course people were...some people were rather anxious to draw parallels between your images of man, who often seemed wounded or damaged in some way...

That's right.

And what people might look like after the Holocaust.

That's right, that's right.

How conscious were you of working in a way which owed nothing at all to Henry Moore?

Well I mean his, from a very early age, from his forties he cast his shadow over the whole...he was a big force that one at that time seemed to resist, and as a matter of fact I think there was an idea of having a big Henry Moore gallery at the Tate, and a group of artists including I think Anthony Caro, we all signed a letter to protest, saying that that space could be better used.

Even though Caro was a...

No he was ex by then, an ex assistant.

Yes.

But it was felt at that time that one...that he was a father image that one had to reject.

But you certainly didn't think very much of Moore's work, did you? I mean it represented some sort of English values for you.

Well, I suppose it did. And don't forget I still had my allegiance to Picasso and I still had my allegiance to the Surrealists. But the thing is, they might have been muddled values, because in a strange way you could consider that Henry Moore is a sort of English surrealism of a kind like Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland, if you wish.

Yes, but I mean he had changed a bit hadn't he by the time, by the Fifties.

Mm.

His best period was long gone.

Yes, that's true.

In Paris as we have seen, I mean you had got to know a lot of artists and you were very excited by the works of a lot of them. But in England, there really wasn't any art, let's think in terms of painting now, other than Francis Bacon, for you.

That's more or less, that's true. And I mean I used to see a lot of him when I first came back from Paris, and admired him immensely.

Did you first meet him after you came back from Paris?

When I was in Paris there was a man, a very important man I used to se a lot called Peter Ross-Pullen who definitely, who had lived in Paris before the war and then he had to go back to London and became a fireman, which a lot of intellectuals did, I think Stephen Spender perhaps, and then immediately the war ended he went scooting back to Paris and he was there when I got there and he was married to this rather nice girl, and I saw him practically every day. He used to paint every day, and after, he was staying in a hotel between the Rue Visconti and the Ile St Louis, quite generous, living on a pittance, and we used to always have

an evening omelette which he cooked in the fireplace. And he used to keep saying to me, there's a wonderful man who does things in London, you will have to go and see him when you go to London next time, and I did, and he was living in the Cromwell Place at the time, and bacon, cooked tagliatelle with walnuts, which was wonderful.

So why did you admire Bacon and Bacon's work so much?

Well everybody liked him as a man very much, and what he said, and his unbelievable honesty. And he was a kind of mystery. It was very difficult to say at that time why the paintings were spectacular, but one was very much influenced and moved by him, his belief, and there was certainly, when I think of an early exhibition of his in the Hanover Gallery of these kind of retreating naked man, and using cotton wool and a safety pin, but even before that there had been an exhibition at the Lefevre which, at one gallery which seemed to be on Bond Street, and there were some Barbara Hepworths and there were some bizarre early Bacon which seemed to be like a raglan tweed coat draped over a chair, but there was a certain kind of mystery about it that was inexplainable, that was hypnotic, hypnotic.

What kind of things did he say then that you remember?

Well a lot of it's repeated in Dan Farson's book which kind of refreshes the memory, but I mean it was just this kind of curious, devastating, burning, blistering honesty about his view about life, and it seemed to be free of cliches. And of course all these ideas influenced one's way that one looked at his art.

Did it influence the way you looked at your art?

Well it made one look twice, because one felt that one was perhaps indulging, self-indulgence; I mean there could be...I think he destroyed some people, that they were never able to, like Denis Worthmiller[ph], they were never able to paint again, or even Dickie Chopping[ph]. I mean if you didn't have enough vision yourself, if you weren't driven yourself, you could be knocked sideways.

Did you feel driven?

I think, yes, to do your own bronze casting in 1958 you had to be driven to do that thing. But also I felt driven, I mean in a roundabout way if I had been screen-printing and working till 6 at the Central, to go downstairs and work until 10 o'clock, one must have been driven. And often in lots of cases, if I had been working all day doing a special exhibition for the Hanover

Gallery which I did at Radnor Walk, after, maybe at 6 o'clock I would then go on to Nigel Henderson's and do these photo experiments in his bathroom till 2 in the morning. So in a strange way I must have been driven to, instead of going to the pictures.

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Yes, the time is nearly 11 o'clock, and after a long break we are continuing the interview between Sir Eduardo Paolozzi and Frank Whitford. The last time we met we talked mostly about the 1950s.

Mhm.

We talked about your time in Paris. One thing we didn't say very much if anything about, was your discovery, if that's the word, of Surrealism, and I know Surrealism has always been very important to you since then, and I would be very grateful if you would say something about Surrealism from your point of view, why you think it's important, who you think is particularly important, and in what ways you still consider yourself to be a Surrealist.

Yes. I don't know if I went over the ground, over this ground before, but there were two, there were possibly two-and-a-half places you could go to in London which were I think open through the war, there was the London Gallery which was financed by Peter Gregory, Peter Watson, and Mr Zwemmer, and I think that, this of course was managed by George Melly, and I used to go there quite regularly, and of course it reflected very much the tastes of Roland Penrose, and Roland Penrose, when I used to come back from Paris on my jaunts I used to stay with Margaret Gardener in Downshire Hill. Margaret Gardener's house was full, was a sort of temple to Barbara Hepworth, Pevsner and Ben Nicholson, and indeed, it was even furnished in a way that was imitated by Eades at Kettle's Yard, the hand-made bowls with pebbles, and the Heal's curtains, and even the sort of Russell-type sensible moderne chairs. But next to Margaret Gardener, practically next-door was Roland Penrose's house which was a total different kettle of fish, full of the most extraordinarily good Surrealist paints, and Picassos of course, so...and Roland even had, I mean he had learnt, he had used his eyes when he visited Picasso, because the house was kind of a recreation of what might have been a house that belonged to Max Ernst, lots of bizarre objects scattered around, and even a glass case full of small objects, including Roman erotic art, things like that. But he had some classic Max Ernst including one I used to stare at which was made up of cuttings out of a natural history book of sort of biology, and he had cut them all out and made a kind of, invented a new landscape. So, even when I was in England, this was an introduction. Also the London Gallery was just full of things like people, postcards by Eileen Agar, and of course Schwitters used to float through there, and I wouldn't be surprised, which I missed...I think Kurt Schwitters gave a reading to that. And of course what's quite interesting, when I was in Munich a few months ago there was a giant Dada exhibition, I'll show you the catalogue, and the interest among the young was enormous in Dada, enormous, including

them queuing up t a kind of sound booth just to listen to Kurt Schwitter's readings on poetry. It's very very interesting that perhaps maybe they have come to Surrealism through people, extraordinary people, through pop videos, or even strange people like Zappa, Frank Zappa, and there was a programme on him the other night. Do you know about him, Frank Zappa?

Yes.

But I think, I was astonished how easy the young were able to assimilate Dada, which one might have assumed was a past historical movement, and in a strange way of course, I think that not only Surrealism is very powerful, because it embraces a lot of the arts, and when you look at these great books, like `Minataur', I mean they were able to sweep Piero di Cosimo under the heading of Surrealism, the surreal vision was not only moderne but it was able to re-interpret the past in a strange way.

Can we just get the dates right? Roland Penrose, Margaret Gardener and so on, did you meet them before you went to Paris, or are we talking about afterwards?

I met them through Peter Watson, because I was sort of, while I was still at the Slade I was discovered by Peter Watson, and even he...well I was still a student, he put my student works, I think against Cyril Connolly's misgivings, he had my student work in `Horizon' magazine, which was...and of course I saw...`Horizon' magazine was also a very good introduction in a roundabout way to Surrealism, and the article on me of course was written by Robert Melville specially commissioned, and he had all little bits and pieces. He was a Surreal, he was a great English Surrealist of a kind. I think his brother was a Surreal painter.

I didn't know that.

Oh yes indeed.

But what date was this about?

We're talking about, say, '46, a year after the war, hyphened, and '47, it's the year I went to Paris, June '47.

Margaret Gardener, and you make a comparison with Jim Eades' collection.

That's right, at Kettle's Yard.

And the present gallery at Kettle's Yard. That represented I suppose a kind of ultra English avant-garde aesthetic.

Absolutely, and even, there were strange tails about Ben Nicholson's eccentricities, lots of stories, and I used to catch up also stories about Ben Nicholson from Kathleen Raine where I went to live after, when I came back from Paris.

Where did Kathleen Raine...?

Well she was 9 Golden Square at the time, and then she, on the other side of the square.

Now, was she your landlady then?

She was my landlady.

I see, I didn't realise that.

Oh yes.

What did you object to mostly about this English aesthetic?

Well, I think perhaps some of the same reasons that I object to the English now. I mean I think that say, the average RA seems to be drenched in a curious kind of middle-middle-class which seemed to be the main temperature of the Slade when I was there; there's a curious kind of English middle class, and a mixture of niceness, and a confusion about professionalism and amateurism, and dear dear sweet Nigel Henderson I think was equally contaminated, quite confused about that. And sometimes it's, in Henderson's case I think a curious kind of intuition, or some form of gift; he was able to surmount the usual problems, and he, like I actually despised most of our contemporaries at the Slade, particularly the teachers.

It was sort of good manners, good taste.

And of course Schwabe, who was the head of the Slade, was the apotheosis of that, and when I had my year in Oxford Rutherston was also the apotheosis of that. And of course it's no surprise that these, these are lost generations in the sense that they never treated art as a fabulous way of dealing with the world.

Saying things like, pardon?

Well, good drawing. I think even in my time, the generation at the Ruskin School disapproved of Matisse because he couldn't draw properly, and of course in a bizarre way, John was not only admired but a role model for Slade students. I think that even some of the girls attempted to look like Dorelia.

Yes, Augustus John.

That's right.

So what on the other hand then was so exciting about Surrealism?

Surrealism was of the offer. Surrealism was a wonderful court to inch your way back to all the things that excited you in childhood, like games, secret writings; there was a lot, a great deal in Surrealism where you were able to trigger all these childhood things, which in conventional art education you were taught to forget. Surrealism would embrace erotic drawings for example, where with this English sensibility it was simply not done, not only to do erotic drawings but even to talk about them. I must say that things have got much better since then.

There is also that...

I mean there was also, if you have heard a recent programme by Judith Bumpus on Herbert Read on the Third, you will find that Bowness has described my antipathy to Herbert Read, and Read of course, although he was one of these interesting paradoxes, although he was very interested in modernism, he himself had a lot of English sensibility which, he thought that the idea of American films, anything American, was unappetising and unnecessary.

Read of course dominated the art world from the critical point of view, didn't he? I mean he made or broke reputations at the time.

Well I think there's a Herbert Read catalogue that was given to me, there's an exhibition of him at Leeds, but the amount of doctorates in the last years are immense accolades from all over the world, including America.

Whereas Robert Melville represented the kind of antidote presumably to Herbert Read.

Robert Melville just lived on little scraps, you know, but I think he was fulfilled in his...he was happily married and lived in a little flat, and had a very contained day. And I don't think he was socially ambitious at all. He was a very nice man.

The thing in technical terms about Surrealism which has obviously had an enormous impact on you, was the collage principle.

It was also the...I was longing to kind of get back to the world that had deeply moved me when I was younger, like bad films. I had to get away, and I was very disturbed when I went, I submitted drawings to get into the Edinburgh College of Art, where I was kindly told to put them all to one side and get on with real art, and I found that experience very disturbing. But when I did find in the Army what might have been the beginnings of something, which embraces Surrealism, was seeing in a public library in Buxton a bound, a nice copy of `Foundations of Modern Art' which I found in the art section but it absolutely amazed and gave me a lot of hope that they had included, apart from African art, it had battleships and it had the wheels of motor cars, and it also had vulgar art, and anonymous photographs, and that opened the big door for me, that my thinking process wasn't too much out of step with another way of thinking. But I had to seize on Surrealism, and I still, not so much, I wasn't necessarily affected by it, but in the sense it gives one enormous licence to justify certain images that I make even today. For example, I'm doing an etching which shows the tracing of a locomotive in a sense which is almost good enough on its own, but on top of it there's a torso of an Indian dancer. So you get a kind of, like all good art, it has to be a metaphor that exists on all kinds of levels, but it must be something that is deeply felt. But I mean, this is kind of Surrealism which everybody recognises, two disparate things put together, the excuse to do it. This is very natural to me, and I'm sorry that it's not natural in other people.

We've already talked about your experiences in Paris and the kind of art that you were doing there, and the kind of art that you were doing when you came back. We talked about you getting married, you were living at first in London, and then you had your first daughter, Louise, and it was at that time that you decided to move to the country. Were you living all the time in the country at that stage?

Well, one was very very poor at the time I think, but the only way, if you didn't occasionally sell a drawing, the art world wasn't then as it is now, I mean those handful of small galleries, a lot of the better galleries, like the one that I showed with, Mayor, actually their bread and butter was things that Freddie brought over on consignment from Paris, including that strange artist that, Kamptweiler[ph]. He used to buy from Kamptweiler[ph], or borrow. Van Velder[ph] who was in the exhibition at the Tate.

Brandt van Velder[ph]?

That's right. Freddie could always sell him. Even better he had Giacometti drawings which went very slowly, they were £40 at the time. But there was also a curious kind of feeling that Matthew Smith sold quite well enough, and there was always a feeling that, even when I was at the Slade, that, an idea about foreigners, and even foreign food somehow.

What kind of idea, hostile?

Well there were people, when I was at the Slade, who had never seen spaghetti before, and there were people who had just found Picasso was interesting but foreign, and that the English School was much...you could occupy the rest of your life just thinking about English art.

It seems extraordinary now, but the only way you could get olive oil I seem to remember then, other than outside, other than in Soho, was through a chemist's.

That's right, I remember that. I've even bought oil under duress from Boots, under duress.

And it was olive oil BP.

That's right. Then I remember going to special shops in Soho just to get a clove of garlic.

And there was also in the Fifties a famous April Fool joke on `Panorama' where Richard Dimbleby showed a film of people harvesting spaghetti from trees.

That's right.

And a large number of people, including my father, actually believed that this is how it...

I think there are still some people who believe it, up in the Highlands. (laughs)

Presumably you didn't sell very well at the time though?

I didn't sell, I didn't even do that well in Paris, but the reason I came back to England was that William Johnson of the Central School wrote to me and said, did I want to teach? And as I couldn't...as I couldn't manage in Paris that well, and I was living off Freda who later became my wife, but then I had had enough of that, so I thought I would come back and teach. And I

had had a lifeline with teaching. You were saying a difficult time when I went to live in the country, the only lifeline was teaching. One used to come up and teach at the Central, and then I moved to St. Martin's, and by that time I was spending the week in a spare room at Hampstead in Dorothy Morgan's house, and I used to charge up and down from that house to St. Martin's, getting enough to live for the week, and then going down to the country for the weekend.

You weren't teaching sculpture of course.

Oh at St. Martin's I was. That's why I moved. At the Central, because I hadn't answered William Johnson's letter for a year, he said, I'll punish you and put you into the Textile School. And that was, he didn't realise it, that that was a very lucky, because there was a strange refugee called Anton Answeig[ph], did I talk about him before?

You've talked about Anton Eronsweig[ph].

Yes. So I was lucky about that.

Yes.

And I learnt screenprinting, and that's the time when also I had joined up again with Nigel Henderson. It was a time when I used to stay there, before I went to Hampstead I stayed in Chisenhale Road, which ironically has become the hubbub of a whole modern art empire.

So it has, yes, yes, Chisenhale Studios and all that.

That's right.

So, the pattern of your week, and we're talking about what, '55?

Yes, early Fifties.

Early Fifties?

That's right, or mid Fifties.

Freda and Louise are living in Essex.

In Landermere[ph].

In Landermere[ph], which is near Thorpe-le-Soken.

That's right.

A long way away actually from civilisation in a way.

Not that, no, at that time, we couldn't even afford a car at the time, we both had to learn to drive. But that came a wee bit later, maybe after a few years, but there was a lot of walking, and I remember enjoying the walk to the station, it was about half an hour to the cross in the village, the cross-roads, and I mean, through rather interesting farmland, and then another quarter of an hour downhill to the station. And from Thorpe-le-Soken it would be an hour, about twenty minutes to Colchester and an hour from Colchester to Liverpool Street. Of course, Liverpool Street was very 19th century then, and even in the early days there was steam, up to the Sixties.

You didn't do this daily ever?

Never, never.

And, so that the pattern of your week was, London from Monday to Friday, Monday to Saturday?

Monday to Friday, yes, or sometimes if it was summer, Thursday, but sometimes also if it was summer, and there was no school, one would maybe spend a week to ten days. And much much much later on of course, when I had enough, after a big bout of lost wax, making grotesques in bronze, I took against that, and said on a programme, a television programme with Bronowski how I would really like to work with engineers, and I got this letter from some people, found a place in Ipswich, found a foundry in Ipswich who introduced me to engineers, and then from about 1960, which is about the time that I moved into Dovehouse Street, till about 1970, I had another passion which was teaching at the Royal College, and quite seriously teaching, although I had a year in Hamburg in 1960. And I used to go to Ipswich on Thursdays and Fridays, which fitted in very well with London Landermere[ph] at the time.

That was C.W. Juby[ph] and Company Limited I see to remember

That's right, that's right.

Before we talk about the Sixties, you already mentioned these, what you described at grotesque figures.

In...yes.

In lost wax.

That's right.

These were the sculptures with which you actually made your name aren't they.

Well, yes, I mean the Guggenheim bought one eventually, the Museum of Modern Art bought one at that time, although I think they're in the cellars now. And of course, what people might say was, one made one's name was, that there was a bunch of us showing at Venice in the Fifties, and I wouldn't be surprised if Read wrote the catalogue for that.

I think he did, and he coined the phrase.

And the famous, that's right.

`The geometry of fear'.

Fear, that's right.

Well I mean, how did the idea of these figures, I mean we're talking about things like, there are a number of things called `Damaged Warrior'...

That's right.

Quite unlike the prevailing tradition in English sculpture which was dominated still obviously by Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth.

Well also in a strange way, when you say dominated, Moore at the time, there was this kind of thing which he perhaps had borrowed from Arp, the organic smooth surface, and what one was doing was also...there was a sort of shadow, if people did write about it, of science fiction, you know, of damaged and hybrids, and...which I got tired of, the way of making

things by pressing objects into clay, it's found objects and so on, and then wrapping it round and making it rather humanoid. But I got tired of that after a while.

Would you please say something about the technique that was involved, because it seems to me to have been very original at the time. You say you took objects, I mean, toys, bits of junk.

That's right. They would be bits of piano for example, and they would be the whole...and I did a lot of wax before I found a studio in London, we moved from a little cottage to next-door where there were two bigger ones including a glass shed, which was home-made and always leaking, it had been inhabited formerly by a glass artist much used by Basil Spence called John Hutton.

Oh yes.

But he seemed to have limited means, and there was a lot of DIY there. But I worked in this glass studio pressing on beds of clay, I mean sometimes whole bits of pianos, so that one got this kind of African type pattern, and then one would have to resolve that by making it into something vaguely psychologically familiar, not only human figures but also animals, and I did frogs at that time, and a few dogs and things like that. And I had an exhibition of these while I was still living at Landermere[ph] with Erika Brausen, quite early ones.

And having pressed them into clay, you would make...

Pour hot wax on, and from that you would get a sheet, and while, when you pulled it off, if it's still warm you could then wrap it round some kind of clay, if you wrapped it round a big clay tube it would be like a leg, or you could even wrap it round...I mean some of them, they're incredibly malleable, and of course if the foundry agreed to cast it, they always said, if it didn't run, it wouldn't be their responsibility, but I never had a failure. But it would be much cheaper because they weren't...and this was attractive to me at the time, that if you get a kind of, quite a distinct definition of everything, no loss of detail.

And from a technical point of view it was like the transference of two-dimensional collage into three-dimensional.

That's right. It was kind of collage, there was a lot of sticking and cutting and immense flexibility.

And the results were I suppose, they might best be described as expressionistic.

Very expressionistic, particularly things like ‘Crocodile’ and things, yes very much so. And I think that, one reviewer, John Piper's wife was a reviewer in one of the major Sundays.

Myfanwy.

Myfanwy, that's right, and she wrote favourably about the Hanover Gallery, saying that everything looked as if it had been drawn together by a giant magnet. But I mean all kinds of common everyday things could be employed, even bits of wood, bits of wood that had interesting surface, and bizarre found objects. And of course, this was one of the bonds that linked me with Nigel Henderson, he was very much into everyday detritus.

In his photography.

Mm, and I think at that time, Laurence Alloway called Nigel Henderson the John Betjeman of the junk pile.

Which is still very good isn't it.

Still very good.

Still very good. You talked about using bits of a piano in some of these things.

That's right.

And I remembered, there was a series of photographs taken of you, actually I think breaking a piano up and using, in `Life' magazine.

That's right, that was...that was going to be an article, I think they didn't print it, on three artists. My photographer is called Mark Kaufman[ph], and I don't know, when it...they sent me all the photographs once because they felt they were mine, but it was going to be an article on three artists working with junk. One was...the other one was Cezar[??], and the other one was an American artist called Richard Stankowitz[ph], but long since gone.

But the very fact that `Life' magazine was interested enough to set this feature up, whether or not they printed it, is evidence of how you arrived, if that’s not too strong a word.

Well, not so much arrived, but it was that kind of way of working was novel and had caught the imagination not only of the art world, I mean i.e. the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim, but also was good copy shall we say, good copy. But I mean I think they may have had brilliant art editors on `Life' magazine, I mean, Jackson Pollock was noted very early in `Life' magazine, even though they were covering things like the Carnegie International and all that.

Were you consciously trying to make a career, or did this in the end, other than the fact that it might have meant that you were earning a bit more money, not really touch you at all deeply, I mean that you were only really interested in working as long as you could earn a minimum to keep you and your family alive? Or I mean were you consciously trying to make a career?

Maybe, it's difficult to answer that now. I mean even if you ask me that question now, I would have difficulties. I mean if I was now, I mean in a sense, if you were taken up...I mean I've always been taken up, if you were taken up by say the Hanover Gallery, in a sense if you are not conscious, they will assist you to consciously make up a career, such as, they will tell you if there's a...if they can make money out of it, they will go through the motions of notifying the press and all that. But I mean there's no...there's all kinds of artists. I mean in a sense, how would you apply that question to Francis Bacon, if in a sense... I mean there's the paradox, by being with them he had them destined to guard him against what other, normal lay society would be blocking him from things that other, a material society would assume was necessary to make a career.

Yes, and I mean Bacon...

Like lots of interviews and talk shows and so on.

In a way not only of course were they making him a great deal of money, but they were protecting him against himself to a certain extent, because presumably Bacon was the kind of person who, without the help of the Marlborough or some similar organisation, would have been financially ruined within two or three weeks.

Yes, possibly, but according to the last writings by David Sylvester, unknown to me, that Bacon was selling, even when he was under contract to the Marlborough he was selling things round the corner for Sylvester, which provided Sylvester with a bit of a living. And that's not gossip, this is David Sylvester writing about that period.

I'm coming out of the chronological flow now, but you see one of the striking things about you is that you say that about dealers and galleries, and yet you've had very very few in your career, and those that you've had, you've left after a short period of time.

Well sometimes there has been misunderstandings. I had when Waddington, the young Waddington, Leslie, came to London, and he started in Cork Street, and I think his father also had a gallery there, and his father had heart problems which he has passed on to Leslie, and I had an exhibition there for instance which was early work from the engineers actually, I mean in the early Sixties, and then quite innocently I sold a piece, after the exhibition ended, which Leslie treated as an affront. And so that came to an end because of that reason. And then I was with the Marlborough, and then I was with...I was after with the Hanover. But no, I can name other artists who have gone from gallery to gallery, like Tom Phillips, he has run through the lot, and he's just had I think a big row with Angela Flowers.

End of F4992 side A

F4992 side B

.....get the right contract.

Ah, yes, I mean maybe it's the way you are thinking at the moment, because I have always had...

It has its...if it worked for Bacon I somehow feel with such bizarre, I think it can work for anybody.

Because I mean this has got nothing to do with the interview or anything, but I think it would probably be a jolly good idea, as long as the dealer were the right dealer, and as long as he was an honest dealer.

Well, if I do it through my lawyer, and we had discussed it at great length really, like one has...as a proper contract it's fine.

And they would, after all they would...they would enhance your prices, and apart from that, they would actually organise you a bit, wouldn't they.

Oh, I mean they would even, might even send somebody from the, a girl from the gallery once a week to deal and go on to... I mean if you're having a big mark-up, that's a flea-bite of an expense.

Yes, yes. And I mean really you could have done with an arrangement like that, I think...

Mm.

But then as I say this...

No no, you're right, anyway, I don't mind if it's on the tape.

Let's go back now, we're sort of coming to the end of the Fifties.

Yes, yes.

You've already mentioned going to Hamburg, and I would like to hear a lot more about that, because this was, I think, after Paris this was your first extended stay abroad.

Hamburg?

Yes.

I did a bit of commuting, because I was officially still...life was so much more relaxed and easy, I mean, I was still, I was at the Royal College of Art and yet I was allowed to have this kind of sabbatical without even asking, without even asking. And even when I was in Berlin much later on, I was still officially at the College. But as long as I came back for interviews, it's rather like when, later on in Munich, most of the professors, as long as you are around, it must be one of the easiest jobs in the world, as long as you are around for the important handful of decisions, the assistants will... You are even encouraged, which is an old-fashioned thing, to carry on with your own work, and the status and all that, and the students don't seem to protest against that.

Mind you, I mean Germany has got a much more liberal tradition in this respect than England has. I mean there are some art schools where I don't think the professors turn up at all, in Germany.

Mm. Such as...?

Well, Berlin for one.

Vanovitch[ph] in Dusseldorf, where I think the students ripped off the entrance to his studio, but I think because they resented his non-appearance.

Yes, yes.

But you see, professors have also got to help with grants and all that. I think it was...because he was unco-operative on that level that they didn't approve.

How did the invitation from Hamburg come about? I know you had done a sculpture...

It was easy, that's an easy one, because, I am going to take you back to 1953, even 1951, because I knew Jane Drew, she had a site at the Festival of Britain which was at the very end, it had nearly ran out, and it went on to a brick wall, and she wanted a feature on the brick wall, and I showed her some sculptures I was making, and I showed some at the Hanover at that time, I must have shown there very early, which was based on Giacometti's ‘The Palace

at 4 a.m.', which was a series of dowels with plaster shapes suspended in them. It's rather a poor, a pure homage to a wonderful masterpiece, a very brave, interesting masterpiece, but I did some sculptures like that, and I did them at Radnor Walk in a studio that belonged to somebody called Olive Richmond[ph], who is dead, and I shared it with Bill Turnbull at that time. And at that time I used to work there, and I used to go down to Chisenhale Road and work with Nigel Henderson, and at that time London was full of government surplus shops where these big rolls of government surplus photograph paper, and I remember going down to the East End to carry on working in Nigel Henderson's darkroom, and we worked in there until 2 in the morning. And I remember in a very primitive, under very primitive conditions, but quite happy, then going off next morning to Radnor Walk, make some plaster objects for an exhibition with Turnbull at the Hanover Gallery. And there was a man around very much at the time called Douglas Newton, who then went on to New York much later to be director of the Rockefeller Museum of Primitive Art. Anyway, it's difficult not to jump, as you remember, things seem to flow back and forward.

Yes well I don't want to stop you doing that, because some interesting things come out.

That's right.

One of the things that you did at the Festival of Britain was a fountain, which I remember seeing, I must have been eleven or twelve.

That's right. But that, that in 1951, it was just on a low budget, it was scaffold using building materials, scaffolding tubes and some contained water that was pumped up and some contained the lights. But the idea was that when it is dark all you saw, very difficult to do, just the water pouring. But it seemed a reasonable success but it was far outshone by a very technological fountain by Richard Hughes with buckets that poured water, but that had hydraulics and he had worked on it for three years. But it was out of that image seen in a Hamburg newspaper by Werner Hoffmann[ph] who was Hamburg-based at the time with, and his best friend was George Meifsman[ph], who was a professor at the Hamburg school, he saw that and invited me over in '53 to do something for these...

The garden festival.

That's right, Kunste and something.

Kunste und Bau?

That's right, Kunste und Brau. So I did three fountains there, and that was ‘53 and it was very cold, and Germany was still on its knees in '53, and then I was...I had a letter written by him inviting me if I wanted to take a year's professorship in Hamburg, and I remember going over with my wife, and we just stayed a week there just to discuss it, because by 1960 I had already had ten years' teaching, can you believe that? And I had wanted to move on, and I told Von Offen[ph], the very enlightened director of this school, the academy, which has a very distinguished past, that I had wanted to try something new which maybe came out of Surrealism and things like that called...I wanted to have a year's class of twelve people, each quite intelligent from each class, and to call the class the translation of experience, where we would run through in the first months the history of modern art, and which was difficult there because you couldn't even buy in the bookshops a book on Duchamp, you couldn't buy a book on Max Ernst, if you can believe it, then, if you could believe it, in 1960.

It's very difficult to believe, yes.

It is very difficult, but if you checked it, and because of Surrealism, we used to go to a bookshop, part of the thing was going to an incredible bookshop called the Buckerkabinere[ph], which had a lot of damaged books and [INAUDIBLE], and buying a lot of the cheapest possible, including technical books. We could buy them cheap, particularly when they were damaged, and bringing them back to the class, and then cutting the books and using the books as raw material to make things. And a lot of the collage that I did, I later made into a film called `The History of Nothing', and that all came out of the bookshop, and that was really a homage to Surrealism, that film.

And that's probably a very good example of the way in which your teaching has fed into your own work, or the other way around.

Probably, probably, but I mean I encouraged all of them to do, which I would have thought was the precepts of Surrealism, that there could be poetry, it could be a mad play, you could make puppets, but part of it also was going to translation experience. It gave one a licence to go to, they had a very nice secretary who arranged for us to go to a slaughter house for example, a modern one, and then, but the particular exciting thing was going to Walzershof[ph], this big harbour town, there was a big place where they brought ships up, and for somebody who collected odd objects or material, I mean, a large ship just supplied everything from flags to old maps to, even discarded clothing, because when this ship was written off, all the crew could go off with was, including the captain was as much as they could carry in a bag. So in some of the quarters there would be their pin-ups, everything, and there would be...and just think how people maybe confined there for weeks below decks, or

on decks, and the ship had to be self-contained, it was like a city, if there was a fire or if there was a break-down, and even the life-boats had water and they had biscuits and things like that.

And you were allowed to go and scavenge?

Absolutely.

With the students?

Absolutely. But they used to come back with firemen's helmets for fighting, and all kinds of things. And I mean it was, it was about this time when Stuart Sutcliffe turned up, which they've just made a film about, including me, me interviewing him. Not me but somebody playing me.

Good Lord! I mean we should perhaps explain that Stuart Sutcliffe is...

A refugee from the Beatles, because I was there, I was going on there while the Beatles were playing, and Stuart Sutcliffe came.

To the school?

Came to the school, said he had had enough and he wanted to become an artist.

From the Star Club in Hamburg?

That's right, yes. And I never went there, because, he gave me, I think Stuart put me off, it just seemed to me like pub songs, and I still think that a bit. I mean at that time I was, my heroes were Stan Kenton, I mean what I call real jazz, and I still think that.

Did you, I mean the Star Club I think was on the Reeperbahn wasn't it?

I think so, down by the harbour.

Anyway, so...

I never went there.

Yes. Do you remember anything about Hamburg, I mean itself, other than what you've already said?

Well I remember, I used to sleep in the academy, I was the only person, but I had Wunderlees'[ph] room.

Oh yes.

Which he never used, he never used, and there were some of his etchings. And we were very great friends at the time, he was very sweet then. And then next to him there was another man who had spent a lot of time there just getting drunk, listening to Bessie Smith records. It was rather outrageous to listen to Bessie Smith, because it had been forbidden under Hitler. All Negro jazz was forbidden. So in a strange way, Gresco[ph] used to listen to...and then he would take me down to the Reeperbahn and he would go to a particular club where he was a great friend of the woman. And it was the very nice, sweet, early days of transvestites and all that dancing about, but it was all wooden...the Rikolbar[ph] is unrecognisable. At that time it was a very simple kind of Otto Dix Germany, you know, wooden shacks in the form of, and I suppose naughty shows were not like, naughty magazines are quite different from naughty magazines now. I mean now it looks archaeological and charming, the soft porn of the Fifties. As even one would say that the hard porn of the Nineties might look charming to the new millennium. [BREAK IN RECORDING - TELEPHONE]

You were saying that the hard porn of the Nineties might also look kind of quaint and archaeological by the year 2000.

I won't say I guarantee it, but I think it's more than likely, if you just think of these patterns.

Were you aware when you were teaching in Hamburg, that you were doing something unusual, in your teaching methods?

No, well, I know that when...there's a wonderful, which, in the lower part of the academy they had a restaurant-hyphen-canteen, I thought was unusual because, I used to eat with the students, where the professors preferred to eat at their own table. But I mean when you talk about Germany of the Sixties, I mean there was still such a sort of, like in Haftmann and Meistermann, I mean they were all survivors; they had been young soldiers in World War II.

Was this Hoffmann or Haftmann?

Haftmann.

Haftman.

That's right.

Because Hoffmann went to Hamburg a little bit later on.

Ah, but then he was Austrian anyway.

That's right, yes. So Werner Haftmann, and I didn't realise that Werner Haftmann ever had anything to do with the Hamburg academy.

He was the professor of art history there at the time.

I see, yes. And I mean were the students aware, because you've always got on very well with students.

Yes, and still do, I think.

Yes, I think so. Were the students aware that what you were doing was very unusual?

Yes I think so, they ere very pleased to be... I mean, but even that that time, I mean when I walked into class they would all magically rise to their feet, you know, and then, we would have some food, and sometimes we would have wine in the evening. I mean we would...we would work... If I was there at the weekend, I mean, I was in class 24, which was on the ground floor, and what was very unusual for them is that I was around until about 8 or 9 at night, whereas most of the professors went off at 5 back to their wives. And also I used to work there at the weekends as I did in Munich and I would leave a window open, and they would all come in on Sunday. That was very unusual. And I think the other professors protested, but they put up with it because they knew I was only there for a year. You can put up with any pain if you know it's going to end at some point, if you know it's easy.

Was there any emotional dimension about being in Germany at the time, for you?

Oh yes, colossal for me, because I mean, you kind of totalised about German numbers, you know, and the war, I think one was very conscious that you have been brought up for years that this was the enemy, you know, and you are on...I used to think...but I used to find it

deeply moving, sort of going past [INAUDIBLE] and all that, because it seemed, it was iconography of German Expressionism in a sense, or even these, the world of Metropolis, there was a world at times, you would take a left... I used to feel this strongly in Berlin, there were such areas neglected, even gas-lit. You would take a left turn and you would be in an early German film, very strong.

There was also...

Even the smells made one think of the Blue Angel.

There was also, in spite of the devastating bombing that there had been in Hamburg, and it must have been evident still in 1960, evidence of German technological advances relative to Britain possibly.

Well I think by 1960, when I used to look out of the window in the academy, it was on the top floor, I mean even at 6, I mean already they had described the economic miracle. You would look out of the window and there would be long queues of cars going into the city, and these cars would be only two German cars I could see, Mercedes and Volkswagons, or maybe a [INAUDIBLE], occasional, was it Volkwart[ph]?

Taunhaus[ph] was Ford I think.

That's right, but it was made in Cologne.

Oh was it.

Yes. It was made in Cologne, in the big Ford works there.

It must have been very different from England.

What, Germany?

Yes.

Well I remember coming back, and there seemed to be a curious orthodoxy. If you look at the German illustrated magazines, you can buy them at flea markets bound, it's a very bizarre Germany after the war, because they were bizarrely trying to look like Americans, and they were trying to...and the advertising, it was...everything was pseudo-American in Germany at

that time, hence the success of Tannhauser. But they were just discovering about fridges, and they were just discovering about...and the women wore, the men looked like they had hats, fedoras and things like that.

And this was very different from England.

This was...and when...but also [INAUDIBLE] orthodox. I remembered, when I came back to this studio, the King's Road looked like a bizarre zoo; I mean everybody was terribly different and there were a lot of bare heads, and there was a lot...every car was different, every car was different. And everybody was trying to look different, whereas there was this sort of orthodoxy in Germany. But also there was this sort of strange remains in Hamburg, you would go to some cellar cafes which were just pre-war Germany, people just brought their culture, the culture, the flesh seemed to have been stronger than the architecture.

This studio, the one we're sitting in, I should have said this probably at the beginning, is in Dovehouse Street, which is in Chelsea.

That's right.

Had you moved here before you went to Hamburg then?

Yes, because my lease started in 1960, which was the same year as I went to Hamburg. I remember coming back here distinctly and meeting my wife here.

Why did you choose to live here?

It was because, when I was living in Hampstead, Dorothy Moreland[ph] drew my attention to, in the Sunday press, in `The Times' there was, some studios had been built and were available. And I went to Cluttons, I didn't have four-and-a-half thousand pounds, and the bank, the bank I went to said, well if you get a guarantor, who was Derek Jackson, if you get a guarantor we will advance it to you in the form of an overdraft. But if you had a guarantor, it was very easy to get money, and I mean I think fortunes have been made that way.

Yes, I think so too.

But it was no problem. As soon as they had got the assurances from the guarantor, who was a very rich man who lived in Paris, a very strange man, it was, I then came here, and as you can...it was entirely empty and brand new, which is difficult to believe.

Yes, well I want to get you to describe the studio on another occasion.

Certainly.

But presumably this area wasn't an expensive then as it is now.

When I came down to Dovehouse Street the entire street was bought, and the architect who designed some of it, I think it might even have been somebody like Louis de Soisson[ph], was bemoaning the fact, it was considered not that spectacular value at the time, because you could, as some of my friends said, for four-and-a-half thousand pounds you could buy a farmhouse and two acres then in 1960. But I prevailed and I was glad really, because I had always wanted to live within walking distance of cinemas, within walking distance of the V & A, although I don't go every day, but I like that idea. And of course, it is walking distance to the College, which seems to have become my mother somehow.

Yes, the Royal College of Art.

That's right.

And in any case, I can't imagine you living permanently in the country, I mean you are not a country person, are you?

No, I find I need a rich, a kind of rich diet, like going to the Almeida Theatre last night to see Moliere, like knowing that there's even some Poussin at Dulwich, I like all that, and that it's available. And of course I belong to the London Library, I never go to, or the Physic Garden, I never go to, but I like all these things being possible.

Mm. Can we just go back to Hamburg. Have you kept in touch with any of the students that you had there?

No, I've kept in touch with all the Munich boys, but practically all the Hamburg ones, they used to write, but we are talking about more than thirty years ago. And who knows, a few of them may have gone away, died, and so on.

Sure. You are not aware of any of them having done particularly well?

One of them may be at...no, not really. One of them might be an assistant professor in Hamburg, called Dietlev Berkfeldt[ph].

I haven't heard of him.

No.

In terms of your work, Hamburg was quite important I think, partly because of your experience of the ship breakers yards.

That's right.

And your work did change, as you have already said, between the time you went to Hamburg and when you came back, or earlier [INAUDIBLE].

Well, one of the things we did do, and part of the translation of experience, because it was the Sixties a lot of factories we went to were absolutely brand new, so we went to an aluminium foundry which was brand new and they gave me some castings which I later incorporated, which I brought back to England and had re-cast, and put them into sculptures. So there was that sort of overlap.

So how, I mean is it possible for you to characterise the way, the major ways in which your sculptures changed? You, I mean they didn't become abstract, did they?

Well, I mean in a strange way, there might be...while we are talking about, it's very interesting. Do you know a Scottish word called scunner? I often take a scunner to, that way, and that's kind of, not only did I sort of run out of ideas when I went to, kind of overworked, something goes wrong, overwork, some things, and of course it's intelligent to stop. Some people get stuck for life. But I remember taking some, with great...taking some old bronze sculptures to, and I don't regret this, to the engineers, and getting them to break them up and just scrap them, and I haven't any regrets about that at all. But I also ran out, even at the engineers I started to run out, there were certain things that, I just didn't want to get on, go on with that any more. But in a strange way, very strange way, I had never thought I would say it, but simply because one's mind alters, it's not the technology of doing things, it's the notions. I mean I could easily see myself doing a set of heads using that old process, but it would all be quite different, and have different intention and so on.

Well if we can call those figures of the Fifties that you did expressionistic, I suppose you then moved into a kind of constructivist phase.

Well, yes.

You [INAUDIBLE] an art historian.

Not at all, no. But what I'm slightly resisting is that, a lot of it is really intuition that rather some intellectual decision, it kind of creeps up on one.

These were sculptures, I'm talking about the new sculptures now, which were made from, as it were discreet bits, some of which you had collected, some of which you had cast.

Yes.

And they were welded together.

That's right.

To form, the best description I can think of off the top of my head is, totanistic figures or idols, as re-imagined for the machine.

That's right. But I mean I even used the word idols. I mean there was one title called `Hermaphroditic Idol', you can see that Doumon book, the Doumon book for example.

Right, this, we're just...yes, `Hamophriditic Idol' I can remember Diana as an engine which [INAUDIBLE].

That's right. I mean I think we are thinking of the same things. I think you have almost...there we are.

Yes, we are looking at the Wilfred Konnertz book.

That's right.

And it's on page 123, Diana as an engine, and I mean, here is another one, `City of the Circle and the Square', I mean they are not actually figures but they are, they are more like...

This, that would be from Hamburg, I would bring back.

Yes, this is a kind of wheel.

That's a German thing for cutting a cake up, precisely.

I see, this is...oh God! Yes, this is at the top. We're looking now at the `Bishop of Cuba'.

That's right.

And this is, as it were, the head or the face rather.

That's right.

This is a device for cutting a cake up [INAUDIBLE].

That's right.

How extraordinary. And the wheel at the bottom you say you collected in Hamburg.

That's right, it was in the yard.

And some other bits you had cast.

That's right.

It's painted in the photograph, it's painted yellow.

But it's been stripped down, and it lives in...

But was it painted at the time?

I painted it, and it was about, Cuban[ph] is a play on the Cuba crisis was about that time.

So it was, '62 wasn't it.

Yes.

Yes. `City of the Circle and the Square'.

Which belongs to the Tate. Well now this was a casting from a visit, there's the cake thing again.

This is called `Imperial War Museum' and it is on page 126.

And this is in bronze, aluminium, and that's from the foundry in Hamburg.

Now, these kind of sculptures, which as we can see date from 1962, yes in fact they are all, well 1962/19...

All made at [INAUDIBLE], all made in Ipswich.

In Ipswich, and you had a man there who was more accustomed...

Just a welder, just a welder. More accustomed to doing engineering work, and usually working from a drawing, whereas a great deal, all of these were improvised as one went along.

Yes, so in other words there were no sketches or drawings.

No, no.

You as it were arrived with the bits, and you said, look, here's one bit, here's another bit, can you see if you can put those together in that way, and he would.

That's right, and no models.

Len Smith I seem to remember his name was.

That's right.

And he must have been really rather bewildered by all this.

Bewildered and getting at that time £14 a week.

Good Lord!

But I mean these would cost just a few hundred pounds at the time.

So they were considerably cheaper than bronzes.

At the time, yes.

Now, I mean you made a big hit with these didn't you.

I guess so, mm. I think one's in the Lembachhaus[ph], ‘Easter’, these two, and the other one's in the Whitworth.

I can't remember when that book appeared, but it must have been about that time, called `Private View', which was somehow symptomatic of the whole...

With me pushing one of them along.

Yes. And the photograph's by Snowdon.

That's right.

Text by Brian Roberton and...

John Russell.

And John Russell. And it as it were signalled that the arts had arrived.

Swinging London slightly. Kitaj, Hamilton, Blake. It's quite a historic document.

All part of, I'm afraid I've lost my copy which is infuriating.

Probably costs two or three hundred pounds now.

Probably does. And, extraordinary photographs of people like Paul Huxley I seem to remember, who looked like...

Twelve.

Yes twelve, exactly. And Mark Vaux and Tess Jaray [INAUDIBLE].

Yes, yes, and Kitaj was his, his wife who committed suicide.

That's right, yes.

Elsa I think.

And we are really talking about the swinging London and the identification in the context of visual arts at any rate, with Pop art.

And moving into the Robert Frazer world, swinging London.

Well, I mean there is so much to talk about there.

Mm, yes.

Shall we talk about...how are you doing?

I'm fine.

I mean shall we talk about Pop art first of all, or shall we talk about Robert Frazer?

Well, we can interweave them, and do them...as you like.

Well, how aware were you, I mean when you came back from Hamburg, that so to speak you were going to become famous, or celebrated?

Well, I don't even think...we'll put that to one side, but we can move on to Pop art somehow. Go on.

Well yes, I mean, Pop art was a phrase which had been around for quite a long time, been coined meaning something really rather different by Lawrence Alloway, and it came out of the involvement with the Independent Group. But of course, for some time it hadn't impinged on public consciousness.

No, but you have to think also that in France people are always worried about Pollock because they feel that a lot of that innovative direction has come curiously enough.....

End of F4992 side B

F4993 side A

It is...oh yes that's better. I have to make sure that I'm on this as well as you.

We can do two things before, in the next hour; we can talk, which might be quite interesting for historical period, is Robert Frazer, and then we can move on to Pop art.

Very good.

Either way round.

Robert Frazer was a young dealer, wasn't he.

He was young, he was an OE.

Old Etonian.

Old Etonian, and was very dashing, and I think very attractive, and beautifully dressed, and was quite a high-flier. And he had a mother that was connected, Cynthia, in the arts, I think she had some connection with the Tate, and was also a very good friend of Gabrielle Keiller[ph], very good friend, and they used to lunch frequently, and they used to talk about Robert. And Robert of course had this wonderful interesting gallery in Duke Street, sort of Mayfairish, and was also a great friend of all the Pop artists, and he will go down, he is immortalised in Richard Hamilton's work, a famous print called `Swinging London and Paintings' of him handcuffed to Mick Jagger. And of course he also was convicted and wen tot jail for an exhibition I was involved with with Jim Dine, `Collaborations', and he was convicted because he had already had one conviction with, he had had one conviction, and when he was arrested with Mick Jagger there was a sort of bad hanging judge sent him to jail, because you could go to jail on a second conviction. And I think they were trying to, in an alarmist way trying to crack down on drugs and making examples. But the first, his first conviction was an exhibition I did with Jim Dine where I used to give a lot of, stacks of paper materials for Jim Dine to do collaborations with. But Jim Dine knew all about me before he came to England, and he actually did, which were photographs for `Art News', some collage called `Thorpe-le-Soken', with buses and things, string. Worth mentioning, but the `Collaborations' that was wrapped up by the police, they came in a van, wrapped them all up in brown paper, had very, what would be quite unusual, not that...things not worth worrying about, were sort of drawn, pencil drawn penises spurting, and that was enough, that was considered pornography.

They were by Jim Dine not by you.

Yes they were done by Jim Dine, but on top of material that I gave Jim.

Mm. When did Robert Frazer start his gallery then, do you remember?

I think originally he had a wonderful gallery, he started with very high ideals, and I remember discovering it on my own, I took Gabrielle Keiller[ph]. He had an exhibition of twelve Richard Lindners, and Gabrielle Keiller[ph] bought one and that was the only one sold. But he was always going to New York or Paris. I went with him once to Paris, we went in the morning and came back, well it used to be called the midnight champagne, Air France, you would leave at midnight. And when we came back at 1 there was already a group of people waiting for him outside his flat, and he showed wonderful films, and David Niven appeared one day with two actresses on each arm, and the kind of films he showed would be Jean Genet called `Notre Dame Des Fleurs', which is kind of, pretty tough stuff at that time, highly pornographic. And he had this lovely flat in Mount Street.

So it was about 1960 that all this...

1960, and his artists would have been Peter Blake who was a great favourite, and Peter Blake's wife called Jan Howarth[ph], who is a very good, would occasionally surface, was an extremely good artist, and used to beautifully make Hollywood figures, like cowboys.

Yes, and Mae West.

And Mae West. Quite beautiful.

Standing, life-size...

That's right, that's right.

Or sitting sometimes, made out of material.

That's right. Bridget Riley was one of his discoveries, and I think one of the Cohens, Jim Dine was a great favourite of his.

But there was something exemplary representative about him too, in the sense that he had been an Old Etonian, very wealthy, who nevertheless sort of inhabited two worlds simultaneously. I mean there was the wealthy world of British aristocracy and connections, and then there was pop music, the Mick Jaggers and the Beatles and so on.

That's right, and the drugs that went with it.

Yes, because I mean he was a drug addict.

And homosexual.

And a homosexual?

Yes. And that's where the Aids came in, I guess.

Oh he died of Aids, I had forgotten that.

Yes. But in that appalling way with boils and all that, looking really bad.

And, he then became your dealer for a bit, is that right?

He was my dealer, yes.

And so he was the person responsible for selling these sculptures that we've already been talking about?

That's right. And then he also arranged for me to have an exhibition with, he had a hook-up with the Pace Gallery.

In New York.

In New York, and my introduction to Pace was through him.

Was that your first one-man show in New York?

Yes I think so, yes.

And, it was a big success I seem to remember.

Well, the Pace could sell anything at that time, I mean, to be with the Pace at that time, I mean they had such clout with the American rich, and they were popular. But at that time, if he bought something at that time, it was guaranteed accrued, you could double up at that time, so, it was easy to sell. I mean there were waiting lists. But not only that, you could buy a Louise Nevelson and lend to a museum and then give it to the museum but on accrued value, maybe double what you had paid.

And get tax relief.

That's right. So, a very very good formula for an aspiring dealer.

Did you feel that you were part of Robert Frazer's world, or did you feel that you were somehow on the fringes?

Well I never took...I didn't do the drugs, and neither did Bridget Riley or Peter Blake, but I think that Peter Blake liked the Pop world and still does very much, and I think he has done paintings...I mean he is a great friend of Paul McCartney, and...

Who owns one of your sculptures.

That's right, still does, still does.

Bought from Robert Frazer I suppose.

Absolutely, called `Solo' and it was in the Pop art exhibition.

But you weren't...I mean presumably you were going to all these glamorous parties and so on were you?

A fair amount, a fair amount. But he had kind of weird parties in the gallery all the time with champagne, and then in his own house.

This was also the time I think when there was that very strange place called the Indica Gallery too wasn't there?

I think so, I'm not quite sure. There was a lot of old, sort veteran galleries in a way, the prince of somebody where Denis Bowen[ph] used to show, and the Portman Gallery I think.

Yes.

And sort of, resilient places, and I wouldn't be surprised if Philip what's-his-name, there was Lord's Gallery I think at that time.

Philip...I don't know.

Well, he was just, used to deal in posters, used to be open at weekends, Lord's Gallery. There was a handful of people.

Yes, but Robert Frazer was quite different from any of these.

Absolutely, absolutely.

One thing that strikes me too is the thought of you inhabiting this world, even if only on the kind of fringes, during the week, based here in your studio in Dovehouse Street, on the weekend back to a kind of English rural idyll, at Thorpe-le-Soken.

Yes.

I mean were you aware of almost a schizophrenic...?

No, not schizophrenic. But this was English...but this is...I mean it's not my style, but when you think of the average English, say the broker, I mean it is sort of, Covent Garden during the week and I think it's shooting and things at the weekend. I thought was an English pattern, the resting up, you know, from bowls to walking after lunch on the dike.

It is indeed very typically English, but you are not, I wouldn't have thought, in any...

No, but my wife was, and we had that kind of life at that time. I mean we only went to, we only went to that particular country because of Nigel Henderson inheriting all that, and it seemed to be the, having been under-capitalised we could never buy something in London.

And your wife didn't want to live in London?

Well, you just got a better standard, it was much easier, particularly on reflection, than trying to live in London, I mean with all that space and au pair girls, it was a kind of, by luck, an Arcadian existence.

And better for children.

Well not only that, but also you could have, if you didn't have much money it was better, you didn't depend on so many other things.

You had...had you got three daughters by 1960, or just two? I can never remember how old they are.

Well, I think, there's two or three years separation, and I think Louise, whose birthday is just looming up, she might have been born about 1950, so the next one might have been mid-Fifties, and the last one might have been born, I think Emma was born when I was showing in the Biennale in 1960, that was the other thing, she was born in July 1960, so, they were all around by then.

Did you consciously miss permanent family life, or were you rather glad to be on your own during the week?

Well one wasn't that...as you were saying, it was kind of busy, one would be doing work and seeing lots of people and there would be lunch, and lots of dinner parties.

But you used to work on the weekends as well down there, didn't you.

That's right. Well sort of, when I was...I mean we had sailing boats and all that. Sometimes, if, I would go down with a big suitcase with things to do, and never even open it sometimes if there was a lot going on, and it was fun, and if we had a lot of people coming down for barbeques, things like that.

Were you aware that for the first time in your life you were probably financially secure, if only in a temporary way?

Yes, yes. But also I suppose I had come out of my family, I had grown up in a very family way with grandparents, Italian style, and perhaps one was more aware that one, having been shattered through the war, that's Italy and Britain, and that one had kind of made roots again of a kind, with all these things.

Can we now talk about Pop art?

Mhm.

Because it was at this time that you were labelled everywhere.

Yes.

Not only as a Pop artist, but as really the father of the whole thing.

Yes, yes.

Although, at the same time presumably some people were describing Richard Hamilton in the same way. But you were both becoming really quite celebrated, and selling your work in fairly large numbers for the first time.

Mm.

What was your attitude to this whole Pop art phenomenon?

Well I liked the idea that I was able to talk about these things, say in the Fifties, about things that had interested me for a long time, and that seemed to be foreign to their childhood, having a shop, an ice-cream shop meant that one had, it was easier to collect cigarette cards that, a lot of men wanted the cigarettes, they didn't want the cards, so they used to give them to my father, so it was easy for me. It was also a kind of street cultures, when you think that some of the families were so poor they couldn't even afford a radio, but there was kind of little games that my generation used to do, tracings, and the tracing would be a piece of greaseproof paper from the mother, a scrap, and tracing football heroes, or tracing images, adventures from comics. Comics, penny comics, twopenny comics, they were all the folklore, was the street literature, and everybody discussed it at great length. So there was a lot of that tracing. And in a strange way, I mean that, one could say that a form of Pop art might have begun then, but it wasn't accredited officially. But I mean that's the world I actually came out in, particularly drawing battles and aeroplanes, I was surrounded by that, and there were always people who did it much better than me, much better.

You seem now to be rather irritated whenever anybody describes you, even as a former Pop artist.

Mm.

Were you irritated then?

Not...I mean one was much more casual, because at that time you thought you would live forever, and that's quite a...it's quite a good way of living if you think you will live forever, because you get a kind of detachment and ease about present-day events. I was never evangelistic about it, but I was always slightly disappointed that under what might have been my bunk there was things about science fiction. Science fiction and Pop art never seemed to come out, even, I think Lichtenstein did a bit of science fiction from comic books, but it's an area that Andy Warhol never touched on and a lot of other Pop artists, Wesselmann, it's sex and products. So I was a bit disappointed that the whole broad band of, say at the ICA, things that I was very interested in, were uninteresting to the others, including jazz; jazz seemed to be uninteresting. And it seemed to me that that was a kind of rich world that could have been painted and drawn upon, and I mean even now I do jazz posters, I'm very interested in...and then much much much much later on the idea of making an iconography based on musical sounds, like my Charles Ives.

`Calcium Night'.

That's right.

That series of prints.

But I mean, I remember doing, even in...'64, I did [INAUDIBLE], and some people might call that Pop art, but, I don't know, and yet, I gave a zeep[ph], which was my experiences in California, to the library at the Academy, which you may see today. I think, there's a sort of Pop art which is, say...I mean the Pop art section of American art now, I feel sort of highly detached from, as I would from the Minimal artists there, but the Oldenburg `Mutton Chops' I just have to walk by, it doesn't hold me the way that some other things do. I mean the early work of Stuart Davis at the Academy, which could be the seeds of Pop art, they are very beautiful, and I mean, I think, I like them a lot.

‘As is When’, the series of prints to which you have already referred, I would like to talk about, either in a minute or two or on another occasion, but, first of all, I would like to ask you about one or two, well particularly one other person who was around then, and who you

have known for years, really from the time you were at the Slade, and that was Richard Hamilton.

Yes.

What about Richard Hamilton, and what about his claims really, or claims that are made on his behalf, that really, he started Pop art off?

Well, I think that's...I mean I don't mind him making these kind of claims, because I don't want to go down, I don't want to go out in history as a Pop artist, I would much rather go down on perhaps an observer about something, I would have thought, had a much deeper European roots. He turned up when I was at the Slade, I mean, I was early at the Slade because I had been, I had come out of the Army, but there was a little tight group of us, and Raymond Mason had not only, some of them had been at the Ruskin School, including Peter de Francia, but he had turned up rather late and we never kind of liked him at all, he never seemed to be part of anything, and Mason went on to Paris and I followed him on a year later. I got interested in Pop art purely because I as fuelled by Surrealism, and they would have sections in their magazines about black art, and black art would be B movies, and pictures from pirated books about torture and all kinds of bizarre things like that. And there were a lot of Americans who were living in Paris. You could get a grant, you didn't have to have been a student, you could get a grant called GI Bill of Rights, where you could study, and the easiest thing for a good time was to sign on at an academie libre, and you would draw your American pay, live happily, and you didn't have to do any art. The academie libre got the fees, and they didn't mind, I mean really the idea of libre meant you didn't have to turn up, you could do what you liked. But I became great friends, and so did Freda, with some American families, and they all had their magazines sent on from, because for a long time in America, if you had a three-year prescription you had practically got the magazine through the mail at cost. These Americans used to, their parents sent on the magazines like `McCalls' and all these magazines, which I found fascinating, particularly `American Vogue', and I used to keep some of the pages, and then cut them out and make compositions, and that's what people might have called Pop art.

But it had as much to do with Dada and Surrealism.

Well, that sort of thing. And when you think of somebody like John Hartfield, a lot of his raw material was magazines. And I think that, when I was in the Rue Visconti, Richard Hamilton had come back from, he was still doing drawings and all that, I showed him a lot of

these things when I was in the Rue Visconti, he was on his way back from somewhere with his wife who had died in a car crash, Terri I think she was called.

Yes she was.

And then, I don't know why it's so important for him to have said that he invented it, you know, but, I mean I haven't invented anything really, and I don't particularly want...it's something else that I'm not even striving for, I'm just interested in.

It was these things that you were collaging then in the Forties were as I say, it seems to me anyway, they came out of Dada and Surrealism, but as you've already said, the subject matter, the material, was to a very large extent, although not exclusively, American. Now you mentioned `As is When' just now, which was your first, again I'm saying this, important, magnificent, series of screen prints.

Yes, '64.

1964, in full colour, and it's a series, nominally at any rate, to do with the life and writings of the Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein.

Mm.

Now, there seems to be quite an important shift there, because although they are all based on collages, and although as you say there are certain superficial connections between the style and Pop art, the subject is not only European, it's actually very esoterically European, or it was at any rate at that time. Can you account first of all for the subject matter, I mean the theme rather than the subject matter, of this series of screen prints, which I am trying to find actually in Konnertz' book as I am talking.

Now don't forget I had my...I had a winter in '53 in Hamburg, and I also had my year in 1960 in Germany where I was with, actually cutting out a lot of German material. Of course, you wouldn't be aware, if you were in Germany in 1960, about Dada, I mean there wasn't a book about it. That's why probably in 1993 a big Dada exhibition in Munich is attracting large crowds, because it's, as I said before, for the young it has an electric interest that one can be anarchic with art material, and also in a strange kind of way, you don't necessarily have to be a brilliant draughtsman to make some of these objects and things and puns and all that. The timing in a bizarre way is absolutely perfect for a big Dada exhibition which is going on to two serious museums. It's at the Hippoteque.

Well let me interrupt you and ask you another question which I should have asked you actually some time ago. This is 1964 when you make this series. You had already had your exhibition at the Pace Gallery by then.

Yes.

Which I assume from that, meant that you had been to America.

Yes I think so. I mean I think I, my first exhibition in America actually was Betty Parsons, which was a works-hyphen-bronze period, '58.

Ah. I should have remembered, I should have remembered that. And was that the first time you went to America then?

That's right.

Well how did America strike you? Because after all, it might be said...

It struck me, I mean, I can't remember being [INAUDIBLE], I think I just...it was a gentle America even by 1958, it was still an America that was pre-drugs and was still the kind of New York that I thought, that I had hoped for, and I mean there were still people having groceries delivered up the back door. Now all these back doors have been padlocked, and you know why. And also Peggy Parsons knew lots of people with sort of, say, these wonderful gentle Americans who wore tweed, James Thurber type Americans. And cartoonists and people like that. And then, I think even Charles Adams, heard of him?

Of course I've heard of him.

He was a great friend of Betty Parsons, a great friend.

Yes. So this...

And I mean these were people who adored Europe and took great pleasure in their European trips, and these were Americans who wore American clothes and adored the English.

Whereas you adored America.

In that kind of way, that's right.

Yes. And I mean you had lived in a way in...

But that was the American I expected, because I knew all about New York before I went, and also I had been fed, as a lot of Europeans are now, but in a different way, fed on the idea of American iconography through the movies. But I mean when you get to New York, I mean a lot of it even now is probably, when you go down to these dives and bars, I mean it's an America which belongs to, almost sometimes before the war.

So, what I am really trying to get at is, does the fact that you are now dealing, in 1964, with a European theme, have anything to with any possible change in your attitude to America in the meantime?

Well in a roundabout way. You see I think, if you looked at what the others were doing about that time, they were still into Jack Kennedy, which I came back to in 1971, I used Jack, and Marilyn Monroe, in a print called `Bash', but I mean, in a sense I was going back to my years in Hamburg, and I liked the idea of, I mean I used more about Wittgenstein's life than his philosophy in making them, like that one of him going to New York.

Which he never did, did he?

Yes he did go.

He did go to New York?

Oh yes.

Oh I had forgotten that.

I can read out, next time we meet I could read out the chapter of where he, George von Wright[ph] I think, one of his American students, and I think there's a text under that one saying going down...he went by ship of course, going down the gangplank.

I went to New York to meet Wittgenstein at the ship.

There you are.

Yes, when I first saw him...yes, so, the inspiration, initially at any rate, wasn't so much Wittgenstein's extremely difficult and enigmatic writings, to my way of thinking anyway...

Well I was thinking of me being at Oxford and being, finding it very much an alien culture, and having been in a...and it had all the classic things of, which I think is captured in a film called `The Remains of the Day'. That was the kind of Oxford I knew. And these very disturbed people unable to communicate or show any sign of love, it's all in this film. But I also felt that he felt odd in Cambridge in the same way that I felt odd in Oxford. I also felt he was a kind of foreigner who looked at the English as exotics, as I still do. But it was also it seemed to me important, I mean it's a kind of world, having been in Germany, that I would find very attractive in that sense. But I mean if you look at `Bunk' again you will see there were little threads that might have led up to that series, there are always these threads. There's that Nazi meeting with a big eagle, which is something that Wittgenstein would have looked at. There's also, there are some images that I share with Wittgenstein in `Bunk' like such as Freud getting in a plane to leave in a Junkers[ph], and Einstein coming out of a plane, arriving in New York. But these are little kind of Wittgenstein threads about that world, the ancient European world, which is a world, having gone to Italy a lot before the war, I just felt separated me from that whole Blake, Tilson generation.

Was this your first important essay in screen printing?

There were little sorties, because there was a bit of funding. I think Hamilton organised some kind of fund-raising for the ICA and he had got, there was a sale of things done, I think screen printed by Plater[ph] would have been a commercial printer, and I did a print which was very much images drawn from the book-kabinet[ph] in...

Hamburg.

Hamburg called `Conjectures to Identity', and I think they were ten shillings each.

That was black and white, was it, or...?

No no, it had sort of little films of colour on it. I don't know if it's in that...it should be in that book. A lot of the raw material is...a lot of the raw material is from German, German raw material.

For `As is When'?

It's before that.

Oh I'm sorry.

If you're talking about...

Yes, `Conjectures to Identity'.

That's right, but it was an early screen print, there was little bits, and I did a print which might have been before that called...yes, `Metalisation of the Dream', did you see that book there, I'll show it to you. If you dig that book out.

Oh yes, `The Metalisation of a Dream', with a text by Lawrence Alloway was it?

That's right, which, it was nearly not printed. But that's about, that's about the period, or just the prelude. There is the shipyards.

Yes, with you as a young man.

Now that's an image out of the Buch Kabinet[ph]. Here's a collage from German material. This was a screen print done by Prater[ph], and that's all German material, all of it, the [INAUDIBLE] knitting[??] book, and that's a schizoid thing from a German magazine.

Yes this is on page 53 of `The Metalisation of a Dream'. It's a very nice book this you know, I haven't seen it. Oh, Lion and Unicorn Press, which was Royal College of Art.

It was £7 for three books. One was silver marks, hallmarks by my neighbour Mr Grimwade, and the other one was Constable drawings, it was sometimes you got the three.

Good Lord. I mean this is...

That's German material.

Yes, this is page 11, collage...

Cables.

On page 11.

End of F4993 side A

F4993 side B

.....looking at `The Metalisation...'

Yes, a very good example of pressing of objects.

Yes, there are some reproductions of...

And this is [INAUDIBLE], this is the early days going through the engineers.

That's on page, on page 12.

As a matter of fact these were cut out when I was in Hamburg, I cut them out.

The bottom section of that.

That's right.

And there are some early reliefs.

That is when I was in Paris, I mean that's a prelude to doing that.

Yes, that's an early plaster relief.

That's right.

Very Surrealistic in...

That's right.

In origin. One thing we haven't talked about of course, and I don't suppose it's really necessary, is your contribution to...

An aluminium, an aluminium version, and these are sort of like engineer drawings. Because these, I had to do them to make patterns for them.

That's on page 18. So in other words, I mean some of these sculptures that we have talked about already were partly made up from elements which were specially made for you from drawings.

That's right, and this was a clock kind of case from home. I bring these things - that's a German motor bike - I bring these things from Germany, which was very easy at that time, you just have a bag, you wouldn't even be searched, they wouldn't even look in them.

Page 19 this is. Were these engineering drawings done by you or...?

No they were done by the firm.

Ah.

No that's a drawing by me, but that's a collage.

That's page 21. Yes a collage from a series of drawings.

That's right.

Yes. This is an extremely...I haven't seen this for such a long time. It's an extremely...

And this was a painting done by Kitaj and I, `Collaboration'.

Page 26.

Guggenheim, Buch Kabinet[ph]. And of course I did a book with Chris Plater[ph] and that's a page from the book.

Chris Prater[ph], who ran the Kelpra[ph] Studios.

That's right.

Because as you say, first of all a commercial screen printer.

That's right.

Were you the first artist to get [INAUDIBLE]?

I think there were one or two, might have been somebody like Gordonhaus[ph], one or two. I think it was a shilling each to do. That's dubious and all that, these are both in what they call gun-metal, but it's bronze.

Page 37. And there's another fascinating collage on page 39.

Some of it German material, Buch Kabinet[ph], the book on castles, `Time' magazine. But that's, you see, once again, I don't call that Pop art, this is an amalgam, layers of culture, and here oddly enough is a survivor, one cigarette card out of maybe a thousand that I collected.

Of the [INAUDIBLE].

Yes.

And some of these images of course constantly recurred in your work, and I'm thinking of Michelangelo's David, and this man here...

That's right, with the mechanical arm.

With a mechanical arm, exactly.

Absolutely. I mean that's, once again Buch Kabinet[ph], that's a German motor bike with that wonderful name.

Page 41, yes.

And that's what I was saying, `A History of Nothing', that's a collage I did, made into a book.

You actually haven't said anything about this film, other than you based it on imagery which you collected in Hamburg. Was this made at the Royal College of Art this film?

The film, eventually yes. And I wasn't even there at the time, just in the Film School.

And it was animated?

No not really. Not properly, just a series of stills. But synchronised with a bizarre sound-track.

And, where was it shown?

It has been shown around. I mean sometimes it has kind of been shown when I've had an exhibition.

Because, I mean you have done a number of films haven't you, in your time.

Yes. This was with Nigel Henderson, that's `Distorting'.

Yes, that's on page 50. Yes, an extremely nice book this.

That's Dovehouse Street, and these Tim Roberts I gave to Jo Tilson once.

Page 56.

I regret that.

Yes.

And that's Hamburg. And this is a reoccurring image all the time.

That's `Inkwells' I think isn't it?

That's right.

Page 58.

That's right, but this is...this goes on, and there is a sculpture I did at the Royal Academy which is called `Road to the Isles'.

That's page 61, which is a print. I mean that's in the middle.

Woolworths. That's Woolworths, a kit to make something.

These are the two bits on either side of a central, round a Max Ernst thing.

That's right, absolutely.

Now this actually brings us back to `As Is When', because a lot of the raw materials of `As Is When', let's just get this in order, you would make a collage...

Yes.

From a variety of quite disparate sources.

Yes.

And we will hear about some of those in a minute. And you would then take the collage to Prater[ph] and he would turn it into a silk screen. Presumably with the aid of some kind of photographic process? Because classic...

Mainly photographic.

They would cut stencils, wouldn't they?

That's right.

But he had moved on from cutting stencils, so some were cut stencils, some was photographic stencils, I suppose.

That's right.

And the colours would be determined by you during the printing process?

Well that's the great thing about this silk screening, you could put any colours through you like, you know, it could be white or yellow and...

So he would kind of experiment for you, would he?

A bit, yes.

`What do you think of that, Eduardo?' and you would say...

That's right, and he did it with the others, yes.

Yes. `Or would you like to try red here?' or something.

That's right.

I'll put that back properly in a minute. Now... [OUTSIDE NOISE]

That's the garage downstairs.

Oh I see, I thought it was me. We're looking at `Wittgenstein The Soldier' on the left here, and I seem to remember you telling me once that the background was wrapping paper.

Mhm, that's right.

So you've got wrapping paper...

That's wrapping paper there, that striped paper, it's very common, cheap rubbishy paper.

And the figures, these marching Austro-Hungarian or German soldiers...

That's right.

They are filled out with what look like...

Another print reduced.

Other prints by you reduced and cut up and...

That's right, which is in the Wittgenstein, it's an earlier one. I don't think...I don't know if they are all there.

No they are not all here unfortunately. And then you've got a moth.

That's right.

And a sort...I don't know how to describe...

Like a sun.

Yes, it looks a bit like a diagram.

That's right.

And then, the next one, `Wittgenstein in New York', which...

That's a Buffrin ad, for headaches.

The figure on the left.

That's American advertising both of them.

Yes.

A bit savage.

And you've got one of your favourite subjects, an aeroplane in that.

That's right, an earlier aeroplane, and the Stars and Stripes.

Yes. Where did that come from, do you remember?

Yes, it was from my first trip to America, where I brought back some toys for the children and that was making patterns up from beads.

This, I mean again if I can come the art historian...

Certainly.

This was the first important silk screen portfolio of prints made by anybody.

Yes, OK.

And it really was responsible, I think, and I would be interested to hear what you say about this, for the print boom, which was another or graphics boom, which was another characteristic of the 1960s.

Mm.

Would you agree with that?

Oh yes, sure. I think it, absolutely. And I mean it just launched Chris Plater[ph].

And it was about this time I suppose too that the Petersburg Press[ph] started.

About that time, yes.

Who published this portfolio, do you remember?

Editions Elekta[ph].

Editions Elekta[ph]. Which was founded, I think, to exploit this new boom in prints.

Probably, yes, yes.

And you did other things for Editions Elekta[ph].

You see that, that cut up is that.

Oh yes, that's...this is on page 163.

That's right, and there's the two ads.

Yes, absolutely.

This book is now out of print.

Oh it's a very good book actually.

It's good for me. Thames & Hudson turned it down.

Which I can't understand frankly.

Well...

But it's out of print because they must have sold the edition, which is very good.

Well it's a small, I think it's probably written in the front. Didn't you get one?

I got one, oh absolutely.

I think it's about 2,000.

I don't know whether it does say, no it doesn't say in the front.

It was a small edition, but I think, [INAUDIBLE] they can't get any more.

Yes. I'm surprised about that in a way, that they haven't re-printed it. Because I thought it did quite well initially.

They might, they might.

I think Konnertz is still going...

I'm sure, I'm sure.

As the chief art editor of Dumont.

That's right.

Yes, I mean you did several things for Editions Elekto[ph], you did `General Dynamic Fun', `Moonstrips'[ph], `Empire News' and [INAUDIBLE].

That's right, that's right.

Was it about now, that's to say in the middle Fifties, that you began to think of yourself consciously as a print-maker as well as a sculptor, or was there never any...?

No there was never any...there was never any thing about that.

Oh I see, yes, all that's happened is that it's...

Come off the clip.

Come off the clip. I'll just...that's terrifying that garage when it's opening and shutting.

[INAUDIBLE] as I am now, I'm not that self-conscious about anything like that.

Did you consciously see intimate connections between your prints and the sculpture that you were doing at the time?

Well I tried to make connections. I mean one of the Wittgenstein prints is called `Pirate' and at that time it was not only, there were sort of two triangular things, I tried to make a connection between the curlicues of the legs and the curves of the...the curves, and also it's kind of like doing a diagram which is, I was always interested in painting the sculptures at that time, not any more. And I thought of the print making a connection between...also the sculpture called, which I painted about ten times, until I finally ended up by it going in silver, called `Hamlet in a...

Japanese Manner'.

That's right. And I always thought of that as being like a print, and as you walk round it you got these overlapping colours. But it never worked out that way.

I thought you had destroyed that sculpture actually, I thought...

That's the one I destroyed, which I cut up and put into a skip.

Ah, that's `Caracas'[ph].

That's right.

Page 135 of the Konnertz book. But `Hamlet in a Japanese Manner' still exists I'm delighted to hear...

It's in Glasgow, it's in Glasgow. Kelvin...

Kelvin Grove.

That's right.

And it's...did you say it's in silver then?

Well it's gone back to original metal.

Yes. Now there's a kind of change...

That's ‘Parrot’, and there's...he's done it all you see.

Yes, yes.

He's done it.

A direct comparison between a sculpture called `Parrot' and a print.

That's as near as I got.

Yes. Now, there is something already quite different about `Parrot'. The sculpture, I mean the principles remain the same, but they are becoming different, they are becoming, they are much more Constructivist it seems to me.

Yes, sure.

They are becoming, although...I mean they are not abstract but they are becoming more abstract, the figurative readings are no longer as clear. Can you remember what kind of considerations made you make sculptures, not so much like `Parrot' maybe, why don't we talk about `Artificial Sun' or `Giro' or `Poem...' Indeed, I mean here is the Constructivist reference, because...

That's right, sure.

`Poem for MRT' I believe...

Malevich, Rodchenko, Taplin[ph].

Right. These are on page 140 and 141 of the Konnertz by the way. Can you...I'm sorry to ask such a bland question, but I mean can you simply say something about these sculptures, the kind of considerations that you had when you were making them?

Well I thought at that time, I mean it was great to have thought at that time, to just go and work at engineers, you know, the whole atmosphere, maybe having had a week at the College and a totally different culture. But also it seemed to me that it was kind of in line with the precepts of the Futurists, that they thought that the engineering floor was a real platform for discussion and debate about the arts in the future. So I felt in sympathy with that a lot. But it seemed to me at the time to make a lot of, a tremendous amount of sense if you were doing something, to make things in that particular way with professionals. And it seemed to me so clean and not so arbitrary, because they were able to calculate making things and how much it costs with accuracy, whereas in the art world it was all kind of vague, and it was also quite...it was quite, I thought very fruitful at the time, quite economic. And there was a tremendous correspondence between me and the welder.

Not for the last time, a tremendous correspondence between you and a technician, and in a way, I mean you needed, in order to make the prints, the technician, the printer, to produce them.

Mm, that's right.

Just as you needed Len Smith at Duby's[ph] to weld these things together, in the way that you determined.

That's right.

This is fundamentally different from a lot of people's attitudes to art, and what they expect artists to do or to be able to do; they would possibly say, even now in 1983[??], but look, you are not actually physically making these things yourself.

Neither did Rachel Whitbread[sic - WHITEREAD]], when she made her concrete house. But I mean, if you think of the...nobody should really ask that question any more, after Marcel Duchamp really, but do people use that dialogue when they look at Duchamp's bicycle wheel? He didn't make the bicycle wheel, nor did he make the stool, and yet you can not open a book on 20th century art without seeing this key image.

So in what does an artist's skills consist then?

I think probably his intellect, and his imagination, I would have thought. But you could also say, I mean I thought maybe one has become accustomed to the fact that a playwright like David Hare, he doesn't have to appear on the stage to get over a powerful message, he uses

the energy and the talent of others. But I can't see...it's the same with music I would have thought, that you need...you write a quartet but you don't have to appear playing it, I would have thought.

And I mean of course...

But I think there is wide acceptance now I think that even people like Gilbert and George I think they probably have a team of photographers and photo-process labs to do their Gilbert and Georges.

I'm not sure that in their case the results are always worth it though.

No? But they've been shown at great length in Moscow, they've been shown at great...there we have the different variations.

Of `Hamlet in a Japanese Manner'. Yes, I mean I remember...

But you can see, I have tried very hard to try and even the same, almost tie that in with print-making so that when you walk round them you get these, in theory with, you had to think that it might be bit coloured shapes that overlap, you know, and you probably, by having a video camera or film camera on a trolley, as you move round you probably saw the point, but it would be difficult physically to do it for yourself.

Yes I remember that being painted on one occasion.

And also in a strange way, that was also the whole feeling about sculpture then, there was a lot of painted sculpture at that time.

This was the time I suppose when people like Caro and Philip King and...

And all that.

That whole sort of St. Martin's...

And there was also the McAlpine donation to the Tate, he bought a lot, there was a whole generation at that time, Isaac Witkin and people like that.

And in that sense, `Hamlet in a Japanese Manner' fits in with that kind of aesthetic, because it sits on the floor and it's rangey, I mean it goes...

And it's flexible, because these are three separate units. I think the model...no no, there's a model for one of these in Cambridge, in the Fitzwilliam.

Is there? I didn't know that.

I think so. And they are going to show it, there's an exhibition of drawings and models coming up done by, do you know Jane Monro?

Monro, I do, but I mean, not drawings and models exclusively by you?

No no no, by other people.

Ah, that's [INAUDIBLE].

It's coming up.

That's quite a good topic...

That's where you will see, yes.

For an exhibition.

Yes.

But I mean, you say that there are affinities with the kind of sculpture that was being produced in England then.

Yes I do.

But, I mean you weren't consciously trying to slot into a trend, were you?

No not at all, no, it just happened to go that way, maybe like my so-called Pop art period.

Because in almost every important way they're not like Caro's or Witkin's or Philip King's or...

No.

Anything at all. Then we come, I mean I'm just turning over the pages in this Konnertz book, to page 283, 282 rather, and there are examples of sculptures which you did in '65, '66 and '67, not, I've always thought, one of your happiest periods.

No, no. Just looking, I agree with you, I think I was beginning to run out of steam. Yes I agree.

But the principle, the manufacturing principle remains the same.

Mm, well that was...the manufacturing principle I think was beginning to take over. I would probably go down then, there was an immense amount of castings that I may have over-ordered and not had the courage to say, we will scrap them, just because of this [INAUDIBLE], and they would say, `What shall we do now?' you know, and you had all these possibilities. So that's, you are quite right, I agree with you.

Well, we have mentioned the Royal College of Art continually actually this morning as we've been talking. You weren't teaching sculpture there.

No. No I used to be a guest often at the School, and I used to go around and talk to them, I would be invited.

You were employed...

Always in Glass and Ceramics.

Well, what were you actually doing in Glass and Ceramics? Because I think there is a link between the sculptures that we are looking at and the things that you were doing there.

Well, I think, as there is now, there are three kinds of students oddly enough, in Glass and Ceramics, and there is one kind of student who will come and go there without making a pot, in the same way there will be, there's an excellent bronze foundry which I used in the Sculpture School, there will be a student who will go through there without dreaming of making a bronze casting. And indeed a lot of what they call the younger school of British sculptors, Deacon[ph], Long[ph] etcetera, feel that they don't have to do anything in bronze. The reason I was asked by Queensberry to go to the Glass and Ceramics was to take care of

any of the ceramic artists who were just, as they do now, working, just make 3-dimensional objects, that reason. But also he has always thought, which is true, that the input from a sculptor to a potter could be useful, and vice versa. So that's what I did there. But it's...the great thing about the place, more and more, is that it's such a sort of basic biblical way of doing things; it's just clay which is shaped and baked in an oven, sometimes decorated, it doesn't have to be. And to a sculptor that's quite good, I mean I've gone back to clay or plaster being a very very basic material, and something that's so basic in a way offers such a tremendous platform for the imagination really, it gives you a lot of room. Just think of, what is the basic material of `Spitting Image'? It must be, it's just plaster and clay, isn't that right?

Yes, or, I don't know, rubber.

Rubber, no rubber comes later.

I see, [INAUDIBLE].

It has to be modelled, the basic, the raw material is clay. And yet, we know what a wide are that is.

Mm. So, how did you benefit then from being in Ceramics?

Well I was able to do quite a lot of the work I put in the Tate exhibition at the College. I mean I made the moulds there, and also I poured, and sometimes we used latex and things there, so I was able to benefit a lot.

But, yes you were also able to make abstract elementful forms.

`Thames Boat' was modelled in this Glass and Ceramics, things like that.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

Another kind of sculpture which seems much more obviously related to ceramics, and making abstract elements in plaster, are some of these things which are reproduced on page 154 and 155, which are in metal and they are chrome.

Yes. Well I am hoping you are going to say, Frank, that another of your dud periods, I feel quite strongly, that was...I feel quite strongly that I would really... I had all these resources to draw upon, but I didn't have enough...I don't think I had enough ideas to back it up somehow.

I think I was also very contented at that period, and that's very dangerous for an artist I think, to be incredibly happy.

You mean emotionally?

Yes, yes. I mean in a sense, as if I didn't need it, and it also looks like a hobby. There is something incredibly missing in them somehow. But it seemed like there's a part of an idea of, idea being about having moved on from the struggling with colour, I thought that if you had a chromed object that the colour would be defined by the environment that it was placed in.

Yes.

But I quite liked the idea too of making a sort of, a mechanical approach, that they were...one of the sculptures there, that you had to have a special kind of machine to make it, that it couldn't be made in a back yard, you had to have...it was all pressed out, and it had also was finished off in another mechanical process. They were almost like with toys of a robot somehow, but a robot with not a very good brain.

There is something nevertheless quite appealing about the idea of changing or seeming to change forms radically, by altering the cross-section of the same 3-dimensional form.

Something like that.

And also there is something rather attractive about the idea of having small sculptures, because...

Oh yes that...

Because I know you've done small sculptures.

That's right.

But these, these are actually small enough to sit on a table in an ordinary-sized living room.

Yes, well you could say it too about that one.

Yes, actually that's true, that head down at the bottom there.

That's right. But I mean I think I must have been powered...I mean I showed sculptures like that at the Pace, I must have been powered by a notion of the euphoria of making a sculpture entirely by using a machine.

Mm. They are among the most abstract things that you have ever done, aren't they.

Mm.

And now, actually we come, 1969, to a very large sculpture, which is related to the ones we've just been talking about.

That's right.

Which you did in Japan.

That's right. With a tunnel for a child to walk through.

And this was, it was made in Osaka and the idea I think, I seem to remember, was that the Japanese steel federation...

That's right, you're right.

Invited you together with a number of other sculptures to go there, and have a nice time, as long of course as you ended up with a sculpture which could be left.

That's right. Not only left, but also, which was very clever for them, which is they sold to the Hokoni[ph] open-air sculpture park.

Oh I see, and of course...

That's where it lives now.

They provided the material, and so it didn't...the material actually didn't cost them very much if anything at all.

That's right, and we stayed in a...this is actually, the Manichi[ph] Press empire got involved, and the hotel that we, us sculptures, lived in, belonged to the Manichi[ph] Press world.

And probably the pencils that you were given to draw with were produced by the Manichi[??] pencil producing company?

Well not only that, I think that, all the food that was eaten was supplied by the...

Manichi[ph] rice farms.

That's right.

Yes. Well, what I wanted to say was, I mean I remember now, because I had got to know you by now, and I remember you going and getting marvellous postcards from you, from Japan, very enigmatic postcards they were, written in block capitals, `from Eduardo-sun', and you obviously had a marvellous time.

Well, I mean because I had been doing judo, and judo made me get interested in seeing Sumo for the first time, which was wonderful. And also going up to Kabuki, the real Kabuki theatre in Tokyo, and also going on the famous bullet train, the connecting link at that time, which still is, I think they've extended the bullet train, with Osaka to Tokyo, which is an enchanting journey, and with a bizarre restaurant-bar on it.

And Japanese-style lavatories in one compartment, one carriage, and Western ones in the next carriage.

That's right, that's right.

This was the first really exotic country I suppose that you had ever been to.

I think it was, I think it was, and I mean...I thought it was...it was just the right timing for me, it was exactly the kind of experience I wanted. And also one wasn't there as a tourist, you were supplied with an interpreter, and an assistant, and often the assistant couldn't speak any English at all so you always had two at your elbow.

Yes. And of course Japan was a source of a lot of the toys that you liked, wasn't it.

Well I did buy heavily, which, and it all, I am happy to say, most of them have all gone on to the V & A.

These are battery-driven toys are they particularly?

Everything, including metal ones and... At that time they were considered just toys, but now they are considered in Sotheby's, Christie's particularly, as collectables.

When I went to Japan first of all I was terrified, because I couldn't read anything. And I felt so foreign, I mean I might as well have been on Mars as long as Mars is inhabited. I mean did it strike you the same way?

Well don't forget one was protected; I mean if one went there, you were given the tickets to go there and you were met at the airport. And you also had a job of work to do. So you look at things different when you are not a voyeur, you are a participant. And I mean you could arrive in jeans and get to work right away.

Was there something that struck you about Japanese visual culture, which has always struck me. There's a very curious symbiosis if that's the word, between extremely refined visual culture and extremely vulgar visual culture; the two things co-exist in a very interesting and productive way.

You don't think that exists here?

Maybe it was just that it was so exotic, that it struck me with more force than it has anywhere else.

Mm, mm.

I mean the way in which you can get these fantastically vulgar, pornographic comic books, which nevertheless can be drawn with a tremendously exquisite sense of composition and placing and line and so on.

The thing is the way they treat the past, like you can still go, there are still places you can go to which are like old inns, and the Japanese can go to relax and have hot baths. And then you have these ancient meals if you stay at these inns. I don't think foreigners do it that much, but I've tried all that.

Yes, rioaka they're called I think.

Yes, and...I don't like it very much myself, it's not my taste, and you don't know where to...there's no tables where you can work or...

Yes.

And where do you put...when you are in a [...], where do you put your suitcases and all that? It's extremely over-rated and uncomfortable, for me.

Yes, and I mean you even pull your own bed out, don't you.

Well no, they do that, they do all that for you when you go down for.....

End of F4993 side B

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Now is this...?

Does that mean you have been listening to it all, all of it, or just...

No, I must...

That must take a long time.

I must confess it wasn't all of it, some did, some [INAUDIBLE].

You must have five hours by now.

Oh I see. I've listened to all of it in the meantime, yes, oh sure. No we've got six hours Eduardo.

Good.

Also you see I've noticed, and this has got nothing to do with you, in fact on the contrary, this is one very good thing. In the past I have interviewed one or two German artists, like Christian Shad[ph], who have been interviewed endlessly before, and mostly people have asked them the same questions because they're inevitable.

But are these people who have listened, or haven't listened to previous interviews?

I think they must have done.

Or may not have.

And the result consequently is very mechanical. And I hadn't thought about it any more since...

By the way, talking of that, there's a man that swims, knows you, mentioned you to my great surprise, and he is a retired, is he a German engineer? Ernest somebody Elscourt[ph]?

I know, I can't remember his name, I don't know him very well.

Ernest Galner[ph], retired, 77 I think.

Gelner[ph]?

I think so, isn't it? Ernest...he garbled it, but I think it's Ernest, but he mentioned you.

Good Lord!

And I think, did you interview him, or were you on a fund or a committee together?

No, I think he lived part of the time in Birmingham, if it's the same one I'm thinking of, and he runs the Friends of Birmingham Museum or something.

Could be.

As a hobby, and he asked me to give a lecture.

I think that's the man.

And we had...

Did you lecture on...

Japanese prints and their influence on Europe.

Yes, I think it's the same man.

About two years ago. He is the brother of, did you ever hear of a sociologist at LSE called Ilda Himmelwhite[ph]?

Yes, yes.

Her brother.

Really?

Yes.

If it's the same man.

I think it's...he is the apotheosis of the distinguished refugee in a way, white-haired but...

That's right, yes.

Very good for his age. Swims. Swims with a swimming cap and goggles.

It sounds very much like...

And nose grips.

Yes, and rather thin and...

That's right.

Yes. And wonderful for a sort 77 I think he is.

That's right, yes. Well me mentioned you.

Well, I mean if you see him again, do give him my regards won't you.

Certainly.

Yes, I mean I know, we actually came up to the end of the 1960s you know last time, and I should by the way mention that today is Sunday the 19th of December, and we are interviewing Sir Eduardo Paolozzi again in his studio.

OK. Well have we started?

Yes.

Oh really?

We have actually. All this business about the German is on the tape.

That's all right.

You can imagine the...

It means you've got the right sound level I hope.

The person who is doing the transcription might get a bit surprised about that. I wonder sort of how you remember the Fifties generally, living in London, what was it like?

Well it's also 1993, which means if we're going to talk about '53, we're going back 40 years. Think. I think one has to mention that there wasn't this enormous amount of material written about the arts. People might grumble about that, but I mean there's such a higher proportion about the arts and the way its' covered now than it might have been in the Fifties. I think things are much more international. What might trigger one's memory of course would be looking through newspapers, but I think when you say Fifties, we might begin with the so-called Festival of Britain, we might even think about how important the ICA was at that time, the Fifties, and then there was this, a curious kind of austerity at that time, not only among the artists, I mean we were all grey, we would all, although we think we had escaped from it, all of England was still trying to get over in the early Fifties from the war, there was still a fair amount of astringency, there was still a fair amount of rationing and things like that, even poverty among the intellectuals, at least my group. And I think things that were cut out of magazines, like say the Smithsons, who, I think had left Doughty Street, did a project, could have been Hunstanton, which enabled them to buy a house in [INAUDIBLE] Street, and they decorated their kitchen with cut-outs from American magazines. By then you could buy these magazines down the Charing Cross Road for half a crown. How they got them, they may have just come in bulk, in big boxes, but they were all on the pavement at that time. So I assume the Smithsons got theirs from Charing Cross Road and they cut out all the food ads, which they plastered - and they looked exotic of course, plastered them on their kitchen walls. And I think there was even an essay written about that time, I don't know if it was Lawrence Alloway, or Peter Banham.

Or it might even have been the Smithsons.

That's right.

[INAUDIBLE] it was called.

That's right, that's right. And I think, that was the sort of mood, but all that material looked incredibly exotic to us, simply because of the astringency in the grey world that we look at now. Of course today all the shops are open on Sunday, and walking round Safeways or

something is actually the result of that kind of prophesy. England was more England then, I think that England, like the rest of Europe, has become much more Americanised. And I certainly didn't have a fridge at that time, and even what we take for granted now, like cameras, at that time were luxuries, and now for the young student... Nobody could drive as far as I remember, but in fact every student can drive. Most students at the Royal College of Art bring their cars up at the weekend, which are not necessarily their cars, but they have borrowed them from their mothers, but I mean there's been a big...socially, England has sort of moved up. And there was no Hayward in the Fifties, there were none of these great exhibitions. Even the exhibitions at the Academy were quite modest at the time, so that's one of the things which people forget was that things were very thin on the ground. And I don't think there was any big dealers at that time, I think there was respectable dealers, like Freddie Mayor had a name for dealing with the avant-garde, which really meant things that he had borrowed and brought over from Paris, van de Velde, and even an occasional Giacometti drawing. But his bread and butter at that time was Matthew Smith, which a lot of young painters had never heard of. But he was a known painter at the time, and the only decent shop that sold good art books was Zwemmer, Zwemmer being the pioneer. And of course the early Fifties, the London Gallery must have, might have been on its last legs, or might have had another decade to go, maybe closing down.

But there weren't even very many art books. You mention Zwemmers, there wasn't all that much, particularly not made in England, were there? I mean, there were a few SKIRA art books done in Switzerland.

That was from Zwemmers. Zwemmers might have been the sole agents at the time, but I don't know about Thames. Where was Thames & Hudson at that time?

That's a very good question. Just about, I would think starting in a half-hearted way, I imagine.

And starting in a half-hearted way I think that Fisher dealt in art books. I think that even now in the phone book, Marlborough Rare Books, I think they started from books and moved...like Anton D'Offay did, started with fine art books.

I didn't know that.

Oh yes.

Were you a particularly political animal? I don't mean joining this party or that party, but I mean thinking about politics.

Well I was the only one among the group that seemed to have had a political background. I mean as being the son of Italians I was inscribed and went to these fascist youth camps before the war, and this seemed to have been an experience that the others...the others seemed to be, when I say, in the generation, when I say that my particular group at the ICA, seemed to be curiously unpolitical, it never seemed to be something that was discussed. But certainly while I was still at the Slade I used to go around with Nigel Henderson, whose mother was involved with a left-wing publisher called Lawrence & Wishert[ph], and we used to go to, even while I was still at the Slade, we used to go to meetings above pubs and meet people, like, there was a sort of working-class George somebody who painted banners and that, but we used to go to meetings. And I think there was a man called Klinginder[ph], who was a sort of Marxist writer on art history who went, and I think there was sometimes - these rooms were always above pubs - included somebody like Jack Lindsay[ph] who wrote `The Life of Turner'. But I seemed to be the only one; the rest were curiously unpolitical.

So you thought of yourself as left-wing?

Yes, more or less. I certainly didn't think of myself as a fascist, but I had been indoctrinated. Even when I was in Oxford I used, I went to some, which was very low-key, communist meetings out of, partly out of boredom in a way, or through the accident of meeting somebody interesting.

In theory, communism was poison for the fascists though wasn't it?

That's right. No but it wasn't quite...but during the war, during the war we were, I mean the Soviets were our glorious allies, so there was plenty to think about. But in a way, there was an enormous difference between the Italian fascists and the German Nazis, I mean communism was ever hardly mentioned when I was a child, or Jews if it comes to that.

England must have been a pretty miserable and dull place. You among your friends at the ICA and elsewhere must have been one of the few people who had actually had any real experience of abroad. Few English people at that time, other than maybe a handful of intellectuals and rich people had been to Paris, certainly not for a year; very few had as much experience of Italy as you had. In other words you were aware of the alternatives. Were you ever tempted to leave England and go somewhere else where life might have been a bit easier?

Well I thought by about '58, I thought the alternative might have been America, particularly if you had Italian parents and you didn't feel that particularly English, the alternative might have been America. But I seemed to, by the time I got to America, I was married with children, but I still could have pulled them out. Then I had a second chance, a sort of [INAUDIBLE] California was as interesting as the English man's imagination is, that I might have just pulled up roots, family and all, and gone to live in California. So when I was so-called visiting professor at Berkeley about 1968 I had that chance to have a real good look, but I found that, my vision was coloured by a kind of America which was more like Updike rather than, who was the man who wrote `The Best Years of Our Life'? Billy...not...it was less than Billy Wilder America, it was more a kind of...it was more brutally realistic. But I had this, perhaps resolution in '47 when I went to live in Paris to leave England behind for good, but I've always had a kind of bizarre love-hate relationship with England. I didn't mind, and I love London. There was always something in London which I found that America never seemed to have, the kind of compensations. But, New York I still find an attractive place for an artist to go and live in.

hen were you visiting professor at Berkeley?

'68, which was the tail end of their revolution, and it was that kind of revolution that rippled across Europe and came to England perhaps two or three years later, and certainly it descended on the academy in Munich in '72, causing tremendous riots, causing them to smash the best plaster cast in Europe, which is sad because the very plaster figures that must have inspired Georgio de Chirico who was a student there, that kind of primary evidence has gone for good.

We are leaping forward, or at any rate we are leaping...

Well, back and forward.

Back and forward. We had already talked about the Sixties in our last meeting.

Yes.

And one thing we didn't mention actually was your visiting professorship at Berkeley, partly because I had forgotten all about it. How did it come about?

I think it came about because of Peter Seltz[ph]. Peter Seltz[ph] used to be in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, and he gave me an exhibition there, I had just started making sculptures at the Engineers in Ipswich, which would have been about the early Sixties, and he then transferred to California, he got much more...but there were other reasons for him, he had had a bad divorce and had a new mistress and he took a house in, a large house in Berkeley and had this post I think head of art history department, and he was instrumental not only in inviting me out, actually it was for a year, and I was also out there with Kitaj, Kitaj was out at the same time. But I didn't like it after a few months, and I came back to London.

You were teaching, giving formal classes?

Well, and also I had this nice studio; I thought I had more, and I was disillusioned about the professors, and the students, and I think, having spent a lot of my life involved with students, I think they must have been the worst students that anybody had, they were totally unteachable, and perhaps it had a correspondence to their parents. It was a very bad time in American history. Perhaps things might have been better at Princeton, things might have been better at Yale, one got a feeling of that. But it wasn't a difficult decision to come back to London, to my studio, and to the house in the country.

Where presumably you had left your wife and children. I mean you went there on your own?

That's right. Well I went in an exploratory way, I mean I thin a few Englishmen, not David Hockney but Brian Wall[ph], a few of them had gone there and see it as paradise, but I'm the other way round, I think. That the most...people who don't live in America don't see the dark side, I mean the Saul Bellow America, the mountain of damaged souls, you know, that kind of lake of corpses, you tend not to see that when you live in Europe.

Maybe particularly in California, I don't know.

I would have thought particularly in California, but I mean if you wander round the wrong streets in New York you will still see the rejects, you will still see the maimed and the mental cripples for a people.

Mm. Did anything during the later Fifties in England happen to make you change your mind about politics, or about the way England was going?

I grew to accept in a way that my generation of the artists and all that were quite, particularly the ones that followed, like Jo Tilson, Peter Blake, and Alan Jones, they were and still are I

think incredibly unpolitical animals, and I think on the whole their approach to their art might be considered amoral. But I think there's a general idea in our art world, I mean, if only from Bacon downwards so to speak, that the way you treat...Bacon in a roundabout way, you see he was, whether he liked it or not, considered that he used political metaphors. I mean there are some paintings where this is actually the Swastika armband, there was the hint of the cruel SS man and torture and drugs and blood, beating. And he seems to have the capacity to embrace that. But a lot of English artists still, some of it is still involved, and it's considered impossible I think to deal. But in the modern art pantheon, politics is a very very difficult tightrope.

Does your art now have any political dimension do you think?

Well I would have thought that, I would have thought that zero, the portfolio I did after California was highly political, when you think that there's a whole chart called `War Games', and where there is all kinds of notions about IBM, but the only way that one might pull it off is having sublime metaphors. But I have used, I have used things I have found in California, like, I mean there's one print called `Bash' which has Jack Kennedy in it, and it has a monkey, I would have thought a young boy, it has a Vietnam soldier, it has a young boy, it has all kinds of things which could be an oblique political commentary on American way of life and death.

Certainly there were a number of things in your exhibition at the Tate Gallery in 1971 which, this may indeed be the point to come on to that, which had a stronger political content than anything else I think you've ever done.

Oh, and I think...I had been to New York I think again, I think I had shown at the Pace Gallery, and when Peter Seltz[ph] came to New York we met up, and I remember walking in the streets and in an anti-Vietnam march, and it had a lot of New York intellectuals in the group. And I remember walking past the Playboy Club in New York, and all the bunny girls on the balcony all shouting obscenities at us. And I think we were all sort of embarrassed, because walking in the streets is quite harrowing, and you are quite naked. But also, when I did the exhibition at the Tate I seemed to be the only one that seemed to be involved in one's art in Vietnam, the war in Vietnam; I mean the cover of the catalogue was a boot, an American soldier's boot, and there was a group of bombs which had something to do with napalm, and I thought that that was the last of the great ready-mades, somehow, was a group of bombs. But it was very unpopular, I think the Tate didn't like at that time that kind of exhibition. There was also, which I would imagine is still a taboo subject, making commentaries or jokes about certain aspects of modern art, like having a geometric sculpture

with a snail on it. I think that crinkled, being outside of what might call a general aesthetic experience, it was considered unpopular, and even using kitsch objects, casting kitsch objects and all that was unseemly, but as has been pointed out, a lot of these things had been developed on a big scale by Jeff Koons.

Much later.

Much later. But, I don't think the English, there weren't any favourable reviews at the time, and I've more or less decided that making, the last great taboo is making jokes about modern art.

I certainly want to ask you a lot more about that, because that for me was one of the most interesting aspects of that exhibition, the satirical aspect with certain kinds of contemporary art as the target. But what would interest me, and I suspect other people as well, would be how exhibitions like that, because, perhaps one should say, this, I think I'm right in saying, was your first big exhibition at the Tate, indeed, until now the only one. The place where, as a British artist, you would, or one would expect to have the kind of definitive exhibition. How does an invitation come about to exhibit at the Tate? Who asks you? How is it organised during the early stages and so on? If you find that question too boring, I mean say so.

No no it's not boring. I think, the man to ask is Michael Compton who is now retired from the Tate, I think it's compulsory, if you work at the Tate you are a civil servant, and I think there's a compulsory retiring age, which is either 60 or 65. It could well be 60, but it means that you have civil service pension, probably quite a good one. But I mean the only person I knew, I think he must have been asked, I don't even know how the trustees work at the Tate, but it might have been a decision at the Tate, you know. But [INAUDIBLE] at that time it was Norman Reid, and I think that Michael Compton.....[BREAK IN RECORDING - TELEPHONE]

Yes we were talking about the way that exhibition came about at the Tate Gallery 1971.

I think it must have been, might have been a decision with the trustees, and Michael Compton was the emissary; not only was the emissary, he was the one that arranged it all and was around when all the stuff was being moved in.

But then you had more or less complete freedom what you showed?

Absolute and utter freedom. I think he was actually shocked, because I think they wanted, had the impression afterwards that they wanted a nice safe kind of exhibition, which was a short of chronological arrangement of bronzes, even from beginning to end.

A retrospective.

A real old-fashioned retrospective.

And this you didn't want to do?

No, I thought it was a good opportunity, and I haven't any regrets about that, it was a good opportunity to have, define an idea about art, even doing it on the spot, and I did a lot of it on the spot. I had large Cy Twombli, the big painting of Cy Twombli, and I had Crispin Turnbull silk-screening flies on it, and I also did...I worked quite late doing little dwarfs in front of a striped painting called `Abstract Expressionism' and some rather...and that's gone to Dundee.

The striped painting with the parrot in front?

That's right. Well I gave it to Dundee. I didn't know what to do with it. It was quite a shuffle when the exhibition came to an end.

The inspiration, if that's the word for it, for that painting, was Kenneth Noland I remember.

I think so.

Just a Cy Twombli was the inspiration, I want you...perhaps say that they weren't just paintings, they were actually installations as they were put together.

That's right, that's right, were things.

With things. I mean...

But they were painted on the spot, I mean the canvases in both cases were delivered. And didn't you work on some of it yourself?

Well I tried to paint the Twombli.

That's right. Well that was quite successful.

Well I'm not sure it was really. I realised how difficult it is to paint a Twombli actually while I was doing that.

But they went on to the Royal Academy that too. And I think I lost sight of the painting.

Well it was all painted over wasn't it, and it was painted over a sort of grey and the flats were put on the top.

That's right, that's right.

Were put on the top.

It was like coloured screen-printed.

But what was it? Because your attacks first of all were the kind of post-painterly abstraction I suppose it's called in Greenburgian terms.

Mm.

The late abstract expressionism of Cy Twombli, the minimalism of Donald Judd, and a number of other people like him.

That's right.

What was it about these kinds of art which got up your nose, to use a...?

Well it was also an idea of examining perhaps what is avant-garde at that time, the notion of avant-garde. And I think it had something to do with one's idea about dealers perhaps, because also in the exhibition was, and I was hoping that, I mean this could easily have been, if it had been done much later, I could easily have seen the pile of ingots called `F-dash-art'[ph], there was a pile of ingots that was a kind of, I just felt that the whole way at that time of looking at art had become very commercial, and making a whole bunch of ingots was really a metaphor about art and... I don't know if I had been, or if it was to come, I was with the Marlborough at the time, but it was an idea about the art game, and I mean it's the kind of subjects that Robert Hughes writes about even now, what kind of, that last book.

You say even now, but he hasn't been doing it for that long, and he was among the first. What I'm trying to say is, that those attitudes to certain kinds of contemporary art which came out in that exhibition, were very new and to some people, particularly in the art world, rather shocking then, but now, in 1993, I mean for the last five years, say, maybe as much as ten years, I don't know, people, quite respectable critics, like Robert Hughes, very respectable critics, have come round to that point of view.

Yes, but they would protest, they would say, well, they are protesting about that. I think the last book is something about the language of complaint or... They would take a totally different view, because Robert Hughes has written about Lucian Freud as being the best painter in the world, so that...that would mean it's a different point of view. And he uses perhaps Freud and Auerbach as a metaphor which is criticising kind of perhaps sight-painting in a way. I mean it's the other end of the band.

It's now common to say that. I'm looking here now at the Konnertz book again, page 179, you did a print in 1971, the year of that exhibition, and I am delighted to say you gave me a copy of this print, which I look at with great pleasure very often, and it simply says, `avant-garde', and the letters are made out of grotesque...

Bubble gum cards.

Bubble gum cards to spell out `avant-garde, question mark, exclamation mark'. I mean there is no doubt what your view of what passes for the avant-garde is, and that's a kind of commonplace now of criticism, that what used to be regarded as the avant-garde has now become the kind of, the academy, it's become the sort of entrenched establishment Arts Council view. Would you agree with that?

Yes. But I don't really make any claims in that direction of being a visionary, it's just, in a way you think of creativity as being instinctive, and it's wrapped up, interlarded with ideas of responsibility, or honesty, rejection of hypocrisy, sprinkled with a touch of madness, that's what I really feel, that I wasn't really, I was very surprised that, in a way, that there was no real.....

<u>End of F4994 Side A</u>

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.....or where was it in 1971 if you put...

Well you can find a lot of that, you can find all the answers probably if you research and looked at all the magazines at that time. I don't think 'Studio International' was at that time, but there were certainly art[??] in America, and certainly by that time the wheels were turning, and there must have been not so long after that an Andy Warhol exhibition at the Tate. The Lichtenstein at the Tate must have been two decades ago, the late Sixties. But when I was in Berlin, which was, I mean Marcel Brudars[ph] was there, he was considered very avant-garde.

But are these people, Brudars[ph], Warhol, Lichtenstein, are these people that you as it were approve of and see as genuine avant-garde figures, or had they already been absorbed by the establishment?

Well, I think that the Tate they had a floor of [INAUDIBLE] boxes, I'm not quite sure if they had them in the Pop art show, but the Tate found it much easier to absorb these kind of things, maybe because they had Leo Kastali[ph] muscle behind it, already probably by the time Warhol got to the Tate there was already a large body of acclaim in America. So I think, I felt, when I did my...I didn't have anybody or peer group to support me, and I felt very isolated when I did it. And I have the strange feeling that Michael Compton couldn't get...he thought it had been a damp squib and they couldn't get it all out quick enough.

I had forgotten that you were still with the Marlborough in 1971.

Well, I know they arranged the exhibition in the Nationalgalerie, so that must have been after that. No I don't think I had a dealer at that time; I think the Marlborough was to follow, the Marlborough was to follow.

Of course, this is something else, I mean before we go back to the contents of the exhibition, if you would be prepared to say a bit more about that, my memory might be wrong but I got the feeling, not just because of the response to that exhibition, that your career, if I can call it that, wasn't going quite so well at the beginning of the Fifties, that the former star of the Sixties was not attracting as much attention.

That's possible.

You don't remember it in that way.

I don't, and I think I probably didn't really care, I probably didn't really care at the time.

If we can...we're still looking at the Konnertz book, and you mention of an earlier occasion, here it's figure 335 on page 180, `Tim's Boot', which is a bronze cast of a model made after an American army boot.

An enlargement.

As worn in Vietnam. And there's also, on page 181, a photograph of shelves, very much like the shelves that you still have in your studio, where you've got different things in them, which at that time contained toys, a lot of them which you had collected in Japanese, in Japan rather, a kind of build-you-own model of Frankenstein, photographs of Einstein and so on, which seem to hark back to the Independent Group.

That's right.

The 'Bunk' period, but nevertheless, from what you say, are kind of at the same time looking forward, they are not just about, how interesting this sort of material is.

But I mean, that's what my view about Pop art was, what they call Pop art was that there is an enormous, a lot of things, and there's even been a lot of writings about that, like a big Museum of Modern Art exhibition not that long ago called `High and Low Art'. I think the exhibition is trying to write about, and that was also as unpopular, this exhibition, I've been told, as my exhibition, for perhaps similar reasons. But I still think that a lot of things that you see in the streets are often much more interesting than the pretentiousness of art objects which you see in art galleries, and that in a sense that a group of rather brilliant bubble gum cards are more interesting than a series of other miserable [INAUDIBLE] etchings by some minor artist. But I feel that that's not a difficult thing to say, but it seems to be a very difficult thing for society to absorb, and I think society has got an incredible soft spot for a kind of, the appreciation of the arts I think in society is very much wrapped up with their notion of the, a fantasy idea of the artist, and also the, a kind of psychological notion of how the artist lives, and they are absolutely dominated or even perplexed by artist style and the object. But to think there's this idea of anonymity which I would have thought had been well established by Duchamp, that in the anonymous object there's a curious kind of pathos, there's a whole kind of rhetoric about the ready-made. And there's even the psychopathology of the object which Freud wrote about. But it's very strange, there seems to be a sort of resistance, and I think it

reflects on our society, and there's nothing better than to talk about the lack of creativity when Christmas comes to Western society, how extraordinarily uncreative it is. It's a fantastic opportunity I think, Christmas, to be incredibly creative, but suddenly you have armies of people just stamping through halls just buying last year's decorations at enormous expense.

As they might even be doing at this very minute.

They're doing it this very minute, right now.

Mm. One or two of the other things in that exhibition, we've already talked about the bombs and the minimal snail on a primary structure which are illustrated in this rather good book by [INAUDIBLE] Konnerz, but there is also, I seem to remember this was called `Crash Head' wasn't it?

That's right.

Illustrated on page 183, and, I'm trying to remember whether it was bronze or what it was.

It was bronze.

And it was a model of a rather anonymous-looking face with a couple of bolts through the neck.

That's right.

And a, not exactly a hook but a ring on the top of its head with a chain.

That's right.

What were you...?

Well that came out of books I used to, catalogues I used to like, of crash dummies, and the crash dummies used to be, when they weren't being used they were hung by a chain from the head on wax. But it was also a metaphor, I don't know if you remember the, I've certainly got a packet of them, the poster for the Tate exhibition was an FBI target of a man, so one of the themes which was also not at all popular, I thought, in the Tate exhibition was man who was becoming de-humanised in the same way that there was a sort of [INAUDIBLE] of the fact that man being de-humanised could be reflected in the idea of ingots, that ingots were

considered artistic, and certainly the idea of having bombs in an art gallery was all part of that thing of man which is this [INAUDIBLE], the notion that man is spending an awful lot of time trying to destroy itself through perhaps technology and hatred.

Well there's a little recent footnote to that crash head to I think, because the crash dummies were used by, or are used by car companies testing the safety requirements of their...

That's right.

Experimental models. And in the paper only about three weeks ago there was a report that in Germany...

Using real cadavers.

Oh that is...

And it was probably much less expensive, I think was the idea.

And that can presumably only mean that they have been using real cadavers the whole time actually.

That's right. Well in certain parts of the world, instead of having an automated line-up you have people paid, slaves pay little money, it's the same thing.

What kind of line-up?

A line-up for doing some kind of automatic process, like wiring cheap radios.

Oh I see, I'm sorry, yes yes yes yes.

Paid at slave labour prices, it's almost like using cadavers, but one step up.

Yes. Cheaper than robots presumably.

Cheaper than machines.

We're at the beginning of the Seventies with this exhibition. As I recall, I mean your life had by then assumed what for some time had been a kind of constant pattern.

Yes.

It didn't really deviate. I mean obviously they are deviated, day by day you would do different things, but during the week you were here in this studio. You had also by then I think got another studio...

No, no that was not...not by then, no.

Ah.

But I think I had still, I think I was very much involved with the Royal College, and I was using very much, a lot of the things in the Tate Gallery were made at the College. `Tin Boots' was made there, and all kinds of things.

Made by an assistant in the Ceramics Department.

That's right, and I was going, I think...you're quite right, there was a routine which included going to the Engineers on Thursdays and Fridays, and that's where the ingots were cast, and that's where there was a big skip, and I had some unsuccessful aluminium sculptures, after the skip, which was designed at Ipswich, was brought up and bolted together. I also brought up some, what I considered unsuccessful sculpture, and me and the welder who came up to stay, we cut them up and threw them into the skip, and I think the noise, and actually doing that, was very unprecedented, and I think horrified the Tate. And as I was saying, they were hoping that it might have been a nice...I mean nice...they were hoping, and I mean it was out of the goodness of their heart that they were kind of giving me a palm leaf or an accolade, but they thought, like any other retrospective everything had been done and was just delivered, and perhaps supervised by a nice girl with a clipboard from the Hanover Gallery. But it wasn't to be.

On the other hand, for an artist of your reputation by then, huge, and somebody of your age by then, it's not often that you come across someone who is actually able to irritate.

Mm. But that wasn't my purpose, I was just hoping that a lot of people would think the same way. And I was amazed that nobody seemed to...they seemed to take art, art wasn't something you made fun of, or even, art didn't combine with the political statement. Art was something that was, you could use as a device to hide from reality as much as actually get involved with it. But it's the difference between, say, a Boucher and Goya.

And, Goya is by far the more important artist.

Well probably, but I mean, there are...or one should say Watteau, I mean, but Watteau in a sense proves that you can be still a fine artist, even though you have turned your back on reality and that you are able, if you can create another one, like Franz Hals for example. But I would have thought even Latour could pull his...I'm sure a good art historian could dig out, as he would out of Vermeer, there's a famous lecture I think that Peter de Francia does on Vermeer which turns the whole objects, the allegories in Vermeer, into political statements, the way the girl is dressed and what she is doing and all that, I think they were `femmes du joies' in a complex way.

I should perhaps have mentioned that skip before, because it was one of the largest sculptures. Again it was more of an installation.

That's right.

Than a sculpture in that Tate exhibition.

Three-dimensional object.

Mm. Full of discarded pieces of sculpture.

And castings to fatten it up.

And, was that the one which included the head of Kennedy in the foreground?

I think the same one went on to the Academy. And I think that's where the head of Kennedy was introduced.

And is this the one that's now in Munich?

The one in Munich was specially made, because the one...that one went to Milan, and I gave it to the Italians, but mark you, I think, they've never shown it, in the Palazzio Reale in Milan.

But, it's got a...it's got a very important autobiographical element in a sense, because already by then, I mean for years you have been collecting bits and pieces which you discovered in dustbins.

Well, yes, or scrap yards.

Or scrap yards. And the skip, which of course has appeared outside houses in London that were being gentrified particularly...

Yes, yes.

But all the old bits and pieces going out, and the new interior decorators coming in to make it fit for middle class habitation and so on, and these were particularly good hunting grounds for you I think, and still are probably.

But the skip seemed to be an important tool. When I used to go to the Engineers on Thursdays there were always these skips that had marvellous, which was all part of the organisation of the works, and they all contained fabulous bits of cut iron and, they had to get rid of a great deal as they went along. It was really that kind of...and we took our drawings and measurements from an existing skip. It had to be, I'm afraid one has to transgress reality, it had to be made in aluminium. A real one would, you would never have got it into the Tate, so it had to be aluminium and it had to be bolted together, and indeed the same was one that was made after, in Munich, and I had a lot of surplus castings which came over from Munich, and with a big, head of Cruikshank, Mr Cruikshank came into the picture by then.

So, yes, I had forgotten him, I am ashamed to say. There is also the notion of recycling which has got to do with this, things that some people have thrown out as rubbish...

Yes.

Are being identified by you as having a certain value or potential value.

But what a lot of people leave out, you know, it's such a broad band when one discusses junk or rubbish, and I mean one just has to be extra sensitive about...the organs of selectivity, they are not turned off when you go round the scrap yard, you are actually seeking some particular invisible object, and as one doesn't...and it's often true creativity in the sense that what you may discover is beyond preconception, and that's not a bad description of a certain kind of creativity, and also near to the plastic arts. And actually one could make a literary analogy from that, but selectivity is a key word, and one may go through... It's even, when one is trying to find a photograph that might be a metaphor. In Munich when I was there there would be piles and piles of magazines left wrapped, wrapped outside houses to be collected

by an organisation that was Green, it went towards funding a Green organisation, and I would often take a big pile of these magazines. But out of maybe ten magazines there might be two possible images, and they would only be possibles. So you have about the notion of the ready-made is that it has to be really, to be selected it has to be really near the core of something, and it has to just drop into a context, otherwise it can be meaningless. But it's like the choice of the sitter for a portrait painter, or the choice of the particular landscape that has any, will have...the choice is almost critical as to its ever, the possibility of it becoming truly creative, or an invention.

I'm getting a bit worried about your clock in the background; I would have thought it would...six bells...

No, it goes slightly...switch off.....[BREAK IN RECORDING]

So, your life of the early Seventies was following this fairly regular pattern of London and studio and Royal College of Art and so on during the week, and Thorpe-le-Soken, or at any rate Landermere[ph], outside Thorpe-le-Soken on the weekends. Then there was a big change I think when you went to Berlin.

That's when...I think Karl Ruhrberg[ph] wrote to me several times, and I wasn't that interested at the time, because everything was going, as far as I could see, the sort of rhythm, and I said I was happy with my life, which was shuffling between the country, and I was still at the Royal College, and life was very nice then, and I was making things, and I said to Karl Ruhrberg[ph], the only possible reason I might go to Berlin is by having something I've never had before, which is an enormous amount of space. And it was quite easy at the time, he found an ex-factory, a place that had gone bankrupt which was an entire floor in a very nice district, Kurfürstendamm in Berlin. But he actually had come down...he came down with his wife, and I think daughters, for lunch, and he convinced me I might go, and it was fabulous, I really enjoyed it a lot.

One should perhaps explain first of all that Karl Ruhrburg[ph] was the person in charge of the artists' scheme...

The DAD. But he had been before that, he had been a director, and had had an exhibition in the Kunsthalle at...

Düsseldorf.

Düsseldorf, or at Stuttgart, which?

Düsseldorf, definitely.

Düsseldorf.

And that was in about '68 or '69.

That's right, and it was already, there was this...there was already half bronzes and half steels. But I still think I was partly represented by Erika Brausen who came over with Toto[??], and I used to know somebody called Mary Campbell who was a friend of John Huston, and he flew out for the exhibition. So I mean I was slightly, I was flying high at that time, having retrospective.

Erika Brausen was Hanover Gallery.

That's right, now gone.

And she represented you, or the Hanover Gallery represented you?

That's right, she managed most of that at the time. And I think at that time, Daniel Sperry[ph] had that restaurant in Düsseldorf which specialised in wild game, which meant elephant's trunk and snake.

And bear steaks.

And bear steaks, and all kinds of bizarre things, parts, the flank of the giraffe, which probably wouldn't be tolerated now, it would be closed down easily by animal rights people.

And I think he got them from a local zoo, that's the story I was told.

The story was that a lot of it was frozen and flown in from Africa. Well sometimes it was quite legitimate, it might have been elephants that were culled, or zebras that were culled.

I remember bees in aspic on that menu as well.

That's right, all kinds of things.

And it was an extraordinary place. It was papered I think from floor to ceiling...

That's right.

With his old correspondence.

That's right.

And there were signs, I only wish I could remember more than one of them, made by the American Kalvin Tompkins[ph], which were palindromes, in other words they read the same backwards as they did forwards, Madam I'm Adam, in every imaginable European language.

That's right.

I thought that was particularly clever at the time I read that.

Mm.

That was a successful exhibition critically, I mean it was reviewed very well I seem to remember.

Yes. But the Germans were a bit...they were very hungry for art at that time, for foreign art, and I mean I had other successful exhibitions, like one that went to the Kesnergeseltshaft[ph] one year.

That was a bit later though, wasn't it?

I think so. But that had painted sculptures, I remember painting them there, re-painting some of them there. But I think at that time, that was later, you're quite right, because I think I was even living in Berlin, because I went with Helga Retzer[ph], and that's my Berlin period, to help me to do the painting.

When did you go to Berlin then?

'74, would it have been?

I think that's right, I think it was about '74. In other words, not all that long after the Tate exhibition.

Not that long.

Were you, or had you in the meantime, been represented by Marlborough?

Maybe not at the Tate, but the Marlborough, certainly Richard Salmon came over supposedly to help to do the catalogue in Berlin.

Or in Düsseldorf?

No in Berlin. I had this exhibition, while I was there, not only at the Nationalgalerie, I had an exhibition of all my prints in the Kupferstichkabinett at Dahlem.

I remember both of those actually.

That's right.

And I remember you in Berlin too, very very clearly.

And what I did there was a lot of plaster work, which was cast at Noak[ph], including two reliefs in Bronze, one that, three reliefs, one went to Gabrielle Keiller[ph] which is against the wall of her house, and some, two reliefs came to England, big ones.

Your work changed a lot [INAUDIBLE].

It became for a period very curiously geometric and decorative, which included also making these collages for...I mean I think that there was a time when, at that time, that Abrahams[ph] was going to do a book in combination with Propilean[ph], and that phutt for some reason. And I also was commissioned to do a set of prints by Propilean[ph], and that was, I forget the man's name.

Wolf Jurgst Ziedler[ph].

Ziedler[ph], and that went...and then of course, Vieland[ph] was around. Vieland[ph] at that time was hoping to be director...

[INAUDIBLE]

The director, it was just the tail end of Werner Hauftman's[ph] period. And I think it was also, at that time I did an etching for Rembrandt Werlag[ph], was it Rembrandt Werlag[ph]?

I think it was.

Which is maybe Munich. `Homage to Michelangelo' was some kind of set of prints for Michelangelo's birthday.

I remember thinking at the time, and if I was wrong about this, please say, because this is the point of the question really, that your work really started to take off again when you went to Berlin, and I thought that the reason for it was that somehow, every now and again you needed injections of living abroad, being in a completely different environment.

Yes.

And this sparked you off in some strange way.

I think it's not...I don't think it's that clear, because, then I went for a while to Cologne.

That was later again.

That's right, later, but I don't think that was, my period in Cologne I don't think was pretty productive, but as soon as I went to...

Munich.

Munich I think that started. I went there as kind of bizarre abstract kind of half-machine-half-humanoid things, but when my time was up I was very much into figures and heads again.

But let's go back to Berlin in 1974 or whenever it was, as I say I think it was '74, Gurburg[ph], or at any rate the German academic exchange service, had found this floor, it really was a large floor...

Mm, the third floor.

Of a bankrupt...

In a courtyard. The more you went in the cheaper it got.

You describe it as a nice area, but very few Berliners would have called it...

It was reasonable then, it was reasonable then. It must maybe have gone down. It was also, had Greeks and Turks in the same street; there was also, when I moved in it was just a tail end of one of the first cinemas in Berlin where you could actually sit behind the screen which was cheaper, which was...

And see everything in reverse.

That's right, that's right, and it was cheaper, but I suppose, that was something I had never seen before, but during my time there it went out of business and became a Greek theatre, a Greek cinema.

But, I seem to remember that the Kurfürstendamm was the place where transvestites and prostitutes paraded up and down.

No, I never saw one.

No?

No. You might be thinking of another part.

But it was in [INAUDIBLE]?

Yes.

Which was...

Maybe I didn't notice them. I noticed a lot of drunks, there were a lot of bars, some which stayed open till, I don't know if this was Berlin, but you could stay open till dawn. As a matter of fact there was an apartment where Helga Retzer[ph], Marianne...lived in a wonderful part of Berlin that was like Paris, and underneath that there was a homosexual bar that seemed to go on till, thump away and was very very smokey, and that seemed to go on until 4 in the morning.

Yes that was way out west though wasn't it, it was quite a way away.

It was near Kantstrasse.

Yes, off the Kurfürstendamm.

It wasn't...it was almost walking distance from the Amerikahaus[ph].

Now, you have mentioned Helga Retzer[ph]. She worked in the Amerikahaus[ph] didn't she, or what?

Originally. And then she, she then moved on. She was unhappy there, and then she moved on to D.A.D. and was absolutely fabulous with the D.A.D.

[INAUDIBLE] with the German...I see, the German academic exchange.

Absolutely. And she organised, she used to look after artists, she was absolutely invaluable. Another person that worked under Karl Ruhrburg[ph] and helped to get the job was Dekkers[ph], Tomas Dekkers[ph].

Oh, I've heard of him, yes, but I've never...I never met him.

And he has moved on somewhere else. But they all become in the end, if the are patient, like Herr Zogenrat[ph], who ran the...

Kunsterein[ph] in Cologne.

In Cologne. He has become, he is head of a big museum now in Berlin, could be even the...

Of the national gallery, couldn’t it?

That's right, yes.

I think he has become the director.

Then he was trying very much because he had written a book about the Bauhaus; at one time he had applied unsuccessfully for the Bauhaus archive.

I didn't know that.

And [INAUDIBLE] Grieserberg[ph] is also director of a museum.

Yes, but not in...

Not in the big league.

Of the...he is hoping to get in the big league. No he is in Nurenberg.

Yes, and he is also divorced and all that.

Yes, that's right.

And they had children I think.

Two daughters. And it's actually a very sad story. One of the daughters keeps trying to commit suicide.

Really?

Yes, and I think there's probably a drug story as well. One of them is perfectly normal but the other one is causing them no end of grief. I mean Luzio[ph] and his former wife, who still lives in Berlin I think.

I remember going to have dinner there, and it was a classic kind of, white walls, dead white walls with matt black furniture, which, very reminiscent of Hofmann[ph], the Wienerwerstadt isn't it?

Yes, the Wienerwerstadt.

And they all seemed to have, including all my friends in Berlin, always seemed to have large cabinets full of wine glasses; they all used to each collect one, which were cheap, curiously enough, for a city that had been destroyed by bombing. Maybe there was a psychological thing of collecting wine glasses.

Well I think so, because actually the junk shops in Berlin.....

End of F4994 Side B

F4995 Side A

So you lived in your studio as well?

Absolutely, and made the bed myself.

What, you welded it, or something?

No no no, it wasn't welded, just a wooden framework with... But I actually took an assistant that I had here, he wanted to go back and live in Germany and I had an assistant called Glauskus[ph], and I used to pay him out of my monthly cheque. And of course like a lot of assistants who were superb and highly skilled, he couldn't just wait to get off and set up on his own, and what happened after that was oblivion, which often happens.

Yes, I remember...

That, there's a paradox which is that the...a good assistant can learn more helping somebody else than actually when they are on their own, when they have to be creative on their own.

Yes, he was here with you for some years I seem to remember.

Well, here, not that long, but there was...and he had been left over from my great class in Hamburg, in 1960 when I was a year in Hamburg.

Ah, that's where you first met him?

He was in my class for a year.

Good Lord, I never knew that.

Then he went to live in England, he got involved with an English woman who was absolutely besotted by him, and then he came to Berlin with me, and then...then I think he went back to her, and then, I think that that broke up in a rather tragic way. I think she attempted suicide.

It did strike me at the time, seeing you in Berlin and realising that you sort of lived in this place as well, that it certainly, they weren't the kind of circumstances that I would have cared to live, it was just really a cubby-hole with a curtain pulled over it.

That's right.

And a bed there. There were cooking facilities, I remember we used to cook a lot there.

For up to 14 people. No, but, I mean I can take, I find it all quite acceptable; it's luxury I can't manage. But I mean peasant-like simplicity. Maybe I just grew up that way, but I find it quite, even now quite attractive. When I stayed in very expensive hotels I have hated every minute. Don't forget, it might have been a cubby-hole but there was tools and there was things, all kinds of things that one could make every day. And there was also things...I thought Berlin was curiously exciting at that time in the sense that it was sort of suspended in history, and there was a sort of time warp, it never, at that time, hadn't really got off the ground; society was still waiting to make its...and of course the wall was there at the time. And I was there when the wall, which had been made up...I always...I've got lots of regrets but one big regret was, I never took photographs of the first wall, which was all made up of bits and pieces and fabricated, and then overnight they decided to make the tidy version. But I was there when all that was happening. And even I also regret that I didn't actually go out of my way to take some photographs of the great jail that Hesse was in.

Spandau.

Spandau, I always regret I never took photographs of that.

I think that would have been difficult. I remember trying, even out of the window of a car...

Or even a drawing.

And somebody came out and said, `Stop that.' I mean they were watching for people taking photographs...

Really?

All the time there in Spandau, yes.

But, I mean I regret not even going near the place somehow. There were always other things to do. There was always an architect who wanted to show you a Schinkel pavilion, or there was always the possibility of going up to Hamburg for the weekend and driving through East Germany, which was very grim and full of tension. They made it very tense, as well you know, driving through East Germany.

That wasn't the Autobahn either was it, it was ordinary...

That's right.

Ordinary roads to Hamburg then.

I presume all that's been...all these roads have been made up, proper ones now?

Well there was an Autobahn built before the wall came down actually, because the East Germans obviously didn't like westerners going on their ordinary roads, because they could pop off into little villages or towns on the way, they were harder to control that way, so they built this Autobahn. But now, I mean yes, the roads very quickly really started to be improved. They're not by any means all done, but the main arteries are [INAUDIBLE].

Say you drove from Berlin to Hamburg now, would it be like the Autobahn experience?

Yes.

With places you could stop off?

Yes, already, yes.

For a couple of vinos.

That's right, yes. Did you go over into the East much?

I went...not that much; I went with Helga, Helga seemed to have connections, and we went over, we went over to a bizarre Prokofiev `Romeo and Juliet', but done in modern, with capitalism and all that, and we had supper there, but we came back the same day, same evening, it wasn't difficult as you can imagine. But back in, you would be back in, you could be back in about twenty minutes.

But you didn't go over looking at the bookshops or, just doing any tourism?

No, I mean there was enough in Berlin to look at, and I was...at that time don't forget Tempelhof was still in action, and there was still a lot of British. I don't know if they're still there, can't be.

I...do you know I don't know.

There were the French and the...it was called...they didn't even have a consul, it was called the BMG, British Military Government or something.

Yes, at my time...

A.G.M.

Your work, as we have already said, did change rather a lot, although looking at this book, page 201 there's a print there called `Cosmos', which looks forward rather to the work that you were doing in Berlin.

Well also it was a lucky discovery, I mean it was an actual...with all that relentless looking without buying much in this second-hand bookshop, that was a second-hand book. There were some of the best second-hand bookshops I've ever seen were in Berlin, for all kinds of complicated reasons. And there was this kind of Twenties image which set me off quite a lot, and even I used the motifs from it doing the Underground in the Eighties, but it was the attempt, which was one reason for being in Germany where artists were trying, attempting to give a kind of visual image to the sound of music. And that one from `Cosmos' is really some anonymous artist's idea about organ music, and there's also...

`Silent Night' it's called, `Stille Nacht'.

Yes. And it was also the same kind of...there's a Bauhaus tapestry that seems to have the same...I don't know if you know what...one of the famous ones.

You are dead right, and it's still being issued by Liberty's.

That's right, correct. And also I think that might have been an image that came out of the early Bauhaus which I call the Johannes Etan[??] period, which a lot of people are not so interested in, but I think that Etan[??], there are books about him and I think there's been an Etan[??] retrospective I've seen somewhere.

Yes.

But I think that, I mean he dressed in a strange way, and I think it was overlapping with ideas about Goethe, and the idea of theosophy and vibrations.

But...ah, yes, I'm turning over the pages, and we come to one double-page spread, page 206/207, of drawings, because I remember...this is I think before, 1972/1973, before you went to Berlin, these are studies - maybe you don't want to talk about this, because I remember...

Well you can see that there's a lot...

Painful episode these...this [INAUDIBLE] castle.

That's right. But also, they are all being sprung out of...but basic, that. A lot of them just have sprung from...this was a very interesting plant, there are a lot of little...

Which is on page 201 by the way, this...

A lot of plants, a lot of...plants came out of these seeds, as you say leading on to Cleish castle.

Which, in way, I mean, say if you don't want to talk about it, because I know how painful it was at the time, was typical in some ways, the way in which you have been treated from time to time by patrons or publishers or whoever it might be.

Are you thinking of Michael Spence[ph]?

I am thinking of Michael Spence[ph], who bought this...I mean he was...he was the heir to a fairly large fortune which I think ran through his fingers fairly quickly.

That's right.

And he was an architect who had bought this Scotland - castle in Scotland of course I mean, Cleish Castle. And he commissioned you to do a ceiling for one of the rooms. I don't know, I never saw it, I was just aware that you were doing this when it was going on. And it occupied an enormous amount of time.

Well mark you, one did, having got drawings and a dimension, one developed a way of doing it with a very nice firm, having made a master, they did a big master from a wooden, which is reproduced in the book. One was able, because of the very nature of the design, one was able to repeat by re-forming a lot of bits of the plaster into panels, the right size of panels, and

when these panels had been then moulded, and they made their fibreglass, then one, from the plasters one then re-developed them into, so one had nine different panels, all from the master. And not only that, having been done in fibreglass I had, one of the terms of going to work in Berlin under the D.A.D., they shipped a lot of the plasters to Berlin for free, that was one...they would move your studio.

But this Cleish Castle ceiling did I think represent a bit of a turning point in your work, because you hadn't done reliefs before, to that extent.

No.

You hadn't even been drawing quite as much for some time I seem to remember.

No.

Certainly not in this way. I mean you were filling sketch-book after sketch-book...

That's right.

With...

The same kind, like playing music.

Yes, improvised, but within a very strict set of rules.

Within that kind of set of...in that sort of set of images.

And you coloured some of them, and the were very beautiful I remember.

That's right. Well also it came out of the...[INAUDIBLE] came out of that experience, at the same time.

Yes you did that...yes, you did that in Berlin too.

That's right.

And this is why I say that it represented something of a turning point, because to my way of thinking that set, `Calcium Night Light', that portfolio, was the most beautiful portfolio that you had done for some time actually.

Done by Crispin Turnbull who had done the other ones.

Right.

`As Is When'.

No, he had...that was...

Well he was working there at the time.

Oh I see, I beg your pardon.

No he was there.

Now these reliefs started off as drawings and then you made them, or developed wooden reliefs in squares, using plywood which was cut with a fret-saw presumably.

That's right.

That's the way it looks. And also there are a number of kind of standard elements, like checkerboard patterns but in...

That's right.

In three-dimensions, which presumably came from another source, or did you have those [INAUDIBLE]?

Well the Japanese use, that's slightly Japanese, but you find in the Wienerschule[ph], they use a checkerboard enormously, and I don't know if they've got that, if you've seen the Russian icons in...

The V & A.

Those black and white, and I think that Schiele, Klimt were very much influenced by them, that was able to use decoration and perhaps flesh, perhaps...I think they maybe got it from the Russian icons, then they got it from Russian prints.

An, I'm looking at one of these reliefs on page 209 of the same book, and it looks almost as though you are building elements up to make a kind of contour map.

Mm.

So you could say, although that's clearly not the purpose of them, that you are looking at a sort of architect's model of a city from...

Yes.

From above.

Yes. And I've always found that, architect's models very attractive for that reason.

And the woods are in various colours, so you've got some very light blond and some really quite dark brown. But although the ceiling was completed, the Cleish Castle ceiling, I think you were never paid.

No, I was paid a pittance, I was paid a pittance.

And then of course what happened to them? They were broken up and sold individually.

Well, I never saw it. He sold the castle and then he tried to sell the panels to the Museum of Modern Art. I think at first he was going to give them, and then he got an idea about, he got an idea bout trying to raise £60,000.

But, anyway, this was the kind of work that you were doing, not exactly exclusively but extensively in Berlin.

Mm.

And as you say, the prints related to them. First of all, `Calcium Night Light', which was inspired by the music of Charles Ives.

That's right.

Where did that idea come from? Because after all, I mean Wittgenstein...

That's an easy...that's very easy, because, I mean English radio on the Third, they have always had, although it's got a different title now, a week's programme on the Third at 9 o'clock called `This Week's Composer', and he was this week's composer. And, I've got a life of him, and I always like to read about the, as I did with Wittgenstein, and even the first print, the bottom of the print is cut out from the`Radio Times' and the first one they had, it says, `This Week's Composer' on the print, at 9 o'clock after the news, the 9 o'clock news, and the first one was called `Children's Hour', and that's straight out of the `Radio Times'. That's why I did it, how I did it.

And you felt immediately drawn to the work of Charles Ives.

Absolutely.

Because of what might be thought to be the [INAUDIBLE] collage?

Well I think his life story is very interesting, I mean a highly educated man at Yale, and already deeply troubled about his ideas of modern music, and realising it would be...it couldn't stand a battle.....[BREAK IN RECORDING- TELEPHONE]

You were talking about Charles Ives, and the aspects of his life, as well as his music...

While he was still at Yale he knew that...I'm not quite sure you could get a degree at that time on doing a symphony, but he did a very nice symphony, although he was restless and he wanted to do something else. It's sad that unless you had done the...

That sounds as though there is someone at your door, or someone's door.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

We were talking about Berlin, and the work you were doing there, reliefs, prints, Charles Ives, the fascination for Charles Ives, who also, I mean used a kind of collage in a lot of his music, didn't he?

Absolutely, and he had kind of, as Frank Zappa did much much later on, have totally disparate things. Perhaps that's what really interested me in Ives, that it was, as you say, like collage, but he would have, at that time, totally, and which made him curiously unpopular, not curiously but understandably unpopular, having perhaps, he was a genuine pioneer and realised that his work was so provocative, he would write it until early in the morning, he decided that nobody would actually ever play, he would never be part of the American concert platform, but he carried on working, and he had a job as a very highly-paid insurance man, he used to commute from a house in Connecticut up to, and became this very highly-paid insurance man, worked very late doing his great music, and I think that he had a major stroke by 1913 and never wrote anything again. But a very interesting man.

You said that you heard his music on Radio Three, he was Composer of the Week.

Absolutely, that was my introduction.

You listen to a lot of radio?

That's right.

[BREAK IN RECORDING]

We were talking, we keep getting interrupted by someone who is trying to park outside, which is, I suppose is an indication of the way we live in London today. You've always listened to the radio a lot?

That's right.

And Radio Three, Radio Four as they are known now, they used to be called the Third Programme...

That's right.

And the Home Service. You sit here working, drawing, making collages.

That's right.

Always with the radio on?

Yes more or less, but I'm very...once again, I'm very selective. I mean I buy the `Radio Times' before it actually, before the actual programmes start, you've got about, it comes out on Tuesdays for Saturday's programmes, it's one week, and I always give it a really good stare, and it's a most wonderful, even now, while it's fighting a battle of the ratings, even now it's an incredibly easy way to familiarise oneself with all the great plays over the years and all the great concert orchestras; it's just a wonderful, marvellous way of being educated in a sense. I mean all these areas that one has been ignorant about, everything from Greek mythology to Strindberg, to avant-garde music, even jazz now, it's a most marvellous kind of catalyst for drawing, and it's absolutely, almost like a tool to help[??].

And as far as I know, unlike the radio anywhere else in the world.

Absolutely. Well having been in...mark you, in Munich they had [INAUDIBLE] Zwei, which was quite good.

They had plays and so on did they?

Absolutely, in the evening. But during the day it was excellent music, classical music.

Do you watch television as well?

A bit, but once again I just watch...I prefer the radio. I find the gap between the radio and television quite marked. And I prefer the radio by far.

One thing, and I mean this is now completely out of the chronological run of things, but one of thing which has always puzzled me, worried me almost, I have rarely ever seen you actually working.

Yes.

And I wonder when you find the time to work, because, for as long as I've known you, I mean you are always going here, there and everywhere, to meet people, to talk to people.

That's true.

You are teaching, you are in the College, seeing various people. When do you work?

Well I was working yesterday for example, I mean quite hard physically, doing a collecting box for the Royal Academy, and I had to cut out a lot of wood, and I had to kind of pour some plaster. I did it all, I did it in bursts, and then I have rubber moulds of some of the heads, and I often re-shape them. But one can only concentrate I think with intensity for about six or seven hours.

That's a long time, I mean it's...

That's maybe a long time.

Whenever we've been doing these recordings here, the phone has been going, I won't say constantly but quite often.

Yes.

So, I mean is it very early in the morning, or very late at night that you do most of your work?

Well, even...I mean I think that the decision and the concept is quite important. I mean I've just done six etchings which are a kind of tribute to a wonderful exhibition I never saw at the Louvre called `Copier Criée[ph], which were drawings done by modern artists from Old Masters, and these are my contribution in that direction, but they are actually old ideas. But to be honest, I mean I did the drawings, but I didn't do the actual plates, they have transferred. The only way I have ever done etchings so far is by having the drawing transferred to the plate. But I mean, I've had accounted to that, which is after the edition is done, which is small, that I actually ink and experiment with the plate, so that each one, I have a set which are unique. But, it's quite true that...I mean a lot of the things that I have done could only be done if...the nice thing in sculpture is that you can have a lot of help, I mean Michelangelo, it would have been impossible for Michelangelo to have done the Sistine chapel with a lot of people helping, and the thing that makes him mysterious about Michelangelo, he had all his cartoons, everything, destroyed in his lifetime. But you could not do this, I mean it would have been a mistake for Michelangelo to do the actual scaffolding; it would have even been a mistake for him even to have done the original models to show how it was going to be. But he would have had to make models to get the idea. But I mean he wouldn't be allowed to do that big project without the models and the cartoons being improved by the commissioning priests. But, in these pursuits, I do use help but not a lot, but it helps a lot. I mean if you want a series of heads, it doesn't matter if you pour the plaster or an assistant does. Henry Moore I think always had five assistants.

Assistants, yes, and you've never had nearly that many surely.

No, two as been the maximum.

Yes. But you do almost every day work very early in the morning, don't you?

Yes, more or less, more or less. But I mean I'm doing perhaps two...I'm having an exhibition in Cambridge, and I'm doing some things specially for that, some wooden reliefs and some other things.

At Jesus College.

That's right, in June.

And where do you...because clearly you don't make sculpture here in this studio; I mean I can imagine you drawing and making collages...

I could do them in the next studio, but I've got used to working at the college, particularly during the holiday times when there's nobody around.

Yes, because, I mean during term time you don't have terribly much room there, do you?

Well, I mean I've got a lot of things piled up, and the students just move round them, but, I just find it, for sculpture you need moulds, you need space, once again, and plaster, and there is always plaster, and there is always help if I need it.

Let's go back to Berlin, where you were from 1974 onwards for more than a year I think, weren't you?

It was fourteen months. I dragged it out a bit.

Because you enjoyed it so much?

It was absolutely perfect, and it's what I wanted at the time, it was absolutely perfect. And the atmosphere was good, and...there was a sort of detachment from England which was quite interesting.

And, whether or not I'm right in saying that, interest in your work had relaxed in England...

Yes.

It was becoming quite intense in Germany.

Well it was starting to build up, because after that, I mean I used...I did two sessions, and maybe that was much later on, in the Eighties, at Saltzburg under Wieland[ph].

That was later on.

That was much later on. But, I've never been worried about that; if the attention has been slack I have always thought there was an advantage in that, that one could read more. I mean I've never been, as you have maybe commented on, I haven't been that kind of, kind of obsessive that might, of just doing sculpture every day, like maybe...and maybe I've been put off by people who have actually done that every day, like Reg Butler, or some of the other people. I mean it doesn't necessarily lead...I have always thought, there's a wonderful dangerous area which made being an artist worthwhile to take an awful lot of risks, and that you have to invent...you can't be another Picasso, you can't be another Giacometti, you can't be another Anthony Caro if it comes to that, you have to, whether it's a risk or whether you are pushed on by a tremendous drive, an obsessive drive, you can't, you just have to, even if it's a big risk, invent another kind of, a special identity for yourself. Even if you are turning the world upside-down and even if you are working with the bizarre ideas, you have to invent a kind of role for yourself.

On the other hand, the interest in your work in Germany did have a number of consequences, not just the exhibitions, I mean they were big exhibitions, the first one at the National Gallery, and the concurrent one at the Kurtfurstichkabinett[ph]...

That's right.

Of your complete prints, although they, not surprisingly, left one or two out I think, simply because they didn't know of their existence, and you might even have forgotten about it by that time.

That's right.

But, I mean certainly the most complete exhibition of your graphic work that there has ever been, and it looks splendid. The big exhibition at the National Gallery, and then there were the architects who became interested in your work.

That's right. And then there were other exhibitions. I mean not that long ago there was an exhibition in Edinburgh, and then, I'm not quite sure if that went on to Munich to the Lenbachhaus, and then went to Cologne, that was only a few years ago, and then went to Lisle, travelled round a bit.

That was `Recurring Themes' wasn't it.

That's right.

But, what I wanted to know really was, whether, because after all, earlier in your career you had been very involved with architects, then there were a number of years when you didn't seem to have so much to do with architecture, at least not in terms of your work, but here you were in Berlin, and it started up again. I remember you doing a mural for the side of a house in more or less the, off the centre of the western part of Berlin.

Berlin. That was a competition.

But it was an architectural competition.

That's right, that's right.

And, you got a number of other architectural commissions, didn't you, while you were there, or am I mixing this up?

In Berlin?

Not necessarily in Berlin but while you were living in Berlin for other places.

Yes. No, I think much later on, when I was teaching in Cologne, I did something for a new radio station, a mosaic, and then there was a children's playground I think later on. And I did a very big project in Cologne, the Reingarten.

Maybe I'm...

Running things together.

I'm running things together, and thinking that this started in Berlin where it didn't.

Yes, I think even what you are talking about may not be in that book, I mean I think it comes after the book.

Yes. But certainly, not only were you making large number of wooden reliefs in Berlin...

Mm.

Which you are still making, I mean you mentioned just now that you were going to do one, or you are doing one at the moment for, I forget, you mentioned it only about five minutes ago you were doing a relief.

Give me another clue.

Work that you are actually doing at the moment. You are doing the collecting box for the Royal Academy...

That's right.

And you said you were doing some reliefs... Never mind. But there was also this extra spurt to your graphic activity, not only `Calcium Night Light', the Ravel Suite, which was...

That's right, well that was a tiny spin-off. That was also listening to the Third Programme, This Week's Composer was Ravel.

But they were, I mean they were beautiful prints.

Well, not bad.

Not as good as the Charles Ives you think?

Well, I mean there are minor, little minor things.

Yes. Well how would...I mean what were the consequences in your view of your period in Berlin then, fourteen months away, coming back now and again I assume?

Mm.

Although not very often. I mean you didn't come back very often, did you?

Oh once when Helga Retzer[ph] got killed in a car crash I went to her funeral.

Was that while you were in Berlin?

No no, that was when, after I came back to England and she...

No, well I meant when you were living in Berlin, you didn't come back to England very much.

Yes, I came.....

End of F4995 Side A

F4995 Side B

It's working away, good-o. You were commuting, because you said something about a sabbatical.

Well I was still attached, as I am now, I am still attached to the Royal College of Art, and I mean my boss at that time was David Queensberry, and I think that as long as I went back for these important meetings, such as interviewing new students, things like that, and also, while I was in England I made a really decent input, it was OK me being in Berlin. And of course, I think flying was slightly easier at the time, I think you just went to Tempelhof, and British Airways, it was a non-stop flight, and rather nice, but I flew back and forward a great deal. And don't forget, I was still married at that time, so I had some kind of family commitments at that time.

Sure, and I mean, at last two of your girls were still at school.

That's right, and at one point I think they came over, I mean more than once, they came over twice, as a family.

You can actually, just as a footnote, fly to Tempelhof again, from City Airport.

How come? I thought it was turned into a military airport.

It's been opened up again, because they haven't got nearly enough airport capability in Berlin again now.

What, at the new one?

At the new one, yes, since Berlin has opened up, and there's this one firm called Contiflug[ph] that flies daily from the City Airport to Tempelhof, and it's amazingly good, because you go from, well it's quicker to get there than it is to Heathrow, at least from where I am, and within an hour and a half you are actually where you want to be in Berlin.

Mm, I see.

It's a very good...and...

Is it like the old airport, or have they all modernised it?

No, it's just like...it's just like...

I used to think it was adorable.

Yes.

And had lots of little silly boutiques.

That's right.

Selling kind of souvenirs, gee-gaws.

That's right. They haven't got so many of those, I think they've cut down on those. But they haven't changed the plan at all, I mean in fact it's very much like it was in the Third Reich days. It was open...

And have you done that?

Yes, only once, but I thought, this is absolutely the best way to go to Berlin now. And I'll certainly try...

I mean you save money, it's in the middle of the city.

It's in the middle of the city, and you save money too, because Contiflug[ph] are always offering special offers.

Oh I'll bear that in mind.

Yes.

And of course Berlin has changed radically, hasn't it?

[BREAK IN RECORDING - TELEPHONE]

Yes, well so, you are commuting backwards and forwards.

That's right, which I find quite easy, and I used to be taken to the airport by Helga in an ancient Carmen Ghia.

So, looking back on that time in Berlin, fourteen months, what did it give you, and how do you remember it in your mind, for what most clearly?

Well, I remember a kind of wonderful lifestyle where one could have a kind of floor, because one had all that kind of space, and the kind of nature of the culture at the time. I remember one had a wonderful kind of groups of people that one used to see. There seemed to be in a strange way, because of a kind of concentration, when there was an opening, some people found this irritating but when there was an opening, there would always be the same 25 people. And in a way that was quite nice, you know, because it was like family in a sense, but what I remember, which nobody ever told me about, what how nice going out to Dahlem, where the museums were, and what a fantastically high quality they were, I mean ethnographic and everything, and wonderful shops with...the shop was brilliant, with not only postcards but wonderful records and books, so that was marvellous. And a fabulous restaurant where you could have the most incredible brunch. And I remember Charlottenburg, and there was even, it was a tiny Bauhaus museum by the Egyptian museum at this time, but... And there was also a lot of bizarre cinemas; I remember seeing an early Fritz Lang there which was very long, called `Gold', do you know a Fritz Lang film called `Gold'? Very bizarre, very, wonderful. But it had all kinds of, a kind of feeling of Germany in the Thirties Berlin at that time. And it seemed to be very neglected, in fact some of the streets seemed to be gas-lit. There was a wonderful restaurant in the [INAUDIBLE] called Exile[ph], run by two Austrian eccentrics, walking distance.

Ozzie Wienertz[ph]?

Ozzie Wiener[ph].

Yes, a madman.

But it was a particular kind of...and also one, as my friends in Berlin, they used to claim they got claustrophobic, but I don't know if that was very subjective, but I mean they always ended[??] me, because I used to fly in and out with a certain kind of ease and confidence.

There weren't many other artists in Berlin, or any rate not many [INAUDIBLE].

There was a cluster left over from the DAD, and I had a few friends, but there was the remarkable Ed Keenolds[ph] was there at the time, and of course there was this big foundry which I used a bit called Noak[ph]. There was, also the zoo was very bizarre in Berlin, the Berlin zoo, with a bizarre aquarium.

When it all came to an end after fourteen months, did you regret it, did you...?

Mm, sort of, but I mean I was...I wasn't...I was coming back to my studio here, and I was coming back to the Royal College, and I was coming back to college life, and I was coming back to family life, so, putting all these things together, there was no time to...it was an episode. But it's not something, I mean some of the people who stayed on were really Eastern bloc people who were just going back to zero. And I felt it was fine, I had had the right amount of time. In the same way I had a year in 1960 in Hamburg, which was quite fruitful, and yet after a year, I was asked if I wanted to have another year and I felt a year was enough somehow.

And, as soon as you came back, your life then fell into the familiar pattern?

That's right.

London during the week...

And...that's right.

Country at the weekend.

Yes. And I did a bit of the Engineers at that time. But I think I was running out, running out of ideas by then.

What, generally?

No...

For the Engineers?

For the Engineers. I mean I couldn't quite develop that vernacular any more.

We keep coming back to the Royal College of Art, and you said how important it has been for you over the years.

Mm, and still is.

It's strange that you never ever taught sculpture there.

Well I think, I mean the reason that I went to Glass and Ceramics, I was invited by David Queensberry, and as there is now there, there's still a lot of people who do sculpture in Glass and Ceramics, and in a way they do a kind of sculpture that might not get into the Sculpture School because of reasons of fashion. So I feel like a guardian angel in that way, but the original reason for going there was to deal with, to be sort of fresh, a fresh view at making ceramic objects, and I mean I've been, what I've often found, that the Sculpture School was, in the early days were going through very very experimental periods, whereas there's something very fundamental about the Ceramic School with glass and furnaces, and there's something very biblical in a way. I still think it's very attractive, people making bowls and decorating them.

Apart from the fact that you obviously like it there, and it has provided you with facilities, what do you think about the Royal College of Art, what's been your view of it over the years?

Well I think it's a very nice tool if you've got imagination. I think it's also, the library if you're interested in art books; I think it's a very easy library that you can actually browse in. And I mean I find it comfortable including a canteen, and also it's kind of, young people, whatever you may say, I think that some of the young people are very attractive and very nice to talk to.

But what about...

You don't have to go to the senior common room for lunch, that's not necessary.

But what about the place as an art school, as an educational institution?

Well I think when you've got your head down and you're concentrating on, I mean I don't go and see what they're up to in the Film School for example, nor do I even go to the Painting School, but as I'm having quite a lot of work cast in the foundry in the Sculpture School I often can't resist walking around and seeing what they are all up to, and it seems to be quite a catholic, interesting group of ideas really.

Do you think art can be taught at all?

I think that, well what most young people, I mean we have to remember the Royal College is post-graduate, so most of the people have had three years BA, so they've been taught something, or they've learnt something by that time. But what the people want after BA, if they are accepted, it's not necessarily a diploma, but what they want, it doesn't really matter in the end whether they are accepted by the Academy schools of the Slade; what they really want is a grant and a shed, something to keep the rain off, so they can develop themselves. But I think, that is a prime role I think of the art school is to provide facilities, and you have to teach yourself I think. But I also think after you get, if you're any good, if you're any good I think when you leave you don't...it's only the bad people who say that's the end of it; if you're any good you just carry on teaching yourself, but that would include being a writer I would have thought, after you leave Cambridge or Oxford, you either stop and you get on the treadwheel, actually particularly if you haven't got a tremendous talent you get on the treadwheel of survival.

Mm. I am wondering, it's now 20 past 5, and if we've got to meet this bloke at half-past...

Yes, OK.

And since we've come to a kind of natural break anyway...

That's right.

End of F4995 Side B

Tape 8 Side B

It's working away, good-o. You were commuting, because you said something about a sabbatical.

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You don't have to go to the senior common room for lunch, that's not necessary.

But what about the place as an art school, as an educational institution?

Well I think when you've got your head down and you're concentrating on, I mean I don't go and see what they're up to in the Film School for example, nor do I even go to the Painting School, but as I'm having quite a lot of work cast in the foundry in the Sculpture School I often can't resist walking around and seeing what they are all up to, and it seems to be quite a catholic, interesting group of ideas really.

Do you think art can be taught at all?

I think that, well what most young people, I mean we have to remember the Royal College is post-graduate, so most of the people have had three years BA, so they've been taught something, or they've learnt something by that time. But what the people want after BA, if they are accepted, it's not necessarily a diploma, but what they want, it doesn't really matter in the end whether they are accepted by the Academy schools of the Slade; what they really want is a grant and a shed, something to keep the rain off, so they can develop themselves. But I think, that is a prime role I think of the art school is to provide facillities, and you have to teach yourself I think. But I also think after you get, if you're any good, if you're any good I think when you leave you don't...it's only the bad people who say that's the end of it; if you're any good you just carry on teaching yourself, but that would include being a writer I would have thought, after you leave Cambridge or Oxford, you either stop and you get on the treadwheel, actually particularly if you haven't got a tremendous talent you get on the treadwheel of survival.

Mm. I am wondering, it's now 20 past 5, and if we've got to meet this bloke at half-past...

Yes, OK.

And since we've come to a kind of natural break anyway...

That's right.

End of Tape 8 Side B

F4996 Side A

It's the 30th of December 1994, and we're already actually on...

Nearly half-past 11 in the morning.

Nearly half-past 9.

Are you warm enough?

Yes I'm fine thanks.

OK.

I don't mean nearly half-past 9, I mean tape 9 already, we've done nine hours, or almost.

Mhm. How many pages would that be? How many letters, how many pages do you reckon?

I hate to tell you, about 600.

Really?

Yes.

That's quite a chunk.

It's a huge chunk.

And what are we aiming for, how many tapes?

Well, I think another three.

Are you sure?

Yes, I think so.

Well we can review it, because you can always, as they say, have a rattar[ph] or an apologia, or what's it, afterword.

Yes that's right, a nachwort[ph].

A nachwort[ph].

Because almost certainly there will be things I image that you will want to say that you haven't said.

Yes, which are probably quite important.

Yes, that I've been really probably too stupid or lax to ask you.

But I mean can you remember what...I can't...did you keep a log of what we talked about roughly?

I have kept a log.

And what was the last one, I've totally forgotten?

The last one, we were talking about the Seventies, we talked about you in Berlin, and we talked about the prints, and also the reliefs, except...

And ‘Calcium Light Night’.

And ‘Calcium Light Night’. Except, one thing I didn't do, and maybe you would like to talk about this, I certainly would, is the way in which you actually made those wooden reliefs, which I think were some of the most beautiful things that you've done for a long time.

Well I think, I think last time we were looking we were looking at the Duman[ph] book by Konnertz and we were looking at that image which I found unbelievable, this one image from Kosmos[ph], I think a German kind of encyclopaedia, or a weekly, bound, which, I suppose the...I'm trying to find a word for it, I sort of see it as the mechanisation of Europe, the sort of industrial Germany, cheap production, and [INAUDIBLE] great interest in machines and sister images, and there's this image of some rendering of, which is of organ music in visual terms, and I think we did say, it could have even come out of that strange, mystical thread in German cultural life which included Steiner. And also one has to think about...and Johannes Seaton[ph], which one forgets is the first phase of the Bauhaus.

Of the Bauhaus, mm.

And I think there is sort of...I think that image was also used, the same image was used as a tapestry in the...every Bauhaus book shows that famous tapestry which as you said had been re-done by Liberty's. It's very moving, and it's a series of wobbly geometrics.

It's a very very similar image, yes.

That's right. And anyway that's what started me on having some kind of imagery for the reliefs, and I just copied it, and I did, as I thought if was musical one was able to sort of play music with these same forms, and I used that as a basis for the castle in Cleish, and it just went on and on. And I also thought it was decorative, and I quite liked the idea of, it seemed to me to be involved with the decorative was a taboo area in the arts.

Yes it's a dirty word, isn't it.

It was. I don't think so much now. But it certainly has its history in modern art, like Sophia Delaunay[??] and other people. Balla was a great decorative artist. There's lots of others, felt I was...I mean Balla of course is a wide span from, like Boccioni, they've all got a wide span in their images.

And it was a continuation of the kind of collage principle in a way, wasn't it, because you had a number, a fairly large number, of standard shapes in different sizes...

Mm.

Which you...

Could combine in different ways.

Yes.

And I even did wood cuts as a kind of, because they were in black and white and rather severe and geometric, a kind of homage to Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

Which was what the portfolio was called I think I remember.

That's right, I think so.

And of course also, it was almost infinitely re-usable in the sense that you could transform wooden reliefs into bronze.

Which I did, I did that in Berlin, I made that my task and I did several reliefs which were shown at the exhibition, at the Nationalgalerie.

I think they bought one, didn't they?

Yes I think so, yes.

I seem to remember seeing one up there, one of these bronzes.

And cast by Noak[ph].

But you also did some of these reliefs as architectural commissions didn't you, you did some doors.

Did some doors for Edinburgh.

For the Hunterian in...

For the Hunterian Library.

And did you do doors for the patent[??] office in Munich, or...? I've never seen them.

No, I didn't do any doors there. I did a large iron sculpture called `Camera', and then another one called `Leonardo' much later on.

Yes.

And then I did, curiously enough, almost, but, aluminium reliefs for the new airport was the sort of tail end of that.

I've certainly never seen those either.

Oh yes, they're in one of the, curiously enough the British Airways departure lounge. And that was also rather the same idea of the wood cuts which was a series of geometric patterns

that could be inter-changed; in a technical sense that's got advantages in the sense that you can combine and cast one element three times and turn it upside-down.

And the original elements presumably were cut with a fretsaw.

The original ones, yes.

From plywood.

Absolutely.

And then you had one or two plastic found elements from, I don't know, they seemed to me to be either from toys or from baskets[??] [INAUDIBLE].

What, in the reliefs?

Yes.

Mm, can't...

No?

No. I think this whole thing about the reliefs was, they were all kind of inventions, and we had been talking about biggish ones, including the one at the airport, but I also did a lot of tiny ones which fitted into pencil boxes, and that I thought was nice. I mean now that I've done some large etchings and I'm now going to do some tiny ones, and of course, I think that's one way of re-discovering ideas is by suddenly going tall and small. And I think Giacometti did that when he started from scratch, he did tiny matchsticks figures on big bases.

I was looking, that's why you found it on your desk, I was looking at one of these small reliefs, which presumably fitted into, or still does fit into a pencil box.

That's right.

Did you sell those, or have you still got most of them?

No I did then, I sort of would give them to, say I gave one to Rudy Zeitz[ph] which he uses when he travels, he always takes one with him. It's like a sort of modern icon, and like, in the

olden days when you travelled you would have a crucifix, when you travelled, and this is just, not exactly a modern crucifix but an icon.

Rudy Zeitz[ph] was the rector of the Academy of Art in Munich.

That's right, for ten years, two groups of five.

Where you became professor, but that's a bit later on. I want to talk about something else first, but before I do, it seems to me that you, like me indeed, have always been fascinated by Germany.

Well I've been...I was taken there, I mean in a way...I mean being a war-child in a sense, the...well you have burnt into your psyche the whole idea of German imagery, and, I mean even when I went to Hamburg, my first trip to Germany was, even in the early Fifties, to do the fountain, a fountain, but it's just, the German iconography, even the way the Germans did numbers and all that, I found gripping and fascinating. But the whole idea of seeing films when you are young was the dreaded enemy. It was interesting to be in a sense in the middle of the enemy's country, that's the way I was brought up.

But whatever the reason, Germany has played a very important role in your life.

Well for some reason I was embraced by them, and I mean I've been snuggled in its breast for half my life, beginning by being asked by a man who became very important on the German cultural landscape, Werner...

Haftmann[ph].

That's right. And then he became much later on a director of the Nationalgalerie in Berlin. But there was another man, a younger man called Wielan Schmidt[ph] who also became quite an influential man, and he succeeded Rudy Zeitz[ph] as the rector at the Academy in Munich.

I don’t' know whether you would accept that you are perhaps better known in Germany than you are here even.

Mm...I think that's changing, having done sort of, some sculptures on the London landscape, or even the Underground, beginning to get quite well-known.

But there was a time, certainly, wasn't there, when most of your commissions came from German sources.

Well, I think Henry Moore at one point said that he had more work abroad than he had in Britain, and that might even be true now. I mean I think some of, one of the biggest sculptures, modern sculptures ever done I think is in Bonn, an enormous Henry Moore.

Outside the Chancellor's residence.

That's right. And I think also most German museums, including Munich, have got a Henry Moore parked outside, a reclining figure. And there's one even in the garden of, rather a largish one, of the garden of the Art Pinakothek. But I mean when you have a very underrated, a great city like Munich, I mean it's a city which in a way has bent considerably towards the arts, it's very easy to like Munich, in a way, I mean, when you think of that just, the Glyptothek, and you think of Lenbachhaus, I mean it's a city that not only embraces artists but the arts itself, and the Nationalmuseum, or the Stadtmuseum where I did this exhibition called Noah's Ark, I mean, they really like to grasp the arts and hug it to their bosom in a way that seems to be different from England.

Mm. Munich was later. In terms of Germany, after your experience in Berlin you came back to England for some time.

That's right. Then I went back to teach in Cologne.

Exactly, and this is really what...

Early Eighties that would have been. And that was while I was there that I used to go to Salzburg, which was run by Wielan Schmidt[ph], and I did two bouts of six weeks.

This is the summer academy?

The summer academy, where a lot of artists, but I mean, continuing with this theme of doing these things abroad which don't seem to exist in England. I mean there's no international summer exhibition at all, and I think it's a wonderful scheme and I think started by Kokoschka.

Started by Kokoschka, called The School of Vision I think, Schule de [INAUDIBLE].

Probably, probably.

Yes, in the Fifties.

And of course Salzburg is an ideal place to have it, they've got this big empty fortress, ex-fortress, which are all the classrooms, and then down on the town they've got these excellent, of the highest sort of music where the aficionados go from all over the world, to the opera, and used to be Karajan's province for a while, but...

Of course the international summer academy takes place at roughly the same time as the...

The festival.

The Salzburg Festival.

It overlaps.

Yes. What took you to Munich then? I mean was it again an invitation which came out of the blue?

Well I was already...I had been asked...I think that, it no longer exists for some reason, the Werkschule in Cologne, although it's quite a good history going back to the Twenties, and I think it was, I think in the late attempt to make it stimulating and interesting, they asked a few foreign people to go there, and I think, that was slightly, Gruwerker, who I knew very well...

Stefan Gruwerker.

I gave him space in my studio in Berlin, and he invited me, but I had to go through the same process of being interviewed where, like all the other applications you would...you have to be agreeable, you have to put your case forward publicly to the students and to the staff of what you are about, if you talk about your...and they judge. So I slithered through that and became...the only professorship that was open there at the time was for, curiously enough, ceramics, and so I was professor of ceramics for a few years. And then, I knew...I did a competition with Schneider Wessling[ph] called the Reingarten[ph], which was built eventually, it was about 18, 19 big bronze geometric sculptures cast in Düsseldorf by a wonderful man, and, who later on did some other, did a big foot and a big hand for Edinburgh, outside the cathedral. But I was asked by Schneider Wessling[ph], who was already...I think he was rector, curiously enough, at the Academy in Munich, and they had

some vacancy there. Jacobson I think was on his way out, and Jacobson I think held on rather too long in order to qualify for a pension. But I should have gone to Munich before. But I still had to go through the ropes of being tried by the students and all that.

In Munich too?

In Munich too. And it got down to two people, it was me and a mad Belgian artist called Panamarenco[ph].

Oh yes.

Who I think would have...wouldn't have managed that whole thing at all, because there's a fair amount of administration and things like that.

Yes. You weren't very happy in Cologne I remember.

No, I think...and because the only professorship was...the only professorship was ceramics, there was a man who had been waiting to be, who worked there, was a man who had been waiting, I can even remember his name, Cozler[ph], had been waiting for ages to be professor, I was appointed over his head, and I think this was a most terrible, terrible disappointment, rather like what's happened at the National Portrait Gallery now. And he, I mean, and he had a lot of friends in the Academy, so they all made it difficult. But I mean as I was not that involved, entirely involved with the school, and had my other life in London, it didn't really worry me that much, but it certainly precipitated by departure from Munich.

How long were you there for, two years?

No, a bit longer than that, three or four.

And you once again had a little bed in the school did you, or did you...?

No I didn't, no that wasn't possible, that wasn't possible there. I had a ghastly little apartment nearby, and then I found a much nicer one on a sixth floor, a modern one, which I still have as a matter of fact, because it's still cheap and it's, I've been advised to keep it on for a bit longer until I finally decide to pull out. But there it is.

Yes. Well actually I would think it's a jolly good thing to have, and presumably is worth a lot more now than...

Well it's just rented monthly. But it was absolutely wonderful for a while.

Do you sub-let it, or...?

No no, it's just empty, but I think under the German tax...I think I...if I do a project in Germany I think I have to pay tax, and it counts as tax deductible, that sort of thing.

As you do now, don't you.

But it's much cheaper, Munich, it would be I think, a similar apartment in Munich would be four times, would be quadruple to what's paid there. Munich's very expensive.

Well the Reingarten[ph] project, which was this, a kind of public park along the cathedral side of the Rhine, isn't it.

That's right. And it's behind, it's all part in a way of re-constructing that bit of, the Philharmonie have got their own hall, their own hall, and also the famous museum, Ludvig, which is designed by Bussmann[ph].

Yes. This was the major project you did while you were in Cologne.

Yes, I did something else, I did a children's playground in aluminium in Pesch[ph], one of the suburbs there, but that was the major one. And I did a small version of that in Munich much later on which was paid for by the bank, commissioned by the bank, and it was a present to the city, and because it's got water it needs a little bit of maintenance, the city looks after it. And that was also cast in Düsseldorf, it's about five geometric things for children to play on.

You continued to come back at regular intervals because of the Royal College of Art.

Mm.

Because you were still heavily involved there.

Well I was...I think, things were very...I mean I still officially, at the Royal College of Art when I was having my year in Berlin, I used to go back and forward, to the envy of people who used to say, the real Berliners, we used to pretend to be depressed because they felt walled in. Maybe it's true.

Yes, I don't know, because after all West Berlin's a very [INAUDIBLE].

And of course at that time one flew in and out of Tempelhof at that time, which was always interesting.

How about teaching in Cologne? Did you not enjoy that too?

Well it was very difficult, because also when you think of the state of the arts, you have to go, you have to reel back to what the state of the arts, what Dokumenta looked like at that time, it would have been...it might even have been something like the tail end of the Seventies, '79 going into the early Eighties. And I think that, maybe this is the reason it was wound up; I think there was a lot of free and easy, the rector there was called Karl Marx, who did slightly Baconesque paintings and at one time, he had a moment of glory when he was...they tried to have a group called the German Fauves, the German Fauves, but it didn't quite work somehow, there was something that didn't quite work out, I mean from the point of view of being a key figure in Dokumenta. The focus and the searchlight moved somewhere else, fifa[ph], pink, these worries[??]. I don't know if it has something to do with retrospectives in America, or having extremely muscular dealers, because the growth of German modern art must be parallel with the growth of the German art dealing exhibition.

And with the growth of the German economy I suspect as well.

And, possibly, and the banks, I think the banks were buying, or are buying.

Mm. But the Werkschule was absorbed by the Fachhochschule I think wasn't it?

That's right, yes.

And, I mean I don't know, was there a kind of fine art section in the Werkschule?

Well, you mean sculpture and...?

Yes.

Of course, oh yes. But you were saying, at that time, you were saying about teaching, I mean at that time I don't think there was, as possibly when one went to the Salzburg, people didn't really want teaching, people, particularly the particular kind of students that went to this

summer academy of six weeks who could afford it, just really wanted to have a kind of working holiday, but they didn't want to use their brains too much. And as a matter of fact in the class next to me, like George Eiseler's[ph] class...

This is in Salzburg now.

In Salzburg, there was just a hard group of people who had been there before and were using the model to do water-colours that they could sell, so in a roundabout way it was a free holiday. But the whole idea of exploration, I tried that in Salzburg by trying to do a class on still life, the examination of the still life, and I took a hundred postcards and so on, set up still lifes, but most of the class, and I tried desperately to have a masterclass, but it didn't quite work there, and people just wanted to do, which I suppose is misinterpretation of modernism, they wanted to do what they wanted when they felt like it, if they felt like it. I mean the whole idea of free expression has become intertwined with amateurism.

Do you find that as well in places like the Royal College of Art?

No, the Royal College of Art is unbelievably, I mean apart from staff assessments and things like that, and it's also, I think going over to the American semester system, or whatever it is they have in America, alumni, they use, but I think maybe it's simply because the computer discs are cheaper, but it's going over to another system. But I mean there's much more controls; I think that even in ceramics there are projects, competitions, and I think people can go for business management and so on. I think it's...I think there is a new flavour there of what might be called professionalism, or let's say coping with the life they may have to deal with when they leave.

And you approve of this?

In a roundabout way, but I mean, as I said, I must approve of it in view of what I said about Salzburg, just... And also I found when I was in California in '68, that was the apotheosis of free expressionism, and I think that that just led nowhere. I'm not so sure about whether you can...about teaching art, but I think there are certain ways of learning through good people somehow. I think, was it Black Mountain that Johns and Rauschenberg, and there was Albers, I think, if you've got good artists perhaps you can pick up something by osmosis.

Yes. It may have been a false impression, but I got the feeling that when you were in Cologne things actually weren't going very well for you here in England. You were finding it difficult to...get work is the wrong expression, because I know you never, as it were,

consciously go out and try and get work, but after all, I mean you've got to live from something.

Well, when I did this in '64, [INAUDIBLE], the Wittgenstein portfolio that seemed to sell quite well. There were certain things along that seemed to go along quite well.

But by the end of the Sixties...

I never, I never really felt... I also had a patron, Gabrielle Keiller[ph], who kind of kept my ship on an even keel, but I was always quite happy because of my background to live quite frugally. I've never gone Hollywood like some artists and had fancy cars, or rented villas, I've never done anything mad, so that...

Well, on the other hand, I mean you've always been tremendously generous, and I mean I remember you...

Well I still am.

You still are. I remember you taking eight, nine, ten people out to dinner.

But that was because I had arranged by them having a sculpture, I had a large credit account, so it wasn't exactly I was putting my hand into my wallet, it was some kind of barter system.

It's still very generous though.

Yes, probably.

Gabrielle Keiller[ph] bought regularly from you, did she?

Particularly when I was, say, overdrawn at the bank she would bridge the gap, and most of these works are now on loan in Edinburgh.

She alas is now dead.

Is she?

Oh...

I thought she just had very severe Alzheimer's.

Oh, I thought she died.

Not yet. Well you may be...have picked something up. Where did you hear that?

No, I mean I thought I heard it from Caroline Cuthbert, but you would...you've seen here much more recently.

Well, I think when you have Alzheimer's you're nearly there somehow.

Yes. She was the widow...

Of Alexander Keiller[ph].

Who was the marmalade man.

But he had sold out long, as a young man he had sold all that out to, I don't know, I think that it's changed hands several times.

And you first met her in the Fifties?

Well, no, something like, she went with Nigel Henderson's mother, Win Henderson, to see the Biennale 1960, so I really knew her from 1960.

And she started to buy your work...

That's right, yes. And I encouraged her also to buy other works, such as, I mean things, via the Pace Gallery of things, via Robert Frazer, like Tongui[ph], Léger.

Magritte I remember she had.

That's right.

Some very nice pieces.

Bacon, I encouraged her to buy Bacon.

Yes.

Which was one of the pops. It seemed a lot of money at the time, but she paid 9,000 for it.

Yes. And would you say that she was your most important patron?

Yes I think so, yes.

Have you ever had any other patrons remotely...?

Well I had Jane Drew as a kind of patron, but I mean most of...she commissioned me originally to do the fountain for the Festival of Britain, and...

She was the architect, she was a partner of Maxwell Fry was she, or what?

She was the wife of Maxwell Fry.

My ignorance, yes.

That's right. And also she had gone to, she is still living and well and practising, and she used to go to India when I knew her and work with Le Corbusier at Chandigarh. But I think that when the war ended, they were more or less top dogs on this scene and they were commissioned to do, I mean after the war Britain had colonies still, and they did universities in Africa, whole universities which were all, at that time seemed avant-garde because they were simply modern, flat, rectangular, carefully worked out.

Quite early on, I forget the date, you did a collage for the architectural practice, a kind of collage mural didn't you?

That's right, yes. And these were all done for fun, really. And her great friend of course was Peter Gregory, who is one of the founder members of the ICA, and also I think part-owner of this wonderful London Gallery that was spearheaded by Roland Penrose and Peter Watson to bring modern art and Surrealism to England, which never sold by the way, they sold very badly.

Yes. Come to think of it, architects have been important for you throughout your career. I mean not only Jane Drew who we've already mentioned, but the Smithsons you were very friendly with at one time.

Mm, yes.

I don't know whether you ever collaborated with them on anything.

Well I collaborated a bit, say on Huntstanton, they won this competition, and I did...

This is the famous school.

I think I [INAUDIBLE] at the Central at the time, and I used their facilities, the screen printing facilities, to do a lot of curtains, which were never put up, I think they were considered a bit too arts and crafts.

Yes. Of course, again it might be a false impression but I thought that one of the important results of you going backwards and forwards to Germany was that you started collaborating with architects again.

Well I also did with the Smithsons an exhibition called Parallel of Life and Art for the ICA.

That was in the Fifties.

That was in the Fifties. And then I also did a ceiling, they had a great friend called Jenkins who was an engineer at Ove Arup's, brilliant man, long since gone, and I did, I also printed at the Central School a ceiling, a decorated ceiling.

He worked, and this is something actually...

And Bassmann did a drinks cabinet for the same room.

Oh I see.

End of Tape 9 Side A

F4996 Side B

.....talking about one of the gaps which will no doubt stick out like a saw thumb when we see the transcripts. We haven't talked at all about any of those exhibitions that you contributed to in the Fifties which were directly or indirectly connected with the ICA. You've already mentioned Parallel of Life and Art, which looked at now in retrospect was tremendously important.

Mm.

And you mentioned Jenkins, because he was a collaborator, I think with you, on the now famous, This Is Tomorrow exhibition at the Whitechapel.

Yes, that's right.

And it's become particularly famous I suppose because of one installation, it was a series of installations...

Which was at the Whitechapel.

At the Whitechapel, the one which you didn't contribute to but Richard Hamilton did, which is now seen as being one of the sort of sources of Pop art.

That's right.

But your contribution, which you did with the Smithsons and Nigel Henderson and Jenkin, I can't remember his...Roland...can't remember his first name, but was quite different from this, wasn't it?

Mm, absolutely. Because I was thinking in terms of, [INAUDIBLE] perhaps we were thinking in terms of what might have been, has become, called Arte Povera, because there was a sort of basic art. And I think we had this shadow of, perhaps it might have been the atom bomb and things like that; there was a kind of cold war feeling about art. And there was also an idea bout rubbish, because the plastic roof of the hut had a lot of things that Nigel Henderson had found and we just threw it on the roof.

It was corrugated.

Corrugated plastic. And then there was a sand, a kind of sand floor, which we had objects buried in, and I made some objects which were kind of round plaster objects with drawings on them.

Like archaeological finds.

That's right. And it was kind of, it was more Art Povera than Pop art.

Yes it was basically this little shack, opened at one end...

I mean you could walk round it.

Mm.

And also you could see yourself, there were walls which had been given by the manufacturer, of aluminium covered plywood, so you could see yourself. It was supposed to be like a theatrical...it wasn't an exhibition about Pop art or the cinema, it was about some kind of bizarre theatrical experience.

But it was the kind of exhibition that one never sees now, or almost never sees, inasmuch as each of these installations, I don't know how many there were now, six or something...

Well I thought the vernacular was kind of taken up under the heading of Happenings, Performance art, like when Vostel[ph] had an exhibition in Berlin, you had to walk on top of a lot of broken plates, things like that.

Mm. But it was, each installation was a collaboration between an architect or architects, an engineer, and artists.

That's right.

Rather unusual.

Well I think the thing was slightly spearheaded by the Smithsons, because the Smithsons, I think they've got a complete archive, they've kept a total archive, they've kept every newspaper clipping about themselves, and anything to do with themselves, including `This Is Tomorrow'.

Now Alison Smithson is dead, isn't she.

That's right.

She died...

Quite recently, this year.

Yes. But Peter Smithson's still alive I guess.

Yes.

But presumably not working.

I don't know how he...I haven't visited their house for a long time.

Am I wrong them in thinking that Germany gave you reason to collaborate with architects again?

Mm, not really, not really. I mean, do you mean the relief at the airport?

I not only mean the relief at the airport, I mean that big mural that you did on the end of a house in Berlin, and you did...

Mm, that was a competition that I put, but I had this wonderful girlfriend called Elga Retzer[ph] who had kept one informed, and filled in all the forms and so on.

But you did, I mean you have done quite a lot of things, you've already mentioned objects that children can play in and around.

Yes.

You did a monument, a Bruckner monument [INAUDIBLE].

That's Austria.

In Austria rather than Germany. And you've done one or two other things.

But that's often like, say the orange sculpture at Linz, which has often got to do with a visionary, it just needs one man, and the one man was a professor who had trained apprentices for the... A lot of people don't know, there's one of the biggest iron works, steel works in Linz, and so that he had this idea called Foro Metal[ph] with a whole, just a simple little place where he asked, got money from the...and it could be well imitated, he asked a group of so-called international sculptors to come and work in Linz and make things. And I used, I more or less made a model which was copied in cast iron. And I think the full size version was made by apprentices who were attached to the steel works. And that was my first cast iron sculpture, but that would never have been born, or even all these sculptures. And they had an interesting condition that you could, that the sculpture belonged to the artist after two years, so that in a sense it was borrowed by another visionary, an art historian in Munich who went to Berlin, but he instigated borrowing the Linz one which was in Munich. And then, then we used the money and decided to sell that to use the money to have a new cast iron sculpture from Munich, which was called `Leonardo' which was cast in a foundry that no longer exists, which was made up from patterns, tubes and two spheres, and it's there now.

Mm. But is the...the Bruckner monument's still there, isn't it?

Absolutely, that's, absolutely, and it went back.

It amazes me that it could be moved, because presumably it's [INAUDIBLE].

Well, they can move tons now, they can move tons now. It never seemed to be a problem. But also, when I won this competition to make an iron sculpture for the Patentown[ph] that's called `Camera', I went back to Linz and they didn't seem to be that interested in making one, so I left all the models in the technical...I didn't want to take the models back, I had the moulds in London, so I left all the models in the cloakroom of the wonderful technical museum in Vienna.

And they're still there?

Well, I hope so.

Yes.

But I mean I then had to root around to find somebody to do the cast iron sculpture, and curiously enough, having had the aluminium doors cast at Henshaws[ph] in Edinburgh, they pointed to friends of theirs, Bobby Taylor's in Larbert, which is a point between Glasgow and

Edinburgh, and they were founded on castings for the shipyards, and of course all that world had dried up, including doing these cast iron kitchen ranges. The history of the Scottish tenements is all landed in with these cast iron kitchen ranges which were their hearts, was the everything to the, making it comfortable in these one-roomed and two-roomed plants.

That had to be [INAUDIBLE] and blacked with a [INAUDIBLE].

All that, all that, absolutely.

Yes. But, this brings me to another point. I mean I find it difficult to imagine anybody ever wanting to be a sculptor as opposed to a painter; I mean it's much easier being a painter, because you don't need very much equipment, whereas you've just been talking about finding places to cast this or cast the other; there's a tremendous amount of organisation involved.

Well, after a while it becomes, curiously enough it becomes a way of life, and you don't even think about it after, say, you've been doing it for twenty, thirty years it's automatic really, and it's never seen as a trial. And also perhaps, it has its points which leaves painting behind, in a sense, you can make a large foot and which children play on, or a large hand, and it has this kind of life, and it also can be affected by light. But I think that leaves...I mean painting is slightly more cerebral, I'm not that romantic about sculpture, but it has its...there are reasons for doing it.

You have from time to time had some secretarial help. I remember...

That's right.

When I first met you, there was an American art historian who was actually doing a doctoral dissertation on your...

Diane Kirkpatrick.

Diane Kirkpatrick, and it eventually appeared as a book.

Yes.

And she was sort of organising you a bit, wasn't she?

Maybe a bit, yes, maybe a bit.

Acting as a kind of...

That's right.

Part-time informal secretary.

Mm. But also my wife was doing a bit of, my ex-wife was doing a bit of typing at that time too. But there wasn't such a lot to do ever, as is now there isn't a lot of letters that need answering.

Well it's probably just as well, because I don't see how you would have the time to do it actually.

Well, there are...I mean it's not that difficult. I mean even the accountant will pay the bills in a sense. And if I did ever go back to a leading dealer I would get them to, as in the old days I used to just give them a packet once a week.

Yes. But then I mean as we've said before, there were long periods, we're still in one, where you didn't have a dealer at all.

That's right.

You said you had this girlfriend in Berlin called Helga Retzer[ph].

Yes.

Was she very important for you?

Oh yes, very much, I mean to the point of perhaps getting married at some point.

Creatively as well as emotionally?

Oh yes, all of these things. And a wonderful person really. It was her that got me these...rang up and said, did I want to go to Cologne, because she was also a great friend of Veverker[ph] who is really Berlin-based.

Yes.

Otherwise I wouldn't have considered it at all, and I remember spluttering, saying no at the beginning. And in the same way that, I think in an earlier tape we talked about going to Berlin, and Karl Ruber[ph] came down to the country, and I just couldn't...I did say to him, I couldn't see the point, I had a nice life in the country with the workshops there, a nice studio in London, and a nice life, and as I said, still connected with the Royal College, and the only reason I would go to Germany would be if he could find something I couldn't ever find, even now, an enormous space, like an old factory. And he did, he did.

Yes. Was your...obviously, we don't have to talk about this at all if you would prefer not to, but was your relationship with Helga Retzer[ph] also a reflection of the fact that you were less fond of your wife than you had previously been? That's not very well formulated.

No it's not very well formulated. I think at that time, I think that, we hadn't really... I think we both had a complete life, I think she was...she had all the tools to have a complete life in Landermere[ph]. I mean there was even boats were on an estuary, and the children were growing up in an interesting period. She had the keys to my studio in London, she had, we had joint accounts, so she had quite a lot of reason to be fulfilled. And that took quite a...we had created a world from scratch, we had nothing when we began, and by the point that you are talking about we had both learnt to drive, she had had her own car, she could spend whatever money she liked, there was at that time au pair girls. And a lot of freedom. As I say she could use this studio to go to the theatre, she could do exactly what she wanted. So I didn't really feel that troubled really, and I felt that gave me a similar reason to pursue my own ideas about art and my own kind of life. And it was just a very symbiotic relationship I had with Helga Retzer[ph], it was a great benefit for her, and we shared a great deal of things together. It wasn't like an old-fashioned passion, it was just a very intelligent relationship with an enormous amount of sharing.

And you must have been shattered when she died.

Well she was married by that time, she had married a man, and I mean she wasn't just hanging on to me. I think we had, we must have decided without even saying much that we had gone separate ways really. And I think she must, we must have had a conversation about marriage, and I think she realised it was not to be, so she married somebody else who was, I was older than her, somebody her own age, and they used to do things like skiing together and so on.

Yes, very German things.

Very German things.

Why did you leave Cologne, going back to that? You had just got fed up with it?

Not that particularly. It was just that Schneider Westling[ph] was Cologne-based as an architect, but was also rector at the Academy, because Jacobson was on the edge of retirement and I knew him professionally and otherwise, socially, he asked me to apply, but I wouldn't have dreamed of applying.

You were applying for Munich?

Yes.

Ah! So you applied for Munich while you were still in Cologne?

That's right.

I had forgotten that.

But I mean the thing that...the thing that...I mean I knew Munich because of the Potentant[ph]; I worked in Munich before I actually became a professor, and I did see the academy and just thought, what an enormous difference, what a kind of, it was like climbing up a ladder, and in Cologne one just was on the first rung of the German academic world, you had one foot, the right foot on the rung and the other foot was still stuck to hell, whereas if you got, if you became a professor at the academy you started, you moved up several rungs and you were looking down. For example, you had your own key to get into the academy, and you had your own key to your own studio, and you could do whatever you liked there, you could come and go, which wasn't quite true of Cologne. And there was also a large garden. And of course the professors were treated, there were several professors there, but all on a much higher intellectual and other scale. Really the reason I think the Werkschule closed was that it was really, there was a lot of, it had become through some complex form of nepotism, had become inbred and useless, and the type of students they attracted were probably the ones that couldn't get into Düsseldorf or anywhere else.

Well I suppose most of the students there, outside the fine art departments, were apprentices anyway weren't they.

More or less. But it was very...they were all very substandard. And I'm afraid, I can't quite remember about the selective process, but the whole thing about Munich was much more agreeable and civilised and one met real, wonderful people, like Rudy Zeitz[ph] and so on. And also the museums there, there's much more contact between the museums, say the [INAUDIBLE]; the Glyptothek was really, in former times, built to be of the academy, they were supposed to be complementary to each other. And of course when I got to Munich, because of this misunderstood idea about modernism, there was no connection whatsoever.

And you re-established all that?

I tried to re-establish that by having my students drawing there on Mondays, which were, normally it's closed to the public and also we later on had an exhibition there of the work we did there.

We should perhaps explain that the Glyptothek is the collection of classical, and also Egyptian statuary.

No no, there's a separate Egyptian museum; there's nothing Egyptian, it's Greek and Roman.

All Greek and Roman.

And it's a large, wonderful building, built by Klensa[ph]?

Yes.

And there's a mirror of that building on the other side of the platz which is the vases[ph] and a few of the bronzes. But one's much more attractive than the other, and the attractive one with the marbles has also got a courtyard and a wonderful Greek style cafeteria.

And of course another major difference between Cologne and Munich is that the academy has a very very distinguished history, in terms of the people who taught and studied there.

Well there is, but it's got large chunks of students you've never heard of and professors you've never heard of.

Yes, well like every academy I suppose.

Probably every academy, which would include the Royal College of Music. And who knows, the Royal College of Art.

Oh well certainly I would think. You've already mentioned Rudy Zeitz[ph] who was your particular friend, and he was rector for ten years as you've already said. He was...he specialised in teaching art I think, didn't he?

For children very much so.

Were there any other people there that you got particularly close to, among the other professors?

There was another sculptor professor, I used to occasionally have dinner with him, but there was still a tail end of professors that went in for kind of modernism in a way, and I felt they were very odd really. I think that Rudy[ph] was my, and still is, one of my best friends, and of course, when Wielan[ph] came along we became good friends again.

Yes. There were a number of things that you introduced there, not only the closer involvement with the Glyptothek with your students, but you also started up a paper-making...

Yes, well I started that in Salzburg the second year, and I had a nice boy in the first...I had an assistant, you were allowed assistants and I brought somebody from Cologne to be my assistant, and then the second, I think I had in my class in Salzburg Andreas Von Weisiger[ph], and the second time round I decided we would make paper, it would be a paper class, and we made paper for, under the most primitive conditions, paper for the etching class, but it was very primitive, we were working from scratch, and I think we even had to have home-made holland. The holland is the thing that shreds linen to make proper paper, and all the great paper you see, say the Getty drawings at the Royal Academy, that's all made from paper and flax, and that's why it's still reasonably white, and as they never, didn't use preservatives, then thank God you can see all the drawings, they're absolutely immaculate. But modern papers where they use a lot of chemicals, when you see these collages of Hannah Hoch or Picabia, or Picasso particularly, who used newspaper, the newspapers decompose and become brown or orange, that's the chemicals.

You were making paper from linen then and stuff?

Trying. It is very hard, it's very hard, unless you've got the real heavy machinery, but later on, next to my studio in Munich there was a room which, there are seven rooms next to the

professor's studio where they have Meisterschule, and often with connecting doors, but that room was turned into a proper paper-making workshop where one had racks and did it properly and it started becoming part of the school syllabus.

It's a quite different system, isn't it, from British art school...

Well it's much more ancient you see. I think the Academy, I think that all the craftsmen, roughly all the craftsmen evaporated in England when the industrial revolution started, and everybody came into the towns, and because of that you get the...I mean this is crudely put, William Morris was worried about all that, and re-launches an Arts and Crafts Movement which was necessary in an industrial England, and then you have the Prince Albert and the V & A, and you then have the foundation of the, the Central must be not that old.

No, but part of the same movement, because that was Lethaby I think wasn't it.

That's right, that was Lethaby. But I was also thinking that the Academy in Munich was started, as I say, complementary to the Glyptothek but it was teaching a classic art.

But the way that you have a professor who is expected to do his own work on the premises, and the professor has a small number of, or one master students, and then there are also the others, you don't have that system.

You don't have that system, but you have perhaps a way of, you have a very older system, you know, which in a way is not that far from the world of Mozart, not that far away from the world of Messerschmitt, that's Franz Xavier Messerschmitt, in the sense that it's like being court painters, it's much more ancient and much more imperial; I mean the whole thing about the professor has, the professors have almost curious life and death over these students and also to be elevated to being a Meisterschule is a terrific advantage in life. And also you don't have grants the way you do in England, and also, which seems to me a cardinal difference, you can go to the Academy for six years, and if you can be a Meisterschule[ph] you can be there for eight years, but you don't have a grant. But that long period of time gives you a cushion to take time off to make your own living. But who knows, I think perhaps the university systems were like that before the war in England. I think if you were Arnold Bax and got a £120 scholarship to the Royal College of Music, I think Bax had to work every night as a waiter, because all that was being provided was your fees and a token amount.

But which do you think is the better system? I mean the English system, where everybody is treated more or less as equal and they get a grant, but on the other hand the amount of study

time that they are allowed is limited, or the German system where, I mean one criticism might be that it's all right if you're a Meisterschule, but it's not so good if you are one of the also-rans.

But also, you might also say, if you are young, what happens if all the, probably one in eight gets into the Academy, what happens to the seven that, what's their future, if you don't get in at all to the Academy, what's your future as a young artist?

Mm. And, indeed, I mean what is your future as a young artist when you leave the academy, whether in Germany or in England?

And I was also thinking, if you were a BA, an English BA, and you applied to the college and you don't get in, what do you do then? I mean it's all question marks isn't it, and it's all suspended on the amount of intelligence and character, and whether you've been kissed by the gods, i.e. Francis Bacon, who never went to any art school. I mean its an interesting question, how is it that England, when you talk about art education England's most famous painter never went to art school. It's what you teach yourself I think. And also if you just, within the definitions of genius or great talent. If you've got enormous talent, the conclusion might be, you don't have to go to art school. I mean a lot of people, there's a lot of people who go to art school who disappear.

Most, I mean the vast majority.

The vast majority.

I remember very clearly the studio that you had in Munich where you also used to live, you had [INAUDIBLE].

That's right. I was the only one who did that.

And presumably it was sort of illegal, wasn't it?

Not quite, because the Professor that followed me not only lived there but he had a properly fitted room. There are certain privileges if you are appointed Professor, they will pay for certain things, they will pay for all your...which must be an ancient statute. First of all you are on the same level, you become `beamte', you become a civil servant, automatically, and you have a wage scale which is equal to a German judge, which isn't bad. It also means if

you are there long enough you have a full pension, which is probably quite large. And that seems to me pretty ancient, that's not the kind of thing that goes on here.

Were you there long enough to get a full pension?

No not at all, but I think I've got a half cock[ph], I think maybe ten years, a quarter or something like that.

Not bad.

It's not bad.

Yes. And I mean, normally if you are a civil servant in Germany you have to be German, you have to be German nationality.

Well, I'm not sure about that, I don't think so. Because Jacobson, who had preceded me, Danish[ph], I think he hung on to get a full pension, he hung on.

I see, and he never became German?

No.

No. And of course neither did you.

And of course I got the Goethe, and I would have thought that might have been only applicable for German nationals.

No I don't think these honours like the Goethe medal necessarily are only for Germans, although I don't think the Goethe medal has often been awarded to...

I've never met anybody else who has had it.

This was while you were in Germany, in Munich?

Near the end, yes, near the end. I think I was still at the Academy.

I remember your studio very clearly, and the thing that must have struck anybody who had known you elsewhere was that very quickly that studio became very very similar to where we're sitting now in lots of ways, to where you've always worked.

Surrounded by clutter you mean, lots and lots of portfolios and...

With bits and pieces of scraps, of pieces cut out from magazines.

Like at my elbow.

Drawings, sketch-books, some of them used, some of them unused.

That's right.

Of course, I mean the big difference in Munich was that you had lots and lots of plastwer casts around as well.

That's right.

Where you don't have so many here, because presumably, I mean you don't work on them here.

Don't work on them here, but there's the same amount of plaster casts but they're up in the College on racks. And also, don't forget that there's a studio next-door that's maybe more sculpturesque than this one.

You must be constantly, or you must have at that time, constantly been moving things around from Britain to Munich, you must...

Well as I said, when you became a Professor in Munich they paid, you could have as much shipped there from England, and in the same way that under the D.A.D. it was similar, they would pay for you to have things shipped.

But the other thing about your studios is the number, not that I can see any now, the number of suitcases and bags and things that...

That's right. Well there's still a fair amount. I mean that was, that's left over from Munich when I would go, there's a suitcase called a globetrotter which is the strongest one, and it also

has a simple lock which means if you lose the keys, it's a flat little key, if you lose the keys you just, they're all the same keys, you just buy another one, another little case which you give away and keep the keys. But they're easy to duplicate.

End of F4996 Side B

F4997 Side A

You were talking about the suitcases that you used.

That's right.

Now you're a suitcase connoisseur in fact.

Well, I found that in Peter Jones they used to have these lovely simple suitcases with simple locks called Globetrotters, but very very tough, and I never had...and they seemed to stand up to an enormous amount of plaster casts and bits and pieces I used to put in them, and I used to go back and forward fully loaded and very heavy, way beyond the excess baggage rate, way beyond, but having a Senator card, which is free, granted to some people, that you could check in on first class, and if the plane wasn't very full you could have an enormous, you could go up sometimes, go up to about 90 kilos. And when I was doing these exhibitions, say the one at the Glyptothek with my students, I took some plaster casts out, so that was quite heavy. But I used to find that when I...and I also used to take books for the students, or objects which I had found, which I knew was part of their obsessional range, so they were very heavy with a lot of non sartorial material. But I found that when I got there, and I had also buy my model maker French cigarettes, but I found that when I got to Munich, and I would always be met by my assistant, and we would go straight to the Academy with these two heavy suitcases, and I would open them up and start distributing what was inside, putting the models and so on to one side, that I was...it was often in my interest to start packing right away, like putting the French cigarettes in and other things which I had put to one side, which I hadn't been able to take the last time. There was a fair amount of duplication of tools and things like that, which I didn't have to carry back and forward.

You did used to go backwards and forwards quite often.

Quite a lot, quite a lot, probably every two weeks, because I was still officially at the College and I would have to come for interviews and things like that. And there were commissions. I think that while I was at Cologne there was the first things, the first letters about drawings for doing the Underground while I was at Cologne, and that overlapped to Munich, so I would have to come back for things like that.

We must talk about those murals for Tottenham Court Road Underground station in a minute or two. I would like to...

But what I was going to say about the suitcases, I thought that, it's not a strong regret but I have a little regret that I didn't catalogue everything that had gone in these suitcases on the way out and on the way back, you know, and I would also buy heavily second-hand books from doing my circuit in Munich. And there were a certain range of books which you don't see naturally, you don't see in secondhand bookshops in London, and certainly there's a whole range of postcards that you might find in German museums. And even some of the bookshops had, like Gaults, have an enormous amount of postcards, and every exhibition there might be, it says, `The Haus der Kunst' Or if you went to the Sackgallerie[ph] there was always, or the Egyptian museum, a lovely little museum of Egyptian art in Munich, there would always be good on postcards. And Lenbachhaus of course would be hundreds of Kandinsky and Gabriele Munter and Yoletsky[ph]. And my suitcases were full of that. But I'm sorry, I stopped at one time, I was going to have to give a lecture in Australia, and one of my ideas was just to read out the lists of my suitcases which might have been a reflection very much of how one taught, or how one was moving in that kind of circle, England over to Germany.

Well it would have provided a unique insight into the way you were thinking and also partly the way you were working at the time. And alas, I mean this is something that's occurred to me often, you actually have rarely kept records of any kind, have you?

Well, I think there's...I think that the Tate archive is probably incredibly richly endowed with material, really. I may not have kept records, but I've been able to pass more stuff over to Caroline Cuthbert at the Tate than, say, any other artists; other artists seem to have been hesitant or mean about their... I think, there's a fair amount of bills and all that, so you can build, you can assess how much it costs and where and all that, sculptures were done.

Now, well that's good to know.

Oh yes.

I mean you have, it's true, been very very generous to archives, because after all, your collection of toys and magazines and so on, I mean things which were at the time regarded as mere ephemera, you...there was a plan that you would give it to the university of St. Andrews.

Oh I did, and it didn't work out there, they didn't look after it, they didn't...they weren't that keen really.

This was called `The Crazy Cat Archive'.

Which is now looked after and loved at the Victoria & Albert.

The Victoria & Albert Museum. And I mean that is a unique record, not only of your obsessions at the time, but also of things like toy making.

Mm. Well there are things now which fetch several thousand pounds at Christie's, like the tin, any tin toy, or anything on robots, anything on science fiction.

But you see, I can't help thinking that it would be extraordinarily difficult, given the state of your affairs if I can put it that way, to do a catalogue raisonné of your sculpture.

Probably.

Or indeed a catalogue raisonné of your prints.

Well, there is a lovely archivist who is rationalising everything, it's at Roger's, which is a warehouse where one has to store some things, including a lot of old work, and I think he will, she is young enough, maybe we will, having done all the sculptures which is possible, we may move on to the prints. Everything is possible.

Well that's a relief.

If it's done slowly and methodically.

Yes. I know...

And of course I've had a kind of retrospective at the V & A.

Diane Kirkpatrick also started to do a catalogue raisonné didn't she.

She did.

She had a card index file I seem to remember.

That's right.

And which I hope is still around somewhere.

It's still around.

Yes, well that's a relief. Perhaps, does the archivist know about this?

No, because she is...she has had her work cut out, when she went to the warehouse originally it was in a shambles, but the room's been painted out with shelves and everything is neat, and that's quite a leap forward. And it also means there's a place to take material out of this place, this clutter, and...

Let's go back now. You mentioned that while you were in Cologne, probably while you were in Cologne, the first approaches were made about the murals for Tottenham Court Road Underground station.

That's right.

Which was something, as I said, I mean you collaborated with architects before, and you had done what might be described as decorative work before that. But this was nevertheless something quite new for you wasn't it.

I'm not quite sure. I think that, I had some geometric symbols before that, I think that...

I don't mean in terms of the imagery, I mean in terms of the project. I mean you had never worked in mosaic before I don't think, had you?

No. Yes I had, I think at Redditch.

Oh heavens of course, the new town.

That's right.

In the shopping centre.

That's right. And, I'm trying to think of...no I think Redditch became before, and that was just a series of simple cards, and I think it had been...the people I suggested, I think that was a stepping stone to the people who were involved, the middle men who had it turned into mosaic. So I think I was in training really.

Did that commission come from the architect, the Redditch, or...?

Yes I think there was an architect, it was something called Redditch Corporation, I think it had...Redditch was like a big shopping town for the car industry, which means they're probably going through a bad time, but it was a satellite place to just take over from, take the off-load from Birmingham really. Because when I used to go to Redditch I would often go to Birmingham and be met there and driven maybe ten miles.

The Tottenham Court Road murals, they were probably the first of London Transport's intention to brighten up all the Underground stations.

That's right, that's right.

I think it was the first, wasn't it?

Yes I think...no, I think there were tentative arrangements. But they had at that time, and I think it's been disbanded, they had their own, probably left over from the Thirties, their own design group and all that kind of thing, and I think all that's been disbanded with the Thatcher era for privatising and sending all that stuff out.

And splitting the buses off from the Underground.

All that kind of thing.

Yes. So, they simply said to you, `Here is Tottenham Court Road Underground station, what are you going to do with it?'

More or less. I think I had a free hand, and I think, I think it was very agreeable to the main architect what I was doing, particularly if it was geometric. And of course, by doing mosaics you gave a lot of people work, I mean I think it was Higgs & Hill, subcontractors, they had to install all the mosaic with cement and all that, and I think it fitted in terribly well. And of course, in its way there's such a sort of fine-honed machine there for translated colour drawings into mosaic, it was no problem for them. It existed then, one didn't have to look. But later on I thought that Higgs...I thought that the middle men were taking too much profit and I found, there was a group of people in England, Italian trained, who could do it just as well in England, and the last phase, the last phase was all done in England rather than Italy, equally good.

It was your decision to have mosaic?

Well I had to have my back-up.

No, it was your decision to do it in mosaic?

Yes sure, sure. And the mosaics are really little squares of glass, coloured glass, not marble.

And some of the decorations in Tottenham Court Road are abstract, and they relate both to the reliefs and the prints which relate to the...?

That's right. And then there's some figurative stuff which are like mechanical hands, which is a metaphor about factory farming, and also mechanical car, something to do with hamburgers.

Human figures as well.

There's a human figure, a running man.

Well how consciously then did you try to sum up something about the area up above the tube station?

Well, I think the...Tottenham Court Road is very lively, and when you come out, I mean you hit...one of the exits which has got a large mosaic panel by me, and you can see it from the street which I quite like, but you come up, Oxford Street, particularly at the Tottenham Court end, is the nearest that London gets to Calcutta, I think, it's squalor and it's busy, and it works all night, and it's just crowded endlessly, and it's everything going on, everything, and every race is wandering around there. And it's a big kind of, it's a rich churning mass of people wit lights and sort of a kaleidoscope of events and cinemas, hamburgers, fast food. And a lot of it, the fast food, is eaten on the way down these days, to your platform, and so they have a big problem of getting rid of tons of rubbish, which has all got to be carried up again to the outside world. But, that's one of the exits. There are several exits that come straight out into Tottenham Court Road of course. And then there's an exit with a lavatory and buskers, comes out on to Charing Cross Road.

And that's where the dossers are.

That's where the dossers are. But I mean there was that rich thing which you can kind of echo in some kind of symbols, and cameras, images of cameras, blurred images of cameras and fast food, and somebody running, some poor helpless man running behind an Oriental mask.

Did these mosaics start life as collages? I image they must have.

Yes, well, line drawings which are coloured and then cut up, and at that time, in an archaeological sense, colour copying, you couldn't get it quite right, but the alternatives were often better than the originals at that time, and that was very good. And so that the mosaics reflect, in a very bleak way, colour copying at that time.

Going back to Munich now, you've already mentioned this model maker that you had.

Yes.

Who...

I still have, Mr Watson.

Ah no, the model maker in Munich, the German.

Yes. Helmut.

Oh, Helmut...

Salborn[ph].

Oh that's right, yes. Helmut. And do you still use him then?

No no, he's kind of gone, he's slightly gone Hollywood; he wants to have an exhibition of his work with mine in some sculpture museum.

Oh I see.

So I think that, he's gone Hollywood.

I didn't realise that he...

Had aspirations.

Yes.

Well that was what...I mean he was in one of my classes in Salzburg for example, that's how I met him.

But he was a good model maker, or you used to think he was.

Well self-trained. He's the best model maker that anybody has ever met, even professionals, he's better than a professional, because he's just made that way.

And I mean, these were moulds for plasters, or what? You see I don't understand the technique involved.

Well, I mean sometimes, say, I, this is where the big suitcases came in, that I modelled a Newtons[??], and he would make the moulds, and sometimes once a Newton[ph] got quarter scale it would have to be cut up and put into a suitcase and re-assembled when it got to England. But it would work both ways. When I did this exhibition at the Stadtmuseum called Noah's Ark I brought lots of little figures over for, say, the 'Raft of the Medusa', and he made the moulds for that, and it requires a lot of skill. And then I did some figures from a painting by Charles de Truille[ph] like a sort of, slightly a Jean Genet balcony scene, and he made the moulds for that. And then he would do the figures. But I also gave him a lot of art works, you know, as a form of payment, which he has now called the Salbons[ph] [INAUDIBLE].

Exhibited as such is it?

Not yet, but he wants to.

Yes, I see. I mean he also used to drive you around places didn't he. I remember going ton a really frightening trip with you...

To Salzburg?

And him at the wheel. No, to Ravensburg and Valhallah[ph].

Yes that's right.

Driving far too fast in this oldish car, on the motorway.

Well we also used to go to Saltzburg for breakfast, which would be leaving at 7 and getting into Salzburg from Munich in an hour and twenty minutes. But never never on the way back; on the way back it would be three, four hours, because of the traffic build-up. And of course that route is practically the road to the east, the one going Salzburg way.

Yes. Your work obviously changed when you were in Munich.

Yes, from, I used to...I mean, if you look at this exhibition at the Royal Academy, there is my diploma work incidentally they've dug out, which is a bronze, and the bronze has appeared[??] which is the mechanised head but very, it looks like an engine block, the shoulders are part of a motorbike, and I did that in several sizes. And the top is sort of geometric, but that was the state when I went there originally. And then, when I left I was doing sort of figures, and near the end I was doing, there was the Newtons[??] kind of, was coming into the picture then, which was... And also I was doing, I had also been commissioned to do, it seems at that time, I was commissioned to do a self-portrait in Holburn, a double life-size figure, slightly against my will at the beginning. But to work up to that I had to make a lot of models, and once again that's where the suitcases came in, because several versions of self-portraits about three feet high, or two feet probably if they were a third scale they would be about two feet, have to be, and I would take bits myself over. And I always wanted the customs to open them, but I was never granted that wish. I always seemed to sail through.

You have certainly never done any self-portraits before.

Well, in the most awful way, they used to be, when I first came back from Paris there was an art journal run by a Mr Gainsborough, a wonderful name, and he used to ask artists to do self-portraits.

For the cover?

For the cover. And I did a line drawing of myself, and I think he later on gave all the, quite nicely he gave them to the Tate, the self-portraits.

And there was an exhibition, that's right.

And I think I had a postcard, they made a postcard of mine, it's me with my mouth open.

But that was the only one.

And then there was a long gap, then there was a long gap. And I mean I did it, I did it unwillingly; I would much rather have done what I do now, which is like allegorical figures.

The diploma work of course is the work that you have to give the Academy when they elect you?

That's right.

So, I forget now when it was...

About '74 I think, about, just...I think that Monnington who was President of the Royal Academy at the time, asked me himself.

Monnington?

Monnington. And he asked me to, if I wanted to be an RA when I had the exhibition at the Tate, I said I thought what I did wasn't at all compatible with... He said, `No no no, we want to get some fresh blood in there.' And I said, `What about this voting and all that, which could be humiliating if I was turned down by the RA?' And he said, `There will be no problem there, it's...if I want it, I'll have it.' And he rang me after voting and said, `It's no problem. You are now ARAS,' as he said. And I was absolutely new and knew nothing about it.

Yes, I wondered at the time why you had...

Well I was the only one, and I think, I mean all kinds of people, like Tony Reichardt[ph] at the Marlborough said it was a bad career move, and so did Leslie Waddington said it was...I had just cut my own throat or shot myself in the foot. But...subsequently a whole bunch of people have followed on and it doesn't seem to have done them any harm at all, such as Kitaj, Alan Jones, Jo Tilson.

Hockney even.

Hockney even. But I think, there's a protection there; I don't think anybody sat at the Royal Academy when Hockney is in California, which I think is a good way. And of course England's two great architects, Rogers and Foster are RAs, but I don't think...I think it's whether you want to use it. I mean I think if you are strong enough it doesn't really matter.

What are the advantages to you of being in the RA?

Well there are lovely things like, they are now having wonderful exhibitions, like the Getty drawings, but they've had Pizarro, they've had Monet, and you can just walk in and out. It's like...I mean I use it much more as a club than I do the Athenaeum.

Well it has been described as the best club in London.

Well I think it's true.

It's certainly got one of the best wine cellars I think.

What, the Royal Academy?

Yes.

Possibly. Although the Athenaeum is very proud of their wine cellar. But I mean there are...I mean it has got very...it has got benefits. It's got this nice geographic location somehow, which is, and I can get the 14 bus at the end of this street and get off outside the Royal Academy. I like all that, it's my idea about living in London, I like to be part of London. And I think the RA has now become part of London, I mean it's got a very good restaurant, it's got quite a good shop.

You've mentioned the Athenaeum, we're talking about the RA, and these are two institutions which seem to belong, in the popular imagination anyway, as very much belonging to the British Establishment.

That's right.

And if one were writing a romantic novel about an artist growing up in the 1930s, it would scarcely seem credible that somebody of Italian parents, not very well off, certainly not benefiting from any of the usual English class advantages, or British class advantages that existed at that time, ending up, not even ending up, a member of the Athenaeum, Royal

Academician, CBE first, then a knighthood, and it might be thought that you could regard this as, as it were evidence that you had been absorbed by the Establishment, that you had in a sense achieved official recognition.

Mm.

And yet I don't sense that this is what it means to you.

But you could add to that, you could add to that the bizarre title, Queen's Sculptor in Ordinary in Scotland, that seems pretty Establishment. And you could add to that, Visiting Professor, Royal College of Art.

Yes, indeed.

You can add a lot of things to that, including I would have thought, having done a bit sculpture for the Royal Bank of Scotland; you could also say that by doing a big sculpture for the British Library, it's all kind of dressed up as the Charles Wheeler of the Nineties.

No I didn't mean that.

No no, but that's what it could suggest on paper. But I think things are quite...I think there is a romantic idea about poor old Van Gogh only selling one thing to his brother. But when you think, people still say that Henry Moore, I mean I think that even Picasso, there's not much romance, Picasso was very rich very early, I think 1918, immediately the war ended he went to Savile Row and bought twelve suits, and these twelve suits, the linings are still, they hang in an apartment which he kept on, his original apartment when he was married to Olga. But if you read about the early days of Picasso's life, documented by John Richardson, I think he had a Hispano-Swiza, and I think he had a manservant, and I think that Olga insisted on having a governess for the child. That's all extraordinary for a young artist, in a way.

That's money though, isn't it.

Well...

What we're talking about in your case is official recognition which actually doesn't necessarily bring very much money with it, although big sculptural commissions probably do.

Mm.

And yet you see, I mean you don't have any Hispano-Swiza, you still live [INAUDIBLE].

No, but I've got two nice studios in Chelsea, but they don't look posh, because they look horrible.

[BREAK IN RECORDING - TELEPHONE]

End of F4997 Side A

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F4998 Side A

.....1 o'clock.

Yes, 1 o'clock on the 5th of January, and we are resuming the interview with Sir Eduardo...

At 107 Dovehouse Street.

At 107 Dovehouse Street.

I wonder if that was ever said.

Possibly not. We were interrupted at the end of the last tape.

What, of one's suitcases?

No, I mean, I think in a way we dealt with suitcases.

Oh right, fine.

If you remember, you were talking about the honours, and the membership of clubs and so on. And you were saying some very interesting things about your attitude to that, because after all, as you said, when you joined the Royal Academy, or when they elected you a member, it was at a time when most serious artists weren't interested in that kind of thing. Now they are.

Now they are.

And I wondered whether it was just a case of you, as it were wanting to join, to transform it from within, or whether there were other reasons.

Well I would never have done it without being asked by the then President, Tomlinson. And of course this would be about the time I had an exhibition at the Tate, and I protested a bit, but I thought I would give it a try, and I always thought one could resign if one found it utterly utterly unacceptable. There were a few famous people still there, still alive, like William Roberts, but he was very non-communicative. But I don't think, I don't think that it's...having lived abroad a great deal, I knew it didn't make much sense to other people, so I didn't think it was a particularly heart-searching conflict to agree.

It does also frankly have its practical uses if you don't have a dealer, doesn't it? Because you can exhibit there in the summer, at the exhibition, so many pieces, without being selected, and you can sell and the percentage they take is considerably lower than most dealers [INAUDIBLE].

Well also in an old-fashioned sense, rather like, we don't have many things that would be equivalent to the Salon, as in Rodin's time, where all these sculptors used to show their plaster works and use that as a social showroom and dignitaries from provincial towns would come, particularly when they were considering doing a sculpture for the town square, and you always had to have sculptures after every war, the Franco-Prussian war for example, and there must have been thousands after World War I. But the tradition of the monument, by World War II, was beginning to, through modernism, beginning to flake away.

And of course the importance of the Salon also because of modernism was beginning, well it had already flaked away. And I'm wondering whether your willingness to be associated with this institution had something to do with your attitudes towards modernism in general.

Probably, probably. I think now that we have a fair amount of, a fair amount of the best of the British, like even Michael Andrews who has just joined, and certainly they had the three best architects that England has produced for a long time, and architects seem to be more, they're more professional, and also I don't think, it doesn't matter, I don't think it matters a thing to Rogers or to Foster whether they are RAs or not, but the lesser ones, as you said, they make their living out of the Academy and it acts as a sort of power base and so on, but these are the lesser ones. But, I think it shows an attitude; if you can, without getting involved with a struggle you can contain the Academy as an idea really, and it might have been...it might have been considered incredibly, something to fight against, but I mean, it's...I mean since my time they've had a lot of unbelievable exhibitions, such as Pop art, all the kind of things that the old guard of the Academy, certainly for the Pop art exhibition, there would probably only be two or three Academicians.

I thought that was a bad exhibition actually.

Yes.

That Pop art exhibition.

Well, I have friends who think the American art isn't any better.

What the...?

The current one, which has actually just ended and they are just clearing the decks for Modigliani.

Yes, which I think is going to be a big disappointment actually.

Probably, probably.

But those things, I think we don't necessarily need to go into. I wonder though, because there was a piece in the diary of the `Daily Telegraph' this morning, I don't know whether you saw it, saying that you had signed a letter, among a number of other people, I think fifteen other people, George Melly was one, sent to the `Evening Standard', attacking Brian Sewell, who is the art critic of the `Evening Standard'.

Yes, mhm.

And apparently it's going to be published on Thursday.

In the `Evening Standard'?

I think so, yes, I assume...

But you've read what the letter said?

No, they didn't reproduce the letter, they just gave a précis of it. Sewell is the, probably, most reactionary critic working today. I mean he is very anti-modernist; he has almost no sympathy with the avant-garde whatever; and I wondered whether this in fact doesn't chime in with some of your views.

What, that I might share with Brian Sewell?

Yes.

Well I think...

I mean we don't necessarily specifically to talk about Brian Sewell, but there has been a movement in art criticism in Britain over the last three or four years I think, whereas at one

time all the critics were prepared to accept anything avant-garde, no matter how extreme, without thinking about it, there are no almost two distinct camps.

But I don't know if it's a briefing from his editor, I mean with a history of art writers in the `Evening Standard' I believe that they've had some nice people like Richard Cork, I think he wasn't abrasive enough. I'm just wondering if that is part of the briefing of the `Evening Standard' if you're going to write about art, you have to turn it into nonsense, which is certainly not my view. I think he is too destructive in a sense. I mean, I certainly have views which might be against fashion, a lot of artists have that, these views, they often say them to each other privately, but there is a small difference when you actually make a living being excessively provocative, even negatively provocative. But also, I mean there are great exhibitions in London which you could never write a provocative piece about, such as the Poussins in the Dulwich, and also there's been these wonderful exhibitions like the treasures from Lille. I mean on one side you have the Turner Prize, but you still have in London a big broad band of experience, such as great art, and they had a wonderful text by McGregor. You have a choice in other words. But Brian Sewell is really playing on a single string, endlessly, and I'm not quite sure whether the editor knows what he's doing, whether he is able to assess, if this is an advantage, it's a deliberate policy.

Do you read much art criticism?

Not much. I used to belong to a press cutting agency and I've given that up as something, it seemed to me a useless exercise, reading clippings.

So, what critics had written about you haven't really...

I've never met a real artist who even bothers, and if you mention the `Evening Standard', very few people in my circle even read the newspaper, never mind Brian Sewell.

You mentioned the Turner Prize just now. Do you have an attitude towards that?

Well my attitude is that one has a certain amount of time of the day to give to certain things, and it's pretty low on my priority. I don't dismiss it, but I'm not that involved with the issues that much. And I mean, the media reports it well enough, well enough that one doesn't even have to go to the Tate to see it, and one lets one's imagination work. But I'm not hypnotised by it, I'm not transfixed by it, and you can...London is such a broad compass of experience, there are other areas, other areas, and I mean, a lot of my friends go to Paris to see other

things, which seem to them more important, such as the Barnes Collection, or the Matisse, and so on.

We were talking last time about your move to Munich, and your involvement with the Glyptothek.

Mm.

Drawing in the museum classical figures. And also we touched, although no more than that, on the change in your work which occurred either while you were at Munich or just before you moved there.

Yes.

And it seems to me that it would be possible, and perhaps we could look at this book again now, by...

Konnertz.

Konnerts, because it is probably the best source of illustrations that we're likely to have, that the kind...

I have a slight feeling that catalogue is everything up to Munich, up till that point, and then...but you can see at the tail end a head or two, a head or two.

Yes, here we are, 1983. I can't remember when precisely you moved to Munich.

Well it was about that time. I mean I think there are even pictures of my studio in Munich.

What we've got, we're looking at page 272, it's a head done in 1983, and in some ways, I mean it might be argued that this represents a kind of return to classical concerns, in spite...

Or one might even say, naturalism.

Yes.

Or even naturalism re-defined. But it's got to do with perhaps, as I did, assuming that certain kinds of abstractions are much too ambiguous to be, have the dynamics in something which can be related to in a personal way.

Could you be a bit more specific about that?

Well it's very difficult to, probably, it's very very difficult to be...we're also nearly back, a big curve in time, but it's like re-stating earlier themes, because one of my exhibitions was called Obsessive Themes, which really was on this subject of always using the figure and always using the head, but trying to...with certain kind of additions and alterations, and it actually measures one's... And I'm hesitating about using sort of pompous terms like psychological feelings about the world, about the troubles of the world reflected in a man's face, which is in a sense good old Expressionism of a kind.

Yes, I mean certainly these heads, although, I mean there are some classical elements in them, strike one at first sight anyway as being within the realm of Expressionism, what might loosely be defined as that.

That's right.

Could you say more about the troubles of the world as you see them? I mean could you be more specific about that? I mean what are the troubles, where...?

Well, in a sense, I mean the troubles of the world might include the Academy that I went to, and it had been one of the oldest art academies in Europe with one of the oldest collections of casts in Europe in 1972, then all, there was an uprising there, difficult to think about it now, seems to be the essence of tranquillity. But it's difficult to think that every possible plaster cast in this enormous academy, which was probably much larger than the cast room at the V & A, that they were all, there was the need to smash this all up. So in a sense that may not be the troubles of the world, but it was a kind of ripple that started in America and went all the way through. And I think that even Dublin School of Art, it was very easy for them to destroy their plaster casts because the plaster casts to them was a metaphor for colonialism. Well these are slight, they may be just, certainly the troubles of the art world, and most people have assumed until a certain point that the art school was, and looked like, an arcadia.

We come back I think to your attitudes towards modernism, because throughout the history of modernism there have been artists, I mean one thinks of Marinetti possibly above all, who would have approved of smashing plaster casts because he wanted to burn all the museums

down, destroy the art of the past, in order to have an art which was totally contemporary. And you seem to be very much out of sympathy with that.

Well I think what they...you can't be Berchoni in 1993, nor even if it comes to that you can't be Giacometti, in the Eighties, everything has to be defined, and there's a limit to even intellectualising gesture. There's a limit to working on somebody else's theory, so that invention I think will always be around, whether it's writing poetry or working for the cinema. But the degree of the talent of the executor, or the kind of notions, is kind of, it does reflect his...it has to reflect, in a most instinctive way, his epoch in a sense. I mean that's why...that's really beautiful the way that some art has its date look, or certainly movies, I think movies are the most powerful human expression we have, and I find that it's deeply...it seems to ride...it seems to ride clear of these kind of values, what you were saying about modernism. When...the values that cinema is talked in, that often literary values, and deeply psychological values, it's very interesting that that kind of language doesn't seem to be a platform for discussing aesthetics.

Yes there's a pause because I was thinking of...

I mean it's amazing to think, that tremendous film, that what may scoop all the prizes in today's newspapers, may be `Schindler's Ark', which is about the Holocaust, which would be in painting terms perhaps a taboo subject, except by the most brilliant metaphors that Francis Bacon touched on the Holocaust, I think, even had Swastika armbands on, but he left a lot of room to the imagination.

Yes, I mean there are some themes, as people are constantly trying to remind us, that actually you can't touch because they are so vast in their implication, and that obviously is the leading example of that kind of theme.

But even perhaps twenty years ago, making a film, which would be a prize-winner about the Holocaust, might seem unthinkable. Now if that's unthinkable, something unbelievable, then, we also have to leave room in our minds for what might be the unthinkable, or even in the arts, but certainly in the cinema, in the year 2,000, which is six years away.

Mm. If we can just go back to this head, and describe it a bit, as I say it's on page 272, and it's figure number 477, it's...

Well it's based on something we know. I mean there's a ghost memory of the kind of artificial head as one might have seen in a shop window, and the source of that is German, it had a

particular kind of Thirties Aryan look, and then of course, then it's done with alterations, and the alterations in a sense come out of necessity, and there is one thing I think about, one aspect of modernism is that you often don't conceal the creative mark, you let it show through. And in painting it may be the dribble, but in sculpture to be the crack of the plaster which has swelled in the mould, or it hasn't been made properly, and we always will have this, a division between the artist working at random compared with the other kind of artist who is more involved with craft and finesse than he might be with a complex idea.

It looks as though you began by making a plaster head in a fairly conventional way, and you then sliced it vertically and horizontally.

That's right. Well, I've always thought that one of the great tools in modernism has been collage, and collage has also been a kind of took where you can sprinkle the elements, as even in Dada, and that randomness can have as much a meaning as wilful construction. So I've always thought collage could be introduced to sculpture, sculpture being in a sense very solid and unremitting if you like, but be able to make changes. And also the nature of collage is often going, well described by people like Duchamp, is going beyond preconception, by chance you can make, sometimes it's brutal, but by chance you can have, as Arp would say, another reality. Where you would cut sentences out of books, and then collage them together at random, and the same might be true in sculpture by moving elements around that you get something that's beyond one's deliberate conception.

In that sense these heads are related to some collages, or photomontages more properly speaking...

That's true.

That you did at about the same time.

That's right.

Whereby you would have the top third of somebody's head fixed together with the middle of somebody else's, and the bottom of somebody else's again.

That's right. Well you could also kind of mix politician with thief, and you could also mix, well male with female. But I mean that's, if you really look hard, I mean these are all games going way back to the turn of the century.

But those collages of which a series of postcards was made, have a kind of jokey, humorous aspect to them.

That's right.

Which comes out in the titles as well, because you've made up humorous names, existing names of people.

Right.

Whereas there seems to be nothing jokey or whimsical about these heads which are horrifying, because of the implications, and the memories of, not only smashed sculptures but smashed faces.

Mm.

Indeed, I mean this one that we're looking at, I mean the nose has been completely smashed...

That's right.

Before the bronze was made.

They also relate back quite a long way to the kind of things that you were making even in the 1950s, inspired by crash heads and so on.

That's right.

And there was this sculpture called `Mr Cruikshank', wasn't there.

That's right.

Which, I mean what was `Mr Cruikshank' originally?

Well, `Mr Cruikshank' was an image out of a `National Geographic', I think even July 1947, as way back as that; it was a wooden head made for scientists and it was hollow, and the scientists were pursuing radiation damage, because there was very little knowledge about that, and they were wanting to probe into space, and they had very little knowledge, ways of measuring and so on. So what they did is, made a wooden head that was cut in two, and they

put photographic plates into this head, and then exposed it, to see what the depth of penetration was. It seems absolutely ridiculous now, but this was a time when they used to strap pigs into giant catapults to see what happened to the pig's heart when they accelerated beyond a speed that seemed technically possible, shall we say a thousand miles an hour.

And this is part of the dimension of contemporary life which you find horrifying I suspect.

Not only horrifying, but I mean I did do a print of a pig strapped up, being used in an experiment. I did some series of animals being used, rats, monkeys.

Those were etchings related to the Olivetti series.

That's right.

Yes, that's right, I remember...

Horrified, but transfixed.

Yes, I mean, is this your dominant feeling towards science, technology, horrifying but transfixed?

Well I've thought about science, I mean I listen, we have very good radio programmes where they often give four hours to artificial intelligence, and then we also have the Reith lectures. I half understand them, but I really can't see that one can give one's art as a kind of rainbow coloured landscape which is entirely escapist, I feel that one has to, even if you can only half comprehend, that one has to add, use one's limited knowledge about the sciences and do a translation of it, and that's kind of a part, I won't say challenge, I won't say fun, but that's a part of the intrigue of the little theatre that one erects for oneself to see if one can catch, trap, another imagination within that.

You have always been very unusual in my experience among contemporary artists in being interested in science. You used to subscribe to `Scientific American', perhaps you still do.

Well, I think it has kind of got less juicy, but, I don't subscribe, but I buy it at the news stand.

Still?

Absolutely. And I prefer it to the art papers. I think, I might have said, that the language that art is discussed seems to be absolutely and utterly different from these other art forms which I think are much more hypnotic. I can't see that one should write pages and pages of some image, or once read about it, that one might even, if one is allowed to be, utterly indifferent to.

Do you regard, perhaps the question is too naive, but do you regard science as being as creative as art?

Science I think is as much as you can actually contain in your head, a notion of science. But one would say that the big polemic of today is concerning transplant of eggs, surrogate, having a child at the age of 60, and so on; I mean that, all that's not possible without science of a kind. And there's also science in the discovery of ancient bones, and all these methods of recording it and preserving it. But it's such a sort of broad band, and you can take a little, you can cut a little bit out of that broad band, as `Scientific American' does, and if it's of interest. I mean I did a big iron sculpture in Munich called, it's actually called `Leonardo' but it's based on an image in the `National Geographic' which is trying to describe for a lay man the terms of genes and interruption of life cycles using gene science and so on, but the fact is that in the same way that `Mr Cruikshank' was devised by scientists, without any notion of aesthetics and made this simple moving head form, these scientists, in trying to describe gene division had made a model which showed six quasi geometric blocks with two big bizarre shaped spheres with in-cuts, called `Leonardo' because it was rather like a model for, a Leonardo model for a building, in a sense. But I mean, I quite like doing, making a contradiction, like doing by hand something which has been made in a very scientific way.

Is that the sculpture outside the Neue Pinakothek in Munich?

Not the Neue, it's the background to the [INAUDIBLE].

Sorry, yes.

The back garden.

And it's cast iron, which is...

That's right. Indestructible and rusty.

Intended to be rusty?

And it contains water, it contains...whenever it rains you can see the sky in the water.

It's obvious, particularly from recent, or the current cases which are going on, of surrogate motherhood and playing around with genes and human eggs and so on, that science, or the products of science and its implications, are of vast importance for human beings, society, the future and so on; how important in the end do you think that art is?

I think...I think it could be with a large school. I think...a school could be...there might even be...maybe I just hold the arts as, in some cases, a sacred operation, that a school that attaches great value to the arts I think makes it a much better school which doesn't attach value to it whatsoever. A large institute, even an institute like a prison, I think to be ignorant of the arts in a prison is sort of lethal and a kind of tragedy, and the same would be about a hospital. And that may be far-fetched, but they actually have organisations in Scotland that supply, try to supply art for prison hospitals, and things like that. I think it's the difference between the notion of living and the notion of civilisation.

From what you were saying just now about the cinema, you think that film is the supreme contemporary art form.

I don't think...I don't think it's...I don't think it's superior, I just think it's a tremendous life dynamic, simply because of the way that we can translate dynamics and re-translate them.

Is it the art form that means most to you, that you get most pleasure from?

Well even the artists we sometimes refer to, like Bacon, I think that he almost defined in one image his genius, which was making blurring, which hadn't really been done before, but it might have come out of Surrealism, of fusing.....
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.....to the cinema.

Yes, but you were just talking about Bacon and blurring, and combining one [INAUDIBLE].

That's right, that's right. But I was saying, in that famous single image, which are even the Popes, I think that was very seminal for him and he was able, he has been able to establish a whole, which he didn't really approve of, of the Velasquez really, but it was the cinema probably that was affective in him defining his painting, or what I call the supreme metaphor.

You go to the cinema quite often, don't you.

I used to go a lot, but less now, less now.

Your taste hasn't always been conventional. I remember, this is some years ago now, but raving, in my opinion quite rightly, about `Blade Runner'.

Yes.

Which isn't thought of by everybody as being a great movie. I mean you still think it's an important film.

Well I think, cinema can reach certain heights; it's almost like, the effect on one can be the effect it would have had on Victorian society of a great painting. I mean in a Walter Pater sense, or even in a Ruskin sense, they would write pages about it being exposed to a great, a Boticelli, at that time. And I think that, the cinema obviously, because of its operatic range of sound and movement, and even distortion of reality, there's no doubt it can really dig into and...dig into the unconscious, because that's the machinery that it can do. I mean because of tricks and special effects it can turn what used to be the fairy tales of the imagination into extraordinary reality. I mean when you said `Blade Runner', I think another great film was a film called `Brazil', and it was able to juggle with all these things, I think that's not possible in a painting or a sculpture such as a future, and even time and space, a future England which has actually gone backwards in the future, and everything, and the shabbyness is like wartime England, all kinds of paradoxes and ideas of a police state. And it even, and reflecting very much up-to-date contemporary life; the opening scene was outside Harrods with lots of television screens playing the same kind of, projecting the same kind of banality, and then suddenly a bomb goes off, as it would maybe tomorrow outside Harrods. But it was very

prophetic, and yet even turn this gruesome world of the future into a kind of black tragicomedy.

That was a film directed by Terry Gilliam.

That's right.

I don't know whether there's anything significant in the fact that both of these films, that's to say `Blade Runner' and `Brazil', present us with a very horrifying and to a certain extent, well, almost entirely, depressing view of what the future is going to be.

Except that there were redeeming factors, like the sympathetic hero played by Jonathan Pryce?

Yes.

The sympathetic hero that one could, in the grand tradition identify oneself, and these tremendous simple longings of being in love with an ideal heroine, and flying above the clouds. And in a sense, when you think of that scene, him flying above the clouds with his wings, and if that could ironically be a scene out of a 19th century German romantic, it might be not quite Böcklin, but it's somebody one has not even heard of, one of these artists you see in a Christie's catalogue.

I've always had a sense of you in your studio, no matter where it was, whether in Munich or here or Berlin, of being at the centre of a kind of information network. Now obviously, I mean there aren't any films here and you have to go out to see films, but you are surrounded by, not only papers, any...I mean countless portfolios, each of which presumably has got a lot of source material which you have culled from newspapers and magazines, but there are also a large number of books, and you do read a lot, don't you?

Yes, and look a lot.

Mm. Well, what kind of books? I mean, perhaps it's easiest if we talk about now, or, you know, within the last three or four months, the kind of books that have made you think, have impressed you, maybe even had an effect on the way that you...

Well I always like to have a...I'm always interested in a new book on, if, you've heard of `The Six-Foot Shelves', the Americans used to say that you could have the...they used to sell six-

foot of books, which were all the known world masterpieces, and that's a term you hear in California, but I have my six-foot shelves of books which, I have to see the titles every day, but they are kind of, seem to be people who were important in the pantheon of the arts, and I have to, actually when I walk to the kitchen I like to just glance at the titles, and they are always there, unlike going to a library, these books are always there. A sleepless night on Monday night, or early on a Tuesday morning, one can reach out and grab a large volume on Seurat, or a large book on Ingres seems to me, or even African sculptures, I mean, my taste is very classical; I mean I can see a book on Kabuki, a coffee table book, and the last book I bought was the last catalogue raisonné, if that's possible on Marcel Duchamp, who seems to be a hypnotic figure.

These are all books about the visual arts, but you by no means restrict yourself to books about the work of other artists though, do you?

Well, it seems to have been the arts quite recently. I mean I gave somebody a book on Blake because I wanted to read about Blake's relationship to the Royal Academy, and he was not accepted as an RA because they thought he was mad, which I think is quite interesting. But that was a period where they kicked James Barry out, who didn't like Reynolds and so on. But I mean in a sense, when you are asking me about joining the RA, I mean, I like to think that the history of the Academy is something that's endearing to me, it's history, and in a sense has nothing to do... And then the bad RAs are the people who are just, think of the Royal Academy as something that's not too different from the Croydon golf club, and have absolutely no interest, not only in the history of the institute that they belong to, but I don't think they have any interest in the Grand Palais or the Louvre either, or the National Gallery if it comes to that.

You are not only reading books, you are also reading what, to my way of thinking, seems like an enormous range and variety of magazines. You regularly the read the `The York Review of Books'.

And the `London Review of Books'. I scan, I must be honest, I scan, but my eyes just racing across, regally across the pages to just find that area that I am particularly interested in, like I'm reading a review I saw, it was a new book on Piero di Cosima, who is an artist that interests me a lot. But it gives me the sustenance when I read about the artist to move it on a bit, so I've done, I've always wanted to do an etching after Piero di Cosima, which I have done really, but it's by literature that kind of buttresses one's art. I don't know if Rodin had a big library, but, or even Lord Leighton, but...

I'm afraid I can't tell you.

It's a kind of yeast to me in the process of, the dough mixture that might make an art work.

You may think you scan, maybe you do scan. You always seem to know what the piece is about, because I mean I've had conversations with you about entire books which I have tried to read from cover to cover, you claim to have scanned, and yet you've got the guts of it somehow.

Maybe, maybe. But I mean that's not too difficult, I don't think it's too difficult. I mean I can fall asleep at a play, and I may be, as you say, the guts, I am able to describe the guts of the play later on. Maybe one doesn't have to...I mean I think that one's concentration has limits; maybe one [INAUDIBLE]. Maybe it's enough, if you go to the theatre, to just get the general idea. So it's often an asset to sleep through a dull opera anyway.

Could we now perhaps talk about this studio, because...

Certainly.

It is [INAUDIBLE].

Well when I first came here, which was 1960, it was entirely empty, which seems to be a strange thing to say now, and it was entirely new, and it's very interesting, even without the kind of wear and tear which might be on the floor. But places like the roofs had to be re-tarred several times because there's things like one's own body, starts to wear out, and windows have rotted. But when I first came here I was a different kind of artist, and I was working at that time in the middle of a wax period, so I had to have a kind of gas rings, and I have to have racks for wax sheets. There was much much less books. They have kind of accumulated the way that barnacles might accumulate on the back of a whale, of the belly of the whale. And I am horrified by the detritus, because at times it makes it very difficult to work. Every, in time every horizontal surface becomes covered with what seems to be a central things. I mean I can see, talking of books, a large fat catalogue of an exhibition from the Museum of Modern Art on high and low culture. Well I just had to have that book because of the archive at the V & A, which is about low culture. And I mean in a strange way, I may pass the book onto the library, but what holds me back is that I want to do an ex-libris, I want to put an ex-libris into the books before I turn then, push them on.

You want to do one for you, so to speak?

That's right.

Have you ever done one for you?

I've done one for the Royal College, but not...I've done wine label, I've done a [INAUDIBLE], but I haven't done an ex-libris for me. The thing is that, like writing my memoirs, what I was going to write on Tuesday, I'm glad I didn't on Wednesday.

Are you writing your memoirs?

Well, it goes round and round in my head, and I've been asked by Weidenfeld three years ago, and I'm glad I haven't. I mean, I really, I'm maybe over-ambitious that it should have meaning just beyond the anecdote, and it should be...as I am such an enthusiast about the English radio, that my ambition really is, for it to be good enough for it to be read as a `Book at Bedtime'.

However, I suspect that for them to accept it as a `Book at Bedtime' it would have to be heavy on the anecdote.

Maybe, it doesn't necessarily follow, it doesn't necessarily follow. I mean maybe I'm wrong about `Book at Bedtime', it could be, sometimes they have a very good work, with extracts are read between concerts at the Proms, and that's a kind of little extra titbit, somehow it's like having a plate of sushi between the acts in the Kabuki theatre.

Yes. This studio is not really awfully large, but it's a sort of classic design. You've got your bed upstairs.

On the gallery.

On the gallery, also enormous numbers of books up there; I suppose your telly is up there as well, is it?

That's right, at the end of the bed.

And possibly a video.

A video machine that I don't work, or want it to work.

And underneath there's a kitchen and a bathroom and lavatory.

Yes.

And the rest of it, more or less to the full height of the building, is the studio.

That's right.

With lots and lots of shelves, in fact every available space really is full of shelves.

That's right. Well what it all really adds up to is that I should really be living, I have the mentality of a chateau owner, or I should be really living in a castle, and everything that's in this studio would re-compose; there's enough here to make a nice library, for example, and there's enough here actually which, within the portfolios and the sculptures that are scattered around, to make a wonderful room of sculptures. So that's what it all means, that, the actual objects are there, and the material is there, but I should really be living in a castle, which I would hate to do.

Well I was going to say, I sense that you feel happier here than you have ever felt anywhere else.

Well for the same reasons that, I think that, well I keep going back to dear Bacon, but he's worth going back to, that he could have, near the last, even the last fifteen years of his life he could have had a handsome studio built, perhaps on the edge of town, or even an old warehouse really, he could have had a man...

He could have had a chateau in France.

He could have had a chateau in France, he could have had a driver, two drivers 24 hours a day, waiting for him to drive him wherever he wanted, but he never had all that. He liked getting on the bus. There is even a famous photograph of him in the Underground, but that was his choice, he liked the compression, he liked that he could put his arms out somehow and feel the walls somehow, and that he was as if living within his own experience, I mean that's what I have assumed, in a sense, and that perhaps he liked difficulties.

There's a kind of nest feeling about this environment. I mean you are surrounded by things each of which means something to you, and which presumably makes you feel secure, comfortable.

Well I often think of it also as a fort as much as, and the outside world... But it's also, I mean the human mind can only remember so much; it becomes after a while a whole series of magical surprises. I can't remember what's in the portfolios and that's rather good, so you come to them in a refreshed way. And you might even be, not that you have to be strong enough, but it's quite nice to, having got a swoosh of new work that you've done, like say the tracings that have been turned into drawings, and they may later become etchings, but it's rather nice to get rid of stuff that you are really convinced that you don't need any more.

Yes there is a constant flow in and out, isn't there.

Absolutely.

And the contents of the shelves changes from month to month, year to year, and I mean I suppose, if we could have a series of photographs, the shelves would be in the same place but we could [INAUDIBLE].

For some reason this place has been photographed in detail by the Historic Monuments Association, and it looks quite good, curiously enough, this, what I would call a shambles, an intelligent shambles. But what's torture for me is the opposite, if I have to spend three days in a strange town and in a strange hotel, I feel naked, and this is...I mean this studio in a sense, if...everything that's in here has been brought in in a strange way, there's tons. It's amazing, it's perhaps like a wasp's, two wasps building a paper palace that's done endlessly, it's an endless activity with saliva, and some kind of raw materials, so that the, what's seen through the spit becomes gigantic. And, I just feel maybe walking in here is like walking into a mind, it's an external view of a thinking process, probably.

Did you always feel more at home here even when you had your home in the country that you would go to regularly almost every weekend?

Well if you look at, I showed somebody a photograph of my studio in Munich in this exhibition I did called Noah's Ark, and they said it looks exactly like here, and when I was in Munich I walked into an utterly empty studio. There just seems to be, there just seems to be a drive or a need to fill places up; it's like the busy beaver somehow, it's like a powerful force in

me, which...and I find it difficult when I visit people, that their room hasn't changed for at least three months, how can they live that way?

Do you think it has anything...I don't want to come too much like sort of Dr Freud...

No, but you can.

Do you think it has anything to with possible feelings of deprivation when you were a child, that there is security in things, that there is almost a feeling that you've got a store that you can draw on if everything goes wrong?

I like a nicer feeling, I think I've...I put up with this, and I mean as I said, not lightly, that if I had a castle, but I have an idea that if I had a gigantic place with say ten rooms, I would love to just put everything in order, as I was saying, hang up some prints. And I would love to make a magic, I don't really like, which other people enjoy, taking people to...I don't know why a peasant, because I am basically a peasant, should think in this rather grand way, but I don't particularly like taking people to a restaurant, I feel that's just a substitute for...I would much rather enjoy cooking and serving them in a hall, which I slightly did when I was in Berlin if you remember.

Yes, I remember very well.

But I also give a lot of the books away, and I am more or less going to give another big...when I've done the ex-libris I'm going to give some more books to the V & A library, but I've got such a wide choice. The Athenaeum has a fine library, I belong to the London Library. But that's the other thing about books, you see, I think it's £100 a year for the London Library. I just love the idea of it, though I hardly ever go; it's like the Athenaeum. But this might even be true...the reason I go to the Academy, and I'm slightly, in a strange way, I don't know how one can say this, but I'm not that proud I belong to the Athenaeum no more than of the Royal Academy, except it's terribly useful the Academy, and the Library is wonderful, which I never use. But, I would be, I would much rather have a nice large place, preferably in London, which a nice large room hung with things and objects. Everything that's in this room which is interesting seems to be minimised somehow, which is quite interesting, instead of maximised.

[INAUDIBLE] feel that.

Oh yes, very much. Well when I see scruffy prints in a plan chest as compared to framed up in the library, or even the other places, say the Fitzwilliam, I've just given them a donation, and also sculptures will be scattered through the chapel, will be quite different from the sculptures in this room.

The chapel in Jesus you probably [INAUDIBLE].

That's right, yes.

Jesus College, Cambridge.

That's right.

Oh yes that's absolutely right, and yet you see...

And they might even, there's a scribble which is a handful of scribbles which are down there, but if they are in one of the galleries in the Fitzwilliam I can actually imagine tip-toeing into that room and seeing four people staring at them.

I've known you long enough now though to believe that, if you were to get this chateau...

Yes, or castle.

Every room in it...

Or a warehouse.

Every room in it would still look the way that this room does, because you need it to be that way.

Maybe. I know that when I had this enormous place that I walked into in Berlin it was a tremendous problem after a year of getting rid of everything. I mean I had to be, it was vast, it was plasters, an endless amount of plasters.....

[BREAK IN RECORDING - TELEPHONE]

One of the reasons of course that places fill up so quickly is that you are I suppose a compulsive shopper, aren't you.

Not that much. I've got to that stage in life where I'm given a lot, you know, lots of...I mean on your right shoulder is a Ben Nicholson book, which is a [INAUDIBLE].

Yes, I was surprised to see that.

Well that was given to me. And then in another box there's a, which I offered to you, a Herbert Read memorial in Leeds I think.

No, you didn't offer that to me actually.

Anyway that was given to me. There's quite a lot is given, and it's rather like Christmas presents, I find, in order to breath I've got to just hand them on, just keep pushing them on.

But there was a time, admittedly a long long time ago now, when you used to go round toy shops, not every kind of toy shop, I mean there was one in America, I went to one in New York with you.

That's right.

I can't remember the name of the shop.

It might have been Schwarts[ph] maybe.

It was I think, and you bought an enormous amount of stuff.

Well a lot of that might have been when I had children growing up, it might have been for them.

Some of it however emerged in your art at various times.

Well, and some of it has, the ones that were preserved, tin typewriters and all that, have gone to the V & A, and the tin robots, so that that's all moved on. And what at that time might have seemed an odd pursuit, to buy toys in mature years, of course all that in a sense has been appearing in Christie's catalogues now.

Absolutely. After that though, and we're back to Munich with this, you used to spend quite a lot of time in Munich going round secondhand bookshops, didn't you?

Yes, but that went way back to Hamburg when I first went there, and I used to go with my students, that is 1960, 34 years ago, to the Buchkabinet, where a lot of the books were sort of damaged and cheap, and we would all go back to Room 24 in Laptenfeldt[ph] it's called, in the Academy in Hamburg, and strip them down and try to make a new sense out of them by using a lot of the imagery for collage and so on. And I did a film, out of that experience I made a film called `History of Nothing' which is just a series of tales, but it's supposed to be a lyric poem about Germany, a kind of, the ghost of Germany, in the same way that, having been in California I did `Zeep'[ph], but instead of using, I just used these emporiums that seemed to be rich in imagery, the supermarkets.

is it now, the kind of shops you go into, is it now mostly books and postcards?

Well I went, I mean, I went to the model engineers exhibition on Monday, and that's a great experience, and I bought, there's a German firm, in the same way I might have, in Germany, bought the same thing, there's a firm which makes models for railways, figures, millions of figures of different scales, and I bought some figures from that in a sense, which may reappear in...I've got such a choice of them reappearing, either in an architectural model or they can just simply go to an exhibition at the V & A called Small Things.

Or you might not use them at all presumably.

May not use them at all.

Of course there is a tremendous sense of plenitude; another way of saying that would be, there's a tremendous sense of waste in a way. You buy possibly nine times more than you would ever do.

No there's never a waste in the sense that, if I go to the Glyptothek, having been in and out of that for the last twelve years, one knows what postcards there are and one knows, one scans to see if there is any new books. And there's always a new book or two, there might even be Greek cooking, might be a book in Latin, or there's a book I bought called Greek erotic symbols, which I like very much. But there is a point where it kind, if it starts to get dusty it moves on, I push it on. But I do my rounds when I go to Munich, the places I used to go during the lunch hour from the Academy, or after, maybe...and there are a lot of secondhand books, and I just think it's fascinating and wonderful to see if you can establish your own values, what's...there's a fascination of the chase, of getting somebody, something rather wonderful quite cheap. But also I'm very conscious of other people's obsessions and likes;

sometimes the two things come together. I know somebody who is obsessed by pottery lambs, Etruscan pottery lambs, if I see it I'll buy it.

Mm, and then give it immediately to the person who is interested.

When I see them.

Yes. You've already mentioned one of the exhibitions that you staged in Berlin called...in Munich, sorry, we're still in Munich, called Noah's Ark. And, it's a very unusual exhibition for reasons which we will discover very soon, but there was another exhibition too, and I can't...it was earlier I think, that you...

Lost Magic Kingdoms?

Yes.

At the Museum of Mankind.

It was earlier, wasn't it, than...

It was, absolutely.

Than Noah's Ark. And I remember you being obsessed with this exhibition, I don't think that's too strong a word, for a year or more, and that when the exhibition finally happened, you were really rather thrilled with it. It was obviously for you a very important work of art, quite apart from anything else, and I don't think, certainly not on that scale, that you had ever devised or staged or organised or whatever word we choose, an exhibition quite like that before, had you?

Well I think that, it was Malcolm McCleod who now is in charge of the Hunterian, which has a pretty broad compass, it's a university museum, and it goes from coins, armour, to ethnography, zoology, all the great sciences.

[BREAK IN RECORDING - TELEPHONE]

Malcolm McCleod at the time of the exhibition, Lost Magic Kingdoms, was the director of the Museum of Mankind, which is a subdivision...

That's right. Well he had in mind, I think there's a previous volume where, I think, he was also working on a book which was Epstein's collection of primitive art, and he was having great difficulty putting all that together with an Italian publisher, because I think that as soon as.....

End of F4998 Side B

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We've gone over the same things, but one doesn't know.

Well no, there can't be ruthless pruning, because the thing will be as we've done in.

En bloc.

And then we can add things. I mean I think, because there are horrendous gaps, and I think what we've done, when we've finished it, will probably be, certainly be a stimulus to you, and say, well, you know, I would like to say something about that. But as I say, it would be very good if it could serve as some kind of...

You see, I mean I don't know if we touched on that, whether there's a connection, what would seem a reasonable and yet difficult question might be, do you see connections between, in an autobiographical sense, what you do now and some of your childhood interests. And there might be an answer, but it may not be a correct answer of, having a sculpture in the Academy which was something, I was trying to do something for the Bank of Scotland on a flat bed railway truck, which is like trying to show my world, share my world with the model engineering exhibition which is full of railways and precision, and rather a nice cult. Certainly the model engineering exhibition is something I would have just fainted when I was a child, it seemed to be that entire world of the little boy. The ship, and just super model-making, you know, including a gold medal entry, which is of a wonderful aeroplane called the Short Singapore[??], which was built to service in the Thirties the out-stations, when Britain was still an empire, and I used to have what's called a Dinky toy of Singapore[??] with moving propellers. And it's quite interesting where...you see in literature, you could probably make a career out of writing about your past, but this is something which is maybe different in the arts, somehow.

Well except from what you've said, I would always have said of you that you have retained a kind of child-like wonder, an enthusiasm, for the things, or for the equivalent things, that obviously used to excite you then, and I'm not only thinking of model aeroplanes and Dinky toys and so on, but the way in which, in a funny kind of way, your studio is like an extension of a cigarette card collection.

Mm, mm. Did I give you a video of the [...] film?

The EP[??] sculptor?

No, there's one after that.

About you?

Yes, during the Royal Bank of Scotland one.

No, I didn't see...

I'll have to give you that.

I'd be very grateful, because I never saw that. Was it shown in England or just in Scotland?

No, Scotland.

That explains why I never saw it.

It's behind your head. But that might be useful for next time round.

Well yes it might very well be. Anyway...

But what I was going to say is that, I mean when you were talking about the studio, this kind of clutter, you can't be, you have to invent yourself, if you're going to invent the image you have to also invent yourself, and in a way that, to make the image, that you need these complementary assets, and you can't be what...I think people can get tripped up with the, start thinking before they get to the object, they get into role-playing, and they are perhaps in love with the idea of being a sculptor, which actually means that they try to make their studio either look like Henry Moore's or Giacometti, or Brancusi if it comes to that. But I just think you have to invent yourself before you get to the object, not the other way round.

We were talking when the tape shut off about this exhibition that you did called Lost Magic Kingdoms, and Malcolm McCleod...

That's right, and I was just coming forward with Kathleen Garman[ph], and it's all very well chronicled in a book that's been badly, unnecessarily attacked, which is the Epstein, the biography of Epstein by Stephen Gardener. But I think it's a great read, and it's carefully researched and wonderful. And I think that poor old Kathleen Garman[ph], who has sired [sic] several children including a son, was described in detail, dying rather tragically in the

book. But I think that she...and the original Mrs Jacob Epstein was a bit mad, according to the book, and there are stories and anecdotes about that. But I think she...I'm working my way back to McCleod, who was working on this under great difficulty, trying to piece together this mosaic with large missing parts. One of the things that Kathleen Garman[ph] did, as soon as she became Lady Epstein I think, she started selling, she sold the whole collection off, which was very dear to Epstein and it would have been a tremendous bequest to the nation. But it's often sad when that happens, that...

Didn't she however give a lot of his collection to Walsall or somewhere very unlikely?

It could be, or Jerusalem perhaps, might have been the plaster casts.

Certainly various...I mean there's a Van Gogh [INAUDIBLE].

But I don't think she was kind of capable of making good judgements somehow, and I think it was...I somehow feel that, I mean she could have had the whole collection catalogued, but she was incapable of making any decision that was faintly intellectual.

And obviously this collection of exotic art, or primitive art, whatever you like to call it, is very important for an understanding of Epstein.

Probably, and I think in the McCleod book, he makes comparisons between the influences, I think even in Indian sculpture and carving in Leeds. But this, what I was leading up to is McCleod's interest in sculpture and asking me, I think there's a Henry...he may have something to do with Henry Moore; there was a Henry Moore book remaindered which was called `Henry Moore Looks at the British Museum, where he had selected favourite objects, and I think there's a few drawings. But I didn't want to do that, I wanted, I mean, it was a great privilege to go round immense stores in Osomon[ph] Road, off the Museum of Ethnology, it's something like, in a strange way like a prison, sort of locked and barred with warders and keys and signing in, a tourist paradox to go in there, like entering a prison, and then there was these beautifully arranged boxes, and each box that you opened, even at random, contained amazing treasures. The problem was after three years one could have just gone on and on, just looking and enjoying it, but one had to draw the line and say, there is going to be a date to show... I didn't want to just show the objects, I wanted them to tell a story, and actually use it as an excuse to do these things which one might have done which one didn't do as a boy of making artificial musical instruments and making modelling things which were later cast in plaster that looked like as if they had come from some museum collection; a lot of people, and I thought that also made a comment about value. It also made

a comment that, they used to teach in schools, in art schools, copies and give prizes for copies from museums, and also there was papier maché which I used in the exhibition; all these old things that have been kicked out in the name of, what we would call...this is what I call the dark side of modernism, that they slam so many doors, but they could only hold one or two uninteresting doors ajar for a bit. Anyway I think a lot of these other doors have been re-opened thank goodness. Some of the things...so I had to have categories, and I was able to bring back tin, so there's a tin battleship. I would have thought all the kind of things, maybe as you say I was obsessed and excited, that it gave one a chance to do all the things that one should have done in one's, maybe thirty years ago, such as tin componi[ph] bomber, with a real bomb, and a way of putting together, of mixing things that in the ethnographics world, mixing them with things that would normally not have a lot of value, like an imaginary corner of a market place in Africa, of a hub-cap which was used as a stay, was just bits and pieces which to us we would throw away, but has some kind of value there. A lot of this was based on conversations with McCleod. But there was a nice kind of interrelationship of objects, and I also bought at Beatty's, when you said one goes to toy shops, Beatty's is one of the better model shops in London that had at that time an immense amount of plastic guns looking like the original, and also hand grenades of different kinds, so I have some hand grenades in there, because I thought... And there were also metaphors about the checkpoint; if you went to Africa I think you, according to listening to the radio, you would be stopped at about ten checkpoints before you got to the town, and you would have your pockets rifled by these guards. So there was a note about the checkpoint, and there was also notes about two cases had to do with colonialism, one about music, one about clay. And they went on tour of course for several years in specially made cases. But I was making a...and I was treading in a world that an anthropologist would fear to tread. And I think it was, in retrospect, considered epoch-making, I think.

I think so too.

The catalogue was...they were timid about the catalogue, which, now it's madly out of print and madly in demand.

The exhibition consisted of things from the stores, most of them were genuine [INAUDIBLE].

And about 120 objects made by me. Some things were withdrawn from another exhibition about trading posts, and I filled the gaps; I made up some imaginary wooden screens. It's all in store and maybe, there might be a second version at the Hunterian.

Mm. Some of them were, most of them were authentic objects, some of them were fakes I think, weren't they?
Well, there were one or two, not a lot. They've got such an enormous collection of the real thing one didn't have to fall. I think, I think there were a few deliberate fakes just, in that whole notion of value, what is value, what makes a particular object more valuable than another, because to the artist, often a fake would be a more attractive than the real thing.

And they came from mostly Africa, Oceania, Mexico; there were a lot of things from Mexico.

Yes, Mexico. There was even a lot of contemporary things from Mexico. There was a reclining figure, a beautiful reclining figure in tails.

From the Day of the Dead.

That's right.

And you said that you wanted to tell a story with these objects. You've already implied...

Well one was also trying to invent, well one was...there was one case which was just the objects were superb, and that's rather in the museum line, I mean, if you go to the Museum of Mankind now they've got wonderful arrangements of objects from their own collections. They would have been happy if I did that, but I just couldn't let that marvellous chance go; I would have spent the rest of my life regretting it. One was able to use...and even in the actual spirit of Africa, I mean the whole idea of using recycled objects and old tins, there was even sort of skulls made from papier maché, and there was all...and one was able to do the kind of things, like even scratch at these taboo areas, about religion and the cross, which figures a lot, and kitsch, of having crucifixes bought from Ireland so that you have a thread of the mission school. And just the whole idea of colonialism, because my generation who grew up with Tarzan and things like that.

It was a very successful exhibition even with the public I think, wasn't it?

Well I think so, yes.

Didn't they have to extend the...?

Yes they did, yes it went, and then it went on tour. It's all in store, and I think it may re-emerge as a second version. The real title was Lost Magic Kingdom or Six Paper Heads.

Six Paper Moons.

Six Paper Moons, and the paper moons were the Aztec moon goddess, which was modelled there, and a beautiful one that looked as if it was stone, but it was really recycled `Evening Standard'.

Which you made?

Which I made.

Yes. That then brings me, I mean there was a gap of some years between that exhibition and the one that you did in Munich.

Yes.

And the one that you did in Munich wasn't the same scale, and it was different inasmuch as there were no ethnographic things in it, but nevertheless it was a very unconventional kind of exhibition.

Unconventional, but they had...it was also slightly problem-solving in that it was called Noah's Ark, but Noah's Ark and thereafter the Medusa, so the Noah's Ark, you have this, once again in an autobiographical sense, if you're lucky enough you're brought up on some of these simple Bible stories such as, one of the most attractive ones is Noah's Ark, and it's certainly an incredibly attractive toy, I never had one, but you see them in Christie's books, they're lovely. And that was...and then linked with it, something that was...there was one's other world, I mean, once a sort of fantasy world of being a very young child, and then the later world of, say, of becoming politically conscious, because the Raft of the Medusa was a disastrous political event in French colonial history, and it was a subject of the large painting by Gerricault, now in the Louvre, but very unpopular in his time for obvious reasons. He painted it when he was 27. So it was rather nice, not only to link a genuine pursuit, and a reminder to Munich of how important the history of art is, and also rather like a film director, or even a movie man, to re-invent that myth in the way of making a modern raft from junk, which was at the original time on a sea of video boxes with pornography. But as they were being constantly filched, one just had to use other kind of junk easily obtainable, and the figures on the raft, because one had the head and hands and old clothing, they actually resembled these poor men that in London sleep in the streets, particularly around the Aldwych.

These were plaster models made by you, were they?

That's right, and I had...the number of students that were on the books, under my name in the Academy is 34, but I had a hard core, rather like a master class that had been indented by its own reasons, I had a constant eleven who worked. And I made a...I got the other professors involved, that there was a prize for the best self-portrait of a figure not higher than a foot, or two feet, so everybody did that for prizes, and I sprinkled these figures round the exhibition.

As far as I remember it, it was a single installation in one gallery.

In one gallery. And also there was...I exploited a problem they had in the...most of, unlike the British Museum, the kind of objects we had were worth up to half a million, some of the objects, in Christie's terms, whereas a lot of the puppets, the material which was of very little commercial value, an enormous amount of puppets had no heads, so I made plaster heads, and there was the males, it was a male head, and I made them into soldiers, and there was a female head and they became members of an orchestra with a robot conductor.

It was a very theatrical installation in a way.

Well that was the nature, that was the nature of the material.

And it made me wonder why you had never done any theatre design.

Well I think...I don't know. Even if I was asked now I would hesitate. I think it's a sort of complex world.

Now that exhibition in Munich wasn't in an art museum, it was in the municipal museum.

That's right. I mean, but that's one of the best museums in Europe, and Munich was 40, 50 per cent bond, and this is...it does show you how reasonably working anonymous building, but containing the most wonderful curators, and each level, there's a photo museum where he interviewed me, talking about the Ludwig, and another floor which often has social exhibitions, like Munich in 1923, the time of the revolutions, and on the top floor there's the best musical instruments, which is not part of the Stadtmuseum, it's administered by somebody else. But there's always exciting exhibitions there, always.

This again though is a recurring thing throughout your life. I mean when you were in Oxford at the Ruskin, you spend as much the ethnographic museum...

The Pitt Rivers.

The Pitt Rivers, as you did in the...

But what was interesting, you see, whereas when one was using the theme of `The Raft of the Medusa' at the Academy, as far as one knew, that most of the professors there were sort of involved with their notion, their notion of abstract art, or their notion of being modern, which, being isolated. Munich is in the arts perhaps isolated, I mean they would have no reason in their world to either go to the Glyptotech or even to look at `The Raft of the Medusa' if they went to Paris, and when you say isolated, one always is, one always is, with these people.

Mm. I'm looking now at a catalogue called `Recurring Themes', which is a very good title for your work really, in the hope that we will find some stuff, I think actually this is too early.

Well, what might be worth talking of museums, doing museum exhibition, there's an imaginary museum here which is, a centenary of the...

Ah yes, the [INAUDIBLE].

That's right, where a lot of artists were asked to do, what would they do with a dome, and my idea was to use it as a new kind of museum, and I think the series was called Blueprint for a New Museum, where one would choose an object from, instead of having the categories of an aircraft museum, or the Glyptothek, that you would have one singular object from each one and put it all together, put them all together, not unlike this great book called `Foundations of Modern Art', where you have a bizarre amalgam. And even early Surrealist books, I mean `The World of Breton', he was quite happy, they had this Surreal vision which may come out of Freud, the extraordinary and everyday things.

You did these while you were still in Cologne obviously.

I did them, yes.

They are in this catalogue, `Recurring Themes', on pages 134 and 135. I was really hoping though that there might be some illustrations in a book around here of some of your more recent sculpture, but maybe not.

No, but we can talk about them, or we can talk about them next time round, and maybe I can get them all together, photographs. I mean they are all...

That I think would be a very good idea if we could talk about your recent...

Recent work?

The recent work, because they are, they do belong to the same body of work which you started in Munich, don't they?

I don't know if it could be called...shall I carry on?

Yes, please.

I don't know if it would be called recent work, the standing figure by the restaurant at the Royal Academy, which is maybe two or three years old. There's a large double-sized seated figure at a boy's school; there is a large one for the Royal Bank of Scotland, a series of lithographs, but it's, one might call it `Destructured Man', where all the hands and the feet and the head, the head based on a computerised image of a head, in other words with square planes. So there's a sort of mixture of cultures in a sense, which I've always wanted to do, including bits of abstract sculpture. And that seems to be drifting on for a bit longer. And I mean, if I have a choice, if I'm asked to do a large sculpture, another one, it's either going to be four seated figures or it's going to be one of these sculptures where the hands and the feet are really separated from each other, instead of trying to compose them and trying to make an amalgam. But I've also done six etchings which are based on, which I call museum studies, one after a painting in the Fitzwilliam, `The Seige of Troy' by [INAUDIBLE] di Antonio[ph], and of course, some of the images I've never seen except in reproduction, painting, fresco and San Germiniano[ph], about 1320; Julio di Tedeo[ph]. But it's something I wanted to do, and something that I don't want to repeat necessarily.

We could perhaps talk about those in much more detail next time.

Well you'll have them before you to talk.

Which would be an enormous help.

Mm. But a lot of the recent work I've had photographed, and I'll get...I'm seeing Frank Whitford today.

Frank Thurston I guess.

Frank Thurston.

Yes. I would like to round up Munich possibly.

Certainly.

The Munich period. You were there quite a long time.

About twelve years.

Was it as long as that?

Yes, sure.

Still however coming back to teach occasionally at the Royal College of Art in the ceramics department.

That's right.

And working increasingly, this is a question, for German patrons, or still lots of work in England at the same time, and Scotland?

Well it sort of overlaps. I mean one of the last things, which was through one of the architecture professors, he was asked to design some room sin the new airport outside Munich, which is really space-age and beautiful and light, very high-tech; one might almost call it state of the art, it's very expensive, but very accessible, and probably German, the nearest equivalent to Germany is perhaps Stansted, tremendously worked out and costing billions, but designing an airport I suppose you have to think of all kinds of contingencies in the future, it has to be in advance, or it could probably look very old-fashioned quite quick. So I did, the iron foundry that was in Munich, and it had to be, it had to, through zoning, had to leave Munich, but it had been there since the 1890s, that cast the Leonardo. They moved out of town, and they switched over to aluminium, and were doing a lot of aluminium work, and when I was asked to do this relief, they got somebody to enlarge it in wood, the patterns,

and there was only three patterns, but the way they were combined they look as if it was continuous. And the wooden patterns were used, which were carefully made, the wooden patterns that they cast the aluminium from are actually, were also put up on the walls of this café at the departure lounge, and one day you will see it, and it's because it's...I think it's British Airways usually, although that wasn't part of the plan.

Mm. Any other major commissions while you were in Munich?

Well I did something like a small version of the Rheingarten, a series of five or six geometric sculptures outside a hyperbank in Ungererstrasse, which is on the way out to, out of Munich, but it's also become kind of Munich's silicon area with, is it Nierndof[ph], some famous firm, computer firm.

Nixdorf.

Nixdorf, nearby, but it's that world. And the actual bank is very much like, influenced I think by Jim Sterling. But the bank commissioned it, and they gave it as a present, which is probably part of this law they have in Germany that a certain percentage must be given over to art.

When you do a building.

That's right. And that was made in...a nice nice man who did the Rheingarten, he cast it in bronze. But it was also the same time, and that was with great difficulty, because he was travelling with this giant Prussian image which was gigantic, and the angel holding onto the stirrup of this giant equestrian, which just came up to the stirrup, the angel the height of this room came up to the stirrup, so that gives you an idea of size.

Which sculpture was this then?

Well it's one, I don't know, it's one of the...a lot of people are against it, it cost millions, of one of the great Prussian generals, or one of the great Prussian kings, called [INAUDIBLE] I think.

That they re-cast or...?

Absolutely, from scratch, they re-created it.

[INAUDIBLE]?

No this was for Koblenz I think.

Oh I see...oh...

You must know.

Of course, I mean for the Deutsche Zeg[ph].

That's right, that was done. That was being enlarged while I was trying to do my humble little geometric sculptures.

I see, in the same foundry?

In the same foundry.

I had no...actually there's something ironic about that Prussian image being done in Bavaria I suppose.

No no, this is Düsseldorf.

Oh I beg your pardon.

No no, this is Düsseldorf. There is no large bronze foundries in Bavaria, but there used to be, well there was a lot of iron and steel. I mean one musn't forget that the BMW works is in the middle of Munich, hence it being bombed.

Mm. You had to leave Munich because there was...

My time was up, although I had an extension, I went from, at the age of 66, that was as much as they could do, and they were also getting restless, there was another professor they had lined up, a friend of Wieland[ph], they wanted, and that was quite good. I mean, having all this world here, it wasn't such a blown, and also, I am addicted to London as I was to Munich.

Yes, but I mean you had to retire because there was this compulsory retirement age.

Absolutely.

But they still wanted, or the city wanted desperately to hang on to you didn't they? Because they didn't they offer you a free flat or something?

Yes, but that wouldn't have worked, that wouldn't have worked. But I mean I.....

End of F4999 Side A

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And you shared Rudy Zeits[ph]...

No I still do, I mean my name is on his door, and it's lovely, but there isn't any...if I can go to the College to do work, there isn't any...there's nothing I can do there. Even if I was commissioned, and I got a semi commission through Rudy of doing a garden for, I don't know what it's called but there are sort of students who are hand-picked to spend a year in the grounds of a musician and an engineer, the best of their year, they live together for a year in this sort of part of the government building, I don't know if you know about that.

No.

But Rudy would tell you all about it. And I mean, the garden's pretty barren, so I might be doing a series of sculptures which might be carved, like benches and...but they have to have some kind of connecting thread, not exactly a Valhalla but could be the history of modern sculpture done as a series of places to sit. I mean when you, it doesn't sound complex at all, if you think of Malelovich[ph], how easy that would be to turn into a bench, or even there are some Greco-Roman sculptures which can be used, not difficult.

Much though you might have been delighted to be back in London more or less all the time, nevertheless you must have been in lots of ways reluctant to leave Munich. Because I got the sense that you were possibly happier there than you've been anywhere for quite a considerable amount of time.

Well it had a lot going for it. I mean one had wonderful assistants so that you could leave all your loaded suitcases, and also, I had a special card from Lufthansa which made it all so much easier, and I was never charged excess baggage, but I always had plasters and books and tools even. I would be met by my assistant there. It was all very civilised, and we would go straight to the Academy. And, Munich is a wonderful town if you are working in there, maybe good as a tourist but it's absolutely wonderful, and I adored the Academy, and I actually liked some of the professors. And I seemed to have the best, the best students to gravitate in my direction. So I mean when I did the exhibition, say Noah's Ark and all that, it was perfect, it was a wonderful way to round off that period of Munich, and the catalogue was rather nice, I would have liked it bigger, but my master class of students pose, like the same figures in `The Raft of the Medusa' which is quite nice. And I always did a jazz poster, some of my students in a jazz poster.

For a German event?

No no, for the Pizza Express in London.

You have mentioned graphics from time to time, you've said, well, you know, there were lithographs associated with this, or there was an etching associated with that, but were you as active as a print-maker during the Munich period as you had previously been?

Well I did lot of wood cuts and things, and there was a rather nice man I used to go to called Imhofs[ph], who would run up editions. And I didn't do any prints in the Academy. I did a poster for the Film School. I used to go to Imhofs[ph] and they used to print up whatever I did. And I gave the Academy about 40 graphics.

That you had done while you were there?

No no, off and on. Half I had done when I was there, and they used them for, they used them for exhibitions, but...

Are you aware of graphics being more or less important to you at particular periods, and if so, do you think there is a reason why you should concentrate at this moment rather than another on prints?

Well graphics are quite nice; it's another way of explaining your world, like, I've given a set, I mean...I don't know if you mean should one rather try and push sculptures more a bit.

No I don't mean that. I just mean that, looking at your career so far as a whole, it seems to me, maybe wrongly, that you've had spurts of interest where you've concentrated on graphics rather than sculpture, or, a creative change occurs in graphics before it occurs in sculpture, or...there seems to be periods of relatively greater importance of graphics than sculpture.

Yes, maybe, maybe.

You're not conscious of saying, now or at some time, oh, OK, well now I'll do, I'll concentrate more on prints?

Well on the other hand you see, I had an exhibition, when I did a big sculpture for Edinburgh, there had to be a complementary exhibition, which I quite liked the idea of, in the Museum of Modern Art in Edinburgh, which were a whole sea of variations on plaster models, and there

had to be some drawings, and there was also out of the drawings there were some etchings, so that, this is all the sculptor's world, and I like to think of it all as being inter-weaving, sort of... I mean as I was saying earlier, you can't be...I think that Giacometti found painting and drawing just as important as making a sculpture, but there is a way of, if your mind gets tired in one direction you can flex it in another. But I mean he used to just have a table and he would, I mean it's much photographed, series of sculptures of different scales, there would be a few tallish ones of his elbow, but at the other elbow there would be an easel and he would go from drawing, painting. But I think because, you may see some kind of drama in what you've just modelled which you might want to, maybe it's something you can't do in sculpture which, he might just, particularly his illusionism, do it in a painting or a drawing.

You've worked in virtually every graphic technique that's available, from etching all the way through to silk screen, and I wonder how important the technique is. I mean if I can make that question a little bit more specific, for example your most recent prints as far as I know is this series of etchings done by the transfer process from drawings of works of art.

That's right.

Historically important works of art.

Works of art I've never seen.

Well now, how important is it that you should have made those images as etchings? Do you get the drift of the question?

Well because I think the most wonderful, the good screen printer in Hamburg is not doing it any more, and the wonderful English one died, and also, there's something interesting, as I haven't really done, something I've wanted to do, like museum studies, they just seem to, they seem to come over best as a drawing. And also, if it's a screen print, a good screen print often requires 15 or 16 screens; you can't exactly interfere with the process, but if you make an etching you can...the crafts, the master printer will produce the same image twenty times exactly the same, that's all right, because that will pay for him, and that will also pay all the other costs, but you can also interfere with the etching plate as an artist by inking it yourself and in a sense you can ink it, what to a printer might be called badly, but you can make a unique image from that, and you can even under-ink certain parts, and you can, after you've taken a print from an inked plate you can then do another print, instead of re-inking it, so you get a nice paint, and you can carry on. And it's just a ghost memory. Then you can add

water-colour and you can re-draw it, but with alterations. So that's why the etching is sometimes... But I don't know any other artist who works that way.

No I don't, I don't. But it's interesting to hear that, presumably you would now not think of doing a silk screen, because you don't know a printer who is good enough to be able to realise your ideas properly.

Well, I think, there are certain improvisations you can do, good screen printing. I mean I did a print called, after that film we mentioned, `Brazil', I did a print called `Brazil', and what was quite nice, instead of having black lines, with screen printing, it will print any colour you put through, shoot through the screen, so you can put white through instead of black, and that's, in my case, a very interesting result.

Mm. I said just now that you work in virtually every graphic technique, but perhaps that was an exaggeration.

It was an exaggeration, because in a Stanley William Hayter sense, in etching, I mean, to him it became a kind of a complex cooking exercise, and there are things called sugar aquatint, and then engraving afterwards and so on. You can fiddle about with the plate a lot, and I've never, I don't want to fiddle about.

Have you ever done any lithographs?

Yes I've done some lithographs, but once again they were done rather like my etchings, they were drawings which were transferred...

[INAUDIBLE] for drawing. I mean you've never made lithographs by drawing on the [INAUDIBLE] directly?

No, no. Nor did Matisse; Matisse did all his lithographs on lithographic paper that was transferred to... The zinc plate...

I think [INAUDIBLE] did as well actually.

The zinc plate has become so sophisticated, you don't necessarily have to work on...that's a very romantic thing, and you can't re-use the same image unless all the previous image has been ground off. And the particular quarry that all the stone came from in Austria is mined out, they say, they're very rare, they're like, lithographic stones are very rare.

Yes, I've always been fascinated by the fact that proper lithographic stone should only have come from this one quarry.

That's right, or a special kind of grain.

Which was used by the man who invented the technique.

Senefelder.

That's right, yes. There's something else I wanted to ask you about your prints too, that again, I mean your legendary generosity, you give away so many, I mean virtually every print you've made I think, you've given to friends, so that sometimes, I mean in a way financially surely, or commercially, this generosity of yours stops these images that you are making from being as valuable as they would otherwise be.

Maybe, maybe.

Because, some prints of yours must exist, there must be more copies, artist's proofs, than the numbered edition I would imagine.

Not sure about that, no I try to keep the APs[??] to the right number.

Oh do you? Yes. Well that's reassuring to know in a way, because, I mean should this catalogue raisonné of your graphics...

Well I mean the [INAUDIBLE] Light Night[??], which I've given a set to this boys' school, the ones I did in...

Berlin.

Berlin, they are all numbered, there isn't any...

APs of that at all.

But I agree, one gives them to what might be considered institutions. I mean I'm going to give some to a prison hospital in Scotland. No, one gives them to what one thinks is, hopefully worthy causes which are not in a position to re-sell them.

You mentioned this boys' school before, and I haven't heard about this boys' school until today. It's a school that you've done a sculpture for as well isn't it?

The Seagrove Road, they had a new art block and they wanted a sculpture and they were very kind and I said I would do it at cost.

Where is this again, sorry?

It's London Oratory School, it's in London, it's near Earl's Court and it's called Seagrove Road, and they were very kind, I could have done anything I wanted, but I chose to do for them a seated figure, which is rather robotic.

And it's there already is it?

Oh yes, it's there, and it's the entrance to, entrance to their arts block, which is music and drawing.

And you are going to give them a set of casts...

They've got it, they've got them, they've got them. And `Zeep'[ph], which I think is very appropriate.

Appropriate, yes.

For little boys, Catholic little boys.

Sure.

I have now run out of questions for today.

Well let me assemble some material and you look at it for next time round.

I would be very grateful.

I think I've had enough myself.

All right, very good. I mean, we've done about an hour and three-quarters.

That's not bad.

It's very good.

[END OF SESSION]

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