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Oral history interview with Marianna Pineda,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Marianna Pineda on June 14 and May 26, 1977. It took place in Brookline, MA, and was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

This is Side A.

MARIANNA PINEDA: It'd be really good for you to do that, just on your own, aside from—

[Audio break.]

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, it goes away. This is, uh, May 26, 1977. Interviewing Marianna Pineda in Brookline, Massachusetts. I'd like to, uh, have you begin—if you talk a bit about your, uh, childhood, where you grew up, uh, your parents, your family, your—what you did then. [Laughs.] And perhaps we can lead from there into, uh, how you got into your career in the arts.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Okay. Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: Take our time about it.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, my earliest memories are of the second house we lived in, in Evanston, Illinois. I don't remember the first house at all. Uh, we drove by it later. Uh, the—it was just a block from the lake. And you could look from our street, which is at the end of a short street, through an arch, right out to Lake Michigan, with arch one of the—dormitories. And I—it was a very, very pleasant childhood, in a setting with lots of big trees and—went to public school, walked to school, came home for lunch, and, uh, enjoyed my teachers. They were memorable personalities, almost all of them. I remember the first-grader throwing a book, and [laughs]—literally, when we couldn't spell, things like that, Miss Brooks. And we did a lot of traveling, starting early—

ROBERT BROWN: Were you a ver—a very good student?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, pretty good. I don't—uh, didn't think of myself as being a whiz kid.

ROBERT BROWN: You weren't rebellious or anything?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. Things, uh, were very pleasant, came easily. And I was, uh, sort of encouraged to do what I wanted to do. And, uh, that was a good thing. So it was really nice. Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: And you di—you did start traveling. This was very important to you when you look back on it?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, gosh—it's so exciting. Oh, yes. Yeah. Uh, a trip around the Mediterranean, when I was nine—just fantastic. And I'm sure that all my interest in classical Egypt—classical Egypt and Greece and European culture really stems from that. And that's very—must be very deeply ingrained, couldn't help but be.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm. As a child, uh, wa-was it merely titillating and, uh, variety? Or were you—d-did you have a program of reading that your parents set up for you before, for that journey?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, they had a very good library. And did they prepare us for the journey? I don't know. I had a lot of mythology and so forth, as a child, and fairy books and all that kind of thing. And so I did have a good—pretty good background in mythology.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, we didn't consciously prepare for the trips, no. Uh, they had a very good library. They were kind of readers who bought a book by an author they liked, before the reviews came out. They—if they liked an author, they would buy everything that he or she wrote. And they had a marvelous collection of first editions from the '20s and '30s, now.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIANNA PINEDA: And, uh—so then we had a marvelous old phonograph, I remember, too. And being near Chicago, we went to the opera and we went to see all the dance recitals and the Ballet Russe and went to the Art Institute and Arts Club. It was very rich. It was just marvelous.

ROBERT BROWN: your parents, uh, knew pretty well what they—they were pretty strong-minded people? Uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: I guess so. I guess so, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And they allowed you quite a lot of leeway, encouraged exploration, uh?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: You did the—you were into dance for quite a while, weren't you?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, actually, I started going, when I was nine years old, to a summer camp on Washington Island, in Wisconsin. It's in the Green Bay district, very beautiful little island, populated by Swedes, a few Swedes. And, uh, a quite remarkable woman, named Ma-Mabel Catherine Pierce [ph], had developed her own system of dance, which was based a little on Dalcroze and a little bit on various bits of modern dance and so forth. And the whole idea was—we dance—we had dance classes all morning. And then we took a bath, uh, like literally, with soap and water, sunbathed on these great rock—ocky ledges.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That was also probably an influence. Because I can still see all these young bodies out on the rocks, you know. It's marvelous. And, uh—and in the afternoon we would work on dances, which we created. And every week we had a studio night. And you'd present. We'd have a program of dances, that we had created costume, chosen music for, or the accompanist created music for. And she would sit down with us after each performance and suggest what was good—she gave us a crit, in other words. And if it was good enough, she said, "Keep it." And we'd give a program at the end of the year for the islanders. And that was a really marvelous sort of insight into the creative process, you know? It was just great.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: What was it for you, the creative process? Work?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, I didn't think about it. It was just, you know, you were right in it all the time.

ROBERT BROWN: And doing it. Right.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

MARIANNA PINEDA: The classes were tough. It was a combination of a technique that she developed—and she worked with adults too, like Alec Templeton, who was blind, uh, lots of performers, who got very tense. It's a combination of total relaxation—that was one aspect. And the other was body alignment and using a lot of tension and understanding of the way the anatomy works and so forth. And that, combined with the creative thing, was, uh—it was very exciting. And some of the parents of the kids would have been dancers or—or dilettantes, who went to study with, uh, Humphrey-Weidman—and, uh—or Martha Graham or someone like that. And they'd come back and they'd teach us some of the techniques. So we would get all sorts of things. That was very exciting.

ROBERT BROWN: [Affirmative]—and you weren't inhibited in any—this is the way life was. Is that right?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, it was great, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure. Sure.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, that's the painter taking his ladder down.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Okay.

ROBERT BROWN: So this, uh—uh, this is in the travel too. Uh, you've mentioned already the Mediterranean. But you—you traveled in, uh—you were in France. You said you sketched in France?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah. We—we ended up in Paris, on that Mediterranean trip. And, uh, I took my—I did sketches in Cairo and all over the place. And I also bought—I guess I mentioned I bought these little marble-dust statues, of the boy plucking his thorn from his foot and the Venus de Milo and so forth. I thought those were just great. And I was just broken-hearted when I got home. They hadn't been packed properly. And they were back to

the dust that—[laughs]—they started out from. But in Paris, we went to the Tuileries. And I made little sketches of the statues in the Louvre and they weren't terribly good but it was a lot of fun, you know?

ROBERT BROWN: But the—you weren't, uh—you weren't self-conscious.

MARIANNA PINEDA: No! Yeah, it was great.

[Cross talk.]

ROBERT BROWN: Well, the, uh—you also were in Africa, uh, even in Polynesia—is that right? Uh, some of your journey—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, that was—yeah. We made another trip, uh, in '30—let's see—when I was 12 years old, whatever that makes it—and, uh—'38, I think. Uh, must have been '35, '34. And we couldn't—going around the world, on a Norwegian ship. And it had to be below the equator, most of it, because the war was on in China. The Sino-Japanese War was on. And, uh, so we did Polynesia. And we went to New Guinea, before there was anything there really. We didn't see much. We didn't go inland, obviously. But—and Bali and Java and all the way around, South Af—India, touched various parts of India, and around the coast of Africa.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, this was with your mother, most of these journeys.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, my father was working. He would go as far, say, as through the Panama Canal with us. And then he would come back. We went to Galapagos first. That was our first stop and then, uh, the Marquesans and so for—

ROBERT BROWN: What was your—so your mother's, uh, reason for doing this with you?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, her—she had a very interesting idea, that the way to educate children was to let them really taste the cultures that they were studying, to be in them—so that she wanted us first to make these survey trips and then go live in various countries, learn the languages, study the culture, and all that sort of thing. And—

ROBERT BROWN: You were able to do that, at least in some of the European countries.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. But the war, and also the fact that older kids don't like to be uprooted kind of interfered with that.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, but for a while it didn't bother you at all to be pulled out of school to go on these kind of journeys.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, no.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] It was also about that time that, uh, you've mentioned that you saw, uh, two or three world's fairs and expositions—

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right.

ROBERT BROWN: —Chicago, New York, uh, and San Francisco.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And this made quite a strong impression on you.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, terrific. The, uh, I think the Century of Progress one, Chicago World's Fair, was in '33, uh, '32, '33. And we went many times, to that. It was just next door. And it was filled with, uh, sculpture, of all varieties, architecture, which was a lot of—very modernistic for that time and, uh, so, I guess it was the end of Art Deco really, almost. And I remember seeing, uh, a three-wheeled automobile and a house made of glass bricks. All that stuff was very daring, at that time.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure. [They laugh.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: And it just seemed, you know, logical. There's sculpture all over the place. There's room for lots of sculptors and there will be jobs. Uh, why not, you know? And this one lasted over a period up till the—the New York World's Fair, which was in—

ROBERT BROWN: '39.

MARIANNA PINEDA: '38, '39. And the San Francisco exposition, I think, was a year or so after that, two years

maybe. And, uh, most of the sculpture was bigger, uh, even in those two exhibitions. I think you could check it's true.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes. Well, uh, you were—you were particularly attuned to the sculpture?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I remember doing a little plasticine torso when I was about eight or nine, I think, uh, being very excited by that, uh.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, so then it had begun fairly early not only the dance and travel but—

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right. Yeah. I ended up teaching art at this camp, when I was about 15. I already knew that the dance was fading off. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: But the art didn't.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, what do you think it was, at that time?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I don't know. I just really knew that's what I wanted to do.

ROBERT BROWN: And you worked mainly in the figure modeling?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well—yeah. I didn't carve until later on, till about '70.

ROBERT BROWN: So sculpture seemed pretty important then, and after seeing, it was reinforced, your sense of—by seeing those fairs.

MARIANNA PINEDA: I think that anyone who sees Egypt—Egypt and Greece as a young person, you know. There's no painting to speak of that you can say, though the sculpture's terribly impressive.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, then you were a—uh, also, back in the home, in Evanston, you were at, you went to special art classes, as well, and drawing.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I went to drawing—Saturday drawing classes, uh.

ROBERT BROWN: Were—were these—where, at the Art Institute?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No, no. Uh, a fella named Schaefer [ph], who was head of the art in the public schools, had Saturday classes. And they were kind of fun. They had people in costumes. Mostly painting, actually.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's probably where I learned I was not a painter. But he would give composition prompts. We did drawing too. That was good. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: [Affirmative]—but you learned you weren't a painter.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. My aunt gave me an oil painting set, quite early on. I produced monstrosities.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: And even as late as Paris, we would—Red had some money on the GI Bill specifically for—for materials. And they had these neat easels that you could fold up into nothing, you know. And we thought, wouldn't it be marvelous to have one of these. So we got one of those. We got some oil paints. We tried painting again. We agreed it was [laughs] not for us, you know?

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Terrible.

ROBERT BROWN: What do you think it is? Uh, I know it's, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Color sense, chiefly.

ROBERT BROWN: Ah.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah. Terrible.

ROBERT BROWN: What do you think it was, even as a child, uh, made you very confident in sculpture?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I don't know. I can't say. I don't think you could tell.

ROBERT BROWN: You sure liked it, anyway—uh, settled. When you were in—uh, then you moved to, uh—to Los Angeles.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Is this when you first began going to an art school, the Otis Art Institute?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, it was Saturday classes, the same sort of thing, and the—mostly drawing, though—well, let's see. At one of them—it wasn't Otis. Chouinard is the name of the other art school. Uh, we had a model. And I did a study from the model, the first one, I should say. And I remember it was a very beautiful girl. And she told me, "Don't ever become a model." I think, in those days, it was really different, you know? And she'd had a rough time. Maybe being in Los Angeles made it worse. I don't know. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: Did you feel—out there, was there a different approach to teaching? Or was it pretty much the same?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. No. It was pretty standardized, I think.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]—were there any particular teachers that stand out?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Not from that period, no.

ROBERT BROWN: And it was just, uh, going to a school.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. But it was, uh, then in—not really till you were beyond high school and we—you went to Cranbrook for a summer.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: This was the first, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: —really serious—I'd say—serious art study. The others were—were all right. And I was taking it seriously but, uh, the atmosphere was not really, you know, that stimulating, in the other schools. Well, Cranbrook was at a funny place too, because the war was on then. There were very few people there, very few people living there. I lived there.

ROBERT BROWN: How'd you happen to, uh, go?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, Milles was an idol of mine. I'd been collecting art books and all these—going to exhibition. And, uh, I had a summer to spend, before going to college. And my family had some property in Michigan. And so that was sort of a logical thing to do. And it was very odd. It was almost deserted. And, uh, there were a couple of graduate students still working in their studios. And that was sort of nice. But, uh, you know, there were a handful of people, like 12 students, 15 in the whole place, this great sort of Shangri La, with the fountains and the, you know, statues and pavilions all over the place. And Milles was, uh, very sweet. He would greet us socially and take us into his house, show us his beautiful statues, his, uh, antique marbles and things.

ROBERT BROWN: His collection.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: And he said he liked to hear me singing. Because I started carving there. I did terrible carving. Uh, God, it was awful. I don't think he saw it. I hope he didn't. [Laughs.] But I enjoyed learning to use the tools. And I used to sing, when I was working. And he told me he liked that. [They laugh.]

ROBERT BROWN: Was he a—uh, how did his work stand up, now—when you saw a lot of it? Because you said you had admired him. You still—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, uh, I like his—all but the very last things, which I think are not much his work, the ones in the Met, for instance. I think, uh, his assistant finished most of those. Because I saw the—some of the—in process, which was very important, to see how he made enlargements of sketches and so forth, in his studio. He took us into his studio too. For this, uh, monument in the cemetery, where the relatives were supposed to be greeting each other—very sentimental. But he did it very beautifully. Uh, in fact a very Victorian notion, actually. Uh, they were still very well done, very beautiful.

ROBERT BROWN: Because by the time he got to the, uh—your, uh—the fountain at the restaurant at the Metropolitan—

MARIANNA PINEDA: —that fountain. That fountain is pretty poor, yeah. Yeah. But I saw his work in Chicago, you know there's the Diana fountain—in, uh, one of the early skyscrapers—I forget which one—on Michigan Avenue, used to be able to eat lunch right next to it. And so forth.

ROBERT BROWN: What do you think it was that attracted you to his work, as you look back?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, you could even make a link, if you want to, between dance and his work. Because the gesture is extremely important. And also, he deals with mythology. You know.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, did he teach at Cranbrook?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Not at all. He said when he came, he wouldn't teach—he wouldn't teach—uh, that was a stipulation—he would talk to students and meet with them, enjoy their company but that he wouldn't teach. And Mitchell—what's his name? I did study drawing with Mitchell, just—and that was useful. We had good models. And what's the name of the sculptor was teaching there? Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: Fredericks.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Fredericks didn't teach either. He just disappeared. But we had models. And there were three or four of us. We just worked from the models.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You could—did you, uh, find it stimulating enough, just by yourself?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, it was a marvelous opportunity to work, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, this was a—once you were through that summer, did you feel, uh, you were—you'd advanced? Or how did you feel, when you were on the eve of going to college? There were some colleagues there, weren't there? Was Bertioia there at that very—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And he—he was, uh, very friendly. And he was more like one of the students than a teacher. He was doing woodcuts then, very beautiful woodcuts, which, I've never seen it since, anywhere—and hadn't started sculpture, as far as I know. And Saarinen gave a talk on *Guernica*, that I remember. So there was, uh, sort of informal contact with teachers is all there was. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Very small group of you.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, then you—did you feel, uh—how'd you feel as you were—you were going to Bennington, right, to college? You were all set.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, yeah. Uh, Bennington was the—one of the few schools I applied to that I thought I had any chance of getting into, because I had absolutely no mathematics. Somehow I managed to get through school without taking anything but the most debased of general math courses. And they took me in without any question. Was lovely. [Laughs.] But I wasn't really sure I wanted to go to college. I'd had enough contact with artists, by that time, to know that, if you want to do something like that, there's no time like the early stages for really digging in. And I was really doing it more to please my parents, than anything else. And at Bennington, they encourage you to diversify and test yourself and be tested and so forth. And I really knew, by the time I got there, that, uh, that's what I wanted to do. And I didn't—I knew that I was being tempted by all these other delicious things they were offering that, uh, it was a mistake. And so I left after a year.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you said that you, uh, wanted to develop self-discipline at this time, a direction.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And this sort of shopping center offered for you at, uh—before you at Bennington was not to your taste?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I, uh—well, I think perhaps had the art department been stronger and I could have concentrated on it there. But it wasn't that good.

ROBERT BROWN: It wasn't.

MARIANNA PINEDA: No.

ROBERT BROWN: Who was—who were some of the figures there then?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, Simon Moselsio was there and I imagine I could have learned a lot from him, technically, if I'd had a little more respect for his aesthetic—uh, his basic talent and so forth. He was a very sweet man. And he just let me do what I wanted to. Uh, it wasn't enough. And the facilities were crummy. It was a chicken coop, literally, very small place. And we didn't have any models, and so forth. Uh, there were some drawing classes. It wasn't good! You know, the other departments were much, much stronger. And I wasn't getting what I wanted out of it.

ROBERT BROWN: You were there a full year?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you, uh, after that immediately go into another program or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, what happened was, uh, it was during the war they started that winter program at Bennington, which meant that, four months out of the year, starting with Christmas, you were out of school.

ROBERT BROWN: Ah.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And you were supposed to get a job or get into some kind of project. And I went to New York. And I worked for a man called Victor D'Amico, at the Museum of Modern Art—and, uh—for two months.

ROBERT BROWN: What were you doing, uh?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I was running the children's room [laughs] which was a kind of, uh, playpen for kiddies, with paints and Klees on the wall and Chagalls, real ones. I don't think they'd do that today.

ROBERT BROWN: No.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Because they could have gotten spattered. But it was marvelous. The fish, you know, that beautiful painting of Klee's, was right down on kiddie level. You know, and there they were slopping around in the poster paints. And it was marvelous to see how they could drag the brush from one pot to the next and then up at the paper, get the most beautiful colors, no mud. For someone who couldn't paint, it was kind of miraculous. [They laugh.] And I would just sort of monitor the situation and clean up after them. That was really all there was to it. And then I—I told D'Amico that I really wanted to do some sculpture. And so he sent me to, uh, Oronzio Maldarelli at Columbia. And that was very good.

ROBERT BROWN: And you went—uh, a private, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No, no. I just joined the classes. Uh, what it was was a—it was the extension school, an extension course for architects. All architects had to take sculpture, which I think is a great idea. And I'm sorry it's falling into disuse. And, uh, you did pay a little fee, you know, for the number of credits you took. The grades were not considered important. And it was really like an art school. It was run by a bunch of artists. And the students were serious and the artists were serious. And that was very exciting. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: This was for a small number?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Good studios, marvelous studios, in, uh, what was then a gym, part of a gym, lots of skylights and—really was great.

ROBERT BROWN: And, uh—what was his teaching like, Maldarelli?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, it was the—the school was simplicity itself. In the morning, everyone drew. In the afternoon, the painters painted and the sculptors modeled, if they had a model, or they wood-carved. And that was marvelous! [Laughs.] And then at night we used to hire another model by ourselves and draw. So it was like, you know, 14 hours of work every day. It was just terrific.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, so you were able to channel yourself as you pleased—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: —because you were given such a light hand.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Where—uh, whereas at Bennington it had been too much—little direct—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, there there was just so much offered, you know. They had a program. Uh, you could go through their program.

ROBERT BROWN: Whereas at Columbia, there was no real program.

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. It was, uh, like a real art school, just get into—

ROBERT BROWN: Was Malderelli, uh, would he come around and give criticisms or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: What happened was that they gave him a studio there, which is the ideal way, if you have to teach. And he would come out maybe once a day, maybe not. And he would wander around. And if he saw something that needed attention, and a carving—after all, you can't work that fast, when it's carving—he would say something. Or he'd just say hello. Uh, if there was a model in class, maybe he'd come in and spend a couple of hours with us. Or we'd have a group crit, someone like Zorach would come, who never said anything. He's a very nice man but he was not a good teacher. I mean, he just would say, "Oh, that's nice," or something [they laugh], you know. We had very—uh, George Grosz came. Uh, they had painters too. And we would go listen to what the painters had to say. Or they would give a demonstration. Kokoschka gave a demonstration.

ROBERT BROWN: Were they good teachers, Grosz and Kokoschka—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, uh, lecturers. Uh, Grosz lectured. And he was a fabulous, witty—he didn't talk that much about art. He talked about Germany as he knew it, before he left. Very interesting.

ROBERT BROWN: Really.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah. And then—who was it who said he couldn't criticize our work, because we were studying with someone else and he would expect his students to work the way he did, you know? I think this was Archipenko. Oh, I went to see him, before I went to Malderelli. And I noticed all the students [laughs] were doing little Archipenkos. And he said, "Well, yes. You study with me, you learn to do sculpture the way I see it." This was, uh, sort of European. And that didn't appeal to me. Uh, I guess if I had thought his work was absolutely sensational, I would have said, "Yes, I will follow in your footsteps." [They laugh.] Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: But he made no bones of that.

MARIANNA PINEDA: No bones. And he wouldn't critic—he didn't want to criticize in a class that was studying under someone else. Strange.

ROBERT BROWN: Was he a very severe person or very—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No, he seemed pretty nice. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, well, Malderelli, on the other hand, didn't infuse any particular style at all, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Not really. And we worked also on his work, which was great. He was carving some granite horses with pneumatic tools. And he would ask us to help rough it out. Or he asked me to enlarge a piece of his, one size to another. And it was a very good experience. And there was also a plaster caster, master caster in residence, the whole time. And so we saw him work on big things, small things, you know, and saw the whole process, like a—it was a good school.

ROBERT BROWN: So by then, you were getting an awful lot of technical expertise under your belt.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, yeah, some. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Were there, uh—were most of the others—you said the other students were all very serious. Were there a good many that were, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. It was wartime, you have to remember. There weren't that many men. Because they were, uh, boys were being drafted. And I met my husband there. And he was drafted April something, that year. We had known each other a month before he went away for three years. Uh, there were some married women.

This was also sort of an interesting model. Because they were married women, some with families, who were also very serious and working there. See? And there were some younger people. So it was a very interesting sort of a cross section.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, how long were you there?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I was only there for a couple of months, in the beginning. Then I went to—to Berkeley, where my family was—had moved up north—and, uh, was two years there. Then I came back, had another year, almost to another two years, there.

ROBERT BROWN: In Berkeley, did you follow the same regime? Or was it similar?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. By that time I really knew what I wanted to do. And I took—I went to Berkeley. For \$17 you could enroll, in those days. And I took a few—I just took the classes I wanted to take—I took graduate classes in French literature and I took some music composition [laughs] classes and, you know, this, that, and the next thing. But mostly I studied with Raymond Puccinelli—yeah—who was replacing somebody else who'd gone into the Army. And I also worked in his studio, in San Francisco.

ROBERT BROWN: Was he a, uh—schooled in Europe?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No, no. He—uh, his father was Italian. His mother was Swedish. But he grew up in San Francisco. And, uh, he was a self-taught man, completely almost. He taught himself about seven languages. And he was a terrifically cultured guy, who brought all sorts of ideas into the—into the, uh, class, very stimulating person. He'd read something or he'd seen something and he just wanted to share it with everybody.

ROBERT BROWN: And is—uh, did he have quite a reputation or a considerable career?

MARIANNA PINEDA: There, he was, like many artists in San Francisco, very much unappreciated. Uh, he did better in Los Angeles, where there wasn't the snobbery, where sort of the nouveau riche just bought what they liked. But in San Francisco, you had to be established in the East or be a foreigner with a big reputation. Even then, you could suffer. I understand that's changing a little bit. But he was teaching at Mills, at that time. For a long time, he taught at Mills College, for a pittance. And this was a second job that he took. He didn't get recognition till he moved to Italy. And now he's showing all over the place and doing pretty well. Oh, he was very bitter about that. It really, uh—it marked him, a lot. As a young man, he was on the WPA. And he did a huge granite panther, very beautiful. He also worked for the world's fair and did a large piece. So he had a taste of this kind of acceptance and commissions and so forth but then it just died out, and always hard for him.

ROBERT BROWN: Did that attitude, uh, pass on to some of you students?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, I think we all understood—because most of our teachers had been through the Depression—that we were not going to make a killing in art, that we would probably have to do something else to sustain our art, for a long period of time, and we should not expect a great deal in—you know, sort of, rewards, uh, for this kind of activity, that the work itself should be enough and you should be delighted if you were able to do it, you know. Not that this was the way it should be but that was the way it was. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you find yourself coming to terms with that?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I was very lucky. I never really had to—to struggle. You know, I never had the real economic struggle.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, so your parents really took care and they backed you in all the support.

MARIANNA PINEDA: They really—and they helped us somewhat when we were first married too and everything. I mean, we lived very modestly, but we always felt we had some kind of backup. It was never that, sort of, pit opening up, that other people—

ROBERT BROWN: Your parents had a—a direct interest in what you were doing.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right.

ROBERT BROWN: They were—were they—did they have academic interests? Is that what they did at Berkeley or—were you involved in the university?

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's an interesting question. I never—that never entered my head [they laugh]—why they moved to Berkeley.

ROBERT BROWN: Just a—just a rest place. [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Uh, well, actually moved up towards—to Stanford, when my older brother entered there. And then he was killed in an automobile accident, after his first year there—so his junior-to-sophomore year. And, uh, they may have moved there because—I don't know. I'm trying to remember why they were in Berkeley. Anyway, that's where they were. And then they moved to San Francisco and Marin County, later on.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, you came, uh—you came back to Columbia.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: To study further with, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Malderelli. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: You thought you could advance more with him than being out on the West Coast?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I felt a big need to get back to the East Coast.

ROBERT BROWN: The East seemed like, what, a broader place?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, there was an awful lot more going on. There's no doubt about it, yeah, especially then.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. And what did you take up, when you got to Columbia?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Same thing.

ROBERT BROWN: The same thing.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Right back into the same thing.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you showing, by then? Were you having—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, before I went back—yes. Yes. I showed at the Oakland Art Center, which is now a huge fancy museum. It was—I don't even remember what it was. It was a very unpretentious building, in those days. And I won a prize and a whole big page in the Oakland *Tribune* or whatever. And that was very nice. It was of a wood carving I think I started at Columbia. I may have to stop for a minute.

[Tape stops, restarts.]

ROBERT BROWN: Then in New York, you had a, uh—an exhibition in '46.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. That was very interesting. There was a woman called—Elson?—Mrs. Elson—her name just came back to me—who was a patroness of the arts and connected to this little church, which is in the Village. I can't remember what it's call—St. Mark's—St. Mark's, in the Village. Uh, they devoted the meeting hall, I guess, and the garden to some exhibitions of sculpture by people who weren't well known. And, uh, it was really a great service. A lot of young sculptors—they probably showed paintings too. But I didn't know about those so much. And it was very exciting to be showing in New York, even though it was just a little church in the Village. And I remember, uh, Red did a big plaster piece—I don't know if he mentioned this—*Boy with a Bird*, his first life-sized figure he did really for that exhibition.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. He was out of the Army. He was back.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, right. And we were married. Uh—we had our loft, in, uh, East Broadway. And what did I show? Trying to remember what I showed.

ROBERT BROWN: You got some recognition on that?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yes. We were written up. We were written up. And it was very nice. Yeah. I've forgotten what I showed there. I have the catalogues upstairs. I could check it out. Anyway. That was really very nice. It made us feel that—you know, that we weren't just operating as students totally, that there was a foot in the water, anyway, a toe in the water. Yeah. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: Was it rather daring too, I mean, this first time, a bit of trepidation? Or were you—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No.

ROBERT BROWN: No?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I don't know. Uh, we were a little ballsy, I'm afraid.

ROBERT BROWN: You felt you deserved it.

MARIANNA PINEDA: I think so. [They laugh.] I don't know.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were—you were married then, what, in '46, '45 or '46?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Forty-six, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And you lived in—in Manhattan then.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I had an apartment right across from Columbia and 125th Street. And we lived there for a while. And then, when we—after we got the loft, we shared a house with some friends, in Brooklyn in Gowanus Bay district. Very interesting and diverse and—we would—one would say now depressed district. Actually, it was terribly lively. And, uh—and we used to commute into the studio.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you find this invigorated you, in contrast, say, to when you were out in San Francisco, the city itself?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, gosh. There was so much going on, and galleries. Buchholz gallery, for one thing, was always a very fascinating place to go and see the latest in European sculpture. And, uh—oh, yeah, was a feast.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, then was it about that time that you—both of you went to Paris?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, first we had two children. And then we went to Alfred, NY, for a year—almost two—two years, anyway. And then we went to Paris.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, when you had children, this—uh, this must have affected your being able to work, right?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Very much so. Very much so. Yeah. I, uh, very stupidly listened to my teachers. I was a good student, dutiful type student. And I got a lot of nonsense. They said, "Oh, it's very nice what you're doing now. But soon you'll be making babies and you'll forget all about this art." So I said, "Well, maybe they're right. I'll try it." And we didn't plan children. They just happened. And we were delighted. And I stopped working, literally, for about a year and a half. And I was miserable! [Laughs.] And I realized I wouldn't be a very good, uh, anything, if I didn't get back to work! [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: Not even a good mother.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And, uh, so, before we left for Paris, I was already working again, even before the second child was born—but not very much. But I didn't have a really proper studio. But I was—I did a carving or two. And, uh, then we got to Paris. It was like the great liberation. Because I had help there. And, uh, one of—the older child was in nursery school all day and the younger child was taken care of by somebody. And I just went to studio, all day. And I didn't have to worry about shopping or cooking. This marvelous Alsatian woman sat down with me every night and we planned the menu. And it takes a little organization to have that kind of help but, boy, it's great. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: You were willing to do—

MARIANNA PINEDA: It was just fantastic!

ROBERT BROWN: You were liberating yourself.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, it was fantastic! And there was an awful feeling, at first. But I just didn't know what I could do or could I do anything. And this is the feeling most, uh, artists, I think, experience when they get out of school. We didn't feel that. Because we didn't have this graduation sort of thing. And Red had already been in the Army and had his, sort of, hiatus and so forth. But when we got to Paris, then that was very serious business. And we were really into it. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: So you didn't, uh, flounder for long.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Not for long. No, the first piece I did, I still think, is one of the best things I've ever done. And, uh, it just happened—it just came out. Yeah. And, uh, Paris is such a good place to work, stimulating place to be. We lived very quiet lives there. We had a little tiny house, which had been a—well, not tiny but—it had been a gatekeeper's house. And we had studios across the street—unbelievable situation. And we went to Zadkine's first. We had that. And we worked in his classes, which was interesting—and we had models and—was a good way to get into it again.

ROBERT BROWN: How was he as a teacher?

MARIANNA PINEDA: He was a fascinating teacher, especially good for beginning students. Because the—and we were terrible students, for him. Uh, it must have been a terrible business teaching these older kids or trying to teach. Because we didn't want to be taught. We wanted to do our own work. And we wanted to be left alone. And he wanted to make his mark on us. And I remember resenting hearing him say "my students." Because I didn't feel like his student. I enjoyed listening to him. And I've thought a lot about his approach, as I teach. Because it was—it was a very stimulating approach for beginners.

ROBERT BROWN: What was it?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, he had a marvelous way of describing the model. We had a model who posed for Rodin. If you don't think that was exciting. I have a drawing of him, with a pipe in his mouth. He was the man who posed for the *Balzac*. And his name—they called him Cacahuète, which means peanut—French. And he had, by this time, a tremendous paunch. He always—you know, even the Balzac study had a big fighter's belly. But this is, uh, just a great appendage hanging down in front. And all jowls and—but his legs were just the same. They were absolute—like iron. And, uh, to know that Rodin worked from this guy was pretty exciting, you know? And Zadkine used to describe the models in the most vivid, sort of literary terms, almost. "Look at this model!" he says, "The flesh is like—it's like a piece of old furniture with rags hanging out of the drawers, you know." And he would talk in front of these models. I have trouble discussing a model objectively. Because I know they have feelings. And I sort of sidle around discussing their odd qualities or so forth without offending them. Because I think you have to consider that. Zadkine didn't give a damn about that. And we had young kids pose. We had models always keeling over from hunger. You know, they would come right off the street. And he'd say, "All right. Strip. Let's see," you know. And if he didn't like them, he'd send them away. So we had very interesting models and a lot of diversity. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: But his, uh, descriptions for—for the students were—were a pedagogical device, right?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. They—

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, uh, so that's probably—

MARIANNA PINEDA: —they really brought out the sense of, uh, imagery and a way of relating to the model that wasn't strictly academic. Yeah. And—but I did carving with him there. And that was terrible! Because I was working on a piece of very hard wood, from Venezuela called partridge wood, because the—the grain was like feathered—was beautiful. And he would come in every day to criticize. And I hadn't done that much. And he didn't like to repeat himself. He hated to bore people. So he would say something different each time, sometimes just the opposite of what he'd said the day before! [They laugh.] Finally, I said, "Mr. Zadkine, I think I understand what you've been saying to me. Now I'd just like to work for a while, if you don't mind." I think he—he often got annoyed at us but I don't think he was so annoyed at that. I think he was a little relieved, actually. [They laugh.] And in this little shed that we worked in for the carving was also a painter, who was on the GI Bill. My husband was on the GI Bill. And we used to back into each other. [Laughs.] Poor guy. And the—you know, the chips were flying around.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: And, uh, there were about four of us working in this little shed. Uh—

[Tape stops, restarts.]

ROBERT BROWN: Most of the artists, the Americans, uh, on the GI Bill and others, were they very serious, they work quite hard?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah. Uh, uh, it was marvelous. I mean, the painters were living in little hotel rooms. One fellow kept his furniture up on the ceiling, uh, in the daytime and painted and then had to pull the bed down at night, you know. And also, we met—we didn't meet that many French people. It's hard to meet them. Uh, most of our friends were Americans or Polish or something else. Uh, but many of them were painters. And was very interesting to see that they—how they—just as I was saying earlier, how they emphasized their work. And they—with luck, they would get a critic who approved of them and they would get a patron and they would, you know, somehow manage. But it was really sort of a day-to-day thing. The main thing was to work. You didn't go do—take some other job, which would maybe enable you to get in a little work—you worked. And, uh, in the long run, I think it's a better attitude. And, uh, one allowed for the fact that you weren't supposed to be well dressed, you know. You identified much more with working people. And it was—it was a healthy attitude, I think—might be harder to sustain at a later stage in life. But for young people, it was fine.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you find, uh, the—well, you mentioned the working people there.

Were they attuned to you or were—was it, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, if you said you were an artist, there was a certain, uh, sort of, glimmer of respect. Uh, it was perfectly respectable. "Oh, artist!" you know?

ROBERT BROWN: Was that different from New York?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I think it's different from this country. An artist—well, maybe it's better now. I don't know.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But then.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you think you did—you felt, then, you were doing some very good work, while you were there.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I wish we'd stayed longer. [Laughs.] Yeah. It was really fantastic.

ROBERT BROWN: If you'd—uh, well, you came back, uh, about 1950?

MARIANNA PINEDA: '51. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, there was a good job offered. And with that—with our—given our, sort of, frame of mind, you just didn't pass these things up, you know. We felt this couldn't go on forever—which, it couldn't have, in fact. Though some of our—some people we knew stayed. They became expatriates. We didn't feel that we wanted to live forever in another country. There's a certain kind of distance that it puts between you and everybody else. Uh, you're always pleased to pass for a Frenchman or an Italian or something. And that's a very strange—wanting to be something other than you are—

ROBERT BROWN: Because you're not French.

MARIANNA PINEDA: —gives you a very funny double feeling. And, in one way, people work better. I can see that going away for a year of work really has its advantages, if you have a place to work in. Because you're suddenly removed from all the problems and complications and duties and so forth at home.

ROBERT BROWN: You're absolutely free.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. You're free to work. But you should be able to do that without leaving. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you—you were also having exhibits even before you went, um, other exhibits, I'll say.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Was this while you were at Alfred, at Albright Gallery, and, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah. We sent our work around. We paid entry fees, which we discourage young people from doing now. Because nobody was fighting it then. You know, we'd ship our work and then they'd turn it down and we'd have to pay \$50 to have it shipped back, and all those sort of bitter experiences. But we were fairly—really fairly lucky, by and large.

ROBERT BROWN: Really. [Inaudible.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And, uh, also, were you acquiring some patrons by then or people who were beginning to look for your work?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I don't know. I really don't know. We did have, uh, one very interesting experience, which probably, if you did it—if you look—had the wisdom of, uh, hindsight, you would do differently. I remember, before we went to France, we got a long distance call from Dorothy Miller, from the Museum of Modern Art. And she wanted us to show in one of these new-talent shows. And both of us felt that we didn't really have enough work and that we weren't ready to show. And maybe that was a mistake. Maybe we should have just shown and pushed ourselves into a position where we, you know, would continue to show and people would know about us and so forth. I don't know which is more important. I don't think it made a tremendous amount of difference, in the long run, but it was the sort of thing that didn't happen to everybody. And, uh, we didn't take advantage of it, actually.

ROBERT BROWN: You were at least pleased by it or—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, sure. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Was the Museum of Modern Art, uh, very actively having new talent shows?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yes! Oh, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Or, uh—or the late '40s?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah. Aronson and Levine and people like that were showing. I remember seeing their shows. So when I came here, I was very impressed to meet them.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, did you know where you were returning to, when you came back—when you came back from France?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah. Uh, we came back to the job in Minnesota. We drove from New York right—you know, we took a ferry across Lake Michigan, in the worst gale of the year, arrived in Wisconsin in a terrible blizzard. Ended off the highway in a ditch and had to be towed out. And the snow was about 15 feet high in Minneapolis, when we arrived in April. And the—[laughs]. Yeah. We went right into it.

ROBERT BROWN: This was where, the university?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah. And, oh, that was a very difficult adjustment for me. Because we lived in faculty housing. I didn't have a studio. After this very, you know, marvelous period in France. And, uh, the two kids were suddenly, so my total responsibility. Uh, took a little adjusting.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you able to—to be productive, fairly soon?

MARIANNA PINEDA: After—not right away. But, uh, after about six months, uh, they let me work at the school in one of the big old basements in the building. And, uh, I got some help in. And, uh, then I worked in the basement. The basement was to be my studio for—until I came here, really.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you like that?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No! Was terrible light. The only thing—you can get the laundry done at the same time [laughs]. The only advantage.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.] So you felt a bit beleaguered.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh well, you did show. Was that—help somewhat to compensate for—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah. And they gave me, uh, my first solo exhibition, at the Walker, in the Minnesota Gallery. And I did a big—in this little basement, I did an over-lifesize plaster figure. And I was carving and so forth. I'd gotten into a good routine of work, you know, from Paris and realized I had to do this.

ROBERT BROWN: Was carving, uh, by then, as, uh—as predominant as casting and modeling, in your work?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I don't think quite so much—little less.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Do you enjoy the two for very different reasons?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: What are they? What were they?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, wood is a marvelously clean—carving is a great way to get rid of [laughs] all your feelings that you'd like to crash around, you know, hit things—[they laugh]. And it's also—uh, it's double,

because, as you destroy, you create. And it's—it's a marvelous process. Uh, and also, you have the beautiful solution that you don't have to make anything else, once you've finished it. It's done! You don't have to make a mold. You don't have to work on the mold. You don't have to work on the wax, uh. And wax is a beautiful material. I found about using wax in Paris. And, uh, I did quite a few small waxes for bronze.

ROBERT BROWN: [Affirmative]—you were able to do that, uh, when—when you came back?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. In fact, I don't think I used clay at all in Minnesota—except when I did some terracotta hollow-built heads. But I didn't do clay for bronze. I think that's safe to say.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Uh—did this affect what you were doing, the ability to use wax or the fact you did use it rather than [clay]?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I think that working in wax helped me with clay. Because clay was hard for me. Uh, hasn't been till, really, recently that I really get a great big kick out of working in clay—it's, uh—Because it has no form whatsoever. It's—I think it's one of the most difficult media. Wax, very often you start with an armature, you know. And it's—and it looks the way it's going to look when it's finished.

ROBERT BROWN: Whereas clay is, what, lumpier and formless, by comparison?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, it's anything from just a mud pie to a—a slab or—yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Hm. Oh, as a—as a, uh—an art community and in terms of interest, was Minneapolis, uh, in the early '50s a pretty live thing?

MARIANNA PINEDA: It was great. Uh, I advise young people to get out of the centers, if they have to take a job, and go somewhere where there is a good museum and a university. They will become instant celebrities. [They laugh.] With any luck, their work will be bought. Uh, and if the museum and the university are at all lively in the arts, they will see more of the people that pass through than they would of the same famous people in New York City. Because they will meet them and really be able to talk to them. And, uh, it was very nice. And the people in, uh, St. Paul—Minneapolis—very warm. And, uh, a lively group of young artists. It was an interesting time—and, in fact, so much so that, after three years in Italy, we were ready to go back there, if there'd still been a job. But it'd been eliminated. We'd been away so long, they just took the position away. But we would have, uh, been glad to go back.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. At that stage, it was very good.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: As you look back at it from this distance, what—are you glad that you did come back to a center?

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's an interesting question. I don't regret coming back here. I can tell you that.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [The laugh.] Okay.

MARIANNA PINEDA: I'm not sure that I would want to go—uh, want to live there now. That's another answer.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. But for that time, it was [inaudible]?

MARIANNA PINEDA: It was very good.

ROBERT BROWN: You were, uh—you were optimistic and you had, uh, the feedback and the exhibits and the display.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you develop, uh, close colleagues at this—during this time?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Lots of friends we still have. Uh—that was—

ROBERT BROWN: Has that always been important to you both?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, I think it's important. I think I'm very lucky, uh, especially as I meet many women artists, who have been sort of operating on their own, if they're not living with another artist or don't have artists friends. Uh, sometimes they feel really in a vacuum. And, uh—so it was great. No matter where we moved, we had each other to talk to about things that mattered to each other. And, uh, that was a big advantage. Uh,

we've always found interesting friends, wherever we go.

ROBERT BROWN: Has this particularly been a problem with women artists, uh, operating in a vacuum?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, I think you hear it more now than you used to. Because, uh—and I remember someone was interviewing some well-known woman artist and they said, "Well, I don't remember ever having this problem." Of course, she was married to an artist. But there were other women artists. And there was always a community of artists of both sexes. And I think it may be a more recent thing, say, starting in the '40s. There was a—it was a very lonely business just being housewife in the '40s. I remember feeling totally isolated in my kitchen, you know? Uh, there wasn't a sense that you'd get together with other women to form a group and you'd take care of the kids together or take turns, you know, none of that. It was—you were just supposed to do it all yourself. And it was rough. It was really—

ROBERT BROWN: And you probably didn't have a particular interest in inviting friends in just to talk about household chores and—

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. [They laugh.]

ROBERT BROWN: No. So—so you [inaudible] that, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, right. Right.

ROBERT BROWN: Because the friendships you wanted were those that allowed you to share your work.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, uh, when did you go to—you both went to Italy? Or you both go there?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Was this—you decide to just take a leave from—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, teaching was getting pretty heavy for Red. And we saw the possibility of going to Italy.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, you weren't teaching at all?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. I started five years ago or six years ago, uh, which I think was—you know, as long as it could be done that I didn't teach, it was a good thing. Because it leaves very little time for work. And with family, it's really a lot. Yeah. We were—we were able to go, so we went. And it was—that was marvelous, also.

ROBERT BROWN: So on one hand, there's many years he's—uh, you've been left at home, I mean, in the earlier years. On the other hand, teaching—uh, was a—a load on him, to, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right. Exactly. In fact, I heard a story, and I won't mention the names—but I met a young woman artist who said that a well-known teacher around here discouraged her by saying that, uh, he really felt that a—being a mother and a homemaker was a tremendous responsibility and it was too much to expect that one could do this and be an artist. And, uh, it's really been bothering me that, in this day and age, he was giving out that kind of counsel. And I wish she'd been able to say to him, "And what does teaching do to your ability to be an artist?" Because this person is a dedicated, very good teacher. But he suffers from it. He's also a good painter.

ROBERT BROWN: So you, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: So it's right. It's right. And I've always said that. I said, I've always said, "At least I don't have to teach." I have my—a lot of responsibilities but I don't have to teach. And, uh, I did appreciate that. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: So there really wasn't, uh, resentment between you, because you both could commiserate. [They laugh.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: I hope not. I hope there was no resentment. I don't know for sure.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, what was the goal, in going to Italy?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, just to work, you know. We took the two older kids. Nina wasn't born. And there's always—and we recognized—always a period of readjustment, where you look—come and you look for a place and you get settled. And you lose a lot of time. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: What years were these, that you—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: This—we went in '54. And we went ahead of the kids. My parents, very helpfully, took the kids for part of the summer. And we went ahead and found a studio, where we lived, fantastic studio. Was a Victorian painter's studio, with a great skylight, about 14-by-14—

ROBERT BROWN: Where was—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: —and a huge north light. On—on Piazza Donatello—right on the corner of the Via Fiesole, that goes up to Fiesole—and, uh, this huge, huge studio had frescoes around it, with the muses scattering sheaves of music and swallows and clouds. And then out through the skylight were more swallows and clouds. It was really very poetic. But we had this one huge room. And we slept in what had been a little sort of room under it, under the balcony. Uh, it was a studio with a balcony. And that was sort of the living room, which we slept in. And then there was a big bedroom. And that was the kids' room. And that was it. And a tiny, tiny little kitchen. So we had to eat in the studio. And there was a tiny little maid's room. And after we finally got rid of the live-in maid, I worked in the little maid's room for a while. Because we really don't work well together. We discovered that in Paris that we shouldn't share the same studio.

ROBERT BROWN: You're too sensitive to what the other's doing or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah. We backed into each other. And, uh, it just wasn't good [they laugh]—wasn't good at all.

ROBERT BROWN: What would your routine be? What was it then? You'd talk about it afterward or—

MARIANNA PINEDA: If you say, "Would you tell me what you think of this?" Uh, but always you had to be asked to give a crit—you never ventured—you wouldn't even look—you wouldn't even venture a look. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIANNA PINEDA: Because that could be very telling also.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, did you get good criticism?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, terrific, the best.

ROBERT BROWN: And you gave good criticism, do you think?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I hope so. Yeah. But we were in that studio for one year. And then we heard about a place on the other side of town, on the way up to the Piazzale Michelangelo above the river, on a beautiful old street that's lined with pine trees. And this was a modern house. Uh, and we had half of the upstairs, a little apartment, and the basement. And the basement was unfinished, sort of. And I had one fairly good-sized room and Red had a big room. And then later on he moved into the conservatory of the house next door, which was all sort of glass, and I had the big room. The light was not terrific but it was all right. It wasn't as good as the studio, say, in the other place. But it worked out pretty well. It was better for the kids. There was a garden. There were other kids in the—in the household. And nearer to their schools and so on.

ROBERT BROWN: Did your children, at those ages, take an interest in your—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: We were so thrilled. Once, we came home. We'd given Aaron a little carpenter set for Christmas. And he'd taken the screwdriver and the hammer and he'd—show you—he made a little stone carving of a head. "Uh, God. One of our children's going to be—" [They laugh.] Well, they do marvelous things, kids, you know. And we used to have a great roll of brown paper and just cut up huge sheets of them and give them pencils and paper. And they designed scenery, once, for a play, huge trees and things, we tacked up on the wall. But none of them have gone through with that, which is understandable. So—

ROBERT BROWN: You didn't press them. Uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, no. No, no.

ROBERT BROWN: Just available.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, something like your own upbringing.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Right?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: This is of that form.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: The work was there.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Though I—I felt—I look back and I see I was guided. W—we didn't guide them, really.

ROBERT BROWN: [Affirmative]—surely, the traveling was guiding. [Laughs.] This is—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Also, uh—we used to drag the kids around to every exhibit and so for—they got really sick of it, after a while. I'm pleased they still have vestigial interest. [They laugh.] Because it was an awful dose. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you were showing through this time, too.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And my notes say you were at the, uh, the Swetsoff Gallery, and here in Boston, '53, '56.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. He saw my show in Minneapolis. There was a museum—some kind of museum conference at Minneapolis, when my show was on, which might have been very helpful. And he saw my work there and he asked to show my work in Boston. So I hadn't been to Boston—I showed a lot in Boston. He sent my work all around, to a lot of places. And I won prizes while I was in Europe, money prizes. Very nice. He was a very enterprising dealer. And that was a help. Then he took Red's work. So.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. He was a—did you respect him and he was a—real taste?

MARIANNA PINEDA: He had beautiful taste. He really did. And he knew a lot. And he introduced a lot of very good artists, uh, New York to Boston, Schiele, Klimt.

ROBERT BROWN: Hm. He was very—very raw taste.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. He did. He did. Unfortunately, he had no business sense. It was a great disaster.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, at that time, you said you really didn't know Boston very well.

MARIANNA PINEDA: At all—

ROBERT BROWN: This was just to send your stuff here.

MARIANNA PINEDA: I'd been visit—we'd visited here once, very briefly, and that's all.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, uh, after you'd been in Italy—were you very productive there? Did you both, uh, got a great deal.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, that was a good time.

ROBERT BROWN: And you were—uh, came back, ready to go back to teaching or—? What terms did you have to come with when you—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, we wanted—we decided we were ready to leave Italy, that we'd had enough of being foreigners. It's maybe foolish. I don't know. But it was a real feeling. And we had a body of work that we could show, which is probably a good time to come back. And there was an opportunity. They wanted both of us for the museum school, two for the price of one. And that didn't look like it was what we wanted. So they settled with Red. And, uh, we lived in a little house just below here, right at a house on Tappan Street when we first came.

ROBERT BROWN: How'd it work out? What was the, uh—did you settle back into your split routine and—well, he did too, teaching and—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, we tried different studios, in different places. And, uh—we knew that we had the—it was getting terribly expensive, two separate studios and an apartment, terribly expensive. So we decided we'd better buy something.

ROBERT BROWN: How did you find Boston, uh, as a—as a place to work, colleges?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Liked very much. Yeah. Very, very nice.

ROBERT BROWN: Was it, uh—in the late '50s, was it pretty lively, in terms of what was being shown—who was teaching?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Trying to remember. I think it was pretty lively. The museums, you know, provided various things. And, of course, we were coming from Florence, you have to remember, not from Paris. So there was a different kind of contrast. Uh, very little going on in contemporary art in Florence. There was one gallery showing contemporary—a small one, an out of the way place. They would put on marvelous historical displays, every year, of some kind, in Florence. But, uh, very little going on that way.

ROBERT BROWN: So to come from there to here, where there probably wasn't a great deal being shown was no great shock or—

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. It was—there was—

ROBERT BROWN: And it didn't disappoint you. You—

MARIANNA PINEDA: No, no. It didn't, surely didn't.

ROBERT BROWN: Did he like his teaching there? Was this a a good period there, at the school? [Affirmative]—

MARIANNA PINEDA: You should ask him. [Laughs.]

[END OF TRACK.]

ROBERT BROWN: So, the, uh—coming to Boston, then, was, uh, a time when you both did exhibit quite a lot. And, uh, were you—did you develop a number of people who collected you, at this time?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Swetzoff developed, uh, patrons for us. In fact, Boston had a number of people who bought art regularly, local art. And, uh, this was something new to us and very delightful. [Laughs.] And, we just sort of assumed it would go on and on. I guess it lasted for quite a few years. Uh, it worked out, in the best sense. Because we did see these people socially, sometimes but it was very informal and—uh, it was well done, I think.

ROBERT BROWN: Were things like the Boston Arts Festival stimuli to the—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, of course. Uh, well, it was very nice to win a grand prize and be able to show your work outside—I love to do that. And I think maybe that was one of the first times I ever showed my work outside. It's been on loan various places. That—this one is without a home, for the moment. If you've got any ideas, let me know.

ROBERT BROWN: Okay. When was it, uh, you—you won the grand prize?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I don't know, '50—

ROBERT BROWN: —three?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Isn't it down there somewhere?

ROBERT BROWN: Pretty early.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. It was in the '50s someplace, I think. I'm not sure.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, '60.

MARIANNA PINEDA: '60.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: That was very soon after you were back here, then.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I also got the Margaret Brown Award, which was very nice, uh, when the ICA was in the museum school at that time. And—no, there was a lot of recognition. It was—in a way, the fact that I'd shown here a lot was very nice. Because people recognized my—me for my work and, uh—well, generally, everyone was very hospitable and friendly. I think a lot of people coming to New England don't have that experience. They have to make friends. And they find that it's difficult. So—but, uh, we didn't have that problem. And there were artists we knew, like, uh, Hyman Bloom, whom we were eager to meet. And he knew our work. And we became friends right away. And we were at Skowhegan. Red taught the first summer, before we came here. And there were Boston artists there, like Reed Kay. And they introduced us to other artists. So it was very nice. We immediately knew people and were treated well. It was very pleasant.

ROBERT BROWN: So the, uh—this then carried on into the '60s? Or in the '60s, was there a difference in what you were able to do or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, I can't think of a noticeable difference.

ROBERT BROWN: You were showing regularly and the outlets were pretty well the same.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Were there—were there, over these years, any other fundamental changes, and, uh, your work pattern or your—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, there was another child—yeah—in, uh, '58. And that was—it was a—it would have been a big change and a very difficult thing but I was very lucky to have that Radcliffe Institute grant, at that time. Uh, it sort of forced me to get in there and work, to justify this grant. It also provided a lot of, uh, sort of built-in respect from people who came to work for me. "Oh, yes. She has this to do and she must do it," and so forth. And, uh, I had some very good help, which made a tremendous difference. There are women that do—do the whole bit. But I think it takes a terrible toll. And I'm glad I haven't had to do it very often.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIANNA PINEDA: So that was a tremendous help, really was. Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: Well, do you—have you—did you feel, through these years, that you were—there was a progression or a development? Or were working towards something or—how would you characterize it?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I think you're always working towards something. Uh, you have some notion that you can do better. And you try very hard [laughs] to do it. And I developed a lot of ideas, during that period, that I would like—I have a method of working where I do a small sketch, usually under 12 inches—and then—uh, with the idea that I'm going to do it life-size, an inch to a foot. And a lot of the things I did then I would still like to do on a larger scale.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, that—still that meaningful to you, 15, 20 years ago.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, right.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. So you've never worked out a deliberate program but rather the—

MARIANNA PINEDA: No.

ROBERT BROWN: —the process of doing has led to something else.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And by ideas, you mean the forms that you created.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I mean actual—I mean, I'm interested in symbolism, on a—on a very deep level, uh, not necessarily of a highly literary level but something that I hope will touch people in a specific way. And—so that they are ideas, as well as being formal ideas like the *Oracle* series and so forth. And I usually get that response. Sometimes I get responses that provide insights into what I'm doing that I didn't even—wasn't even conscious of. And that's very interesting too, very—

ROBERT BROWN: So, uh, yeah, you do have that as the—the sustaining thing that you need—uh, that you need to express.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Have you ever, regretted parting with things you've done?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No.

ROBERT BROWN: No?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. I regret having them around. [Laughs.] Then I begin to see how I could have done them better, usually.

ROBERT BROWN: Because once you've done them, you're into something else.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: What about, uh, the casting process? Uh, is it out of your hands, when it's being cast? Or do you control all that?

MARIANNA PINEDA: It's usually out of your hands. And you try to supervise each stage, if you don't have someone who's awfully good at it. In France, we started off with the best in Paris. And we didn't know what we had—this fantastic craftsmanship and integrity of the caster we had. And in Italy, we had to hunt around to find the same thing. They were Italians, in Paris. The best craftsmen were Italians. But they were French trained. Or they were French—lived in France over a couple of generations. Uh, and in this country, there used to be a few foundries that you could trust entirely. Uh, maybe there still are. Some of them are terribly expensive. And others are more convenient but you have to really watch it. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: So that—the reason I brought that up was the business of, uh, orphaning something and going on to something else. Uh, in the case of a casting, it's—to some extent, it—particularly if they're very competent artisans, it's out of your hand. Uh, it's a very—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, but you know they're going to give you as faithful a reproduction as can be done. For instance, when we came back from Italy, we still had a marvelous caster in Pistoia, name of Guastini [ph], which means little disasters. [They laugh.] And I used to mail him waxes in a shoebox, through the air, airmail. He would send me back the master bronze, which would be the wax cast into bronze, and three copies from that, in different patinas, all exquisite, perfect. I didn't have to do anything to them. They were just marvelous. He had a, uh—a chaser who had studied in the same school as Marini, a trained sculptor, was just terribly skillful. And you just—that's hard to find in this country. So you end up working the wax, you end up working on the bronze, you end up doing your own patinas, half the time. And it's very discouraging. You have to do things over and over again.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.] No, sure.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: And why? Uh, you had to work in more materials here, you're suggesting, or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, for instance, I've had some experience in Provinceto—in Providence here. I take him a—a plaster. He makes me a wax. The wax is not good enough. I have to rework it. Then he casts it into bronze. And, uh, I find that it's full of holes or details are missing. So that has to be reworked. And then it has to be patinaed. And then, very often, they wreck the plaster in the process. They bang it up or lose a foot. Then you have to do that over again. It's very discouraging.

ROBERT BROWN: Slows—uh, at the least, it slows your pace.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Wow. So do you think you have any work for simplifications, so these people can, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: No, I try not to. No, you try not to, uh.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, no compromises—[inaudible] and compromise.

MARIANNA PINEDA: No, no. I shouldn't have to do that.

ROBERT BROWN: That would be pretty drastic and detrimental.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Could be.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, when did you, uh, then, so, think you wanted to go into teaching? Had you, over a

number of years thought about it?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Not really. That's a good question. Not really. I was offered a position, uh, teaching one afternoon a week. And there weren't that many sales. And there weren't any grants coming in. And I thought it might be a good idea. And I found it very interesting—uh, Newton College, where I was teaching. It was a very good, small art department. And there were always at least a handful of students in the class that were quite serious and even talented. And it was a very nice atmosphere there. And, uh, it was—it was good. And it also helps to sort of consolidate some of your thinking, to do some teaching—some teaching.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you—did you, uh, fret a bit and [inaudible], about—when you began to teach, how you were going to do it and all? Did you develop elaborate preparation?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I had a big advantage. Because I'd heard my husband talk about it, over the years. I also could go to him for advice. And I think that was a big advantage. I think it's very hard when you're beginning teaching, as an inexperienced younger person. I didn't have too much trouble getting into it. But I was teaching exactly the way I want to. I still do out there. Uh, BU, they have a program. It's a little different story—although this approach is, uh, very sympathetic to—I have freshmen. And I have to give certain problems that maybe I'm not so interested in. It's a little different story.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, you have difficulty, uh, and you adjust to that.

MARIANNA PINEDA: I hope so. The kids seem to know the difference. We had an evaluation this year. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, they can tell when you're keeping to what you want to do and—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, yeah. That's right. Uh, sure.

ROBERT BROWN: Are they likely to continue to insist on this programmatic thing? I see.

MARIANNA PINEDA: I don't know. We've been talking about it. We were discussing doing things a little differently. I think it'll be better next year.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. But the freshmen are great, Because they're full of enthusiasm.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You like—the students you've had, you've been pleased with, by and large. Is that right?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, uh, the—Newton College was bought out by Boston College. And they took over part of the Art Department. And the first year with Boston College students, who are not at all interested in becoming artists, the huge majority of them, and had had no art background—I didn't really realize this. And I expected too much of them. And they sensed this. And it wasn't a great class anyway. And I thought, well, if this keeps up, uh, it's not for me. But the next year, I had a—this last year, I had a terrific bunch of kids—and the talent and the interest. And even the ones who weren't going to be artists did some very interesting work. And it was better than BU, in a way, you know. So it can vary. I think my expectations were more realistic too.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you think you'll stick with this, teaching seems like, for now, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I like—for a while. Uh, I—I got into a situation, the past couple years, where I was teaching full time, by teaching in two different places. They needed somebody at BU. Lloyd Lillie took a semester off. And I took his and I was teaching it. And it was too much, was exhausting. I couldn't do anything else. And, uh, I did that again last spring. And I'm not interested in that. Two—two days is tops. I don't think, really, more than one or two days, any—any creative person should have to teach. Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: What advantages does it have for you, in your personal development? You mentioned it helps to focus.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, even though I understood very well how difficult it was to teach and create, to actually experience that kind of exhaustion, which is not—certainly not all physical, was very interesting. [They laugh.] Because if you're conscientious and you're going for three hours or four hours, giving as much as you can to each individual person, that's a lot, you know, besides being on your feet, manipulating a material, so forth, so on.

ROBERT BROWN: How do you—do you try to, uh, do anything I—you mentioned, some time ago, Zadkine did, tried to—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Stimulate them?

ROBERT BROWN: Stimulate by, if not exaggeration, at least, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I can't do it the way he did it, because I'm not that insensitive to people's feelings. I mean, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: But you do—you think of devices for creating emphasis with your students? Uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, sometimes. I like to stress the fact that, uh—that mistakes can be useful and they should learn to see—they really have to learn to see when they can be useful and that there's always a psychological aspect to everything they do. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: What do you mean by that?

MARIANNA PINEDA: That, uh, even a certain way of handling material will have a psychological effect and that certain kinds of distortions have certain kinds of effects and they should be conscious of this. Or if they do it unconsciously, they should be able to see it and either keep it or throw it out if it isn't doing what they want it to do. That intent is very important.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, is one of the most difficult things in teaching to create a balance, uh, in what they're doing sort of spontaneously—uh, between what they're doing analytically?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Absolutely. And it's—I haven't resolved that yet. I don't think talking to the sculptors' meeting—yeah—that evening, I don't think it's—[laughs] very many teachers have settled that. It's hard. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, uh— Obviously, there's no formulas. [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. No. But I think that you do have to balance it out somehow. Yeah, definitely.

ROBERT BROWN: But you like this challenge, at least now.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: You've also been involved in other—in, uh, artist activities, haven't you?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. We've been involved with, uh, with the Artists' Union for about five years now, myself actively for about three. Really knocked myself out on the Gallery Selection Committee. I was also a Town Meeting member for five years. And that was supposed to be a very simple, three nights a year duty and it ends up being a very big job. And, uh, I was getting sore necks and aches in my working arm and stuff like that. It was really stress, I think. And I just cut it out.

ROBERT BROWN: How did you happen to get into that? A good citizen?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Responsible.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Concerned?

MARIANNA PINEDA: It's very interesting. It's fascinating—I can see how people get involved in politics. If you—if you really didn't know what you wanted to do in this life and yet you wanted to deal with people and issues and maybe accomplish something, certainly politics is an interesting world— personalities and drama and all sorts of things.

ROBERT BROWN: How did you happen to get into the, uh—involved with the, uh, Artists' Union, the Boston Visual Artists' Union?

MARIANNA PINEDA: We tried to organize when we came here. Uh, we found a funny situation. A lot of artists who had grown up together and been very good friends—we saw each other socially, didn't talk much about art. This was true in Minneapolis too. And we missed this after Paris. People didn't talk about art. And we said—there were some who did, a couple, few. And we said, "How about getting together on a regular basis, maybe having dinner, and having some discussion, you know, uh, maybe a program or film or something like that?" And a few people tried to start this. We met at the Harput [ph]. Did you know the old Harput?

ROBERT BROWN: No.

MARIANNA PINEDA: It was a greasy spoon par excellence. They made the baklava with lamb fat. Anyway. Uh, it didn't work out. We couldn't get it going. And so we sort of just threw up our hands and said, "Well, that's the way it is here," you know, "We're newcomers and we're not going to change anything." And, uh, I think probably Red could tell you better how the BVAU sort of got pulled together. Because I didn't go that much, in the beginning. And it was pretty well started, before I started going regularly. But it did answer a need. And there were a lot of younger artists coming in, who didn't have this particular attitude that the older group have, sort of working in isolation, not discussing their work that much.

ROBERT BROWN: Why—why wouldn't the artists discuss their work? Were they—some of them wanted to be cagey, were a bit jealous, or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: It's hard to say.

ROBERT BROWN: Just curious.

MARIANNA PINEDA: There was the example of someone like Hyman Bloom, who was a rather hermetic figure. And he was a big hero—still is—should be around here. And his style may have influenced a lot of younger artists. And that's, you know, you did your thing, you met, and you had a nice social time. But you didn't dig in too deeply. And then you go back and do your work. And that's it. I think that may have had some influence. Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: But the BVAU, uh, as it's developed—isn't the smallish group watching a film. It's—

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. In fact, I think [laughs] it's gotten out of hand, in a way. Because it's an enormous group now. And it needs a big machinery to keep it going. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: Is, uh, some 900 members or more?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And, uh, they get involved with legal problems and organizational problems. And you need a big staff and volunteers. Gets to be too much, really. But that'll resolve itself, one way or another. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: But the prime—the original purpose was so you and your husband had for wanting to get together with artists was to communicate and share.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Is that possible now, on this scale?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, when we came, uh—I must mention that Artist Equity was still in existence here. It wasn't what it had been when it was first started—when many of the painters who I'm talking about, who really didn't get together, did get together. And they were political. And they worked around issues and they tried to get things to happen. And that faded out. And by the time we got here, there were a handful of people involved. But we'd been involved in, uh, Minneapolis, in the Artists Equity. And I've always been a member. And I think it's a really good idea. And so we picked right up on it, met some good friends through that. And we went around to museums and asked them to drop entry fees and things like that.

ROBERT BROWN: Right. Right.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And they did. And we did some good. And then it just petered out. I'm the last known secretary of the New England chapter of [they laughs] Artists Equity. And there—you know, uh, there's still people who would revive it, if it would revive. I think it may. Uh, because BVAU wants to be associated with it. And there are people coming from other cities, who have been Equity members, who say, "Where's Equity here?" So it could very well revive. It's issue-oriented.

ROBERT BROWN: It's issue-oriented.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: It's not substance of, uh, one's art oriented, necessarily.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Not so much. But there could be—it could be combined.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. Yeah. Do you find, in the Artists Union, that there are deep discussions of aesthetics, et cetera? Or is, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, the public discussions that, uh, deal with aesthetics haven't, to my notion, been all

that profound. What happens, though, is that you meet a lot of people and you talk among yourselves. And we do have interesting people come and present their work and talk about it. And that's good.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Uh, you bring on outsiders?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. It's a marvelous opportunity, if it's taken advantage of. We have these schools that bring people, visiting artists and so forth. And if we know about them in time, we ask them. And usually, they're very happy to talk—meet a group of artists and, even for our miserable little fee, they will come and—and that's very great. Yeah. So actually, it's a—it can be a useful thing.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. Can only get better, perhaps [laughs] at this stage.

MARIANNA PINEDA: I hope so. Yeah.

[Tape stops, restarts.]

ROBERT BROWN: This is June 14th, 1977. And today we're going to, uh, talk about a number of works—of your works, uh, hopefully sort of earlier ones and then right up till the present or near present. This is—

[Tape stops, restarts.]

It's—the first piece, then, is, uh, one of 1943, *Mother and Child*, limestone. Uh, what were you—where were you, at that point?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Was this something you were doing when you were still in, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I did this—I started this in Columbia, under Malderelli. Uh, and it was my first stone carving. And actually, it was after a little woodcut that I did when I was in high school. And it's influenced a lot by dance, modern dance and so forth and so on. And, uh, I took it out to California and finished it on my own, out there. Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: As you look at, were there—are there pronounced influences of your teachers at that point?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah. Well, I can see Meštrović and—I don't know. This view, you can't tell so much. But the neck and some of the—way some of the things are done.

ROBERT BROWN: Had you—or were you beginning to get to your own idiom, do you think, by then? Because a mother and child are allied things, uh, at least—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, it was a very—as I think I mentioned earlier, it was a very, very common theme for sculpture, at that time. I don't know why, it just was. And, uh, I don't know. I think so. I think there's something individualistic about it. I think even the way some of the drapery's handled and so forth, uh, still pertains in later work.

ROBERT BROWN: Which—what, in particular is—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I don't know. Just the way it sort of clings to forms. Maybe later on I can point out something that has a similar quality. And, uh, before that, I'd worked mostly in clay. Uh, there was a terracotta piece. I didn't put all the really early, early stuff in here—good reasons. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: But this is quite a, in other words, uh, if not mature, fairly advanced piece, then, is—uh—and in your student years.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, no. It was my first stone carving. And I was 18 years old. No, it was the beginning work, really. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you—when you did that, were you just working for a certain form? Or did you have a particular idea in mind?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I wanted—it was the whole idea of a certain tenderness in the relationship between the child and the mother. And—actually, this relates—I hadn't thought of it before—to a series of little ceramic angels I did, where they're kneeling and with a certain amount of *contrapposto* and so forth. And the action is not so dissimilar from that. As we skip over to the *Sleepwalker*. That's later. That's—well, yeah, it sure is. That's—

ROBERT BROWN: 1949.

MARIANNA PINEDA: —six years later. And this was early student work, early serious student—art school work. And—

ROBERT BROWN: The *Mother and Child*. Right.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And this was the first piece that I did—when we got to Paris, I hadn't really worked very seriously—I'd done a few sculptures since I'd gotten married and had children and so forth. And I was really feeling that I didn't know what I was going to do and not sure that I was going to be able to do anything. And, uh, this piece was done directly in wax, with a little bronze-wire armature in it. And it just sort of came out. And I still like it. I saw it again after many years and it really holds up. And it—it has—in it are sort of technical things that still interest me, where you change the focus by going out of detail. For instance, the braid and the toes and the fingers are very clear. The face has no detail. And since it's a sleepwalker, I think that's suggestive of a certain quality.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And so that's something I'm still interested in doing.

ROBERT BROWN: Do you recall when you first did that, uh, were you pretty conscious of doing it or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yes!

ROBERT BROWN: You were.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yes. Yes, I was. And this was one of these really miraculous casts that we got in Paris. It was so beautiful. I did work on it a little bit but it didn't need much. It was just such a beautiful casting job.

ROBERT BROWN: That's right. You spoke about it the last time, uh—the quality of the work there.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, it's fantastic. We didn't know how lucky we were to get such beautiful castings.

ROBERT BROWN: Is this some theme, this, uh, groping figure, that might have obsessed you or at least interested you at that—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, evidently. Because I—and I did other ones like it. And evidently, you know, one of my themes is sleep or, uh, a less than totally conscious state—connected with movement, usually. So.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, that's fairly active, I mean, in its languorous way.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, right.

ROBERT BROWN: And that you perhaps could relate to your long involvement in the dance, uh—as a child.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah. Could be.

ROBERT BROWN: Could be. [They laugh.] Can't force the—

MARIANNA PINEDA: This is—and then this is the first of the series of the sort of bed ones. And, uh, it's—it's interest—I'm thinking now that—I didn't realize that I did these before I studied with Puccinelli. He was very interested in doing the figure horizontally. And it is a big problem to create enough interest in the silhouette in a recumbent form. But actually, I did this before—many years before I studied—many years? No, I'd studied with him. That's right. Anyway, this relates a lot to Etruscan things.

ROBERT BROWN: Tomb things.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And—this is a little one. And then, I'd done a terracotta one, uh, much earlier, which was also very Etruscan feeling, which I don't have to—

ROBERT BROWN: What were you, uh, trying to do, besides Etruscan-ness and the problem—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: I wasn't—I just loved the idea of, uh—of trying to—it's not just the technique of making, you know, a form that's almost totally horizontal interesting. But the theme itself always interesting.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure. Figures.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Right. And—

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible] a series of those under a bed or [inaudible].

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yes. Right. Right. And this one's sort of humorous. And it was done in—in wax also, with this is just one folded piece. And then these things are added on.

ROBERT BROWN: I see.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: The basic larger form folds over.

MARIANNA PINEDA: See—you see this form. It's just one folded form, which you can do with wax. It's marvelous. That makes me want to work in wax, just talking about it.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Okay. That's—uh, is that all? There's just one view here of the big *Sleepwalker*. But, uh, I did that much later, in—in Florence. Right? No, in Paris. Oh, I did that just before we left Paris. That's right. That was the only big piece I did there, really.

ROBERT BROWN: And it's been shown, hasn't it, or variations quite a bit even recently.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, that—yeah, that—One of the nicest things about—that happened to that one was that, uh—I met David Smith, much later, three or four years later. And he said he had fought for my piece at the Met. It was shown at the Metropolitan, in a big show that they had after the war. And we were just starting out. And we submitted our work. And he said he fought for it. And that was really nice. You know? Because his work was so different and so forth. But he liked it, evidently. Uh, yeah. Here it is. So that was a bit of a thrill. I don't remember if I saw it in place there, '51? Probably went down to see it. I don't remember the show much. '51. We might have still been away. We were still in Paris, when this happened. That's what it was.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, and this—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Wait a minute. That can't be right. No, it must have been the first winter after we got back. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, was this—it was a very important in your career to be shown there obviously.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, right. Pretty exciting. Yeah. And they don't show contemporary art unless they've acquired it, now. So the chances for a young person to show in the Met are pretty thin, these days. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: Well, now, this is slightly different from the first one we saw.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: These are slight variations of the sleepwalker theme.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, and also this, uh, sort of pregnant torso you were mentioning a bit earlier to me.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Right. Right. Well, it's—uh, it's such a striking form, the pregnant form. And it seems to me very, very interesting that it doesn't exist in art, really. It's like a taboo, almost—except in Medieval art, African art, uh—well, a few mythological types. There's, I think, an Egyptian hippopotamus goddess who's pregnant or something. But it's—it's something that isn't shown much. And actually, it's a very, very interesting looking form.

ROBERT BROWN: Certainly.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And, of course, it has all sorts of symbolism and so forth. So—I don't know—I was very intrigued with that. And there's sort of, uh, very free use of—of things going on here. I mean, obviously, the breasts are just barely nubile, and as you got a—a pregnant form. And that's symbolic, more than anything else, you know?

ROBERT BROWN: Of what? Potential or the the—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Changing states, changing states and so forth.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. And the face is ageless, really. Again—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. That's right. There's not much of a face there either.

ROBERT BROWN: And the form is a—is a *contrapposto* form, slightly twisted.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, she isn't turned too much—a little bit, yeah—just barely striding. See, here's this, sort of, link to drapery again, which I use quite a lot. Uh, I think, in the carving, there's just a little bit of that.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. The linking one extremity with—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah, without really being drapery, it suggests taut fabric.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, the form, in itself, is a very taut, uh, combination of softness and tension.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, maybe so. Also, the—I'm just looking at these things. Sometimes it—it helps to have somebody else look with you. You see—you see differently. The—this treatment of the hair, for instance, is not so different from the treatment on the big woman, really.

ROBERT BROWN: Which is a good deal later. Right.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, much later. Okay.

ROBERT BROWN: So those were done in Paris, or the one we just saw.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right. Yeah, right. And also, the woodcarving of the *Daphne*, which started out as a six-foot carving, and it was supposed to be an Ophelia. Another horizontal figure, see?

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MARIANNA PINEDA: —like this. However, I had a lot of trouble with [they laugh] the legs. And so I just cut them off, and changed the whole idea and made it into a Daphne. Uh, because I had an idea for, uh, a pregnant Ophelia, actually. Uh, the Ophelia was pregnant.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: And this Daphne looks a little bit that way too. [They laugh.]

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, that's, uh—this device here, the left arm and the head blending one into the other, it's very, uh, very effective.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And this sort of thing was very much influenced by Zadkine when we were studying this.

ROBERT BROWN: Of transformations from one—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. He did—uh, he actually did a Daphne, where he needed a lot of this sort of thing.

ROBERT BROWN: For the—

MARIANNA PINEDA: I was influenced by him. I mean, this was not the way the log was. It was a solid log, you have to understand. And I carved in these twigs and things.

ROBERT BROWN: Where the fingers become twigs.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, right. See, here's the back of the study for the Ophelia, a little—

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, the recumbent figure.

MARIANNA PINEDA: —a little 12-inch—I often make a 12-inch study, uh, something small, hoping to do it an inch to a foot.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, this is a wax study, right here.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's a wax study. Right.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah, yeah. Well, this was a great deal of activity within the horizontal format. Writhing across limbs.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, it is. And, uh, I did a little silver relief, which was actually designed as a piece of jewelry, which was finally sold as a relief, which is the same theme, a little more baroque, with hair and stuff.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, what did you—did you have some empathy, do you think, with the character of Ophelia or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, sure. You got to have a little empathy for—[they laugh].

ROBERT BROWN: Okay.

MARIANNA PINEDA: He was such an impossible fellow. All right. Now we're in Minneapolis. Uh, that was—

ROBERT BROWN: In 1953—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: *An Effigy for the Young Lover*.

MARIANNA PINEDA: *Lovers*. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: *Lovers*.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Teak.

MARIANNA PINEDA: The—yeah. This was another, uh, *Bed* series. And it was a sort of reaction to, uh, the very serious tomb figures that we saw. And this one is really quite cozy and comfortable looking and—and not all cold and stretched out.

ROBERT BROWN: No, not at all.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: A real picture of, uh, peace.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Uh-huh. Uh, and this—these are a series of, uh, terracotta, hollow-built, coil-built heads I did in Minneapolis. As I was saying, it's a really great technique, because you feel the outside and the inside at the same time, the total three-dimensional experience.

ROBERT BROWN: Is that something first began when you were out there?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, I think so. Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: '52 or so—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: My husband was doing them in, uh, Alfred, at the New York State College of Ceramics. And he did very large ones. Uh, so I was watching him.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, and the head, what—what did you have in mind with that? Because it's a child's head or—

MARIANNA PINEDA: I don't know. Uh, the—it's just a child's head. I sent it to a friend who was a psychiatrist. She was horrified by it, because it looked retarded or—

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, I never thought of it that way. But you never know how people are going to react. [They laugh.] Uh, well, here's a little tiny study for, uh, *The Old Dancer*, uh, *Seated Woman*. And that I did in Minneapolis. And my husband cast it. And it had a sad, sad story. They had a little foundry there. And he had a terrible time casting it. It was nearly lost. And he worked very hard to repair it. And I finally exhibited it. And it was bought by a museum in Canada. And I borrowed it for a show. And it was sent back. I forget which museum it was. Toronto? Uh, they never claimed it. The museum was in reorganization. And they never claimed it. And I got a notice from the customs saying that they had destroyed it, because no one had claimed it. And it really made me feel just dreadful. It was solid bronze, though. I hope somebody slipped it into their raincoat pocket and took it home. Because to destroy it would have been very difficult. You'd have to melt it down. It was very hard to do anything to. [Laughs.]

ROBERT BROWN: They couldn't have done it right there at the customs.

MARIANNA PINEDA: No.

ROBERT BROWN: But the—the figure is remarkable, leaning to one side—the tension and then the gesture and the facial expression bringing it back. What did you have in mind there? It's a picture of collapse, of defeat?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, actually, I can tell you. That was fairly specific. Uh, I was studying with a dancer named Nancy Hauser. I never called it *The Old Dancer*, when I showed it, because I didn't particularly want to, you know, refer to her. She wasn't really that old or anything like that. Uh, but she was an absolutely first-class teacher. She's still teaching and dancing. And, uh, she had a rather heavy body—still extremely graceful and expressive. And, uh, so I used that as an idea. And I tried to do it larger. And it wasn't very good. Uh, well, I did a 14-inch piece—version in Florence. It was the best one. That's in the Museum of Fine Arts. Then I tried to do it in cement. I don't have—I did it in plaster and then in cement. And it's an odd scale. It's a one-third life-scale, which is very tricky scale.

ROBERT BROWN: Is, uh—yeah, yeah.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And it didn't come out very well.

ROBERT BROWN: But the 14 inches, uh, did.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, yeah. The 14-inch one, which is back here someplace—well, anyway—we'll get to it—uh, I was happy with. And I did this before I saw some of the Renaissance—early Renaissance—the Pisano doors and so forth. But I think they sort of pushed me to it too, especially the drapery. I was influenced by that, I think. And then this, the *Prelude*, which is a, uh—is a woman in labor, actually. I start—I did the study in Minneapolis and I did the enlargement in Florence. And that just went marvelous. And I wish everything would go that way. I didn't even have the piece. All I had was a couple of photographs. And I went to a man who made bedsprings. And he made me the armature. He welded up an armature for me. And just used chicken wire. And I just modeled it up. It went very fast. And then I had a marvelous plaster caster, who came in, took the mold off, took it away. Was in plaster and then out to the foundry and—

ROBERT BROWN: It was done.

MARIANNA PINEDA: —a beautiful copy and it's done—just wonderful. If everything would go like that, it would be great. And that's a small version of *The Dance of Sleep or Death*.

ROBERT BROWN: Which is, uh, related still to your horizontal problem?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yes. It's still that. Yeah. And uh, did I tell you the story about that one?

ROBERT BROWN: No.

MARIANNA PINEDA: —that this was related—there were two things that really influenced me in this one. Jerome Liebling, who's a very fine photographer, had taken a photograph of a bum sleeping in a doorway. And at the same time, there was a news story, very sensational new story about a woman who was found frozen in an alley in Chicago. And she was supposed to be dead. There was a similar case just last year, here in Boston. But they took her to the hospital. And evidently, she was so totally full of alcohol that she survived. I mean, she lost toes and fingers and all sorts of things. But, uh, somehow she survived. And the two ideas sort of combined in this piece. And so those are suggestive of newspapers and so forth.

ROBERT BROWN: So it has a rather sordid overtone? At least in your mind it did.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Except the photograph was quite beautiful. It's the same idea of sort of action taking place while someone is unconscious almost. I mean, the—it's—the gesture is more like the Pompeian figures than anything else, isn't it, sort of?

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yes, it is.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Which, uh—which I did see, as a child, and we saw again.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, very, [inaudible].

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I mean, this is quite a bit of action. So it isn't—the body's not passive but somehow the mind is out of it, in this one.

ROBERT BROWN: Another view of the same.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Or it's frozen, one way or another. Yeah. Okay. Let's see what else we got. Well, this is the large—I did a six-foot version of this, for a show in Minneapolis, which was really my first solo exhibition. And it's kind of nice. This is closer to the photograph, the simplicity of this thing. It's also closer to the Pompeian things, I

think, as I look at it. I wasn't consciously doing that, at that time. And—

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, the six-foot version of *The Dance of Sleep or Death* was worked up as you looked at the smaller, earlier version?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, I had done the other one. I don't think I had it in front of me. I'm not sure that I did.

ROBERT BROWN: This is much simplified.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And, uh, this was done in a tiny basement. And we just barely got it out the bulkhead. [They laugh.]

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, this—you had mentioned, uh, that, the problems you had, the workspace.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. I was used to steam pipes and laundry machines.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, Minneapolis.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And no light, really, just whatever light happened to be in the basement.

ROBERT BROWN: Six feet long.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: So a big piece.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And we stored it there at the university. And we left it when we went to Italy. And I don't know what happened to it. Probably thrown out.

ROBERT BROWN: You really think so?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, I'm sure. But, I mean, I don't know what anyone would do with it. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: This is, uh—that's [inaudible].

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Right. Okay. This is the larger version of the, uh, *Prelude*, the one that went—went so quickly and well. And I still like it. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: It's a very powerful figure, isn't it?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, this is a figure—it's not really simply recumbent. It's all—it's a tremendous tension.

MARIANNA PINEDA: No. That's right. Except—it's true. I suppose that's true, although I tend to think of it as being fairly passive and accepting. I don't know why. But you're right.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, that's—

MARIANNA PINEDA: When you look at it—when you look at it without the face, you don't get that feeling. It's true.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. No, I mean, they look so potential.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Oh, and there's all—you can read all kinds of symbolism into the—some women are very distressed by this sort of bound quality here.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And you can read all sorts of things into it. Actually, uh, I remember reading someplace that they used to tie rags to bedposts and women would hang onto them. And, uh, I used it that way, in particular. And you don't see it in this view but there's sort of a triangular drape here, which is almost like a curtain, which could be symbolic. You know, I've—I'm happy to have as many different reactions or, you know, readings of a thing.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, I—uh, this very effective use of that linked drapery that you developed by the late '40s.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: You had the mere suggestion, uh, of covering.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Oh, by the way, that was banned by Lever Brothers, makers of—or, you know, soap.

ROBERT BROWN: Banned!

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yes. They wouldn't show it in the Sculptors Guild—uh, when we first came back from Italy. And we both resigned in protest. And later on, uh—although they still reserve the right to take anything out of the show they don't like, in the lobby of the Lever House. Uh, you should see the stuff that's in there now! [Laughs.] And, uh, I rejoined because I was more or less assured that this sort of thing probably would never happen again. But that was really terrible. And it was terrible that the Guild didn't just say, "Okay," you know, "We won't show anything." But unfortunately, artists are desperate to show. So.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah. Uh, we're getting into the series of, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, this is the *Wailing Woman*. And I did about—well, first I did an ivory version, which was much too sweet. And then I did the little—the little one was done, nine inches, which I still like, and this 14-inch version, which some people like the best of all, and then the over-lifesize version.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, in this you've got the combination of a suggestion of fullness of body and then what we saw even much earlier, in the *Sleepwalker*, this kind of emaciated or—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, you think of that as emaciated.

ROBERT BROWN: In some ways—the legs. Uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh-huh. That's interesting.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, maybe that's too strong a word.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. For me, this version, while it's fine and, you know, it's really worked out perhaps best of all, is too elegant. The idea I was trying to get across was, again, of a mature body, slightly ruined, uh, with the limbs being frailer than the trunk. I mean, you have got that, uh—you do—get through somehow.

ROBERT BROWN: Right. Frail—a better word.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Or less strong. Uh, you know, I have it sitting behind me. And I have to look at it once in a while and, you know, I'm—I still like it but I see all sorts of things I would have done differently now.

ROBERT BROWN: You do?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. That's the trouble with having your work around. [They laugh.]

ROBERT BROWN: You said last time you'd rather have none around.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, that's right. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Have them out, being experienced.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Sometime—I suppose you do learn from them, you know. But if you can't do too much about a particular piece, that can be frustrating. All right. Uh, now we're—we're in Boston. And—

ROBERT BROWN: In the early '60s.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, and I got a grant from the Radcliffe Institute, which came in the nick of time. Because I just had another child and was wondering how I was going to be able to work. That was really a great help. Because this paid for some domestic help. Everyone took me very seriously, since somebody—some organization was taking me seriously. It's amazing. But psychologically, it's really—

ROBERT BROWN: You mean your friends and family—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, the family and the help and everything. Makes a difference. You know? So you've got some kind of official seal of approval. That you're supposed to be working.

ROBERT BROWN: That's—you did that—uh, do that self-portrait of your husband, about that—or the portrait at about that time too.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. That was done about the same time. That was done in wax too. And all the—all the

oracles were done in wax, these studies, and shipped off to Italy in shoeboxes and things. And then I would get back four beautiful copies, one which is, uh, the—what they now call the—the foundry model, which would be the wax cast into bronze, and then copies off of that.

ROBERT BROWN: And what did you have in mind, this *Oracle* series? The *Accused*—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, various things. Uh, it was—it sort of, I have a great interest in mythology. I don't know if some of the things—they're—they're all in here. But I've had a great interest in mythology. And the—it had something to do with women in a position of influence, uh, even authority, as we think they may have been in pre-patriarchal societies, had something to do with the creative process, and struggle of getting something out, speaking something, or delivering it to somebody else.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, the *Phorcathis* [ph] figure, particularly—she has intensity of struggle.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And also then, is the very interesting idea of, uh, just then a design problem of a large form on—perched on a rather slender, complicated tripod. Uh, I think there's a whole series, a whole—I don't know what you'd say—a whole body of modern sculpture that deals with this, a heavy form on thin forms, which is rather typical of a certain period of modern sculpture. And I don't think you see that too often in the past, just as a sort of—

ROBERT BROWN: Wonder why it's done. Can't be just levitation, can it, or lightness?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, you see it even in—in furniture.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, yes.

MARIANNA PINEDA: You see?

ROBERT BROWN: Such as these chairs.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah, right, and the Eames chairs.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, it's just a style, I think, something they could do, technically. You can do it in metal. Has something to do with production of certain kinds of metal. And the fact that houses are stilted up now and things like that. You see, it's some kind of a mode that's—

ROBERT BROWN: But it must be you—I mean, uh, a sculptor, for instance, must like it or be excited by it for some reason.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, it's very different from the certain kind of planted forms that have been very common to sculpture for a long, long time. So.

ROBERT BROWN: Uh, you've had very few that are really, you could say, planted. Even your horizontal—the—the *Bed* and so forth.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's true.

ROBERT BROWN: Those figures are too active to seem, uh—[they laugh.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Maybe so. Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Or the *Wailing Woman*, whose heaviest parts are in the midsection.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right. You're right. And these are also quite dancelike, rapturous and ecstatic and so forth. Had fun with the titles. But they do apply.

ROBERT BROWN: There are none, uh, complete release. They're all pent up, aren't they? Would you say—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Well, this one is sort of letting go, this one—

ROBERT BROWN: Jubilant.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And a lot of my work is really based on—on people I see. We skipped *The Visitation*, back here. But—

ROBERT BROWN: The two-figure group.

MARIANNA PINEDA: The two-figure group—but, uh, Duny Katzman was really the model for this. She never posed but when she came to Italy with her husband, who's a painter. She's a jeweler. Uh, she really looked like this. She was the most graceful pregnant woman I've ever seen. And, uh, this figure is just invented as an older woman.

ROBERT BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. The younger and the older. Sure. That was '56.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. And I did small versions of this and then this large version. That went pretty fast too. Florence was a good place to work.

ROBERT BROWN: You did this—this, then, in '64 and it was cast over there.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah. But this one, for instance, is based on Nina Bola [ph]. This is really her—my sense of her figure. Okay. And then there's a series of more mother and children, on benches. And there are reliefs in that series, also. Don't have very good pictures of those. Here's one. And relief is very tricky business. I feel I'm just beginning to understand something about relief, where it's—

ROBERT BROWN: What seems to be the big—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: It's—it deals with illusion. It's much more painterly. And yet it isn't. Because you're using—you're using real light. You're playing with illusion and real light. So you're dealing with sculpture and you're dealing with painting at the same time. And it's a special skill, I think.

ROBERT BROWN: You're trying, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Harold's particularly good at it, you know. It's—so you're—this is something which is really in depth and yet, you know, the thickness is very little. So that's really illusionistic.

ROBERT BROWN: The very planning of it is very confident and, uh—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, yeah. You really have to—one—each height has to be very carefully controlled, really deal with the other one.

ROBERT BROWN: Would you begin with any drawings in any of these cases?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah, and you do draw on the clay. Yeah. It's related to drawing. And drawing is—is absolutely essential, all the time.

ROBERT BROWN: More so than with a figurative—with, uh, free sculpture, freestanding?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, yeah. I think, in relief, the drawing is—is much more part of the process. Yeah. Although you draw in space, you're always looking at contours and silhouettes and—you know. So it's, uh—it's related also. Then I did some portraits. I've done portraits of some of my children, although they never pose. And I have some commissions. And they usually take me a long time, unfortunately.

ROBERT BROWN: They're very painstaking for you to do?

MARIANNA PINEDA: It is for me. I don't know. I'm always pleased when the people like it.

ROBERT BROWN: [Laughs.]

MARIANNA PINEDA: Because I do think that you—you must deliver a likeness or a sense of the person. And you must also make a good piece of sculpture. And that's a tall order. And, uh, this one, I was very pleased, because it went into a collection with some great art of Brancusi and Goyas and stuff. And that sort of thing keeps you on your toes.

ROBERT BROWN: But you don't feel that dichotomy or that tension between what—making someone look—or something look like something recognizable, as well as being beautiful sculpture, when you're not doing—or you don't feel it to that degree, do you? Uh, except as reference points. You want it to look in a general feeling—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, you're dealing with something else. You're quite right. Uh, I'm interested in the psychological and symbolic aspects of art. And, you know, anything goes to achieve those terms. And we can do that today. That's the great freedom of modern art, is that you can use any method—use what you think is—will do the trick, so to speak.

ROBERT BROWN: You mean because we have materials but also because we have—we've freed our heads.

MARIANNA PINEDA: That's right. That's right. The restrictions aren't there. And it's also a big trap, because you can—you can fall into, uh, mannerisms and—

ROBERT BROWN: Or never find [they laugh] [inaudible].

MARIANNA PINEDA: Right. There's so many styles that are available to us too. I mean, we are totally eclectic, I think. No doubt about that.

ROBERT BROWN: Here's the figure of one of the *Oracle* series that is cast in larger size and outdoors.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah. That was a very interesting experience, uh, when we went to Rome. My husband was artist in residence. I was one of the very lucky ones who had a place to work, of the wives. Because there were a lot of gifted women, who were just bickering [laughs] and fretting away their time. They had no place to work or study or whatever. And, uh, so what I did, I took a little version, the small version in bronze with me. And I had at my disposal the great resources of Italian artisanry. And they made a big armature for me, by using a canopy, a squared canopy, which they enlarged from the figure. And then they hung down points and made the armature. And I modeled the piece. And, uh, then it was cast in plaster. Unfortunately, I didn't finish it there. It was almost done. But it wasn't satisfactory to me. So I brought it back here and worked on it, for, I think almost another year. And then I had to ship it back to Italy. [Laughs.] Uh, but it was—they did a beautiful job on the casting and I'm quite pleased with it.

ROBERT BROWN: You find that the series—the *Oracle* series reaches its greater power, now that it's in this enlarged figure?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, I don't see how it can—you know, size is a—always has some impressive quality. And uh, you can lose things. There's no doubt about it. You can lose—in a way, I like the small *Sleepwalker* better than the big one. You can lose the intensity of something. You can lose whatever you were after. Uh, it's a trick to enlarge things and keep that or improve on it. But all things being equal, I think size does make a big difference. I would like to see a whole circle of these oracles.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

MARIANNA PINEDA: And it'd be fun.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.] Oh, I wanted to ask about these figures here, I wanted to ask if they're studies for the model, these being just a very recent year.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, fairly recent, yeah. These were done—uh, so it's early '70s. And before we went to Hawaii for that winter, I did a lot of work from the model. Sometimes when the ideas aren't flowing, it's a great help just to get a model in and to work. And then—then they come again. Or the model suggests things. And it's just a great way to do, to draw and then to work from the model. And, uh—

ROBERT BROWN: So these were really, uh, you could say, simply studies?

MARIANNA PINEDA: In a way, they're studies. That's right. And you arrive at forms that—with different models, that you wouldn't have arrived at otherwise. And I did a whole—a series in terracotta, where I really began to get a feeling of what to do with clay directly. And those were hollow-built. And in a way, they're—some of them are cast in bronze. But the clay is really the nicest. Because I was working for that. The way the light bounces off the terracotta can be very beautiful. So. See—and I have done things in ivory. I did a little hammock in ivory, the *Year in a Hammock*. And I did a kneeling woman and woman wailing in a hammock.

ROBERT BROWN: And, uh, is the—is the ivory a material, uh—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: It's a gorgeous material. It's, uh—it's terribly seductive. And I just don't think I'm going to do much more, because I feel so badly [laughs] about the elephants. When we were in Hong Kong, we bought a tusk, half a tusk. But I really felt terribly guilty about it. And I don't think I'm going to, uh, carve it anymore. They say that they're really dying out. Because they fine, uh, the hunters but then they just go back.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, sure.

MARIANNA PINEDA: It isn't enough of a fine to deter them. They're still making money on it. Yeah. They're still making money on it. So—

ROBERT BROWN: Poaching [inaudible]—Well, this—these are fairly recent things we're looking at. And, this is just sort of—

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. This is maybe '74 or something like that.

ROBERT BROWN: Is this pretty much where you're working now—this kind of thing.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Uh, this is a very—yeah. Well, it's hard to say. This is a very similar composition to that led to the two figures, *Lovers*. It's very, very similar.

ROBERT BROWN: The early '50s.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Yeah. Uh, it has a different feeling, I think. And it's related to tomb figures and my interest in the Romanesque and all sorts of things.

ROBERT BROWN: It's very soft, isn't it? I think that's nature of the material.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah. Well, you can treat it any way. You can, yeah. It's—it's hard to see in the photograph. It's very luminous. And, uh, you see these slippery highlights. But, uh, but you can make it very crisp. It just welcomes any kind of treatment. See—and there were series of wood carvings, uh, a whole series of wood carvings, double torsos and so forth. Uh—

ROBERT BROWN: There was—you had some comment to make about these, were called, uh, twirlers or—

MARIANNA PINEDA: [Inaudible] oh, yeah. Uh, I call it *Twirling*. Yeah. I did a little study, in Florence—two of them, one of a mother twirling a child and then of two girls twirling around. And, uh, these are the sort of things that sell very nicely. That's not why I did them but, you know.

ROBERT BROWN: I sense you don't particularly like just doing things that you can grind out because they're popular.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Oh, no, absolutely. And, uh, I had the opportunity to present some things to a jury of elderly people, involved with a housing project in East Boston. And they were to pick something of mine to be enlarged for a sculpture. And they were also picking a fountain and an architect. They had a—they were just playing Medici. It was marvelous. And, uh, the first piece I showed them, which was one of the mother and two children, with the mother leaning over, they were—picked that first. And then they decided the breasts were hanging down and that was perhaps not right.

ROBERT BROWN: Dignified or—?

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yes. And, uh, then they picked this. And so I just went ahead and did it. And it looks quite nice. It's unfortunate that they didn't have enough money to do things in the proper scale. Because there's a six-story building behind this. And it was a lot with busy detail. And it just disappears. But they like it. And, you know, they're very pleased with it. So it's nice. I like to have my work out in public. That's sort of the ultimate.

ROBERT BROWN: Yeah.

MARIANNA PINEDA: Yeah.

ROBERT BROWN: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]