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**Oral history interview with Richard Howard  
Hunt, 1979 Mar. 3**

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# Transcript

## Interview

**DB:** Dennis Barrie

**RH:** Richard Hunt

**DB:** Okay, today is March 2nd, 1979 and I'm here with Richard Hunt in his great studio.

**RH:** No, it's March 3rd.

**DB:** Is it March 3rd? I stand corrected, it is March 3rd. We were supposed to do this the other day. And I'm Dennis Barrie. This is the first of our interviews. And I would just like to start out, Richard, with some of your family background. Can you tell us a little bit about your family origins?

**RH:** Yeah. Well, I was born in Chicago, September 12, 1935. My mother was Victoria Inez Henderson Hunt. My father, Cleo \_\_\_\_\_ Hunt. My father was born in Georgia, rural Georgia. My mother actually was born in Tennessee but raised in Illinois, near Monmouth, Illinois. Both came to Chicago, met here during the early -- long before 1935. I guess they were married a little more than a year when I was born. My father was a barber. Father died two years ago. He was a barber for most of his career. My mother is living, retired librarian. Also was a beautician for some time. And as a matter of fact, during the time I was growing up on the South Side of Chicago for the most part, they were both active in those businesses. That is to say, my father being a barber and my mother being a hairdresser. And I grew up mostly on the South Side of Chicago. For a couple of years, when I was about 9 or to 11, we moved to Galesburg, Illinois, a small town. So I spent some time in a sort of small town, rural atmosphere but most of the time in the city of Chicago.

**DB:** Were you the only child?

**RH:** No, I was the oldest of two. I have a sister who's three and a half years my junior.

**DB:** Okay, did you have any kind of -- did your family have artistic roots? I mean, did your mother and father do anything artistic?

**RH:** My mother was interested in music. She'd studied voice and sang in local choirs, churches, was a soloist. You know, would give some recitals and all that. So I had kind of an early introduction to music. She used to take me to her voice lessons and all. As a matter of fact, her idol was Marian Anderson, the singer. As a matter of fact, she named my sister Marian after Marian Anderson. My sister happened to become a singer but.... (Laughter) She knows about it. We're not....

**DB:** Were you introduced to the visual arts as a kid?

**RH:** Yeah. Yeah, I always liked to draw when I was a kid. You know, with crayons on paper or the floor or the walls. And, you know, as a student in public schools, you know, I would do a lot of drawing and it was suggested that I might try some art classes. My mother was the kind who was encouraging and all of that. Because her interest involved say music, but then because of some other interests that were passed on to her from teachers in school and all, I ended up being enrolled

in the Junior School of the Art Institute. I can't remember exactly how old I was, around 12 or 13, something like that. And that began a kind of long student relationship at the Art Institute that went through five or six years of the Junior School and then four years in the Professional School.

**DB:** What did you do in the Junior School? Just have all sorts of drawing?

**RH:** Drawing, painting, some craft type things. And while I was in high school I ended up taking a sculpture class for high school students which was the point at which --point of entry, say, into sculpture. There was a very kind of exciting revelation in working, you know, artistically in three dimensions as opposed to drawing.

**DB:** So the sculpture class was part of the high school or part of the Junior School?

**RH:** Part of the Junior School for high school students.

**DB:** So it was programmed with the City of Chicago Schools?

**RH:** No. I mean, I'd done a few three dimensional things in high school art classes. As a matter of fact, it was a high school art teacher who suggested to me I might try the sculpture. As a matter of fact, you know, they were interested teachers that I had -- I went to Englewood High School and there were several teachers there who took an interest in me. And at the same time, I was going to the Junior School of the Art Institute. And, you know, again I had some interested teachers, interesting rapport with them. After doing a lot of the art things in high school, there was one teacher, Shirley Walters was her name, she said, why don't you try the sculpture class at the Arts Institute, which I did. And like I say, it was very interesting kind of experience for me. And there was a very wonderful teacher there, a woman named Nellie Bar, who you know, was very good teacher and a very inspiring kind of person.

**DB:** What kind of classes did they have? Clay modeling and....

**RH:** Yeah, started out with essentially clay modeling, working in plaster, a little bit of carving.

**DB:** I read somewhere that you were modeling clay as a kid. Is this before this class or pretty much after?

**RH:** No, I hadn't done any -- except maybe just a little something. You know, art classes in public school, you have a little clay somewhere. But not in any -- you know, the real sort of modeling, we would have a model in the class and we used to model with figure in clay and things like that. You know, the real experience of really sort of sculpting began in that class.

**DB:** Did that class draw you more to sculpture than say painting?

**RH:** Yeah.

**DB:** And at the point were you thinking that you wanted to be an artist?

**RH:** Well, no, not really. I mean, that is to say, I knew I liked to do artwork of various kinds. But I hadn't made a career decision at that point. But the interest that developed in sculpture made me think more about doing sculpture than about, say, developing in painting. I didn't -- like I've always since then, spent more time, or a certain amount of time, with graphic work. But I've not pursued painting as an interest. I mean, like the drawing and the sculpture somehow, you know, didn't --have developed in a relationship to one another that painting seemed outside of after being involved

with sculpture.

**DB:** I also read something about you were doing welding in your father's basement.

**RH:** Well, yeah. Once I started to day school or Professional School---

**DB:** Once you were actually in the Art Institute School?

**RH:** Yeah. I took some classes in metalworking, actually at the time when one couldn't weld in the sculpture classes there. It was still modeling and carving. This was in the early middle fifties. But I got interested in working with metal, got myself a welding torch and stuff like that and set up at home. I was living at home while going to the Art Institute. So I was able then to develop on my own, you know, the metal working techniques and sort of welded metal, open form type sculpture as a kind of side.

**DB:** What stirred your interest in getting into metal?

**RH:** Well, as a matter of fact, there was a great exhibition at the Art Institute called "Sculpture of the 20th Century," organized by Andrew Cadder Fritchie [phon.sp.]. And, you know, that was the first time I saw kind of a survey of work done in metal. Gonzalez, David Smith, Picasso's iron sculpture. You know, people coming to the fore at the time. And it seemed to me a very interesting way of being able to work more freely and improvisationally and incorporate more space. You know, like modeling just -- a lot of the other things, it's a chore to make it more than monolithic, the armature, support, you're doing all that. And the idea of being able to do all that directly was an exciting prospect to me. So I determined I'd try it myself.

**DB:** But there wasn't any of that being taught in the school itself?

**RH:** No.

**DB:** After this show?

**RH:** Well, it takes the school a long while, you know. I mean, an individual might be excited or inspired to do something but it's another thing to institute a whole new discipline in an area. But no, you know, I was -- I ended up taking some courses, actually, in metal working, metal craft working, making bowls and various kinds of things that one does with metal in a craft way which gave me some background in terms of working with metal. And then I developed the techniques that I came to use on my own, adapting from there. And also I saw work that a few people were starting to do in Chicago at that time, Joe Godo and Ray Fink [phon.sp.] were two of the principal artists here at that time who started to work with metal, with direct welded.

**DB:** This was in the early fifties when you were in school?

**RH:** Yeah, right.

**DB:** Who did you study with at the Art Institute?

**RH:** You mean in sculpture?

**DB:** Those people who were most influential.

**RH:** Well, one of the most important teacher there was this woman, Nellie Barr. And then I did study

with Ray Fink, who taught the metalworking class. And another teacher, Herman Garfield. Ms. Barr's husband, Paul Wiegard, was also an influence. I didn't spend much time in his class but, as a matter of fact, through his wife I knew him early on, even when I was in high school. There was another teacher who taught drawing in the Junior School, Mr. Jacobson, Manuel Jacobson who was, I think, a very important teacher. Kathleen Blackshear, Ethel Spears.

**DB:** Everybody mentions Kathleen Blackshear. She must be legendary.

**RH:** That's right. I did study some sculpture with Aigon Wyner [phon.sp.], sculpture teacher and Edward Chesain [phon.sp.]. You know, I didn't spend a lot of time in their class. I mean, we didn't get along all that well. But they were influencing in their way. I learned a lot of what I didn't want to do from them. (Laughter)

**DB:** Are the two conservative?

**RH:** Not -- it wasn't that. It was, I don't know, maybe personality as much as anything else.

**DB:** So it wasn't necessarily their philosophy towards sculpture or....

**RH:** Well, I didn't agree with their philosophy but, you know, it wasn't just that. And then I ended up majoring in art education, you know, rather than being a sculpture major. So I took a lot of different courses in a lot of different areas rather than spending a lot of time in sculpture. Another teacher was Max Kahn, who I took lithography with him for a little while. And Owen \_\_\_\_\_ Burdick who taught etching.

**DB:** Why art education? Did you want to teach or....

**RH:** Well, I thought that was one thing one might do, you know, to make a living. Once I started thinking about art as a career. I mean, there was that aspect to it and then the fact that I decided if I majored in sculpture I'd have to spend a lot more time with either Wyner or Chesain than I wanted to. (Laughter)

**DB:** So you really had kind of parallel development because you were doing things on your own at home, right?

**RH:** Yeah.

**DB:** About how long into your time at the school did you start really playing with metal?

**RH:** When I was in my second year.

**DB:** And you went for five years?

**RH:** No, four years.

**DB:** So pretty much you were on your own pretty early into the metal?

**RH:** Yeah.

**DB:** What was your own work like during that period?

**RH:** Well, you know, I was doing these things that were figurative, somewhat academic, you might say. You know, in terms of sculpture and things that were done, modeled in clay and what not. And

then as I started -- the first things I did in metal were soldered metal things and were sort of skeletal figures. And then I did a lot -- or a number of them which were kind of acrobats and I'd incorporate different kinds of construction. Some were like vehicles, some were other kinds of constructions. Then I also, kind of as I was doing that, started to make the things that were like constructions more like sculptures in themselves. Around then I saw things that were abstract that interested me and sort of determined to try my hand at it, you know. Kind of abstraction from the figure, you know, or from organic kinds of things. And also things that were just more geometric, lines, planes, things like that. It was also a way of practicing welding, too. So it sort of developed along that line.

**DB:** Who was most influential during that period?

**RH:** Well, Julio Gonzales.

**DB:** Was that exhibition the first time you'd seen Gonzales' work?

**RH:** It was, yeah. And then I'd been to New York, saw a couple of pieces that were in the Museum of Modern Art. And then, of course, seen some of David Smith. Then also at the time there were -- this is a period when this generation of British sculptures started to work with metal, that was being shown here. Rich Butler, Lyn Gadwick, other people like that. And, you know, they were very vital artists at that time and one was impressed with what they were doing. So all those things. And like I say, Joe Godo and Ray Fink here were people whose work I looked at, you know. They were already well \_\_\_\_\_.

**DB:** Did you have a personal relationship with Godo? You said Fink was a teacher.

**RH:** Yeah, and then I got to know Joe Godo too, you know. Not -- I didn't spend a lot of time with either of them. I'm more an artist who works on my own. I don't congregate a lot with other artists. But, I mean, I looked very much at what people were doing, you know, would spend a certain amount of time talking to them.

**DB:** What attracted you to Gonzales' work?

**RH:** Well, the work itself. And actually, he took a couple different approaches. I mean there was sort of a figurative strain in his work and then more abstract. But I also kind of related to figure or organic sources.

**DB:** In one of your catalogs written about you mention that the concept of Gonzales of projecting into space and drawing into space was particularly important to you.

**RH:** Right. Well, I saw it as an exciting idea, you know, as a sculpture. I mean, you know, as I mentioned before it seemed to me when I was modeling and carving, I always wanted to be sort of -- be less monolithic and more kind of involved with space, you see. And so kind of getting this idea, both from seeing the work and reading what I could about Gonzales, quotations from him. And seeing that possibilities were there in welded metal for doing that because of the tensile strength of metal and because of the way you could put pieces together with welding or soldering or whatever. It just seemed to fulfill that kind of requirements that developed in my own mind for the kind of images I wanted to project in sculpture.

**RH:** So then, you know, there it was. I mean, someone who had developed an idea, a kind of rationale and the technical basis for doing it. So it was very influential. And I was also impressed with the sort of humanity that was expressed in his writing, in his thinking about art. I mean, more so

than by someone else who was maybe a constructivist or did constructed work. But it was more theoretical and more involved with technique as technique.

**DB:** Did you see a lot of Gonzales' writings and so forth?

**RH:** Oh, yeah. I would look for whatever was available about him.

**DB:** Was there a lot of available work out then?

**RH:** No. There's still not.

**DB:** Right.

**RH:** I mean, he's one of the great, unsung artists in my estimation. But partly it's because he didn't do a lot of work and partly he was in Picasso's shadow. A lot of things, you know. And then partly because people didn't understand what he talked about in terms of drawing in space. They were drawing on space, you know. A lot of the welded stuff that came later was actually rather two dimensional. Then there was sort of a big wave that passed and then people sort of had taken to doing other things. And I think partly that had to do with the fact that most of what they appropriated was the effect of drawing. Like you say, drawing in two dimensions and taking away the paper. So it's all been so frontal, you know, that there wasn't a lot for a lot of people to do for very long. And quite understandably, interest in it waned. First people were looking at it and then people were doing it. Went on to other kinds of isms that \_\_\_\_\_ raised in the sixties.

**DB:** But you did a great deal of it.

**RH:** Well, I think it was partly to recognize that sculpture is a three dimensional art. I think part of the problems was sculpture in our time is too influenced by the two dimensional, the way we actually -- the way we exist is really two dimensional, the way we actually -- the way we exist is really two dimensional.

**DB:** Yes, you're probably right.

**RH:** I am right. (Laughter)

**DB:** All right, it's a difficult concept for most people. And as you said, it's a difficult concept for most sculptors.

**RH:** No, I really meant that -- it's more societal, too, you know. I mean, we're part of society so it's kind of like going against the grain.

**DB:** At what point did you start the pieces that were, as some say, drawing in space?

**RH:** About 1955.

**DB:** Oh, pretty early?

**RH:** Yeah.

**DB:** And were you out of school or...

**RH:** I was in school. I was a third year student, second, third year I got into that sculpture.

**DB:** Did you show these anywhere?

**RH:** Yeah, locally in art fairs, Chicago and vicinity shows.

**DB:** What kind of reaction did they get?

**RH:** Well, actually very good reaction. I mean, I won a couple of top prizes at the Chicago and Vicinity Show and had a dealer from New York see my work there and invite me to exhibit in New York. This is Charles Allen Gallery. As a matter of fact, Katherine Kuhl and Daniel \_\_\_\_\_ Rich came to see my work and they got a piece for the Art Institute which was given to them -- you know, bought for and given to them by Arnold Merrit.

**DB:** In the fifties?

**RH:** Yeah. Dorothy Miller was out to jury an American show that Fred Sweet, who was the curator then of American (inaudible) selected a piece. And she purchased that for the Museum of Modern Arts collection or arranged to.

**DB:** You had a lot of favorable....

**RH:** Yeah, fairly, you know, short order.

**DB:** Were you just doing the linear things?

**RH:** Well, some were linear and some were more figurative, you know, related to figure. Well, like that figure downstairs was indicative of something. I was working a totally different direction, you know. Metal work was -- you know, Lanier and others that were then sort of more abstract, organic abstract you might call it. And then others were more rooted in the figure.

**DB:** There's no one particular direction you were doing?

**RH:** No. I mean, I never have liked the idea of working in one direction. You know, I mean the variety of ways of developing or dealing with imagery that's expressive of one thing or another. And rather than trying to develop a kind of unified style that has a sort of singular look to it, I've been more interested in -- you know, you can't do it all at the same time. So one day I might be working on something linear or another day I might be working on something planer or volumetric or something. And of course, there's a kind of cycle. I mean now what I'm doing is different from what I was doing ten years ago. But I still look at it as doing either what kind of needs to be done at the time or what I feel like doing at a given time.

**DB:** Let's backtrack a little bit. After you got out of the Arts Institute school you received a fellowship?

**RH:** Yeah, I got a fellowship from the Art Institute. Graduating students can compete for these fellowships, there are some funds available for graduating students to get these fellowships. I don't think they call them that any more. They used to call them the Foreign Traveling Fellowships because the idea was, you know, artists ought to go to Europe and see what was going on or what had gone on. You know, I was able to win one of those and went to Europe. I graduated in 1957 so I went in the summer of 1957 to Europe, traveled in England, France and Spain. Spent most of the time in Italy, spent a lot of time in Florence. Worked on bronze, pieces of that -- well, I worked on pieces of that cast because I'd wanted to try that. I'd not done that.



**DB:** You wanted to try casting?

**RH:** In school, as a matter of fact at that time they didn't have a foundry at the Art Institute.

**DB:** That's strange. Why did you want to go to Florence, because of the casting background?

**RH:** Well, I mean, both because of casting and I was interested in Italian art. I mean, the Renaissance and Roman art, you know. Going back to the sort of traditional influences, you know, Michelangelo and all that, artists I'd admired.

**DB:** Did the contemporary scene of that period in Europe excite you?

**RH:** Well, actually I was disappointed in it in that, you know, like as I'd said, I'd started seeing some of the work of the British sculptors and I was interested, of course went to London and looked around. I don't know what explains it, I mean, I don't know how they explain it but it is interesting that all those artists who sort of showed a lot of promise never quite fulfilled it. And even then they were showing signs of weakness. And I saw what I was interested in seeing, you know, being there, seeing what was going on. But you know, it was similar in Paris. You know, I came back feeling that -- sort of wave -- sort of impressed with there. And of course, subsequently, we see that's the case. There was a rise in New York.

**DB:** Right. (Inaudible)

**RH:** Right.

**DB:** Did you like the casting technique?

**RH:** Yeah, I liked it. But I didn't like it for some things. I mean, I still do some casting and I like getting back to it from time to time, you know. But it doesn't allow for the kind of freedom. Like you're doing it in one material or conceiving it in one material or one technique and then using another technique to produce it. And, you know, there's that distance between the making of it and the realization of it. Whereas with -- with either steel or bronze, you're sort of putting it together and once you get -- you're hammering it and welding it and it's there, you know.

**DB:** Were they large pieces that you were casting?

**RH:** No. Small, medium size.

**DB:** And under the fellowship were you required to show these in Chicago when you came back or....

**RH:** No, you were free to -- it was a very open situation. You were free to do whatever -- I mean, I did show them here and in New York but there weren't requirements or anything. You were on your own.

**DB:** So how long did you actually wind up spending in Europe?

**RH:** About eight months.

**DB:** And then coming back here?

**RH:** Yeah.

**DB:** And then very shortly after that you had the Charles Allen....

**RH:** Yeah, right. In '58 it was, yeah. I came back and just took time enough to make some work. As a matter of fact, I got drafted while I was still in Europe and came back, got an extension so I could finish up some work for the show. And went into the Army for a couple of years.

**DB:** Where were you stationed?

**RH:** Well, first in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri and then in Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Texas.

**DB:** So you didn't get back to Europe or anything like that?

**RH:** No, as a matter of fact, I didn't want to go back. They were shipping most of the people that I was training with to Germany and I didn't want to end up in a field hospital or something. I was in the medics. So I got a job working on the base there in San Antonio, which worked out very well because I was able to get a studio off the base and still do a lot of welding work, you know. My duties -- I got a job, as a matter of fact, as an Army artist, which meant that I painted signs. (Laughter) Anything that needed painting, actually. It wasn't only signs. And then I taught a craft class in the Service Club. It wasn't too bad.

**DB:** For a stint in the Army it doesn't sound too bad.

**RH:** It was light duty.

**DB:** And you were only in for what, two years?

**RH:** Yeah, right. Just the regular amount of time, you know, when you're drafted.

**DB:** So you had the show just before you went in?

**RH:** Right.

**DB:** The Charles Allen Show was before you went in. And was that well received?

**RH:** Yeah, it was.

**DB:** I remember reading some of the write-ups. Good reviews; did it sell well?

**RH:** It did, yeah. I mean, it was a wholly successful show.

**DB:** Did you think at that point that maybe you'd go to New York?

**RH:** When I got out of the Army, you know, I went to New York, looked around. It was very difficult, there were a lot of people, lot of sculptors, you know. Of course, most sculptors by that time were welding and it was very hard to do that in New York at the time, you know. It was before lofts were legal and it just seemed rather difficult. A sculptor's life in New York seemed more difficult than I wanted to be bothered with, you know. Like I say, I was tempted or at least thought it was worth looking around. But I'd visit artists there, talk to people. Then I'd come back here and (inaudible). Actually, before long I found a place here that I bought, you know. This was 1961. It was a really good studio for me at the time. And so I forgot about going to New York to live, you know. I didn't have to go, as a lot of people did, to sort of be there, to sort of look for a gallery or develop connections.

**DB:** Because you had them already?

**RH:** Yeah.

**DB:** Did you feel like you were away from the stimulation?

**RH:** Well, I went there with some regularity and still do. And, you know, I don't feel I need to be stimulated by New York everyday. A few days at a time.

**DB:** You had a series of shows right in that period and the one that comes to mind is the New Sculpture Group Exhibition in 1960, something like that. What, essentially, was that exhibition? I mean....

**RH:** Well, actually a group of sculptors in New York got together. Let's see, where did they have the exhibition, Stable Gallery [phon.sp.] or something like that?

**DB:** I think so.

**RH:** But a group of sculptors who had -- you know, some of whom I'd met when I'd go to New York, thought that some of what was being produced wasn't really being shown. And of course, again it was harder for sculptors to find adequate representation in galleries. Most galleries were there to show paintings, really. And it's harder to show sculpture logistically, more problems in handling and all that. But anyway, the sculptors, it was sort of a cooperative thing as I remember it, among a group of the New York sculptors to put on an exhibition. It gave a sort of survey of things that were going on.

**DB:** Do you remember any other people that were in it?

**RH:** I haven't thought about this in a long time. It's like coming up out of the blue. But people like Richard Stenke [phon.sp.], Tom Doyle, Sandra Deo, I think, Sugarman. Gee, I can't -- David Winerib, John Chamberlin, I think.

**DB:** They did it for two or three years?

**RH:** Right. Well, you know, like most things artists do on their own, they get tired of doing it after while.

**DB:** Did you feel at all involved in what was going on here in Chicago during that same period?  
(Recording interruption.)

**RH:** The scene in the fifties?

**DB:** Yeah, your role in it, how you felt about it.

**RH:** Well, of the things that were going on here at the time, well, there was kind of the older art, you know, all the ancient people practicing as they had in the WTA School, Middle Chicago School and maybe a late one which was represented then, I think, by people like (unintelligible) and the monster (inaudible). I didn't feel myself part of that. Actually, I suppose in relationship to either the regionalism or the expressionism, I was more like being influenced by Gonzales, say, Picasso, David Smith. I mean, those influences were more international. So I was sort of outside of some of that. But then there were some artists here, too. You know, Godo, and then painter like Roland Ginzell. Actually, you know, we like one another's work and were friendly and just -- you know, (inaudible).

But, I mean, it was --again, I haven't been that interested at any point in my career or any place I've been in being too closely identified with whatever else was going on there. It was more that I was doing whatever else was going on there. It was more that I was doing whatever I was doing. And I found an audience here as well as in New York for my work, interested people. Sometimes they were the same people that were interested in the Monster Roster [phon.sp.] and sometimes they weren't.

**DB:** Were other artists here interested in what you were doing? Again, you know, Chicago does have this image of the Monster Roster and then the surrealism of the sixties and so forth. Did they relate well to what you were doing? Because you are very different

**RH:** Well, some did and some didn't. But I really -- you'd have to ask them. (Laughter)

**DB:** Did (inaudible) with some of those exhibitions like Momentum, or was that before?

**RH:** Well, that was during the time I was a student and I didn't exhibit in Momentum but I was around. And I think I benefitted by some of the activity that was stirred up by those exhibitions. You know, met some of the New York artists who came in to jury the exhibition and went to the exhibitions. And then I participated in some panels and sort of discussion groups that Momentum would put on. Because there was a period -- there'd been a couple of Momentum shows. The earliest ones I wasn't involved in. And then there was sort of a Momentum revival at that point and I was more active in the sort of second phase.

**DB:** Did you participate in regional show here?

**RH:** The Chicago and Vicinity Show, yeah. From the middle fifties and then I was away in the Army and all. But then when I came back I participated for a couple years. And then I decided I wasn't a Chicago artist even though I was living here. So I stopped exhibiting in about 1962 and haven't exhibited since. You know, it was just a decision based on---you know, it was practical in a certain way. I'd done very well in the show in terms of getting awards and stuff like that. Plus I was exhibiting more elsewhere. While everybody has to live in one city or place or another, whether you think that your career is larger or geographically broader than where you are, you know, if you come to that conclusion that it is broader than that then maybe you'd leave the Chicago show to the people who consider themselves Chicago artists.

**DB:** Artists concerned strictly with the region. I think that's true because you certainly have people who have the much broader career. You remained in Chicago but your career seems to be much more out of the city than part of it. Did you get a lot of commissions during that period for....

**RH:** No, I didn't do any commission work at all until 1968. I received a commission through the architect Walter Netsch [phon.sp.] of Skidmore and \_\_\_\_\_ for a hospital he was doing in a suburb of Chicago, Hines, Illinois. And, by the way, he'd been an early supporter of my work. He's a collector, as you probably know, and has a couple pieces of mine in his personal collection. And he felt my work would be suited to this project he was doing. So my entry into the kind of architectural or public sculpture world dates from '68. And from that time on I've done an increasing number of larger....

**DB:** Let's again go back a little bit. You taught briefly at the University of Illinois at the Art Institute School in '61, that period?

**RH:** Yeah.

**DB:** What were you teaching, were you teaching sculpture?

**RH:** Yeah. I began teaching when I returned from the Army to Chicago in the summer of '60. I was sort of getting back into things and one of the things was to make a living and just sort of get back into things was to do some teaching. And I started out teaching actually at both institutions, the Art Institute and the University of Illinois for a year, sort of like half time for both places. And I taught a kind of introduction to sculpture at the University of Illinois and a three dimensional design class at the Art Institute. It was kind of --well, it was mostly design in metal at the Art Institute. And as a matter of fact, it was like a class with a lot of people in industrial design and interiors were taking. You know, not sculpture majors. So I taught that and I decided after a year of being divided between both places, I got a better offer for the next year from the University of Illinois. So I taught there on a full-time basis. And I taught there for two years and I was getting to the point then when I was making about as much money selling my sculptures as I was teaching so, you know, I was filling out my income tax that year and I said, well, if I can do that I'll just try sculpting and see how I can do with that. So that was the last time I sort of was regularly employed.

**DB:** Sounds bad, "regularly employed." (Laughter)

**RH:** Well, I've been intermittently employed at colleges and universities, one way or another, visiting artist. But like rather than building a career around teaching for a year, thought I'd do it the other way.

**DB:** Did you like teaching?

**RH:** Yeah, and I still do. I like the interaction with students, faculties, university or college atmosphere.

**DB:** But did you feel it took too much away.

**RH:** Yeah, to do it with the kind of consistency and dedication that's required, you know, in that context.

**DB:** So in '62 you received a Guggenheim, right? I'd like to explore that a little bit. What did you do with your Guggenheim?

**RH:** Well, I used that to help establish myself outside teaching because at the time I was still teaching, you know. It -- I mean, I had recently purchased a building, my studio-home. And rather than traveling or anything like that I just wanted to work. And I just used the money to buy equipment, material.

**DB:** So you didn't travel, you just strictly....

**RH:** No. Well, I'd seen enough.

**DB:** Did you do a body of work for....

**RH:** Yeah, work for some exhibitions, right. I mean, there wasn't any specific body of work. It was a continuation of what I'd been doing. But it allowed me to be a little more comfortable in terms of having quit teaching. It was sort of like an insurance policy for a year.

**DB:** Nice policy. (Laughter)

**DB:** And you again went to another exhibition right after the Guggenheim? You did Carles Allen, I think?

**RH:** Yeah, well, I had shows there with some regularity, you know, from '58 through maybe '63 or '64. And I left that gallery and at the same time, as a matter of fact, in '60, I showed some work here. I'd been in different galleries here, the Fairweather Harder Gallery [phon.sp.]. I never had a one-man show there but I had worked there in group shows. And then there was a cooperative gallery called Superior Street Gallery that I exhibited in. And then about '61, I think it was, '61 or '62, I started a show in the Holland Goldowsky [phon.sp.] Gallery. So during '62, '63, you know, the work I was doing was being shown, some of it in the Allen Gallery, some of it here in the Holland Goldowsky Gallery.

**DB:** Holland was one of the major galleries at that time in the city?

**RH:** Well, I'm still with the Holland Gallery.

**DB:** You're still with Holland?

**RH:** Yeah. Noel Goldowsky left Chicago in about 1966 and of course opened his gallery in New York. But kept the gallery, the more public gallery for a while and now it's more private. But, you know, he's still my dealer and we've maintained an association over all that time.

**DB:** When's the last time you had an exhibit there?

**RH:** No, not a one man show, no. Because he doesn't have exhibitions as such. The last one I had with him was about '71, yeah, '71 or maybe '72.

**DB:** It seems to me in '62, that period, you really were involved with a lot of shows. I can't find it here in my notes but didn't you do things at the Seattle World's Fair and just a whole series of...

**RH:** Yeah, it was like large group exhibitions, yeah, right. You know, work is invited, individual piece. Carnegie International Exhibition, you know, some of the --American Show at the Whitney, things like that.

**DB:** When was your first museum show?

**RH:** You mean one man show in a museum?

**DB:** Yeah.

**RH:** I think that was in Milwaukee. No, maybe it was Cleveland, I think it was. Sort of the middle sixties, '64 or ....

**DB:** What was the reaction to that?

**RH:** I liked it. It was a small show, it wasn't a big show like the one in Milwaukee, which I think was maybe '65 or '66, that was the first large scale show. And then there's the one at the museum of Modern Art and the Art Institute was the first -- well, I mean it was larger than the Milwaukee. It was interesting to put a lot of things together and sort of see them all spread out. Like a sort of mini retrospective context.

**DB:** Did the concept of being in a museum thrill you?

**RH:** No.

**DB:** Not at all?

**RH:** Well, that's where art is, to a large extent.

**RH:** How did the retrospectives come about at the Museum of Modern Art, which was '71?

**RH:** '71, yeah. Well, actually they came about -- well, I don't know. In a sense, I got a call from Bill Leberman [phon.sp.] saying he'd like to come see me. That he would want to organize this show. And a lot had gone on, obviously, before he called me, but that's the first I knew about it. He came out and looked at what I'd been doing, bringing himself up to date. As a matter of fact, he purchased a piece of mine for the Fairweather Art Gallery a long time ago. In terms of his interest, individual interest in my work, he was aware of what I'd done along the way. But he wanted to see just where I was at that time because they were thinking about doing -- and I think they were thinking about it from a couple points of view. There were a lot of people at the time clamoring to have more blacks represented at the Museum of Modern Art, one way or another, full scale shows or work purchased. So part of it came out of that, I think. And then they started thinking about people that they might want to show. So there was that. It seemed like a good opportunity to me, anyway.

**DB:** Was that the same year, though, or the year after you showed at the Art Institute? Were they the same shows?

**RH:** It was the same show that was at the Museum of Modern Art, yeah. The Art Institute decided to do -- you know, kind of pay me back.

**DB:** Art by one of their own?

**RH:** Yeah, well, there was a lot of this show that was happening there, you know, being put together by the Museum of Modern Art. So they thought it wouldn't be a bad idea, you know, to bring it home.

**DB:** Well, I think we'll stop now. (End of Proceedings as recorded.)