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*Archives of American Art*

Oral history interview with Patricia  
Stanley Cunningham, 1964 July 28

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Patricia Stanley Cunningham on July 28, 1964. The interview took place in Carmel, California, and was conducted by Mary Fuller McChesney and Robert McChesney for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The original transcript was edited. In 2023 the Archives retranscribed the original audio and attempted to create a verbatim transcript. 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.

Poor audio throughout the interview led to an abnormally high number of inaudible words and phrases. The original transcript was used to clarify passages where possible. Additional relevant information from the original transcript has been added in brackets with an -Ed. attribution. The current transcript is the result of a combination of the original transcript created and edited in the 1960s, a verbatim transcript created in 2023 from the digitized sound recording, and an audit of the 2023 transcript compared to the original transcript using the digitized sound recording as reference.

## Interview

[00:00:02.65]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: [in progress]—Cunningham, at her home in Carmel, California. And the date is July 28, 1964. Present also this afternoon is Robert McChesney. Patricia, would you tell me first about your art school training or your art training?

[00:00:15.73]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I was a graduate of the University of California; then studied in Munich, Paris, France, and Italy, and then went back to New York, and worked as an artist.

[00:00:29.04]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: That was the University of California in Berkeley?

[00:00:31.16]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:00:32.16]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: And how did you first happen to get on any of the government-sponsored art projects?

[00:00:36.00]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I just can't remember. Isn't that funny?

[00:00:38.65]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Was it when you were living here on the Monterey Peninsula?

[00:00:40.81]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I was living here on the Monterey Peninsula, and all of a sudden, I [inaudible] remember, I was on it. Because I'm a native Californian, and my mother's family are native Monterey.

[00:00:53.55]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did many other artists that you knew from the area, uh—were many of the other artists that you knew in the area working on the project at that time?

[00:01:00.51]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I didn't—uh, well, all of them that I knew were working on that project. As far as that goes, everyone. [Laughs.]

[00:01:08.10]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Who were some of those people?

[00:01:10.68]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: André Moreau, and Ellwood Graham, who has become very successful. And—

[00:01:19.82]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Was Barbara on the [inaudible]?

[00:01:22.76]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Barbara, mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:01:24.06]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: [Inaudible]

[00:01:25.35]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: That's Barbara Stevenson, who was married to Ellerton [ph].

[00:01:28.01]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes, she was Barbara Stevenson, and [inaudible] [Sissley Lyon [ph] [inaudible]].

[00:01:35.78]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Sissely Lyon? It's a new name to me.

[00:01:39.58]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I don't remember. And her name then was Edwards.

[00:01:49.12]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Who was the supervisor here in Monterey?

[00:01:51.18]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Amalie Waldo. [Kness; Mrs. Fred Elkinton -Ed.]

[00:01:55.30]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Do You know August Gay? I understand he was a supervisor—

[00:01:58.21]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. Mm-hmm [affirmative.]

[00:01:59.47]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: —before Amelie Waldo took over.

[00:02:01.60]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes, we knew him very well. But he died.

[00:02:05.99]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: During the time of the project?

[00:02:07.02]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I think so. Didn't he?

[00:02:08.63]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: I'm really not sure.

[00:02:10.16]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, and he—and, oh, Bruce Ariss was on it. And he and Bruce Arris did an absolutely fabulous mural at the Pacific Grove High school. It was really divine. It burned down.

[00:02:24.74]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Oh, it burned?

[00:02:25.21]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Isn't that too bad? And he had all the personalities in that mural, all of the history of Monterey, and the fishing industry, and Fisherman's Wharf, and Pacific Grove Beach, and the Feast of Lanterns, and all of us. It was really a beautiful thing.

[00:02:44.07]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, that was sort of the general attitude towards murals at that time—getting all your friends.

[00:02:54.92]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well—and it would have been such fun. I would go and see them, because there was my son as an infant in my mother's arms.

[00:03:02.03]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, really?

[00:03:02.66]

[They laugh.][00:03:02.98]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: She would take him to the beach, and he's now getting his Ph.D. in Astrophysics.

[00:03:08.45]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, my gosh. [laughs.] Was this a fresco? It was done in wet plaster? [00:03:15.92]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah.

[00:03:17.09]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: And was that the Pacific Grove High School?

[00:03:19.06]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Pacific Grove High School. Of course, now it's replaced by a newer building.

[00:03:24.40]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: What part of the building was it in? Or what—

[00:03:25.93]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: In the library.

[00:03:27.04]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: In the library. Was it an interior wall?

[00:03:29.53]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

[00:03:30.34]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: And that was done by Bruce Arris?

[00:03:32.00]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Bruce Arris and August Gay.

[00:03:33.31]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: And August Gay.

[00:03:34.30]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: August Gay supervised.

[00:03:36.47]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did any of the other painters around here work on that project?

[00:03:38.57]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No. Only the two of them. And it was done in August Gay's beautiful tonality. He had a marvelous sense of color, as you know. I guess.

[00:03:47.32]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: I haven't seen any of his work, no, unfortunately. But he designed the mural. [Cross talk.][00:03:50.50]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. And also Bruce.

[00:03:52.81]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, they worked together on the design?

[00:03:54.58]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: They worked together. And Bruce was, and is, a marvelous draftsman. So it was a really wonderful work of art. Everyone was mad about it. But the tragedy is losing the whole history of the fishing industry, which is gone now, of course.

[00:04:15.51]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Yeah.

[00:04:16.56]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And it's the abalone pounders, who were all Japanese women, who worked in one of the warehouses, pounding abalone. It was the most charming sight to see, things like that.

[00:04:31.17]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: These were all incorporated in the mural?

[00:04:33.65]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:04:34.95]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: When did the building burn down? Was it recently, or some time ago?

[00:04:40.43]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Since the war.

[00:04:44.34]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Were there any other mural projects in this area?

[00:04:47.25]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. I did one for the Bay School that is now being torn down. But luckily it was on canvas, so they could take it to the new school, and install it in the new school.

[00:04:59.45]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Is that a grammar school?

[00:05:00.62]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:05:01.70]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: And where is that located?

[00:05:03.14]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: In New Monterey. It's the oldest grammar school on the peninsula.

[00:05:08.79]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: And how large was this mural? It was on canvas, you said.

[00:05:12.45]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It was probably five [feet] by seven feet, I think.

[00:05:17.72]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: And what subject matter did you use?

[00:05:19.44]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: The fishermen.

[00:05:20.18]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: The fishermen?

[00:05:20.73]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. That was the thing in Monterey.

[00:05:24.33]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Can you describe it for me?

[00:05:26.38]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, there are two fishermen coming in with their catch, and a fisher-girl watching, holding some fish. And of course, the background of the wharf, and the water. So I suppose in this sense, I mean, I never saw any of the Art Project works except here, but now I realize in talking to you what a wonderful thing this was, to preserve the background and the color of Monterey. If only it hadn't burned down. [Cross talk.] I suppose it's been done—it was done other places, wasn't it?

[00:06:04.84]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: For different areas it was done, yeah. But then Monterey lost theirs.

[00:06:07.75]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And, I mean, who's doing that now, after all?

[00:06:11.77]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: They aren't. Nobody.

[00:06:12.86]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Nobody's doing it.

[00:06:15.28]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: [Inaudible] there aren't—there's practically no murals, which is startling [inaudible].

[00:06:22.30]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: But it wasn't really historical, but what was going on there now, it would be historical—

[00:06:25.75]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Yeah.

[00:06:26.20]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: —in the best sense of the word, since it was done at the time. It's so hard to see ahead, but now all these years ahead, we all love it so. It would really be famous. I'm sure people make pilgrimages to see it— how Monterey was.

[00:06:45.82]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: [Jean -Ed.] Varda wasn't on the project?

[00:06:48.55]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Not that I know of. He was here then. You know, he may not have been along until later.

[00:06:58.64]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: He may not have had citizenship at that time. That may have been the problem.

[00:07:02.92]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, that probably was it.

[00:07:05.71]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I know he was poor enough. [They laugh.] But your mural is going to be transferred to the new high school?

[00:07:12.40]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I—well, no. It's a grammar school.

[00:07:14.62]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, grammar school. Excuse me.

[00:07:15.60]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, [inaudible] I don't know. I know Mr. Cunningham was over there, buying up all their windows [laughs]. Because they're having a big sale of all of the old stuff there. It's such beautiful stuff that can't be incorporated into the new school. There's windows, and oaken beams. They're selling the maple flooring, and walnut flooring. Imagine [inaudible].

[00:07:46.36]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: They had walnut floors in that place?

[00:07:48.23]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And maple floors. All the most beautiful materials in that little old school.

[00:07:55.16]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Where was your mural placed in the school?

[00:07:57.26]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It was hung in the entrance.

[00:07:59.87]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, it was hung. It wasn't attached to the wall.

[00:08:01.82]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, it was hung.

[00:08:02.27]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh.

[00:08:05.12]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I suppose you would call it an easel painting, but it was mural style, flat.

[00:08:14.31]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Bright colors?

[00:08:15.52]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, sure.

[00:08:17.59]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Is that the only one you did that was ever placed in any kind of public building?

[00:08:21.19]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Sure, I believe so. I've always wondered what they did with all the paintings.

[00:08:27.17]



MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: How many paintings do you think that you would have turned in during [the WPA? -Ed.] You said you were on the project for about a year?

[00:08:32.12]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: About two years. I would do about four [five -Ed.] a month.

[00:08:36.96]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Four [five -Ed.] a month? [Inaudible]

[00:08:41.07]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Was there any specific number they asked you to turn in?

[00:08:45.03]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No. That was one of the delightful things about it—no pressure at all. So I think they got the best work from all the artists. And at the same, time you couldn't fool Amalie. I mean you couldn't not work, because she kept sharp watch.

[00:09:05.92]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, and she probably knew what your usual—

[00:09:08.70]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. A number of them, I don't know, let's say two or three, were put off the project, because they didn't do any work, and weren't interested in doing any work. So come to think of it, it was very nice.

[00:09:23.89]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did they provide materials for you, and that sort of thing?

[00:09:26.75]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: They must have.

[00:09:29.48]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: How many artists would you say were on the project down there? It must have been quite small compared to, say, San Francisco, or—

[00:09:36.23]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It must have been quite small. [Inaudible.] I really don't know. I mean, I know all the ones that we've mentioned.

[00:09:46.02]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:09:46.13]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, actually, though, considering the size of the town, I don't imagine the project was so small, at that.

[00:09:55.09]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: In proportion?

[00:09:56.02]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Yes.

[00:09:56.29]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It was a small place then. The whole peninsula was so small, my gosh. I don't know what—I think, now I think it's 40,000 [inaudible]. It was probably about 5,000 or 6,000. This is a wild guess. [Laughs.]

[00:10:15.44]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Well, I have about 20 names of artists who had been on the project from down here, and I'm sure that there are more. So there are probably 40 or so.

[00:10:23.99]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That was quite a bit, wasn't it? Were the Brutons on it?

[00:10:28.34]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Yes, but I think mainly around the Bay Area they worked on—

[00:10:31.53]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: San Francisco.

[00:10:32.96]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: —did some large mosaics in Berkeley.

[00:10:34.91]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I suppose any of the artists who had ability—that's what it was for, wasn't it?

[00:10:44.91]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:10:45.80]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: I wonder how much of the territory they covered around with the project. It was Monterey, Carmel.

[00:10:54.28]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And Pacific Grove.

[00:10:55.83]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: And Pacific Grove. Were there any artists down in the Big Sur at the time, or—

[00:11:02.19]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I doubt it.

[00:11:04.30]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Probably Big Sur wasn't discovered by then.

[00:11:08.71]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No. I think Varda was one of the first artists to move down there. And, of course, Ben Bufano used to come down and visit, but he was through all his great big, colossal, porphyry statue in San Francisco.

[00:11:24.74]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: That was after Varda [inaudible]?

[00:11:26.24]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. And—

[00:11:32.88]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: There was a sculpture project here in Monterey, though, wasn't there?

[00:11:35.61]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. Remo Scardigli was on it.

[00:11:38.14]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, he was?

[00:11:38.67]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. And who else? Remo Scardigli [inaudible].

[00:11:43.60]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: A man named Zoland? Do you remember?

[00:11:44.93]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And Roy Zoland.

[00:11:45.79]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Roy Zoland.

[00:11:46.73]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Knew him.

[00:11:48.49]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did he do that large carving—wood carving that's in the [Carmel -Ed. ] park?

[00:11:51.82]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: He did. Yes. Remo—Remo started, and couldn't finish it, so Roy Zoland finished it.

[00:11:58.10]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, I wondered. There was no—I looked at it yesterday and there was no signature on it, and I wondered why.

[00:12:02.03]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, that's why.

[00:12:02.80]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh. [Laughs.]

[00:12:05.56]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It was too much for Remo.

[00:12:07.44]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Is Remo still around?

[00:12:08.30]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No. He's gone away.

[00:12:12.30]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did they do any other—

[00:12:13.06]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: He's gone to Mexico.

[00:12:15.02]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, excuse me. Did they do any other large sculptures or plates around the area that you can think of?

[00:12:22.28]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I think so. I'm sure they did. Did you ever hear about [inaudible]? For the Bach Festival, they brought down Ben Bufano's statue of Bach. The stainless steel statue with a ceramic head. About 10 feet tall. I guess it was '42, July '42. Yes it was. It was July '42. So it was—of course, the Bach Festival, even then, was the big event of the year. So this was going to be a marvelous festival, with a stunning monumental statue. So they set it up in the park, where the other one is. And it was a great sensation. During the night, someone stole the head.

[00:13:19.80]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, no. [They laugh.]

[00:13:21.51]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And this—but really, they had to have had a truck, and a block and tackle. Because the head was this high—ceramic. And so we were awakened here. Ben was staying with us, and he'd made a spaghetti the night before, and we were all here. And he was sleeping right there on a couch that used to be there. And the phone rang at dawn. "The statue's pulled down, the head's gone." Isn't that strange?

[00:13:51.18]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: They pulled it down?

[00:13:52.20]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It was pulled down; the head was gone.

[00:13:54.98]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Did they ever discover it?

[00:13:56.46]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: They never found the head. He finally made another one. But this shows how—Now, this statue would be so conservative, of course. But it was supposed to be too modern for the time. [Inaudible] an example.

[00:14:10.62]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh that was—

[00:14:11.19]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: It was vandalism.

[00:14:12.57]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Vandalism.

[00:14:13.23]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Somebody wanted it—wanted to get rid of it.

[00:14:16.02]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Vandalism.

[00:14:18.15]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, they probably threw it in the ocean.

[00:14:19.95]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Probably. Don't know that.

[00:14:22.74]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Isn't that something?

[00:14:23.37]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: I never heard that.

[00:14:24.65]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: No.

[00:14:26.44]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It was so incredible. It was a great big head, how they could have done it? And—

[00:14:34.48]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: How long had it been—had it been in place?

[00:14:36.25]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, it had just been put up that afternoon.

[00:14:39.54]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: So somebody's was planning ahead, with their truck and everything. [Laughs.][00:14:44.23]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, had the statue been purchased by the city? Or by the committee—

[00:14:52.82]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, no. It was lent—

[00:14:55.10]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: [Inaudible][00:14:56.72]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: —by whoever owned it. I suppose he'd done it on the project.

[00:15:01.01]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Bufano didn't own it, then.

[00:15:02.28]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, he didn't own it.

[00:15:03.02]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Oh, I see.

[00:15:04.01]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: As far as I can tell.

[00:15:08.11]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: It's probably not, because a lot of work at that time was done on government—

[00:15:11.38]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: But by that time, the project was over with, wasn't it?

[00:15:15.44]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: It ended in '42 in San Francisco. I don't know about down here.

[00:15:19.49]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I think it was over by then. I think Ben was working on his—he's [inaudible] working on things for a while. There were so many up in San Francisco. Joe Danysh was supervisor. They—you know his Casa Mañana here.

[00:15:43.99]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, I thought Bufano went off on the project before '42.

[00:15:54.15]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I think he did. I just can't remember. Have you—we haven't heard news on him for some time, have you?

[00:16:03.52]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Well, yes, very indirectly. We're up in Mendocino, and he's doing a huge sculpture up near there, at Timber Cove.

[00:16:12.79]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, is he? It sounds like him.

[00:16:14.65]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: The people there said that he apparently comes out on weekends and works on it.

[00:16:18.92]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I'm glad to hear that. We heard he was quite ill.

[00:16:22.36]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh.

[00:16:23.34]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: He's gotten over it.

[00:16:25.78]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did he do any other sculptures that were placed in this area?

[00:16:28.47]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No. [Inaudible.] My, he had a warehouse full of those beautiful sculptures. One was placed at the marina in San Francisco.

[00:16:39.94]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: At the Marina?

[00:16:40.76]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. What do they call it, where the museum is for the sailing ships.

[00:16:47.53]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, Aquatic Park.

[00:16:48.73]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Aquatic Park. Yeah. A couple of them are there. And I've read and—about others being placed here and there.

[00:17:02.17]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: There's always a battle about them.

[00:17:04.99]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: They're such marvelous sculptures. You know, his animals really are heavenly. We first met him in southern France, when we were first married there. And he was making a porphyry bowl for a—it was a commission from an English family to be placed in their garden. So John, my husband, was his assistant on this. And that's how we got to know him.

[00:17:35.84]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: What, was he living in Europe then? Living in Paris?

[00:17:38.64]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. And so he showed us, in the warehouse in Paris, his St. Francis.

[00:17:47.61]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: The one that [inaudible]?

[00:17:49.51]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Guess so.

[00:17:50.47]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, the one that used to be in front of the church up there [in San Francisco -Ed.]?

[00:17:52.54]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah, that one.

[00:17:53.23]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, I didn't know.

[00:17:53.54]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: He did that in Paris.

[00:17:56.62]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: I didn't realize it was that early.

[00:17:59.72]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. And he did it, I think, while Paris was occupied by the Germans. He did it in the—some kind of barn in the center of Paris. And there it was, and we were amazed at it, of course. [Cross talk.] It got here, where it belongs.

[00:18:24.78]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: A lot of his ceramic work was done in the Orient.

[00:18:27.95]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. I think so. A lot was done in China.

[00:18:32.69]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Oh.

[00:18:33.16]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Because he studied in China. The piece that's in the Metropolitan was done in China. [Inaudible]

[00:18:42.88]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did your husband, John Cunningham, do any other work with Bufano when you came back here?

[00:18:47.86]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No. No, he did not.

[00:18:54.69]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: He was a sculptor? Or is a sculptor?

[00:18:56.97]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, he's a painter.

[00:18:58.17]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh.

[00:18:58.35]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: We have an art school here.

[00:19:00.24]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: In Carmel?

[00:19:00.99]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. Carmel Art Institute. We've had it since '41.

[00:19:09.89]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: That's a long time.

[00:19:10.54]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. So, during the war, I kept it on, in a small way. And after the war, of course, we were approved by GIs. And approved for a four-year Fine Arts course.

[00:19:28.22]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: So it's a [inaudible] then?

[00:19:29.87]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: The California Board of Education [approved it -Ed.]. So— I wish you had time to visit it, matter of fact. And our pupils, when they send in, usually win first prize [inaudible] private school. It's the only private school between San Francisco and



Los Angeles with this—all these designations. Where there's a visitor exchange program by the State Department, [inaudible] department [inaudible] to take foreign students. That's what we've been doing.

[00:20:11.13]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: How large an enrollment do you have?

[00:20:14.46]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It's on the plan of a European art school, one big studio. And not more than one instructor can take charge. Such excitement in the community, to build it up to be a big art institute. That would mean a whole staff of teachers, administration. Now what would be the point of that?

[00:20:35.70]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: No.

[00:20:37.11]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, not at all. So keeping it like this, it worked out so that one of us could travel while the other had charge of the school.

[00:20:49.21]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Very nice arrangement.

[00:20:50.62]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It was. So now, of course, it—with this terrific surge of interest in painting that there has been, it's been really remarkable, in a way.

[00:21:03.80]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: It's frightening. [They laugh.]

[00:21:04.55]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It's frightening because the school is full all the time, and you have to learn to paint. But, it's a school for professional artists, not a "la-di-da" dilettante school. We've made a great effort that it shouldn't be. So the enrollment is for people who want to be professional painters. And it's amazing how many that come to be successful professional painters. Successful in the sense they make their living selling paintings.

[00:21:42.61]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: That is surprising. Yeah.

[00:21:44.84]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: How many you have on the bank roll?

[00:21:46.43]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Just my husband.

[00:21:47.51]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Just the two of you?

[00:21:49.51]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: You see, for the reason I explained.

[00:21:51.73]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Yeah.

[00:21:52.88]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: [We've become -Ed.] administrators.

[00:21:57.58]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: It's a very good idea. And I'm—

[00:21:59.11]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: You see now.

[00:22:00.55]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: I was going to ask what kind of painting were you doing when you were on the WPA easel project? What sort of style were you working in?

[00:22:07.41]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I'd say contemporary, for the time. Not conservative.

[00:22:13.55]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: What were the influences on the painters in this area? Were there many people down here who were much influenced by Diego Rivera, or by Siqueiros, or by the Mexicans? Or were they more following the surrealists? I mean, what was going on among the painters?

[00:22:30.46]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It seemed to me they are more influenced by the school of Paris. Nothing Mexican [inaudible] our purpose. We certainly were.

[00:22:41.93]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Well, you had been in France.

[00:22:43.89]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes, and studied with Léger and André Lhote. So [inaudible] Robert Stevenson, Ellwood Graham. As a matter of fact, Ellwood painted in a very figurative conservative style. [Inaudible].

[00:23:04.58]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: At that time. [Inaudible] work with him was rather geometric.

[00:23:10.06]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. It became non-objective.

[00:23:14.13]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: What was André doing about that time? André Moreau?

[00:23:18.36]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: What was it? I just don't remember. I think he was doing all sorts of things. Where is he now?

[00:23:25.86]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: He lives right next door to us. He has a [inaudible]. He had this [inaudible]. [We live at Petaluma, on Sonoma Mountain. -Ed.]

[00:23:39.38]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: What's he doing now?

[00:23:43.98]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, not much of anything, really. He a does little photography now and then. He was painting for a while, started back again.

[00:23:56.15]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: He seemed to really be the temperament and personality of an artist, if I ever saw one [laughs].

[00:24:04.46]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, they just spent a year in Mexico, and got back this spring. But the first—when I first met him, I was on the project by that time. He was doing his—whatever abstract, sort of relief, high relief [inaudible] panels. I know how long he'd been doing this.

[00:24:31.64]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did you ever have any exhibitions of the work of the different painters who were on the WPA project here in Monterey? [Inaudible]

[00:24:38.58]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Not that I recall. [Inaudible]

[00:24:43.05]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: What was the arrangement? You did the paintings, and you did about four paintings a month. And then you turned them over to your—

[00:24:49.68]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Turned them over to Amalie. And we always wondered what happened to them. We wished we could have kept them. I suppose they had to be sent there, to be checked on, and know what was going on.

[00:25:01.52]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: You were never informed of any exhibitions that were held of your own work?

[00:25:05.01]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, only in the World's Fair. My paintings were shown—American section.

[00:25:10.52]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: That's the World's Fair in New York?

[00:25:11.96]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:25:12.92]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: How'd you happen to hear about that? Probably in the [inaudible].

[00:25:16.18]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: We went and saw them. [Laughs.]

[00:25:17.24]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, you did? How wonderful. [They laugh.] Were you mainly working in oil then, or watercolor?

[00:25:22.83]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oil.

[00:25:25.70]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did they ever restrict you as to subject matter, or give you any advice?

[00:25:29.20]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Heavens, no. Which was very good. [Inaudible] It really was.

[00:25:38.68]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: So the other painters—nobody was working in any one direction, was working [inaudible] on their own?

[00:25:43.49]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: They worked entirely on their own. And much more freedom, actually, than we have now, when you have a dealer. The dealer wants certain type paintings that will appeal to his clientele. And this is much more strict now than we had our project. So in a way, I mean, it was really wonderful.

[00:26:09.94]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Was there enough money to live on?

[00:26:12.16]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, the way we lived, of course. It really was, because, in this climate, and on the beach, and with the prices being as low as they were, it was really enough.

[00:26:28.64]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:26:28.82]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I wonder about in the cities, if it was enough.

[00:26:32.26]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: I did all right.

[00:26:33.40]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Did you, in the city?

[00:26:34.74]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Fairly well. I was living on top of Telegraph Hill. [Inaudible] 25 dollars a month for rent.

[00:26:43.16]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Of course, by the end of the month, we were all—[They laugh.]

[00:26:49.54]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Fairly broke with it—

[00:26:52.31]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. [Laughs.]

[00:26:52.46]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: But then there was a while on the relief, they issued food supplies [inaudible] was some sort of tabs [for surplus food -Ed.] or something. You'd go out, whoever they distribute it, they'd say, we've got a huge bag of onions, or a huge bag of potatoes. Mostly very impractical things, because you couldn't possibly use them up in time [inaudible].

[00:27:17.19]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I didn't know about that. We never got any—

[00:27:20.12]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: They didn't have it down here. Just—

[00:27:24.62]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Probably just in the larger metropolitan areas. Sometimes, I think, you could get clothing, too. You were issued a certain, you know, for work clothes.

[00:27:33.78]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Last thing we needed here—work clothes.

[00:27:41.49]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: [Inaudible] as far as I know, most the artists made out in New York [inaudible].

[00:27:48.02]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I can imagine, in that climate, my gosh.

[00:27:50.88]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Fuel in the wintertime.

[00:27:52.44]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Fuel, and the warm clothing they had to have. That must have been pretty hard.

[00:27:59.39]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Somebody said something—excuse me. It was—somebody said something to me about a—some kind of project that you all participated in down here for a county fair. A paper mural to go around the fairgrounds. Were you in on that? I guess André must have been the one.

[00:28:14.60]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I wasn't in on that. [Cross talk.] Sounds amusing, but I wasn't in on it. Didn't hear about that.

[00:28:21.60]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did the supervisors come around to check on your actual studio? Or did they just—

[00:28:27.20]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. Amalie used to come around, chit-chat.

[00:28:30.00]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: How often did she appear?

[00:28:31.34]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Whenever she felt like it.

[00:28:34.92]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Not enough that it was—you'd call it harassing, or anything?

[00:28:37.78]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, no. I'd still like to see her and have a chat. It was really charming here. Very charming. And probably unique, not many places like it.

[00:28:52.73]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Seems to have been a very compatible place.

[00:28:54.05]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Because everyone knew what everyone else was doing [laughs] every day. [They laugh.] She really didn't have to go around to check us. She would talk to us every day on the phone. What were you going to say?

[00:29:10.85]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, that you seemed very compatible—to be a very compatible group. There were no differences of opinion, that's all. Well, I think, sometimes part of the problem that arose in other areas was because the people were working on joint projects. They were working on murals together—

[00:29:26.72]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:29:26.84]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: —whereas here, you were—apparently, most of you were working independently. And so—

[00:29:29.33]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah, that was good.

[00:29:30.29]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: The conflict the personalities didn't develop the same way.

[00:29:32.99]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: You know about the Henrietta Shore mural in the P.G. Post Office, right?

[00:29:37.82]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: No, I haven't heard about that. That's in Pacific Grove?

[00:29:39.86]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: In Pacific Grove. Now, this was a [inaudible] to come out of a project. It's perfectly beautiful, [inaudible] the new Pacific Grove Post Office, of the artichoke fields out here.

[00:29:53.21]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Is that still there?

[00:29:54.58]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: You can see—Sure. You see that. There must be

[inaudible].

[00:30:00.64]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: She died just recently, didn't she?

[00:30:02.50]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah, mm-hmm [affirmative]. And she was really a mural painter—Mexican style.

[00:30:07.09]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh. This is the fresco on wet plaster style?

[00:30:09.64]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I think it was. There must be some little old paintings. 'Course, lots of paintings in San Francisco.

[00:30:23.40]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mural paintings?

[00:30:24.89]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:30:26.87]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Didn't somebody named—

[00:30:28.05]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: There must be others [inaudible] down here.

[00:30:31.55]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did you know a man named Burton Boundey?

[00:30:34.10]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

[00:30:35.70]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did he—didn't he do a mural?

[00:30:37.41]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I don't know. Darling man. Died. You see, I didn't know all these older Carmelites because I've been away, then came back. There must be a lot of them [inaudible].

[00:31:00.61]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: I thought for some reason that he had done a mural at Pacific Grove, too. Oh, [inaudible] a mural, but it's the Pacific Grove Post Office, isn't it?

[00:31:20.37]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. There's one in the Monterey Post Office, too.

[00:31:28.19]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh. Oh, Burton Boundey, mural at Pacific Grove High School. You ever seen that?

[00:31:34.73]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, I never saw that. That probably was in another part of the building.

[00:31:40.24]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: And a man named Armin Hansen.

[00:31:41.95]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:31:43.09]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did you know him?

[00:31:44.08]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, very well. He was a magnificent artist. Just magnificent.

[00:31:50.25]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: He did a mural at the Sunset Grammar School in Carmel. So I have him somewhere.

[00:31:55.83]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I don't know [inaudible] was. [Cross talk.]

[00:31:56.27]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: That wasn't the same grammar school that you were working on?

[00:31:59.36]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: That was in Carmel. Armin Hansen was the National Academy. [Cross talk.] Our most distinguished American painter of his time.

[00:32:12.48]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Do you know a man named Howard Bobbs?

[00:32:15.41]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

[00:32:16.82]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Yes, I understood he was on the project—on the easel project down here.

[00:32:19.82]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, I didn't know him then.

[00:32:20.79]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: He might have been on—in San Francisco, it could be.

[00:32:24.86]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I didn't know Armin Hansen was on the project.

[00:32:30.54]



MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Somewhere, I have information that he did this mural at the Sunset Grammar School in Carmel.

[00:32:34.80]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: He must have, then.

[00:32:37.20]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Well, some of this information is not as accurate as it could be [laughs]. Did you know Victor Mantilla?

[00:32:43.59]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No.

[00:32:44.80]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, I wanted to ask you. Was Brett Weston or Edward Weston—were either of those ever on the photography project down there?

[00:32:49.86]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I don't know, but it figures that they would be. Everyone who was anyone seems to have been on. [They laugh.] They probably were.

[00:33:00.84]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Was there much of a photography project? Or did you know about that?

[00:33:03.96]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I didn't know about that.

[00:33:05.67]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Was there very much contact between the people down here and the people in San Francisco? Did you know many of the WPA artists up there?

[00:33:11.91]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No. Only Ben Bufano. None of the other ones.

[00:33:18.61]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: There wasn't much visiting back and forth.

[00:33:20.20]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: There wasn't, because it was much more isolated down here then. It took a good three hours to San Francisco. Not good highways. How things have changed.

[00:33:33.90]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: The cars weren't so good then, either. [They laugh.]

[00:33:35.25]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: The cars weren't so good. Things have changed. Now it's—we go back to—we go to San Francisco and back in the same day, if we want to go to an exhibition or something. But then it was a real trick.

[00:33:57.54]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: I was wondering if there were any fountains, or that sort of thing done around this area.

[00:34:00.90]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I'm afraid not. I wish they had. I wish there were more fountains.

[00:34:04.74]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: That would be nice.

[00:34:05.52]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah.

[00:34:07.59]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Well, apparently the sculpture project here was never very large.

[00:34:10.08]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Not much to it. Remo and Roy Zoland were the only ones I can think of. Probably the Brutons, except they worked in San Francisco. And who is that other sculptor—woman sculptor? She worked out of San Francisco, though.

[00:34:32.73]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Ruth Cravath?

[00:34:34.29]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, not her. I know that name. Very good. Who else have you seen down here that was on it?

[00:34:43.83]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, Maxine Albro is the only person I've interviewed. And tomorrow, I'm going to talk to Suzanne Sheuer, who lives in Santa Cruz.

[00:34:51.29]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: What about André [Moreau -Ed.]? You interviewed him.

[00:34:54.02]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: André, yeah.

[00:34:57.75]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: But surprisingly, there was a great number of the artists who were on the project here who are dead now.

[00:35:05.31]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah. Well, that's a long time ago.

[00:35:08.04]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: It seems proportionately, there's far more out of here than have died off than in San Francisco.

[00:35:14.98]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Let's see. Well, that's—I'm trying to add. I mean, I'm trying to subtract '37 from '64—27 years.

[00:35:32.56]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:35:34.19]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It's a pretty long time.

[00:35:35.82]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: It is a pretty long time.

[00:35:39.50]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And of course, so many of them probably were pretty well along when they were on the project.

[00:35:47.73]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Sure.

[00:35:49.50]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Because they seem to have used a lot of discrimination, and taken only the best artists, and so that—They'd have to. They had to be artists of experience.

[00:36:01.46]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Was it difficult to get on the project, or do you remember?

[00:36:04.17]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, it wasn't difficult. It wasn't obvious[ly difficult -Ed.], or I would have remembered.

[00:36:16.56]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. What kind of an influence do you think that period of about two years on the WPA easel project had on your career as an artist?

[00:36:27.89]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well—

[00:36:28.58]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: I was thinking in terms of your painting.

[00:36:29.66]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I'll say this for it—it's the only time I had to paint easel paintings, those two years. Until just 10 years—it's only in the last 10 years that I've been able to get back to it. Our school became very successful, and I was able to hire help. Now I have to do—pay so much attention to the house, or teach, or do anything else, you see. But after I went off the project, John and I worked on the San Francisco World's Fair. We did miles and miles of murals.

[00:37:22.30]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: But not on the WPA.

[00:37:23.50]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, no. We were commissioned by the University of California. We did the Hall of Agriculture. Then Dorothy Liebes asked us to do exhibit design in the Decorative Arts Building. And we did so much work on that. So then we went back to New York, and then decided to come back here again. We went back to New York only for a trip, to come back here, because we made quite a lot of money on that World's Fair. We said, "Well, we'll take a vacation for a year in Carmel." And this was by that time 1940, 1941. And at last, we'll have time to paint. So of course, the war started. Then—this school had been started by Armin Hansen and Paul Whitman. I bet he was on the project.

[00:38:29.55]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:38:33.10]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: So something happened. They asked us to come—and they're taught in a very traditional way. They asked us to come and give Contemporary class. And so this intrigued us and we did. So it ended that most of the students were interested in learning what was then supposed to be contemporary painting, which now, after all, is pretty conservative. So they said, "Well, why don't you take over the school?"

[00:39:02.52]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh. [They laugh.]

[00:39:05.17]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: So we did. We bought the school. And then we stayed here because of the war starting. I'd rather live here, which was my home, than go back to New York. My job was in New York. And after the war, we decided to stay here and do the school, and did.

[00:39:29.40]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Was Armin Hansen a portrait painter?

[00:39:32.13]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No.

[00:39:32.73]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: No.

[00:39:33.87]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: He did scene paintings. But you see this—I mean, you make me realize—I haven't thought about it. So much as happened since. But yes, it gave me the chance to paint. And I would love to have gone on just painting. But no, then it was teaching. Exhibits designed, and murals, and industrial design, but no chance to paint.

[00:40:09.20]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Until recently.

[00:40:09.90]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Until recently.

[00:40:12.02]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Of course, actually looking at it from their point of view, if you were turning in four oil paintings a month and a period of two years, they got about a hundred oil paintings.

[00:40:19.97]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, I'm rather looking forward to—

[00:40:21.08]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Quite well, too. [Laughs.]

[00:40:24.08]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah.

[00:40:25.79]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: But I think that most of you people that were on the easel project were fortunate in that way, because far more of a chance to experiment than those working on the mural projects.

[00:40:39.84]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: That's right.

[00:40:40.29]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Particularly in San Francisco. I know I worked on the Volz mural at Treasure Island and on this large mosaic there. And although it kept me working, and I don't know what I've been doing if I hadn't had that opportunity, it didn't give us much chance to experiment, or to develop our own paintings.

[00:41:03.20]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yes. That's—really, mural painting is a form of industrial design, really.

[00:41:11.90]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, and the one we were working on, too, was so huge, and the figures and the areas that we were painting were so immense, that well, it was actually no technique or anything. We were using these large house-painting brushes, filling in these large areas. Well, we got to be good house painters. I could have gotten—I think most of us did get jobs afterwards—

[00:41:36.88]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: That didn't do—

[00:41:37.78]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: —as house painters.

[00:41:38.53]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: That didn't do anything for you, individually, as artists.

[00:41:41.83]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Not nearly as much as it would have if we'd been working on this easel project, or doing lithographs or something like that.

[00:41:49.25]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: On the other hand, the murals got done. I mean, it would have been good if they kind of divided it up, wouldn't it?

[00:41:58.77]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: So people could have both.

[00:41:59.82]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Yeah.

[00:42:00.27]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Yeah.

[00:42:00.63]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Let you do your own work for a certain length of time and then alternate.

[00:42:05.07]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: That would have been an idea.

[00:42:05.85]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Between murals and your own work. That would be fine.

[00:42:10.13]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Actually, the experience of working on these things was quite valuable in some way. And I think, well one—one good—one good advantage was the fact that so many artists working together and cooperating together, which I think was quite unusual. [Laughs.] Usually don't do it or can't do it. [Laughs.]

[00:42:34.15]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It's really too bad it couldn't have gone on, isn't it? Because the buildings would all be—have murals and sculpture.

[00:42:48.44]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Some of the schools could use some—the new schools.

[00:42:50.42]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: They certainly could. All of the schools could use that. So few buildings have any ornamentation at all. Or color. A few of the new big buildings in New York have got—

[00:43:11.61]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: And some of the commercial buildings. We commission artists to work on them. But even so, that's very few and far between. And none of the federal buildings anymore, it seems.

[00:43:23.16]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: It's really too bad not to commission artists.

[00:43:27.63]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Is anybody doing mosaics down here? Do you remember?

[00:43:33.28]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Um—on the project, I don't know. But Louisa Jenkins is a native resident who does them.

[00:43:42.78]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: She lives in Big Sur.

[00:43:45.21]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. She wasn't doing it then. When we first knew her, which was after the war, she was just starting then.

[00:43:52.89]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh. I was wondering if they used any mosaics for decorations on buildings here.

[00:43:58.67]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I don't remember if we did.

[00:44:00.85]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: It was more fresco.

[00:44:02.50]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:44:06.22]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Well, didn't—What's her name? The woman we interviewed yesterday, did she—she did some of those, didn't she? [Maxine Albro -Ed.]

[00:44:15.02]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh, yes. But they were in San Francisco, not this area.

[00:44:17.29]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Oh, San Francisco.

[00:44:18.68]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: At San Francisco State College. The old State College. Was there anything else you'd like to say about the WPA period?

[00:44:29.17]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, except that in remembering—really, it's the first time I've sat down and thought about it. I realize it was rather wonderful. And when you think of all of those artists producing, and having a chance to enhance the public buildings like that, it certainly truly added something to our culture, which is lacking now, perhaps. On any scale, at least. Well, there's so little being done, really.

[00:45:06.22]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: You stop to consider the number of artists that are being churned out today though out of all the schools all over the country, it'd be quite a problem for the government to handle that many.

[00:45:16.00]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, they couldn't, obviously. I mean, they'd just have to take a reasonable number. And the others would have to go into other things [laughs].

[00:45:27.76]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Did you have any criticisms about the way the project was run down here?

[00:45:30.94]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, not here.

[00:45:31.72]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Not here. And nobody else that you—ever did either?

[00:45:35.50]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, heavens, no. I think everything that was done was—another thing that was done, that my cousin did, was to make paintings of all of the wildflowers.

[00:45:48.97]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh.

[00:45:49.66]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And this made a really valuable collection, which I think is now in the Pacific Grove Museum.

[00:45:57.43]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: These were probably done for the *Index of Design*, I think?

[00:46:01.14]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I don't know. Probably. But that was, I think, a marvelous thing to do, isn't it? I don't know of any—there are books on wildflowers, but I don't know of any book just about the native wildflowers and wild shrubs here. Do you?

[00:46:19.47]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: No, I don't. I have—a few I've seen for small areas in California.

[00:46:24.12]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Weren't those things done for the *Index of Design*?

[00:46:26.82]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Probably were.

[00:46:28.26]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: I don't know why they should have wildflowers in *Index of Design*, but —

[00:46:32.58]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: I think it was a separate project. Mary Dakin was a woman in San Francisco who worked on a project like that. Shirley Triest worked with her for a while. And I don't know whether they were just put into portfolios, or what actually happened.

[00:46:45.66]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Well, in the museum, they're on one of those stands, and you can turn them around.

[00:46:51.30]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Oh. They were watercolor?

[00:46:53.88]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: At least they were. Yeah.

[00:46:56.87]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

[00:46:57.02]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: How many paintings were there?

[00:46:58.69]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Oh, dozens and dozens. I had no idea we had so many wildflowers. Different varieties.

[00:47:05.53]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: I wonder if they were ever published.

[00:47:08.17]



PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I doubt it.

[00:47:09.61]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Or reproduced.

[00:47:11.17]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: Reproduced.

[00:47:13.45]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: And if it had been carried to the desirable conclusion, of course, it should have been made into a book and published.

[00:47:23.37]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Yes. Was there a Writer's Project down here in Sur?

[00:47:25.54]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I'm sure there was. Didn't know any of the writers.

[00:47:29.93]

ROBERT MCCHESENEY: You say this was your cousin, who was doing the wildflowers?

[00:47:33.30]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Sissely Edwards. I think she signed them "Sissely Miranda."

[00:47:39.54]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Is she still here?

[00:47:41.04]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: No, she isn't. She's up in Grass Valley.

[00:47:52.14]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: Anything else?

[00:47:53.22]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I can't think of it.

[00:47:54.78]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: No?

[00:47:54.93]

PATRICIA STANLEY CUNNINGHAM: I'm surprised you thought of that much.

[00:47:57.35]

MARY FULLER MCCHESENEY: [Laughs.] Well, thanks very much for giving us the time. I really appreciate it a lot.

[END OF TRACK AAA\_cunninp64\_3309\_r ]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]