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Oral history interview with Jeanne L.
Wasserman, 1993-1994

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Jeanne L. Wasserman from January 28, 1993 - July 19, 1994. The interview took place in Cambridge, MA, and was conducted by Robert F. Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00] Interview with Jeanne Wasserman, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: If our voices are picking up as they should, let's see, if you just say—well, this is January 28th, isn't it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: This is the 28th of January, yes.

[Audio break.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —starting.

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: I'd like to just begin by asking you questions about your childhood. You were raised in New York or near New York?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I was born in New York City and during World War I. And when I was three, we moved to a suburb, New Rochelle. By then, my sister, Claire [ph], had been born, and New Rochelle was considered a village in those days. [Laughs.] I was brought up in New Rochelle. My father was a musician, and when I was 12 we went to Paris so that he could study music with Nadia Boulanger. And for three summers in a row, we went as a family and lived in Paris, in France, and did some traveling, and I think at that time my interest in the visual arts began, because—

ROBERT F. BROWN: At home, was this stressed a great deal? Did your parents talk about the arts?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, we were brought up—certainly, we went to sleep listening to music many, many evenings. There would be a string quartet or trio or, our favorite, the Brahms piano quintet going downstairs, and we'd [00:02:00] fall asleep to this music, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did your father concertize? Did he—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, he was essentially a composer, and he also studied conducting and initiated several series of children's concerts in Westchester County, modeled on the Damrosch series in New York. And he had a small orchestra composed of New York Philharmonic men, and these were very important events in our lives.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were these concerts held locally or—and you would usually go to them?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes, indeed. And the mornings of the concert were very tense. I remember I had a terrible fight with my sister one morning, and it was a great deal of screaming, and this was very, very bad the morning of the concert. But these things happen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: From your trips to—before you went on those trips to France, had you also been brought up with some art in New York? I mean, had you gone visiting around the museums and things of that sort?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, the museums really began—no, that's true. My mother was a woman who believed in enrichment for children, and we were signed up for all sorts of extracurricular things. And I do remember a class at the Metropolitan Museum, and I remember the paintings of Rosa Bonheur from that period. There was also a class at the—that I went to that visited the Bronx Zoo, and I have a vivid [00:04:00] memory of visiting the snake house and being allowed to hold a king snake, which is very beautiful, black and yellow. But, yes, we had a great deal of that, also theater. When I was quite young, we would go—in those days, New Rochelle didn't have any of the professional people or the amenities of the city, so we would have to travel, of

course, before—the parkways through the Bronx and so on to New York to the dentist and to whatever was—that sort of thing. And usually, there would be lunch at Schrafft's and maybe the theater, and there was a great deal—my grandmother had been a singer, and she had two tickets for Saturday matinee at the Metropolitan Opera. And we were always taken to *Hansel and Gretel* every year at Christmas. [Laughs.] And I can remember on the spur of the moment coming home from one of these New York trips seeing that—my mother saw that Ethel Barrymore was playing in *A Merchant of Venice*, and we stopped the car, and we got box seats and went in. And my sister was probably five, and I was eight, but it's a memory for both of us forever. And, yes, we had various kinds of culture but not specifically visual arts at that point. As I remember, we had very dreary art in our house. We had boring, boring etchings of no distinction at all, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, your mother's idea of enrichment or perhaps your father's, too, was it so that you would be better—[00:06:00] well rounded, or did they—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —hope that their daughters would become professionals?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, it was just to enrich our lives and—I don't know. There was so much of it going on around us that we couldn't help but absorb this. We took dancing lessons and got into modern dance because at one point my father had a music school in New Rochelle, and I was very much influenced by—well, two dancers. They were the Marmine [ph] sisters who did what they called drama dances, and we spent a summer at Manomet, Massachusetts, where they had a school for—a special course for dance teachers who came from all over the country, and my father composed music for Miriam Marmine [ph], suites of dramatic dances. One of them was about John Alden and Priscilla, and another one was the week's work, and all very charming things. We were young children, and we got to benefit. We had the—we joined the dance classes on the beach doing ballet, and, uh—but I think the visual arts became important to me when we went to Europe because we visited, of course, all the great museums, starting with the Louvre. And my interest in sculpture began probably, I think, when I was taken to the Rodin Museum, and I was 12 years old. [00:08:00] And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you recall impressed you when you saw Rodin's work?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I was very impressed with the sculpture. And of course, at that time, my tastes were very, very different than they are now, and I remember one of my favorite painters was Greuze, for instance. And I remember being taken to the Wallace Collection in London and liking all these things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you mentioned, yes, that Boucher—you also—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And Boucher, of course.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But do you think it was the sort of Romantic quality, say, in Rodin's sculpture?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think so. Then, my father was working on a tone poem, which he called *Le Penseur*, so he was evidently very taken with Rodin, too. And my interest in the visual arts expanded considerably when I went to high school because I was sent to Fieldston, actually, the year it opened. And it was, of course, the high school part of the Ethical Culture Schools, and they had at Fieldston what they called the Arts High. And the students had a choice. They could either take college preparation curriculum or, if they were not interested in going to college and had artistic talent, they could specialize in the arts. And many of my friends were in the Arts High, and I was fortunate enough to study painting with a painter named Peppino Mangravite, who was teaching at that time. [00:10:00] Also, uh, I think a stage designer named—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you said [inaudible], this designer, was a classmate of yours.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, and then began—I also fell in love with New York at that time, and I would spend my weekends visiting various classmates who lived in New York.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you wish you lived in New York by the time—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes, yes, because that's where it all was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.] It was a bit of a haul getting to Fieldston. Where was Fieldston?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Fieldston is up—actually, it's in Riverdale, New York, near the Hudson River. And, um, we had a taxi that transported a group of students from Westchester County. The taxi would begin in Larchmont and pick up the Goldstone sisters, and then they would come to—he would come to New Rochelle and pick me up, and then pick—and somebody else in New Rochelle. Then, he would go on to Mount Vernon, and we would pick up somebody in Mount Vernon, so we would arrive at Fieldston with a full car. And then, at five o'clock, he would repeat—you know, reverse the process, and we would all be delivered to our homes. And that's how we

commuted, literally. But the weekends I would spend as often as I could in New York, and one of my very close friends was Ruth Wilke, whose father was an executive with Warner Brothers. So she would get passes to the [00:12:00]—oh, what was the big movie house at 42nd Street?

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No. Well, I remember the Music Hall, but this was—anyway, and we were very taken with Maurice Chevalier in those days. And we would get passes for the movies, but also, I would—I discovered the art galleries, and I would visit. They were mostly clustered on 57th Street, and it never occurred to me that they sold art. But they were, for me, wonderful exhibition areas, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You assumed they were a new form—another form of museum.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, another form of museum. I didn't know anything about the back room. I never went into any of the back rooms, but, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were going with a friend or two, or is this largely your own [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, either with a friend or on my own, and I remember also at that time visiting the gallery in American Place run by Alfred Stieglitz. And he was very cordial to young people in a cantankerous sort of way, and we would have long discussions. He would want to know what I thought of the art. I remember the exhibits of Georgia O'Keefe and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you give your opinions pretty [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. We would have big discussions about art and philosophy and life, and he was very inquisitive and very—he was sort of a strange man, I remember, elderly with great tufts of hair coming out of his ears. And those were very interesting times—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:14:00] He was kindly, was he, among other things? Was he rather kindly as you look back?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, no, he wasn't avuncular at all. He was sort of—he was very opinionated, and—but the wonderful thing about him was that he was not patronizing. He would really be interested in your opinion.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, your opinion was based on, by that time, what? Had you had a certain amount of schooling or just—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —thinking about visual art? You had had training with Peppino Mangravite.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had done some work yourself.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, and—but I had no ambitions, uh, as far as being an artist is concerned. I didn't have any aptitude. I was supposed to write the Great American Novel, and English and language was supposed to be my great forte, but I was always drawn to the visual arts.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the—as you look back, Mangravite's approach to teaching, was it very rigorous, or was it—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, he was very open. Everybody was very open at Fieldston and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I was going to ask. Was the school sort of—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —progressive?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it was very progressive, extremely progressive. And, actually, a group of us the summer of our senior year rented a house near Mangravite in Elizabethtown, New York. He summered up there with his family, and several of the girls—I think we were four girls, and we had a wonderful time. We rented a little college, and we kept house together, and one of us [00:16:00] was our—we designated as "mother." And, you know, she kind of kept order and kept us at our various assigned chores.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You didn't rotate this, did you? No?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, well, we did rotate the chores, and one evening we were invited over to the Mangravite house because he had company. And there was a couple to whom we were introduced named Boissevain, and all they talked about—there was a woman and a man, and all Mrs. Boissevain talked about was a flock of chickens that had arrived at their—I guess they had a farm. And I thought it was all quite boring, and the next day Mr. Mangravite told us that she was Edna St. Vincent Millay and it was—we were not only amazed but a little bit annoyed that we hadn't known, because the conversation was very, uh, mundane. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: The school itself, then, as you look back was a wonderful—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Wonderful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —way of doing things.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was a wonderful period, and it certainly nurtured all these interests. And I feel very fortunate to have had that kind of background.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it a fairly large school or [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it was quite large, and I know that when I settled in Boston and had children of my own I kept looking for a school that was similar. And the closest that I found here—and, of course, it wasn't quite the same—was the Cambridge School of Weston, and one of my daughters did go there. [00:18:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was a time, then, of considerable, rather precocious growth and reaching out [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you were a teenager.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and I was very, uh—having the kind of mother I did, who was so interested in cultivating and—a background, a cultivated background, a background of culture and exposing us to the great things, the great literature and so forth, and I wrote poetry at the time, even in French, I remember. [Laughs.] And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did your mother write, or what did [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, but she was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —read widely?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —she was very interested in reading. My mother was—as a young woman, she was very involved in votes for women, and she marched in the parade. She was a suffragette, and then, as a mother, as a parent, she was a child-study mother. She took it very seriously. We had—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That meant what, [inaudible]. Excuse me. That meant what, child-study?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Child-study was a group of—I don't know who founded it exactly, but it was an organization centered in New York. It might have been national. I don't know, but they had publications, and they were very much interested in childhood education and also very liberal and forward-thinking. And she was very, uh, conscientious about this sort of thing, and I know we were given [00:20:00] books that were unusual. They were more realistic, maybe early children's literature. And at the age of three, I was given a whole *Book of Knowledge*.

ROBERT F. BROWN: To read? [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. It had wonderful stories in it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That would be read to you, or you were able to read it yourself?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, it would be read to me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And my mother, uh, was so certain that I had a literary gift because at a very early age—she read to me a great deal, and one day she was reading a book, and I asked her to read to me. And she said, "Oh, well, I don't think you would enjoy this book. It's a book for grownups. I don't think you would understand it." And she swears that I said, "Read to me anyway for the joy of the words." [Laughs.] I can't imagine a three,

or four, or five-year-old saying this, but evidently, I did. And so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were destined, possibly, to be a writer [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, absolutely, absolutely. And I did write—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —I did write a great deal in those days, but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you—even then, you—on Saturdays, you'd go to the art galleries.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you recall—you mentioned Georgia O'Keefe. Do you remember others, things you saw, exhibitions, or at museums as well in those days?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Let's see.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You went to Stieglitz's gallery [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I was very—yes, and also, of course, the avant-garde at that time was Matisse, [00:22:00] Picasso, Cézanne. These were all artists that we felt were cutting-edge in those days. It seems strange now, but—and looking back, when I think that we were in Paris in the—in 1927, '28, and '29, and the—when Gertrude Stein was holding forth and Matisse and Picasso were just really beginning their careers, uh—not beginning their careers but beginning to be known, and to think that my mother could have bought art of that sort, and she was simply concerned with buying beaded bags. [They laugh.] I look back at that time. What an opport—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, [inaudible] ladies' products?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, and French embroidered underwear, silk underwear, and all that sort of thing. There was a great deal of mad purchasing in the '20s, and, of course—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —we went over and came back on cabinsteamers, which took 10 days, and you could bring back all you could possibly carry. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you meet artists at all in France or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[inaudible] your father or your mother?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Actually, we spent a month with our father during that period in Brittany at a—a singer [00:24:00] named Charlie Hubbard who taught singing—I think he had a studio in Montmartre at that time. He was an expatriate, an American living in Paris, and a singer. And he rented the Chateau Sarah-Bernhardt on Belle-Île in Brittany. And we spent a month there. My father was supposedly composing. I guess he was. My mother was in Vichy with her mother, and my sister and I, both sisters—I had two younger sisters—were with my father at Belle-Île. And there were singers and musicians and other children, children of these people, and it was a quite interesting group of people and little Brittany maids. There was a great water shortage and—because it had been a very dry summer, and I guess we had—the water came from dug wells. And, uh, they couldn't do the laundry as frequently as they should, and they ran out of table linen, so they were using bed sheets on the tables. And when my mother arrived after her sojourn in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Vichy.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —in Vichy—she was a very practical woman—she tried to get Charlie Hubbard to use paper goods, and he said, "In my house, never, only linen," but they were bed sheets. Also, there was a brush fire next to the chateau. That was a big excitement. [00:26:00] All able-bodied men went out to fight the brush fire, which they did in fact put out, but it was very beautiful there. And you would go weekends to the villages. There was a village—I think it was called Quiberon, or maybe that was on the mainland. Quiberon, I think, was on the mainland, and Saint-Malo. It was quite wonderful, and the women wore native costumes still in those days.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, they still did?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: This is the '20s, late-'20s. They wore the coifs and the shawls, long dresses. It was very interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you children expected to be studying or following a regime of this or that during these summers, or were you sort of [inaudible] enjoy yourselves?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, surely, we had books that we were to read, but I don't—I think we were studying French, actually. As a matter of fact, we were put into a pension for the summer months, and another of those summers when my parents were—wanted to travel through Europe, we were put in the pension, uh, which had a summer session, also in Brittany, but another part, in—that's when we were near Saint-Malo.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that was language study that time.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: That was language study. We were studying French, and we had to practice the piano, too. I remember that. And we were very homesick. I remember the Fourth of July we—[laughs] we felt terribly homesick, [00:28:00] and there was another American girl named Mary Jane. And we all—we got a hold of an American flag somehow, and we had a little ceremony on the balcony of the villa where we were staying. It was right—it was—the town was Paramé, and it was right on the plage, on the sea. And we made this ceremony for the Fourth of July and sang, "America." And the son of Madame Ilartin [ph], who ran the school, she was very strict. Her son Pierre was a little older than we were. And when we burst into song, "My Country, 'Tis of Thee," he said, "Ah, yes, I know that. God saves the [inaudible]." [Laughs.] It was very funny.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you were—pretty much, then, you had decided you were going to go the academic route.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, I was the good student in the family. This is why they sent me to Fieldston.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because at Fieldston, if you wished, you could—there were some very demanding courses [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes, yes. And I did in fact flunk chemistry, [laughs] and almost didn't get my diploma because of that. That was my senior year, but in view of the fact that I had strengths in—in other—in French and English and other subjects, uh, they did in fact give me the diploma. And then, I had to make it up in the—they had in those days [00:30:00] a review at school for the college boards. Uh, and so I took chemistry then, and they gave me a special exam, which I did in fact pass. [They laugh.] And then, I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Can you think of where you wanted to go for school?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. I had applied to Radcliffe and I don't know where else, but I know Radcliffe was my first choice. And, uh, I did in fact—I was accepted, and I went to Radcliffe.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why did you want to go to Radcliffe? Had your mother gone there or anybody in your family?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, we were rather fascinated with New England. We had spent some summers in New England. My mother had studied—she loved gardening. When she had moved to the suburbs, she became interested in gardening. She had been brought up in New York City, of course, and she decided to study landscape architecture. So this was before the European years, when I was much younger, about 10 or 11, and we stayed at a—she studied landscape architecture at the Lowthorpe School, which was outside of Boston, and we rented a little cottage on a pond near Ayer, Massachusetts. And that was before—no, I guess Fort Devens was there even then.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It might have been, yes, near the military base.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And your mother studied landscape design.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did that at all interest you or your sisters, gardening and that sort of—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, [00:32:00] except the garden—we all loved—have all loved gardening, and, uh, I think this is why I never could live in an apartment, because I always have to see the first crocus and all this. We had wonderful spring bulbs at our house in New Rochelle. We had a very sunny spot where we would have the first crocuses and the first daffodils, and it was always very nice. So, we developed a love of gardening from my mother.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But through these New England connections, you, too, were interested in going to school, to college, in New England.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was Radcliffe known to be a pretty liberal place? Did that attract you to it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, I wouldn't say liberal, but it had high academic standards. It was near Boston. I wanted to be in a city, and I remember one of the—in the college application, one of the things that I really struggled over for a long time was the essay, which, uh, in those days, they gave you the subject. Radcliffe did, anyway, and the—you were to write an essay on "Why I want to go to Radcliffe." I had a lot of trouble with that, and my friends used to tease me and say, "Well, of course, Harvard men. That's why." [They laugh.] But somehow, I managed to get something out because I was accepted. And then, from that time on, I discovered the Fogg Museum, although I was—I majored in English literature. And those were the days when the English department was very renowned [00:34:00] at Harvard, and we had George Lyman Kittredge in Shakespeare. We had John Livingston Lowes and, uh, some great scholars. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did this continue as a love of yours, I mean, the great literature? And you also were still thinking of being a writer, weren't you?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes, yes. I took a poetry course with Hillier, and my tutor was Theodore Morrison, who is a writer, but I took as many fine arts courses as I possibly could. To my regret, I never took Fine Arts 1A, which was the big survey course, but I took, uh—no, I took Fine Arts 1A, which was not the survey course, but it was a very interesting course in which you studied the, uh—it was—the professor was Pope, Arthur Pope, who had a theory of color. And also, we had a laboratory in which we ourselves were to produce works in various styles, for instance, like a Japanese print in which line was very important. We had to copy a wash drawing of Rembrandt, and it was interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was very effective, then—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Right. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —getting to—to becoming connoisseurs, too, right?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and then I took some courses in Oriental art [00:36:00] from, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] Langdon Warner?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, I didn't take Warner's course, but—

[Audio break.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —[inaudible], I discovered Oriental art, and I think that my first art purchase, in fact, was a Japanese print, which I purchased with birthday money. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was it, would you say, about Jap—about Oriental art that you liked at that time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I was absolutely enamored of Japanese prints, and then, because of the simplicity and the marvelous use of line and contour, and then I was—became very interested in Indian art and philosophy, the life of the Buddha, the travels of Buddhist art across the Gobi Desert from India into China and then to Japan and so forth and the different styles in which the Buddhist pantheon was expressed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was all explained and expressed through lectures or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, through lectures and as slides and so forth. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were the courses given separately for women from men, or did you have courses—classes together for the most part?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, they were separate in those days, separate but equal. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: They—[00:38:00] the professors for the most part came to Longfellow Hall at Radcliffe and taught us there, but, of course, the fine arts courses were held at Fogg.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, again, they were separate for the women from the men for the most part?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think they were. I think they were, but I'm not sure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was there anything remotely like study of contemporary or recent art in those days, in fine arts?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, absolutely not, but I was very interested in contemporary art. I suppose it was something that I—you know, that developed from those high school years when I was surrounded by it and was able to—it was so accessible in New York in those days. Um, and when I graduated from college, I wanted to get a job because my mother believed, as a former suffragette and so forth, she believed in—she was an early feminist. There's no question about it, and she believed that—first, in education for women. She herself had not gone to college, but she was continually taking courses and studying. And she was adamant that we were to go to college, and then she believed in careers for women, and she believed that women should have their own careers. And my great ambition was to be able to stand on my own two feet and earn [00:40:00] enough money to live in New York, have my own place. And in those days, it was not in an apartment. I would have been perfectly happy to have had a room in one of the brownstones on the side streets of Manhattan, but I never made it, because these were Depression years. When I got out of college, um, I was hoping to get a job in publishing or possibly in an art gallery so that—I had the two ideas. But as luck would have it, I didn't get a job in either place, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you have to then live at home?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, I had to live at home in New Rochelle, and I had to visit friends in New York and travel around with my toothbrush in my pocketbook and sleep on people's sofas because I never—I started out, finally—I did—I think it was the summer of my junior year. We usually went to the Adirondacks and rented a cottage on a lake in the summer as a family. Mother was very clever about that. She would rent the house in New Rochelle to an old lady who thought it was the country, who lived in New York, and she would come up with her dogs and her chauffeur and so on and install herself in our house. And we would use the money to rent a cottage on Lake Placid, Star Lake, or whatever up in the Adirondacks. And then, of course, we went to Europe when I was 12, 13, and 14, and, after that, back to the Adirondacks. But my junior year in college, I—we stayed at home, and I took a secretarial [00:42:00] course. And I used to think afterward that the most useful thing I had ever learned was typing, so I did learn touch-typing. But the shorthand didn't come very easily, and I left the course quite half-baked. I had my own system, [they laugh] which was all wrong. And so there I was in the job market in the midst of the Depression, hoping to get a job in publishing or at an art gallery, but nothing happened, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Could your parents help you out only limitedly at that time or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: On the what?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Could your parents help you out only in a limited way at that point in the Depression?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your father was also in business, you had said, wasn't he? [Inaudible] surely he had been.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, he had been in business, and then he had always had tremendous musical talent, which his parents felt was—you know, that in order to earn a living you had to be a businessman, so he was very discouraged. And he came to study music very late in life, so it was always a handicap for him. That is, he was in his—I guess he was in his late forties, so he never really made it either in the business field or in the music field, but, uh—and he never made it financially. And actually, it was my grandfather who was our main support. He had an early, uh, mail order business of women's clothing called the Hamilton Garment Company, and I would give anything to have saved one of those catalogues. It would have been screamingly funny, because I remember Grandpa was always very, very worried at the time of the—when the catalogue came out. He was [00:44:00] always very preoccupied and very serious, very withdrawn, and very worried, and those catalogues must have been really something. But, um, he did very well, and when the crash came in 1929, which coincidentally was our last trip to Europe, he retired rather than struggle on. And he at that time had owned a building on Lower 5th Avenue, and he lost it. And as far as the Depression was concerned, I think that was the biggest tragedy in the family. Otherwise, we always, you know, had enough to eat, but we were always very price-conscious. And I think that the—that my grandfather and my mother were sort of parsimonious anyway, so

we were brought up that way.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Your father, on the other hand, was not so apt to pay attention to finances.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, he was not. And furthermore, he could—you know, we were always—our income was always supplemented by my grandfather, and it was always—Mother always insisted that we do things to please Grandpa because he was important in our lives. And, uh, Grandpa had great ambitions for us. We were three girls, and, uh, so—

[END OF TRACK.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: [00:00:00]—about your post-college years, going back to New York, and looking for work [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You also at that time continued your interest in the arts, and what—what form did that take at that point? Did you—were you beginning to get to know a lot of people, a lot of people in the theater or music or the visual arts?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think that at that time I was, uh—I spent as much time as I could in New York. Of course, I would go in every day and job-hunt and actually went to agencies and went through the whole thing. And it was extremely difficult in those days, but there were agencies that—employment agencies that concerned themselves with, uh, white-collar and executive-type jobs. And I never seemed to fit in any slot, although I was sent out on interviews, and the first summer after I left college I did work for a very high-style milliner who happened to have been a former neighbor of ours in New Rochelle who began to, uh, be in the—who opened up a millinery establishment on Madison Avenue, which was mostly wholesale, selling to [00:02:00] department stores all across the country. And she hired me, I think, to do some kind of public relations, but I ended up in the office working under Irma the bookkeeper. And at that time, I was going to write something for the *New Yorker* called, "This is the Bookkeeper Speaking." She was very Brooklynese, and I found this very amusing. However, uh, my job was not very amusing, and by the fall I decided to again make an attempt to get something more like what I had planned to do. And in those days I would spend weekends in New York visiting friends and going to theater, art exhibits, and so forth, and many of my friends lived in Greenwich Village. In those days, uh, New York was a very different place from the New York of today, and one could go on the subway without giving it a second thought. And I certainly used the subway at all hours of the day and night, traveling back and forth from Greenwich Village. And there were parties in the village. I remember meeting a poet named Maxwell Bodenheim. Those were the days of the WPA Theatre. Orson Welles was a great star and hero, and his productions were always stimulating and fun. He did—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Quite different, quite [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Very different. He did a black—an all-black cast doing—I think it was [00:04:00] *Macbeth*. It might have been *Hamlet*. Who knows. And, uh, his theater was great, and it was a very interesting and stimulating time, also a very difficult time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you remember some of the art exhibitions you would have seen in those—at that time? What about—was the Museum of Modern Art becoming anything of a presence by that time? You graduated in what, 1936?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I graduated in '36, so that was when the museum first started, and I think, perhaps, I was—I can't remember whether I was aware of it at that time or not. I really don't remember, but certainly I remember the Knoedler Gallery and, again, looking at the mostly modern French artists. Uh, I also remember that we very much admired Dalí. Surrealism was beginning to come upon the scene.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you could see some in New York by that time.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, you could, and we were very much impressed with the limp watches and all those things. Uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you think it was partly the novelty or the boldness of—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We thought it was very, very poetic and very profound, extremely profound. [Laughs.] Um, and I also remember Dalí appearing on the scene, always—he was quite the dandy and always made a very [00:06:00] dramatic appearance. He had a coat with a big fur collar, and he had mustachios that curled around, and he was always a great personality, very vivid.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He would—you would see him, or you could—yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, you could see him. You could see him.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were ambitious, then, to try to strike out on your own as much as you could.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had a job that you mentioned at Macy's as a clerk. [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, right, right, during—I was actually hired as part of the Christmas help one Christmas. It must have been in '37 perhaps, the Christmas season, and I was sent to adult toys. And, uh, my mother was very excited at the fact that I had been snapped up by Macy's and thought that I would make my mark there and perhaps be chosen to go on the—it was called the—well, it was the training squad. I forget what they called it exactly, but then you would train to eventually be a buyer, which was the be-all and the end-all. But, unfortunately, I was so bad at arithmetic that I made many, many mistakes when I actually made sales transactions, and I think they were very glad to unload me when the Christmas season was over. At that time, my father met an old friend on one of his morning commutes to New York from New Rochelle who had a small radio advertising agency, and [00:08:00] he being a rather excellent salesman, was able to sell me to his friend as an employee. And, um, he—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you know he was doing this?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, I didn't. He said, um, "I am a very proud father today," and so forth, about, "My daughter has graduated from college and is looking for a job," and so on. So, they did in fact hire me at an agency way up high in the RCA Building, like the 35th floor or something, and they hired me to be—to do market research, about which I knew nothing. But fortunately, they knew nothing about it either, [laughs] so I made it up as I went along. What I did was, they would tell me what account they were interested in researching, usually an account that they were anxious to get. One of them was Dresma [ph] Cosmetics, whatever that was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Dresma? [Laughs.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Isn't that wonderful? They had another account called, uh, I think, Fischer's Bread, and then they had Andy Boy Broccoli. And this was probably the first name-brand fresh vegetable on the market. And I was very eager to write commercials for the advertising. That was the part I wanted to do, but I was sent out on the streets of New York to do market research. So, what I did was pretend that I was an inquiring reporter. I would stop people—I would pick a neighborhood like 42nd Street and Broadway, and I would interview people and ask them what they thought of the—either Dresma Cosmetics or whatever product [00:10:00] I was supposed to be researching. And then, I would come home and type up the interviews and hand them in, and they would show them to the clients. [Laughs.] And that was the market research.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it embarrassing to do, or amusing?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, no. I—I got right into it. I went to Brooklyn. I had all kinds of adventures. Then, as the weather got colder, I think they felt sorry for me, and they let me come into the office. And they had one young woman who was writing all the commercials, and she was bored to death, so she was only too happy to let me write some of them. And I remember the thrill of hearing my immortal prose over the radio by the announcer. [They laugh.] You know, "Having broccoli for dinner tonight?" [They laugh.] And that lasted about a year, and at that time—

ROBERT F. BROWN: There was nothing—no growth potential, really, as far [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, and finally, as happens very often in the advertising game, they lost a few of these accounts. I think they were kind of hanging on there anyway. It was a very small outfit. It was Mr. Nepp [ph] and Mr. Rogo [ph], so they finally had to let me go. And, uh, at that time I think I went off to Florida where my grandparents lived in St. Petersburg for a month or so. And then, I came back, and I had met my about-to-be husband when I was a senior at Radcliffe, and we had been seeing each other. [00:12:00] And in the, uh, early summer of 1938, we were married. So my unfulfilled ambitions went with me to Boston, and I tried to do a little promotion in—radio advertising was quite dead here at that time, and I went to—I think it was a company that I thought really should advertise on the radio and tried to sell the idea to them, but they didn't buy it. Nothing came of it. At the same time, my husband had started a fledgling building products company, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And your husband Max was a, uh—an MIT graduate, right?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In what, some form of engineering or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, he was—actually, it was civil engineering, building construction. And while a student at MIT, he had invented a product, a building product, which was a through-wall flashing material taking thin-sheet copper and fortifying it with fabric by means of a mastic material. And it was less expensive than solid copper and much easier to form on the building, and he had begun—

ROBERT F. BROWN: A dry product after [inaudible] mastic and [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, yes, yes. It came in rolls. It was flexible.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And he invented it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: He invented this. It was patented, invented while he was still at college. And although his main job was working for his father, who was a roofing contractor—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right around here?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —in Cambridge, [00:14:00] where Max had been brought up. He grew up in Cambridge. He also was starting his own very small business with one employee who made the material, packaged it, and took it to be—and shipped it all in one. [Laughs.] And he had a little tiny hole in the wall in Cambridge on—near Cambridge Street, actually. And, uh, pretty soon he ran very small ads in a trade publication called *American Roofer*, and the agency that he—that was handling this account was—left something to be desired. So, he began bringing the ads home and asking me what I thought of them and so on, and gradually I found myself working for Max in his office. And as the business grew, the job grew, and all during the years that our children were born, and we were raising our family, we were working together in what came to be known as, uh—what was it known as?

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] Wasco?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The Wasco.

ROBERT F. BROWN: W-A-S-C-O.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: W-A-S-C-O.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you acted as sort of—became, in effect, the manager [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I became the advertising manager, and I also did all the sales promotion as the sales organization grew. And, uh, the biggest [00:16:00] job was the publication of the Sweets catalogues. And he, uh, at—in time had several products. And after—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It would be listed in—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —after World War II, he developed the plastic skylight, which I believe I named the sky dome. And this—the business really took off with this product. It was very useful as a way of bringing daylight into a building in distances far from the window and particularly used in schools. Many schools were being built after the war, and it was an excellent device for backlighting the classroom.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, now, had there been anything quite like that before?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, never.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: This was the first. It was the Kleenex of the industry. Now there are many making them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The plastic, and then how—it was framed in a metal frame?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. What—this was an idea that architects had come to on their own after the war. They had tried to use the plastic bubble that was used in the airplanes on the roof as a skylight, but they were nailed to the roof, and they failed because of the expansion and contraction of the plastic, acrylic plastic material. They cracked and then leaked, of course. And I believe it was the Rohm and Haas Company who made the plastic sheet, who came to Max and asked him if he could develop this product so that it would be, uh, viable and waterproof. [00:18:00] And he put it in a metal frame in which the—there was no nailing of the plastic, but the plastic bubble had a flange in the frame that could then float in the frame and contract and expand with the

weather. And it was extremely successful, a very good product. And then, he developed various variations like a skylight—a sky dome that would—that could be opened for ventilation, which we called the vent dome. And then, he developed the pyrodome [ph], which would open automatically like a sprinkler when the temperature got to a certain degree and vent a fire, which was a way of keeping it from traveling in large plants, for instance, where a fire could sweep through a plant going from bay to bay. This would vent the fire and put it out before it could spread, and this was a very important development. There had been a tremendous fire that was in the news at that time in a factory. It was a big disaster. I don't remember the name of it. And this product was an answer to that problem.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible]—were these skylights opening [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it would open and vent the fire. The fire was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —fire and smoke would go up, and then it would go out. And I can remember that we had set up—we had the press. We had the fire department of Cambridge, and we had set this up in a vacant lot in Cambridge, and how scary that was when we performed the test. [00:20:00] We set the fire. We had a large thermometer on the wall. You could see the smoke rising to this degree and that degree and the other degree, and then this awful moment, will it open or would it not, and then it did pop open. And this was great.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this a new material that caused it to pop open or the way he fabricated it, that caused it, with the heat, to open? [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, it was—yes, it was hinged to open, of course, but the mechanism was a timing mechanism that would open at a certain degree of heat that would cause it to pop open, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So was your husband always fond of—these are very elegant. They sound simple, but they're not. They were extremely basic kinds of needs that—was he always enamored of, do you think—of the sophistication of such things, such beautiful solutions?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: These were. These were.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Oh, yes. Yes, he certainly admired good design, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would he spend countless hours, thinking over ideas and variations and so forth? Uh, was that his chief role in the business?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, he was a very—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —he was a very quick study. He would get an idea Monday and do it Tuesday. [Laughs.] And when the business got too large for one man to handle, he didn't want to have any more to do with it. He was a very poor delegator, and the business did get large, because not only did we develop this whole line of skylight sky domes, but then he began to manufacture the acrylic sheet itself. We had fascinating trips to Europe to meet with people. [00:22:00] There was the people in England who manufactured Perspex, and there were people in—we went to Scandinavia. There were people in Sweden, people in Germany, and it was a very exciting time in the '50s. Um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had he concluded that you must manufacture your own plastic sheet?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, and this was a very difficult thing. And DuPont, of course, was making it here, and the Rohm and Haas Company, and Perspex in England, and it was being made in Germany. But—and then we had a very interesting man working for us who was not trained but was very clever and inventive. And through a mistake, we had a terrible time perfecting this process. It's a very difficult process, and we had many mistakes such as the sheet, the plastic sheet is—the chemical is in liquid form, and it—and the sheets are formed in—between glass, in molds, and they are literally baked, heated in an oven, at a certain temperature. And if everything is not right, they crack. And you could go in—he had a small factory where he was working this out here in Cambridge. And, um, you could go in and here crackle, pop, and this was not a very good thing. However, [00:24:00] the cracked sheets are quite beautiful, and, uh, this man began experimenting with putting dried twigs and leaves into the liquid plastic and building it up and making a thick slab with embedments in it. And, uh, although he was not a designer and they were crude, it was a very interesting thing. And we branched out from there into a decorative sheet, and that was great fun for me. Then, I got into the whole business of design, which was really fun.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] design—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Product design, yes. And we went in search of a woman named Drew Dunn [ph] who had done this kind of embedment in lamp shades [00:25:00] and table mats, not using acrylic plastic but using, uh, more of a fiberglass material and a different kind of plastic which is not as clear as the acrylic, which is really crystalline and beautiful. And we began buying theatrical material and embedding it and naming these different patterns, and then we developed products using the decorative material. We called it acrylite, and those were very, very exciting times and fascinating for me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were doing all of this with a growing family and so forth?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So these products, I mean, obviously most of them became very successful, didn't they?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, they were.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They became very widely [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: They were very successful, [00:26:00] and we had sales representation, you know, all over the country. Uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would you have to—were you on top of that? That was your—one of your sectors, was it, in charge of sales?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, not really in charge of sales. I had to furnish—I had to produce the sales meetings. I had to set them up and plan the programs and so forth, and I had to furnish the sales tools and sell them to the sales force. And, of course, working with Max, I got to travel with him on all the business trips, and this was very nice because whenever we had a business trip to Europe, for instance, we would take a week off at the end and go someplace for just vacation. And in that way, we spent a wonderful five days in Taormina in Sicily one March. We went to Spain and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And was Max—had he some interest previously in, say, art or architecture and that sort of thing, or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —were you beginning to introduce him to it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Actually, when we were just going together, I think I took him to the Museum of Fine Arts for his very first visit and showed him the burning of the Sanjo palace in the Japanese department and a few of my other favorite things, which, of course, I had learned to love at Fogg. And—but he had a natural eye and an instinct for art. He didn't need to have had the training at all. He was [00:28:00] right with it, and he had an innate taste that was really quite remarkable. And as far as collecting was concerned, he was the collector. I was not. He was the one who would decide, "Yes, I want that," and I never could have decided because the world was so full of a number of things. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You'd prefer to go on looking?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, but he enjoyed that very much. And so, on our subsequent trips to Europe—I think it started in the '60s, the collecting part, and I don't know at what point one is considered a collector. You buy something, and then you buy something else, and you acquire something else. And I guess at some point you were a collector, [laughs] but it happens very slowly, and you're sort of unaware. And because of my interest in sculpture, this was the focus of our collecting. And also, there was a dealer in Boston named Hyman Swetzoff who was very, very important to us in these early days. And on Saturday afternoon, we would travel to the few galleries on Newbury Street, and we were early members of the Institute of Contemporary Art and also members of the Museum of Fine Arts. For so many years, that—about 10 years ago, they made us life members because we had been sending in that \$100 for—I don't know—30 years. Amazing. But [00:30:00] Hyman realized that we were interested in sculpture, and he encouraged us very much because nobody was collecting sculpture in Boston at that time. And when he went to Europe, he would look for things for us and send us photographs of Degas sculpture and so forth, which were all attainable in those days, even on a modest budget. And my first major purchase or—Hyman had a Nadelman show, Elie Nadelman show, and I absolutely fell in love with Nadelman's work. He had, I guess, known Nadelman's widow, Mrs. Nadelman, and had arranged to have the exhibition. He had sculpture and drawings, and I was able to buy one of the, uh, painted wood sculptures of a circus performer, which has always been a great favorite of mine. And that was our first major sculpture purchase, although I had spent wedding present money in the early days after I was married. That first summer,

I would haunt the shops on, uh, Charles Street and in Boston and also in New York, and I was able to buy some Tang [ph] figurines. So, I—actually, the Nadelman was not my first purchase. The Chinese Tang figures were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But the Nadelman [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [00:32:00] Was the first modern art, yes, first modern, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was about when—would you say you got the Nadelman?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, it had to be the '50s.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The '50s. This is really before your husband is moving into collecting. Is that correct?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He—he was coming along [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: He was certainly not against it. He was encouraging me, and he was interested. He was interested, but he never could buy one of anything. Shortly thereafter, I think, in the late '50s, we were in London, and we went to the Marlborough Gallery in London, which was quite new then. And we got to know Fischer, who was one of the partners, and, uh, he also was very encouraging and made it possible for us to buy a Degas drawing and, I think, two Degas sculptures at that time. And that was when we bought the seated dancer that I still have, which is a very, very late Degas, very worked drawing, which appealed to me very strongly because you could see the artist's hand and his indecisions and how he resolved it. It was a very strong drawing, and also one of the dancers was a very heavy, uh, [00:34:00] sort of old woman, not a young, beautiful—it wasn't a beautiful dancer, but it was a very strong piece. Also, from Hyman we bought, um, Käthe Kollwitz. He had Käthe Kollwitz sculptures and drawings, and we bought two charcoal drawings and a relief called *Die Klage*. And I have since done a little work on that. We have the plaster, and I don't know if it's an original plaster or a copy plaster and would have to really delve rather deeply into that to find out.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A tricky field [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, it's very, very tricky.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —about that.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Very tricky. Yeah. Uh, Max and I were married on July 1st in 1938, and, actually, we were married—we decided to elope because my mother was getting very nervous about my approaching marriage to Max. She wasn't—he wasn't at all what she had envisioned for me, and she was quite nervous about the whole thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she thinking you should marry a literary sort, or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, she just was very surprised. I guess it was surprising because I never went out with MIT men when I was an undergraduate until I met Max, which was the very end of my senior year. I was already taking my, uh, final exams. Uh, [00:36:00] so we decided just to do it, and we didn't want a fuss anyway. We hated the idea of big weddings and all that business, so we were married on a Fourth of July weekend, and it was raining. And we were married by a justice of the peace in Nashua, New Hampshire. He couldn't be more dismal. [Laughs.] And after it was over, there was nobody we knew, and we got in the car, and we didn't know where we were going. But Max knew that there was a lake, Lake Sunapee, uh, that was sort of a resort, and he felt we should head up that way. We had no reservations. It began to rain, pour, and it was dark. And we got to Lake Sunapee, and, uh, we saw a sign out that said Seven Hearths. And I waited in the car while Max went in to see if perchance they had a room for the night, and they did, and we went in. And it turned out to be a very small inn, mostly a restaurant, actually, with some rooms above in an old house. And they had a few rooms for people to stay, and they happened to have a vacancy because it was the Friday of the Fourth of July weekend, and it was raining. And we were shown into a lovely room with a fire going in the fireplace. We were served a supper in the room, and it—if we had planned it, it couldn't have been more ideal. The next day, the sun was shining, and they told us that they were very sorry, but they were all full up for the weekend, and we'd have to leave. [Laughs.] So we moved over to the large [00:38:00] hotel on the lake, which was one of those big, old-fashioned New England hotels with an enormous porch and rocking chairs and the whole works, called the Granliden. And, uh, we spent the weekend there and then went back to Cambridge Sunday night and had to tell everybody we were married. [Laughs.] And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They thought you had simply disappeared. [Laughs.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, and Max's mother was quite disturbed and felt that we really shouldn't tell anybody that we were married, but she did give us a double bed, nevertheless. [Laughs.] And the following

week, we had another ceremony in New Rochelle with the benefit of clergy so that everybody would be happy. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Meanwhile, you, of course, made overtures to your parents or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, my sister Claire was the only one who knew what we were going to do, this dastardly deed, and, uh, actually, she was the one who told my parents.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you had a friendly intermediary.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I had a friendly intermediary. They all forgave us eventually, but that was it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

[Audio break.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It's going?

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is April 29th, 1993, and we're continuing our interviews. We'll be on this tape, and then I'll go to the new one. We talked last time, really, through your—your close involvement with your husband in his very interesting and burgeoning business interests, but I gather that, although you both were very dynamic people, uh, you really didn't interfere with each other. You had your separate realms, so to speak, and that by the 1950s, uh, [00:40:00] you first, of course, and then showing Max, became interested and began collecting art.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How—how did that come about, or just sort of creep upon you very, very gradually?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, it crept up. I've often wondered, uh, when a few things that you've acquired become a collection. We never thought of ourselves as collectors, but I had this great interest in sculpture, and Max became very interested, too. It started in a small way in Boston. We would on Saturday afternoon go to Newbury Street and look at the—what the galleries had we were particularly close to Hyman Swetstoff. And what really, I think my very first purchase was a Nadelman circus performer in wood that Hyman had. He had an exhibition of Nadelman sculpture and drawings that he had gotten from Mrs. Nadelman after Nadelman's death, and, um, I was very excited by the sculpture and decided that this was it. I was going to plunk down my money and buy something, and that's what I bought.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you been aware of Nadelman, say, when you were a young woman in New York?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I hadn't really.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But this suddenly—so this was a sudden—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it was a very sudden—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —conversion.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —yes, awakening, and that was our first purchase. And then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you have in mind for it, simply something to embellish your house or for outdoors, or what was it to be?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, no, it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was indoors.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —definitely an indoors piece, and I had spent [00:42:00] wedding present money on Chinese Tang figurines, and we had added to those over the years, but I think this was the first major piece of modern sculpture, and I seem to remember that we paid what was a huge sum to us at that time, \$900 for the Nadelman.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And would this have been, say, in the late—in the '40s or '50s, something like that?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: This would have been in the '50s. I think this would have been, uh, perhaps the late '50s, I would say, middle to—no, probably the middle '50s, like around '55 or '56. And then, uh, Hyman realized our interest in sculpture, and he encouraged it, of course. And he offered to find things for us when he—on his occasional trips to Europe. And I remember his sending back photographs of Degas sculptures and—I'm trying to remember all the different things that he did send back. And we began slowly to acquire pieces through Hyman. Also, we acquired a Käthe Kollwitz relief, an actual plaster, which to this day I don't know whether it's an original plaster or a copy plaster, probably a copy plaster, made during her lifetime of grief, *Die Klage*, which is the [00:44:00]—in memory of Barlach, and it's a self-portrait, a wonderful piece. Uh, and so it came about, and at some point, we—it became a major focus of our leisure time, a focus of our trips abroad and so forth. We went to galleries, museums, and rather early on we purchased from Marlborough Gallery in London, from Fischer—

ROBERT F. BROWN: From Fischer—was Fischer the collector?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, he—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —owned the gallery. He was a partner of Frank Lloyd, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of Marlborough Gallery.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, at Marlborough in London. He was a wonderful man and very encouraging, also. And the interesting thing about, uh, our, quote-unquote, "collection" was that I seemed to have pointed the way, but Max was really the collector, because when he had leisure—which was not very often, and it would be on a Saturday afternoon—and he found himself in a gallery or on a business trip, and we would go together. And then, there would be part that would be pleasure, and part that would be business, and the pleasure part was always visiting galleries and museums and so forth, art exhibitions, and Max never bought one of anything. He always bought two or three, and I found at Marlborough a [00:46:00] Degas draw—yes, a Degas drawing, a very late worked drawing that fascinated me. And, uh, I think at that time we bought that drawing, another drawing, and a Degas sculpture all at one time, so that's the way things—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Why do you suppose—he was—you're suggesting, I think, that he was less cautious than you were. Is that right?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Exactly. He could make up his mind, and I was indecisive. There were so many things. Why this thing rather than that thing?

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what would he argue? "Look, we know we like this one."

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: "We're certain of this."

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: "What are you waiting for? Let's do it."

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And since, um, he was the financial chairman of the partnership, [laughs] you know, if he felt we could afford it, I went along. And it was very exciting, actually.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, did you begin then to learn—you got to know some of the—some various art dealers [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What about—

[END OF TRACK.]

This is tape number two.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [00:00:00] He was not your typical art dealer or anyone—anyone who was selling anything who would promote it or push it, he was very laidback about, uh—very quiet. And you made the decision, but he was very knowledgeable and had great love of the art that he exhibited and that he showed in his gallery. And, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was something of a—had something of a salon, too, didn't he? I understand—wasn't he

a bit of a poet or—himself?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I never knew that side of Hyman.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would you through Hyman get to know some of the artists, or did he discourage you from making your own contacts with artists?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, no, not at all, but I don't think we met artists through Hyman. Actually, at the time we were buying, we were buying artists who no longer were living. We were buying, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Degas.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Degas and Käthe Kollwitz, and I'm trying to remember what else we bought through Hyman. Uh, and then, of course, we bought in Paris, in London, in New York, and from many dealers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In London, where did you particularly look? What were you after, Henry Moore or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I remember, of course, Marlborough made it possible for me to visit Henry Moore. By that time, we had built the large house in Chestnut Hill and had started a sculpture garden [00:02:00] on the grounds, and I wanted a Henry Moore very, very much. And I couldn't seem to find through Knoedler in New York and Marlborough, uh, just the right Henry Moore, the one that I really wanted. And so Harry Fischer of Marlborough in London said, "Well, why don't you go out and visit Henry Moore, and perhaps you'll see something out there that you'll like?" And that was the beginning of a wonderful day for me. Max was busy on business, and Harry hired a car and sent me out to Much Hadham to visit Henry Moore, and that was really a wonderful thing. And in showing me around, he was so, uh, enthusiastic and so wonderful to talk to and so generous with his time. Uh, I was the only one there at the time, and I had tea with him and Irina Moore and in his house. But he showed me his original small studio, and we walked around the grounds, and on a loading platform outside of one of the work areas was a cast of the *Falling Warrior*, and I knew that was the one I wanted. And, uh, Henry Moore said that he was almost certain I could have it, but he had to check, of course, with his various dealers. And, uh, I did in fact acquire it, and it was the first of three large Moores that we had at one time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You spotted this, the *Falling Warrior*, on the loading platform.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, out there. [00:04:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: What do you suppose it was in Moore's work that seems to have captivated you right away?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It's so hard to put in words. People ask me, "Who is your favorite sculptor?" Or what—you know, it's something that—it's almost a gut feeling, that—something about sculpture, and I've never tried to verbalize it because it's so difficult, that says something to me, and I always know when it happens. And I can see a work and say, "That's a sculptor," and with Henry Moore I was very captivated by his feeling of monumentality, his relation—relating his figures somehow to nature, and his abstracting his subject to a certain point. And I think this is the kind of art that I've always liked the best, and it's brought me back to early modern American art, too, because it's a time when modernism is just beginning, and, uh, I think this is the quality that Moore had. It's something that's not totally abstract, that's humanistic, and yet, um, is an artist's vision, is not a literal thing. Um, lately, I have had to revise my feelings and my assessment [00:06:00] of Moore because I think in the late work he lost a great, great deal. I've seen some very bad things that he has done, and I think there was a moment in the late '50s and the '60s when he was really at the peak of his career.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So happy were you to—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —have been there then.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then, thereafter, you say you got two other Moores.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, we acquired the—a seated woman whom we placed under a tall oak tree at the top of the, uh—our garden was hilly. It went down a hill. It was a slope that went from the house down and then sort of disappeared into a strip of woods in Chestnut Hill. And the seated woman, the thin-necked, seated woman had a back rather like a turtle's back, and we put her under this oak tree where she could sort of survey our landscape, which is something that Henry Moore himself liked to do. He liked to—he was one of the most eloquent, I think, of artists, and, of course, there are many, many books full of quotations and conversations with Henry Moore. He could describe his work better than any art historian or anybody I've ever known, but he

always liked to see his sculpture against the sky and against nature. And I think this—this was a happy sight for the seated woman on top of the hill under the oak tree, sort of looking out into what was, of course, a small landscape, but our landscape. [00:08:00] And then, I also—we acquired—the third large Henry Moore was one of the maquettes, which would be medium-scale, of the Adam piece, which—the original, which was created for Chicago, in Chicago. We had that one, too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, would you—were many of these purchases planned out well ahead, or would—would it be almost sometimes impulse when you—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, not at all. It wasn't impulse. As the collection grew, I began to feel that I would like to have certain pieces to fill in, and they were—it was really a classical-modern collection. I was not cutting-edge at that time. We didn't get really very contemporary and with it until the days when we were buying for the 180 Beacon collection. And then, we really took off into Pop art and all the other things that were happening in the '60s. And that was a very exciting time, too, but prior to that, in the '50s, when we were buying art I was thinking of Matisse. We never did have a Picasso sculpture. We never had the opportunity, but we had Giacometti and Rodin. I bought my Rodin rather early on, also a seated woman. And this was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What about Degas? Did you have something fairly early by him?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, we had—of course, dating the Degas is almost impossible, but [00:10:00] we had, uh, three dancers. We had one arabesque, which is perhaps one of the most—one of his most graceful dancers in sculpture, and we had a very—a much less finished piece of, um, a dancer looking at the sole of her right foot, I believe, which he did in several versions. And this was perhaps the least dancer-like. This was a very heavy woman, and it was a very strong piece. And then, the third Degas, which I still have, is very fragmentary, and it has a perfectly wonderful back, and it's a woman getting out of a bath. It's one of the Degas sculptures that suffered a great deal of loss in his studio. You know, they were falling apart for years during his lifetime, and the edition was made posthumously, and there was a great deal that had to be done to sort of put some of the pieces together in order to cast them. But this one was quite fragmentary. Her legs are gone beneath the knees, but it's a wonderful fragment, and the back is so marvelously articulated, so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you're—in that case of Degas or, say, Daumier's sculpture if you could—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, Daumier, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you would want the precast, however [00:12:00] fragmentary, the plasters, right, or the modeled ones? They're very rare, very hard—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, in Daumier, um, we started collecting, and for somebody like Max who was a collector by instinct—and it could have been butterflies or anything else, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which—meaning what, he wanted to be comprehensive?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, he—he had the collector's instinct.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: He really—he was interested in collecting stamps, although he never persisted long enough to get deeply, deeply involved. But, um, perhaps because the interest in art was a shared interest, that lasted his entire life. And, um, I began collecting the Daumier busts. Uh, we began collecting in the late '50s. I think we bought one or two at Knoedler's when we saw them, and then it began to be very interesting. They would come up for sale at Sotheby's, and we bid some in. We acquired one at a London auction and, I think, even at the, uh—in Paris. And knowing that there were 36, it was very tempting, and I think at one point we had as many as 16, perhaps, but we never acquired all 36. There are very few sets of 36. One of them now is in the National Gallery given by Lessing Rosenwald, and there's, of course, one in the Louvre. Um, the Daumier [00:14:00] busts are very posthumous indeed. They weren't—the edition wasn't even begun until the '20s. And when I began to work on Daumier sculpture at the Fogg, a project which started as—was supposed to be a small exhibition that John Coolidge thought would be interesting—and he knew that I was collecting Daumier busts, and he thought there might be other Daumier collectors in the area who had some sculpture. And he envisioned a small show, and it was my first exhibition at Fogg. I had been working there for several years for John Coolidge, and I began to work on this. And the more I worked on it, the more I was convinced that there were many sculptures that were puzzles and that didn't seem to be by Daumier. And what started to be a small show of local objects turned into a two-year project and a total Daumier sculpture show. And, uh, in the course of doing the research and going to Paris and following the trail, the trails that opened up as I went along, I was—we were able to see the original clay busts that were in the collection of the LeGarrette [ph] Collection. And the grandson of the original LeGarrette who had bought them from Daumier's publisher, um, [00:16:00] still had them. His grandmother was then alive, and he was gracious enough to take us out to visit his grandmother, who lived

outside of Paris, and we saw all 36 original busts by Daumier in a glassed-in cabinet in Madame LeGarrette's house in Paris. That was, I guess, the biggest thrill of my whole life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And was she very, uh, talkative? Did you—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, she was a wonderful old lady, and she subsequently died. And when I did the show, her grandson, Jean-Claude Roman [ph], who has a print gallery, essentially, a print gallery on the Left Bank, Rue de Seine, came over and brought with him for the exhibition, uh—I believe it was four of the original busts, so we were able to show the original clay busts, hand-painted by Daumier, full of cracks and certainly showing the wear and tear that they had gone through as well as the complete bronze edition, which we had borrowed from Lessing Rosenwald, and also an aborted edition that Roman had thought of doing in baked terracotta, and they had only managed to cast a few and hand-paint them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, this fact that you could have a work by a man [00:18:00] who died long before that but still being presented and—for the first time and newly cast, must have been rather exciting, tremendous. Did this—did you begin to take an interest or had you an interest in these varieties of technique, the [inaudible] to the possibilities technically speaking?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, the technical knowledge came as I worked, and I worked with—I was very fortunate. There was—at that time, he was a young man, Arthur Beale, who was in the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was a conservator at the Fogg.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —a conservator at the Fogg, and I was quite impressed with work he had done and articles he had written about some ancient bronzes, which were in an exhibition the year before I began to work on Daumier. And as I began to puzzle over some of the questions that arose in my mind about Daumier's sculpture, I would go up to the lab and talk to Arthur and ask him questions, and pretty soon we were collaborating. And it was a very happy, uh, collaboration for both of us. He had a remarkable way of being able to detect exactly how the sculptor had achieved what he achieved, because Arthur himself had done sculpture. He had studied at Brandeis and had worked as a sculptor before he became a conservator, and so—but he really understood the techniques a great deal. And it was he who pointed out to me the characteristics of Daumier's hand, and this was the key element in rejecting a whole body of work, the little figurines that have become beloved little bibelot that people [00:20:00] pick up and probably still collect to this day, and they're signed "H.D.," and they all assume they're by Daumier.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: But Daumier himself worked very—this is what appealed to me, and it appeals to me—it's the act of creation. The very finished sculpture doesn't necessarily excite me as much as the rough study, and this is true in painting and in drawing and in everything else, although a great contradiction would be Brancusi, whose high finishes are magnificent. But, um, the wonderful thing about the Daumier sculpture was the fact that it was so lively and unfinished, and Arthur was able to point out that he used a comb tool, and you could see the traces of the comb even in the bronze casting. Of course, in the original clay, they would have been extremely—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —much more apparent.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —uh, much more obvious. But even in the bronze, which is so far removed from the original, having gone through the wax and then the molten metal and then the finishing, you still can see these traces of the comb tool, and he used it much as he would use shading when he was making a charcoal drawing for his lithographs. He used it as he would shading, and this is totally absent in the figurines and some other sculptures that have for many years been attributed to Daumier, including, [00:22:00] a laundress and her little girl that's in the Walters Collection to this day.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, really?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. We questioned that very much.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] is—doesn't seem to have this evidence of the hand.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, and another thing, uh—the figurines have these very sweet faces, and it's very un-Daumier-like. But the most curious coincidence, the work on Daumier keeps—there will be years when you don't hear anything, and then somebody will get in touch with me, or something will surface. And it's like everything else in art. It goes in cycles. Uh, at the time that I worked on Daumier, Daumier's work was very much in evidence. There were many books being written. Collectors were collecting, and they came up at auction. And now, you hear there are no more Daumier. I just saw the drawing show at the Metropolitan last week when I was

in New York, and early this week, a young man called me who's a photographer and who traced me through the Fogg, because of my Daumier book, who is convinced that many of the drawings attributed to Daumier are not by him. Well, of course, there are many, many questionable drawings, and it's a topic that can go on forever. But he's so very excited about it. He can't find anyone to work with him on this, and I think he called me to see if I could recommend someone or tell him where to turn.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: But then, he called me back after we had finished our conversation and said, why don't I come down and look at the exhibition with him. And I said, [00:24:00] "Well, drawing, I'm not expert on the drawings, far from it." It's a field that I don't feel qualified to comment on at all except maybe how I feel about a drawing. And I had seen this particular exhibition rather hurriedly at the end of a very long day, and there were some I liked better than others, but I'm sure there are many very doubtful works attributed to Daumier.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Maybe he wants you to collaborate with him on the book. [Laughs.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I couldn't possibly collaborate on a drawing, but it would take a whole lifetime, I think, of expertise.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: But I met Kenny E. Mason [ph] who wrote the catalogue raisonné of the drawings and paintings, and he was, as a matter of fact, very disappointed that I hadn't been more forthright in denouncing the figurines that were attributed to Daumier, which, of course, I had repudiated, but I had to do it in very careful terms. And I have a letter from Mason. I think it was several years before he died, of course, but saying—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But he—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —that he was disappointed that I haven't been stronger in my denunciation of the figurines in the book, which was funny. But, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So that's '69. The show was '69.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: In '69.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And at that time, or—and also because you were affiliated with the Fogg, was it thought that you shouldn't come down, say, on the Walters Gallery or its figure or something, very hard?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, they were very, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Trying to—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: They were very generous about this. Uh, they—the only person—well, there were—Pierre Matisse was very annoyed at me [00:26:00] because he was sponsoring one of the recent Daumier discoveries, in fact, was instrumental in casting it, and I very much questioned it. Now, I've visited the gallery several times and looked at this. It was a small head of a man, very small piece. Uh, I think it was terra-cotta or baked clay—it was terra-cotta—of a man in a top hat. And it had a rather humorous face, but it certainly wasn't Daumier. You could find no trace of it in any of his work, and it just simply wasn't Daumier. However, I didn't—I said nothing to Pierre Matisse, but I did visit the gallery, and he was very hospitable. And I did get a history of this piece. It was discovered by an artist at the Paris Autumn Fair, antiquities fair, and Pierre Matisse was convinced that it was Daumier. And he—I think Joe Hirshhorn financed the casting of the edition, and, of course, Joe bought the original, the so-called original. And when I published it in the catalogue in the, uh—I can't remember what they called it—[inaudible] in the appendix.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of the catalogue, [00:28:00] the Fogg catalogue, 1969?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: At the Fogg catalogue. It's called *Head of a Man in a Top Hat*, unbaked clay. And the edition was cast in bronze. And like all the questionable Daumiers the documentation of the bronze edition is very thorough, but it's the original that one can find no trace of. And this is the thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Isn't that funny? You mean that they take great pains to be—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. It has the [inaudible] stamp, and it has an edition number. This particular—oh, yeah, "A bronze edition of 30 cast by [inaudible] in 1968," so it was hot off the—hot off the foundry when we went to press, which was [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you suppose that was part—in a sense part of the passing appeal of these Daumier

castings? They were just done, and look how they speak [ph] to us and—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, not at all—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —nothing of that sort?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —because, uh, the [inaudible] were done over a period of years starting in the '20s—no offense [ph]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, uh—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and the—actually, the relief he did, the only relief, which exists in two versions of *Les Emigrants*, was—the first relief was done, I think, in the late 19th century, so it isn't that. It's that Daumier is so lively that he speaks to us. He's a proto-modern, there's Daumier and his—there's Rodin that also, particularly the studies, the late studies, [00:30:00] the *Études de Danse* that he did—they're very appealing because they're rough. They're—they have a tremendous liveliness, and they're unfinished, and that's what appeals to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So did you at this time also begin to look a good deal at Rodins and particularly liked Rodins?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. I really started with Rodin, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did you proceed, just by going to the Musée Rodin in Paris, or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes, yes. I didn't do a study in depth, but I think my love of sculpture started with Rodin.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I don't know if I mentioned this before, not [inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —yeah, that, you know—

ROBERT F. BROWN: As a young girl.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and so it was only natural that Rodin should be one of my original acquisitions. Uh, I actually bought a fake Rodin drawing, [laughs] and I didn't find out it was a fake until much later when the whole business of the fake Rodin drawings came to light and, I think, was actually written up in *Life Magazine*—it was either *Life* or *Time*, and it was discovered at the death of, I think, a Czechoslovakian sculptor who died as a ward of the state in a state institution, and his possessions became—belonged to the government, the United States government. And they discovered all these fake Rodin drawings that he had done. He had worked for Rodin, come over to this country, and had picked up these late pencil and watercolor [00:32:00] sketches that Rodin did because he was interested in movement. And as the models moved, he would sketch and perhaps throw them on the floor, and this guy picked them up, brought them over, and he needed money, and he discovered they were very salable. The American market was mad for these late, unfinished, sketchy Rodins. And so, when he ran out of the real thing, he began to manufacture them. And, uh, there are many, many in very well known public collections including in Fogg, I think. And I had bought one of these, and when we all began to study this we—and I looked back on this drawing that I had bought, how naïve I was, because the one thing you know about Rodin, no matter how rough the sketch is, the body is right. The skeleton is right. The bone structure is there. And this one that I had bought is supposedly a woman leaning backward with her hair falling in a very almost pre-Raphaelite way, very decorative. And her legs are like spaghetti, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The underlying skeletal structure is lacking?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It's very slack. Yeah, so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But Rodin was—had been an interest, your earliest interest, and it's one that continued right through this time of collecting.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And Degas, likewise, you picked—you began your—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I began with Rodin—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Degas. Of course, the sculpture of Matisse I loved, but I never had an opportunity to buy it, unfortunately. And Nadelman became an interest, and I was delighted in him, and, [00:34:00] uh—and then we moved on to Giacometti. Uh, we acquired a wonderful sponge by Dubuffet and a Max Ernst sculpture called *Gay* [ph] of a little birdlike creature holding a bottle, and even a Man Ray sculpture. I think, uh—these were very small pieces. We had a long marble mantel over our fireplace in Chestnut Hill, and these wonderful little pieces were on it. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were these things you'd usually just see in your travels, as you stated before, [inaudible] the various dealers [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Visiting galleries, yes. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you get to know, to some degree, say in the '50s, other collectors?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned Joseph Hirshhorn.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, Joe Hirshhorn. Hyman brought him to our house, and, uh, I really will never forget the visit. He was so enthusiastic, and our collection was absolutely miniscule compared to him. And yet, he absolutely raved over all the pieces as though it were the first time he had ever seen them. And, you know, he might have had 10 of the same. He was really—but it was sincere. I mean, he just loved sculpture, and at that time he was looking for a home for his collection. And Hyman—I guess he was checking out the Museum of Fine Arts, and Hyman brought him over to our house. So, I did know Joe Hirshhorn. And other collectors, I'm trying to think.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At that time in Boston, there weren't [00:36:00] too many of—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —there was Nathaniel Saltonstall's collection there at—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —who was a patron of the Institute of Contemporary Art.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, but, uh, we did get to know certain dealers quite well in London besides Harry Fischer. We knew—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Of Marlborough.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Gimpel [ph], René Gimpel. I'm not, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Charles was the son?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Charles Gimpel.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: René was the son. Yeah. Charles Gimpel and his wife, and we knew Denise René [ph] in Paris. Oh, and also in London we knew Erica Brausen, I think, was her name, interesting woman. And she carried Giacometti, and also, she had, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Another Italian sculptor?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Actually, Magritte.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She handled Magritte as well?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and she was a very interesting woman. Yes, Brausen was her name, B-R-A-U-S-E-N, Erica.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you get to know her a bit? Had she started in the—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in London or in continental Europe or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I think she was originally from, uh, Germany or Switzerland.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, uh, we would see something of her when we were in London.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What about the Gimpels, because they were sort of a dynasty of dealers.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, they were wonderful people. Yeah, and I also knew Peter Gimpel, the—Charles's brother.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would they push you to—things upon you, or were they very, very discreet and low-key?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, but they would show us [00:38:00] things, of course—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Show you things. Yeah. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —but we were very willing to be led. We were very interested.

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

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, uh, when we were collecting—when we were buying for the 180 Beacon collection, we met many of the artists who were working then, both in New York and in Europe. And, um, our first buying trip for 180 Beacon Street when Max was constructing the building and had this very original idea of—I think it was the first time it had been done—of filling an apartment house with art not only in the lobby but on all 17 floors of the building.

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

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Um, we had a committee. Uh, we formed an art committee. Max first went to Sam Hunter, who was then director of the Rose Museum at Brandeis and making very exciting things happen out at Brandeis at that time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this was what, the mid-'60s or so?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: This was the mid-'60s. This was about '64, '65, and Max was very impressed by Sam and decided—when he had this idea of forming a collection for the quasi-public building, um, he realized that he needed somebody to be the curator of the collection and help to get it together. And he went to Sam and asked him if he would be interested, and, of course, Sam was [00:40:00] delighted. And he arranged our first trip. I think it was the summer of '65, probably. Um, he arranged the itinerary and the people to visit, the galleries, the artists, and Max and I with Sam and his wife Edys Hunter, uh, went to Europe together and had a remarkably wonderful time. [Laughs.] We started in Israel for the opening of the Jerusalem Museum, and we met there Louise Nevelson, who was with Arnold Glimcher's mother.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh, who was from Boston.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: She was being represented by—Nevelson was, of course—they were her dealers, the Glimchers. And Mrs. Glimcher and Louise were traveling together, and Louise had given a great sculpture to the Israel Museum. Is it—yeah, the Israel Museum, and unfortunately nobody had the wit to entertain her or make something of her. And when we discovered that they were just wandering around by themselves, we took them to dinner, and it was—and we had a lovely evening. And that's where we first came to know Louise, who, um, later on came and visited us, spent the night at our house.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she a very outspoken person [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, Louise was a character in every way. She was wonderful. She said just what she thought, and her thoughts were very, very interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you in—in prospect of acquiring [00:42:00] a Nevelson anyway at that time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: At that time, uh, I don't think we were thinking of it. Uh, yes, I guess we were. I guess we were, because it was an original part of the collection.

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

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: But, uh, I think at the moment that we took them to dinner in Jerusalem, I don't think that we had decided what we were going to buy. This is—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is the very beginning, wasn't it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, this was sort of a prospecting trip, but we did do some—some purchasing, and we did do, actually, some commissioning from Israel. We only spent about five or six days there. We went to Rome, and we were entertained by Beverly Pepper.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Beverly Pepper, who was a long resident there.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Had a real salon at that time, and had a big party when we were there. We also met, um, Carla Panicalli, who ran the Marlborough Gallery in Rome and was a beautiful, beautiful woman, still is, and entertained us. And we met many of the artists. I can't remember all their names. Some of them I've forgotten.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And some—from this came some of your choices—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We went to a wonderful party. I remember. It must have been given by Beverly or—oh, and we met Arnaldo Pomodoro, and perhaps it was Arnaldo's party. And Max bought me a marvelous jewel by Arnaldo, who was doing jewelry. [00:44:00] We had a large sapphire—not sapphire, [inaudible] sapphire—a large, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What color?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Purple stone.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Amethyst?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Amethyst, a large amethyst that we had bought previously in Brazil. And, actually, we had given it to our daughter Suzie [ph], whose birthstone is amethyst. She's a February child, and she thought it was much too big and was not interested in it. So I gave it to Arnaldo, and he made me a perfectly marvelous pin pendant with a chain. It's a beautiful, beautiful piece. It's like a piece of sculpture. I almost never wear it. It's too beautiful.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you met him? Is this the first time you met—had met him?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, on this trip, but we had seen him—we saw him subsequently. And then, uh, from there we went to Paris, and we met Agam, and we met [inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you know of his work a bit at that time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, these people were all new to us.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Agam? These were all new. Yeah. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And Agam we saw many times after that, because once Agam knows you it's forever. And we also met Schöffer, Nicolas Schöffer, whose studio was so neat and so elegant. Oh, and before we went to Paris, we went to Milan and met Baille [ph], went to his studio, and he was doing these fascinating assemblages. And to see the bins of material that he had was so fascinating, and we had a wonderful time in [00:46:00] Rome, also.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was Manzù still around? Did you meet him at all?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We didn't meet Manzù, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Giacometti, did you meet?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You collected but, uh, never met.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Never met Giacometti. Um, on a previous trip in the '50s we had met some of the Italian sculptors because we had first met Albert Alkali [ph] when he came over here. And we were going to Europe, and we were—again, you see, I'm backtracking and zigzagging.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That's quite all right.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: This is the way I always [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, this is perfectly fine. Here's the, um—this is [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Um, it drives my children crazy.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, Alkali was—was—after the war had his first showing and training in Rome, so he would have known—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Exactly, and we had met him here—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —in Boston when we were contemplating this trip to Europe in the '50s, the late '50s, I think, '57, '58, something. And so, he—and he knew that—I told him of my interest in sculpture, and he gave us le—

[END OF TRACK.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[00:00:00] for—this would be in Italy.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I don't even have a [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. No.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, in Italy, in Rome, actually, um, [inaudible]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it Mirko Basaldella—

[Cross talk.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I was trying to think of—that's when we first met Mirko.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mirko Basaldella.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, of course—yes, and we bought a sculpture and a drawing, I think, from Mirko in the '50s. And when he came over to the United States to teach at the Carpenter Center he, of course, got in touch with us, and we became very good friends. We saw a great deal of both Mirko and his wife Serena. And as far as I know, Serena is still alive, and I should have kept up with her over the years, but somehow, we lost touch.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, these were—uh, you met him—this was even well before you thought [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, this is before the 180 trip, which was in the mid-'60s. I'm talking about the '50s now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you knew—you got to [inaudible] Rome at that time.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We knew—oh, yes, we—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and we were beginning to buy. We were beginning to become interested and to seek out the sculptors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did—would you characterize Rome as a place to find art, contemporary art, say, in the 1950s? How did it strike you? Perhaps you'd compare it with Paris.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, there were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, there were very few galleries, but one of them was El Obelisco [ph], and we bought some drawings that I love to this day by artists who were not so well known. Up in New Hampshire, I have three prints by an artist who did these sort of dreamy horses [ph] in pastel colors in very [00:02:00] pale landscapes. And, uh, I can't think of his name at the moment.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I can—but so there weren't many dealers, but there were—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: There weren't many dealers, but there were a few, and it was exciting to see what they had. Um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: How would you compare it with, say, Paris? What was Paris like, say, in the '50s, because you knew that somewhat better, Paris? [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I did. We spent more time in Paris. Um, I can't remember—see, we didn't meet Denise René and that wonderful dealer who carried Magritte, in Paris, until the actual—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the dealer was Alexander—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Iolas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Iolas, I-O-L-A-S.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Is he a dealer that you were—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I used to love his exhibitions because he had other, uh, surreal artists as well as Magritte.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And Surrealism at this time was one of the threads that you and Max were collecting at this time.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At that time.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, Surrealism was something that I had been, uh, fascinated by since the days of my girlhood when one would see the Dalí exhibitions, and he was all the rage in New York. So, Surrealism was very much—and, actually, Max and I bought a de Chirico, [00:04:00] a large, large drawing of de Chirico, a chalk, huge drawing, somewhere along the line.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you perhaps remembered from the '30s, say, the Dalí or other exhibitions in storefronts. Wasn't there one in one of the department stores that, uh—or do you recall particularly the Julien Levy Gallery shows?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No. You know, I never—I don't think I ever went to—but I must have. I must have.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But this carried over, then, when you and Max 20 years later began collecting.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Right. Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The concept of 180 Beacon Street follows on Max's getting out of his earlier business and into real estate development.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But was he sort of a would-be architect as well, and very concerned with the layout and planning?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, he was very interested, because after all he had trained at MIT.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, no, he was more of an engineer than an architect, but, of course, he was interested in architecture. And architects were a very important part of his life because he needed them for the buildings that he developed. But, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, then, the catalogue to the 180 Beacon Street, Sam Hunter, you know, writes as though this is really about the only example anywhere of its sort, this, uh—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Perhaps at that time. I don't—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —not merely a—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I don't know now if there is such a collection anywhere else now—could be.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the—it was—art was to be not just in the lobby or not just in certain places but in various sizes and shapes on every level, and I believe you said—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: On every floor.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Every floor.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: There were, you know—unfortunately, all apartment houses have long corridors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, uh, there was literally a small exhibition on each floor. And our plan was to rotate these [00:06:00] so that you would have—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Really?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —a different exhibition, perhaps, every year on your floor. But we only succeeded in doing it once because it was an enormous undertaking. You had to tie up two or three men, and I was in charge of this. And what we did was we took the—I think it was the 17th floor and brought it down to the second floor and then brought each one down a floor, and this was a big job.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And you had to rearrange it according to the floors. It was very interesting, though, the whole 180 project, because the people who were originally tenants, 180 Beacon was the first riverside luxury apartment on Beacon Street in many, many years. And, um, the people who became tenants had—came from varying backgrounds and had more or less interest in art. They were very unsophisticated, most of them, and would let you know in no uncertain terms what they liked and what they didn't like. They knew what they liked. And, um, it was very interesting, because people would not like certain things or express dislikes of them, and then, when we came to move them, they didn't want them to go. And I thought that was very interesting, that living with the art they had—it had become part of their lives, and they became very attached. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So there was a sort of educative function that—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, indeed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —180 serves.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Unfortunately, the education was not such that when the building became a condominium that they were willing [00:08:00] as condominium owners to buy the collection, which Max offered them at a very attractive price, uh, because they didn't want the expense of the insurance and the upkeep—

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

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —because, although people thought it was a very, uh, almost foolhardy project and asked us repeatedly—the question that we were asked over and over was, "Aren't you afraid of theft?" Well, nobody stole anything, but the thing that happened to the works were that they quietly self-destructed. In other words, some works didn't hold up well, and there was a problem of conservation. And we had an in-residence conservationist taking care of the collection, and her name—I think she still lives there—is Bridget Smith [ph]. She was in the conservation department at Fogg, the painting conservation, and she took over the job at our request of examining the collection. She kept records and went over every floor. It was a large, large collection, and made a condition report and recommendations. And, uh, Bridget is now, I believe, at the Museum of Fine Arts in their conservation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was—now, it was also—you suggested 180 Beacon Street was something of a public collection. That is, would the public be admitted or at certain hours or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: They would by special permission. It had to be a special thing.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I felt all along that it was the largest collection of, uh, really contemporary art in the area, unquestionably at that time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Indeed.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [00:10:00] And it was a reflection of the '60s.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, and I felt that it was a worthwhile educational source and that people should be allowed in. However, one of the attractions of the building was its very tight security, and we had a concierge at all times. This is par for the course now, but in those days, it was quite a new idea and something that Max had, I think, just another thing that he had introduced. Um, so you could arrange through the concierge, who would contact me, and groups would be led in. They were never let in alone, or a few people would get permission to see the collection.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And just for a bit more—I don't want to go on too long—uh, you had advisors, including Sam Hunter, and you and Max—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and we had a small committee, an acquisition committee composed of Harvey Arneson [ph]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was where at that time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —who was formerly at the Guggenheim, and at the time he was not at the Guggenheim. I think he was doing independent work, and, uh, Dorothy Miller at the Museum of Modern Art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And we used to meet about once every six weeks or eight weeks in New York. They had these wonderful lunches at the Carlyle Hotel, and, uh, in the end, though, I don't think there were many decisions made at those lunches. We all got really rather high, I must say, [they laugh] on martinis and things, had a very good time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would these be occasions when you'd—you would have assembled all the photographs of things you might consider, and they were—you were deciding what the collection might acquire? [00:12:00]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, I don't think there was much decision. It was more or less open discussion. And then, in the end, what happened was that, uh, each of the members—actually, most of the acquisitions were made by Max, Sam Hunter, and me. And, um, Dorothy Miller and Harvey each selected certain pieces for the floors, but the big, large works that were in the public areas like the lobby and the sculpture court were, by and large, selected by Sam, Max, and me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You three.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, uh, I remember we had one of the very first enamel-on-metal sculptures by Lichtenstein, and it was a wall piece. And it was one of those bad [ph] sunbursts. And we cursed it because they hadn't worked the kinks out, and it kept falling apart. And then, we had a lot of trouble with Schöffer. We bought a microtemps [ph] of Schöffer's, which was a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it metal?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it was metal. And it was like a little theater. There were these two metal objects. One was round, and one was elongated, curved and elongated, and they went through a whole program, programmed routine that was computerized and programmed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh. Very early, uh, for that.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And lights came on, and all sorts of things happened. And, of course, it was always breaking down, and after several years of trying to get parts from Europe, because American [00:14:00] parts didn't work, Max decided, "No more moving sculptures. Out." But, um, I think the most wonderful—and I'm digressing again. I'm running back to—going back to our trip with the Hunters that summer, that acquisition trip, one of the highlights of Paris was meeting Niki de Saint Phalle and Jean Tinguely, who were living—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —together in an inn, an abandoned inn outside of Paris. And we had such a good time with them, and both Tinguely and—both Jean and Niki corresponded with us, those marvelous letters that they did drawings in. I have quite a collection of those. Um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were they immediately—did they take to you? I mean, you [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, we were very great friends, and Max had a way of relating to people. He just had great humanity, and Jean and he hit it off beautifully, Jean Tinguely. Jean had a terrific sense of humor, and

—as you can see in his sculptures—and Max commissioned—bought one called *Isidore* [ph], which is this great thing that moves. And we have wonderful, uh, drawings of *Isidore* that he did and sent to Max. And when they did together, they collaborated on a large sculpture for the roof of the French Pavilion when the World's Fair was in Montreal. And that summer, uh—that spring, they were supposed to be installing it in Montreal. Niki arrived one day and called me up from the airport [00:16:00] when she had arrived in Boston en route to Montreal, and she was terribly sick, and could I tell her what hospital to go to. And I said, "For goodness sake, Niki, you come here, and we'll see what to do." I said, "Get in a taxi," and I gave her my address. And she came to my house, and I got a doctor. And what had happened was that, uh, on one of her trips to the states perhaps the year before, Max had told her that her *Nanas* that she was making in papier-mâché could be made in reinforced plastic, fiberglass in other words, and would be—it would be possible to use—put them outdoors, because we had bought a plaster one from her, a small one. And, um, our collection was shown at MIT in the old days before they had a separate gallery, when it was in the library, in the Hayden [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: The Hayden Library, the Hayden Gallery.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, the Hayden Gallery in the library. And the very last day of the exhibition, a guard checking everything out knocked the Niki *Nana* over, and it broke. And at that point, Max said to her, "You really should make them out of something more permanent than the plaster, the painted—hand-painted plaster." So, being very generous, he sent her up to his plant in Maine, and she worked with people in fiberglass who were making things in fiberglass, although his Maine operation was acrylic plastic. But for her purposes, the fiberglass was good. And unfortunately, she didn't protect herself, and she got the particles in her lungs. And she had, like a pneumonia. That was her symptom. So, of course, she wouldn't have to go to a hospital, but she was ordered to be, and she stayed at our house [00:18:00] for about 10 days. And Jean came over and went up to Montreal and started to install their joint sculpture, and then he would come weekends to visit Niki at our house. So both of them were there, and, uh, it was Max's birthday the 29th of April—the 10th of April, when he came down one of the times. And together, they drew—they made a collaborative—they used three or four eight-by-ten sheets of paper and pasted them together. Their whole sculpture where—there was a ring of different kinds of mammoth *Nanas* of Niki, and they were—in between them were machines, moving machines of Jean. And they did all kinds of things to the *Nanas*. They goosed them and, you know—very, very amusing. So, we have a drawing of this whole thing that they inscribed to Max on his birthday. It was really quite charming, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were nearing the height of their careers, their reputations at that time, [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yeah. Well, Niki—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —was just beginning, really.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just began her—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: She was just beginning. She had just gone from the—I think she had just begun to do the *Nanas*. She had gone from the things that she—the pictures that she shot with a gun, you know, and then it would dribble, [laughs] and then these strange females with all kinds of objects adhered to them, these very complicated assemblages, really. So, she really began to focus at that time. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he somewhat older, Tinguely?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think so. Yes. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But they were very open with you all? And did they—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, they were wonderful. [00:20:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were—you were exploring—I mean, getting to know artists of the broadest international suite, and yet your focus was here, say, in 180 and in your home—collection at home. How did you—would you compare what you were bringing in to furnish your house, at least your Chestnut Hill house, as with—compared with the apartment building, 180? You had a sculpture garden at Chestnut Hill, so this would be larger pieces?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, [inaudible] many of what I call modern classics, at Chestnut Hill that we had acquired slowly over the years, and then the newer things, um—the collection at 180 was, frankly, a very contemporary collection of art then. It was now—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Art now [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —art now, then, and it was a reflection of the '60s, absolutely. Uh, we did at the same time buy things for ourselves. For instance, we bought the Magritte at that time. We bought a wonderful

Dubuffet painting. Uh, we—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you meet either Magritte or Dubuffet?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, unfortunately not. I think Magritte was not alive—was he alive? Yeah, I guess he was in the '60s.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, he still was. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, he still—no, we did not meet him. We didn't meet Dubuffet, alas, but, oh, we bought the very first sculpture that Agam ever made, and Max was very interested in—Agam was very clever. He was able to do changeable parts and build his sculpture with very [00:22:00] simple elements. And we commissioned one from him, maybe the third that he had done, which was called *The Organ*, and it was all these stainless steel tubes with curves in them that went into a long base, and it sort of ended our sculpture garden. It was—it formed sort of an open fence between the garden and the strip of woods behind, and it was perfectly lovely. And large as it was, you could move these elements and change the composition. And my son Peter has a bottle [ph] of it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A bottle?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Of this sculpture. I don't know the whereabouts now.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh, so he was a very persistent fellow, you said. He was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —always the—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We—one of the things that Max did for the Institute of Contemporary Art—the first thing he did that was a very large gesture, I think, was the opening of 180 Beacon Street, which was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I wanted to ask about that.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Boston's biggest happening, I think, of that period. And he made it a benefit for the Institute of Contemporary Art. In other words, the public was invited, but they had to buy tickets through the Institute, although we had an enormous list of guests. We had a dinner before. The apartment house was not then occupied, so we were able to have events on every one of the 17 floors. And the idea was that you took the elevator up. You started at the 17th floor. You looked at the art, and then somewhere on that floor would be an empty apartment with something exciting going on in it. We had two kinds of [00:24:00] bands. We had, I guess, the '60s version of rock and roll in one of them and more of a dance orchestra in another. We had light shows. We had happenings. We had all sorts of things on different floors and various bars where you could stop off and have a glass of champagne or something. It was really an extraordinary event. Many of the artists came. Niki had on her—was it—who had designed the smoking—she wore the velvet smoking—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, yes. [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think it was, uh—it wasn't Dior.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was—well, one of the big designers, and Denise René—did I mention Denise—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just in passing.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —became a very dear friend, and we bought a great deal of art from Denise and became friends. We visited her often when we went to Paris, and she visited us when she came to the states. And, of course, about that—uh, shortly after that time, she opened a gallery in New York, which lasted just a few years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was she like as a personality?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, Denise is incredible. She is to this day. She's a very tiny woman and extremely energetic, and she has a vision that is very precise and that is very definite, and it is a certain kind of art that started with, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The 20th century?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So to start—her stable [ph], so to speak, started with—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, [00:26:00] she has a very precise vision.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —with art, genre.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and she had art, and then she had, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Here, I'll [inaudible]. I think—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, at the time that we, uh, met Denise, she—Vasarely was one of her hottest numbers, and we met Vasarely, visited his studio.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was he like as a personality?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: A very tall, good-looking, rather serious guy, and I remember that he had a lot of assistants in his studio. And also, subsequently, we visited—he set up his own museums by up buying various castles in the south of France. I think he owns at least two, and they have become Vasarely museums, which are really kind of wonderful to visit.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So he was obviously of some means [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, he was doing very well.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Very well.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, let's see, what else about Denise. We've met her family, and her sister handled her small gallery. She had a large—Denise had a large gallery on the Rue de [inaudible], and she had a small gallery at the Boulevard Saint Germain, which was for multiples. And, uh, she also had young artists. We bought—one was a young woman named Geneviève Claisse. We bought a painting of hers for 180 Beacon, and Denise always had marvelous dinner parties in restaurants. And it was very high living. We had a wonderful time. Uh, also at that period, we knew Claes Oldenburg, whom I saw just two weeks ago at Brandeis. I hadn't seen him for maybe 20 years [00:28:00] and met his wonderful new wife. He's not married to her, Coosje van Bruggen or whatever, a Dutch lady, very handsome, who now collaborates with him. Claes, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Where did you first meet him, on these trips or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We met—now, we met him—well, obviously in New York. Where did we meet him? Well, we were crazy about his sculpture, and we had a lot of his works. He himself came when we installed one of his geometric mouse sculptures in our garden, and this was a big undertaking. We had two or three men to, uh—the parts came on a flatbed truck, and he was there. He spent the night, and he visited our farm up in New Hampshire. And when he came—at that time, he was very close to a young artist named Hannah Wilke, and Hannah was, besides being an artist herself, was a very gifted photographer. And at the time, she was photographing Claes's works for a book. And when they—when we erected the mouse and they visited us in New Hampshire, they were photographing—they particularly were photographing a sculpture—a soft sculpture he had made called *Fried Egg*. And, uh, when I came down to breakfast at the farm in New Hampshire, the *Fried Egg* was draped over a sofa, and I thought, "How nice, it's a house present," but not at all. They were photographing it, and they had tried it out on the Cape, I think, on some rocks. [00:30:00] And then, they took it up into one of our pastures where—a sheep pasture—and laid it on the grass and photographed it. And that was the photograph they used in the book.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, oh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: So it's sort of nice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, how was—what was he like, very serious or playful or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, he's a very amusing person. He has a very wry sense of humor just as Tinguely had, and Claes did also. He also was seriously interested in food. I mean, this was his metaphor, and this was the subject of his sculpture—of much of his sculpture. And he had a little notebook, and he was very interested in what we were eating. And he would go in the kitchen and talk to the cook and ask, "Now, how did you do this, and what did you do?" And so forth. And it was, uh—he was quite serious about it, but he was very much a fun person. Um, and also—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was the—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —uh, we knew Bob Indiana. Bob used to—we had one of his *LOVE* sculptures in our garden. At the bottom of the garden, we had sort of a brick terrace, and there were several sculptures rising from there, and *LOVE* rose on one side. And there was also a marvelous Ellsworth Kelly blue disk on that platform and then, behind it, the Agam organ [ph], so it was quite arresting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, uh, Indiana was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Anyway, Indiana would come and visit his sculpture on his way to Maine, because he had a place on Vinalhaven in Maine where he lives now, totally. He has given up New York, and I haven't seen him for years. [00:32:00] But I guess he's the same.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But he would come and visit his work?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: He would come and visit his work, and he would have this huge station wagon full of cats, as I remember—he had a lot of cats—and his current boyfriend, whoever. He was nice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is he someone you could talk to [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes, yes. All of them were very accessible. Um, at the same time that Max was building—very much concerned with the 180 Beacon project, he was also building a condominium, vacation condominium, on St. Thomas. And every Christmas, he would invite Denise René and her boyfriend Hans, who was a young German, uh, who had ambitions to be an art dealer and today is a very big wheel in—I think it's Stuttgart. I'm not sure, but he was smart enough to attach himself to Denise René, and they—he got his start as a branch of her gallery in Germany. But they would come, Christmastime, to St. Thomas, and so would the artists. Um, Indiana was there. Who else? I'm trying to think.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this a place where you were even more relaxed than other places?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, we had a very good time in St. Thomas, although Max had terrible problems. It was [00:34:00] absolutely like *Don't Stop the Carnival*, that book, uh, because everything would either break down, or the people would quit work. We had a grand opening of our restaurant, we thought, on—of course, it was a very informal restaurant on the beach, and—but we actually had local radio spots announcing the opening on Christmas Eve. And none of the help showed up, so Max and I, our family, and all our guests had to pitch in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Pitch in?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: His sister was in the kitchen. Um, I think his brother—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What had happened? Was there a strike or something, or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They were off for the holiday. They weren't going to work.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [inaudible] they were just—yeah, I mean, that was St. Thomas. You never knew where you stood with anybody, and things would happen, like, there would be a shipment of new stoves for the condominium, for the units, and they were left out in the rain. It didn't rain much in St. Thomas, but it rained on our stove, and he had a terrible time with managers. They didn't last very long. They might have been teetotalers at one time, but they immediately became alcoholic when they got to St. Thomas. Everything fell apart. And I remember one Christmas holiday when—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this about the same time or just a little bit later than, uh—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: This is [inaudible] the '60s—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —St. Thomas, 180.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —all at the same time. This was a very rich period in our lives. There was a lot going on.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, it's—I know. It doesn't seem possible.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How about an art collection in St. Thomas? Was there something of that?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Ah, yes. Ah, yes, but it was not a very hospitable place for art because of the weather conditions. We were in [00:36:00] what horticulturalists call zone one, down by the sea, and that's another story, trying to landscape these units. These were just small, two-story units. By present-day St. Thomas standards, they're tiny, because everything has gone high-rise. You almost can't find our units now. There are so many high-rises behind them, but they're still there, and they were designed by, uh, Josep Lluís Sert. And Max had ambitions of creating sort of a Mediterranean village designed by Sert up in the hills behind the beach. Sapphire Bay, where his condominium was, was the most beautiful beach I've ever seen anywhere. It was a perfect crescent, white beach, and the view—you had this turquoise sea stretching out, but not just into infinity, because there were the British Virgin Islands in plain view. So you saw these islands, and at night, at evening when the sun set, I called it "magic time," because it was breathtaking. You would get reflected sunsets from the west, which is behind the beach, behind the hills, on St. [inaudible], reflected on these islands in the sea. It's just marvelous, a beautiful spot.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did Sert think in terms of a Mediterranean village? Was he interested in continuing that?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, he built—well, not a Mediterranean—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —as a period—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, no.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —or as a folk thing. It was simply Mediterranean in spirit, and, yes, a village on the hills, sort of a multiple dwelling on a hillside. He had done this in Ibiza, [00:38:00] and he was very interested in doing it in St. Thomas. And through Sert, we had a pair of—a couple who were doing a great deal of botanical research in the rainforest in Puerto Rico, and they came over to—as consultants for what would grow here before we bought landscape material. And that was a day I shall never forget, in the broiling sun, going around with these people. And we had one of our employees who was supposed to be digging holes for them. And if they said, "Dig them here," he would dig them there. And at one point, I thought, "If I don't go in and have a cold shower, I'm going to die." [They laugh.] But we survived. And in spite of their advice—and we did try to follow it—we would plant these little gardens in front of each unit and come back a month or two later, and everything would be gone. They either had gales, or there was—I don't know—the salt air or something. It was very difficult, and the wind was very—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Constant.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was affected. So, eventually, we began to look kindly at the weeds that survived and tried to duplicate them, you know, the native material. Those were heady times.

[Audio break.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —the icemaker [ph] gave up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: We're continuing the interview. This is May 25th, 1993. Uh, why don't we talk a bit about the opening of, uh, 180 Beacon Street? Was the—how—what was that planned to do or to be? Did you and Max together work out the details?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, we did, and, uh, Max was [00:40:00] particularly imaginative about it. He wanted it to be a very exciting event, and he decided that it should be a benefit for the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston and that they could sell tickets to it. And, of course, there was an enormous invitation list besides. And his concept was to have the entire building, which was not yet occupied, part of this opening so that all 14 floors were involved in special events. And, uh, it was planned that people would take the elevators up to the 14th floor and, uh, where the collection was installed in every corridor on every floor besides the art that was installed in the lobby and the sculpture court in front of the building. And the idea was that people would start at the 14th floor and then walk downstairs floor by floor. And on certain floors, empty apartments would turn into sound and light shows, different kinds of music. There was a dance orchestra for the older people, and then, of course, there was good and loud music for the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Youth? [Laughs.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, the, uh, discotheque group.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, yes.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And there were all kinds of events on different floors that—and also many champagne bars that you could stop for refreshments and so forth. And it really was a very, [00:42:00] very big event. We

had a dinner beforehand also in one of the empty apartments for the members of the committee that selected the art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The three you've mentioned, Sam Hunter and Dorothy Miller.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, uh, Harvey Arneson.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, yes. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And at that dinner, Max spoke and presented each member of the committee with a light box made for Howard Kanovitz, the artist, who had put the committee into a large painting, which, actually, I named *The Opening*. And he had a row of people, and they were all people in the art world, and he interspersed those of us on the committee, Sam Hunter, Max, myself, Dorothy Miller, and, uh, Harvey Arneson. And, Dorothy always hated the, uh, Howard's portrayal—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The light box?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —of her.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, is that right? [Laughs.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The hat, she didn't like the hat, and she discussed it [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: But it nevertheless—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: She had to be gracious and receive the light box.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, but Bill—the large, full-scale was in the lobby—Kanovitz [inaudible] lobby painting, too —

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was in the lobby. Yes, the lobby painting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —as well, so she couldn't escape it wherever she went.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did Max particularly enjoy developing this opening, this kind of entertainment?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. This was the kind of thing he just reveled in, and he—as I say, he was very imaginative, and he had, he thought on a very large scale. In fact, he—at that period, he financed for the ICA an exhibition of monumental-size sculpture, which were—sculptures which were installed on the City Hall [00:44:00] Plaza. And Sam Hunter, of course, was curator of that exhibition also. And then, following the opening of that, we had a big party at our house on Malia Terrace.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Chestnut Hill?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: In Chestnut Hill, and many of the artists came, were invited. They included Agam and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he an artist that you got to know fairly well at that time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, we knew him very well indeed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Had you met him first in Europe or in—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, on the buying trip through Europe we met Agam in Paris. He was working in Paris at the time. He had a studio in Paris, and he was a terrific self-promoter. [Laughs.] He even once went up and down the aisles of a plane that was carrying him from New York to Paris showing people a copy of a catalogue of his works [inaudible]. [They laugh.] And at the party, uh, his—one of his early sculptures called *The Organ* was at the bottom of the garden, and it was—consisted of large, pipe-like, metal members that could be arranged by hand into all sorts of interesting configurations. And he installed himself there so that he could explain his work to all the guests who wandered through the garden at the party. That was Agam.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] Did many of the artists sort of disport themselves at the opening and make themselves quite available?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. I remember Niki was there in her smoking, which was a—had just been brought back into fashion by Yves Saint Laurent. And she had on a great hairpiece with sort of Lord Fauntleroy curls and

this smoking. [00:46:00] She was stunning, a stunning woman anyway. And, uh, Denise René was there in a minute gallery—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you had gotten to know her pretty well, hadn't you? Because you—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, she became a friend. Here's Denise's picture.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And she was always very fashionable and dressed by, uh—[inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: She was so proud that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —by Ungaro.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —yes, she said, "I am so lucky to be dressed by Ungaro." And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did Sam Hunter give a talk? Was that the very evening?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, he gave a lecture—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, that was later.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —to members of the ICA, uh, at 180 Beacon. Now, I think it was an afternoon event, and it was very well attended because this—a building full of crazy art was—can, you know—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —it was quite a curiosity.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, the ICA was then—

[END OF TRACK.]

This is tape number three.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[00:00:00] at the opening.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, they wore earrings that lighted up, and many, many of these women still remember that.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] So, it was considered a—it was perhaps the major art cultural event of Boston at that—at that time.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that was—what year was this? Let's see. That was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Um, '65.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], '67, I guess.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, '67.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sixty-seven. Yeah. Yeah. Well, now, you—the scope of the collection, you've talked about it in one way or another, but the aim was to be European and American—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and to be—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Very contemporary. The idea was to reflect the art of our time in all media. Sculpture and painting, large paintings, were in the public spaces, in the lobby, and this sculpture court that was a sunken

sculpture court like a miniature of the Whitney's in New York.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], in front of the building.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: In front of the building as you entered. Um, we had a small version, a maquette of Barbara Hepworth's United Nations piece there as you entered the building. It was quite dramatic. We also had, in the courtyard, one of Lichtenstein's early, early attempts to make sculpture, and it was—they were, uh, enamel paint on metal. And this was a large sort of a band, [00:02:00] and it kept falling apart because they hadn't worked the kinks out yet, but it was one of the first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And the idea was to, uh, the collection would not be a permanent, stationary thing, but there would be changes. And, um, hopefully we could rotate the floors. There were 17 floors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Seventeen in all?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, 17 floors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Not 14, 17?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Not 14, 17 floors. We managed to do it once, actually. It was a very, very difficult, time-consuming job. It took several people, and I worked very hard at doing it because we had to take the art on the 17th floor and put it on the first floor and then rotate all the others, move down one. And it was very interesting to me because this was maybe two years after the original installation of the art in the building, and people who perhaps laughed at it or objected to it or thought it was crazy became very attached to certain pieces and would be very upset that we were moving them.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You're speaking of residents then.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [inaudible], yes. I found this very interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it tenanted pretty much from the beginning? Did it—and what sort of people, would you say?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was very slow because it was the first luxury building on Beacon Street since 330 Beacon had been built. And I suppose the rents were considered high at that time. In fact, we—the building was open and ready for occupancy around Labor Day of, uh—[00:04:00] I guess it was 1966 or—yeah, and nobody came to the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Open house?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —the open house and the various things that we tried to do to attract people. And, uh, we began to think there was a whispering camp—campaign going on. But once its—people began to rent apartments, then it took off, and, of course, very shortly they became much, much more valuable.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were a number of the tenants art collectors themselves?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, not necessarily at all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No? Not necessarily.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No. I think some of them became art collectors, which is interesting. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the scope was—is very ambitious, I mean, by any standard, wasn't it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, it was. And Sam wrote in his introduction to the catalogue, uh, which we published at that time—a very well-designed catalogue designed by Malcolm Greer [ph]. And he wrote that it was probably the first collection of its kind in a public residential building and certainly the first in which the entire building was devoted to works of art. So it was—certainly, it was a very unusual phenomenon for Boston.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you have in mind this becoming [00:06:00] or being, as it was, a museum, because you had—for example, you had John Neff, who at the time, I think, was a graduate student at the Fogg, thoroughly catalogue the collection, for example?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes. Well, I was a curator at the Fogg Museum at the time, and had museum connections, and, yes, we conducted it like a museum. We also had Bridget Smith, who was a painting

conservator at the Fogg, who became our conservator for our collection, and she made inspections twice a year and kept records because it was very important to keep the works in good condition. And people wondered how we dared have works of art in a public building and asked, "Aren't you afraid of theft or vandalism?" Well, these were not a problem at all. There was never a theft, never any vandalism, but the works themselves would quietly self-destruct because—the Kelly, for instance, in the lobby was acrylic paint on unprepared canvas, and the colors tended to run. They came in and washed the floors. There was a problem with the bottom of the painting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And there were things of that sort that we had to deal with. And, yes, we were—we certainly had museum standards in the care and the acquisition of the art. Um, it was also planned that we would hopefully continue buying the art, which was something my husband was able to do at that time because of his business connections. [00:08:00] He was a real estate dealer. This was something that could be a company project. And therefore, he was interested in continuing to buy art, to bring in new works and retire the old ones by giving them to museums. For instance, we started off with a beautiful triptych by James Brooks in the lobby, and after a year or two, we decided to replace it with a Larry Rivers. And we then gave it to the Fogg Museum, where it is to this day, and I think we gave other works. I can't at the moment recall what and where, but this was definitely part of the program.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At this time, you lived principally in Chestnut Hill—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and that, too—there, too, you had a sizable collection, didn't you?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, we did. Uh, it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was that? Was that—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —essentially a sculpture collection, because this, of course, was my focus and my interest and the subject of the work that I did. And we had part of an old estate, the part that had a tennis court, in Chestnut Hill so that we had, I guess, over an acre of land, mostly a hill. The house sat on top of a hill, and it went down and disappeared into the woods, and we were able to develop a sculpture garden in which we had three large Henry Moores, two David Smiths from the Voltri [ph] series that he did in Italy [00:10:00] for the Menotti Festival of Two Worlds, and we had a large Lipchitz sculpture. Uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And these could be walked around and—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes, and seen.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you plan out the siting of them at—in Chestnut Hill or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. And, actually, we also had one of Claes Oldenburg's geometric mice, and he came and installed it, supervised the installation, which was a big, big project. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did Henry Moore ever come around [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: He didn't come around, but I was lucky enough to visit him on two occasions, one with Max and the Hunters. We were taken out to see him at Much Hadham by a dealer in London—

ROBERT F. BROWN: His principal dealer there?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Gimpel.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, uh, Henry Moore always was hospitable, generous, showed us everything and was delightful to talk to, but I had been to see him alone previously when I bought our first Moore sculpture, the *Falling Warrior*. We had been friendly with, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Friendly with—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —with Fogus [ph], one of the partners of Marlborough Gallery. No, not Fogus, I'm sorry. [00:12:00] Erase that. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, okay.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I was not able to find a Moore that I wanted or that I liked for the—for our garden, and Harry Fischer of Marlborough—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Fischer. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —he was Frank Lloyd's partner at that time—uh, sent me out. He hired a car and a chauffeur and sent me out to Much Hadham, and I had a delightful afternoon with Henry Moore and his wife and had tea in their house. And, uh, he again showed me—took me through the grounds, showed me his various studios, and particularly the small studio in which he developed his original ideas, and he had a collection of stones and pebbles and shells, which inspired him. And it was a wonderful, wonderful occasion, and I saw on a loading platform of a cast of the *Falling Warrior*. And I asked Henry Moore if that was available, and he said he thought it was, and he would see about it. And indeed, it was, and I did, in fact, acquire it. And it was the first of three large Moores that we acquired. Uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this beginning in the 1950s, this—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, this was in the '60s.

ROBERT F. BROWN: In the '60s.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We acquired one of the versions of the *Atom Piece* that he created for the University of Chicago, which was a very large sculpture, and we had, I would say, a half-size maquette of it, which had been cast in a limited edition in bronze. [00:14:00] And we also had a *Seated Woman: Thin Neck*, which is also a '60s sculpture, which sat under a tall oak tree. And her back had an interesting texture. It was shaped rather like a tortoise shell, and, uh, it—the rough texture corresponded with the bark of the tree. It was—it was very nice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And she was—it was on a hill?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: She was at the top of the hill where we could see her from—we have glass walls. The hill faced south, and the house had glass walls on the south where you could see the sculpture garden, and in it was also a wonderful Rickey. And we had a Rickey in our sculpture court at 180 Beacon Street, so there was a lot of dovetailing of the collections. For instance, we had a wonderful Tinguely at 180 Beacon Street called *Isidore* [ph], which was a rather strong piece that moved, of course, and it made a sort of an up-and-down motion and much noise. And at home, we had—at Malia Terrace, we had small metamechanic of Tinguely's, which was an earlier work, much more Constructivist in design, a little bit reminiscent, maybe, of a Calder, and it had some color. And there were cogs of the wheel that didn't quite mesh, and it moved also, very slowly. We were into a lot of moving sculpture at that time because motion was something new that was introduced as well as light and other, uh, more or less mechanical things until Max became very disenchanted with the moving sculptures [00:16:00] because they were always breaking down. We had a wonderful Paul Bourrie [ph], for instance, at home, which was beautifully crafted. It was an oak board with oak pegs in a rather interesting cluster design, and when you plugged it in the pegs moved here and there in a random fashion very slowly. You weren't sure if they were moving or not moving. It was almost like an illusion, a fascinating piece. But when—we had a chauffeur, and these were all artists whom we met on our wonderful spring buying tour the year before the opening of 180 Beacon when we traveled through Europe with the Hunters, Edys and Sam. And, uh, we met Nicolas Schöffer in Paris and bought one of his microtemps sculptures, which were like little metal stages in which the characters were metal objects that moved with light and sound. And they were programmed, so they did a whole performance, but the disenchantment came when we couldn't get parts and had to send to Paris because there were certain electrical parts that were only European, and I think Max decided, "No more movement." [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: They would tend to wear down or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, things would wear out and break.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because these were all essentially prototypes, unique, right?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, right. Right, they were unique.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you particularly taken by this kinetic mechanical work, or Max, or did you share this interest?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, well, we were fascinated. We both were, [00:18:00] particularly with Tinguely's works, which—[inaudible] Swiss watchmaker, you know, who—where everything is supposed to be so precise, and everything broke down. The more it broke down, the happier he was. He had a marvelous sense of humor.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, you got to know him fairly well at this time.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We met him and—and Niki de Saint Phalle. They were living and working together in an abandoned inn outside of Paris, and we met them on that trip and became friends. And Max bought *Isidore*, and I think we also bought the *Metamechanic* so that we were the fortunate recipients of a wonderful correspondence that—both Niki and Jean had friends which they would write on any kind of scrap of paper, drawing pictures and words. We had a great many of these letters of theirs, framed, of course, in our house in New Hampshire and so forth. But, um, at that time or shortly thereafter, Niki was making her *Nanas*, her large, voluptuous women in bikinis. She was making them of papier-mâché and plaster, and, naturally, they were not possible to be put outdoors. And Max suggested that she use a different material, reinforced plastic or fiberglass, and he had a plant in Maine in which, they manufactured plastic for building. [00:20:00] And his main focus was on acrylic plastic, which is like glass, very clear, but he also had acquired a fiberglass boat manufacturing company in the Midwest and was experimenting with fiberglass at that time. And he suggested that she use it. She went to the plant in Maine and did in fact work in fiberglass and has been using it ever since. However, she didn't protect herself, and she developed a terrible bronchial infection and came over the following April, called me from the airport, and asked if I could tell her of a hospital she could be admitted into at that point. And instead, I had her come to our house and got the doctor, and she was put to bed for a while. She was on her way to Montreal where she and Jean were to install the—a large joint sculpture on which they were collaborating of his machines and her *Nanas* on the roof of the French Pavilion for the World's Fair in Montreal. And, uh, Niki couldn't make it because she was much too ill, but Jean came over and did the work and then, weekends, would come down to our house and spend the weekends with Niki and us. So that was, uh—fortunately, she did recover, and it was not a sad time but a fun—a rather fun time, actually, for us. And, uh, we knew, of course, Louise Nevelson also.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Beginning at this time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: At this time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, and she spent some time with you here.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We bought—yes, she came for an overnight. Are you sure I didn't [inaudible] before? [00:22:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Did I go in and out?

ROBERT F. BROWN: No. So, she spent time or spent the night, at least, with you in Chestnut Hill.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, she spent the night with us, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she an easy guest?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yeah, she was lots of fun. She was a great guest, and also, uh, Robert Indiana spent time with us both in Chestnut Hill, and he also went to the place that Max owned in St. Thomas, Sapphire Bay. And, uh, we had a version of Indiana's *LOVE* in our sculpture garden at Chestnut Hill, and he would come and visit it whenever he was in Boston. And I remember on his way to, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Maine, perhaps?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Vinalhaven in Maine.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Vinalhaven, yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: On his way to Vinalhaven in the summer, he would come up with his station wagon full of his painting equipment, his possessions, his cats—he had many cats—his live-in boyfriend, whoever it was at the moment. And they would stop off and visit the *LOVE* in our garden.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just walk around and talk to it, talk with it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he quite outgoing as a guest and friend?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, he was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Well, Claes Oldenburg, too, you said, came and—I think he went to your farm, you said.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, he did and spent the weekend with us.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The farm is where, in New Hampshire?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, on Lake Sunapee, and he was—he was a very interesting guest.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did he—you said he had an interest in, as always, in food, I mean, a serious interest in that sort of—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, he was very serious. He had a notebook [00:24:00] and took notes and would always consult our cook as to what had been served and how it was made. I seem to remember he was interested in pancakes at the time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you were interested in his work and had several pieces.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, we loved his work. We were very excited about it. We had quite a few pieces that we couldn't keep. We had, for instance, *Falling Shoestring Potatoes*, which hung from the ceiling, and our ceilings were not high enough in Chestnut Hill for this. They fell on the floor too much. They dragged on the floor, so we had to exchange them. I think we exchanged them for *Soft Eraser*, which was a better scale.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And then we had the mouse in the garden, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was it the whimsy of his work, you suppose, that attracted you?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. What—what was so wonderful about it was that he was able to take—what delighted me and still does—everyday objects, and by blowing them up they become great heroic sculptures, and I love his humor, the drawings of the monuments that he proposed, like the *Good Humor for Park Avenue* and, oh, endless ideas that were delightful. His drawings are wonderful. Uh, when he visited us in New Hampshire, Hannah Wilke was with him, and she was photographing his works for him. They were working on a book that was to be published of his works, and, uh, they had with them one of his soft sculptures. It was a poached egg—no, a fried egg, and the center was beautiful yellow felt, which he said was [00:26:00] taken from a Swedish flag, which has the most beautiful, clearest yellow. And at first, I came down the morning after they arrived, and in the living room the, um, fried egg was draped on the sofa. And I thought perhaps it was a house present, but not at all. It was being photographed, and they had tried it on the seashore around Boston—I think the North Shore—and then they tried it in our—in one of our meadows where we had sheep. And it was actually that photograph that appeared in the book. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Very flattering.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it was nice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he a generous man, rather open, or what would you say, [inaudible] formal or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, he was very open and very amusing. He really was very amusing. He had a marvelous, pixilated sense of humor, and I was—had a wonderful reunion with him just recently out at Brandeis where he received an award for sculpture at their annual arts festival this past spring. And, uh, I was able to meet his charming wife, who is also his collaborator, and we reminisced about those days. And, uh, it was very nice, very nice.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you get to know George Rickey at all at that—at that time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, indeed. We knew Rickey. We went to visit him at his home, and his wife Edith, and we had two Rickets, one in the courtyard at 180 Beacon Street and one in our garden, which was the most wonderful weathervane. It was—it consisted of [00:28:00] four arms, two up that went back and forth and two that whirled around in a circle so that you could tell exactly what was happening as far as air currents and wind was concerned. If there was a strong wind, everything was going, and if it was a gentle wind just the upper arms would be moving lazily back and forth. It's a wonderful sculpture.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And it didn't break down particularly, did it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, no, no, no.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: His were engineered by balance and not motor. They were not motorized. Like Calder,

they were moved by air and wind.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he a very enthusiastic person, or how would you characterize him?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, he was a wonderful person, very enthusiastic, and, of course, a great scholar. He knew so much about art history, particularly Constructivism, and their home, in New York, near—what is it?

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, it's in the Berkshires, in Chatham, New York.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: In the Berkshires, it was beautiful. Chatham, East Chatham. It was a delightful place, and Edith was a wonderful hostess. She cooked very well, and lunch was always a feast. We enjoyed our—I still get Christmas cards from them, but I haven't seen them for years. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was one of the greatest things, then, of particularly 180 but also your collecting, was meeting so darned many people.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, and also, we met—we visited another great favorite of both mine and Max's was, uh, George Segal. And we went to visit him at his succession of chicken houses, which are his studios [00:30:00] in New Jersey. And Max very much wanted me to sit for Segal, but I was much too chicken. I didn't like the idea of being smothered in plaster, and, uh, Max was quite disappointed. He thought it would be wonderful to have my portrait done.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Laughs.] You share that with several of the founding fathers, as I recall—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —who shuddered at the prospect. But he—what was he like? Was he a very down-to-earth sort when you saw him?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, he was wonderful, and his wife is—is a wonderful woman, too. And we just enjoyed seeing the work and where he did it and how he did it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This was a very important period for you, and it has coincided with, uh, the beginnings of your involvement with the Institute of Contemporary Art as a trustee and as a scholar yourself.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, that's true.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Maybe we can—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Art was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —pick up on that.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —a very big focus.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Let's pick up on that, then.

[END OF TRACK.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [00:00:00]—reliable these days. I keep getting hoarse.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, we're—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —we'll continue this—this is December 2nd, 1993. We've talked a great deal about the exciting furnishing and—with a wonderful collection of art, 180 Beacon Street in Boston. But by the early '60s, you and your husband were involved in a more official level in the art community in Boston. I think, beginning in about 1962, you were a trustee of the Institute of Contemporary Art, which I think you—you main—stayed on that board until the present. You're still on it, aren't you?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I'm probably the oldest living board member. [Laughs.] And, uh, I think they keep me on because I'm sort of the institutional history, but I thought this year might be a good year—my term was up yet again—to become an honorary trustee. But I took a sort of informal vote among my fellow trustees, and they seem to feel I'm still useful, so I'm still there. Um, but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did you become involved in the early '60s?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, because of our interest in—of course, our interest in the arts and contemporary art, and that was the period in which—actually, the middle of the '60s, when we began to collect for 180 Beacon Street, but we had always been members of the Institute of Contemporary Art ever since I can remember, ever since I really came to Boston.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was it like when you first knew it, which would have been where, back in the '30s?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I knew—no, I guess I didn't know it in the '30s. I wasn't—I was a college student then, and then I was in New York, but in the '40s I remember it. In the '50s, I remember it not in the brownstone [00:02:00] where it originated, but I remember it on Newbury Street. And I remember a very riveting exhibition of Hyman Bloom there, the paintings, which were quite fascinatingly horrible, [laughs] and, you know, the jewel-like, bloody corpses and things. But then, I also remember the period when Tom Messer was director, and then we became more involved and became—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That would have been in the late '50s, after—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, before he went to the Guggenheim. And he had started a rather interesting, uh, project in which he had a group of members of the ICA who formed a little group within the membership and would buy works from different exhibitions. And I forget what he called this, uh, but it was a way of—perhaps a way into collecting for the ICA in a very limited way, at first. An exhibition would be there—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and one of the members of this group, and I can't remember—he had a very good name for it—would say, "Oh, well, I would like to acquire [00:04:00] that work." And, uh—or I guess there was a kitty. You had to pay so much to belong, and then the money was used to purchase a work, and that's the way it went. And then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: For the—for the Institute or for your—yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, supposedly for the Institute, but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which—it never had a collection.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, it never had a collection, but, um, then, any individual who was part of that group would say, "I would like that painting," and could take it home for an indeterminate amount of time. Uh, and we found out somewhere along the line that this was definitely not the way to operate. It was a—really, illegal because people were getting tax deductions for belonging and then were keeping the artworks, because they never did go back to the ICA. I really—I'm a little bit hazy about that, but it was quite interesting for a while.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But, basically, it could have been a good way of building up the collection.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It could have been very good. It was a very good idea.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was, uh—was that followed through, or did people—did they finally decide that the ICA, in fact, wouldn't have a collection?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I think it was decided always that the ICA would not collect, although on and off during the years various trustees would begin to look at it afresh because it became increasingly difficult to raise funds for the institution. We had to raise our operating budget every year. We didn't have a, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: An endowment or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —an endowment fund, and [00:06:00] we had no assets, so that it was really very difficult. And every once in a while, people would say, "Well, it would help our membership if we had a collection and there was something to see besides the exhibition of the moment." And also, we would own something that would appreciate, but we never did agree to do this. It was—the timing was bad. We were too late, really, to start collecting in a historical sense, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean the cost and the rarity of—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: That's it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And then it would mean, uh, a whole different kind of operation, which would be more costly and more difficult. So, we never did. We remained a Kunsthalle all through the years. But this was a very

interesting experiment on the part of Tom Messer, and, uh, we got to know him because we were members of this group. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he—how did he run the ICA? What was his style, would you say?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think he brought a lot of Latin American art, more than we've seen since, and, uh, I think his style was an attractive one. I think people, uh, liked him very much, and he simply left to go to the Guggenheim. And then, I was not on the board—oh, my word—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, I was going to ask. You knew—Tom Messer [00:08:00] you got to know quite well. Did you know James Plaut, the man who was there before him? He was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, I didn't know James, Jim, too well at that time. Uh, I was not very close to the ICA when he was director. I was simply a member, an interested member, but I've gotten to know him much more. Now I know him very well indeed, but—and he is chairman of our, uh, honorary curators, honorary, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Trustees?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —trustees.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the ICA.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, at the ICA.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So when you came on, then, shortly after Messer left—you came on in 1962 to the ICA board.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and Sue Thurman was in place at that time. And we were out at the river. We were in that building designed by Nat Saltonstall for us—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, yes, that was on the Charles River.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —on the river, and we really were marooned. It had been thought, planned, when we raised the funds for the building, that there would be a whole art center there, theater, music, everything. And the—I forget what it was called. No, it had a special name, and it never happened, never happened. So, we were left alone—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —in this rather isolated place away from everything, and people had to really plan to visit the ICA in those days to go out there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you had to drive.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And you had to drive, and we—the attendance fell considerably. [00:10:00] So Sue Thurman, who is a very practical type—although she was always accused of having no sense of money, of great extravagance, because she had great ideas for shows, and we were so strapped for funds all the time that the board was really quite distraught about that. But she was practical, and she realized that we couldn't continue like that. And she was instrumental in moving us back to the city, but we were then renters at, um—we were tenants of the New England—

ROBERT F. BROWN: New England Mutual Life Insurance Company.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and their building on Newbury Street, which was like a storefront, actually. It was a ground-floor building with large windows. It was a very nice space. But in order to move us back, she had a fundraiser, which she called the potlatch, and I think we—local artists contributed, and we sold the paintings or something like that. And she ran raffles. She was very resourceful, Sue. And when we got back to Newbury Street, she had a very ambitious series of exhibitions, which were very underappreciated by the Boston public. When I look back at them now, I'm amazed at what she—she managed to show, and I believe that we were the very first institution to—museum institution to give Andy Warhol a show, a one-man show, which we did. And what I remember of that show are the helium-filled silver pillows that were floating around. I don't remember [00:12:00] much about the art.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What about the artist? Was he there?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I don't remember. I really—and I'm sure I would have if he—if I had been there. But I know she did have a Warhol show. She had a show called "Art Turned On" in 1966, um, which—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was that about?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —dealt with light art and, uh, which was very much in in the '60s. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mean neon and [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and I don't recall the artists that she had. Uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did she—did you as trustees have much of a role in planning these shows, or were—how did she work with you when—on her exhibitions?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, she would present the ideas and her plans, and we would scramble to raise the money. [Laughs.] That's about how that worked, but the ideas were hers.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: They didn't come from—from the trustees.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was she by and large easy to work with? I mean, you seem to have admired her enthusiasm.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, she was easy to work with, except the business types on the board, and Lou Kane was president at that time, and a very conscientious fellow board member was Charles Withers. And they kept wringing their hands because her ideas were—far exceeded our funds. However, um, she managed to do some very interesting shows.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, maybe we could talk about those that you particularly remember.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Well, I remember the Julius Bissier retrospective, [00:14:00] uh, and that was a very nice show. But the show that really was riveting for me was the Kienholz show. And I think we did get a larger-than-usual attendance because the work was so astonishing for those times. And that was also in 1966.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was—what would—what would have astonished people in Boston about the Kienholz show?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, he had these fascinating, um, site works, really, tableaus that he constructed out of funky materials and these strange figures and small pieces like *The Hostess*, which is a figure on wheels. And I remember he had the *Back Seat Dodge* with two couples making out in a rather messy way on the backseat of a dilapidated car, and *The Illegal Operation*, which was horrendous. It was a depiction of—these darlings are driving me crazy—a depiction of a—I can't think of words. It was a depiction of an abortion, but he used, uh, sort of junky material to describe it. And we met him [00:16:00] afterwards. Uh, Max and I, in fact, took him to dinner, and he said that he found his found objects, which he used in all his works, from these mammoth yard sales that they had in California. Actually, they would have them in the, uh—on the premises of abandoned outdoor movie places and huge shopping centers and so forth. And he really had some amazing things. I remember a very poignant piece of his called *The Weight*, in which a widow-type figure was seated with a string of bottles around her neck like a necklace, and in them were little scenes from her past life. And there was a birdcage and old photographs of soldiers and all sorts of people. It was really an amazing work, and the most exciting of all was *Jake's Beanery*, in which you could actually enter this structure that was built like a beanery and mingle with the strange creatures inside. They were people with heads made out of different clocks, and the whole thing had a rather strange smell, which I suspect was the plastic material that he used to glue things together and to make these, uh, figures.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was he like as a personality?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, he was—I remember him as being big and sort of burly and a really [00:18:00] interesting guy. We took him to the old Lobster House for dinner or the old Oyster House for dinner, and, of course, he enjoyed that. And when I looked at the littered table, it looked like one of his works, you know, because in *The Beanery* he had cigarette butts and all sorts of things glued down.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He wasn't a tidy fellow.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, but, uh, very interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you felt that that show had a real impact.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I think it had more than the others, and he—Sue also showed George Rickey with his, uh, jewel-like moving pieces, small pieces in those days. I think it was before he did the huge outdoor ones,

which—of course, we had one at 180 Beacon Street, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And did Rickey, uh—did that show also receive some acclaim here, or did, um—did the ICA get very good press in those days?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, we always complained about the press. It didn't do much for us. No. It gave us, actually, rather bad press because it focused on what we—what was then called the ladies' committee, and it treated it as a society event, which was the wrong image for the ICA, and something that we've had to fight a great deal. We don't have a ladies' committee anymore. Now we have an ICA council, and it's—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that would be a group that would—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It's a group that is—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —supplement the work of the director or the trustees or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —sort of a bridge between the two?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, it's sort of a support group—

ROBERT F. BROWN: For the [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —just as the ladies' committee—they do the annual fundraising event, [00:20:00] which is, of course, the big ICA benefit, which has really made its mark on the Boston scene. It's a very big affair and usually very interesting, with a theme, music, all sorts of things. Um, and they usually hold them in unusual places. There was one in Filene's Basement one year, which was also supported by Filene's, which was very nice. We made a lot of money on that one, but the council is now made up of both sexes and—I should say all sexes—and is no longer a ladies' committee. Um, one of the things that Sue did that I thought was very resourceful was to arrange at the last moment to show the large-size works that—of the United States artists in the, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: World's Fair?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —in the World's Fair when it was in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Montreal?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Montreal, when it was in Montreal.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], 1967.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Right. And she figured that these things would be shipped to New York from Montreal, and why couldn't the train stop at Boston on the way, and why not have these works shown here? And she pulled it off. Unfortunately, it was—the exhibition was during the Christmas holidays, and people just weren't very museum-minded. And she needed a large space because these [00:22:00] were all enormous paintings, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were in that fairly large space.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, we couldn't get them into our building, so she rented Horticultural Hall, and that was off the art beat, too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes, it is.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And I think the attendance was extremely disappointing, but it was a marvelous opportunity. It was the kind of thing that Sue did and did well.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that was, of course, the first showing of the works gathered, assembled, for that World's Fair, wasn't it? It was the first showing. It was before it went to Montreal?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, it was on the way back.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, after.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was afterward on the way back, but still it was quite a coup for Boston to have the show. And Boston didn't realize it. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you've mentioned, I know, before Robert Indiana, and there was a show in '63 and '64 of Richard Stankiewicz and Robert Indiana. Uh, do you remember that show at all or anything associated—I guess Robert Indiana came by your place in Chestnut Hill [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, we got to know him in the '60s, but I don't remember the ICA show—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You don't remember the particular exhibition.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —particularly. I don't know why I don't. Uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: There was—let me throw out one other—what about the "Design in Transit" show of 19—the fall of 1967? I can recall that as an important, uh—it was an important conference or series of talks there as the new subway systems were going in in Montreal and Washington. And there was talk of other new, I guess, mostly modes of transportation.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I don't—I really don't recall it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You don't [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, personally, I know it was important, and they did it, but I don't [00:24:00] have a personal recollection of that particular activity. What I do remember is an emphasis in the ICA during those years—and I believe Jim Plaut had something to do with it, and there was another curator on corporate art and corporate images. And at—in the early days, particularly when we were on Newbury Street, we used to have a Christmas show, a design show, in which we showed particularly good furniture design and so on, much the way the Museum of Modern Art does in New York but on a smaller scale. And this whole corporate—it was almost its own division that had its activities, and I know it was very, um—it had a great influence on me and also on Max because we were very aware of the importance of design for the corporate image, and I became very involved in that. And actually, we had an exhibition, I remember, of corporate design, and at that time we had a designer named Michael Lax [ph] who did a whole—designed a logo for us and, uh, did a whole design plan of stationary and labels and packaging and everything for our products. And, uh, actually, we were given an award along with other companies by the ICA. There was a special event in which this was done, and, uh, [00:26:00] this was a very interesting thing. It's something that the ICA doesn't do anymore. It just—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, it pretty well died out once—after Jim Plaut's time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think so.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned this corporate—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —activity [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: There was somebody else who worked on it, and I can't remember his name, but he was full-time on this. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You feel it's potentially an important thing for the institute to do, to—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I don't know if it's so relevant today. In the '60s, it was, because corporate collections were beginning to be noticed on a large scale, and I think design, uh—corporations were beginning to be more aware of this kind of industrial design. And today, it's—I think it's accepted. [00:27:00] It's old hat. It's nothing that one has to really promote or educate about, so I guess it just died a natural death. Um, after Sue, we—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did it sit—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —when our lease ran out on Newbury Street, it was not renewed because the insurance company needed the space for themselves, and we were then quite homeless. And I remember the period in which we really had no base, no place that belonged to the ICA. And this was very difficult. It was very difficult to make an impression. [00:28:00] We were marginal in our best days as far as the Boston art community was concerned, but in the years—in our Wanderjahre, which I think of—we really almost disappeared. It was very hard to keep us together, and if it hadn't been for Lou Kane's wife, Kathy, and her activities as an assistant to Mayor White, I think, probably, that would have been the end of the ICA as I look back on it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And how did her activities [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, she was able to get us the use of, um, the city-owned house on Beacon Hill, on—

ROBERT F. BROWN: On Beacon Street?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Beacon Street. I don't remember the name of that house. It has a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] called the Parkman House.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The Parkman House, yes. Thank you.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, it was one of Francis Parkman's several houses.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes. Well, we were able to use that, so we had a headquarters. And also, I believe Kathy was instrumental in getting Drew Hyde to be our director, and this was a very, way-out kind of decision because Drew had never had any real art experience at all, but he was an extremely, um—words.

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Isn't this terrible?

ROBERT F. BROWN: He was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: He was a very charismatic person, and he was able to gather around him really an enthusiastic [00:30:00] group of people, of members, and he was very—he was able to do activity. Now, Drew's expertise was really in the public domain. He was good in bringing art to the multitude, in doing city things, and this was a very interesting period in which we had inner-city young people doing activities in the summer. We involved artists in this kind of program, and, of course, Kathy was very interested in it, too. This was the time in which she began the concerts on the Boston Common in the summer and things to keep the youth off the streets. So, the ICA began to wander all over the city and become a more social—

[END OF TRACK.]

This is tape number four.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —[00:00:00] and we—

ROBERT F. BROWN: After the merger with the MFA was off, now as you go on your own, although Jim Plaut observed it, the membership had sort of been at a level number. The nature of the board and the membership has changed [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, completely.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And a, uh, black man is currently the president of the board, for example.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and we—also, we've for many years have had a—I think since the '70s, certainly the early '80s, we have had a member of the Boston artists' group, you know, the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Boston Visual Artists Union?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, of the Boston—the BVAU, exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which formed 20-odd years ago.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: That's it. And we have—we decided early on to invite one of their, uh, members to be a member of our board, and this membership rotates so that every year or two we get a different BVAU member as a member of our board, which has been a very fruitful collaboration. It's worked very well, and we now—of course, in the years of David Ross—let's see.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible]—

[Audio break.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Drew Hyde, Christopher Cook [ph]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And Gabriella Judson [ph] and Sydney Rockefeller.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Gabriella Judson and Sydney.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Then, you had Stephen Prokopoff.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, we did have Stephen Pro—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Prokopoff, yes.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Propokoff.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What were those years like? Was he a [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, they were not [00:02:00] sensational. They—we had very well-thought-out, good shows, but not spectacular, and they were a little bit effete, I think. They were not shows that engaged great numbers of people. Uh, I remember a show of, uh, Florine Stettheimer, which is a very offbeat, wonderful little show, but not for everybody, and, uh, other exhibitions that he did. He was not an institution builder. Steve did not reach out to people or have ideas to—that were dynamic for the institution. He was, you know, strictly curatorial in his directorship, and it didn't last very long. And then, we brought in—and we took a big chance. We brought in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: David Ross.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —David, David Ross—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, he was considerably younger than [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —who was not only much younger but had not had much experience. He had been curator at, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The University of California, I think, Berkeley.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think at Berkeley. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah. And his forte had been—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And before that at one of the California museums, Newport Harbor or one of [00:04:00] those that were sort of way out, and his field was video art. And, um—but he was young. He was ambitious, and we took a chance. We needed new life, and we knew it. And we really lucked out with David. David was there really for quite a long time, longer than most directors, and he was able to really energize the organization. He—we had Elizabeth Sussman as curator, who was excellent.

ROBERT F. BROWN: She had been on the staff even earlier, I think.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: She had been on the staff, but David, uh—she blossomed under David, and they did very cutting-edge, interesting, avant-garde shows, which certainly didn't endear us to the general public but put us on the map as an institution. And he also attracted very serious young collectors, and he was full of ideas. And I would say that, of course, these were the prosperous '80s, and we had—for the first time in all the years that I had been on the board, the annual budget reached \$1 million, and I couldn't believe it. [Laughs.] It seemed absolutely—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had seen it when it was a few tens of thousands [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, exactly, very modest indeed. And we were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So what—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —actually able to sustain it, and we've gone over the \$1 million mark. But, uh, here we are again in a period of austerity. [00:06:00] David became director of the Whitney, and he took Elizabeth with him, but we have now a whole different regime and time, and we have a really wonderful woman, Czechoslovakian, Milena Kalinovska. Is that right, Kalinovska? And she is the right person for this time, I believe, and I—although we're in an austerity period. We've had to let members of our staff go. We've had to pull in like all institutions, uh, nonprofits in the area. Milena is able to do some very interesting things because she has wonderful contacts, is very well thought of among artists. She relates very well to the artists themselves, and she's doing exhibitions that are not perhaps popular or big-time but are very creative.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And they're—as you said with respect to David Ross, they're—they're cutting-edge, too, [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, they are still cutting edge.

ROBERT F. BROWN: They bring, as David did, to Boston things as they are happening, things of some importance or [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Right, they're very much here and now, and she brings artists from—she's bringing, for instance, a Czechoslovakian woman artist, and she has invited, uh—who has invited a group of local women artists to work with [00:08:00] her, to do perhaps a collaborative work, and to show their works at the same time. This should be a very interesting exhibition. It will be next spring, and, uh, I've been forever on the exhibition committee, because this is where my interest lies. And I can't imagine life without the ICA, which is perhaps why I hang in there so long. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It has become a sort of part of my life.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It's done a good job, by and large, hasn't it? I mean, even though, as Jim Plaut said to you, membership has not increased—it reached a plateau long ago in Boston—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I think of—I think of the ICA as sort of a phoenix that periodically rises from its ashes, because you really think, "Now, it's done for," and somehow it pulls itself up. And I think, uh, this is why I stubbornly cling to it, too, through thick and thin and up and down, because I refuse to believe that a city like Boston will not support an institute of contemporary art or cannot support one. And so, it's this kind of sort of stubborn grit, I guess, that keeps it go—

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: It all amounts to the same.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. Yeah.

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Continuing the interviews, this is June 28th, 1994, with—we wanted to discuss today your involvement with the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard. You were an honorary curator there, I believe, beginning about 1969.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: That's so. Well, I—

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did that come about?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, it was a strange story. Uh, I had been working with my husband doing advertising [00:10:00] and sales promotion, but I really was very much interested in the visual arts and wanted to pursue work in that field. And when my husband sold his business and went and became a real estate developer, I felt that was the moment to make the break. And I first went to Radcliffe and applied to the graduate school, and the then-dean of the graduate school of Radcliffe—this was long before the—Radcliffe and Harvard joined. And, uh, she did not look with favor on my application because I had three small children, and I would have to—my studies would have to be on a part-time basis, and she was extremely discouraging, which, looking back on it, shows how far we've come, what with the feminist movement and everything else.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that would have been when, in the late '50s, early '60s?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: That would have been—no, that would have been—yes, the late '50s, early '60s—late '50s and—however, she saw that I was very disappointed. She said that, since my undergraduate major had been English literature, they would accept me on a part-time basis in my field. But since I wanted to change to fine arts, that was something that they frowned upon. They couldn't grant me a part-time status, but she suggested that I go over to the Fogg Museum and do some volunteering and find out if indeed this was the work that I wanted to do and have them get to know [00:12:00] me. And then, if I wanted to apply, her reasoning was that they would look upon it with more favor because they would know me, whereupon I went over to the Fogg and had an appointment with John Coolidge, who was then the director. And, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you know—had you known him a bit?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Not really, just at openings and things of that sort, because I had always been a friend of the Fogg. But at first, he didn't know quite what to do with me, so he thought it would be best if I worked for him rather than with one—two—rather than being assigned to one of the curators. So, I became sort of a Dorothy Dix of fine arts. I would get all the correspondence that asked research questions in fields that were not represented by the teaching staff, curatorial staff, and I would do the research and write and answer the letters. And this went on for about a year, and I enjoyed it thoroughly. Uh, I was able to poke into a lot of things like—I

actually discovered a lost Dufy watercolor called *Harvard on the Charles*. And when I found the owner, she gave it to the Fogg, so I actually was able to arrange for an acquisition. Uh, then, somewhere along the line, John Coolidge discovered that I was very interested in sculpture, modern [00:14:00] sculpture, and that we were in fact in a modest way beginning to collect sculpture. So, he called me in one day and said, "You know, nobody is doing sculpture in this area at all. If you wanted to pursue your interest in it, you would have the field to yourself," and he was very encouraging because he himself was very interested in sculpture. And, uh, during his directorship, he actually acquired some very good pieces for the Fogg.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Coolidge was, uh—seemed to have had quite an ability to detect potential.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] say that was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I would say so. He was a very open man and quite imaginative, and he delighted in giving people plenty of room to expand and do things, and he was very encouraging. Well, along the way, he discovered that my husband and I were collecting Daumier busts of the parliamentarians. And, uh, we had actually managed through various purchases at art galleries in New York, Knoedler and others, and auctions here and there to acquire, oh, about 12 or 14 of the 36 busts that existed. And, uh, he had the idea one day that it would be a very good thing maybe to have a small Daumier sculpture show. And the idea was low-budget, not very large, and just build on local collections. [00:16:00] And I was delighted to do this, and as I began to look into the matter of Daumier sculpture I discovered that something was not quite right. [Laughs.] And that was that the catalogue raisonné to date that had been written on Daumier sculpture by a Frenchman named Gobin [ph] was full of inconsistencies, and I began to think that a whole body of work called the *Little Figurines* didn't seem to be by the hand of Daumier. But I hadn't had enough experience to pursue that alone, and I went to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you suspect this just on sight or just looking at them?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. I can't remember when it first occurred to me that things were not right, whether it was through the research material I was doing or whether it was a visual thing. But it just didn't add up, and so I turned to Arthur Beale, who was then working in the conservation department at Fogg, and he impressed me very much. He was a young man who I think as an undergraduate had been at Brandeis and actually had done sculpture himself, and he had very keen insights into sculpture. And he could almost do detective work and recreate the process that went into the sculpture. And sculpture at that time was not being treated very much by scholars because, particularly in cast sculpture, it's very difficult to know what you're looking at, and particularly when [00:18:00] confronted with casts that are unmarked, and so forth. And the whole question of how far a bronze cast has traveled from the sculptor's original plaster or clay is almost an ethical question. Um, however, Arthur and I went to work on this, and along the way it got to be a rather large show instead of the small exhibition that John Coolidge had visualized. And at that time, Peter Wick was temporarily, um, assistant to the director in the director's office, and he had—when he had been at the Museum of Fine Arts, had organized a Daumier show, uh, based largely on the prints and had included a few sculptures from the local collection. So, he encouraged John Coolidge to get behind this on a much larger scale, and it was apparent that I had to go to Paris to do research and that it was going to be a much longer process than we had visualized. And fortunately for the Fogg and for me, my husband was willing to finance my travels abroad, and it became a very fascinating two years for me.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How did—maybe you can describe that process as you may recall it when you went abroad. [00:20:00] You presumably had read all the literature you could lay your hands on.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes. Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, uh—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And I followed—there were a great many Daumier sculpture shows at that time. You don't see them anymore, but there were a great many in France and Italy, Germany, and getting all these catalogues together and tracing the provenance of the various pieces that were shown, a history began to emerge. And I traced down the current owner of the original clay busts that had been made by Daumier very early in his career, the 1830s, I believe, and he had been encouraged to make these busts by—to model these busts by his editor Philipon, who had the satirical papers, *La Caricature* and *Charivari*. And there's a legend that he sat in the gallery during the proceedings of the—Louis-Philippe's parliament and actually modeled these little heads after the people who were members of the parliament. But this is highly dubious. However, he did make these, and he did use them as a basis for a sequence of really, uh, hysterically funny cartoons, caricatures of these people in Philipon's publications. Now, [00:22:00] um, these busts were very fragile from the very beginning, and the early photographs of them from early catalogues at the beginning of the century showed them full of cracks, and—because they were never baked. They were simply made out of clay. And Daumier, not being a professional sculptor used any old kind of clay, and another legend is that he used clay from the

backyard. I doubt that very much, but certainly there was no thought of preserving them, and they were not baked, so they were never—they never became terra-cotta. And then, he hand-painted them, and, as I say, they were falling apart from the very beginning. I found that they belonged to—they had a very short provenance. They were in Philipon—the editor's office, for years in Paris, and then they were purchased by Maurice Le Garrec, who was a dealer and collector. And, uh, it was he who had them cast in bronze long after Daumier's death. In fact, they came out in series, one by one by one in the 1920s—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Very [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and '30s. And one of the first people in the United States to subscribe was Rosenwald, [00:24:00] and he eventually had the entire 36, the series. There were very few of the whole series in bronze in this country, but the original clay made by Daumier, the little heads, were then owned by the widow of Maurice Le Garrec. Uh, and she kept them in a cupboard, you know, a glass cabinet in her home outside of Paris. I don't remember the town now. And her grandson, uh, Jean-Claude Roman, had a gallery in Paris on the Rue de Seine. And I contacted him, and he was very helpful in putting me in touch with all kinds of contacts for Daumier. I went to the foundry where they had cast busts, the original edition, and interviewed many people.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And there were people there who could remember the casting back in the 1920s or so?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I think there were, but there were many dealers who were in Paris at that time on the Left Bank who were print dealers, essentially, who were also selling the bronze editions of the little figurines. And then, I actually went to the—to Gobin's son's [00:26:00] house to see the original of the figurines that Gobin had. And it became quite apparent that Gobin had found these old little caricatured figures and, uh, had built a theory about them in his book that they were studies as the busts were for Daumier. And they were studies for the various lithographs that he then made of—when he was—when he had to cease doing the political cartoons because he was politically in trouble with the regime. Uh, and he did Parisian life and so on and so forth, and these little figurines could be matched to certain of the lithographs. And Gobin's theory was that he made the things, and then he used them as models for his engravings.

ROBERT F. BROWN: These are also [inaudible] clay figurines.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Little tiny things about, no more than five inches high, like that, five or six inches high, and you could match them up to various of the lithographs. But, uh, in studying Daumier's methods and technique, he used a certain combing tool, and the comb marks were all over the clay in the busts. And these were totally lacking in the figurines. They were built up in a much slicker way with a lot less character. The faces didn't have a caricatured [00:28:00] expression but were almost sweet, and this was very suspicious. Also, the backs were not articulated of the figurines, and then the final clincher was that there was no reversal in the lithographs.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ah, mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: In other words, if a man is holding a hat in his left hand in the lithograph, it's also the left hand in the figurine, and it should have been reversed. And therefore, we—I was able to launch this theory in our book. Also—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you speak with anybody in France about this [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes. After my catalogue was published, I almost didn't dare go to Paris. I really thought I would be shot on sight. Uh, the dealers were very angry, and also Gobin's son, who had received me and allowed me to see the original terra-cottas—these were not the raw clay like the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The busts.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —like the busts. They were terra-cotta and so forth, and he felt that this was a terrible betrayal and so on and so forth. But in my travels, I had gone to see K.E. Mason, who did the catalogue raisonné of the Daumier—all the paintings, I believe, the Daumier paintings and drawings, drawings and paintings. And, uh, he agreed with me 100 percent, and many scholars did. I mean, it was very hush-hush, but, [00:30:00] you know, there was something not right about these figurines. But when my catalogue came out, Mason wrote me a letter in which he expressed disappointment that I hadn't gone—I hadn't been strong enough in my revelation, although I—not having proof, I could only show the reasoning and let the reader draw his conclusion.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How long were you at your researches and [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was two years, two years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the catalogue came out—was that in '69, [inaudible] show?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I believe it was. Yes, and, actually, Agnes Mongan was acting director at the time I was working on the show because John Coolidge was on sabbatical, and shortly after Agnes took over I was summoned to see her, and she said to me, "What is this I hear that you are planning to show things that are not right in the Fogg Museum?" And I had to explain that indeed I was and the whole story of the questionable figurines and so forth. And I said, "The only way we can find out is through visual comparisons, and the more we can show the more it will prove our point." And she was not only won over, but she became a fellow conspirator, and she was very enthusiastic about writing to her contacts, old dealers that she knew in Paris and almost writing to them in code. It was very funny, [laughs] like a—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] if you could get some information from them?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. Well, we didn't really, but, anyway, she was very, very cooperative. But she did, um, insist that, um, I call the catalogue a "study" and not a, you know, a *fait accompli*. [00:32:00] And so she rather saddled it with an unwieldy title like *Daumier Sculpture*—some title that said, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible] here it was, *Daumier Sculpture: A Critical and Comparative Study*.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Uh-huh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: She insisted that that be made perfectly clear in the publication, and so it became the subtitle. Um, the show was a very large show indeed in spite of the fact that the objects were very small, and Jean-Claude Roman agreed to come over and bring, uh—I believe it was two of the original busts from his grandmother's collection. And he and his wife came over for the opening and brought the busts, and we were able to study the whole question of reproduction in sculpture. And it really turned out to be a groundbreaking exhibition because we had—for instance, we discovered, or I discovered, that there were at least three editions of the *Ratapoil*, the only standing figure, sculptured figure, that Daumier did. And I was even able to line up not only an example of each of the three editions, the earliest one being—all of the casting was after Daumier's death, so they're all posthumous, but the earliest edition was, uh, in the early 20th century and was limited. And, uh, then there were other editions. And, uh, [00:34:00] through Arthur Beale's keen perception, we discovered that a plaster—what was thought to be a plaster copy in the storeroom of the Albright-Knox Museum was one of the original plasters, and Arthur was able to determine this by measurements, and that was very exciting. And we had an example of the *Ratapoil* from each of the three editions plus a museum replica, an Alva reproduction, and that was really quite a sight, to see them lined up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Alva reproduction?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Alva, yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is that a well-known—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, they make reproductions of, you know, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So, the show was very instructive.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was a very instructive show, a didactic show, but it was also quite dramatic, [00:35:00] because we also—I had various graduate students. I had a regular Daumier factory going in the, uh—there's a whole sort of a warren, a rabbit warren of rooms, on the second floor of the Fogg—the third floor of the Fogg. Um, and I was assigned one little room there, but we had a whole succession of graduate students who did research and work on the catalogue. And they did the captions for the drawing—for the prints that we used to relate to the various subjects. And it was a wonderful show.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you, in the writing of the catalogue, did you—how long did you allot for that? You had not written a—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I had written small catalogues. [00:36:00] I had started right off when I went to the Fogg—John was so open and so interested in developing people's potential that he encouraged me to write a piece on a Maillol sculpture, one of the few male nudes that he did, called *Le Petit Cycliste*. And, um, in those days, Fogg published an acquisitions catalogue annually and illustrated it so that I was published for the first time in that on the *Cycliste*. And again, I did some detective work there. Uh, I found out that there were several editions and that ours was the—not several but two, that Maillol had not been satisfied with the first and had redone it [00:37:00] and simplified it so that it was more like his mature work than his early work. And I actually traced down our cast.

ROBERT F. BROWN: As being of the first or the second?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The second.

ROBERT F. BROWN: The second.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So—but then, the task of writing the Daumier catalogue was not entirely foreign to you.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, no, because I had always—I had been doing commercial catalogues, and, of course, it's very different. And you have to—there's a whole knack of doing the academic paraphernalia.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And however, I managed to do it, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: How was the—what role did you play in the installation and planning of—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, well, that was the—for me, that was the wonderful part, and that has always been what I've enjoyed the most, is the installation [00:38:00] of exhibitions. Um, when it all comes together, and you see relationships that you hadn't even thought of when the objects are in the room and the idea of placing them to their best advantage and so forth—it's a very exciting and very creative occupation. And we had some wonderful—a wonderful crew at Fogg. We had two Portuguese men named John and Nino, and they were just wonderful. John had an intuition for sculpture. He would, when he was doing a show for me, they would assemble all the objects in a gallery, you know, just on the floor, and John would start setting them around almost instinctively in a very good way. [00:39:00] And he was wonderful to work with. I enjoyed it so much. But the installation of the Daumier show was very complicated because there were so many small objects, and then the visual comparisons were very important. And, again, a great stroke of luck, um, there was a young man, then assistant to the director, which was a post that changed continuously as different graduate students left and others came in, and this was Henry—[inaudible] his name.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: But, anyway, Henry was wonderful at installation. We had no idea, but he was, and he designed a really wonderful installation, which was very luxurious for Fogg because they actually had acrylic plastic [00:40:00] vitrines made, which they then used for years afterward. It just elevated the whole exhibition paraphernalia to a whole different plane, and it really looked very slick. Uh, and he had these vitrines arranged in the gallery, because so many small objects in a large gallery can be dreadful, but he managed to assemble them in a way that was both instructive and visually exciting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Presumably, you were right there the whole time because you were the [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, every step of the way, every step of the way, but it was very exciting for me. And, um, actually, the show made *Time* magazine and the *New York Times*, you know, a feature article in the *Times*.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you show some of those figures, the baked clay, that were presumably done after the lithographs [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, the figurines. Oh, yes, and I showed, of course, all of the—all 36 busts. The—what all the research determined was—and this was the way the catalogue was structured—that the actual provable body of work, documented body of work in sculpture that Daumier did, was very, very small. And I was able to quote one of the art critics who said, uh, there was a great enthusiasm in the—from the '30s on. It was sort of a discovery of Daumier sculpture, and he appealed to the modern [00:42:00] eye because it was so rough and free. And it was almost proto-modern, because, naturally, Daumier was not a sculptor, and he was—and this always happens. Uh, the sculptures of painters are very special, too, but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the response to the show was considerable.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, it was very exciting. Um, oh, I was talking about the actual small size of his sculptured oeuvre. It's very small indeed because the only documented pieces are the—from his lifetime are the 36 busts, the only relief he ever did called *Les Emigrants*, and there were two editions of that, which is very puzzling. We can't decide which one—we never did find out which came first, but I was able to borrow both of those and to carry over—my husband actually carried over in the end the cast of one of the *Emigrants*, which was on loan to the Fogg from a French family that owned it. And, uh, that's another story where our flight—we had a seat reserved for it in the first class, and this was January. And I guess there were very few passengers, and they canceled the flight. And we—it had been arranged that we would be met at the airport by the import-export people for Fogg, [00:44:00] and they would take over, get us through customs, and get the piece to the

museum. And as it turned out, we had to get—we were very adamant about going there for—from Paris to Boston rather than New York. But, in the end, it was the only way we could get there, and we had to go to New York. And they had to rouse a specialist in the—because of the elevated value of the piece, they had to call a special inspector who had already gone home on Long Island, and he wanted to—he was very curious about this thing. He wanted to see it, and he wanted to open the package. And I was beside myself because it had been packed in our presence by somebody from the Louvre, and I didn't want it disturbed, particularly since our flight had been canceled, and we had to finally go home on the shuttle with this highly valued piece of art. And in the end, my husband carried it off the shuttle in Boston. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did the inspector get his wish or not?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I showed him photographs, and I begged and implored and pleaded, and he finally allowed it to go through. But it was a bad moment, and I remember the weather was bad. And we were taken in this little cart all around Kennedy Airport in the snow when this man came. And, uh, I think we ended up on the last shuttle at night from New York to Boston, [00:46:00] and we couldn't get it to the Fogg that night, so it had to spend the night in our station wagon in Chestnut Hill. It was a very, very hairy experience. [Laughs.] But—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, following the show, were you ready to do more?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Yes, I really was, and on the strength of it I was able, uh—my next assignment, big assignment, was "Metamorphoses" in 19th-century sculpture. In the brief tenure of Danny Robbins, when he was director of the Fogg and he had this idea of doing, uh—there had not been much done on 19th-century sculpture, and he thought it would be a wonderful opportunity. And he gave it to me. And, um, I remember in those days, so little had been done on sculpture that at the time we were—

[END OF TRACK.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[00:00:00] Dan Robbins have in mind [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, he thought it was interesting to emphasize the technical aspect of sculpture and how it does change from the study, the quick study that the artist first conceives and then develops into the finished work. And in the 19th century, that's a very, very long road indeed because the—stylistically, the very finished product was the aim in those days, so you ended up with the smooth marble or the very smooth bronze. And the touch of the artist is not there, but it is in the study. This was a very large and ambitious work, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: This exhibition, the [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —this exhibition, and I was given—actually, I was given a whole room over in the then-abandoned building that is now the site of the Sackler Museum, and it was a building that was abandoned by, I think, the science department, which then was moved into the grand, new science building. And they didn't know quite what to do with these classrooms, and then, finally, Fogg claimed it because they were bursting at the seams.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Just across the street.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Just across the street. And so I was installed there, and I had at this time a whole metamorphosis factory, because I had an editor for the catalogue, [00:02:00] and I had an assistant, a perfectly wonderful woman named Jill Levine, who was married to a fine arts professor, and she was—she's a great British woman with a terrific sense of humor so that we really enjoyed ourselves very much, and then, the usual parade of graduate students working on this, that, and the other. And this was a very long project, too, and immense, because not only did we do the catalogue and the study and the exhibition involving many scholars, not just one, but we also—Danny Robbins arranged for a Jacques de Caso, a 19th-century sculpture specialist at the—where the hell is he? Berkeley. Yes, at Berkeley. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: He arranged for him to do—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: To come and be a visiting professor the term before the show opened, and he gave a seminar on sculpture, which disappointingly was rather poorly attended, but he was very philosophical about it. He said, "Oh, well. You know, so few people are interested in sculpture." And really, that was the situation in those days. Um, this is early '70s.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, was the scope of this to be—well, 19th-century.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was 19th century, and the scope was that—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —we selected, um, [00:04:00]—see I can't remember. I think it's over there.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Okay.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Jacques de Caso contributed a fine essay to the catalogue on serial sculpture in 19th-century France, a subject in which he was an expert, is an expert. And Arthur Beale, as he had done in the Daumier catalogue, wrote a technical view of, in this case 19th-century sculpture. In the Daumier catalogue, he explained all the technique of bronze casting and so forth. Um, and, again, this—this was pioneering work. People had not really done this, and I suspect that sculpture had been so long neglected by scholars because it was so puzzling and because there hadn't been much work done in casting and so forth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But there was also the vexing problem of reproduction—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes, yes. Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[inaudible] editions and works.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And this was, uh, dealt with in depth in the *Metamorphoses*. What we did was select, um, several leading sculptors of the 19th century, and they were—starting with Houdon, Barye, Carpeaux, Rodin, and finally the Americans, Saint-Gaudens and Daniel Chester French. And, uh, [00:06:00] we chose certain works of these sculptors, and traced their development from the original maquette to the finished bronze.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And there, too, the installation was very, very important, wasn't it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, the installation was—yes—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —was crucial, and again, it was visually exciting as well as a didactic show.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, your role was sort of coordinator more than anything?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I—well, yes, I was coordinator, and the difficult part was that we had hoped—in choosing these sculptors, we then chose various scholars who were experts in the work of these sculptors such as Harvey Arneson for Houdin—Houdon, Glenn Benge for Barye, um, Patricia Sanders for Rodin—who had worked with Jacques de Caso in California—John Dryfhout for Auguste Saint-Gaudens, and Michael Richman for Daniel Chester French. Um, we ran into trouble with only one, and that was Annie Braunwald, of the—who was in Paris who never answered our letters. And finally, we had to [00:08:00] persuade a graduate student, Anne Wagner, to write the essay for Carpeaux—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Carpeaux.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —because we never got it from Braunwald. We were sending telegrams, making phone calls. It was frantic, but we just—she just couldn't produce to deadline, or maybe at all.

ROBERT F. BROWN: How much lead time did you give yourselves once you had chosen—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I think—I seem to remember that it was—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the scope of the [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —a couple of years. I could find out in my files, but I think it was about two years also.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, was your delight in doing this show as great as it had been doing [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, this was endlessly fascinating, but it was also a much more complicated project because it involved so many people.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: What our thought was, uh, to have the art historians come and confront the objects within our conservation department with the specialists, with the technical specialists, and together sort of enrich each other's knowledge. The—and this has been a theory that came out of the Daumier show and one that I very much believe in and promote every way I can, that the combination of the art historian and the art

technician is very important in understanding these things.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you were able to do that [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And so it was that—we sort of, um—the pioneering work was the Daumier show. It was the first time it had ever been done, and then we used that format [00:10:00] but in a much more complicated way, because it involved many more people, uh, for the "Metamorphoses". And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and it also was very complicated in making the loans, which is a very big part, of course, of organizing an exhibition.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] here quite early [inaudible] art historians [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Exactly, exactly. And another disappointment was Glenn Benge, who had written his Ph.D. thesis on Barye, uh, *The Lion*—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible?]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —*The Lion Crushing a Serpent*.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was his thesis.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Actually, it was—no, his thesis was on Barye, but this particular subject of Barye's was the one chosen. And we were able to get to the excellent casts that were lifetime casts that were documented as such in the Walters Museum Gallery in Baltimore, and it meant a great deal of traveling, looking, and in the case of Benge we thought he was going to be our absolute model of the art historian who had new insights as a result of being exposed to the technical side. He was on a fellowship from—he taught at Temple University, and he was in Rome teaching that year. So he came over from Rome, spent the better part of a week with us, and seemed very much in tune with everything. And then, much to our surprise, he submitted his manuscript almost immediately upon return. And, what do you know, it turned out [00:12:00] to be his thesis. [Laughs.] He hadn't changed a thing, so that was a second disappointment.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you do in a case like that? Did you ask him to—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, we had to—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —do a bit of rewriting?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, yes, there was a lot of editing, and I remember a young woman who was a Wellesley graduate. No, they don't have a graduate school at Wellesley. I think—I think they—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Perhaps she had done a senior project or something.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, she was a graduate student. Maybe she was at Harvard and had undergraduate at Wellesley, oh, but she had such a frustration with—I think it was Benge, editing Benge. But, anyway, we had a wonderful woman who was the overall editor, and she had a great sense of humor, too. And so, I remember in the heat of the summer we were putting the catalogue to bed, and the whole team would meet at my house in Chestnut Hill, and we would have some long sessions. But we did it, and the show opened—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So your job was to keep them all moving and productive.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Keep them all moving, and, of course, I wrote one of the introductory essays and was in on every bit of it. And I had a lot to do with the installation, too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, this was under—Dan Robbins was then director. You had done this—and the show was—and the publications are 1975.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you had done, uh, two smaller things at the Fogg also in the first half of the '70s—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. I had.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —following the Daumier show, uh, 1971, *Six Sculptors and their Drawings* [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, that was an interesting—a very small, low-budget project, but it was [00:14:00]

interesting. Um, most of the small shows that I did while I was at Fogg built upon objects in their collection, somewhat expanded. And I took Henry Moore, David Smith—Maillol was the, uh—was the earliest sculptor in this grouping of the six—objects in the Fogg collection and then borrowed others and a Lipchitz. We had—Fogg had wonderful drawings. It's a marvelous drawing department, and because of having this wonderful resource I always showed drawings with a sculpture. And I thought—think it's a very important way to look at a sculptor's work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you pull this together pretty much on your own, or was Agnes Mongan involved?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, this was—no, no, this was pretty much on my own, and, as I say it was a small show, and I worked with a young woman from Israel who was in the graduate school at that time and is now a curator at the Jerusalem Museum. And the interesting thing about that show for me was that several of the sculptors were then living, and I was able to write to them and get letters back that were quotable about drawing. And the interesting thing that came out of the show was the different attitudes toward drawing. For some, it was important to get ideas down because drawing—sculpting is such a long, tedious, time-consuming thing. [00:16:00] That was the way they thought, and at other times they—as Henry Moore would say, he did drawing for drawing's sake because he loved to draw, and he did very finished drawing. And David Smith had a different way of working. He did some that were—that could be related to sculptures, and it was very interesting because Fogg had on extended loan—and, I think, eventually will have permanently—the David Smith sculpture, drawing, and paintings belonging to a collector in Connecticut, a woman who has been a wonderful Fogg benefactor. And, uh, so this was a very intriguing subject for this show of drawings and sculpture.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were those things shown at that time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes. And, actually, later on I did a David Smith show simply to bring forth the treasures from this David Smith collection, and I believe I was the first one to show his paintings, because his—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: His executors were keeping the paintings very much under wraps for reasons of their own. They were not exhibited, but I used two galleries on the first floor of the Fogg, a small one and a larger one, for these sculptures, which were very important, from early to late [00:18:00] in Smith's development and were—some of them were very—are very heroic pieces, and some of them had related sculptures.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But this was some years—several years after this first show.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, this was a show that there's no record of because there was no catalogue. It was just something that came out of the Fogg's collection.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you seemed on the other hand, uh, pleased that these were didactic shows, that graduate students worked on them, that they were adjuncts to teaching, weren't they?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Right, right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you doing any talks or lecturing or involvement with seminars during those years at Harvard?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I did. I, uh—the Friends—the director of the Friends of the Fogg had initiated a luncheon series for Friends of the Fogg, which would be lunch and a lecture. And I did a whole series on modern sculpture for that with slides and so forth, and that was fun. And I did give other slide lectures at that time.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you also—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And I gave gallery talks, of course.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —you also did—in 1972, you did another show with a catalogue, a small catalogue, a recent figure, sculptor.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, that was another Danny Robbins project in which, uh—it was the time when, in the '70s, when the super-real was entering the aesthetic, and in sculpture you had people like Duane Hanson and De Andrea and [00:20:00] so forth who were actually, um, casting on the human body, George Segal—

ROBERT F. BROWN: George Segal.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and in very different—and using these casts in very different ways. So that made a very interesting show, and that was a small show that was packaged to travel to university museums, and it went to the Rhode Island School of Design. It went to, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You mentioned—to Bowdoin College and—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Bowdoin College.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Dartmouth.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And Dartmouth.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And Vassar, I think, possibly.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Was it Vassar?

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, probably.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, was this a reflection of your interest in getting the shows out, or was this Daniel Robbins's [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I think he realized that it would—that there would be others who would—that it was the right size and type of show that various museums would like, and he arranged it. Um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was that a fairly involved procedure, putting that show together, or did you work mainly with the artists or their dealers [ph]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I worked with the artists, and, again, I had a graduate student who absolutely hadn't the faintest idea how you went about researching and writing entries for a living artist had not had—been published a great deal. And, uh, he found out. You went to the periodicals and also to the artists and to the dealer and so forth. So that was a big experience for him. He was a young man from Texas, and that was very stimulating. I knew George Segal, uh, [00:22:00] and he was kind enough—oh, that was for another show. I think for the recent figure show we loaned our own Segal, which was a cast of a woman combing her hair, a nude, sitting on a chair. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had gotten to know him when, back in the '60s when you were—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, in the '60s, when we were collecting, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: For 180 Beacon Street or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —well, and for ourselves.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. This was not at 180 Beacon. This was in our home, and it would startle people because we had her—the front entrance had a stairway, an open stairway going upstairs, and a large upstairs hall, which was visible from below. And we had her seated there with her hairbrush and the chair, and people would come in the house and see this great, white nude and be absolutely startled. [They laugh.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: This is the family member they keep [inaudible]. [Laughs.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. Yeah, but, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The, uh, *Metamorphoses* show, then, was perhaps one of the most complex [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It was. The logistics were daunting, but it worked. It happened.

ROBERT F. BROWN: When you—by the time you were doing—in 1980, the, uh, Lachaise, Nadelman, and Archipenko show, *Three American Sculptors and the Female Nude*, at the Fogg, was that—did that go along pretty smoothly? I mean, you knew most of the pitfalls.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: That—each one was an adventure, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was the aim of that? This is a female nude. This is 1980. Was this to make a certain statement at that time?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Uh, it was—[00:24:00] again, it started—the inspiration started with the Fogg's collections and their—Fogg has a wonderful small collection of Lachaise sculpture. And, um, it seemed to me that Lachaise and Nadelman went together and worked together, and it was a chance to get into that whole

period in American art, and the early years of *The Dial* publication, which took me to Hartford, Connecticut, where some of the original artworks collected by *The Dial* are in the museum. And I—the nephew of Lachaise's wife, a lawyer in Boston, was the executor of the Lachaise Foundation and was very generous and underwrote the catalogue so that it was a grant from the Lachaise Foundation. Um, Nadelman was interesting. I went to visit Nadelman's son and his wife, who live in Riverdale in Nadelman's house with a superb view of the Hudson. And, uh, best of all was Archipenko, because through Virginia Zabriskie, who's certainly the most generous dealer in the world and a perfectly marvelous woman—she couldn't have been more helpful and cooperative. Uh, through her, I met the widow of Archipenko, his second wife, who had been his student [00:26:00] and much, much younger than Archipenko. And she was a really fascinating, wild woman. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In what sense wild?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, she decided that she wanted to have children, because she had married this old man, and she was now the widow. So, she proceeded to have a series of children by different fathers. [They laugh.] And, uh, let's see. She did—she came to the opening with the youngest, which was a babe in arms, and the most recent father. [Laughs.] She was a very colorful person, and she took me to her storage warehouse in New York up on Riverside Drive, way uptown, and we went through—I had the pick. It was wonderful. So that was a fun show, too. They were all fun.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you do the—most of the writing and [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: That was your project, wasn't it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, except, interestingly enough, I worked with the, uh—the graduate student I worked with was Jim Cuno, who's now director of the Fogg. And he was very busy at the time we were working on this show. I believe the print curator was on sabbatical, and he was practically running the print department. He was everywhere, a very bright, wonderful young man, and I enjoyed working with him. And he wrote a very good essay for the catalogue on the female nude. Uh, my essay, I had worked out rather interestingly [00:28:00] a parallel career chart for Nadelman, um, Lachaise, Archipenko—and Archipenko. And it was very interesting because they were all émigrés, and yet they were all American, because in the days when they were working there were very few American sculptors who were not totally, totally academic. So that was very interesting. The only disappointment was—I would so much have liked to have met, uh, Lincoln Kirstein, but he just was not available. And he had done so much for Nadelman—uh, for—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Lachaise.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Lachaise.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah. Did you ever get to meet him subsequently?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No. No. No, but that was very interesting—every show was an adventure, and as I say —

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, the show—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —I loved the research. I loved the installation. For me, the writing was a chore.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh, it was?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, it was a chore.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yet you first set out or thought—or your mother set you out to be a writer.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I know, and I think that's why I never felt comfortable. I always felt that, you know—that I was not—I was my own worst critic. It was very hard to get that first sentence out and still is. I'll do anything rather than write. [They laugh.] But, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did you do [inaudible]—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —but it was always—oh, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Make notes—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —outlines.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Outlines, outlines first. I do that with my courses, too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then, the, uh—comes the writing.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And then comes the writing. [00:30:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: But lecturing you don't mind, and you enjoy it.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, um, no, I get stage fright. I think [laughs] the most horrible experience I've ever had lecturing was when I was invited to an all-Daumier symposium at the, uh—by the Smithsonian in Washington. And I came down with my tray of slides, and I had two projectors to do the visual comparisons. I had wonderful color slides. Everything was all set, and I had written out to the last period what I was going to cover and what I was going to say. And when I got to the, uh, museum—was it a museum or an auditorium, which was kind of modern and state of the art? I became so frightened that I almost turned around and went home because the Fogg—everything is sort of seedy, falling apart, comfortable, informal.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It was. [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Was, isn't anymore, but it was in those days. And here was all this, uh, state-of-the-art equipment and everything. But I managed to get through it all right, but it was very, very hard. But I think I did give a pretty good paper, actually, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was this around the time or following the Daumier show?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. That was why I was invited. It was several years later, actually, quite a bit later, and I'm still getting letters and phone calls and being asked, "I have a little sculpture. I believe it's a Daumier," and it never [00:32:00] is, never, never is. And in spite of what I thought was clearly laid out in the catalogue, people don't realize that—and even about the figurines, they go on buying them when they turn up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the figurines were—are entirely dismissible. Is that [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The entire group—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —are provable to come from the lithographs, and the technique is definitely not Daumier's, because through Arthur Beale's perception we were able to really analyze Daumier's technique, and probably there—his thumbprints are probably all over these sculptures. And he did use his combing tool much the way he would do shading in the lithographs, and they're very much a part of it. And the fact that the backs were not articulated because you couldn't see the backs from the lithograph—and then, there were—the interesting thing about the figurines is that they had quality, too. The older ones, the original ones that were bought by Gobin, who bought them and claimed they were Daumier, have some quality to them. But there are some later ones that are so blatantly bad that you just wonder, and they kept coming through the '60s. They would put out new ones, new discoveries. It was, I believe—oh, my memory.

ROBERT F. BROWN: You believe it was the—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, uh, it's interesting because I believe it was Philips [ph] who [00:34:00] made the remark that "The sculpture of Daumier is so wonderful, so delightful, it makes one wish there were more." And shortly thereafter, there began to be more, more and more and more. And, um, it's amazing, some of the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But the corpus of genuine work is pretty well established, isn't it? So—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, yes, it's documented. You know, you can trace it back.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, but the, uh—so if something else [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The other stuff isn't—and that was another thing. It, um—it determined the format that I chose for the entries in the catalogue, because we would have a chronology at the end of each entry in which you would see where it first appeared in a publication. And those went to the early 19th—the late 19th century and the early 20th century, and then the ones that just turned up in 1965 in a catalogue in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. It was very interesting. It all—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It made the point.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —it made the point. It all did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Though you also made the point in your—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It all did. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —in your essays.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, right. Yeah, so—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Do you want to—?

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —continuing the interviews on July 19th, 1994. Oh—

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —continuing to discuss the—one more exhibition that you did at the Fogg Art Museum, the 1982 sculpture by Antoine-Louis Barye in the collection of the Fogg. Can you—how did that come about, as a sort of a natural continuation of [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, it wasn't, actually. Seymour Slive—I think I discovered that there were many, many Barye sculptures in the Fogg collection, [00:36:00] with varying quality of the cast. And, uh, I was curious about it, and I proposed that I do an exhibition of the Barye sculpture and at the same time do some research on the casts. They had been acquired over a long period of years, and there had been several donors. Um, and Seymour Slive, who was then director at the Fogg, was very enthusiastic about the project and found the money to fund it and suggested that I produce the catalogue as part of the cataloguing of Fogg's collections, and several similar catalogues had been brought out on various groups of objects in the Fogg collection so that the format of the catalogue conformed to what they had decided upon. Uh, thereupon, I embarked as usual with the collaboration of Arthur Beale, of the conservation department—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and we did a lot of research into Barye casts and traveled to the Brooklyn Museum to look at their collection and also the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, which has a superb collection of lifetime casts of Barye. And having done the research, I discovered that Lucas, who [00:38:00]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: A great patron.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —was a great patron of the arts and also bought for other collectors, went often to Barye's studio so that the works in the Lucas Collection in the Baltimore Museum and the works in the Walter were absolutely lifetime casts. And then, you could compare them with late, posthumous casts where the models had been totally worn out, mostly signed by the Barbadian foundry, uh, which was one of the largest in Paris in the late 19th century. And, uh, this was a very interesting project and made a rather attractive small sculpture exhibition.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was—did it also serve to bring Barye to the attention of people for whom he was just a name? I mean, was he—hadn't he slipped somewhat into obscurity, except that one would see these animal figures, you know, [inaudible] many places?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, the whole idea of the animal—animalier sculpture was touched upon, and also it was very interesting to find Barye collectors who came up to the Fogg to look at our collection and give an opinion. And, uh, one of these was a very colorful person who was—it turned out later, when Andy Warhol died—was his favorite friend and shopping companion. And, um, he had been [00:40:00] a long interest—

ROBERT F. BROWN: His own study.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and, uh, he had actually produced—had managed to collect photographs that were very helpful in my research at that time, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I'll put it—

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: —and this friend of Warhol's was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Stuart Pivar of New York City who traveled to the Fogg to see our Barye sculpture and also invited us to visit him and see his collection in New York. And he had a studio apartment on the West Side, I believe, that was, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] duplex.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, I'm forgetting nouns now. Uh, a duplex apartment that he filled with 19th-century paraphernalia of, uh, the artist's studio of that period, and it was like stepping back a hundred years. It was a very delightful visit. Um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you give talks, and were there presentations during [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. I gave gallery talks, of course, and it was a small show, and I wouldn't say that it was even in Fogg terms one of the bigger or more—it was really an in-house exhibition.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What, uh, in—in your opinion did it accomplish, particularly the, um—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I think it—it—

ROBERT F. BROWN: —the casting story [ph]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. It really established some kind of a relative comparison for the quality of the casts [00:42:00] we had, a history of them wherever they could be found and also related what we had to similar subjects in Barye's animal sculpture, uh, as found in the other collec—large collections in New York and Baltimore and so that ours were mostly late casts. We didn't have any lifetime casts, but we did have one very fine object, and that was *Lion Attacking a Peacock*, which was an actual original plaster by Barye, that he had altered. And you could see where he had applied wax and given it texture and corrected it in order to make a new edition, a new and improved edition of the object. So that was a very fine thing to have in a study collection like the Fogg's.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And had the—these had come into the Fogg as study objects primarily?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, they were given—

ROBERT F. BROWN: No?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —by various donors over the years. Um, and we also—I was able to show a Barye lithograph and a—two Barye lithographs and some drawings, which were in the Fogg collection, so that, again, it was a rather full presentation of Barye's work. [00:44:00]

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were these—did these objects come to the Fogg, would you say, in fairly early days, early 20th century for the most part, or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, they came over the years from several sources. Uh, there were many from a collector named Henry Dexter Sharpe, and they were accessioned in 1956. And, uh, the famous Winthrop bequest, which brought such a variety of magnificent objects to the Fogg in 1943, included several Barye sculptures, but mainly Henry Dexter Sharpe collection and then a few single donors.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you move from doing the Barye show immediately into something else? I know that was about the last show you did at the Fogg, was it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and that was dated—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible] 1982 is the Barye show.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —1982, right. Um, it—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you decide you'd done what you wanted to do [inaudible] or [inaudible] opportunities?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, it just so—no, I was working—actually, I left the Fogg around 1987 or '88. And in the interim, uh, Max died in 1986, and after that I had been working on a show, but I must say that my energy level was quite low as far as that was concerned. It was a very hard period for me, [00:46:00] and Fogg had changed. Uh, Seymour Slive had resigned as director and gone back to his—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Teaching.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —teaching career, which was so illustrious. And, um, the director at that time was Peter—what was his—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Bowron [ph].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Bowron.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And he simply was not very sympathetic to my work or my contribution to the Fogg, and I felt that perhaps that indicated that that chapter of my life was over, and so I resigned. Um, however, at the time I had been working on an idea for a very contemporary show, which—

[END OF TRACK.]

This is tape number five.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —[00:00:00] a contemporary show.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sculpture this would have been? Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: You know, I can't remember what it was now. I think I moved the file downstairs, too.

ROBERT F. BROWN: This idea—but you just let it go because you decided the time [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, it had been accepted, and I was to work on it, but I felt that I couldn't really work under the circum—the atmosphere.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Huh, which was—because other—before—until then, it had been quite cordial, hadn't it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, and very supportive.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Very supportive, and this was an entire change, and I felt it was time to move on. Uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You had—meanwhile, before, uh, your husband's death, you had been—and, of course, a long time involved with MIT. Do you want to talk about that now, or do you want to talk about the Wellesley show in '89? Maybe that leads from the Barye a little bit easier. We could talk about the Wellesley show if you'd like.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. I was, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That—that came on in 1989.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: In 1989, I was invited by a director of the Wellesley Museum to contribute to a centennial project celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Wellesley College Art Museum, in which several curators were invited to [00:02:00] choose an object from the Wellesley collection in an area in which they had strengths and organize a small exhibition around that object that would be scholarly and that would add to their knowledge of the object. Uh, they invited me to select a piece of sculpture in their 19th century French collection, of which they had quite a few, and I selected a marble bust of Diana by a French, uh, late-19th-century sculptor named—his full name—Jean Alexandre Joseph Falguière. I had only the vaguest idea of Falguière. I knew very little of his work, but this marble bust was a very arresting object. It was a realistic bust of a woman with her head turned and eyes downcast in a rather haughty expression, uh, that was very compelling. And it started me on a scholarly treasure hunt that was extremely interesting and very rewarding. And I began by—with a hunch that there probably [00:04:00] were many examples of this bust languishing in the storerooms of many museums in the United States. And I had a checklist of holdings that I had done during "Metamorphoses" so that I was able to write to selected museums from coast to coast and ask what they had in Dianas in 19th-century sculpture. And—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this—you had determined—was to have been the young Diana. That's what the bust was of.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Yes, and specifically Falguière or any other. And, sure enough, I turned up a remarkable variety of this image of Falguière's *Diana* and also many other Dianas of the same period so that I was able to mount an exhibition that was twofold. It showed, on one hand the various metamorphoses, if you will, of the image of Falguière's Diana, which ranged from a full figure to reduction of the life-size bust, which was in the Wellesley collection, to a bust four-and-a-half inches high, the size of a paperweight. And, indeed, it

was a very popular image. And in researching the history of Falguière's [00:06:00] work and his popularity, the popularity of his work that appeared annually at the salons in Paris, I discovered that the *Diana* bust was taken from a full-length nude, and he was noted for the nudes that he showed each year, which were very popular and very titillating to the public, uh, because they were so lifelike. And, uh, they could even, according to the literature of the time, guess who the model was. And it was really a very interesting project, and the show turned out to be, visually, a very beguiling small show suitable for the college art museum. And, indeed, Wellesley arranged for it to travel to the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin, the Mount Holyoke College Art Museum in South Hadley, Massachusetts, and I guess that's all. And in each venue, uh, it was installed differently, of course, but my favorite installation was the Wellesley installation, which had been designed by an architect, the husband of the curator at Wellesley under whom I worked, Judith [00:08:00]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So the curator was—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Judith Fox.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —Judith Fox.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And her husband designed a wonderful installation, which had—it was small like—and contained within the larger gallery, and architectural in feeling. And in the center, was the—one of the full-length reductions of the life-size statue of Diana by Falguière. And then, to one side were all the various, uh, variations on this Diana object from—there was the full-length figure I was able to borrow from the Shepherd Gallery in marble in New York. And, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The—these were all by Falguière.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, by Falguière. On the left-hand side were ranged all the variations I had been able to secure of the bust in three or four sizes, different materials, different patinas, so that one could really study what happened to an image in the 19th century which, when popular, was reproduced for the masses, really, the newly rich middle classes who wanted some decorative object for their liv—their parlors. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then, there were also in the show, though, examples by other sculptors—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, [inaudible].

ROBERT F. BROWN: —apart from Falguière.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Where is Kashey? Wait a minute. I've got it. [00:10:00]

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: We've mentioned the Shepherd Gallery, and the, uh, person there is—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Robert Kashey, who is a great, great scholar in the field of 19th-century casts and, in fact, has published, for his gallery the only publication I know—the only really useful one I know of that actually reproduces some of the foundry marks that one finds in 19th-century sculpture. And it's very helpful to the scholar in a field that's largely uncharted.

ROBERT F. BROWN: I was going to ask. Were there any students, say, first at Harvard-Radcliffe and then maybe at Wellesley, who began studying these—this field at all as a result of or at least more or less the same time as you were putting together your shows [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, I really don't know of any. Uh, unfortunately, I don't know what happened at Wellesley, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were there graduate students at the Fogg? I think you've mentioned in the past some helped [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, yes, they always worked on my shows at the Fogg. But in this case, I was on my own.

ROBERT F. BROWN: At Wellesley.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I had to do it alone, but, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And you—you made a comment earlier—now, the installation was grand, and you—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —[inaudible] very effective.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and I wanted to say that on the other side of this installation construction were the other Dianas by the other late-19th-century sculptors who—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —that I had been able to find, uh, starting with [00:12:00] Houdon, of course, who was early, and his Diana, which in a way was a great inspiration, and Carrier-Belleuse, whose Diana was extremely decorative, a wonderful object by Frémiet who also did animalier sculptures of Diana called *The Chariot of Diana*, which was a great centerpiece for the table and done in gilded bronze. And this Diana was riding in a chariot drawn by two beautifully articulated reindeer, and she was a Diana of the North with, not a stag at her side, but a dog. And she was wearing an animal fur around her shoulders. [Laughs.] Amazing object. And, of course, there was a Saint-Gaudens, *Diana of the Tower*, which in its original monumental scale had been designed for—as a weathervane for the old Madison Square Garden. And we were able to borrow a beautiful cast of one of the reductions, of which there were many. All of the sculptors that, uh—sculptures in the show were small-scale. The full-length Dianas were around 30 inches high, and the various [00:14:00]—

ROBERT F. BROWN: The—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —aspects of the Falguière, of course, ranged from a life-size bust down to the smallest, and they were shown in marble, in bronze, in plaster.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Were you given pretty much complete control on contents and installation?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Each of us was, each of the curators invited, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you've mentioned that, uh—before that the publication or the brochure itself, I guess, you didn't have quite so much control.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, because that was designed for the whole series, and therefore I had nothing whatever to do with that. And, um, it really didn't do justice to the amount of material that I had, perhaps more than they ever wanted, [laughs] on the subject. But once having delved into it, it was so fascinating, because I then discovered at the end that every one of these late-19th-century Dianas from Falguière's to MacMonnies and Saint-Gaudens, the American versions, all of these sculptors had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts from Falguière's teacher named Geffois [ph] or from Falguière himself so that one could see that it was almost a school of Dianas.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], and [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, in addition, I was interested in tracing the history of Diana, why it was so important in French art in general, and got all the way back to the time of François premier, who imported [00:16:00] classical statuary when he was building Fontainebleau, and then, of course, Diane de Poitiers and all that. So that, actually, the show really, uh—not the show so much as the material for the catalogue was very multilayered and perhaps much more intricate than the small show warranted, but it was interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But if you [inaudible] catalogue and then the installation, put them together, these various strata could emerge.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Right. Right.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you were quite happy in—by and large with this, this work.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it was a wonderful project, and I was delighted to have the opportunity to do it.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, that's one of the last shows that you worked on, was that one at Wellesley.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But before that, uh, you had also done a publication. I think you wanted to talk just briefly about it, the Odilon Redon.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. During the last—my last years at the Fogg, I had been approached by a

Frenchwoman, Mira Jacob, who had a very well-known small gallery on the Rue de Seine in Paris notable for its prints and drawings, and who herself was quite a scholar. She had had her graduate degree in fine arts and had gone to the—[00:18:00] had studied at the Louvre and had already done some scholarly works. She had discovered—she had a very fine collection of Redon paintings, drawings, and prints, some of which she sold, but the best of which she kept for her own collection and was considered quite an authority on Redon. And she had discovered that there didn't exist a translation of the Redon journal in English, and she decided that would be a wonderful project. And having heard of me through my work on Daumier, she approached me at the Fogg and asked if I would collaborate with her on this translation into English of Redon's journal. I was very doubtful that I could really do this and told her that, you know, I was not a translator, this was not my field, and perhaps she should seek somebody more qualified to do it. But she was a very stubborn lady, as I was to find out, and she insisted that I work with her. And there began a relationship that lasted, oh, three or four years, I guess, that got very, very complicated and very involved. And she did all the transaction of the publication of the book. She, uh, signed a contract with Braziller, and I had nothing to do with that. Also, she was very difficult to work with. [00:20:00] She insisted that every single mark made by Redon be retained and that the sentences not be rearranged in any way, the punctuation be used as it was, and the result was very, very awkward English in most cases, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did she think was gained by retaining his—the punctuation?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, she felt that the spirit and that he was such a poet—she really worshipped Redon, and, um, the project began to be really a terribly difficult chore for me, because I became more and more involved with this woman. And, um, toward the end she was in a great hurry to finish it, and at that time she was—she had a small house in Georgetown, in Washington and would divide her time between Paris, where she had her family and her gallery and owned a great deal of real estate on the Rue de Seine and thereabouts, and the States, where she would do her scholarly work and have a quiet time. And I would never know when she was coming, but there would be a telephone call, and I would hear a shriek at the end saying, "Jeanne," and then I knew that Mira had arrived. And I was expected to drop everything and wait upon her and work with her. Actually, Max was very understanding and very hospitable, and we invited her to our farm in New Hampshire and [00:22:00] saw a great deal of Mira at one point. But, uh, shortly after Max died, she became very rushed and insisted that we end the project. I imagine Braziller was getting a little bit restive at that point, and she had to go back to France and left me with the manuscript that we had finished one terrible weekend, very hot weekend in September when she summoned me to her house in Georgetown and wouldn't even allow me out, [laughs] kept me prisoner until we finished, hardly would let me receive phone calls from my husband. [Laughs.] But, um, she went off then—this was a year or so, I guess, after we had done our last translation—and left me to do the final editing and work it out with Braziller—Braziller's editor. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What did Braziller's editor think of this awkward syntax and arrangement in English?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, she tried to fix it up as best she could, but Mira didn't like her, and I think that the feeling was mutual. And, uh, I don't know. It was something that I don't like to think about too much, and to this day—the book did come out, and it was something less than a sensation. Braziller did not promote it, much to Mira's disgust, [00:24:00] and it was not really a very useful book because, although it did have the translation of the journal, it had no illustrations, which was too bad, no biographical information on Redon, no essay to accompany it. It was just the translation, and, as such, it sells its few copies every year to libraries, I suppose, and I get one half of the royalties, which amount to something under \$30 and a few cents. [Laughs.] And that is the net result of the project, but I—Mira was not happy with the translation and accused me of letting it go—of being a traitor and letting it go to press with horrible, embarrassing mistakes in it. I never found out what these were because, to this day, I've never read it. [They laugh.] I can't.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And, uh—but she didn't want illustrations. She wanted to keep Redon's—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, this was the, uh—Braziller's decision.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Oh.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: This was his—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Would Mira Jacobs have allowed a biographer or a little biographical outline, or did she not want that either?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It never came up. It never came up.

ROBERT F. BROWN: It never came up. You were [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And since I had nothing to do with the arrangements—

ROBERT F. BROWN: You were anxious to bail out of the thing, weren't you?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and I was anxious to bail out. But it does exist, and, as I say, to this day I get twice a year my little check for the few copies that are sold here and abroad. And I don't know who's buying them, but I suspect it's libraries. Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, much happier was your long indirect and direct involvement at MIT, wasn't it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, it was.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Because Max was an MIT graduate and—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: He was, in the class [00:26:00] of '35.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Was he involved by the '50s or so, and you as well, in their—on their arts council?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, Max was one of the early members of the arts council at MIT shortly after it was founded.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Which would have been, maybe, in the 1950s or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [Inaudible.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So this, uh—Max, then, was an early member, one of the early members of the MIT arts council.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Arts council, which came about in the—I think sometime in the '50s, and Max's involvement probably started in the early '60s. It became one of his favorite volunteer activities. He was very absorbed in it, and no matter how busy he was he made time to go to their meetings. And, um, they began to set up the—the arts council was an advocate for the arts at MIT at—starting with, I think, under the presidency of Julius Stratton, and his wife Kay was one of the founders of the council and is active in it to this day. Um, this dedicated group nurtured the arts at MIT, which had grown very haphazardly. It was very interesting. They were given by a corporation, um, a collection of mostly print a long time ago. And not knowing—not having a museum or any place to care for them or store them or keep them, [00:28:00] they distributed them throughout the campus to various offices and professors and so forth and—who enjoyed it so much that this was continued. And as the art collection grew, the idea of placing it in public venues continued. And to this day, MIT, though it now has not one but two museums, does place the collection in suitable areas and also, in these days, has a one percent for art so that works are commissioned when new buildings are designed and built.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And that program had its beginnings back partly—well, like, when Max came on.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. And, uh, then—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What—what was—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Max actually was most active under the presidency of Jerry Wiesner, and Max was very close to the Wiesners and very enthusiastic. And Jerry Wiesner, I think his greatest contribution during his presidency was the building up of the humanities at MIT so that, now, the drama department, the music department, the creative writing department as well as the visual arts are blossoming at MIT, even the dance. And I was told by one of the professors in the drama department that, actually, several [00:30:00] students had majored in drama at MIT. It's that fine a thing, uh, so that Max's dedication to the council became more and more absorbing. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: What was his particular interest, the visual arts or—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, he was interested as a collector in the visual arts and, uh, was very supportive of the fundraising effort to raise funds for the Wiesner—excuse me.

[Audio break.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Uh, when the proposition—the proposal to have a new museum for the visual arts at MIT came along, Max really supported it a hundred percent and was able to raise a lot of the money. He's very—was very gifted at fundraising, which always amazed me, because—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now this—why is that, because—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: It's just something in his nature.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: He's—he was never afraid to ask for the money. He knew—he was always sought after by all sorts of organizations who had to raise money because he really was very good at it, and he involved—I remember he and Roy Lamson, who was a professor at MIT and also on the Council for the Arts, uh, were able to interest Luis Ferrer [ph]—Ferré, who was then [00:32:00] governor of Puerto Rico. And we had a very mad trip. The Lamsons and Max and I went to visit Luis Ferré in—

ROBERT F. BROWN: In Puerto Rico.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: In—in—it's the city.

ROBERT F. BROWN: San Juan?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: In San Juan, and the men didn't want the wives present when they really talked cold turkey. So, uh, Luis Ferré arranged for one of his drivers to show Peggy Lamson and me around San Juan. Unfortunately, however, the driver didn't know his way around San Juan because he came from the other city on the other side where Luis has his museum.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Ponce.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Ponce. He came from Ponce. And we were told to be back at Luis's house at a certain time. And when the time came, it was apparent that the driver didn't know his way back, and we had a terrible time trying to get, you know—to find—ask the way and so forth. And finally, Peggy, who hasn't got much patience, said, "Oh, never mind." And we got out of the car and took a taxi. [They laugh.] But, uh, that was just one of the experiences when they were—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, this was raising money—the Hayden Gallery was already in existence.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The Hayden Gallery was in existence, but it was the only—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —gallery. It was very small, very limited, and it was obvious that they needed a museum [00:34:00] for their visual arts. Um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And there were, on the faculty—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The architect I.M. Pei was on the committee and, of course, was given the project to design the museum. And Max was very helpful in that also because he was never afraid to speak up, and he had very practical ideas about building. And when Pei presented the first proposal for the building, Max immediately criticized it and pointed out what was not only impractical but costly, and wouldn't work. And I.M. Pei took this criticism in good grace and went back to the drawing board and redid it. And not everybody would have done that, but Max had a very close relationship with I.M. Pei also, admired him very much. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Pei was an MIT graduate, too.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So [inaudible] sort of a sentimental interest, I suppose.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, uh, about the time that the museum was under construction, Kathy Halbreich, who was then the director and who was also very fond of Max—and we had a very good relationship with Kathy, who was brilliant and full of ideas. One day, Kathy and I had lunch, and she proposed that—she had an idea that when the museum opened there was going to be a large gallery and a small gallery, and she thought it would be very interesting to have a series of small sculpture exhibitions in the small gallery and asked if [00:36:00] I would be interested in organizing them. Uh, her thought was to take sculptors who were well represented in the MIT collection, such as Henry Moore—there are two monumental Moores on campus.

ROBERT F. BROWN: These had been acquired over the years partly through the arts council. Is that [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: That's right. And, uh, yes, one of the arts council's activities, of course, was to acquire art for MIT, and, in general, support the arts. Uh, and another was Jacques Lipchitz, because outside of the Hayden Gallery was a courtyard which had a small group of Lipchitz sculptures, many—most of which were on loan from Lipchitz's widow Yulla. So—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And how would they have come to be on loan, through—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, Yulla was a member of the arts council through, um—what is her name?

ROBERT F. BROWN: But there was someone with a close connection.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible] this woman—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Ida Rubin, who was also one of the founders of the Council for the Arts, I believe, brought Yulla Lipchitz—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yulla.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —onto the council, and it was very close to her.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And then, you were approached by Kathy to do what—it was one of the inaugural exhibitions, wasn't it?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Right. Well, when Kathy and I discussed this, we decided that the—a Lipchitz show would appropriate for one of the—for the initial small sculpture show and the inaugural one when the gallery opened in the fall of, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I think it was the spring, [00:38:00] March of, uh, 1985.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I think it was in the fall, actually, of '85, and—or maybe it was the fall of '86. No, '85, and that was a very interesting project because we had the idea of doing Lipchitz not only as sculptor but also as collector. And I went to see Yulla Lipchitz on several occasions, and she had cases full of the ancient artifacts that Lipchitz had collected. And I was able to make a selection of those to show in connection with the small sculptures of Lipchitz that I borrowed from Yulla Lipchitz herself. And it was—she was very overcome, emotionally overcome, when she came up to the opening and saw the show because she hadn't seen these objects together for a long time. And it was a very attractive small show of Lipchitz's work.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the architectural setting was very successful for the show?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, the building was fine. Uh, the gallery is the small Bakalar Gallery in the List Visual Arts Center. And, uh, actually, Max was the person who in—who brought Vera List onto the arts council and therefore was indirectly—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Got her—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —responsible for the Lists' large contribution, which made the arts center possible.

ROBERT F. BROWN: What—in that inaugural show, what—was there something [00:40:00] also in the large gallery, of course? Wasn't there?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, but not more sculpture.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I can't remember.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Who was the, uh—but during those years and earlier, there—faculty people who—you've mentioned Roy Lamson. In the visual arts, I know a Wayne Anderson, [inaudible] very closely involved.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Wayne Anderson was a very—yes, we knew Wayne quite well. Uh, he was not connected with MIT, though, by '85.

ROBERT F. BROWN: No, but earlier he had been.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Earlier he had been, and we had known him quite well.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And what—and he had interests very similar to your own, or what was it like working with him?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, he was particularly interested in sculpture. And after he left MIT, he became a consultant, uh, to—in large businesses and industry in acquiring art, corporate art. And he also was instrumental in the acquisition of a large cast of the head of Beethoven by a student of Rodin.

ROBERT F. BROWN: A cast—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: By Bourdelle.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —a cast for MIT?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: For MIT. It's in the collection.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, was, uh, Wayne—did Wayne sort of supply scholarly information, or how did you all work together? Did he—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, we never worked with Wayne. I really don't remember much about Wayne's MIT career.

ROBERT F. BROWN: But you did know him [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: But we did know him. Yes, we did. And, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, the second show you put on for the new List Art Center was the one on Henry Moore.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. [00:42:00] And that was very interesting because I had a very strong interest in Moore's work and career. I had been fortunate enough to visit him twice at Much Hadham in England and had done a lot of work on his sculpture at Fogg and had mounted shows that included his sculptures. Uh, the large Henry Moore on the campus at MIT had been there for a long time, and at the time of the opening of the Wiesner Building—Arts Building and the List Visual Arts Center within that building, Vera List gave to MIT a second monumental Henry Moore, which is placed on campus in an outdoor space adjoining the Wiesner Building. And this is a cast of one of the studies for the Henry Moore sculpture that the Lists gave to Lincoln Center, and it's—she gave this sculpture to MIT in memory of her brother, Sam Glaser, the architect, who had been an MIT—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —alumnus.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you get to know her a bit during these—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, we knew Vera. She was family. She was related to Max as a distant cousin, maybe not so distant. I never quite understood the relationship. It was very complicated. [Laughs.] [00:44:00] But Sam Glaser and Vera were part of Max's family's family, and we did know them over the years.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did she have a particular astuteness as a collector? How [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Vera has the most intuitive understanding of art, particularly sculpture, of anyone I've ever met. And she was continually shocking friends and acquaintances by selling modern masters and buying cutting-edge art, which everybody thought was crazy. She was one of the guiding lights for the New Museum in New York. She was instrumental in getting Sam Hunter as director of the Jewish Museum in New York when the Jewish Museum for the short period, one or two or three years that Sam Hunter was there, became the center of all the exciting activity of art of the '60s in New York. And, um, in the early '60s, when I was really becoming more and more involved at Fogg and becoming more and more interested in art history and working on Rodin and early modern sculptors, I suddenly discovered that I understood and knew nothing of the new work that was coming out. And I called Vera List one day and asked if she would [00:46:00] guide me on a small tour of the galleries in New York and show me some of the new work, and that was one of the most exciting afternoons I've ever spent. We went to the Green Gallery at that time, and I saw these strange things, measuring devices, which are being sold as sculptures. And I think they must have been early Robert Morris, and now I realize how early it was and how important it was. It was the beginning of Minimalism. But what Vera did for me was bring me into the Pop Art of the '60s and introduce me to Segal, Segal's art, the art of, uh—[inaudible] name [ph].

ROBERT F. BROWN: Lucas [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: On that particular trip—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Wow.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —we saw not only the Robert—

[END OF TRACK.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —[00:00:00] Morris, and, um, Vera was buying things here and there, and I was just

watching. But when it came to the boxes, I have quite a love of boxes and baskets. I decided to buy one so that I have this Samaras box as a souvenir of this very enlightening journey. And later on, Max and I acquired Segals. We visited Segal in his converted chicken houses in New Jersey, and, of course, we got to know Oldenburg and so on and so forth, and the rest is our history, which I've already gone over. But this was the very beginning, this trip with Vera.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Now, this would have been mid-'60s or something like that?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, I think, uh—yes, probably '65 or so, '64.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, you had Sam Hunter involved with the furnishings of 180 Beacon Street.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, we did.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And was that partly Vera's [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, it had nothing to do with Vera. As a matter of fact, it might have been the other way around. Sam was, uh, at that time—before he went to the Jewish Museum, he was the first director of the Rose Museum at Brandeis. And Max and I became early friends of the Rose, a very lively group, and Sam Hunter, who really was the guru of the art of the '60s, uh, was able to get for Brandeis the Mnuchin Collection, which to this day, I believe, is the largest [00:02:00] collection of '60s art in—or Pop Art in this area and which is a great resource for students. And, uh, these were very heady times. About that time, Max had a new project. He was planning the construction of a luxury building at 180 Beacon Street. We've done this—

ROBERT F. BROWN: We've talked about that. Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —as I've mentioned before. And that was how we got involved with Sam Hunter.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And I think Vera noticed him and so forth. And because she was a trustee of the Jewish Museum and they needed a new director, and because of her influence on the board, the Jewish Museum at that point was very oriented toward exhibiting contemporary art. And it was she who—when Sam decided to leave Brandeis—who lured him to New York.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you might say that Vera and you and Max sort of sharpened each other's [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [Laughs.] Yeah, in a way, in a way, but—

ROBERT F. BROWN: And the MIT arts council, then, has had a very—a rather formidable role over the years.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes, it has. And, uh, of course, now that Ellen Harris has come and been appointed Associate Provost for the Arts, these many, many arts that were—have been flourishing all over the campus at MIT are now finally being brought under one umbrella, as it were, and, uh, [00:04:00] in sum total are a very important part of the life and the intellectual life of MIT.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you've continued to sort of fill the shoes, Max's shoes, [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, after Max's death, I continued to be invited to the annual council meetings, which were always two-day affairs. And the council consists of people, mainly MIT graduates, but not necessarily, all over the United States. Uh, and these meetings were always very, very well orchestrated and very interesting. And I was always invited. Spouses were invited to the dinner, and the final luncheon, at which various awards were given and so forth. And they continued to invite me to these, but I had really no official role for several years until finally it occurred to them that—everyone, I think, assumed that I was a member of the council, but, of course, I was not. And in order to be a member, you have to be appointed by the president, so it took a while for this to happen. But I have been a formal member of the council for the past, I think, four years or so. And during these years I have instituted an annual forum in contemporary art [00:06:00] in memory of Max, which I feel is a very appropriate way to remember him because he was not only interested in contemporary art, but so very interested in MIT. And this was—I wanted, uh—he had wanted to make a gift to MIT, which, in fact, has not been—it depends upon the sale of some real estate, which has not been executed so far. And in the meantime, I felt that I wanted to start a special project and have it going for the time when the money would kick in on an annual basis, and by this time Kathy had left MIT and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Kathy Halbreich.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —Kathy Halbreich, and Katy—oh, what's her name? Katy Kline, who was curator, is now the director, and so, again, I had lunch with Katy Kline that turned out to be very fruitful. And Katy made several

suggestions that—of what would be most useful for the council in Max—for the List Visual Arts Center, which was where Max wanted to make his bequest, a project that would be viable for them and appropriate for the gift. [00:08:00] And she named several ideas, and the one that appealed to me the most was an annual forum on some topic currently controversial or of interest in the art community in general. And we have now—we are working on our fourth forum. Mark Palmgren, who is director of the council at MIT, was appointed by Ellen Harris as the person in charge of this project. And with his knowledge of the field of art criticism and his background in the arts, he is indeed a very appropriate person to carry this on. Uh, we have consulted various curators in the area to come up with ideas, and so far, we have had three forums, each on a different subject, with a different keynote speaker and three respondents. It's been a rather complex event to organize, and perhaps overambitious to mount on an annual basis. I'm wondering if it shouldn't be maybe every two years instead of every year. However, we are [00:10:00] carrying on at the moment.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Are you getting a—quite a big attendance? I mean, that [inaudible]—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The attendance has been good but not great, and with each year they're improving on getting the word out. But as a member of the boards of two college museums—I'm also a member of the board of overseers of the Rose Museum at Brandeis, and my past experience at the Fogg Museum—I realize that the matter of art attendance both at the museum and at the events on these campuses is very, very questionable, very difficult to build up the attendance, and it's a problem that I hear articulated over and over at all these board meetings, how to build up the campus awareness of the art facility. Um, we are filling the small theater at the—almost filling it—at the List Visual Arts Center at MIT. It's us—we were having the event in May, but we have now changed it to October, and we had the last one last October. The subjects have been—

ROBERT F. BROWN: That might be a good time. There's still—the fresh, new—early in the new year, the fresh—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, we feel that, May, we lose a lot of the audience because it's the time of finals, and many of the student body is already departed. And the fall is a better time, but we [00:12:00] started with the first one in May 1991, the first Max Wasserman Forum on Contemporary Art. And our subject was "Quality Control: The Challenge of Cultural Diversity," which, it turned out to be, was quite prophetic because cultural diversity is now the big catch word—

ROBERT F. BROWN: It is [ph].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —in the arts and is the big direction that most museums are going in.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Well, was there a consensus there that one should go after cultural diversity, or were there [inaudible] to this?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Oh, yes. Uh, it was an interesting forum but a little bit wide of the mark, I think. We had a professor of English and art at the University of Chicago, Professor Mitchell, as the keynote speaker to give an overall view, and the respondents were, uh, an interesting mix of people. We had Kimberly Camp, who turned out to be the most lively and the most interesting of the group, who is director of the Experimental Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution, and she really was more on the mark than anybody else on the panel. Trevor Fairbrother, the curator of contemporary art of the Museum of Fine Arts, responded on behalf of the curatorial point of view, and then we had Catherine Lord, who was chairman of the studio art department at the University of California in Irvine, who had more of a point of view of an art school in which art [00:14:00] is actually made rather than studied. Um, I would say that this first forum taught us a great deal about how to sharpen the subject so that—it's really rather complicated. It has to be planned so that the keynote speaker will do his paper, his or her paper, and get it out to the respondents so that, in fact, they will stay on the subject, which—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yes.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —we didn't do that first time, and we were all over the place.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: The second one was on the subject of "Seeing is Believing: History, Art, and Interpretation." And the idea came from some controversial exhibitions, one in Washington, an exhibition, *The West as America* at the Smithsonian—

ROBERT F. BROWN: At the National Museum of American Art.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —in which they presented the West not in its idealized form as the great paintings of the past would lead us to believe, the great landscape painters, but as a business development to sell the West for the railroads and so forth. And people took great exception to this, so the whole idea of the way history is rewritten through its depiction and interpretation. And we also—another controversial exhibition of the time that

fed into this idea was the Spoleto Festival of 1991 in Charleston called *Places with a Past*, so that we invited, as keynote speaker, Michael Kammen, [00:16:00] who was a professor of American history and culture at Cornell. And the respondents were the curator at the National Museum of Art who had done this controversial show for the Smithsonian, William Truettner; Mary Jane Jacob, who was the curator who did a show at—of places in the past at Charleston; and J. Hoberman, a film critic for *The Village Voice*, who turned out to be the star of this particular panel. He was very witty and very wonderful. And we had introduced through two of the speakers the use of slides, and we discovered that this very much enlivened the whole procedure.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: So I think the second one was much more exciting than the first.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And more focused, it seems, [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. And last year, we did "Giving Birth to Brightness: African Art in the Postcolonial World," and they were able to do a series of contemporary African films in conjunction with this and tie it in so that this was the most exciting yet to date. And, actually, the participants engaged after their formal papers in a tremendous debate among themselves that went on and on and on. The forum lasted well into the night and much longer than we intended, and now we're going to have to cut it down because we feel that it turned some people off to have an evening that goes on that long. However, it was very stimulating, and it opened a whole new [00:18:00] idea, because when you think of an—we were not addressing tribal art, but we were addressing the contemporary artists within the African culture in a postcolonial world influenced by the West, and yet with its own tribal background. Uh, the star—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Did you record all of this?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah, and the star of this—of last year's forum was a young African, [inaudible]—a professor, let's see. He wasn't a professor. We did have a professor of Afro-American studies named Kwame Anthony Appiah; Michael Brenson, a freelance critic and curator; and the star was a lecturer in Afro-American studies named Moyo Okediji, who is now at the—was at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and came in his African dress so that he was visually very exciting. And he absolutely electrified the audience. And in the question period after, he actually dressed down somebody who spoke about African art as—the importance of African art as tribal art and said, "This is the past. This is over. What is being done in Africa today is entirely different." And he showed slides of his own work, which was really very exciting and very abstract and very modern, very colorful. Um, [00:20:00] and also, there was Sylvia Williams, who is director of the National Museum of African Art in Washington, DC, who gave a magnificent paper with wonderful slides. It was a really very exciting evening, and our audience, too, had changed because we were able to reach into the African American community, and there were many, uh, blacks—black people there, and both in the student—black students as well as professors and so forth. And it was a very interesting evening. Now, this year we are working on an idea, but—for next October, and I don't—I'm not sure how far along it is because, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Have you got a general—you must have a general subject by now?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: We have a general subject. We don't even have a title yet, but I'm hoping that it will come soon. And the subject is, um—it really grew out of the tremendous critical clamor against the last Whitney Biennial in which there was so much political art and so little, um—

ROBERT F. BROWN: With any aesthetic merit?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —so little formal art. Uh, formalism had to give way to rather sloppy installations and a great deal of video, talking, and so forth. And this brings up the question of is there a dichotomy [00:22:00] between political and social art as expressed by artists today and the more formal or—art expressed in formal terms. I see it as—we do have Peter Schjeldahl, a critic, as the moderator, and we're hoping to get—we've decided, in the interest of cutting down the long-windedness of these evenings, of having just two respondents, one who would represent the social emphasis and one who perhaps—it's my hope—who would have a social message within a more formal presentation.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And I'm thinking of such artists as Kiki Smith and Alison Saar. We've already been turned down by Alison Saar, who will be out of the country at the time, and I don't know just where we stand with the others.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you—you're very closely involved in the evolution of the forum?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: I've been very closely involved, and I am hoping to be less and less involved. I'm

hoping that it will get its own momentum and that before long I can see it going on its own so that when I'm no longer around, I hope that it will go on. But I do think maybe it's overambitious, that it's very hard to build an audience for such a thing, and that we have to keep simplifying it, streamlining it, and perhaps not trying to do it so often.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Is there a publication follow—?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, MIT is great in these [00:24:00] things because they make videotapes, which are available, and I think they also have some kind of a printout.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm [affirmative]. So you're practically as involved as ever, aren't you?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: [Laughs.] Oh, yes. Yes, indeed.

ROBERT F. BROWN: And this all started when you were pretty young on the trip to France with your parents and —

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —got turned on at the Rodin Museum—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: —by particularly the sculpture.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Exactly. Exactly. Exactly, and, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: I also know you're teaching now. I mean, you're teaching people—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. Now that I'm no longer formally connected with the Fogg—before I left the Fogg, I became interested in an organization that I had heard about and met people who were very enthusiastic about and were members, and that is Harvard's Institute for Learning in Retirement, known as HILR. And while still at Fogg, I went over to their office, which was in a basement in Lyman Hall on the Harvard Yard and registered for a term and took a course in archaeology to see what it was like. And I thought, "Well, you know, I could lead a course here, and maybe I have something to contribute." So I not only matriculated the following fall but proposed a course in modern sculpture and—which was accepted, and I then went to work on a syllabus and gave the course the following fall, [00:26:00] uh, fall of—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Several years ago?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes. I think it was '87. I've been doing it since '87. And I gave slide lectures, in effect, which is what I had been doing as a curator at the Fogg. Uh, I didn't realize at the time that this was not at all the philosophy of the school, and was not the way many of the courses were organized, but it caught on. People enjoyed it thoroughly because they didn't have to do much work. Naturally, there were no marks and no requirements, and—

ROBERT F. BROWN: But what was the usual way of teaching, [inaudible]?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Well, the usual—well, the idea of the school, which I began to understand as time went on, is that there is no professional teaching staff and that it is organized by peers teaching peers. Retired people who have expertise in one field or another, or perhaps want to find out about a field that they don't have expertise in, will design a course, which then is passed on by a curriculum committee also run by members of the school, and so that the curriculum varies from term to term based on what offerings there are that have been accepted. And participation of members is absolutely tantamount. Um, so I have had to literally learn to change my ways, change from a lecturer to a teacher, in other words, to present the syllabus, [00:28:00] plan the course, and because I change it every single year or it would be deadly for me to repeat, the part that I really enjoy is going to my carrel, which I have in the Fogg—in the fine arts library at Harvard and researching the material for the course. Now, because I change it every year, I've never been able to find a textbook, which means that, in order to give the course content for a mixed bag of students, some with background in art, some with none, just an interest—I've had to give what's known as handouts for background material, which is a lot of work. It means Xeroxing material from books and so forth. And I always give at least a 30-minute presentation myself to keep the course moving in the direction in which the syllabus goes and to give them formal content as a basis for discussion. Uh, the things that I find difficult to work into the syllabus, is the topics for class presentations. Uh, members of the class volunteer to take a subject, usually a sculptor, and do their own paper. And I've had to learn exactly the balance. Each weekly session is two hours with a 10-minute break between the hours, and I have gradually [00:30:00] over these, uh, last six or seven years—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Or seven years.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —refined it to the point where I know exactly how to schedule each meeting so that I don't take more than 30 minutes. I used to give them much too much material and over-schedule, and I now reduce it to 30 minutes of slide presentation for myself, time for discussion, and time for a presentation by a class member followed by more discussion, so that this year, I'm doing a survey of sculpture in America starting with the gravestones of the 17th century and ending with the—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —with the welded sculpture of David Smith in the 1960s.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: On the way, I hope that we can emphasize the neo-classic marbles of the 19th century, which I haven't done yet and which are, of course, very accessible to people with not much art background who find the more abstract things very difficult.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Right, and they're abundant in this immediate area, too.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And, of course, we have—

ROBERT F. BROWN: [Inaudible.]

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —and then I always do a couple of field trips either to artists' studios, museums, exhibitions, or whatever, so it's natural for a trip to the Museum of Fine Arts with their amazing 19th century collection. And we're also—one of the early sessions, we will have a little field trip right around the corner from our new headquarters where our classes are at 51 Brattle Street to visit the burying ground on Garden Street, which I have finally visited for the first time and find fascinating. So it's a whole new thing for me, [00:32:00] too, and this is the idea of HILR. It's an idea that is now national. Harvard was one of the early—not the earliest, but one of the early universities to add this to their department of continuing education, and now universities all across the country are beginning to have these institutes. And there is now a network of institutes combined with Elderhostel, which combines travel with a preliminary course at your institute for background, which is very, very interesting.

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you could conceivably have people dropping in from programs elsewhere.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Not exactly.

ROBERT F. BROWN: [inaudible], not quite that?

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No, no, it isn't that. It is that if a course, for instance, centers on Rome, there will be a trip to Rome, and there will be so many places open for the network members, that is, universities across the country who are network members. And last year, the subject was Mexican history and art, and—oh, that's, uh, [inaudible].

[Audio break.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: So this—it sounds like you have a good deal—it's a rather intensive program [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yes, and it's very interesting, because I have become, almost in spite of myself, very involved in it. In the beginning, I'm afraid when I went over there I felt rather condescending, I'm ashamed to say. I thought, you know, "If I give an art course, I'm the expert, and these people are—"

ROBERT F. BROWN: Yeah.

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: —going to sit at my knee and learn." [00:34:00] And now, I have—I find that it—even my social horizons have changed and revolve around the school. One makes connections. One makes friends. I found a buddy to go to art exhibits with who was a teacher in a junior college of modern art, and we have a wonderful time. We went to Washington together and did nothing but museums last—a year ago May. And also, I've found that, I felt—I began to feel that I ought to contribute to the structure of the school because we—the only paid staff that we have is the, um—I don't know what she's called officially, but she's not exactly the director. She's, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: Sort of a coordinator or—

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: Yeah. She's—and then she has an assistant who helps us with all the logistics and so

on and so forth, when we have material copied or processed, and we get out a newspaper called the *HILR Connection*. And then we have all these committees, and the committees run the school. There's a council. And I find myself appointed to the admissions committee, about which I'm very ambivalent, because when I discovered that people now have to fill out an admissions form, which is as complicated as a four-page form. It's like applying [00:36:00] to college, an application. And they even have to write a little essay on why they want to go to HILR and what they think they can contribute. The committee consists of four couples, four women, four men, interview in pairs, one male, one female. And we interview constantly for the—during a term for the forthcoming term, and the admission changes. Uh, when I saw the application, I felt that it was too elitist. There's even a question about, "Have you or any member of your family a Harvard or Radcliffe connection?" And I felt this was terrible. And I was going to go to the dean of the department of continuing education and say, "What's the idea?" But, um, I went back to our handbook and read our mission, and Harvard's standards are to be adhered to. On the other hand, we have to have some kind of a cutoff point because our absolute limit is 500, and we're getting up to 400—more than 450. The population changes from year to year. People drop out. Others come on, even from term to term. There are many who have been there from the very beginning, and I think now it's 15 years old, this particular organization. And we have wonderful new headquarters at 51 Brattle Street as part of the department of continuing education, which is a building, an early 20th-century building, that has been beautifully rehabbed, and the classrooms are state of the art. [00:38:00] But they are planned to hold no more than 25, which is very good, because when we were taking whatever space we could find in Harvard Yard before we had this permanent headquarters, um, at one term, my course—because by then, at that time I had not—I was still doing far too much slide lecturing and was very popular. I had about 50 people, and that was too many.

ROBERT F. BROWN: Wow, that's [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: So now they're really limited to 25 and—because the discussion is important. So, uh—

ROBERT F. BROWN: So you find this is a [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: And I find now that I'm totally absorbed by it and that, to my own surprise, this is the main focus of my art involvement, and I keep it up. It is work, but I keep it up because it does challenge me. It keeps me in my field, and I am able to do research every summer in preparation. I only teach one term, fall term, and last year I, uh—it was a great stretch for me and for the class. I did women sculptors because I wondered why suddenly there are so many women sculptors. When I first began working in sculpture in the '50s or '60s, there were so few, and I found out that the women's movement had a great deal to do with it in the '70s. And I have, uh—now, I'm aware of the work of women sculptors that I was not aware of before, so that it's, for me, [00:40:00] a continual growing experience, and I'm much more humble about it than I was in the beginning. [Laughs.]

ROBERT F. BROWN: You couldn't have asked for more [inaudible].

JEANNE L. WASSERMAN: No. Right.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]