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Oral history interview with Marvin Lipofsky,
2003 July 30-August 5

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Marvin Lipofsky on July 30-31, and August 5, 2003. The interview took place in Berkeley, California, and was conducted by Paul Karlstrom for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Marvin Lipofsky has reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

MR. KARLSTROM: This is beginning an interview with Marvin Lipofsky for the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. And this is Paul Karlstrom interviewing Marvin Lipofsky at the artist's home, the studio adjoining downstairs, in Berkeley, California. The date for this first session is July 30, 2003. The interview is for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, and this is disc number one; my first digital oral history recording.

So Marvin, we chatted a little bit before the interview, sort of establishing a kind of format, I guess, for what I hope is a somewhat in-depth interview, taking as much time as we need, but certainly, I think we want to shoot for - well, maybe even six hours. But at any rate, we're going to get together tomorrow.

But first of all, by way of introduction, I want to congratulate you on the splendid retrospective exhibition and the fine book here that accompanies it currently at the Oakland Museum of California. Both the book and exhibition are impressive, and they raise for one - or certainly for me, certain compelling questions about your career and the place of studio glass within the broad field of fine art in this country - here and abroad, because you know about both of them; you have traveled a lot.

So a first question, one that I think will hover in the background or I hope it will, throughout our interview. In the forward to, *Marvin Lipofsky: A Glass Odyssey* [Oakland Museum, July 19, 2003 - October 12, 2003], Tina Oldknow - is that how you pronounce her name? Oldknow, curator of modern glass at the Corning Museum of Glass, concludes with this paragraph, if I may just quote it briefly. It's not very long.

Quote: "Throughout his career, Lipofsky's single-minded focus on the development of abstract sculptural forms in blown glass has served as a benchmark, reinforcing basic and cherished beliefs that are deeply rooted in the soul of the studio glass movement. Among these beliefs are the notions that glass is a material capable of sculptural expression, that vessels can become separate from function, and that the relationship between craft and fine art should not be based on mutual exclusion, but on an open and ever-expanding dialogue." Close quote.

Somehow, for me, this has the ring of a definitive statement, one that seems - that perhaps sums up your career, or could, and its significance within the studio glass movement, or perhaps as an American artist who has chosen glass as his expressive material and medium. So, my first question in relation to this is: Is that the way you would describe the situation and your position as an artist? Does that, for you, characterize, briefly, you and your career?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, first of all, I think that abstraction found me, rather than I finding abstraction. It just seemed to be the way that I expressed myself in art school. I studied industrial design at the University of Illinois. At that time, in the late '50s, there wasn't a sculpture major. I knew that my interests were in making things. I knew that I wasn't going to be a brain surgeon or a lawyer or a doctor, so design had sort of been the only choice that I really kind of recognized. But while I was an undergraduate, I took every sculptural course that was offered, so I gravitated towards that three-dimensional - making things in three dimensions, and I gravitated towards the abstract.

In my hometown of Barrington, Illinois, there was a sculptor [Carl Tolpo] whose specialty was Abraham Lincoln. And he had - he was a realist; he did statues and portraits of Lincoln. And I knew him briefly, and he was quite upset with me that my choice for my creative expression was abstract. He thought that the only true expression really should be more of the realist. But that's just - that's just the way I found myself - I didn't find myself. I did some small figures and things in school, went on a trip to Italy to a foundry in Florence, made a few small figures -

MR. KARLSTROM: This was during school?

MR. LIPOFSKY: This was just after school.

MR. KARLSTROM: Just after.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Just after school -

MR. KARLSTROM: After college?

MR. LIPOFSKY: - after college. I graduated; I and a friend of mine I had met in one of my sculpture classes, went to Europe, traveled around in a Volkswagen. And he had the idea that he would like to cast some pieces in bronze, and so we visited this factory in Florence where they gave us some wax, and we drove around - actually, drove down to Rome and there made some small wax pieces. He was figurative in his own work, and that's the only way I could at the moment see to make things. But we had them cast. I think there were - I had three pieces cast in - three pieces cast in bronze, and then they were shipped back to us in the States.

When I started my graduate work, I toyed a little bit with some figurative - well, I have always kind of played a little bit with some figures and - but the main body of my work was abstract. Graduate school [University of Wisconsin-Madison] was really an opening for me. Well, actually, I should tell you how I got there because that's fairly important.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay, I wonder if we should hold this for a minute and kind of, if we may, just dispatch the sort of more general questions because we're going to have a chance really to sort of follow your career, and I can get back there real quickly.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Sure.

MR. KARLSTROM: But I suppose - I suppose what I was looking for in a sort of direct way was a sense of how you view, in terms of this statement, the significance of - the best description of your career. And the issue of abstraction does seem central to that. And, if I may suggest - we're not going to get sort of mired down in this sort of bigger kind of generalization, but it's like a self-descriptor. But your mention of abstraction, for me, goes right to the issue that you were drawn to imagery, to a form of an expression from the beginning, and an interest in making things, but not specifically yet - which - well, we will get into glass for which you're so known and you have a prominent position in that.

So, it just seems to me - and you can sort of answer this or not, we can go on - that those two things are very much held in your work, in your career. You came to glass - and we'll talk about how - but for reasons that seem to me that you settled on that as a way, a medium, a way to express or realize your interest in abstraction. Is that right? Is that why you said abstraction found you, rather than the other way?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, in school you're given - we were given problems, and most of them were figurative in the sculpture classes. And I never felt that I was very successful at using a figure. And when I did things more abstractly, I felt more comfortable with it and felt that it was more successful in my - for me. Also, that was just coming off of the abstract expressionist painting. And when I looked at art, I didn't relate so much to the figurative thing, although I did look at painters, and I still like painters and sculptors who work in a figurative way. But I related more to the abstract and what people were doing abstractly, and it just became natural for me to express myself that way.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. Okay, well let me, before we really get into this, just, if I may, ask a couple of these sort of preliminary questions that I think - I hope will provide a framework for - in our discussions.

A second question, related: How would you - I'm not sure that this is fair at this point, but I'm going to try it anyway - how would you define Art with a big A, to include what were formerly understood as craft media? That's this issue that we were even mentioning earlier. You know, what is your overview and perspective on that issue, of this kind of status, if you will, or the understanding of craft media within this broader idea of making things, of making objects, of making art, that you set out to do, then you came to what has been called glass, especially, a craft media?

I guess what I'm asking - and if you want to pass on this, we can come back to it later, but I'm really interested in what you think makes for serious artistic activity and signifies true creative ambition. In other words, what is being an artist as opposed to being an artisan or a craftsman, which is slightly different, I think.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I think - I think, for me, it's - it's fairly simple.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay.

MR. LIPOFSKY: For me, I think it's education. I think it's where people went to school, or how they were educated into what they express themselves - or how they express themselves. Those people who had experiences in

many materials, I would believe, don't discriminate quite as much as those people who were educated solely in one material or one aspect of art. And I think it's just purely a prejudice on our historians, for the most part, who have influenced artists and schools, and so forth.

MR. KARLSTROM: Right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And I think – and I think it's their lack of education. And as we look deep into our history, they had very little education into the total picture, but they –

MR. KARLSTROM: You mean the understanding of –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Understanding of many materials and arts, and so forth. And those who write about painting don't write about sculpture; those who write about sculpture don't necessarily – but some do – write about painting. So I think it's just purely a prejudice and the lack of education of those people in power. It's just – it's purely power.

However, I do see that there is craft, and craft to me is more functional and expresses itself as function, and it does not really have anything to do with material. And especially today, when anyone can use any material and it's the success of using that material and their degree of expression and depth is how that material is used, whether it's shown in a – and I hate the word fine arts because I think that's a misnomer – it's – in a gallery, a blue chip gallery, or in a shop. I think that's the only distinction.

I think there are probably many more lousy painters in this world than – that I don't think would qualify very much as being artists, they're just – they express themselves, but they're pretty bad. [Laughs.] So, I think it's a matter of quality. So – and there are people who use clay or glass or who express themselves extremely well and are very successful at their material – successful at what they're doing. So, I think it's just a matter of education, and I think that it's a rather moot point these days to deal with it.

Now, one of the problems I have seen is the museums and organizations changing their name to eliminate the word craft –

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And I think that's –

MR. KARLSTROM: What about that?

MR. LIPOFSKY: – quite a shame. It just means that they weren't very successful or really weren't very comfortable with what they were doing, because there isn't anything dirty about craft.

MR. KARLSTROM: No.

MR. LIPOFSKY: There isn't anything wrong about craft. But I think the people who are running those organizations have a lack of education. And if you look at the people who make the decisions, they're the ones who are not educated, they're the ones who are prejudiced, they're the ones who are bowing to what they believe is what society thinks they should be doing, and I think it's – it's highly suspect. Most of it comes from pressure from the East Coast, from New York, and I think it's a matter of who they think will respond to them, and having a negative feeling about the word craft because it's really – it's really a shame that they haven't been successful at their jobs – director of whatever, president of – they haven't done a good job. And I read one woman associated with – that said that when she goes to corporations, they sort of laugh at her when she mentions the word craft. But they would laugh at her if she brought up some minority people's – I mean, it's the same – it's the same as bigotry. It's the same as corporate heads making jokes about minorities. That doesn't mean they're right because they're the president.

MR. KARLSTROM: Right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: We've had presidents of the United States who made jokes about minorities, and that didn't make them any more right or any more correct or any more knowledgeable. So, I think the same thing applies to those people who can't stand on their own and can't believe in something. And those people who believe – some of the nicest people are people who work with their hands. Now, I don't know if painters believe that they work with their hands, but they do.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And the people who make pots work with their hands. And you have to think just as deeply making a pot as you do when you're putting down a brush stroke. So, I don't see much difference in it. There are some differences in expression, there are some differences in feelings, but I think those are fairly minor.

MR. KARLSTROM: Do you – this is interesting because immediately we’re – this is good, moving into some – what I call the big questions, and we will revisit that. But it seems to me that you’re describing what is a kind of marginalization – that’s a popular term, you know –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes.

MR. KARLSTROM: – marginalized groups, and in this case, a form of expression or material-based prejudice. I think that that’s what you talked about. In some ways we think that that’s gone because a lot has happened since the ‘60s; you have been a big part of that. And yet, in other ways, it seems to linger on, that crafts art – ceramic sculpture, glass sculpture, which is the way I would – I would – that’s, frankly, the way I’d describe your work: you’re a sculptor who works in glass – that to the extent it’s attached to traditional ideas of craft, it becomes marginalized. It still – and it seems to me people who write about it, even support it, and even understanding that it’s part of fine art, they still seem to think of it in terms of material and technique, like that has to be – not apologized for, but sets it apart. And again, we’ll be able to talk about this. But I wonder what you –

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think that’s really a moot point. I mean, there isn’t anyone, any group of people who are more limited in what they use than painters, who paint on four-by-six foot canvases using oil or acrylic paint. I mean, there’s nothing more limiting than that, so it can’t just be material.

And again, I think it’s primarily education and socialization – socially, where – how people feel, where they came from, what they did, what their experiences were, because if you say, well, craftspeople always use the same material, hmm, that’s quite interesting, when the majority of painters never deviate from the canvas and oil, I don’t understand that. I don’t understand why that’s better than someone who uses clay. So, I think, again, it’s the success of what they make, and I think that’s more important that someone is more – I would rather have a wonderful bowl to eat cereal out of that I really felt good about, enjoyed looking at, then have some horrible velvet Elvis Presley hanging on my wall.

MR. KARLSTROM: Some of those are now taken seriously. [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, well sure, everything comes – everything has its day. You will find something that’s just – because everyone’s searching for the new – something new. It’s fad; it’s a fad like everything else, just as the pot may be a fad at some time, too.

MR. KARLSTROM: Just a couple more points, then we will get back to the sort of chronological development and our list of questions.

Reading the essays in the catalogue, and what I thought was a very informative chronology in the catalogue, one can’t help really but be impressed by the extent of your contribution – and I mean that having just looked through it myself and seen your exhibition – to the field of studio glass. So that certainly is one way to see you, and in some ways, maybe that is enough.

But in the interview, especially the coming session, I would like to take it a bit further, as I mentioned to you, into the context in which you have worked. Above all, I’m interested in how Marvin Lipofsky thinks about modern and contemporary art, and how you see yourself and glass fitting into this – what art historians have called a meta – the big picture – meta-narrative, whether or not we even agree that that holds up. But you know, today we’re going to, as I say, focus on some biographical and career specifics. But let me ask you one last question, and then I will get away from my extended introduction here. So, finally a question along these lines, at least for the moment.

A tour group from Stanford will be visiting your show in October. I have it right here, a little brochure. A group from the museum down there will be visiting the show, and I gather you’ll be guiding them through, isn’t that right?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I’m not sure if I’m going to be available.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay. But I’m going to show you this because that – that would be cool, if it should happen. But what struck me – I think it refers very much to this – I noticed that you’re described – there are three people being visited. You’re described here as “among the prominent artisans of the East Bay.” Now, maybe this is my prejudice, right, but I see that as not quite accurate. It doesn’t match how I would think of you and your work as we have been discussing it, but maybe I’m off base. How do you feel about that way of being described?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, I think, again, we go back to the – where we were talking about art and craft, craft and art, and I think it’s just a matter of education. And whoever wrote this, just doesn’t have an understanding what the word artisan is. I’m not an artisan.

MR. KARLSTROM: Right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And I don't think I would be a very good one, if I could be an artisan. And I've never - never thought of myself, I mean, as an artisan. It's an antiquated word and it doesn't have as much relevance today, even in the field of metal working or what are called crafts, from wood workers, metal workers. I mean, this is in the - this is the craft unions, where people make things for buildings or whatever. It's - it's just not me.

MR. KARLSTROM: Right. Right. Exactly.

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's just misused, and I think people are just trying to find a nice word to use, which I think that it sounds more exotic to call somebody an artisan than an artist or what -

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, you think so?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, in this - well, remember, these people come from Stanford. I had some Stanford people once before. The women were interested. They stood in my studio and we talked. The men all stood outside and talked to themselves, and they weren't interested. So I never - and that's the first group - I have had many groups of people visit my studio. That's the first group that the total group wasn't interested in being there.

MR. KARLSTROM: Because they were just dragged along by their wives.

MR. LIPOFSKY: They were dragged along, and I didn't know - it may say a little bit about the South Bay more than it does about - [laughs] - I think the further south we get, the more problems we have with the arts, so - in some respects. And then also, it also may have something to do with the Stanford group, I don't know. They seem to be nice people, but I don't know their understanding of what - or how much they have educated themselves, or whoever is leading the - leading the tour has educated them in what they're going to see, or so forth. So - but, I can't be an artisan, and that just doesn't fit me.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, no, and I would agree. That's why I asked the question. But anyway - so, enough on that, and thanks, because that allowed me very quickly to state some of the things that come to my mind in connection with -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. It's used quite frequently. I see that - I see that word used in the newspapers and reviews and things like that. And it just - I don't think that people just have a good command of the language.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, and furthermore - my final remark for the moment on all this - there's also diminishing, I think - it's not pejorative, because there's nothing wrong with being an artisan -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Absolutely not.

MR. KARLSTROM: - but it is a cut - I think in most people's understanding, artist is an exalted notion. Artisan is perhaps less so, it's more like fabricator, almost and -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, I think, from my understanding, artisan works for someone else or some other person's idea.

MR. KARLSTROM: Right. Right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And they produce something that someone else asks them to produce. Well, painters can do that, too.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yes, commissions.

MR. LIPOFSKY: They can do commissions.

MR. KARLSTROM: Including Rembrandt or Rubens.

MR. LIPOFSKY: But I mean, that's where the trades come in, where they produce - produce something for someone else's use or someone else's manufacture or someone else's ideas, or to be incorporated with something else. And I mean, that's - so artisan, I don't think - it denotes highly skilled.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yes.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I mean, if you want someone to make something that's part of another product, you want those persons - those people to be very skilled because you want your product to function well. So, they're very important.

MR. KARLSTROM: I remember, I was reading in the catalogue, either in the chronology or one of the essays,

about your working abroad. And I can't remember where it was; I think it was only on one occasion where you basically had, I guess, an artisan glass blower – I'm not sure, maybe a master glass blower – actually do some difficult, quotes, "fabrication" or "creation," according to your drawings and to your ideas.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I only worked really once that way. That was the first experience I had in a major European glass factory. That was in Leerdam, the Royal Leerdam Glass Factory. That was working with a master glass artist, master – his name was [Leendert] van der Linden. He was exceptional. And so, my first experience, I did some drawings and – because I didn't know how else to relate to being invited to work there. And I wanted to experience that, the designer designing for industry or designing in the factory, and that was the first idea I had.

After that experience, I felt that I didn't – that it wasn't what I wanted to do, and so I became more part of the team, more of the maker of the objects. So I was just one of the – I worked along with the master to make my objects. I handled the molds so that I shaped the pieces that were to be made, and took advantage of the skills of those people who were on the glassblowing team, who could blow the glass into what shapes I wanted it to be blown into while I determined those shapes, also the color. Sometimes I would put my – the color in or be a part of it, or arrange the color. And so it wasn't just a matter of drawing and asking them to do it, and they did it in the way that they felt they knew – they knew how to do it best.

So that happened one time, and I wouldn't mind going back and trying to work a little more that way again, but I didn't feel comfortable doing that; I wanted to have more hands-on in my work. Of course, after objects are blown, when I work in a factory, I take them back to my studio and then I have total hands-on when I finish the work myself. So the actual amount of work is in two phases, the blowing and the finishing of the work.

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm. That's interesting. And it, of course, brings up again the issue of skilled craft – skill involved in – I have seen glass blown up, at Pilchuck [Pilchuck Glass School, Stanwood, Washington] and Dale Chihuly's place one time. I don't pretend to understand the intricacies. Well, actually, I even blew a little cup one time. I was allowed in. It was pretty crummy, but at least I had that experience. It was a friend from Santa Fe that I met at Pilchuck.

But there's no question that working – especially in a very sophisticated, elaborate way, as are many of your forms – with glass is something that you can't just do; you can't just step in and do it. And actually, drawing and painting, anybody can do it; developing knowledge and skill in terms of the materials, and if you work in oil paint, what's involved, the vehicle, and so forth, and glazes, but basically you can do it. And yet, perhaps that's part of the difference, the level of skill that is necessary in the various crafts, as a matter of fact, in a fabrication way.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, if anything, it takes practice and time to develop certain things. Certainly, it's much easier to put a mark on a piece of paper –

MR. KARLSTROM: Right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – or a brush stroke on a canvas than it is to dip a long blowpipe into a molten furnace, which is hot and sweaty and a little bit frightful, and come out and then wonder what to do with this little bit of glass on the end of this pipe. So the skill – [laughs] – needed to that, and the development to develop those skills is a long process. But it's a long process to develop good skills to be a painter or to draw well, too. So that aspect is the same, it's just – it's practice, it's all practice.

Certainly, I think sometimes good artists have a more natural talent for drawing – eye-hand coordination. But there's good eye-hand coordination in glassblowing, too, and it helps to be a little more coordinated and to develop that. And it has nothing to do with strength, really; it has to do with that coordination of – and practice in how to make things. So you develop. I think it just takes time. You could work forever and not draw very well also. [Laughs.]

MR. KARLSTROM: True enough. The glassblowing just is a little bit more intimidating for most. [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's much more intimidating, that's for sure.

MR. KARLSTROM: And –

MR. LIPOFSKY: – much more physical.

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm. That, of course, is something else we will probably touch on later, is it touches a little bit on this, that the tradition within studio glass, I think, of a kind of boys' club, a macho thing. I heard about it up at Pilchuck. But let's hold that.

Last question. And, obviously, I'm very interested in these things that we're talking about, but we have to leave

them in a moment. The last one related to this has to do with the making and the thinking. And I've actually read you described, at least by one of the authors in your catalogue, as a conceptual artist: concept, idea, and that precedes, of course, fabrication. And the most extreme example of conceptual art, really it is the idea that's the work of art, rather than the realization. I don't know if you want to get into that at all, but again, you, yourself, were described at least once in there as a conceptual artist. I would have to find it for you. I don't know if you noticed that.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Do you remember where that -

MR. KARLSTROM: No. [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: You don't remember where that was?

Well, I never thought of myself that way. Maybe others could see something relating that. But there is a lot of concept to making things, and there is a lot of ideas floating around on how to produce those ideas. I would have to see exactly what was said to relate -

MR. KARLSTROM: I'll find it. Yeah -

MR. LIPOFSKY: - to relate - if I could relate to it. I don't necessarily relate to it, but others see you sometimes differently than you really are, so -

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, when we take a little break, I will try to find it because I think it - it is interesting in regards to what we've been discussing and -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Because my ideas, as far as when I have been working with glass, really came out of the factory and where I would produce or make that work; where that work was made. And the ideas came out of what was available to me, what I could do within a certain time limit and a certain situation to make something that I felt satisfactory.

MR. KARLSTROM: You're quoted in the catalogue to that - in that regard and to that effect, that this context, the framework in which you're working, specifically at the place - at the particular place, particular time, particular resources available, provided the limits in which - I mean, naturally enough because that's what you had available. But you seemed - the way you talked about it, you seemed to describe it as a virtue of the situation; a positive aspect that you had to bring your ideas and your own expression to just what was at hand.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That's true. That's true. And I think I would have trouble if I had total, unlimited access; that there weren't any barriers or any parameters to work with. I think I work better with those parameters; that - how big it can be. It's like finding a problem and solving the problem. I think I have always been interested in problem solving, and I have sort of approached my work as problem solving. I think other artists do that; maybe they admit it, maybe they don't admit it, but they do set up certain criteria and certain problems for themselves, and then they solve those problems, whether it be spatial problems or color problems or physical problems with - as far as sculpture or balance. That's, I think, all in creating art. I like that, and that's what I have always dealt with in my art.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, I think that that's a pretty substantial introduction to our little list of questions that I think I would like to turn to now, which will actually then bring us back to where we almost were, almost started, in terms of your background.

I realize, Marvin, that much of this information appears - well, elsewhere, certainly, probably in other interviews I would suppose, and certainly in your catalogue in terms of the chronology. But - and so, I guess what I'm suggesting is that we can give kind of short shrift to some of these questions and just deal with a brief answer. But as we move along, if there are any that, what shall we say, resonate for you as opening up areas that you would like to talk about more, feel free; let's do that.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Sure.

MR. KARLSTROM: And so, first of all, the usual first question: when and where were you born?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I was born in Elgin, Illinois. I grew up in Barrington, a small town about 14 miles away. Elgin had the hospital, so. Barrington was a - is a small town 35 miles northwest of Chicago, along the Northwestern Railroad, so a lot of people commuted into Chicago to work, commuters.

My grandparents - my father's father settled in Barrington after coming over at the turn of the century from Europe. Both my father's father and mother were from Latvia, and they were in part of the Jewish migration that came about that time. My grandfather came to Chicago, and he may have had a brother that was in Chicago or somebody, and then they eventually moved further west of the city, and - in the clothing trade. First he had a

general store, and then went into the dry goods business and had a small, very small department store in Barrington.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, there's a picture of that, even, in your catalogue.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes.

MR. KARLSTROM: That's great.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And my mother's family came from Ukraine and Poland, and she grew up in Xenia, Ohio – which is misspelled in the catalogue.

MR. KARLSTROM: Ohio? What's the proper spelling?

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's X-E-N-I-A.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh.

MR. LIPOFSKY: So – and my father was the oldest brother of the family and was in charge of the business, and my mother assisted him in sometimes buying women's apparel, and so forth. So, I grew up in a retail – around the retail trade. I never was really interested in going into the retail side. I didn't have that bent in me, although I worked during summers in helping in the store sometimes, selling things. And I loved going to Chicago to the Merchandise Mart and other wholesale establishments with my father to buy – to buy for the store.

MR. KARLSTROM: Are we – I forget, were you the eldest?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I was – I'm the oldest. I have a sister that's younger than I am.

MR. KARLSTROM: You are the oldest. Uh-huh. And so do you think the family actually had hopes that you would carry on the business? Somehow you got diverted.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Maybe. [Laughs.] Maybe early on, but after a while, they realized that I wasn't bent on business. I wasn't a great student in high school, and so I didn't have anything in school – the only thing in school that really – that I was – was the arts. When I was in junior high school and we had units, my units were always successful because I made interesting covers and illustrated things, copying things from the encyclopedia, and so forth. So, I didn't draw that well, but I was able – I able to draw and able to do things. And so that was – that sort of saved me in a few classes. I didn't have a – I didn't have a strong academic bent.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, but that's interesting. So you actually, then, quite naturally, and I guess on your own, engaged in what would be viewed as artistic activity.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I gravitated towards –

MR. KARLSTROM: Making images. Making images.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – making – yeah, making images. That and sports were my interests in school.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, yeah. I think I read that you were like everything. I mean, you were –

MR. LIPOFSKY: It was a small high school, so you do everything.

MR. KARLSTROM: Football, basketball, track.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – participated in everything, yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: God, that's great. When did you first – when were you first exposed to art in the sense of, like, old master works? Presumably in Chicago, is that right? Did you go and visit the Art Institute there?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Very little. I never really was interested in, quote, "The old masters." I didn't relate to it very well. And I – when I read artists talk about how paintings or sculptures related to them, that never happened to me. And I was a little bit bored in the art history classes, and so forth; I really didn't – couldn't relate. And also, some of the great paintings – and once in a while – I mean, I've been to a lot of the better museums around the world, but I didn't always relate that strongly to the paintings, although I looked; I looked and I observed. If there was an opportunity, I would go to the museum or I would see a painting or an artist. But there wasn't anything that was really strong that I said – and I've heard people say that they walked into a museum and they saw this painting and their life changed. That never happened to me. [Laughs.]

There was – the only one thing that was close to that, and now I don't remember it that well, but I remember it.

When I was an undergraduate and I spent five years as an undergraduate, I went to -

[END TAPE 1 SIDE A.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: - visit the Art Institute in Chicago, and I was in a ceramics class taught by David Shaner, and it was a small class, and he wanted us to throw pots, and he was to teach people how to make - work on the wheel. And I wanted to use my - hand-build things of clay, make sculptural things. And I went up there with - I don't even remember who I was with, and when I walked into the foyer of the museum, there were two huge ceramic pieces on display. And I looked at them, and I said, "That's what I've been trying to do;" that's what I related immediately.

MR. KARLSTROM: What were they? Do you remember what they were?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Sure.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. And I came back to the school, and I mentioned I'd done this, and the people at the school who I talked to knew who the people were. It was by Peter Voulkos and John Mason, the two - and then I found out that Pete Voulkos had been to the school for a workshop, but because I was in industrial design, I didn't - I was spending more time sort of in design than I was in - in some of the other studios. So I - I missed that because I only - I only took one ceramics class. I took a lot of different things because I was interested in doing a lot of different things, and that related to me.

And so, when I went to graduate school, that's what I wanted to make. It justified what I had been trying to do on a smaller scale in this ceramics class. I said, that's it. I have been trying to do that, and I didn't realize you could make things so large, and I didn't realize - but that's what I - and from then on, I looked in some of the magazines, and I saw pictures of what they were doing, and then I knew their names, and so forth, and that's -

MR. KARLSTROM: And then eventually you met them.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And then eventually - and actually, when I started teaching - I had met Pete Voulkos in New York at the first World Congress of Craftsmen [1964], when I was hired to teach at Berkeley, he was on sabbatical. And so he -

MR. KARLSTROM: So he was already on faculty there?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, he was on faculty in the design department, and his replacement was John Mason. So the first semester at Berkeley I spent with John Mason, and John was quite a nice guy, and Pete was down in the studio, so I didn't see too much of him. You had to go down there to see him; rarely did he come in. And I think he got - because we moved into a brand new building, so John had the task of installing all the kilns and equipment and getting things ready, and Pete was down making art in his studio.

MR. KARLSTROM: So you would - you were in the right place, then. You found yourself right in contact with these -

MR. LIPOFSKY: I know, by -

MR. KARLSTROM: - influential -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Totally by accident.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. Back to where you saw - as an undergraduate, you encountered these marvelous, sort of large-scale ceramics, sculptures. And did I understand you correctly? Was that at the museum, then? Was that a museum show?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, that was at the Art Institute in Chicago that I saw - that I first saw them.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay. And that's quite interesting because that must have been fairly early.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That had to be in the early -

MR. KARLSTROM: '59, or -

MR. LIPOFSKY: - '60s. No, I think it was in the early '60s.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay, because -

MR. KIPOFSKY: Maybe '60, '61.

MR. KARLSTROM: It seems kind of –

MR. LIPOFSKY: It could have been '59. Well, I don't think it was '59.

MR. KARLSTROM: That seems kind of advanced, in terms of –

MR. LIPOFSKY: I should ask, yeah. I should try to find out what was being shown there. I don't remember anything else, but I remember that there were two sculptures at the Art Institute.

MR. KARLSTROM: So maybe it was like a contemporary show?

MR. LIPOFSKY: If it was a show, or it could have been part of their collection at that time, too. I don't remember what it – what it was.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, how fortuitous for you. Last little part of that question – I'm kind of getting a feeling of where your interests were, and if I understood you correctly, there wasn't much that you saw in museums that sort of motivated you, that you identified –

MR. LIPOFSKY: I did look at things. I did look, and I looked at sculpture and so forth, and I think those early years, I think Marino Marini was interesting to me. Giacometti, he was interesting. Miró's sculptures were interesting to me. So I did see things, but as far as being related – now, I must say also that when I was an undergraduate, I took every sculpture class, and so I taught myself how to weld, more or less. And I also was involved with the first group of students to cast – use the casting facilities at the university, and I did some casting in aluminum. I remember making a 300-pound plaster woman, abstract, sort of Marini-like.

MR. KARLSTROM: [Laughs.] How much? Three hundred?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. It was I just kept using plaster, and it got pretty big.

MR. KARLSTROM: That's a heavy date, isn't it? [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: It got a little bit away from me. So those are those. And then I welded – I did a lot of welding, welding steel, rebar and little pieces of steel that I used to pick up that other people cut off of their sculptures. And I would go around and just pick up the junk that they threw away and use it in my sculptures. And then, I was welding and – but I wasn't in the course, and I would just use the shop. And one of the instructors, Roger Majorowitz, the sculptor – a new sculptor who came there asking if I – what class I was in. And I said that I wasn't in a class, and he threw me out of the welding shop. [Laughs.] But – and I was using – so I just – this hands-on making things was something that I liked to do.

MR. KARLSTROM: I wonder – and we're moving right along, as we should be, because we're talking about your education, focused on developing a sense of your self and some direction as an artist – but I'm wondering if the fact – it sounds as if you, at that point, didn't think of yourself necessarily as participating, at that point, in this big sweep, this range of art history. A lot of artists, especially painters, I think –

MR. LIPOFSKY: That could be true, yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: – think of themselves – and sometimes, it's a little bit intimidating for them, so they say that they're – they are carrying on this tradition, mainly of Western European art.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, maybe because I came out of industrial design, and I was making this transition – I was switching over without my knowing it, I was just doing it – that I didn't have this burden on me; and – although I took the art history classes – what was required of me – I didn't have – I didn't have a burden. And I took a few painting classes, which were required. I didn't paint that well; I mean, I would judge myself according to other people in the class, and they were always much better than I was. So –

MR. KARLSTROM: That's motivation to switch, isn't it? [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. So – and that's in – in design, that's why I sort of moved out of design, too, because I saw that the other people that were very – the successful ones, and I didn't approach what they were doing, although I had ideas. I had ideas, and it was a good experience. The design was good – was a good experience for me. It was problem solving, something that I liked to do, and I enjoyed most of it; I think I liked that challenge. So the – it sort of just – I sort of just developed, I think, learning about how to weld, learning about how to cast aluminum and so forth. Then I did other things with those materials. So I learned about a lot of different materials, learned how to do – how to approach things.

MR. KARLSTROM: So do you think – and this leads us to I guess a pretty big question, and of course, we know some of the answer by, again, reading in your catalogue, and it's not exactly a dark secret how you became involved in glass. But I'm just wondering if this sense of not – well, to phrase this a little bit differently, there's this lack of sort of a personal connection between you and what you were doing, and this historical sweep. Would this have perhaps made you more open – more open to the possibility of other media – that you could really chart your own expression and basically choose whatever was there, what seemed to –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. I think when I look back in – yes, I think that was very true. I think you hit at that, was that I didn't have – I didn't have any prejudices at that time about what I was doing. And I was – I was more or less motivated – self-motivated to learn new things and to try new things, and that was good. I didn't get caught into, I'm a painter, and that's all I do is paint, and I go to the studio and paint, and I don't look at anything else outside of that. I was – I had many interests, and that – that's been true throughout.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, well, it seems to me, from what I know about you, you're most willing to – if you were to pick up those things that interest you and incorporate them into your work – which also reminds me of somebody else, a friend of yours – rest in peace – old Italo Scanga, who was very much – I would describe his way of working as this almost scavenging, finding things and incorporating them.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, that's how I met Italo. When I came to the University of Wisconsin, I think it was in the evening I walked into the sculpture studio, and there was a welding shop, and I was going to start make things because I had been interested in welding. And I walked over toward a pile of metal in the corner. And actually, I wasn't going towards that metal, but there was some other little pieces cut off and as I started going over towards that metal, I heard this voice behind me says, "Don't touch that; that's mine!"

MR. KARLSTROM: [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: And I turned around, and there was this little, short guy yelling, and it turned out to be Italo Scanga. He used the welding studio to make his work at that time. He was welding, and that was all his metal over there, and he was keeping his territory. [Laughs.] And so, Italo yelled at me, and I – yeah, but I wasn't really going after his – [laughs] – his metal, but just, I was looking at it and seeing what was going on. I was brand new and investigating this studio. So he taught for two years while I was in graduate school.

MR. KARLSTROM: And it's interesting that he also has had a very close connection with Dale Chihuly, another prominent colleague.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Well, I don't think – Italo didn't have any interest in the glass when he was at Wisconsin.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, really?

MR. LIPOFSKY: But that all happened later. And then he did teach at Rhode Island. You know, I think, primarily, it was that he was invited into the studios where he – and invited to the Pilchuck school, where he could work and do his things and had people make things. I think the first things that I saw of his in the glass were he had people make various open vases where he put strong scents of food. And I can't remember the name of the series that he did, but there were foods and incense and things in these vases, and he used the glass as containers. Actually, they were containers, but I think they made them for him at the Rhode Island School of Design, if I'm not mistaken.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, would you describe him as one of the artists who had some kind of influence on you?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, yes. Yeah, I think it was his personality as the – he was sort of a rebel at the school, and being from Calabria and being sort of a rebellious sculptor, he was quite a character. Yeah, watching him work, seeing his personality and his intensity with his work, that was important, too. So it was just being around him a little bit, although I wasn't directly a student of his, but – because I was sort of under the auspices of the head of the sculpture department, Leo Steppat, and – actually there are three sculptors that taught there.

MR. KARLSTROM: Now, this is Wisconsin.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Wisconsin. University of Wisconsin at Madison. There was Marjorie Kreilick, and who – I was her assistant when I first got there, and then Italo and then Leo Steppat taught sculpture classes. But yeah, I think – I think he was – it was an important person to know. And then as I left, and I followed his work, and I think his work was always changing and very interesting. I have always liked his work, what he has done, and how he has approached things, and he was a man of many ideas.

MR. KARLSTROM: There are three – Leo Steppat, right?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes.

MR. KARLSTROM: And Marjorie, what was -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Kreilick was her name. Leo Steppat was Viennese, and he had quite a negative approach to teaching. I mean, he taught - he never said anything nice about anything. He always said it was - there was something wrong, and he pushed people in that aspect.

Marge Kreilick - I didn't know her work very well. She taught beginning sculpture and so forth. She was on the faculty, but I didn't relate - or I didn't know what she did, actually; I never saw much. I think she had worked with some mosaics and some stone, but I didn't see very much of her work.

And then Leo Steppat I saw because he had a small studio off the sculpture studio, and he always - we were - if there's any sculpture show, you're always in competition with your instructors. That was quite interesting. There were some things that if you entered on the Wisconsin painting and sculpture show, they were there right there with their big sculptures and so forth.

MR. KARLSTROM: Now had you - and I have already forgotten from your - from the chronology - had you been introduced to glass by this time?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, my -

MR. KARLSTROM: Did that happen in undergraduate or -

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, actually, I - no, no, no. This was at the University of Wisconsin. The story there is that I went to the University of Wisconsin. I was introduced to Wisconsin by a professor at the University of Illinois. I was in my fifth year and not wanting to be drafted. I sort of thought that maybe if I took some education classes - I heard that if you were a teacher, that you wouldn't have to serve in the Army, although I had taken two years of ROTC, marched around, did everything properly.

I wasn't interested in serving, so my - I took a class in education - in art education - and it was in a seminar. And the professor there, Dr. [Harold A.] Schultz, mentioned something. He saw my frustration and he saw that I wasn't really geared to being a school teacher in art or anything, so he said he'd just been at a seminar or something in Madison for education, and he thought that I should look into the school. He thought the school was interesting and had a lot of different things to do there, that I should consider graduate school, so I applied to graduate school. It's the only school I applied to.

MR. KARLSTROM: Good thing you got in.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Then I got in. Yeah, good thing I got in. It was on his recommendation. Harold Schultz was his name, so he helped. So my first class - I had been to Europe that summer, and I had been to Murano. I had walked by the glass studios but never paid any attention to them blowing glass. My first class that I - was a ceramics class, and - because I wanted - I went there with the intention of making ceramic sculpture. And I walked into the class. There were a few students, half a dozen students standing around. There was a little short guy who seemed to be the professor, and as soon as I walked in, he said, "Who are you?" And I didn't answer, and he said, "Are you married?" And I didn't answer. And then he said to the girls in the class, "I know you're all here to get your Mrs. degree, and if you learn how to make good soup, you can find a husband; that's how my wife got me: she made good soup." And that was my introduction to Harvey Littleton.

Then he said, "Do you want to blow glass?" And I said, "I have never heard of it." And he was just at that moment gathering - and these were all students who had been with him before, I was the only new student in that group - gathering together to blow glass for the very first time in the United States. He had done his two workshops in Toledo that summer, and - prior to that, reintroduced - they had built a little furnace, they introduced glass. And then he had come back home, and in his garage built a furnace and started blowing glass that summer. So, I eventually became part of that group. Everybody in the class were part of the group. Even though we were in the ceramics class, he wanted us all to come out to his farm, and we each got a day out at his farm to blow glass. I actually did not officially sign up for the class because I said, "Well, I want to make sculpture;" I'm not, you know - [laughs] - I didn't feel I could do that. But I went out several times with one of the other students, Tom Malone, and we would go out there and blow glass, and I would assist him and do things with him. And then Tom worked for Harvey. He would - Harvey made clay in his barn, and he - pug mill - and so Tom pugged the clay and bagged it up, and I would help him do that once in a while and hang out a little bit as it got dark. And then Harvey's wife, Bess, would say "Oh, you - have - you boys haven't eaten dinner yet, why don't you come in and join the family?" So we would go in, and so it was a way of getting dinner -

MR. KARLSTROM: You liked that. [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: - and helping. Yeah, and that was a good - that was - [laughs] - that was a way of doing - so we did that a few times, too. So that's when I started working in glass with Harvey. The second semester, they

procured a warehouse near the campus, and that's where they built a studio.

MR. KARLSTROM: It's interesting – boy, this is amazing; we're very close to using up this whole disc. This is good. But there's time for one related question here. You said that you wanted to stay in the sculpture area and you were interested in ceramic sculpture –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: – I believe, at that time. And so, you didn't enroll in the glass, which suggests that that –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Officially, I didn't enroll.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. But that suggests that you didn't, at that point, yet see glass as a viable medium for creating sculpture.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I don't think anybody did. I don't think anybody had an idea because we – they were just barely – Harvey gave one demonstration, and then everybody just worked. And he didn't pay much attention to them, just came in to check out things, and everybody worked on their own. So we didn't have much skill at the first, so if you don't have much skill, you can't realize anything –

MR. KARLSTROM: You can't imagine the potential.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, you can't realize anything. And that's – as it – it took a while to build some ability up just to make something, so everybody just made a little vase or a paperweight. I mean, I don't know if they were intentionally making paperweights, but it came out to be like a paperweight or a little blown something in the very beginning. I was there when they had the first annealing, when they annealed the glass the first time, they took it out of the oven, and you couldn't tell the difference between who made what. Everybody was arguing about that they made that, but they all looked alike. But that was the – that was the very, very first; it was without any skills whatsoever, and not very much knowledge because Harvey didn't know a great deal about glass techniques. He was just barely teaching himself, and so the students were just kind of a step behind him because he – what he gave to us really wasn't very much, but it was just enough to get started.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, let's take a little break now, if we may.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Okay.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay, and this is ending disc one.

[Audio break.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Continuing this interview session one with Marvin Lipofsky on July 30, 2003. And this is Paul Karlstrom conducting the interview, and this is disc number two, track one; and the previous disc was one uninterrupted track. I don't think we necessarily need to do that again.

But anyway, Marvin, we were again working from this useful list as kind of a guide through your career. We had been talking about your education, the beginning of you finding your medium, getting involved in glass, and I would like to ask you at this point if – in terms of education, are you – well, you're an educator. I mean, you have been a teacher and you have set up programs at least in two places that I know of, at [University of California] Berkeley and CCAC [California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, California]. But you are an educator and you have had university experience, and also – we will talk about it in a moment – a connection with various special arts schools, even special crafts schools. And how do you feel about that, in terms of training – for an artist, for a craftsperson, or whatever we want to say – university training in contrast to strictly focused art school or crafts?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I feel fairly strong that the college/university education is important, and I think even more important than just training in your media, I think, because of all the other things it brings into it. First, while – my education were both at two large universities – Big 10, Midwest universities; University of Illinois [Urbana] and University of Wisconsin [Madison] – and one thing I appreciated was that, along with all the academics and what I was doing, there was also a cultural program. As an undergraduate, they had a great film program, that they would on the weekends show films in a big auditorium, old films. There were – I remember it was an era of a lot of folk music; and it was independent from the school, but there were – I think the YMCA or the YWCA had a program for a lot of folk singers to come to the campus, et cetera, all the way – it was just – that was important. At Wisconsin also that was very important. We're seeing films and we would do that quite frequently. So I think that's a – it was an important education.

Teaching at Berkeley and for myself, eating at the faculty club and listening to the conversations standing in line at the cafeteria and realizing that – not understanding what people were talking about, and with all the Nobel Prize winners and the physicists and the chemists and what have you, it was quite interesting. And also the

students: I had students from other disciplines. I always like to take students from other disciplines. One was a doctoral candidate in chemistry, and so I have always learned things from them. The student from chemistry taught me how to mirror things; use silver mirroring, which I used in my work. And then I had a fellow who was a professor who taught me about electroplating in the glass – copper plating on the glass. He came in and wanted to do some things and he was an electrical engineer. So this exchange and this – the people who were around there – it was quite exciting, and I think the education was fantastic. Also, teaching in the College of Environmental Design with architects, city planners, landscape architects, was very good, too, and some of those students came into the glass studio and worked with us. So that was always – you had a lot of other people with many divergent interests and many things to bring, and I thought that that diversity was just incredible.

It lacked a little bit of that when I taught at CCAC, at the California College of Arts and Crafts. Well, the students were all geared just toward art, and they didn't – although they did bring some skills with them, they didn't have what the university offered. There wasn't any difference in the ability of the students, as far as art goes, but they didn't have some of the academic skills that were – I thought were fairly important. It was quite interesting; the university just offered more. Of course, it would offer more than a private art school. But I liked that university atmosphere. The CCAC was a good experience also, but the university atmosphere just offered much more than what a private art school could.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about ideas being brought to – to the craft, to the making of art? Obviously, in CCAC or in the San Francisco Art Institute or any of these schools, it's – you're there for a very specific reason. You're not – it's not a general education, although there are some general requirements and all that, I know. But I'm just wondering if what you're saying is – or acknowledging or recognizing is that at Berkeley and places like that, you're put into the middle of this mix of ideas, and to the extent you want to draw from them – if you don't take courses, you're rubbing elbows with, like you said, with the Nobel laureates in the line at lunch in the Faculty Club or whatever. Did you – do you feel that that really makes a difference? Not necessarily what you – like your student or a professor helping you develop the techniques that are useful for your work, but just the richness – the atmosphere, the environment – intellectual –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. I think the richness was very important. And there the total development of an individual, the university offered quite a bit more, but I found students with ideas in both places. That – the creativity didn't – wasn't at one place or another. There was a different – a little different attitude because the students had to take so many more academics at the university. Also, some couldn't devote as much time to their artwork as they did at the private art school. But still, the ideas flowed in both places, and they both added up to be good schools, and I think the art school atmosphere was important. A number of students who attended the art school had been to universities or other college before, too, so they brought something with them; they weren't totally just art students, so there was a little exchange of both – in both. But I liked the academic atmosphere quite a bit. It had its backside. In some respects, it was much more conservative, and the creativity in general wasn't at the university because the other faculty in the other departments – there was a lot of infighting, and I had some of the least creative people as administrators and department chairmen that I have ever run across. I was criticized –

MR. KARLSTROM: I'm sure you don't want to name them. [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: You know, well, I was criticized for teaching – I taught some design classes, beginning design, at Berkeley, and I did things with my students that there were people criticizing me for doing, and yet, within a couple years, the things that my students were doing were happening in art or happening in design or happening in advertising, and it was – I found that they were quite limited in their ability to see a larger picture. But that was primarily on an administrative level; it wasn't so much on the other – sometimes the other faculty, too, but the art school was more no holds barred.

MR. KARLSTROM: Did you see a difference at CCAC, the art school – a difference between the students who were basically just going directly, like, from high school into art school and those who had done undergraduate elsewhere and came in more on a graduate program – I guess?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, that's a little hard. I think some of the students that just came directly from high school were fairly talented, but they didn't have a lot of the experiences that you would get, and I think the experience – it's maturity and experience to bring with you to solve problems, to do your work, to be able to concentrate on what you were doing.

And so it took some time for some of the younger students to become accustomed to going to school and to – I always felt and I always told my students that they weren't in high school anymore and nobody was going to tell them what to do. Now it was up to them to make their own program, to develop – that I wasn't there to teach them, but I was there to guide them and to help them, and that this thing that someone taught you and you listened to your instructor and you just followed what your instructor told you to do, it wasn't the same anymore,

that they had to motivate themselves. And maybe that was one of their problems, is how did they motivate themselves to continue doing things, and how did they achieve some maturity within – in the arts, and that takes some time.

It takes some development on their own, although I always tried to guide them and I put up all the information that I had available, that I ever found; I had written information on the walls of the studio, and I created files – a file cabinet with files for techniques and technical information, and those who were motivated could sit, open up that file, and read everything that I had available to me. And anybody who walked in the studio could read what we – on the – I would tell people, just read the walls, and we had papers and technical guidelines and so forth stapled up, and they could read it, and a lot of people did. And it saved a lot of time as far as trying to explain everything step by step, and once they had – they read something and then had a question, they were then into it, rather than just have the teacher tell them what to do. And so, that was a little bit – part of how I approach teaching.

MR. KARLSTROM: You know, beyond the technical aspects, or perhaps you would say focus on form and formal issues, I'm wondering if the undergraduate students, those who came fresh from high school, maybe – perhaps appreciate it less than their elders, graduate students – perhaps some of the implications of the work. And I'm thinking, again, beyond aesthetic or formal concerns, but the implications of trying something new and what it could mean, again, within a stream of ideas. You know, is thinking about art – you know what I mean?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, that's a little – but I can't think back and I never paid close attention to that. But my graduate students – I had graduate students, and they were quite integrated within the glass program at CCAC, and they had responsibilities, and they did things there that were related to the other students.

We also had sort of a team effort. When people had their working times, they – they didn't just work by themselves, but we always assigned a younger person to work with them, to help them, so that the younger person would learn from the older person, and then the younger person could assist; a little bit of it like an apprenticeship. So I tried to integrate the new people with the older people, and those who took advantage of it learned faster and learned quite a bit. So we also had – I also planned a seminar where all the students met. And I would show slides, we would talk and have discussions, and so forth. And when I traveled, I would bring back slides and show the students, things that I had seen and people I had met and objects I had observed, and so forth. So this was sort of like – the glass program wasn't just a class or two; it was an integrated – it was a family affair, so we all tried to work together.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, you mentioned apprentice, the idea of apprenticeship, which of course, in the crafts and in the trade, has been very important for a long, long time, and certainly in our history; back in the Renaissance, this was the way it was done, you had an apprenticeship situation. But you, yourself, in terms of studio glass, it seems to me had to kind of make your own way.

MR. LIPOFSKY: True.

MR. KARLSTROM: And my question is, do you feel you in any way served an apprenticeship? Was there anybody that you would describe as playing that mentor role, specifically in terms, I guess, of glass to you?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, not really because we were all quite independent. You know, one of the problems with glass – in a painting class, everybody has their own painting and their own easel. In the glass class, everybody has to take turns; only so many people could work at a time, using the furnace. We had two people working at a time with a second person, so there would be four people, but the others could assist. But that was that limitation; everybody had their own schedule. We divided from 8:00 to midnight, and everybody had two hours to work throughout the day, or more – I forgot the schedule now. But anyway, they had their period of time, and it had to be divided up if they wanted to work with the furnace, the glassblowing. If they wanted to work other ways with glass, they had more time and they were freer to do it, but we had to schedule that thing so that everybody accomplished something. Not that everybody blew glass – they did some other things, too – but the majority of the students wanted to use the glass furnace. So it was limited in that respect, that the classes couldn't be just too large because we had a limit of how many people could use the facilities.

MR. KARLSTROM: So you really didn't have the opportunity to apprentice in any usual understanding of the term?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Not at all, not at all. And as I said before, that Harvey's teaching was to give one demonstration and then you were off on your own, and if we saw him working, maybe we would learn something from him. But we more or less approached it on our own and what we could – what we could see from other people, which led me, when I started teaching myself, to seek more information and more education, and I turned towards Europe and started to go to Europe to learn about glass because that's really where it all came from. And started to make my contacts there, indirectly learn about glass, and then bring it back to the students. I was educating myself, but I was also bringing it back for my teaching because that was a large part of my life at that time.

MR. KARLSTROM: So that really – I guess what marked the beginning, with a very specific goal in mind of a long career of traveling abroad to do work and to participate in –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: – conferences and to be a visiting artist.

MR. LIPOFSKY: So, part of my philosophy was that I didn't restrict myself just to the classroom. If I had an opportunity to go someplace, for a short period of time of course, to Europe or to somewhere, I went, even if it was during the school year because I knew that what I would bring back would be more than if I sat there in the classroom for two hours or three hours – the students would learn much more from my experience of going some other – to give a lecture or a workshop or – so, I didn't go to Europe so much because that was mostly in the summertime. But if I had to go someplace, I would bring back lots of information and I would share things with the students that I had experienced, and therefore they got much more educationally than if we were just sitting there, waiting for them in the classroom.

MR. KARLSTROM: Let me pose two of the questions from our list as one because it follows exactly from what we're talking about, and that's where you went elsewhere to learn more, perhaps in interacting with colleagues or master glass – I mean, and in this country, I don't think there were to the same extent as in Europe and abroad, these individuals who operated within a long tradition of glassblowing and glass – working with glass.

But it seems to me there must have been two main venues for you. One would perhaps be some of the crafts schools; you know, on here it mentions Penland [Penland School of Crafts, Penland, North Carolina], Haystack [Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, Maine] – I think you have taught there or participated there – Pilchuck, of course.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, we were before all of the other schools. Because I had this wider aspect, this wider interest, I started what's called the Great California Glass Symposium [1968-1972 at UC Berkeley and 1968-1987 at CCAC]. I was a one-person glass program, a one-teacher, and I wanted to get more information and more education out to the students. So we started inviting people to come into the school to demonstrate and lecture and relate to the students. The very first symposium was with Harvey Littleton and Sybren Valkema. Sybren Valkema was from Amsterdam, taught at the Rietveld Academy. And I invited not just my students, but anyone else interested, other schools and so forth, to come in and participate, and so they demonstrated and did various things, and gave a lecture.

[END TAPE 1 SIDE B.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: I was teaching at both schools at that time, and I thought that if I asked both schools for a little bit of money, I would get enough money to invite them to come out there. Sybren Valkema was visiting Harvey Littleton in Madison, so he was available. And both schools gave me a little bit of money so I was able to give them some money to come out to the school. And that started this program. And we've had as many – it's, well, close to 200 people come to watch on occasion.

MR. KARLSTROM: You mean nationally, from –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, no, not – mostly the West Coast. People came from Seattle sometimes, people came from Southern California, and certainly all the Bay Area. The students who went out to start their own studios, people from other schools came down there and we participated. And I think we had over 100 artists over the years participate in the Great California Glass Symposium, it was highly successful.

Of course, we had a big dinner where we cooked it in the studio, and the people gave their lectures. And the demonstrations went on for a couple days sometimes. And people learned a lot of techniques, and a lot on how people worked, and philosophy and what have you. And most of the major people had been guests at one time or another.

MR. KARLSTROM: So you had fun?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. As well as a number of European people.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, from what you describe, it sounds like you were basically creating, then, a sense of community around glass.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right. It became a community. And people told me later that they came and saw someone work and that opened their eyes or that influenced them for something that they did later on. And to me that was very exciting and something that I had always tried to do, to kind of make this community. I sort of lived within it myself because I traveled and went to other places and felt that these people in Europe and Asia were part of

the glass community.

MR. KARLSTROM: Now, you had – it seems to me this is from fairly early on – an unusual sort of international – global we call it now – global perspective, but –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, it just so happened. Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, and it also sounds as if, though, it came quite naturally, because you were, as you describe it, seeking learning; seeking information and learning more and more.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right. Right, that's true.

MR. KARLSTROM: And so this, then, brings me back again to these other schools which – I mean, Pilchuck started [1971] after you were established, well afterward.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, yes.

MR. KARLSTROM: And you went there. But it sounds to me – and then, I think you taught at Haystack. Isn't that right, or –

MR. LIPOFSKY: I've taught at Haystack. I didn't teach at Penland.

MR. KARLSTROM: Uh-huh.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I actually was supposed to lecture at Penland one year, and they had a big electrical storm and knocked all the electricity out at the school. And right when I was to talk, so I never got to show my slides. I left the next morning with Harvey Littleton to attend a conference. And so I've never lectured at Pilchuck – I mean at Penland. But I've been there a number of times.

MR. KARLSTROM: But so, for you – it's kind of beside the point in terms of what you would get from – you were ahead of the curve, it would seem to me, when you had occasion to visit these places. They, I gather, didn't play, really, any great role in your own development as a glass sculptor, as a studio glass sculptor.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I always learned something. There was always something to glean out of wherever I was.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay, anything specific in connection with those schools?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Everybody was experimenting and trying and so forth. No, I guess we were sort of open – well, California was a lot freer than other parts of the country. I mean, this California spirit, the weather, so forth. The East Coast was always a little bit more conservative in some respects. We were just very free out here. And we brought that experience – that – to throw that experience out around the country.

And a lot of people knew what we were doing, and they would pay attention to what we did. We also made little papers – the students put together the information that the visiting artist had and we documented the symposiums and sent that around to people, whatever technical things they brought forth. And that was shared with everyone else.

I think we influenced quite a number of schools and other glass programs. I don't know if they all admit it, but we were doing things and then other people picked up the ball and started doing things. We invited the first Italian master to the United States, Gianni Toso. He was the first Italian master who came and shared some of his experiences with us.

MR. KARLSTROM: This was at CCAC?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Came to CCAC, and then he went to two or three other schools, because he was visiting the States. I had met him and became friendly with him. And he showed the Italian techniques.

The Pilchuck School thought that they had cornered the Italian market, but actually, the first person was Gianni Toso that came to the States. They just have better publicity than I do.

MR. KARLSTROM: As an aside, I noticed again in the catalog, which is such a wonderful resource to have at this moment – it's helpful for me to do this interview, of course – but I was at the Pilchuck for the 25th anniversary, and I think you were there. Did you go to the –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, I went to the anniversary. Yes, I did.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. And I was sort of an outsider that was invited in, which was very nice. And I actually

think I briefly met you, just sort of personal, very, very briefly and -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Could have been.

MR. KARLSTROM: But I remember a lot of noise was being made around demonstrations by Dante Marioni.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: And again, just as an aside, I'm curious to know - this gets into colleagues - I think - I don't know how old he is; I think he's younger than you.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Considerably, yeah. I remember when he was just a kid.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. I was teaching already. I think in the beginning he had some interest of coming over. He grew up in Mill Valley.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, did he?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. And his father, Paul - I actually met his father, Paul first, I walked into a gallery in San Francisco - I heard they had a glass show - and it was panels of stained glass. And the artist happened to be there, and it was Paul Marioni. And his work was very interesting at that time and very creative. And we met. And I said, "Well, why don't you come over to CCAC, and if you want to blow glass or do anything in hot glass," and he came right over. And he started working there, here and there. And I said, "Sure, the students" - I said, "The students would be happy to show you anything, and if you want to work" - and that was when he first started to blow glass.

And before he moved to Seattle with his family, Dante had been - yeah, he was a kid - had been over here once or twice. And I remember him. Then when he got to Seattle, Dante became quite immersed in the whole glass world up there, and that became his life - that's where he developed.

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm. And so, he was then, presumably, interacting with Chihuly -

MR. LIPOFSKY: There's a lot of glass people up in Seattle - yeah, there were quite a number of people that worked at glass studios.

MR. KARLSTROM: I mean, it's interesting. This isn't - I guess this is very much to the point in terms of community. I don't pretend to understand this fully, but I do know, and I've heard from various ones that there, again, was this - it was like a club, like a boy's club, or it's often referred to that way, kind of macho -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, no, people refer to it as a boy's club, but - I've tried to tell this to a number of people - but some of the first people who had studios were women, in Europe especially. The first private studio in Holland was a woman. The first private studio in Sweden was a woman. Also in England, one of the - earlier studios in England, was another woman and her husband. Women have been prominent, it was kind of macho; there were a lot of men in it. That's just mainly because the women weren't quite so interested in the beginning, and it was a little bit kind of restricted. Like anything, men were - did the heavy work and so forth. But there were women involved from the very beginning. There weren't as many and the men dominated, that's rather true, but they weren't kept out.

Now, I've heard stories - students have said, "I was a student and my teacher told me that women can't do this," and I think, well, those were isolated. They did happen, but those were isolated. And there were a number of pretty stupid people teaching who voiced a very unpopular and an untrue situation.

But people have brought this up, it didn't happen at CCAC, it didn't happen at the University of California - both my assistants for a number of years were women at both schools, and it wasn't that way. My first class when I started teaching at Berkeley in 1964 were six girls. And I say "girls" because they just were - one happened to be a graduate student, but the rest of them had no experiences; they were from the - at that time, the department was the Decorative Arts Department until that first semester and then it changed into the Department of Design. And I built our studio with these six girls. I was supposed to get an assistant but the person didn't show up. And that was my first class, and we made do with who was there. They had no skills. They didn't weld, they didn't know anything about electricity, didn't know how to build furnaces or whatever, but we put it all together. The second semester I got a little more help, but we put everything together with that six.

So - but a lot of people - this is from other places - didn't know about this. And I think that that was mostly an East Coast/Midwest concept that -

MR. KARLSTROM: It was a guy thing.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And there were women when I was a graduate student, too. But only one of them continued in glass. Actually, I'm the only one from the very first year that continued – and even the second year – that continued in glass. A couple of students dabbled in it for a short period of time, but they never continued. But one woman, Pat Esch built a glass studio in Colorado and worked for a few years.

So you know, it's the idea that people have in their head. And for some respects, there was a little bit of truth in that. But it wasn't as staunch and strict as most people think it was. And those were isolated incidents that – and unfortunate incidents.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, and this, of course, has to do with maybe a bigger issue of gender and race and ethnicity within a movement, and it's actually difficult – it's difficult to talk about, because there's no reason to separate any one expression –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, in the beginning –

MR. KARLSTROM: – of glass from the broader picture of how things were.

MR. LIPOFSKY: The men once were –

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: In the beginning, the men were stronger and bigger and probably louder – [laughs] – and more boastful, and so that was sort of a natural occurrence. But there were women there and women continue to be glass artists.

MR. KARLSTROM: So it wasn't exclusive by –

MR. LIPOFSKY: It wasn't exclusive, but the women didn't take the forefront in the early years. They didn't step out, and maybe rightfully so. Maybe some of them – I think some of them were doing other things, and doing them better. [Laughs.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm. Who's the famous glass artist who's disabled up at Pilchuck? I can't remember her name. She's quite a – you know, prominent. She was actually there in a wheelchair –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, you mean Ginny Ruffner.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, that happened after she had worked in glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. Yeah, but – right. I mean, I didn't know when that happened, but she seemed to be much – people had, presumably, not just from the fact she's disabled but her involvement with –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, she had been in a car accident. And I visited Ginny when she was living in Atlanta, and she was a professional lamp worker. She worked for the Fräbel Glass Studios, even though she had had an MFA from University of Georgia in painting. She was a painter. But she worked making lamp work, making torch work, and that's where her expertise was. I gave her her first workshop.

MR. KARLSTROM: Really?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Somewhat introduced her to the other glass world. She then went off to – she wasn't at that point doing much of her individual work. She was – she had a job. Then she went off to Penland to do a workshop there. And then that started really her career in making things in glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: But she goes back – I don't know how old she is or anything like that, but she goes back a bit, anyway, with –

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, not that far. Not that far. She's not one of the earlier people. But I also gave Dante Marioni his first workshop at the Pilchuck School. I happened to be teaching there, and invited Dante and his friend Preston Singletary to come up and demonstrate for my class. And that was the first workshop that Dante did. Yeah, he was quite good. At that time he was very good. He had very good skill.

MR. KARLSTROM: Is he the cousin or nephew or what of Tom Marioni?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. No, no, Tom's his uncle. There are four brothers – three brothers? – three brothers: Tom,

Paul and Joe. Three brothers. And that's his uncle. I've met all three brothers. Joe's the painter, Tom is a conceptual artist, and Paul is Dante's father and a glass artist in his own right.

MR. KARLSTROM: Interesting family, huh?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. It was quite interesting.

MR. KARLSTROM: One of the things that – I hesitate to even bring it up because it's so important in your career – we mentioned it in the very beginning – your travels, really, kind of around the world, and your involvement with – your international involvement. And I'm not sure if we want to – you might want to save this, like a separate topic, unless you're in the mood. But let me – either way, let me ask you a question that kind of comes out of that. And in some ways, I realize – again, since you were so much at the beginning of the studio glass movement, I don't know that you can really talk so much about a tradition, or at least specifically in terms of studio glass. But the question is this: Do you think of yourself as an internationalist, as part of an international tradition or movement, or do you think of studio glass as specifically an American phenomenon?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Let's take a break and I'll answer.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay.

[Audio break.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Okay. The question was do I feel part of an international movement? Yeah. It's – there has been a development with glass artists. That is an international movement. And because of my traveling and because of the various festivals, symposiums, seminars around the world, which I have participated in, it has an international movement.

There are things that happen all over the world. The most prominent one is the International Glass Symposium in Novy Bor, Czech Republic, which started out around 1982. But there are also things that have happened in Russia, the Ukraine, in Hungary – [pause] – in Poland, and there's a festival in the Ukraine. There are schools in Japan. Sweden has had a few things. So – of course, Australia and the United States, Canada. So, it's quite international. And there are events that – and organizations that people participate, international organizations. So there's quite a family, quite a glass family.

MR. KARLSTROM: But I guess implicit in this question is this whole notion of something being particularly American in its original development, and certainly, in your experience, meaning the studio glass movement, as – at least, as I understand it in my limited way. Do you feel that this is something, then, that actually on your visits – these factories and these various places in Europe and Japan and you know, elsewhere, that you kind of – you're called an "ambassador of glass," the roving ambassador of glass. I don't know if you agree with that. But was it something that – did you bring something from our experience, or the American experience, to these other venues that perhaps then moved them along in this studio glass direction?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, sure. I think Cheryl White coined that in an article she wrote for the *American Craft* magazine ["Marvin Lipofsky, Roving Ambassador of Glass." *American Craft* 51 no. 5 October/November 1991. 46-51]. It just happened to me. I mean, it was just something that I did.

I went first to Europe, looking for information and visiting – the first place that I went was – I was invited to a seminar in Sweden – in Växjö, Sweden. They just invited two Americans [Andy Billeci and myself] to give a talk – that was very early – about what was happening in the United States. It was a seminar on glass. Primarily, it was an offshoot of the historians and the technicians, which had conferences, glass conferences, dealing mostly technical and historically with glass.

In my travels, I just – I met people. I showed people what we were doing in the United States. I showed the – primarily, I think what – when I look back at it now, I showed the freedom that we had in working with glass. I showed that it was possible for people to make glass by themselves. They didn't have to have the big factory to work in.

And when I first went to Sweden – I went to Sweden on my own, traveled around and went to visit the various factories and designers and so on – I met Ann Wolff [Ann Warff] – now she changed her name to Ann Wolff. And she told me about, oh, maybe eight or ten years later, after I'd first met her, that when I first came there and showed people slides and talked about what the students were doing at the University of California, people didn't talk too much about it. But they saw this gleam – she saw something. She said she saw that it was possible that she could leave the factory, she could leave her design job and go out and be an artist herself. It took quite a number of years before she accomplished that, but that was the first idea that – the first spark that

came into their heads, from what I had talked about on my visit.

And that they had talked about it afterwards, this idea of doing things – being an artist and doing things on their own, because they had all been designers at that time and had a responsibility to the factory and to their job and to the employees that they had to be there; they had to come up with designs, they had to come up with ideas so that the factory would maintain itself and the workers would have jobs. So this was quite interesting to me that this had happened because of myself and what I had done. And I hadn't thought about it anything except that that was just expressing things that we had done here and sharing with everybody my experiences.

And the glass – glass had been prominent in other countries, and they had done things. But I think what the Americans did – and the coining of the studio glass movement, which was just capturing the ability for people to make things on their own and not have to rely on the factory.

Actually, Harvey [Littleton] had taken that idea from meeting Erwin Eisch in Frauenau, Germany. He had a small studio within the factory complex where – small furnace where he could – he and an assistant could make their own work, make Erwin's work, or Erwin could work without disturbing the factory production.

And Harvey had this idea that artists could make their own glass, and that's how he started the glass movement. And he took that, and it was through the American pioneering spirit that it developed internationally, even though there was glass around in various countries and even schools teaching some things, but they didn't have this independent aspect of what they were doing. Due to culturally, due to philosophically, they didn't do it quite the same way. There were some people throughout the world who had independently done some things. But other people didn't pick up on this. And it was Harvey's idea and Harvey's promotion that made it go international, and other people keyed off of what Harvey had done in his early experiments and had done in his class – at the first classes at the University of Wisconsin. So, this just grew until now it's really an international community, international family. And a lot of the people know each other and relate to each other and visit each other and so on.

MR. KARLSTROM: It sounds to me as if yes, indeed, studio glass, then, is to a large extent an American creation or phenomenon.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Studio glass is an American phenomenon, yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: Studio glass, yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: But not glass and not people working in glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: Right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: The independence was because of the freedom that we had in this country. And also – very important – also, we didn't – we here didn't have traditions to follow. We broke whatever tradition there was, and it was much more difficult for other countries and other people to break the traditions that they had been brought up in. So, we had that freedom. And I think that's what allowed the rest of the world to develop that freedom that we had in the United States.

MR. KARLSTROM: But what about this, and this is – and we certainly will be returning to some of your specific experiences abroad as we go along. But this, I think, follows from describing a tradition in Europe abroad – in fact, I don't know about ancient, but there was Roman glass and so forth – it does go way, way back – and then, the factory type of situation; contrasting that to a freedom that you described in this country. And it seems to me – well, I should let you answer this – [laughs] – that that also would apply to this move from function to form and other expressive qualities, where function became far less important – how do you feel about that in terms of the studio movement itself, than in your own work, in particular? To what degree is there still a connection to function, if at all? [Pause.] Two parts to that question.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, that was – [laughs] – yeah, that was a little bit broad.

First of all, there really wasn't any Roman glass. The Romans didn't make glass, didn't blow glass. They brought in people from the Middle East, and primarily Jews to work in glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: Interesting, interesting.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And the Italian early glass blowers were Jewish. The popes changed histories and rewrote things. And people have termed it "Roman glass," but the Romans imported workers to make glass –

MR. KARLSTROM: Artisans.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Artisans, primarily, in that time. And they were the workers in the small factories.

Well, I don't know – of course, things started off as functional work. And that was the natural way, the natural development of – I don't have any problem with that; I was never a very good functional maker of functional things. I never made very good wine glasses. I never made very good vases. I remember making some vases for my mother and giving her about two or three vases, and when she saw them, she said, "Oh, I don't want those. I want your good work!" [Laughs.] And I had made a particular effort to make her something that she could use.

So, I just never had a great deal – [laughs] – of interest in making functional glass. I tried. Actually, I tried to make some things like that, but they weren't very good. And my interest didn't happen in that aspect of glass. I'm very supportive of people making functional things in glass. It's just not my particular interest.

And when I was teaching, I always tried to push the students to work nonfunctionally, to work in a more artistic, a more sculptural way. And if they rebelled and if they didn't do it, then I knew that that's where they were going to go; that function was very important to them, and they had the opportunity to explore other aspects. And if they chose to make just wine glasses or whatever, then that's what they chose to do, and they had the opportunity to go in another direction. And function was the way they chose to go. So that was just fine. But I always gave them the opportunity to learn about other things, too.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it seems that this, actually, then refers back to the earliest part of the interview, when we were talking about those issues and what distinguishes, perhaps, in any craft or basically any endeavor, between primary attention to the useful – to function, as opposed to opening up – broadening the expressive possibilities, and that's what you've just described. You know, say, "here are two ways to go about it," and you basically put it to your students – I guess maybe not directly in those terms, but gave them an option to consider what they want out of their involvement in glass.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, that's true. And this is another aspect to it. I mean, I know that there are artists who buy functional things – painters and sculptors from the people who make glass. And it's that there shouldn't be any differentiation, because many people use what's made by potters, glass-blowers, and many artists use those objects, too.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, think of ceramics, and I don't want to get off-track here, but I'm thinking of Pete, Pete Voulkos. Of course he is the shining exemplar of pushing, well, ceramics into a different – well, into, fine quotes, "high-art sculpture," at least art sculpture. And I – but then, there are other very revered crafts people, or clay artists. I think, like, maybe Natzler, Otto Natzler, Otto Heino –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Otto Heino, and Natzler, right.

MR. KARLSTROM: And it's – there's just no getting around it, that there is a different – it's – they seem to be about very different things.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. They're from another culture, another era. They're old-school-trained, and what they did was just fine, and how they did it was just fine. They were not sculptors. They were not particularly painters – maybe they were; maybe they could paint or draw. But they made functional ceramics. And that is just fine. And that's wonderful. And what they made was something of quality. But that that's an end-all and that's where everything stops, is – I think is a mistake; that it doesn't stop there, that there are other things to appreciate. But that they're included and what they did should be included in the general – the general world. That's just fine with me. And I think that it's all deserving. That they're any less is mistaken.

MR. KARLSTROM: I think – and now I'm sort of drifting a little bit – [laughs] – on these questions, but this brings to mind somebody else in Ojai, down there, my old friend, died at the age of 104, Beatrice Wood.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Beatrice Wood.

MR. KARLSTROM: And she, of course, occupies her own very special place anyway, because part of her story is being the dear friend and lover of, among others, Marcel Duchamp. So, that becomes sort of a cultural institution. But what about her, I guess, very, very personal work in – well, in ceramics, but especially working with glazes and so forth? And there's almost – I don't want to push this too far, but almost a sense in some of her little vessels of a glass surface, kind of a finished –

MR. LIPOFSKY: That luster-glaze?

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I don't see much relationship there.

MR. KARLSTROM: No?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think that's –

MR. KARLSTROM: I was thinking of it as an aesthetic or a sensuality –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Well, she was just such a fantastic person. And she was such a – her stories and her life and what she did, that’s just – I forgot the name of her book there. Something, I – *Myself*.

MR. KARLSTROM: *I Shock Myself* [*I Shock Myself: the autobiography of Beatrice Wood*. Beatrice Wood, edited by Lindsay Smith; Ojai, California: Dillingham Press, 1985], right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: *I Shock Myself*. That’s it.

MR. KARLSTROM: I’m even mentioned in there, by the way. [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, really? Well, she’s just incredible. I never thought, personally, much of her work. In fact, her work was quite – to me, quite ordinary, except for her little personal things that she did, the little figures and parts of her life that she made into very personal sculpture.

MR. KARLSTROM: The figurines, yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: But I thought that it was kind of pedestrian and quite ordinary. I think she used –

MR. KARLSTROM: Naive, would you say, in a sense?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, she had a real knack for what she was doing; she had a feeling for what she was doing. And she did it, and she did it for so damn long. That’s just incredible. I mean, it was her life, her personality. She was just an amazing person. And she’s sort of an example of someone who never really made a great creative statement, but she made many things, and what she did was related to a lot of people and a lot of people’s life, and that was just – that’s just wonderful. And that’s very, very acceptable. I mean, if you compare her work with Pete’s [Voukos], there’s just no comparison whatsoever, what she did. But she did it on a very personal and a very human way, and I think that’s absolutely fantastic. But on an aesthetic level, I don’t think she ever – she ever achieved what a lot of other people have achieved.

MR. KARLSTROM: One last question before we go eat, okay? Quick one, and it can then be a bridge to the next session. It has to do with meaning in your work; it has to do with perhaps symbolic considerations, which we’re really going to talk about a bit later, or I hope so. But the question of religion specifically, or maybe in a looser, broader sense, spirituality, are they important to you in any regards in your work? You know, religion or spirituality?

MR. LIPOFSKY: No and yes. And I say that “no” first.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay. [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, there’s a spirituality. And I never thought about religion. It doesn’t seem to be very prominent. The aspect of me growing up Jewish and my – in a Jewish family and – I never, never used the religion, but I relate – I relate to some things that way, but it never was really part of my work. However, I did make a couple menorahs and –

MR. KARLSTROM: How functional.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Well, I was asked to do it. It was part of an exhibit at the Jewish Museum in San Francisco. It was quite interesting. And they had people make menorahs, candelabras – that were artists, and they just made the objects, and it didn’t always – it didn’t relate particularly to the Jewishness of it, because a lot of the artists were not Jewish, but it was on a creative level.

So, I’ve done two or things like that. But I did it just as a novelty and as something unusual and just, again, for the challenge of making it. I had no concept what I was going to do before I thought about it. I never thought about doing it until I was invited to be part of this exhibition on two occasions. And it was nice. It was a good challenge. And it was nice to do something with another meaning to it. I never got into the religious aspect of it so much as just the – as making the object, the challenge to make an object. That’s never been very important in my work. I don’t believe it’s ever influenced my work in any way.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, maybe we can save the other part – the – sort of the bigger part of that question or aspect, which is the spirituality, which can mean a lot of things to a lot of individuals. But that, as we know, can take many different forms. And I think maybe we should just go have lunch and save that for tomorrow.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Okay.

MR. KARLSTROM: Would that be a –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Spirituality – I was just reading – I just was sent a catalog of Christopher Wilmarth’s drawings, and he talks so much about –

MR. KARLSTROM: And he’s a good friend of yours.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah – his spirituality and the spiritual aspect of what his work is. And I never – I guess it’s indirectly – my work is indirectly involved with it, but there must be some spirituality in the work, although I never discussed it or talked about it.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, good. Maybe we could think about it, and then –

MR. LIPOFSKY: I’ll think about it.

MR. KARLSTROM: All right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Okay.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, good, Marvin. Thanks. We’ve – god, we’ve covered a lot of good ground. And so we’ll pick up tomorrow.

[Audio break.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay, this is beginning a second session with Marvin Lipofsky in his home in Berkeley. The interviewer, again, is Paul Karlstrom. It’s the following day, so it’s July 31, 2003. As I said, this is session two, interview for the Archives of American Art, and this happens to be mini disk 3 that we’re beginning with.

We’ve covered – we’ve got a real good start on dispatching these questions that are somewhat boilerplate but each one seems to open up some area for discussion. And on the last – we ended the last interview session talking about religion or spirituality as you feel it may be important in your work. And you basically said that – well, in terms of religion, you didn’t feel that that played any really important role, with the exception of a menorah thing that you did, but that that wasn’t, I guess, a compelling force or concern for you in your art. But you were willing to consider that – the broader concept, if you will, spirituality could very well play a role, and so maybe we could start there and see if in some way we can identify, or if you want to identify that spiritual component or perhaps even, may I suggest, it could go a bit further or more – shift it a bit to the whole idea of symbolic expression – symbolism. So I’ll leave it for you.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, starting with the question of religion, it’s not apparent to me that religion plays a role, but it may play a role socially or in an intuitive context, and that – just growing up in a Jewish family, not being a very religious person but growing up in that social context, there probably is some relationship to how I do things and how I think and so forth, but it’s not very formal. I can’t see any formal aspects of it, and I don’t think it comes out particularly in my work or in the forms of the context of my work, but it’s more of a social thing – societal maybe.

As far as spirituality, I don’t see any spirituality in my work. I am sure that other people could read things into it, but I don’t think in those terms. It’s – my work is just more physical rather than spiritual, but I think when you look at it, in the end maybe the whole process is very spiritual because it’s the doing, the making that’s important to me. So there is a spirituality there. It’s being in your studio with your work, working on your work. Even though it’s a labor, it still is somewhat meditative. When I’m in the factory blowing the work it’s rather hectic and it’s extremely physical, and there’s a lot of tension: what’s going to happen, when it’s going to happen. But – so I can’t see that – in the making of the work in a factory situation or a studio situation, that it’s –

[END TAPE 2 SIDE A.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: – being someplace, doing something.

So I don’t know if that’s a very good answer. I don’t even know if I have an answer to that.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it’s not a trick question, but it’s much more complex than that little single line with a question mark at the end would indicate, and lumping together religion and spirituality makes some kind of sense. Just in thinking about it myself, how might this apply to you in your situation, or artists in general – Mark Rothko is of course considered a very spiritual artist.

I suppose another way to put the question – maybe a more helpful way to think about it is art-making, creating these works of art, and by so doing touching some kind of transcendence, whatever that means. And of course in a religion it gets – it’s very specifically directed towards a creator, God and so forth, but, I mean, in a more general way, accessing perhaps something that is transcendent to the mysteries. It’s hard to pin down, but does any of that line of thinking resonate for you at all?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Not really. I don't -

MR. KARLSTROM: Something beyond the everyday, something -

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, I don't - I don't think about those things very often.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I can't see how that comes into my work and I can't see how that's influenced my work - maybe indirectly. As I said before, maybe someone else can see it in it but I don't.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about this notion of breathing, something else I read about in here? And there is a series with Wilmarth, I think - there was a connection there and some work he did that - and I just barely - vaguely remember it from reading it in here. I don't know which essay it was. We can at the break, look it up, but a notion of the making of glass as connected to breathing, to life. Sorry that I'm not more specific on that because -

MR. LIPOFSKY: No - well, yes. Actually, I just received from his wife his catalogue from the Fogg Museum, *Drawing into Sculpture*. I've just been looking at it, reading it. And he did a series when we met each other - I think it was '87, about that time, when we first met, and I invited him to work at CCAC with the students if he had any ideas. And he first said, no, no, he wasn't interested in blowing glass, and then he came back and said, yes, he had some idea. And he was inspired to illustrate the translation of poems by Mallarmé translated by Frederick Morgan. A poet approached Chris [Wilmarth], and Chris then thought of the head form after he studied the poems. And this head form really came about because we had offered - I had offered him the opportunity to blow glass, and of course the blowing a glass bubble, blowing a form that relates to the head.

So from the poems - from the offer of making blown objects from this idea of illustrating the poems came the *Breath* concept for this series of work that he did with us. And he also did a series of prints and drawings, and they're all based on the head form and this oval shape. And he naturally saw what the glass could do for him.

His approach was very, very simple and very direct to the glass, and he actually helped make some of the pieces by forming it with paddles and pressing the glass. He was involved with it; the students made - blew - I blew a couple of things for him and then the students worked with him. And he liked to work with the students and he found that they were very attentive, and found that experience very satisfying. He was teaching at Berkeley, the University of California at Berkeley as a visiting artist and led a seminar, and he didn't like the students at Berkeley. They - he thought that they were all - wanted to - wanted him to tell them about how to be a successful artist, how to - how to grasp the ring or something, and he rejected that. When he came to my students, they didn't ask anything of him; they were just very, very open to him, and he then gave my students a lecture, which he said he wouldn't give to the university students. He was a little stubborn sometimes. And so he talked all about his interests and his career and his work and his travels and Brancusi, who influenced him so much. And it was very good, and he related - related that to the students.

And we became friends and we worked a number of times together, helping him, mostly on doing these heads, which he got involved with. *Breath* was the name of his catalogue and show that he did with this group of work where he took it back to his studio and cut some of the pieces and dealt with them in the way that he deals with glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: It strikes one - what you just described strikes one perhaps as having a connection to metaphors for creation, I suppose, in one way - infusing with life, infusing with the blowing, with the breath as a metaphor for, well, the act of creation and therefore spiritual otherness, if you will.

MR. LIPOFSKY: It had something to do with life, I'm sure of that. Now, when we talked about religion and spirituality, Chris was spiritual - I mean, we were so opposite in that respect. Chris really was spiritual and a thinker. He was constantly thinking and questioning, and he was quite serious about his work, and I got a lot out of him from just watching what he did and how he approached things, and conversation with him about work. And I was just more go-at-it through the material, but he thought quite a bit about what he was doing.

His approach was through light. He approached glass through light, the transmitting of light, shadow, and he didn't approach it from the material. It's hard to see because he used glass and metal - or he really limited his materials to what he used. He drew - of course drew, but that was quite limiting for them. But he also just didn't like when people referred to him as a glass artist. Now, he wouldn't have been referred to as a glass artist in New York, but as his work started to become more known among the glass movement, people started inviting him to shows that dealt with glass, and he didn't like that at all and he kind of bristled at that. And he was, of course, on a much higher level than the majority of people they were working with.

And he always fought that a little bit - or fought that a lot, actually. And so as people started - from the glass

movement started to find Christopher Wilmarth and saw what he did with glass, they just – they just went after him and he just shunned almost everything. In fact, Pilchuck had invited him to come as a visiting artist and he always rejected that. In one conversation he said, I'd only go there if you came along, or if you were there, something like that. And then we did have an opportunity and they did call me, saying, "How can we get Chris Wilmarth?" And I said, "Well, he will only go if I had an opportunity to go up there," and he came up and spent some time at Pilchuck. He really enjoyed it; he was rejecting it and rejecting it, but when he got up there it was good for him. And I think he also liked being in the forest and places to meditate and to be quiet, and he could sneak off by himself or he could be by himself, and that's what I think he liked. He liked to walk – he liked to take a walk. He stayed with me a number of times and he liked my neighborhood because he could walk around the neighborhood here and it wasn't too busy and so forth. And I think in Manhattan, Lower Manhattan, where – he loved walking. He loved the bridges, loved the city.

MR. KARLSTROM: Do you think his resistance to being associated with studio glass, with the glass movement, was a matter of status, perhaps, that he saw himself – as we were discussing last time – as an artist and that this was pigeonholing him in a way that he didn't like? Do you think that was the reason?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, I think that – yes, I think that's a good point, and I'm sure that was true. His stature was a lot larger than – and more important than a lot of the people that they invited to these shows, and I think it wouldn't have been a good idea for him to show in some of these exhibits. There could have been a few that would have been on a higher level, but – I find that among myself, too, that they just group all kinds of things together. There's really very little good curating. It's just a matter of just invite so many names – not what they do but just names of people, and that's really not curating; that's just gathering.

MR. KARLSTROM: Accumulating.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Accumulating, yeah. Accumulating enough people to have an exhibition, not what the work is or how it relates to each other, how it relates to a theme or something on that order. And Chris was quite involved with that. His work all had meaning and his work all related. I'm so sorry that he took his life so early. He had so much to give to other people, but with Chris it took a long time to get to know him and get this out, and he could have helped a lot of people; he could have helped the glass movement quite a bit just because of the way he approached his work, and I thought that he was a very important sculptor.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it sounds also as if he was quite important to you and your life as well, maybe, as your work. I was just going to ask, in what way, perhaps, do you feel he had an impact or an influence on you and your thinking, maybe, about your work with glass.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, not so much that way – a little bit – a little bit because I saw how he did things and what he did, but it was more of a friendship. I haven't related to too many people like that that we're both in the field, really, artists and relating to him as artists. Most of the glass people I don't relate as artists. They relate more on what they do and how they do it, and I find a big problem – I haven't found many people that I can really talk to about their work because they talk – in the glass world, in the United States – because a lot of them came up through this concept, this idea in education that you had to explain your work, you had to relate it to some other artist or some other something. I don't know how to say this.

MR. KARLSTROM: It has to be connected to somebody.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. I notice that most – that kids – people that come from the East Coast have all this gibberish that they write about their work. It's just this big philosophical justifying their work, and when you read it, it's a bunch of nothing, and it doesn't relate to what they're doing or not. It does relate to the spiritual and the – and it's just worthless. It's totally worthless. It's just – they spend more time writing about what they are doing than doing what they should be doing.

MR. KARLSTROM: Do you think that that's less true in the crafts movement, though – more true of conceptualists, of course –

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, it's – they ask for artist statements many times and the artist statements are generally just a bunch of junk.

MR. KARLSTROM: Pretentious? Overly fancy?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, really pretentious, yeah, and I hate reading that stuff.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, do you feel that glass is inherently, because of the crafts connection – the making, the importance of the material, the importance of – because we've been talking about that, the making – is less, what should we say, susceptible or involved in this kind of description of self-analysis in these statements that really comes very much out of theory, of course. You know, that's the whole new aspect that's been introduced

into the art world, I think, and where they sort of parrot, mimic these critical theoreticians who write about art or -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, that's true for some, but I don't think most on the student level, they get into that very much. It depends on the school and it depends on what level they're at. But I felt, when I've read things that Wilmarth wrote, they were somewhat profound, and he seemed to be able to put his finger more on where he was. He seemed to know what he wanted and where he was - it was going and what he wanted to get out of his work and how he saw other people viewing his work. He said something to the effect that it wasn't really possible to draw sculpture, to draw the three-dimensional. He just didn't think that it really worked. There was a big problem there to draw his sculpture. And that, for the most part, is somewhat true. People make an attempt at it, but it's very difficult, and he felt that it was - that the sculpture really was more important, that the drawing of it was a difficult issue.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it's flat.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: It's two-dimensional.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That's right, so he visualized something different.

MR. KARLSTROM: This actually leads us into the whole question of community that we touched on in a more limited way earlier. Why don't we just jump ahead to that for a moment because previously, before we taped, I think maybe that when I came over and we had lunch and chatted, I was interested in your connections outside of the crafts, outside of the studio glass movement. In other words, your interaction within the broader, let's just say, Bay Area - keep it local - Bay Area art world and art scene. And if I recall correctly, you pointed out that you felt that, in the earlier days - and perhaps this is maybe the '60s, I'm not sure, starting back then - but there was more of this community, sense of community, that you enjoyed more interaction with other people who were making art, not just glass, a broad art focus. Is that true? And how do you feel that's evolved for you over the years?

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, I remember in undergraduate, experiences weren't that way, but when I went to graduate school there were bars - a bar that the artist people from the university hung out, and it was a place where people talked about many things. Sometimes they even did drawings and exchanged drawings, and there was a community of artists, the older and the younger, the faculty, some of the faculty with the students, and I enjoyed that. I wasn't so much of a drinker, but that was the place where people met. When I came to California and started teaching, there wasn't anything like that. In Wisconsin it was the 602 Club or the 602 Bar, and everybody went there, and you knew if you wanted to talk to somebody you can go there and find them. And I think they had something - that there wasn't any alcohol within a mile of the university, so there weren't any bars that people hung out.

But what was happening around the Bay Area, there were meeting places, and it was Pete Voulkos's studio, that's where the artists went; that's where they went down there to play poker on the weekends and hung out at various times. Tom Marioni's parties, that was a little bit later, but that - and there were a number of places. I looked for the artist community and what I found was the openings, and when people went to an opening of someone's, usually everybody went out to dinner afterwards. The groups weren't as large as they are now, but people went to dinner in San Francisco primarily, and it was a social time to talk to people, a time to meet. And that - that's somewhat disappeared. There's a little bit of that, but that's disappeared and there wasn't any relationship - I don't know - I don't know, it could be going on on a whole another level that I'm not aware of, but I'm not - but I miss that because that's where you relate to other artists, you hear what's going on, you talk to them. And it's very little of studio - that I can see - studio visits or people hanging out in each other's studios or meeting there or somewhat. And there may be some of that going on, but I'm not a part of it.

MR. KARLSTROM: You know, our friend, David Jones, who we were mentioning earlier, actually has tried to maintain - promote and maintain some of that. He used to go drop in very, very late at night, of course, at Pete's studio and just talk.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: Apparently they would talk well into the morning.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That's what happened.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, and this is not that long ago, just before he died they would - when Pete died - David would pay these visits.

I'm curious to know a couple things about the situation you've described, and one of them of course being who are some of the people that participated - that you remember participated in this? But I guess - well, yeah, what about that? You're describing a community - you mentioned -

MR. LIPOFSKY: It was the painters and sculptors -

MR. KARLSTROM: Around Berkeley?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think it was the magnetism of Pete Voulkos. I mean, he was a magnetic guy. He was a very generous person. He had the means to be generous also, and people gravitated towards him. It was important to go down to Pete's. It was important to be part of that group. I think some people may have thought it was macho and it was - the playing poker and playing pool and -

MR. KARLSTROM: Cigars, probably.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Cigars and drinking and so forth, but yet, I think people fed off each other as artists, and I think that maintained their art. I think that was important, too. And I don't know of, or don't see any figures like that now, any - things have gotten - art has become more professional - not professional; that's the wrong word - has gotten to be -

MR. KARLSTROM: A career.

MR. LIPOFSKY: - career oriented, and the showing, and where, and making money more so than it was before. People made money but it just happened.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, what about that? I'm real interested in the whole concept of Bohemianism, which at one time was very much - especially here when there wasn't so much action and activity on the earlier days. That's changed. There are a lot of people coming out of the art schools - in fact, before they even get out, they're focused, as we said earlier, on career. And in some of these schools CAL Arts [California Institute of the Arts]; UCLA [University of California Los Angeles]; [San Francisco] Art Institute, to a degree; CCAC, more now - there is, much more, I think, of a focus - I think you're right - on career. You know, you're in there and you want to set up your network and all that. But what you've described does seem to have passed, and that was the notion of living the art life, basically the Bohemian idea.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think there's still some there, it's just - it's shifted to individuals that I'm not - I don't associate with or don't know. But you know, being around Pete's you could meet artists from New York, from Los Angeles; you could meet - that was important. You saw these other - these people; they talked, they were - there were - Sam Tchakalian was from the Art Institute, from San Francisco. He was always up for a party. Between the Art Institute, that was a social situation, and the artists in San Francisco - and I remember going to a number of parties with - even old Bob Howard had parties, and they were - I'm trying to remember some of the things that went on. And I'm sure that some of that goes on, but maybe it's the age thing. I've gotten away from it age-wise.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, probably the younger ones - I know a few of them - I'm not that plugged in; I'm pretty much a '60s, '70s type person - but the younger ones also seem to be very often engaged in the club scene, South of Market clubs, and a lot of their lives -

MR. LIPOFSKY: That's probably true.

MR. KARLSTROM: And so they're into music and there's sort of a lot of crossover. But I do understand what you're saying.

Who were some of the people besides Pete that were important to you or that you remember enjoying interaction with when you visited a studio at opening -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I wasn't really - really friendly with a lot of the people, but I knew them and I knew about them and so forth. I didn't hang out with a lot of other people. Harold Paris was an interesting guy, and people who came to visit - the visitors to the art department - and now I can't remember everybody's name, but there are quite a number of painters and some sculptors - Eduardo Paolozzi, I remember when he was there, and Robert Morris came - and those, I didn't have a lot of direct contact with them, but the little I did was quite interesting, just to see how they handled themselves and what they thought about and what they did and what they talked about. And that was - I think that visiting artist situation was very important. I'm sure the students got a tremendous amount - out of that. I think that was very, very important. Jim Melchert was an important person.

MR. KARLSTROM: Of course he's still around and I don't run into him very often.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yep, yep.

MR. KARLSTROM: He and his wife –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Don Potts, when he was teaching, was quite important. And Ron Nagle – Bob Bechtle taught for a short time in the old design department. There were just so many people who you met. Sam Richardson was an important person. He was one of the earlier – one of the first artists from the Bay Area I've met, and Tio Giambruni, Bob Arneson, the people up at Davis.

MR. KARLSTROM: Bruni?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Tio Giambruni. Tio is a sculptor. In fact, this building that I'm in, he owned it.

MR. KARLSTROM: I don't think I know him. I know a lot of these other names.

MR. LIPOFSKY: He lived in Berkeley and taught at Davis.

MR. KARLSTROM: How do you spell his name?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Giambruni? G-I-A-M-B-R-U-N-I.

MR. KARLSTROM: Tio.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Tio. And he was a local –

MR. KARLSTROM: Local, maybe. I don't know.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – he was a local. I think he grew up in San Francisco. But he was very influential. I knew him a bit. And Bob Arneson – when I first came to California, I didn't know very many people, so – but the people I knew and the people I had met before I came here were at San Jose and at Davis, and then of course Pete was not teaching – was in his studio; he wasn't at the school. So I would – I would make trips up to Davis, stay overnight a couple of times at Bob Arneson's, slept on his couch. I went down to San Jose with Sam Richardson, met Don Potts there when he was just graduating and I said that they were looking for somebody to teach in Berkeley and got – helped Don get a job teaching in the design department, which kind of saved him because he didn't know what he was going to do. And he established himself as a very interesting sculptor.

MR. KARLSTROM: I remember his cars.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right, right.

MR. KARLSTROM: They were great – fabulous.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, so he – that was just a lucky – a chance meeting, and thought I had a good plan. I asked Don to bring all his sculptures up and put up an exhibit – place them in the hallway of Wurster Hall, where the department was, and all the faculty walked by them – they had to walk by in order to get to their offices or to teach, so they all saw his work. And when his name came up in the meeting for hiring, I said, "That's the work that you've been looking at," and they all were very impressed and knew that he could do things and make things, and so that was – rather than looking at some slides, they saw the actual work, and they hired him; they hired him right away.

MR. KARLSTROM: That was a good strategy.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That was a great strategy. I never tried that again, but it really worked. And they didn't, they didn't know – oh, there's some interesting work in the first floor.

MR. KARLSTROM: This is interesting because we're now broadening the scope of your contact beyond, once again, this focus on material – on glass, on the craft. And you keep saying that there was this kind of interaction, and that to a certain extent there was talking about art. And do you feel that that played some real role in your own thinking – again, beyond material, beyond blowing, the idea that it's part of something bigger?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, absolutely. My interest really went to the painters and sculptors. Well, it went there because there wasn't any people working in glass. I mean, I was the one, and then there was a little bit of glass at the San Jose State University and some people down there. But I didn't – I didn't spend a lot of time going down there, but there wasn't anybody to relate to, so – and my interest was sculpture and the other arts, so that's what I related to constantly. That was where – in the beginning.

After the glass movement started to enlarge, then I had friends and made friends at other schools and so forth,

but it took a few years before that became important enough to relate to, because we really were the pioneers; we were doing things. And then the students – the early students I had were doing quite interesting things and trying – it was a very free situation, and it took some years to build up. We didn't have a base.

MR. KARLSTROM: Do you want to talk at all about this notion of symbolic form, symbolic expression in your work? Is that a concept that has any interest to you? I'm just thinking back to what I gather still is among your most famous – best know works, the early *California Loop Series*, which are quite wonderful, and your show pretty much starts out with that, the show in Oakland. Isn't that right?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, yes.

MR. KARLSTROM: I would say symbolic – I would – definitely symbolic issues or content in there.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I've always said that there weren't any real symbolic symbols to most of my work. That's just what the glass did. And the glass did those things without having to try very hard with it. Then if you allowed the glass to naturally take shape – the gravity to take over, it drips, goes down, and if you blow into it, it gets bigger. And if you have hot glass over a little cooler glass and you allow it to drip, a drip occurs at the end. So I was actually just playing with the glass. I was just using – and trying to use what the glass did in order to make scale – things a little larger. I would swing the glass out; it would stretch out. So the loops were a natural progression of those pieces, and after you stretched it out and you blew a little bit into it, then at the end of the loop there was a little bit of a – there was a round area, a bulbous area. And those things just played into my art.

So the symbolism, it was a little bit – it was indirect to me. Now, when I put them all together so I made different – different pieces and then I put the pieces together, matched them up, tried to find things that went with each other, then people – people read many things into them. But that's what the glass did and that's how I manipulated the glass in its natural state.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, yeah, I think that's important and, I think, very interesting, because most of us, looking at your work without that caveat – I guess it's just a given – would see sexual symbolism, sexual form, sexual symbolism.

MR. LIPOFSKY: People read that into it all the time, and it's probably there, but it wasn't my intent to do that, and it's what the glass does. Then the glass is a sensual material, the glass is a sexy material, the glass – that's what the glass is, and I didn't have to do very much for it to become that. [Laughs.] So, yeah, people read a lot of sexual things into the earlier work, and I said, "Well, yeah, I see what you mean, that's – but that wasn't my intent to do that." But I also – when it became that way I didn't deny it. I let it be. I didn't try to change it so it wouldn't look that way. That was just a natural progression of the glass. In my mind, that's what I was doing. And people related to it quite – quite that way. I think they put too much emphasis on that when my intent was just to make sculpture; my intent really was to lighten the glass up, to have negative and positive shape. The glass would be positive but it would create this negative shape – or shapes where it – from the plane to the piece, so there would be all these other shapes besides the physical shape that the glass was. It would create other shapes when it was sitting on a platform or was sitting on a base. And that was my intent.

My – what started that, in one respect, was that I saw what other people were doing with the glass, and what they were doing was really heavy handed: thick, heavy – things didn't lift up off the base; they were just plopped down, and so I wanted my work – thinking in the sculptural way that I wanted my work to be lifted off and to make these negative spaces that were as interesting as the space that the glass took up – created itself. So that really was my intent.

Now, those – unfortunately in the exhibit, the curator – I tried to get her to look for – there were a few sculptural pieces that I made before those, and that was my first real sculptural attempt, but she – the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art has one in their collection, or at least they had it, and they couldn't find it. I mean, the Oakland Museum called over there and got some intern and the intern couldn't find it. I don't know how hard she looked. And I wanted early sculptures; those were my first three or four of them that I made, those were forms made out of wood. They were kind of geometric shapes – with a stainless steel mirror, and then I attached glass to that mirrored side of this wooden shape so that the mirror reflected – the image reflected the glass. The glass shapes themselves were a little organic but they – so that was my first sculptural pieces that I made, and I sort of wish that one of those would have been in the exhibit.

I did have some slides of them. I don't know why she [the curator] just ignored that work, didn't see it. Those were successful in some ways – the more successful was the one that was this *California Loop Series* that I made, and I made big ones and small ones. There I used other materials – used flocking to get color immediately into the glass. I wasn't a chemist; I didn't know how to get good color into the glass [in the 60s]. We can do some basic things. So that was something that I could put into it right away. I painted sometimes – painted the surfaces of the glass, used copper plating on the glass – I plated some of the shapes so that there was a contrast.

A lot of that was dealt with contrast, the glass to the fiber flocking, the tactile, the rough copper plating to the smooth glass, because I noticed that when people would walk into the studio they would – we had a pan next to the bench where all the scraps of glass dropped, and people would always go in and pick things up and touch the glass. So there was always some tactile sort of relationship with the glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: Tactile, sensual – playing to the senses very much, I guess.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes. Yeah, it was. So my work always had a sensual quality. I always thought glass was very sensual and it had a sensual quality to it as well as an organic quality, and I always – I played with that and I tried to keep that – keep that in the glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about that term, “played with?” Do you feel that there is playfulness in your work?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I don’t know. I use that term – I don’t know where I started using that, but instead of “made,” instead of “developed,” I guess I use that term, “I played with that in the glass.” Maybe – it isn’t playful on a – it’s playful on the serious side. But it is; working with the glass is sort of like playing with the glass. It’s manipulating the glass. I don’t know how that came about.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about humor, then, because play, playfulness, fun –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I have had some humor – humorous pieces that weren’t – I did a series of work – called it the *The Great American Food Series*, where I made molds of McDonald’s hamburgers, a Quarter Pounder with cheese, hot dogs, pickles, things like that; did a Colonel Sanders bank and made a cup. And these all turned into cups. I don’t know why the cup form was something that was interesting me. [All made from aluminum molds made from the actual objects.]

There’s another thing that I found in California. The students at Davis were all making ceramic cups in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, and they were just wonderful. And I acquired a few of them from the students up there, and they were great. I don’t see that happening so much anymore. And I do have a collection of cups that I found. Up in the University of Washington, Seattle, people around that time, early ‘70s, were making cups, too, and they were just wonderful. They were wonderful. Now people make more regular ceramics – they don’t make things quite as funky and as interesting as they did back then, but I still have a – I lost a number of them in my first marriage. I don’t know; they just disappeared. I wish I had some of those back. There were some from those early ceramics students up at Davis.

MR. KARLSTROM: But you don’t associate yourself – or at least I believe this is the case – with the Funk movement, as in Peter Selz’s exhibition.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, when they had that exhibit, I submitted some work to it – they asked all the faculty to submit – and of course they rejected my work and they didn’t think it was funky. I was a little bit – a little bit – not upset so much, but a little sorry I didn’t get in to that show, but then I heard a lot of talk about what was funky, what wasn’t funky. That show created quite a bit of debate among the artists because of the term: whether the term related to music, whether the term related to art, what really was Funk? And some people said, definitely not; this is not Funk, Funk was something else. It was a great show to have this controversy. I wish that – no, I don’t think too many people know about that. They’ve seen it but they accepted it for what it is, and they weren’t around during the controversy.

In the catalogue to my exhibit, one of the writers wanted to use – talk about that my work was funky and related it to that show, but they didn’t know – [laughs] – that everybody was arguing with each other about what was, who is, who isn’t. And glass really was funky – glass itself, making glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: How so?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, it was just different in itself, whether it was accepted into the show in some form or not, but it was – it was a pretty – and I don’t even know what the term means. I mean, I could look at things and say – but – so I heard people saying, “that’s in the show but it’s not funky.” So Peter Selz really had a – really had a time with it. And Bruce Conner, I remember, made a lot of comments about it. I think he was. You’re hearing what Bruce said and what that person said and that person said. It was quite interesting. I like that controversy; that was great. I don’t think any other show has made that around this area, that type of dialogue and controversy. But it was part of the times also.

MR. KARLSTROM: But you did, to a certain degree, identify with – to the extent that you could get a grasp on the term, you felt comfortable with the term, or some connection with it.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, a lot of the people making clay were making funky things out of clay, and I think Bruce Conner, if I’m not mistaken, denied that his work was funky, but it was a lot of people sort of thought, his earlier

- his wrappings and - I'm trying to think back at some of the people. I think a number of people were in the show because of who they were and not really that their work was so funky.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, Bob Arneson sure seems to fit.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, I think Bob fit very well.

MR. KARLSTROM: Very well - I think as much as any. But it interests me that you were a bit disappointed because you didn't get in it. Presumably it wasn't just that you wanted -

MR. LIPOFSKY: That was very early, and yeah - well, it was an acceptance if I got in. I'm trying to remember what pieces that I submitted.

MR. KARLSTROM: It would be interesting to find out.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And they probably were, in the definition, very funky pieces, but they didn't fit what they thought the art should be.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, those curators, they -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, but I mean, I don't think they wanted me. But anyway, it was very interesting to me.

[END TAPE 2 SIDE B.]

MR. KARLSTROM: - as the time goes by, move along and maybe dispatch a few of - and sort a brief way, some of these questions. Once again, if the question strikes some particular note with you that you want to pursue a little longer, that's fine. But I'm curious to know - you have been watching, presumably, the art market, especially in connection to glass, over the years, and how do you feel - or even beyond glass craft - how do you feel the art market for crafts has changed as you have watched it over the years?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, it has certainly increased where now people can make a living if they sell things. [Laughs.] And it has - it has been very helpful. I never paid very close attention to what things were selling. I can't say that I didn't pay attention, but I didn't pay close attention. It never really bothered me. It was always a problem to put a price on something, and that always - that always bothered me: where would I put - how much - [laughs]. And every time I sold something, I said, well, maybe I should have made it a little more expensive; that sold pretty easily. [Laughs.] Did I sell it too cheaply? That bothered me on occasion, that I didn't know my pricing, you know? And I have never really worked with anybody at the galleries or anything about the pricing of my work.

Recently, I have said is that - is this price okay? That price is okay, but I wouldn't make it any more expensive. It was a problem to sell yourself too cheap. So, I was selling things for a few hundred dollars, but remember, there was a couple of guys in New York who saw my work, and - and - I think the works were selling for \$300 or \$600. And they said, that is really cheap for small sculpture, which I didn't know anything about; I didn't know the prices in New York. And they bought several pieces of mine. And I hadn't been in the New York market, so I didn't know that that should at least have been doubled, at least doubled at that time. And so, the early work was sold at just a few hundred dollars. But the market has been going up. Now, some people, starting off with Tom Patti, really put some high prices on his work. And I think they were way overpriced, they still are overpriced. One was in the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

MR. KARLSTROM: What - what were the prices?

MR. LIPOFSKY: - \$40,000, \$60,000 for things that weren't more than eight inches tall. [But it was sold to the museum for much much less.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Wow.

MR. LIPOFSKY: But he - knowing Tom a little bit, he had this - did this gamble, you know. So if you don't sell it for \$10 and you put \$500 on it, someone's going to think that it's really worth something.

MR. KARLSTROM: How do you spell his last name?

MR. LIPOFSKY: P-A-T-T-I.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay. Well, it seems to me that you were operating on a - a bit in a vacuum, because there wasn't -

MR. LIPOFSKY: That's true.

MR. KARLSTROM: – any guidelines for that, and all you –

MR. LIPOFSKY: It was a vacuum.

MR. KARLSTROM: And all you could do, it would seem to me, is, to a certain extent, look at what glass was selling for in boutiques and so forth –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Well –

MR. KARLSTROM: – and then add on something, because you were making art.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Well, the other problem was that the people who ran galleries that showed glass – and I use gallery very loosely – weren't very good business people; they were just people who liked selling things and so on. They were – some of them really were shops more than galleries. That bothered me a little bit, because I knew what a gallery should be or what it was like. And so – but the people handling glass were – and they weren't – they weren't helpful at all. They – and for some strange reason, if the work was cheap, they liked it. Even though they wouldn't make much money on it – if they doubled the price, they would make more money on it. And so, they really weren't into selling, they were just that people would – they were into people buying things from them, but they weren't into selling, they weren't into helping people start collections or things like – something in that order. They weren't really very professional. There were just a few people who really were in the business and who had galleries.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, tell me about that, of your own relationship with the dealers or with galleries. Who would be these few, thinking mainly here in the Bay Area, of course – your own experience with –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, the first show I had I think was with Rudy Turk out at the Richmond Art Center [1965], many artists had their early exhibits there. It was in a case that's still there in a hallway, and that was very early. The next show I had was with a group of students of mine at Marjorie Annenberg's gallery [1966, "Glass from Berkeley: Marvin Lipofsky and his students"] on Hyde Street in San Francisco. She was down near the marina. She, I think, just died recently. She had a little studio shop, and we had a little show: "Marvin Lipofsky and His Students," we called it. We made our own announcement poster.

MR. KARLSTROM: What year was that?

MR. LIPOFSKY: You know, I don't – I don't know. It's probably in my resume.

MR. KARLSTROM: And it's in the catalogue, certainly.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That was the – that was the first show. I think the next – the next major thing that I did, which was a really good thing, was in a summer exhibition of local artists at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, which led to an exhibit at the Hansen Gallery [1968].

MR. KARLSTROM: Later Hansen-Fuller.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: So Wanda Hansen –

MR. LIPOFSKY: It was Wanda Hansen –

MR. KARLSTROM: Was she in San Francisco right after –

MR. LIPOFSKY: – and then it became – yes. Yes, yes, yes. She was – she had – she was in the – ah, I forget – the same building as the Berggruen Gallery. She had just moved in there. It was – it was – so I had a show. Because I was invited to be in a summer show at the San Francisco Museum, which was a summer art show with a number of people – [Bob] Arneson was in it, [David] Gilhooly was in it, Tio Giambruni was in it, Sue Hall was there, and a few other people, I was – the names escape me [Sam Tchakalian, Gerry Walburg, Bob Bechtel, George Miyasaki, Mel Ramos, Kathan Brown]. And it was – the San Francisco Museum put on this show of local artists and during the summertime, and it was a great show. And from that, Wanda Hansen saw my work – or actually, Diana Fuller was her partner at that time. I think they did call it the Hansen-Fuller Gallery – the Hansen-Fuller Gallery?

MR. KARLSTROM: It became that eventually.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Diana was the one who picked my work, and – because I dealt with her and had a little show there. And that was interesting; that was my introduction to – really, to San Francisco, to the art scene in San Francisco. Slightly after that they changed their attitude, and took on some other artists and dropped a number of artists. And so, they didn't continue with me, but that was my first major show in San

Francisco.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about some of the other dealers who are identified with craft? Dorothy Weiss, any – did you ever show with her?

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, I never really showed with her. She had a shop, Meyer, Breyer and Weiss, and I had a – one piece in some show there, some little piece, but I never really showed with her for some reason – because I didn't like that space very well, that was more of a shop than a gallery. But – but then she – in her other gallery, but she never was interested in my work.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about –

MR. LIPOFSKY: [Laughs.] She had a hard time making her mind up. [Laughs.] She couldn't make decisions easily. But we were always friendly. I have always maintained a nice friendship. I used to go into the gallery quite often, talk to her and so forth. She was – she was always very friendly. She – I think I met Dorothy when she was working with the artists – with the gallery – with the Oakland Art Museum. And now it's called the Collectors Gallery. So she – I met her through that, through the Oakland Museum. Met Ruth Braunstein at her gallery.

MR. KARLSTROM: I was going to ask about Ruth.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – at Berkeley. She came over – I don't know – to visit Pete or something like that, and came up to my office. We had offices – studio offices. They are very small but, I had some – I had a lot of my pieces I had been blowing, and she bought a thing that was somewhat like a vase, she bought it from me. I think it was something like a hundred dollars or \$150 or something like that, and I was really impressed. And so, again, I have known her and been friendly with her for a long time. Never showed with her, but I used to bump into her in New York when she was promoting her artists and things like that. And she's – she's a great lady.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, do you – do you have a long-term gallery connection at all? Who's – who's – who represents you now here?

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's strange – it's strange, you know. I don't think the galleries ever – it was usually the newer galleries – to get Wanda – make contracts with people, paper contracts. And I thought they were pretty silly, because they didn't really have any established presence. The longest gallery that I have showed with Holsten Galleries. The first gallery that I did well with in – gosh, now I've forgotten the name. [Laughs.] Oh, I will come – can't remember the name; just went right out of my mind. In Birmingham, Michigan. She now just sells jewelry, but that was in early, in early –

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, Yaw Gallery [Birmingham, MI]?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes. Nancy Yaw. Thank you so much.

MR. KARLSTROM: Nancy Yaw. Okay.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Nancy Yaw. And Nancy Yaw had a very nice gallery. She was a nice lady. She and her husband are wonderful people. I had a show of my *California Loops* there. And I came in for the show, and she said that there was a collector coming from New York, they were flying in to look at my work. They had collected Tiffany glass, then Tiffany glass became very expensive and they started collecting the new glass, what was going on. And so, those – so what she did, she would invite her patrons, her clients to come in while she was unpacking the work, to make things a little bit exciting. And as they were unpacking things, then the work looked more interesting. So she sold a few pieces, but I had the best relationship with her.

I remember coming into the gallery once, visiting her, and she was talking on the telephone, and she was talking to Dale Chihuly. And she had just had a show with Richard DeVore, who made ceramics, taught at Cranbrook Academy. And Dale had asked, from the conversation, asked how Richard did. And Nancy said, well, Richard sold out. Of course, that piqued Chihuly's interest. And I heard him say, she was looking at me while she was talking to him, and he said, "Well, you know, next time Richard has a show, why don't you put me together with him?" And of course, Nancy wouldn't do that, but she was – she raised her eyebrows and looked at me and smiled. And Dale was doing this promotion because here, he wanted to link up with some guy who was successful – and Richard Devore did sell out all his work. I have a piece of his. They were sort of bowls, but very – very, very sensitive pieces. And Dale was just working – working that telephone, working his promotion – so, that to me was always quite funny.

Now, there was this couple who came from New York, looked at my work, and my work was a little bit too much for them; they were more into glass vases and what have you. And Nancy said – drove them back to the airport, and on the way, she said, "There's one more place in town that has glass, and I will stop by there." So she stopped by there, and they bought a couple paperweights, or a little – a perfume bottle, I think, or something

like that, and then she took them to the airport. And that place just had what I just mentioned: perfume bottles and couple little vases, mostly selling realistic Canadian prints. And that was the start of Habatat, the Habatat Galleries. But in – I – she remembers; she said that they didn't even thank her for bringing the collectors in there to buy these little things that they bought.

MR. KARLSTROM: Who represents you here now?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, the longest relationship I have had was with Kenn Holsten, the Holsten Galleries. He was in Palm Beach on Worth Avenue, and I showed quite a few years with him. Then he moved out of that and went up to Stockbridge, Massachusetts. And then I didn't show with him for a period of time, and then I started showing with him again. And he has done – probably he has done better for me than anyone over the years. I show with Ken Holsten, and I have done a couple SOFAs [Sculptural Objects and Functional Art] with him in New York and done very well. I have also – show with R. Duane Reed in St. Louis. It's a little harder sell with Duane. But Kenn Holsten has a really good client body and he's very good with his customers.

MR. KARLSTROM: Nobody locally, I gather.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I show with Jenkins-Johnson, Karen Jenkins-Johnson, but she just has a few pieces. We have never done a show together; she just had my work. She's a very nice lady. And trying to promote a few glass artists.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yes, yes, exactly.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – she has a little hard time selling glass in San Francisco.

MR. KARLSTROM: She specializes in realism.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Realism – yeah, yeah. Most – yeah –

MR. KARLSTROM: – painting. Mm-hmm.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – painting. So –

MR. KARLSTROM: I actually wrote an essay for her jury, her annual –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, that's right, that's right, yes. Yeah. But once in a while something happens with that.

I show with the Habatat Galleries. I have work in Michigan and I have work in Florida, at the galleries, but I don't do an awful lot with them; they just have too many artists. They have so many people, that it's – it's hard. I think they're just overwhelming. I did have a big show with them once, and then I got a little bit upset with how they handled it in – they were in Michigan, and they had a large show of mine. It was probably the largest show of mine.

I have also showed with Leo Kaplan in New York. I had at least two shows; maybe three shows with them in New York. And – when they were on Madison Avenue – they still have a couple pieces of mine, but I don't really – I don't show with them any more. They did well; they were just establishing themselves and did fairly well with me. Those are the main galleries that I have shown with. I haven't shown too much. There have been many exhibits over the years, but those are the main people that I have had some contact with.

MR. KARLSTROM: But obviously, whether or not you had many shows or many gallery shows, people know your work and they find ways to get it. And I'm curious to know that – to what extent do you – I don't want to say deal out of the house, out of the studio, but you do have a little gallery set up down there. And do –

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, that's just a way to keep my work. It's not really – I don't think of it as a gallery; it's a storage. I sell to people on occasion. It's a little bit difficult, because I don't want to sell to somebody who's – who deals with one of the galleries that I show at. And it's – so it's hard to know. And once in a while, someone will come around. I have been pretty good that way, that the people that I have sold out of my studio don't necessarily deal with the galleries that I – that I show at. So that's always a very touchy situation.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, of course it is. Why don't we pause now and call this the end of disc one. And –

[Audio break.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Continuing our interview with Marvin Lipofsky, this is the second session on July the 31st, and this is disc four, the second disc in this session, Paul Karlstrom interviewing.

Well, we have – we're moving along at a certain pace through this series of questions and touching on a number of important issues. How important to you is your working environment? You know, here we're sitting, and –

while not in your studio right now, which is downstairs, but is it important to you, the kind of space that presumably it is that you have created in which to work? Are – there are certain things that you really need, that you really insist upon?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Things just came about. Things just happened as far as my situation. About 1967 I was doing most of my work at the school, and I didn't really have a studio, except what I could use at the school – in the school situation.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay.

MR. LIPOFSKY: In 1967 a sculptor friend of mine, Ted Odza, told me about this building in Berkeley that had a penthouse on top of it, and he was interested. And I said, "Oh, I don't believe that." And so he said, "Come on," and we went down and took a look at it. And I said, oh, my gosh. It was a big surprise. It was a small warehouse with a little apartment built on the second floor in the back of the building. It was used for business by a couple for importing Mexican goods, and so they had a spray booth, compressor. And at that time I didn't have any money; I was new at the university, didn't even think of buying anything. But I knew that my friend Tio Giambruni, again –

MR. KARLSTROM: Again.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – was looking for a studio. And I mentioned this place to him, and he bought it, I think within a week or so. When he bought it, he offered me an opportunity to rent the upstairs portion of the building, and so I thought that that was a good idea. So I rented the small apartment, which was attached to a warehouse, or a room – a storage room, and I started off with my studio there. And the apartment, the small apartment – bathroom and kitchen – I rented to one of my students [Otis Niles] who needed a place to live. And actually, he and Paul Cotton lived here for a short period of time, and I'm trying to remember his name – I can't remember his name. Oh, it slipped my mind again. I'm having a bad day on remembering names.

But anyway, so I used the storage area for my studio; it had a separate door. And then they moved out, and I changed my situation, and I started living in the apartment. I took it over for a place to live. Eventually, Tio died at a young age, and his son Mark had been living in the front of the building; he had been using it as a studio. And eventually Helen offered it – his wife offered the building to me to buy, and I jumped at it. That was really important.

You want to stop? That's a fax.

MR. KARLSTROM: It's all right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: So I bought the building about 1976, I think it was – I think that's around the date. So I have already paid off the mortgage on it and so forth, so. Then I had rented the front portion of the warehouse out to a couple, actually Peter Voulkos and her then boyfriend [Joe Destefino] lived here for – Pete's daughter – for a period of time. And then a former student of mine lived here with her boyfriend [Gail Cates and David Herring. Then another student Terry Eaton and his girlfriend.], and I eventually took it over. And then, my wife Ruth, my wife now, who is –

MR. KARLSTROM: With Ruth?

MR. LIPOFSKY: – we were just friends at the time. I offered her a place to – she was leaving a house that she was living in with her children – and they have gotten older – and I built an apartment for her in the front of the building, and so she has her own apartment in the front. And the downstairs is my studio, part of the downstairs, shared with her own apartment. And so it was really never a conscious effort; it's just something that happened, and one thing led to another thing and another thing. And I wish I had more space, I wish I had some place – unfortunately, the building doesn't have any outside property. So, what – the building is right on the property line, so I don't have anyplace to go. But we did remodel part of it, raised the roof and built a building on the – a bedroom on the top floor of the apartment. It was about 20 years ago. So I like living in a place – it's a converted warehouse. I like living where I work. I couldn't conceive of doing it any other way at this point, but it's been a long time, so I'm very used to it. [Bought the property east of mine in 2004.]

I have a fair-sized studio. Not a large studio, but a fair-sized studio. And my working space for working the glass is fairly small, but it's very convenient because I work by myself. So it's convenient for me. I have enough equipment to do everything.

MR. KARLSTROM: So you have – you're self-contained.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I'm self-contained. Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: You have virtually everything you need right here. And wow, what could be better?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: So what could be better?

Let's pause for a moment. A little bit of an interruption, a bit of a pause. We're now on track two. And - oh, I think that that gives us an idea of your working space and how it evolved. [Laughs.] I don't know that there's much more to say about that.

Another question, and a more general one, which I think to a certain extent we have talked about, and that is how - in your view, how does American studio glass rank within the international movement? Now, we have already talked about it in a way. If I remember correctly, basically you said that the American movement, to a large extent, well, became - actually stimulated the international studio glass movement. Is that right?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. I believe that's very true.

MR. KARLSTROM: And so I think that takes care of that. Wow, that was the shortest answer in this - [laughs].

A question about influences. Again, we have already touched - we have touched on this at several points, but I think the question here - it's pretty specific in terms of what, in your view, are the major influences on you and the development of your work. We have talked about how you were introduced to glassblowing, and you yourself had to find your own way and so forth. But beyond what we have already said, how would you describe that, the people or the events or the developments that had the most impact on direction of your career?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I have looked at other artists, sculptors, painters. I don't think there is any one person who influenced me. As far as my work goes, I think I have had - been impressed and interested in a number of people, in lifestyle, et cetera, what they - what they did, but I don't think my work has been influenced. I like quite a number of - I like painters, sculptors, but as far as directly influencing my work, there haven't been too many. I think the influences come out of the opportunities that I have had to work in factories -

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. So -

MR. LIPOFSKY: - and in other countries. And I think that's the major - that's the major influence. If there was a group of artists who I - I'm impressed by, I think that would have been a number of the Czech artists. I have appreciated what they have done and their creativity probably more than any of the others, and I have related to some of their work.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. I thought maybe that would be your answer, because you have - you spoke earlier about this - what became for you, oh, really, a kind of pattern, repeating itself over and over again, these opportunities to go abroad and different countries and different factories, different glass artists, and, as you've pointed out, different limitations that - to which you needed to respond, I suppose.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. I think that's true.

MR. KARLSTROM: Maybe that - maybe that helped with the - what about, though - in addition to these international opportunities, what about this place? What about California itself, specifically the Bay Area? I - I'm inclined for - I personally am always interested to - in that question to try to get a feeling for an artist responding to place, a sense of place. You did speak about the openness of California, how it's distinguished in that way. Wouldn't you -

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, it's just - well, I don't know. Yeah, I think it's the kind of California culture has just allowed me to do my work. Even though I start my work other places, I always finish it in California, in my studio, and that just allows me more or less a free place to work. I don't - I don't have a lot of restrictions here.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about light and color?

MR. LIPOFSKY: The weather is pretty good most of the time. We don't have real extremes in weather like you do on the East Coast and the North. I like to work with my garage door open -

MR. KARLSTROM: [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: - and I like a little bit of air. For whatever reason, it doesn't bother me that cars drive by every once in a while. I have a security gate. But I feel better that way than I do closed down, if everything was locked up and I was just - there are a few windows in my studio, so that allows a little bit of light to come in.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about the fabled lifestyle and the - well, again, the sort of open and experimental nature,

supposedly, of the society here, and presumably in the art community as well?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I think that's fairly true. I think that that's – it's just a little easier to do things here than in other places. It doesn't have the excitement of Manhattan, but everything else is fairly close. San Francisco isn't very far away. I can walk to restaurants from my studio. I can walk to the bank, if necessary. It's – I live in an area that's mixed use. There isn't any heavy industry here, but it's a few homes and some apartments and some – a lot of small businesses, a bakery. So it's – I think it's a fairly interesting area to live in.

MR. KARLSTROM: This would be, I think, perhaps difficult to answer, but what about the *California Loop Series*: Can you imagine that as possible or likely in a different environment? If you hadn't come here, it's hard for you to know, I guess, necessarily, but this openness to combine materials, to experiment in that way, were you going in that direction before you actually came to California?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes. There is – there is a linkage. There's two links.

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And someone mentioned it to me in my exhibit, and I can't remember who it was –

MR. KARLSTROM: [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: – said that the *California Loop Series* related to the Loop in Chicago, that the – the elevated L tracks that are elevated that goes in a loop around downtown Chicago. And I said, well, I never thought of that before. And it wasn't – [laughs] – because I never thought of it. It wasn't directly linked, but there's – but there's a loop to that.

Actually, when I was a graduate student, one of my earlier pieces of sculpture, a welded sculpture, where I was – I would cut little pieces of metal and sort of form them, make them concave, and weld them together. What I ended up making was a piece, which I called sort of a bridge. I – the first one I called *La Pont Neuf* because – for this little park under the bridge in Paris that I went to a couple times and had lunch; took some bread and sausage and whatever, and thought it was a nice little place, so that I wanted to relate my work to something. So these pieces were grounded at one point, and then they acted like a bridge. They came up and cantilevered out in one direction, in a short direction the other way. So it was somewhat bridge-like, but it was my first attempt to make sculpture in graduate school.

Now, I entered that piece in an exhibit in – well, it had to be in my second semester, I think, in Milwaukee. It was called the 49th “Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors Show” [1963]. Anyway, and I said – so everybody was entering something. So – and to my surprise, I received, like, third prize, or something to that effect. Of course, I was in competition with my professor, with Italo Scanga, and every other sculptor in the state of Wisconsin, and these guys had been entering this thing every year and winning prizes. And so, when I received a little bit of recognition for this sculpture of mine, I was quite pleased and found that there was some validity to what I was doing, and I was accepted. Well, anyway, that was – that was important for me. That kind of helped me kind of move on and see that – I guess I was – I guess I was – I was recognized, and there was something –

MR. KARLSTROM: Kind of an early validation –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Early validation. Right, true. So I wasn't doing the wrong thing. And I – because I was a little insecure about what I was doing, and here I was with all these other people who had been there already and were making things, and people knew them, and everything was brand new to me.

Now, the second thing that happened to me there when I – I then entered the designer craftsman show. First, I was in the painters and sculptors exhibition, then I entered the designer craftsman show [at the Milwaukee Art Center, now the Milwaukee Museum of Art], and the juror for that exhibit was Paul Smith, at that time was the director of –

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, sure! I know Paul.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, it was – let's see, the – forgot what the name of it was then. The Craft Museum – it was the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York [now called the Museum of Arts and Design]. There, I entered my ceramics. I entered about three or – three pieces, I think, or three or four pieces of ceramic. One was sort of a pot-like form. The others were a tombstone and a relief, the earlier sculptures that I had been making. And then, to my surprise, I received the top prize. But what was interesting to me was that a *Milwaukee* newspaper, the art critic [David D. Gladfelter], wrote an article about the show, and his comment in the headline for the article was that “Crudity gets top award at craft exhibit.”

MR. KARLSTROM: [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: "Crudity Gets Top Award." And so, they thought that my work was quite crude because at the Designer Craftsman show they were all pots. Everybody made pots in there, and there was pots and weavings and some jewelry and what have you. At that time, there wasn't any glass, that first year, and so that became a big issue. And I always got a kick out of that thing that this guy wrote about my work, that it was - it did look crude compared to what everyone else was doing, but it was my own branching out, my own use of clay, my direct use of clay, and they were pretty strong at that time. So that was my beginning so I did fairly well in graduate school, that I achieved something in both these state shows, and sort of started to make a name for myself, as the crude guy in clay.

MR. KARLSTROM: So the glass, the serious work in glass, I gather - not - I mean, you were invited out here to set up a -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, it didn't - it didn't happen. None of us really could make much in glass. We made some little - my final exhibit in - my MFA exhibit - I actually did two exhibits. I went for the MS degree, Master of Science, and I put up an exhibit for that. Then, within a short time, I went for the MFA. The MS was a qualifying exam, and then the MFA - and I put up another exhibit, and I had so much work. I had really done so much that I could have two exhibits. And in that show I had some glass in it, but I didn't even take any pictures of the glass, any slides of it, because the pieces were just little small bubbles and bottles, but I thought it was important that I put up a little case of that work. I'm sure none of us were really able to develop those first two years to any degree. I didn't develop my glass until I came out to California and had a little more time to work at it and so on. Most of my work was done in clay. First the welded steel, and from that - then, the last year, I did mostly clay work.

MR. KARLSTROM: Technology, of course, is important for your work and crafts in general, but making - making glass, definitely. And it seems like there was a learning curve that's essential to broadening the possibilities of expression. And - but again, isn't it true that you had to seek out constantly and to learn to grow? I mean, there wasn't, like, one place that you could go and learn everything you needed to make your art.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, right. I - yeah. I didn't know of any one place that I could go to make my art, so it's very true that I was always seeking to find new ideas. And that's what - I think one reason I used so many different materials in the - when I first came to California is I tried to incorporate as much as I could into the glass, so it was experimental, or it was just searching. It was just really a search. So I tried a lot, and I tried a lot of ways of working with the glass and blowing the glass into molds and incorporating copper plating and mirroring and painting and flocking, because I just wanted to keep pushing to see where I was. And then eventually it sort of calmed down, and I found some things that I - that were good for me, that worked with me, and now I don't use anything, and I haven't for a long time, any other materials with my glass. But I pushed it pretty far in the beginning for myself, and also for the students, too, so they could see what possibilities there were.

MR. KARLSTROM: A related question that comes to mind. And I suppose basically it's part of this trajectory your career took, or actually, I don't know, finding that you were a writer or a singer, perhaps, perhaps it's finding your voice; finding the Lipofsky, trying different things. But one of the things that strikes me, especially when I look at some of the Seattle productions, especially Dale Chihuly, as - although you have fairly large-scale pieces, fairly large pieces, they don't seem - this is not supposed to be a pun - overblown. They're not razzle-dazzle, they're quite -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I have to work on it myself. So, I mean, when I make the blown forms, I can't make them too big.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Sometimes the facilities limit that, but also I have to be able to pick it up, handle it myself. And I have never tried to make it as big as I can because the way I'm working now is that I have to be able to hold the piece. And there have been pieces that I've had to cut in half or cut up because I couldn't hold them. They were too heavy and too big to work my techniques with the glass, the finishing techniques with the glass. So up to this point, that's what I have done. It would be nice to kind of push that a little bit, but I don't know personally how I could - I haven't figured out how I can handle that personally because I work by myself. I may need a little bit of help to do it.

MR. KARLSTROM: So that's another one of those limits you've been talking about.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. So I work within limits. It's a limitation. It's a limitation to me. And in the situation of showing in the galleries that I do show and what the galleries are, they sort of expect a certain thing from you, although I don't feel so bound to them that I have to make something for them, but it has to be comfortable to me. It's what I can handle; it's what I can handle by myself. Now, if I were in another situation, maybe this could change.

I have been thinking - I have always thought about what's my next step, what would I - what would I do in the

next form or the next way of working the glass. I have opportunities to use the glass – they keep coming up – to use the glass, as I have been using for a number of years, and my change – the change in my work is fairly subtle. It doesn't change very fast.

MR. KARLSTROM: Really? It's really –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Some people think that the work all looks alike, but there's subtle changes in it. There's color, or sometimes the form, a little bit of form changes. But they – I don't do anything really striking. My biggest change, I think, was when I changed from the *California Loop* series to the blown forms in the factories, I think those are the biggest change. But if I find myself in another situation, in another factory, in another country, a different country, I may be able to affect some different change in it.

MR. KARLSTROM: Do you want to talk about the experience of Venini [Venini Factory, Murano, Italy]? You mentioned that yesterday as we were walking to lunch.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes.

MR. KARLSTROM: And I think you mentioned that, if I remember correctly, that you haven't been actually mentioned so much as connected with it.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I did visit Venice and Murano in 1962, when I went to Europe with this friend, but I didn't pay very close attention to the glass. I saw it, but I didn't have any idea that I would ever be using it. I did go back and walk around Murano after I met Gianni Toso in Venice. I came back there to just look at things.

[END TAPE 3 SIDE A.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: I was at a conference in Växjö, Sweden when I met [Ludovico Diaz de] Santillana, who was the director of the Venini factory. I met him in the hotel, and he said why don't I come to Venice and work. He said all your friends have been there: Dick Marquis, and Jamie Carpenter, and Dale Chihuly, and why don't you come? And so he knew of me. So I said yes, oh, sure. [Laughs.] So, I mean, that was a great invitation, so – and I had an opportunity a little bit later – I think it was about '72 – there was a conference in Switzerland, and from Switzerland I was going to drive to Venice. And I went there; I met Gianni Toso, who was at that time a lamp worker, and we didn't know that he was master blower, so I then was – made arrangements to go to the Venini factory.

And at the factory, Santillana said that I could work at the end of the day, and he gave me one worker to help me. He really didn't have any idea, and I didn't know what I wanted to do, exactly. And he gave me this guy, his name was Serano [glassworker, Murano], and so I started working there with him at the end of the day, sort of an hour before the workers started closing their shift down or so, an hour-and-a-half, two hours, something like that. And we made a few pieces together. He didn't speak any English, but I got along with him pretty well. I could explain things by drawings and hands and so forth, and I – we started blowing into – in some molds, and I used metal molds for lighting globes. But I was having a little trouble. We never finished the work off very well. For some reason, it didn't finish – it didn't finish well.

One day I was walking with Gianni in Venice – I still didn't know that Gianni was a master glassblower – walking with him in Venice, and we bumped into a guy who worked at the factory. And Gianni said hello and so forth, and started talking to him, and this guy told him that they had given me a worker, and he described it as a guy with one nut. So, Gianni said, "Oh, they sort of cheated you a little bit. They didn't give you one of the better workers; they gave you a guy who had a little bit of mental problem." And I said well, I – something wasn't quite right. I wasn't totally unhappy with him – we were achieving something – but there was something a little bit wrong. So Gianni said, "I will come to the factory and help you." I said, "Oh, Gianni, don't. I don't want to disturb anything. I don't want to cause any problems" – because I felt very lucky and very fortunate that I even had this invitation just to come and visit.

But that next Monday, Gianni and I went out to the factory in the morning, and I was still a little bit nervous that he would kind of upset things – [phone rings]. Can we stop, or – with this other assistant.

[Audio break.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay, we're now – after a little break, we're on track three. So –

MR. LIPOFSKY: We're talking about the Venini experience. So I started working with Gianni. He came in and the whole factory just stopped and said ciao, Gianni, ciao, Gianni, and he knew everybody. And I wasn't aware of that; I was a little bit cautious of what I would do. And he went right over to the master, the head – the maestro's furnace and stuck a pipe in the glass, and I would never go anywhere close to the master furnace. I mean, I would watch him, I would stand in the background and watch, but I wouldn't go close to the master; I didn't want

to disturb anything.

So we started working together, and that – we worked together three different times after that, and made a series of work. Twice we worked at the Venini factory, and once we worked at the Fratelli-Toso factory [Murano]. So I had work, and those pieces – and I brought most of the pieces back and finished them in my studio. The first group, some of the pieces were finished in the factory, but then I brought that group – those pieces and finished them in my studio in Berkeley, I did three series of work.

Also, while I was there, I worked with Lino Tagliapietra. One afternoon we just made a couple pieces of glass. I only kept one of them, but we worked together there. So I have worked in three different factories in Murano.

MR. KARLSTROM: Tagliapietra?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Lino – Lino's –

MR. KARLSTROM: Is he mentioned here?

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, he's – he's one of the well-known glass artists – masters, and he teaches at a lot of the schools. He's a world traveler now and his work is sought after by many, many collectors. He's one of the few people that have really broken out of the mold of Murano and established himself. There's a few others, but he's one of the major ones, and the master has taught, taught a lot of techniques, worked with Chihuly a number of times.

So, the Italian experience is one of the best experiences for me. I mean, that – working on Murano and working with masters – I think they're some of the best glassblowers, and certainly their skill level is, in fact, because they have the tradition, and so forth.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, I think you said – again, referring to the – maybe it was in the chronology that you were quoted as saying that they were really the leaders, the –

MR. LIPOFSKY: They have the culture. They have the background. There are other places where they do good work also and do work a little differently, but they're the people who have the majority of the skills, and it's always an exciting place to live. The food is fairly good and it's an interesting cultural place to be, and you can't beat it; you can't beat Venice and Murano for a place to go to work.

MR. KARLSTROM: Did you find this – did you derive a kind of inspiration from being there? Would you describe it that way?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. Just –

MR. KARLSTROM: Told you you were doing the right thing. You know, this is –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, I just – I had wished that I could – I never tried very hard to work. Actually, I had met Emilio Vedova, one of the premier painters of Italy, contemporary painters, abstract expressionists, and he – we had become friendly and were friends, and he lives in Venice, and he introduced me to another factory. He had worked with this factory to do the Italian pavilion in Montreal, at the expo they had in Montreal. He had produced glass plates, which they projected with big projectors on the walls of the pavilion, and he used this one factory. And he took me out there and introduced me to the designer and they said, "Oh, if you want to come back and work as an artist and do something as an artist, you can." So, a year or two later, I wrote to them, saying that I wanted to come back; that I would take up their offer, and they acted like they never knew me. [Laughs.] So, I never worked at that factory.

MR. KARLSTROM: What was this fellow's name? Vedova?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Vedova.

MR. KARLSTROM: Can you spell it?

MR. LIPOFSKY: V-E-D-I-O – V-E-D-I-O – V-A – oh, V-E-D – I can't pronounce – I have his – I have – no, I have got his catalogues.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, we can check it later.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I'm drawing a blank.

MR. KARLSTROM: Ah, we will just check that later. We're going to have to do –

MR. LIPOFSKY: V-E-D-O-V-A.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay. Let's - Italy, obviously, was - has played an important role for you, and so I guess we would sort of include it in, quote, "influences," or at least contributing to your, again, your own development.

Another question, one that I think we can just pretty much pass over because we have touched on it, but that has to do with the place of universities in the training and teaching of crafts - in the broadest sense crafts, but particularly glass. And I guess what my only question - because we didn't talk about it. You talked a little bit at length about the university, CCAC, Berkeley, and all that, the different students, and the importance of university, you felt, offering perhaps, in some cases, a fuller experience. But how has glass - studio glass been adopted within universities in general? I think that's a question I would have. Is it - has it now become pretty ordinary - I don't mean ordinary. Is it pretty common to find -

MR. LIPOFSKY: No. No, no, I think there has been a problem. I think running a glass studio is an expensive - a big expense, so I think that a lot of people, because of the tight economy - and it has been tight in education for a while - it's - there used to be maybe 100, 150 schools. That has dropped down quite a bit. There's still a lot of places that have glass, and there are more private studios now and more private teaching studios, but the universities have sort of backed away from it. Colleges - there are a number of schools which still have it, but without the - and I think one of the reasons - without the main teacher or the person who started it, I don't know what words I'm looking for - that person who really is the center and the guide - after people retire, or the second person there has a harder time. There is a harder time to keep the program going, and there have been some places who have closed down because of that, when the person who started that program and was a more dynamic force - the school has dropped the program and not hired another person. And then there's - economics plays a large part of it.

MR. KARLSTROM: Because it's an expensive -

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's fairly expensive.

MR. KARLSTROM: - enterprise.

MR. LIPOFSKY: But there's still some - there's still some centers and there's still some good schools that have glass. But it needs more than just the facilities, it needs - it needs a major figure to keep it, an individual to keep it; to keep it centered and to keep it going. And there is a lot to do. There is a lot of technical things to do, there's a lot to keep your eyes on; there's a lot to, you know -

MR. KARLSTROM: What universities - setting aside the specialized arts or crafts programs of independent schools, what would be the leading university programs at this time that you would point to?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, that's hard to - that's hard to say.

MR. KARLSTROM: I don't want to put you on the spot, but -

MR. LIPOFSKY: I don't know if there's any real leading programs. There are very little anymore. But there are some programs that are running. Oh, let's see. University of Wisconsin still has a program. University of Illinois, they - their guy leading it just left, I don't know if they're going to continue it. Kent State [Ohio] is still going.

MR. KARLSTROM: These are all Midwestern schools.

MR. LIPOFSKY: This - Midwest. Oh, I'm just starting in the middle of them. On the West Coast, there's not too much. There's some junior colleges. Let's see - Palomar College [Southern California] has a program -

MR. KARLSTROM: They're out by San Diego.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, yeah. And then, in Orange County - forgot the name -

MR. KARLSTROM: Fullerton [California State University]?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Fullerton has a program. Coming up, San Luis Obispo [California Polytechnic University] has something, San Jose [California State University] has something, San Francisco State just downsized theirs. There are a couple other junior colleges that have glass, but not glass blowing.

MR. KARLSTROM: Interesting that the junior colleges -

MR. LIPOFSKY: - Redding and one in Bakersfield; they're smaller. There's a couple more -

MR. KARLSTROM: Community colleges they call them now, right?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Then there's very little up in the Northwest -

MR. KARLSTROM: Is that because Pilchuck is there?

MR. LIPOFSKY: There is Pratt in Seattle, and maybe something in Tacoma, and a couple in Oregon.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: There aren't any universities. There's some private - there are some programs, but they're private. And on the East Coast - well, New Orleans - Tulane [University] has a program. And there's some - I'm missing a few here and there. But let's see, and then there's some new institutions, too. There's two private, nonprofit places that teach and rent studio time in the Bay Area. Let's see. Let me think. There's a little bit in Florida. There's one school. Miami - well, Miami University has glass. There's another one up near Tallahassee has glass, in Florida. In Philadelphia, there's Tyler. Rhode Island School of Design is a major program.

MR. KARLSTROM: RISD.

MR. LIPOFSKY: RISD. Mass. College of Art in Boston has glass. What's up north? I don't think - New York, Alfred University has glass there. A couple schools, two or three schools in New York that have glass. Urban Glass is in Brooklyn.

MR. KARLSTROM: Still, it's not that generally distributed.

MR. LIPOFSKY: There's not that many. There are more private studios, and then there are - there are some. There was a place in - Ohio State has glass, and there's a couple of schools in Ohio, and there's another school. Then there's some private - these are nonprofits. One's in Columbus, I said there were two here, there's one other one in Pittsburgh - this was a big school they just started - and there's some - there's - [Pratt] Art Institute in Seattle, where people can take classes and people can rent studio time to use the facilities. So there's several of those around the country.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about the Berkeley program?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, they just dropped that. That has been dropped for years.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, for years?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Back in the '70s, they dropped it.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh. And is that when you went over to CCAC?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right, right. They just dropped the program, and I - I actually was teaching at both schools for a while. 1967, I started the program at CCAC and then continued teaching, and they put it in their night program, so I used to go there at night and teach. And then after Berkeley folded, I went to CCAC.

MR. KARLSTROM: All right. Well, that gives me some picture in how glass fits into the university programs. It sounds a bit like there was budget cuts involved.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, there's a number of schools also with glass programs that are art schools -

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. No, I understand that.

MR. LIPOFSKY: - in Detroit, and there's several - Philadelphia and so on, but I guess they have college statuses.

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm. Accredited.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: Turning to you again - after all you are the subject. You know, your situation is really interesting because it's not as if you have predecessors, in a sense. I mean, my feeling for you is that you really discovered and then created and developed your own career; and your working with the material. And so I guess, in some ways - and you can tell me if this is right or wrong - that your acceptance of studio glass would be parallel to how you and your own work have been received. The attention you received in terms of how you have succeeded in sales and so forth. Is that right? Is it - do you see it as sort of a parallel?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, well, I don't know. I remember when I first came to Berkeley and started the glass program that people didn't know me, they didn't know my name, but they all knew that there was a glassblower there. So it was like a joke: oh, you're the glassblower. So I was accepted as the joke glassblower - [laughs] - without

them knowing who I was, and it was kind of – well, it was funny because nobody ever thought about it before and it was something totally new. So that happened. That sort of helped me out a little bit. But things just progressed, one thing led to another, and as things were needed and things changed, just there was acceptance as we got better, as people did more work, as people started exhibiting, as people – students graduated and went off and started their own studios.

There are quite a number of studios around the Bay Area from former students from here and Chico State [California State University] – oh yeah, Chico State University has a glass program. And San Jose and San Francisco State, people from those schools started studios in this general area. And so, glass became more acceptable and more people learned about it, and of course they went into business and were start raising families. Now, even some of the children of the – are blowing glass or helping in the studios, and that has helped – that’s throughout the country. They’re old enough now to do their own work.

MR. KARLSTROM: But what are the – related to this, and I don’t know if you want to answer – this is not a huge field, and there are several really prominent practitioners. This is my understanding, my limited knowledge of all this. And certainly, the one who seems to be best known in any sort of a broad way is Chihuly.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Absolutely.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, and for a lot of people, if they know about glasswork at all, they would think of Dale, who has taken on huge projects, to do with glass what no one, perhaps, has done before – perhaps sometimes is almost too much, one could counter. But anyway –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, they have done it before.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, they have? Okay.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, the Venetian chandeliers, if you have been to some of the palaces and into Austria and so forth. They were – now, they may not have been as big as Chihuly’s, but there was a precedent there, and I think Dale also was very keen to know that. He is very aware of what went on, and I think that influenced him in some respect. Well, Dale, by far is the most well known person in glass, and that’s of his own choosing. He has made it that way. He has hired the PR people to do exactly that.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That whole boathouse thing –

MR. LIPOFSKY: I’m BC; I’m before Chihuly. I met Dale in 1967, when I had just finished teaching at the Haystack School and drove down from Maine to Providence to visit Norm Schulman, who was a friend who was teaching ceramics and had taught at Madison one summer, and then sort of pulled Dale away from Madison, where he was in school, to come to RISD to finish his graduate work there and also help him put together a studio, or put together a furnace, or what. And Norm had taken me to a reception for the new faculty members.

And I – it was in the Rhode Island Museum, and the guard came up to me and said, “Sir, there is a gentleman that’s not allowed to come in here, who would like to speak to you on the street.” So when I walked out to the street and there was a big Land Rover, with stuff packed inside and packed on top and all over, and there was a short guy standing there with a white leather-fringe jacket with a little bit of beadwork around the shoulders, and big, curly hair, just really hair curl all over, and he stuck his hand out and said, “Hi, I’m Dale Chihuly, and I just got into town to start working with Norm Schulman, and I have been wanting to meet you.” And I met Dale. He was a student starting his second year of graduate school, and that’s where we first met. I had already started two schools by that time: Berkeley and then CCAC that summer.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, you’re clearly a senior person –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, a lot of people don’t know that because everybody thinks Dale started everything.

MR. KARLSTROM: Started it all, yeah, that’s by far –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Dale never – Dale never said that. You know, he never said that himself, but other people just kind of assume things. Anyway, so that’s when I met Dale. He had spent a year in Madison. And we were friends. We were friends in the early days, and he had been my guest out here. He lived in this place; he lived right here where we are right now, stayed here one summer, just made my little living space filthy.

MR. KARLSTROM: [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: He was just – he is not too neat or clean. And I had a van, which he drove up – back and forth to Seattle and just ruined the tires on it. There were big scallops on the tires. But I knew from his early days – I had been his guest in Providence at RISD a number of times. He always wanted to be rich and famous, and he didn’t have any qualms about telling anybody that. But yeah, that’s what he achieved. That’s what he went after, and

that's what his interest was. And then it wasn't until much later that I realized that he had a lot of depression, and he was sort of like bipolar, so these things – these big – these big, grandiose ideas came out of that illness, and it was very difficult for him. In his later years, he has had quite a big problem with dealing with his depression, and it's hard. A lot of people don't know that, and when he cancels appointments or schedule, they think that he's just being bigheaded, but it's really not that.

MR. KARLSTROM: He did that to me.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: I had an appointment for the Archives. It was at the time, perhaps – I wasn't at Pilchuck, but maybe CAA, College Art was meeting there. And I just sat there waiting in his studio, and he would come by and he would be cordial. He would come by – finally, luckily Italo was there – Scanga was there, and so Scanga very graciously kind of took me over and I visited with him, but Chihuly – I never had the meeting with Chihuly.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Dale – it was – well, I wouldn't want to trade places with Dale. I wouldn't want the responsibility of having to deal with all those people who work for him, and having to do enough work to keep them all employed. That's a tremendous responsibility and something that I don't think I could ever deal with. But we were good friends early on. Since all his fame has grown and his other problems and so forth, I don't know if there are too many people who are really very close to him except the people who work with him, and it's a shame.

I don't know if we could help him at all, but he has had big plans and he has – I always felt there wasn't any real Dale Chihuly. I saw – when – my experience with him, that he took a little bit of the people he met along his journey; that, if he liked what someone did or how someone did something, then he kind of adapted that into his personality or his work ethic or his whatever. And so, kind of Dale Chihuly became all these little parts of these many people he has met. What he thought was important for him, or – and that has always been my kind of theory, that Dale is – what really makes him tick. And he has been very generous to his – the people around him and so forth, but he has got an awful lot of responsibilities, and he thinks a lot. He knows how to use people. He knows how to find good people and keep them for his – to help him.

MR. KARLSTROM: So he runs an industry, basically?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, he's very good at that. I remember that I was in Providence, one of his students picked me up at the airport, and I was staying with him in his apartment. The phone rang early in the morning and then it was Dale. He said, "Hey, welcome to Providence." He said, "Look it, why don't you come over to my studio, and on the way over there, I have got some film at the film store, which you will pass on College, and then I have got some dry cleaning at this other shop, and then I have got something over here, and just pick them all up, and just come up to my studio and we will have breakfast." And I said, "Hey, Dale, this is Marvin. I'm not one of your students." [Laughs.] And then he was organizing his day right there. He had it all worked out.

He was really good at organizing things and getting people to work for him and with him, both ways, and just accomplishing those things. And he – there were a number of very, very good people who are very loyal to Dale, who are around Dale, and help Dale, work for Dale, and do those things that are necessary, and that's very important. And he's very astute at keeping those people and finding those people. So it's another trait that not everybody has.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, I'm interested to hear what you have to say about him. As we know, it's a fairly small pool, I guess we can say the whole studio glass movement, in terms of people who have really established themselves. And one aspect that I think Dale represents – just my point of view – I, frankly, find it just too much, basically that it's – I don't know. It's like you're being dazzled by technique and scale and color, and that's all – there's not a hell of a lot of subtlety there. And so it seems like your old work is quite – done in a different direction.

MR. LIPOFSKY: He's the master of promotion.

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

MR. LIPOFSKY: He's very good at it. That's what he sees as what's important to him, and – yeah, I think it is a little bit too much. It's too much to be around him any time. All these people are wanting to be next to him or with him or so forth, and he's very good at having photo opportunities, so if you meet him, he will put his arm around you and get the photographer to take your picture with him, and then he's off to someone else to put his arm around and have the photographer take the picture. That's not the kind of life that I'm very interested in, and I think it's too much, and I think it's too much for him, too. [Laughs.] That's a lot of responsibility. I often thought that Dale would feel very poorly if he walked in someplace and people didn't know who he was. If no one talked to him or came up to him or recognized him, he wouldn't feel good; he would wonder what was wrong.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it seems to me that Dale's work, which is technically and physically almost overwhelming or can be, like the big Bellagio I guess -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Mm-hmm.

MR. KARLSTROM: - that, which I have been there and seen it -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Some people like it; some people hate it.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, well, I mean, it's like Hollywood if you like blockbusters and so forth.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: I guess my only comment - it's not my business to judge that, but he seems to have taken studio glass in a very distinct and a hugely ambitious, in terms of scale and effect -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Absolutely, yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: - direction, which doesn't, in my observations, actually, match at all the trajectory that your career has taken.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, I had no - we - this is nothing similar whatsoever. I don't have those big ideas and big plans, and I have never thought about things like that. The most that I could do or the biggest that I could do in that scale - I'm - I am at peace with myself and my studio. It's fine when I'm - when nobody knows me. I mean publicity is, you know, tomorrow's garbage; wrap - newspaper wrapped in the garbage.

MR. KARLSTROM: Today's headlines are -

MR. LIPOFSKY: - are tomorrow - yeah. So I have always realized that, and I think that one of the problems that people have, not just in the art world, but when people start believing their own publicity, what's written about them, then I think they're in trouble.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, yeah. We certainly - it could happen to almost any of us. It's a risky thing. Well, listen, I think that we have done over an hour, and I think that this should be the end of track three, the end of disc four, and the end of session two. But we have scheduled -

MR. LIPOFSKY: - one more.

MR. KARLSTROM: - one more, which I look forward to. So thank you.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Good.

[Audio break.]

MR. KARLSTROM: So, good morning, Marvin. Here we are for our third session of interview, an interview with Marvin Lipofsky in his home in Berkeley. This is session three, final session, interviewer for the Archives of American Art is Paul Karlstrom, and this is disc five, track one.

And we have been pretty dutifully following a good list of questions and then riffing a bit off of that. And we wrapped up last time - we ended up last time talking a bit about the reception - your perception of the reception of your work over time. I guess by that we mean, how that may have changed over the years, and I guess how you feel about that. We talked a little bit about Dale Chihuly and the luminaries of studio glass, among which you're definitely one.

The second part of that question, unless there's more that you want to say about the reception of your work, how that may have changed - unless you want to say something more about that, the other part of the question had to do with writing about glass. What - basically, the communication, shall we say, of the studio glass movement to the crafts audience and beyond, and what publications you may think have been important in that respect, and I guess what writers. You know, how is glass - how has it been written about? What's your view?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, that's a hard question. There aren't that many people who write about glass in any substance. There are a number of people who write something, but there's very few people who really write something that's important or have an overview of the glass movement or art and sculpture, and that's a very limited group of people. Dan Klein is probably one of the more important writers. A man in Germany - oh, I have forgotten his name at the moment [Helmut Ricke] - has written some interesting things, but they're all translated so that - I don't know how well the translations are. James Yood writes quite a bit from the Northwestern University. He's now teaching at the Chicago Art Institute. He does a good job.

MR. KARLSTROM: How do you spell his -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Y-O-O-D.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And he wrote an essay in my - for my catalog. He has written a small catalogue introduction of one of my exhibits. And of course, Tina [Oldknow] writes on occasion as a curator of modern glass at the Corning Museum. But for the most part, there haven't been -there are some people who do, what, feel-good articles about people.

MR. KARLSTROM: Sort of profiles.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Profiles. But then again, they can't do heavy criticism, and I don't know if heavy criticism would be appropriate to things like that. I tend to like some of the little more human interest things on occasion instead of deep, heavy art history-related essays. Although I think that some of that's important, but I'm personally pretty bored by - when people relate so strongly to art history because I think they - they have a mission that they have to write this esoteric, limited view of whatever they're writing about, and it's not particularly interesting to me. Although it may have some academic importance to it, it doesn't really have -

But you gave me a list of magazines, and actually I'm pretty big on looking at things. And it started out when I was an undergraduate. When I went to the University of Illinois, there was a fellow that was from my high school, from my town, Don Timm. I think it's T-I-M-M. Oh no, it wasn't Don; it was Wayne Timm. Wayne Timm, was an older brother. And he was in art school at the university already, and I saw him, and his advice as a new, entering freshman was use the library. He told me use the library, that's very important. And I think that's about the only time I really talked to him, and that was probably one of the more important pieces of advice I have ever gotten. And I loved to - as an undergraduate, I didn't use the library that much, I think mainly because the art library wasn't easily accessible.

MR. KARLSTROM: Was he - was he a writer? Was Timm -

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, no, no, no. He's a photographer, actually. He became a photographer. I think it was - no, he's a painter - painter? I can't remember. I lost track of him. His brother - he had another brother. His brother may have been a photographer. But he was a painter - I believe he was a painter. And it was very good advice, and so I did look at magazines and so forth. When I got to graduate school, it was important also, looking at magazines and so on, and I - see what's going on. I looked at a lot of art magazines, and when I started teaching at CCAC, the library there and the magazine section was very accessible, and I would sit quite frequently in the library and just look at all kinds of magazines. I say look because I didn't always read everything, but I looked at the images. I was more interested in the images, looked at the art as - and I looked at everything. I was interested in *Craft Horizons* and *American Craft* magazine. I looked at ceramics, I looked at jewelry, I looked at all the art magazines: *Artforum*, *ART news*, *Art in America* -

MR. KARLSTROM: So really, a -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Over the years, yes. And over the years, there have been a lot of little - little magazines that have come and gone, and I looked at them all. And I also looked at the design magazines and architecture journals. They were always interesting to me, especially because I came out of design. So I always thumbed through the various design magazines, and wood or whatever was available, I looked at. The only thing I didn't look at, primarily, was textiles or - that didn't quite interest me. The really fantastic contemporary weaving that was going on in Europe, and so that was interesting, but the rest of it didn't interest me. I liked wood, so I looked at woodworking magazines. And then my interest was, even more - I remember as a kid looking at *National Geographic*, that we had a subscription. That was interesting, so I looked at that.

MR. KARLSTROM: What attracted you, then, in *National Geographic*?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think seeing the world.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Seeing the world. You learned about the world, you learned about what was going on in the world, and that was highly exciting to me. So I have always - maybe that helped a little bit with my travels, also. And again, I didn't read all the articles, but I looked at the pictures. I'm a real picture looker; looking at pictures is - and I have always looked at - in a variety of other magazines, popular magazines just - that to me is interesting, the *Smithsonian*, and on occasion things like *Nature*. But I have always just looked at magazines, and as you can see, I have got a lot of books and magazines and things in my - in my living space here, and it continues - it gets to be a little bit too much, and I hate to throw things away. I do have a collection, by not wanting to get rid

of them, of *Art in America*, *Artforum*, art – going back to my – it goes back to the early '70s, late '60s, and I haven't thrown any of them away.

MR. KARLSTROM: Wow. Yeah, I have that problem –

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's a storage problem.

MR. KARLSTROM: Pretty much. Yeah, exactly. I have about given up. But I'm interested that – what attracts you to these publications, whether they're specifically on crafts – studio glass – or broader subjects, as you would find in the *Smithsonian*. But if it's the images, the scenes, the looking rather than reading the text –

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's the images. I look at the images, look to see what people have done, if someone has done anything new, how people have used materials, how people have worked with form, and I find that – that's the prime interest when I look at something, or look at the magazines. And there are – occasionally, I read the articles. And I generally – generally find that the articles are just mostly too nice, don't really delve – they either don't really delve into the artist's making and why or they are too academic, or they are to an academic sense, and they have relationships between the artist's work and some other artist's work or history, which I don't always see is that succinct. I think it's just – they use it many times just to prove their qualifications, the writer's qualifications to – when they have a view that –

MR. KARLSTROM: When they have a thesis and idea –

MR. LIPOFSKY: – an idea.

MR. KARLSTROM: – and they look for evidence of –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Sometimes that's important. Sometimes that works.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, what about technical articles? Presumably, some of these specialized crafts magazines –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, let me think about what I looked at.

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And so, I used to have subscriptions, and I just gave them up, to *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics*. That always interested me. I'm trying to remember all the things that I looked at. I look at the news magazines, *Art Week* locally here – I subscribe to that – and anything else, any local magazines that have to do. I like to go to the bookstores and look through the magazines that I don't have and so forth, and look through books. And books have always been important, too, as you can see, that I have just a collection of books; primarily glass, but dealing with art, too. And it has gotten to the point where I try not to buy more books unless it's related to what I am doing because it has gotten to be just too much, and storage is a big problem.

MR. KARLSTROM: But you – you never have been particularly interested in building sort of an art reference library of art history.

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, no.

MR. KARLSTROM: I gather from what you are saying that it has to be pretty much on the visual and imagery. Is this right, and do you feel that that stimulates some of your – has stimulated some of your own progress, perhaps introducing new images into your work? Do you feel connected – that the magazines –

MR. LIPOFSKY: I can't think of too many times when I saw an image or saw a form and then wanted to reproduce that form, although I have done it on a few occasions or used something that I thought was interesting, but – and try to incorporate it into my work. It's not that I have never done that, but it's not something that I look to do. Sometimes, it's more or less validating what I'm already doing. But I look – I look to see how people are handling their art and what's new and what's – sometimes what's old.

[END TAPE 3 SIDE B.]

But I think it's just to kind of store in my own memory or my own mind – except my memory's not recalling a lot of those things these days. [Laughs.] Sometimes I remember I saw something but I can't remember exactly what it was. I know it was really important, but it was so many years ago that I don't have a strong visual image of it. But I don't know if that's that important.

But I like the history. I'm still very critical of what people write and how people relate to history, and I'm always finding what I believe – I should preface that – what I believe are mistakes in people's writing, either mistakes of historical events or people attributing something to somebody that's not really true. I can't believe how many

magazines and articles that I have marked to go back and write a letter to the editor or write a letter to the person who wrote the article and say, hey, that's not right, and then I reference it to other magazines that I have or other things that have been written before and so forth. And I do that all the time but I very seldom write anything anymore or make that presentation.

But I'm constantly finding mistakes. It's kind of a game like that. It's also interesting to me when I see people's résumés. When I was teaching, I used to see résumés all the time, and I found mistakes quite frequently, people referencing something that wasn't true, or using the wrong name, or things have changed – names of museums changed and they're not using that.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's more like a game to find out.

MR. KARLSTROM: That's very editorial.

MR. LIPOFSKY: There was another game, looking at magazines. I liked to look at the design magazines, the architecture, interior design, and looking at, like *Architectural Heritage*, look at people's homes and seeing if I can recognize anything in the photographs of their living quarters, if I recognize anyone's work in the photograph. That, to me, is one of my pet peeves, where – and I think someone ought to – at least I thought the crafts magazine should take up the challenges of when they don't attribute something in the photograph to the artist, or the painting is named but the, quote, "craft object" on the table is ignored, that they should be more aware because they are artists also – finding people's work. So once in a while I've seen something of myself. But it's like a game; it's like a challenge if I can recognize what goes on. And it's kind of easy to do in the *Architectural Digest* and things like that. I don't do it all the time, but it makes it interesting.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about writing that deals with artistic intent? You know, that is a kind of writing. In fact, that's pretty common in writing about art, to try to get behind the art, get into the artist's intentions; what's the work supposed to be, what's it supposed to do? Sometimes that's just flat-out interpretation. Other times, of course, it's based on interviews, like we're doing with all these people. But does that interest you, what the artist's intentions are?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, since I'm not so interested and I don't have a real dialogue with my intent – in the sense of artist intent, and I'd have a very difficult time relating my work, emotionally, sensually, whatever, historically many times – I don't have a great interest in reading that. I do read some of that. And so I don't relate to it that well because I don't relate to it in my own work, so it's hard for me to kind of relate to it in terms of other people's work, also. So that's not my first interest, but I think it's important.

And that's hard, writing. I mean, that's hard to deal with, how close people come to interpretation or however you – I'm not always sure how they can do that, but they do. I can't recall, but people have related my work to all kinds of things.

MR. KARLSTROM: That you don't see.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That I don't – well, I can see it, but I'm not interested in it. It wasn't a prime interest of mine. There's quite a reference to seashells; there's quite a reference to body parts; there's quite a reference to internal body parts. I haven't heard any good descriptions recently. Later, after my surgery, I'll have to go back to the museum and read what comments that people wrote. Sometimes kids or people write some comments that are interesting that you never think about. But there are several themes that people bring up about my work where I said, "Yes, I can see that, but it's not my interest, and it does have some reference to – I'm sure you see that in my work, but it's not my interest and it's not intentional on my part."

MR. KARLSTROM: Still, critics and historians at least imagine or want to believe that sometimes these qualities, ideas, interests reflect – well, they're subconsciously held by the artist and then naturally work themselves – appear in the work. What can you say about that?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, a lot of people see shells.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Number one, I don't scuba dive. Number two, I don't collect seashells. So that's not there. Interior body parts; I don't collect interior body parts or I don't have a lot of photographs of them – [laughs] – although now since I've had my heart bypass operation I have little booklets about your heart and so forth, but – which I see other people that are interested in nature and relating their work to nature and so forth, do collect and do look and do have photographs and relate to things that they read about in books or take their own photographs of. And I think that's fairly common. It's not my – I just don't – I don't do that. I don't approach my work that

way. I think it's a good way to approach your work; it's just not my way to approach the work.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, I think that's important, because you clearly don't make that connection yourself but you're also willing to allow it to exist, which is basically saying that the viewer gets to bring to the work his or her –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, I think it's very important. I think that's how quite a number of people work, and I think it's a good way, relating to machine parts or relating to seeds or flowers or plant life. That's very legitimate.

MR. KARLSTROM: What would you say, then, that your work does relate to? Is it the material? Is it glass itself and the limits of glass, as we've discussed very much?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think so. At least that's what I believe. It may be hard to see, but that seems to be the way I do. Now, we talked about Christopher Wilmarth and his relationship to the Brooklyn Bridge and the other bridges in New York. And he loved industry – industrial situations, the machinery and the light – the light forming – the shadow of light, the edges. Edges are very important to his work. And you could see that: shadows, walking. He liked to walk. And in lower Manhattan, when you see the buildings in the sunlight and the shadows and what reflections or what shadows are made, that's quite important to his work. And I can see that in his work. I can see that.

MR. KARLSTROM: The built environment, basically, I guess.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And the power of those things, the power of the bridges and so forth.

MR. KARLSTROM: Do you know Andy Goldsworthy's work?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes.

MR. KARLSTROM: There's that wonderful movie called something and tides.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right, *Rivers and Tides*.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. On the weekend, I was down at Stanford, and they have a piece there; I don't know if you've seen it.

MR. LIPOFSKY: The serpent piece [*Stone River*, 2001]?

MR. KARLSTROM: Mm-hmm.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I've never seen it, but it's the long – the stacked stones.

MR. KARLSTROM: Right, from both earthquakes.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, that's right.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, 1906 and then '89. He just came to mind and his work because it's so, so tied to nature and his experience of the natural world, but then in a sense manipulating it and making us see it in a different way.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think that's incredible. To me, that's not so much of a Western philosophy towards art; it looks more like an Eastern, and could be even indigenous peoples: one with nature, using nature.

I loved that film. I thought the film was very great. The interesting thing in the film, I thought, was the family scene, when they're having, I assumed it was breakfast, and he's almost totally oblivious to his children, who were acting up, in a nice way, and the whole family life. He was just concentrating on his work, ready to walk out the door to do something else, and the family was just – he didn't pay any attention to them. I thought that was quite incredible.

But I like his work. I like what he does. I think – I mean, he, like everyone else, does good and bad things; some things are much better than others. But it's just the thought process. And if it's a way of the artist relating to nature, relating to other people – because he uses people sometimes, too, to help him – I think that's very good. And the frustration, showing the frustration, it doesn't always have to be – like the pieces that he built on the tide zones on the beach, and the domes, using the ice that eventually will melt and so on. I think those are very interesting. I like that quite a bit.

MR. KARLSTROM: I'm interested in these comments of yours in trying to make for you and your work some connection to something outside the work. And in terms of content, I gather from what you've been saying that

this is something that you really minimize in terms of subject or reference except, in a very modernist way, the whole notion of materials is like – it's sort of "Greenbergian," almost, a post-painterly abstraction where it's the physical characteristics of the materials that a painter would use. And in listening to you, it sounds as if you fit pretty well with that notion.

MR. LIPOFSKY: You think so? I never thought of it that way. I've never had that –

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, yeah, the way we've been talking, because it's like denying or de-emphasizing, say, the references to nature that are seen there. This is not something that, certainly, you intend; and then saying what interests you and what, to a degree, forms your glass, as I understood this, your works, is really that material and how one can work with glass, what it allows, and, again, the limitations and so forth; that it's really about glass.

MR. LIPOFSKY: It is. I guess I never talk so much about references, but the references were there. One of the obvious ones that I can cite was being, in the springtime, in Hokkaido and noticing the small spring flowers coming up, which were quite pretty, here and there, then using a lot of little colors in reference to my sculptures, not copying the colors but just using a lot of little colors. And that was a reference to those flowers.

The being in Ukraine, in L'viv [Experimental Ceramic Sculpture Factory], in the fall time and the leaves being so beautiful, the fall leaves, the golden yellows and browns of the leaves. In my exhibit and video that Paul McKenna did for my exhibit, we used a slide that I took of a woman raking leaves in a park, which I thought was quite nice, and the reference to the trees and so forth. And I've used those colors. In Finland in the winter, just as winter was coming, I noticed the snow flakes coming down but that the ground wasn't covered in snow, and everything had turned rather brownish, or bluish, and so the sky was not bright, but it was – and using those references to my work.

So I guess I do look, I do try to find something that relates, something that I'm involved with in myself. So in some respects, I may have some kind of relationship with Andy Goldsworthy, but not, certainly, as intense or as involved, but there is something there. And nature does play a part in my work. I guess that's very true. I've thought about it but I haven't really thought about it as a prime source, because there are many times when I'm able to work that there isn't anything that I can reference, or that I haven't found something that I can reference, and so I just relate directly to color and what I have. I've worked, in my way of making molds sometimes about making the parts myself, or just finding things around the studio, a shop, in a junk pile or somewhere that I could assemble in order to have those objects impressed into the glass when I blow the glass into it. So I've found machine parts and things like that on occasion that I use with my glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: This sort of carries us back to our earlier discussion, in fact at the very beginning, it seems, after my lengthy introduction. You then began to talk about abstraction. You know, that seemed to be the first thing that you – the first idea that you kind of took up and then ran with, if you will, in our conversation in the interview, how abstraction found you. It was like you had this natural bent. And what you're describing now is still abstraction in a powerful – by itself, maybe by itself sufficient or satisfactory for your art making.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think abstraction found me in one aspect because I never was very comfortable or never felt that I was very skilled at drawing the figure. And that, to me, was a weak side of my art training, if that could be called art training, that when I would be in a class, a life drawing class, I would see these other students turning out beautiful drawings, and my drawings wouldn't even come close to the ability that they had. So I naturally turned to more abstract things.

Now, in later life, I think that I didn't really try hard enough. I may never had had a really great talent for figurative drawing, but I could have been better. It is a matter of practice. It's a matter of seeing. It's a matter of hand-eye coordination. And I don't think I practiced enough. And I think it also takes a concentration, I can see now, that I don't think when I was younger that I had. I didn't have that steady concentration. But that's – in later life, that's looking back and seeing how could I have changed something or how could I have been better at what I did?

I think I should take up drawing again and try to see if I can –

MR. KARLSTROM: Why not?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, it just takes a long time. I mean, the thing is to put in the time in order to get somewhere where there is something satisfactory coming around. I even thought when I was in industrial design that my renderings and my comps were not very adequate compared to the other people. We had to do rendering of the objects that you were designing and so forth. So I've always been weak in that section, and I think that's another reason why abstraction was a large part of what I did.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it seems a fruitful way, or at least one fruitful way to talk about your work, the more I

think about it and talk with you and then look at the work itself.

What about the whole matter of commissions? I mean, with your colleague, Dale Chihuly, that's very important, I think, these big commissions.

MR. LIPOFSKY: [Laughs.]

MR. KARLSTROM: But you've emphasized that you really work in a different way, which is by yourself, which is, now I understand to be, almost a definition of studio glass, the whole idea that an individual can work with this material in a personal – personally expressive way, out of the factory into the studio.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: And so this – and this is sort of repeating or reiterating – but this then provides certain limitations, certainly in terms of size, because you emphasized that. And it seems to me, a lot of the glass commissions even have a corporate aspect to them. At least if you walk around in Seattle, almost every lobby of a skyscraper seems to have glass, and usually fairly large scale.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: What has been the importance of commissions to your work?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, it hasn't been important to me at all because I've never done any commissions.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I've never dealt with it. I've been asked a number of times to do things. Actually, I did one piece and it wasn't that good, and it was for Metromedia Radio Station in Los Angeles. It was a commission that came through Lee Nordness, who ran a gallery in New York. And I didn't have enough time. They were pushing to get something done. I tried to simplify something. They wanted something in glass. I used very little glass with it. It was mainly two panels of stainless steel with a cutout in each panel where I vacuum-formed a shape; a kind of organic shape was vacuum formed and slipped into the panel. And inside the vacuum form, I sprayed Murano paint and put some glass balls inside the plate. And that was the simplest I could do.

And actually I was going to Europe at the time and I left, and I left – at that time Paula Bartron was my assistant at the UC Berkeley. And it was shipped down to LA and she kind of came to my studio and oversaw the shipping of the two pieces by a moving company, and I never even got a photograph of the pieces.

MR. KARLSTROM: Where were these installed?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Metromedia Radio Station, L.A.

Then I received a couple years ago a call from a man who collects glass. I think he collects historic glass, mainly, but he was interested a little bit in the contemporary things. And he was friendly with an auction house in Florida. I don't know if it was around the Miami area or not. And they were auctioning off these pieces, or they had these pieces and wanted to auction them, from this Metromedia. I don't know how they got them. I don't have any idea how they came from California to Florida.

But I don't think they were complete. And I never got a photograph of them, although I communicated with the woman who was in charge. I never got a photograph of what they had, what they didn't have. He thought that they weren't complete, and I'm sure they weren't, that things – parts were lost over the years, and what it was. And after a while I asked him to kind of follow-up if anybody would ever buy that or what it was, and I think he lost interest. And I never finalized what was happening to those pieces, if they still have them or if they sold them for junk, or – I don't have any idea what happened to them. [Laughs.] Historically, that was my first commissioned piece, and it went by the wayside.

MR. KARLSTROM: What year was that?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, I'm trying to remember [June 1969]. I don't even use that thing in my resume as a commission. That was the only commission, real commission. [Laughs.]

MR. KARLSTROM: When do you suppose that was?

MR. LIPOFSKY: It was 1969, I think that would probably be safe to say.

MR. KARLSTROM: And it was arranged through Nordness, right?

MR. LIPOFSKY: It was arranged through Nordness. And I don't know that - Lee never said too much to me, but he was quite disappointed in the piece that it was not really a lot of glass and that it didn't look like my work at that time and didn't have any references to that, I was doing.

MR. KARLSTROM: It doesn't sound to me as if that was a project that really held your interest that much.

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, I just rushed to do it, and so I used other people to make things for me and to put it together: a metal fabricator, a friend of mine, Jerry Bellaine, who did electroforming at that time - no, excuse me - who did the vacuum forming on plastic. And I made the mold, the shape, and then he formed it for me. And my assistant blew a bunch of small glass balls that we put into the thing, so I didn't have much to do with it. And that's the last thing I ever did that was architectural.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, what about smaller commissions, where people ask you if you could make something "sort of like this" -

MR. LIPOFSKY: No.

MR. KARLSTROM: - or even looking at some other work and saying -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Never had an interest, because I don't think I could do it, the way that I work. My work is so much intuitive and so on. The only thing I've done was to make things for theme exhibits, and that's been the one with the exhibition in Venice, Italy, the three times I worked with the Jewish Museum in San Francisco to make things that dealt with Jewish festival objects, menorahs and a Kiddush cup [a cup to hold wine]. [Also a glass birdhouse, a glass mask, holiday tree ornaments for fundraisers.]

MR. KARLSTROM: You earlier mentioned those works as really aberrations in your career.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes, but they were fun to do. I enjoyed doing them. I liked the challenge of doing something - I liked the change that I had to do to make that. It was a good challenge. I tried to relate it to my own work, which wasn't necessary, but that's the way I approached those exhibits.

MR. KARLSTROM: Looking back over the, should we say, sweep of your career and the work itself, certainly there have been changes, no question about that, from the early *California Loops*, that series, and then to more recent work. There's a real progression. But how do you see it? Do you see your career in terms of episodes, periods that are distinct, or do you see a kind of thread of continuity that goes through the work? Have you thought about it?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Never. Never thought about it. Doing my retrospective, having to deal with that, I did see some things. I did see some patterns - not so much pattern, but I did see one reference that I had - I think we've talked about this - when I did this metal piece in graduate school, a few metal pieces, and then later on did the *California Loop Series*, and I saw some reference there that that came out of some earlier work that I did in graduate school. I think there may be some references to some of my work. I know once in a while I've thought about how to make things like I did another time, to work in the same way. But generally I haven't really paid any attention to that. You know, I think maybe others can see it more frequent - better, have a better view than I do.

There was a big break after I did the *California Loop Series*, and then - and I don't know exactly - then started to get involved with the factories. The "Loop" series was me working totally by myself, just me, in all aspects of the work, then going into the factories. That was a big break.

MR. KARLSTROM: Was that because you, in effect, had more of a collaborative aspect?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I had a different opportunity, which I tried to take advantage of and use for my work. And that's carried on until the present day, and I've worked that way. Now, my work has changed over the years, but it's changed very subtly. And the references are quite similar because I work similar. The molds are all different, but they still have a similar characteristic. I think Dan Kline mentioned that in the retrospective videotape, that you can walk in and see a piece in an exhibit and you can know that it's my work and it's definitely mine.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, in looking through your catalogue, which I'm doing right now, holding it up so you can see it - as if you don't know - but there's no question there is a kind of a signature look -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes, I think it's true.

MR. KARLSTROM: - for most of the work, maybe getting back into the Fratelli-Toso -

MR. LIPOFSKY: The Italian work, yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: – it does look a bit different.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, you're seeing the start of using the molds and then how the molds became more elaborate.

MR. KARLSTROM: And these, too.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, now you're looking at the Leerdam work [Leerdam Factory, Holland]. The Leerdam work was without using any molds. That was purely hand-blown with the master. And the master did everything without my hands-on. That was a short – that progression was fairly short, and I haven't gone back to use that again with somebody. I've had opportunities to work in Italy again, but I haven't come up with a project that I could do in the way I could work with – it would be primarily from drawings, and I'm not sure what I can do or when I can have the time to do it.

MR. KARLSTROM: Exhibitions – particularly, I guess, gallery exhibitions, but not exclusively. You know, we've touched on this already, and now I'm reaching back in my mind trying to remember what was an early and very important exhibition for you. I know that you showed – even before you came to California you had some student exhibitions, but remind me again what you would point to as the first significant professional-type exhibition.

MR. LIPOFSKY: One of the first significant exhibits was at the Chicago Art Institute, and that was called the "Chicago and Vicinity" show [1964]. It was a juried exhibit. And I don't even know who juried it; it's not coming to my mind [The Jury included Fred Martin, Walter Murch, James Rosati, and James Rosenquist]. And I submitted a wood sculpture that I had done as a student, an undergraduate, at the University of Illinois. And as I look back, I don't – it was – I don't want to say primitive, but it had sort of a primal design to it. It was a piece of wood that I carved. It was about two feet tall, and it looked very African. It's not in the catalogue. I think – I don't know, I hope my sister still has. And that was the first recognition that I got, because that was a big deal to get in that exhibit. [It was a ceramic sculpture *Handbuilt Slab Construction #IV*, stoneware.]

It was a – I took this – it was a log, and I didn't change the general shape of the log and I just carved into it. There were some holes through it, and it had, I think, three legs on the bottom, three round legs that I carved into it. I like carving wood. I always like to go back into carving wood. So that was a project. I think we all had to carve something out of wood.

That was – I don't remember the dates of that show, but then the two major shows – I don't know if that's even in my resume in the catalogue because they had to delete a lot of things. The two major shows in Wisconsin, the Painter and Sculptor shows ["Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors: 49th Annual Exhibition of Wisconsin Art"] and the Designer-Craftsman shows ["Forty-third Annual Wisconsin Designer-Craftsman Exhibition"], those were very important. Those, actually I got more attention and got a review in the one show, "Crudity Gets Top Award," which I don't know if that catapulted me to the forefront of the art world in Wisconsin or was just a little blip, but that was interesting.

MR. KARLSTROM: These shows were in – and I believe – I'm looking at the chronology here – 1963, I think.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, that's all from – I think that's all when I came to California. I don't think there's much in there earlier. They may just have deleted it because of space problems.

MR. KARLSTROM: Sixty-four, the group sculpture exhibition at the Sherman Gallery in Chicago.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. I was in a few sculpture shows in some galleries in Chicago. I think that that wasn't glass; I think that that was ceramic at that time. So there were legitimate galleries there. I did have a lot of little things like that before I came out to – well, I guess that was about the time that I was in California. No, that was when I was in Wisconsin. When I came to California, the very first show that – well, I think it was at the Richmond Art Center. Then there was a show of myself and my students at Marjorie Annenberg Gallery. And Marjorie just died recently. But she was very supportive of the people using materials and so forth. She had a little – I think her gallery was on Hyde Street, just around the corner from the Buena Vista Bar. So that was the first introduction in San Francisco.

From there, I think the two shows that were important to me was being in this summer show at the San Francisco Art Museum, and following that was the show at the Hansen Gallery.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, you mentioned that. We talked about that.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And that was my, kind of, entrance into the professional – notable galleries in San Francisco.

MR. KARLSTROM: And that was with glass then.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That was with glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: So that's where you would mark the beginning of your -

MR. LIPOFSKY: That was sculptural, yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: - exhibiting glassware.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes, that's true. That's true. Now, I think I was in a few shows nationally, but I don't recall right at the moment what they were.

The next group of shows that were all glass was called the "Toledo Glass National". And what year - I forgot what year that was. 1966. That was a little bit later, because people had to get started. Then those shows, the first one was -

MR. KARLSTROM: That was in '70.

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, 1966. It was very conservative. The Toledo Museum of Art put on the show because that was a center of glass. That was Libby-Owens, and they called Toledo the glass capital of the world. They had a lot of glass factories and businesses, and the Toledo Museum of Art has a large glass collection - historic collection.

It had to be done by the artist; it had to be made in a certain time or something like that. I mean, they had some restrictions on it. And I submitted some, for that show, some kind of wild glass pieces. I don't think they wanted anything with other materials, or - I'm not so sure about that, but it was very conservative. And if you look at the catalogue - you want me to show you the catalogue?

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. Yeah, that would be great.

MR. LIPOFSKY: It's just a tiny thing, but it's quite interesting. [Pause.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Marvin is over at his bookshelf looking for the catalogue.

I'll be impressed if you can find it.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, this one I know where it is. Wait a minute; 1966, that's the first one. Was the other one a little bit - they didn't even put a date in it. Wait - 1968? Yeah, okay. And then it traveled from - okay. So 1966, this was the first show at Toledo. So that was pretty early.

And if you'll look at these pieces you'll see that they're all vases and bowls and highly - there's two things. Dr. [Robert] Fritz from San Jose had something more sculptural, but for the most part, they're really craft.

Now, my piece wasn't even photographed in the show. I'll see what I had in there. Okay. Oh, I know what I had there. I only had one piece in there. It was a glass form with brass inserts, and it was quite glass-like. There wasn't anything in that show that was really of any sculptural consequence.

MR. KARLSTROM: Now remind me which show this was.

MR. LIPOFSKY: This is the "Toledo Glass National", the first one.

MR. KARLSTROM: It was the "Toledo Glass National".

MR. LIPOFSKY: And they put on two or three of these shows. Then in 1968 they put another one on. Then things started to open up a little bit. And yet most of the work in the show is primarily vases. I could say it's almost all vases. You can take a look at this catalogue. Joel Myers came into the picture. And he was working in a factory, so he had some interesting work, even though they were all craft-orientated.

MR. KARLSTROM: Look, Clayton Bailey was in this.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Clayton Bailey. I don't know what he had in there.

MR. KARLSTROM: He was in Wisconsin, in Whitewater, Wisconsin.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, he was teaching in a college.

MR. KARLSTROM: And here's Fritz Dreisbach, in Madison.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right. So everybody had - then the next show, then you see my work, and my work is quite sculptural in content compared to what people did - other people did.

MR. KARLSTROM: So, way back then, mid-'60s, you really were headed off in your own direction, separating

yourself, I gather, a bit.

Well, look at this.

MR. LIPOFSKY: That's the next show. That's the '68 show.

MR. KARLSTROM: And then there, that work is entirely different. Well, these are the *Loops*.

MR. LIPOFSKY: The start of the *Loops*.

MR. KARLSTROM: The start of the *Loops*. Early *California Loops*.

MR. LIPOFSKY: The start of the loops. So then the next show that they had – but for the most part, most people just had vases, again, in the show.

MR. KARLSTROM: Right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Then they had the show – they had it again, and this time the show was in 1972, and they called it “American Glass Now”. Then everything broke open. Then other people started making sculptural pieces. And we see people who are now – like Eric Hilton, who was designing for Steuben. There's a predominance of vases in the show, glass vases, but other people started coming in with more sculptural pieces.

And we have here Jack Schmidt, who makes some things that are more sculptural, and Boris Dudchenko and Eriks Rudans. These people all went to Wisconsin, and my pieces – now, this is the next phase. I had one piece from Italy; they didn't even use my label – my name – one piece from the Vanini factory and another piece from the Leerdam series. And I believe that this show – I don't know, I may have even been out of the country. So the Leerdam pieces were quite strong, and also the Vanini pieces were quite strong. They photographed – well, maybe they didn't photograph that upside down. But these are using the cane work.

MR. KARLSTROM: What's the name of this show?

MR. LIPOFSKY: This is called “American Glass Now”.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay. And that was 19 –

MR. LIPOFSKY: '78.

MR. KARLSTROM: '78.

MR. LIPOFSKY: So then you see things like these little cups. Fritz Dreisbach had a bunch of mugs in sort of a – some kind of cup things, very organic. But then we had Harvey Littleton had some very sculptural pieces in it. Henry Hallem had some cast work in it, figurative, very reminiscent of Jim Melchert's clay work.

MR. KARLSTROM: Now, who's that, Henry –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Henry Halem.

MR. KARLSTROM: Halem. Mm-hmm.

So this seems to me to be a very important exhibition.

MR. LIPOFSKY: So they had his name on the – yeah, this was very important. But these pieces – things got bigger and more playful. We even have neon coming in from Jan Zanduis, who was a Dutchman living in the United States. Michael Whitley had a very sculptural piece in it. He was up in Washington. And some of my students – there's a – John Lander, who was a student of mine, had a piece in it, a sculptural piece, but then didn't do much after that.

MR. KARLSTROM: John Lander?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, Lander – L-A-N-D-E-R. No, wait a minute –

[END TAPE 4 SIDE A.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: He didn't do much in glass. Dan Daily had some neon work.

MR. KARLSTROM: That's another of your students?

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, Dan wasn't – and some things, some lamps in neon – I think he was at RISD – Jamie Carpenter

and Dale Chihuly had some large sculptural pieces on the floor, using sheet glass. There wasn't any blowing in neon. They worked together at that time. Dick Marquis had one of his famous Murrini pieces where he did the Lord's Prayer, and so it was about the size of your thumbnail. And some things he did in Italy. Mark Peiser did some very interesting work. They're vase forms but technically they're very good with - [telephone rings.] Sorry.

MR. KARLSTROM: That's okay.

[Audio break.]

MR. KARLSTROM: This is continuing the third session, an interview with Marvin Lipofsky; Paul Karlstrom conducting the interview for the Smithsonian-Laitman project. This is - the date is the fifth of - what month is this?

MR. LIPOFSKY: August.

MR. KARLSTROM: At any rate, this is now disc six, and, Marvin, you wanted to wrap up - we were talking about the -

MR. LIPOFSKY: We're talking about the "Toledo Glass National" show, which was the first big, major glass exhibit in the country. After the first two exhibits, the third one was called "American Glass Now," and what - we've discussed a little bit about that, but what was interesting about it, out of 32 artists, five of them were my students, plus myself, so that would be six. And I thought that was quite interesting.

So, we see that glass has gone - moved towards more sculptural aspects from that very first show that we -

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, that clearly seems to be the case. The earlier work - except yours maybe - seemed to be fairly conventional: vases -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Very conventional. [Laughs.] Extremely conventional. But then, people were just discovering what to do; people were just learning. And I think one of the points - I think it's well known that most people who went into glass at that time came out of the, quote, "crafts movement." A lot of them were potters; a lot of them came out of clay in the early years, and so they had this object orientation, this utilitarian view of glass. And glass, for most people's perception, was a utilitarian material. So it was sort of natural that glass went this way until people gained skills, insights - so more people came to be interested in glass from other disciplines, or from other thought - the idea of making sculpture, the idea of using glass in a two-dimensional way instead of a three-dimensional way.

Painting on glass has been a long tradition, but not many people painted on glass in this new glass movement, and later on a number of people start painting on glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: Now, remind me, which - we've talked about several exhibitions and looked at a few catalogues. Which is the one in which five of the artists were your students?

MR. LIPOFSKY: That was the very last exhibit, the "American Glass Now" show in 1972. Then that traveled - that traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York, the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh, Corning Museum of Glass, the Renwick National Collection. It went to the San Francisco Museum of Art. However, I think that that was in the time of the earthquake, and so it actually was shown in the airport gallery [San Francisco International Airport]. And Santa Barbara Museum of Art - if I'm not mistaken that was - I don't think it was in the - it was at the museum. So that was in '74. Maybe I'm wrong; I can't remember.

MR. KARLSTROM: You can't remember which earthquake was then?

It's pretty clear that you and your students, or you through your students, put a certain amount of momentum - or established a kind of momentum towards this more sculptural approach to glass and -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, around that time, the late '60s, early '70s, there were quite a number of people started teaching at schools around the country, and it took a few years for the instructors and the students to develop. But there was a big push. And so, what was happening in California was looked upon from the rest of the country because we were more established, we had been working a little bit longer, and we had students who were quite a bit open, and the whole California scene was much more open than the rest of the country. So things were happening here.

But then, slightly after that, the rest of the country caught up, and naturally they - people working with glass, with sculptural concept, et cetera, whatever, was - there wasn't any big gap.

MR. KARLSTROM: But in the beginning it must have been almost entirely within these few glass programs, like what you established, because how else are they going to -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: – the students are going to get the basic know-how?

MR. LIPOFSKY: At that time, one of the few persons working in glass – independent people working – was Joel Phillips Meyers, and he was designing at the Blenko Glass Company [Milton, West Virginia] and had access to the factory to do his work and access to people to help him. So he was, in the early years, one of the few people who was more or less independent, but with a great deal of help. Then he left the factory and started teaching in Illinois.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about overall – in terms of the evolution or development of studio glass, what about the significance of the schools? Do you feel that it remained pretty much located within these departments, whether it be the university or like CCAC, the art schools; that remained the home to it, or not?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, pretty much. I think the schools were the center of the energy in the glass field until – I shouldn't say until – until the establishment of places like Pilchuck, the Haystack school, and Penland. And then the majority of the students came from the schools. Or I shouldn't say the majority, but quite a number came from the schools, as well as independent people who had some interest. So there still is a contact there with the schools. And of course the instructors at the schools all came from the schools, for the most part, in the beginning. Later on, the schools would just mention – started hiring people from outside to come from Europe and so forth to teach – people like Bertil Vallien and other artists. So a number of stained glass artists from Germany were here teaching.

That's another aspect. The German stained glass artists were giving workshops in the States. I don't have an idea when that started. But it didn't directly relate to the movement, but that meant that there was more glass being done and more people involved with glass, and so people knew the people who were blowing glass and the people who were doing stained glass. And so it just – it was a big – became a bigger world, even though what they were doing was quite different and they didn't always interchange or mix, but we had a lot of use of glass.

MR. KARLSTROM: The whole interest in stained glass – well, I can't say this with authority, but at least out of my own memory I'm thinking of – well, I'm thinking of it as sort of connected to the '60s and also the growing interest in Art Nouveau, it was an aesthetic that –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Some of that was true, but I think the Germans, like Schaffrath and, let's see, who else –

MR. KARLSTROM: Who was that?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Ludwig Schaffrath was quite known as quite an influence on many of the people making stained glass and doing commission work in the States. And the commission work, there's the difference, that that was the main body until there was a group of artists using stained glass in the Bay Area that were quite creative, and they, with Paul Marioni as one of them, started to do a Robert Kehlmann – started to do the autonomous panel and then wanted to have exhibits, and started to demand that stained glass be included. If there was a, quote, "glass exhibit," they wanted stained glass to be part of that exhibit. And I said, well, why? I mean, you have your own – they had their own magazine, they had their own societies, they had their own commissions, they had every church in the world for their display and yet they wanted to be part of whatever show had glass in it.

But that worked – I mean, that worked for a while and they were recognized. Now, that movement around here, I don't know how long it lasted. It lasted for a bit – the work was very good. They were a pretty creative group of people and they knew each other, and then it kind of just petered out; people moved away and there wasn't any movement after a while. But it was very exciting in the very beginning. And that's how I met Paul Marioni, when I first saw his exhibit in a gallery.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, I didn't realize that he was a stained glass person.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And he learned from a woman by the name of Judy Davis, who became Judy North. Judy Davis was married to Ronnie Davis, who started the mime troop – the San Francisco Mime Troop, and she had been sort of a young protégé in stained glass, done some early commissions in LA.

One day, when I was teaching at Berkeley, I got a call from – or the office told me that someone had been trying to reach me that hadn't been able to get a hold of me, and they were really excited that glass was being done at the university, and they wanted to come over and meet me. But I hadn't been around to take the call, and the secretary said, this woman was so excited; she was really excited. Then I met Judy Davis, and she was extremely excited – was excited that glass – she did stained glass but she just liked to be involved with glass.

And so we became friends, and I visited her – and then found out later when I met Paul Marioni that he had actually taken over her house in Mill Valley. She had moved on – moved out to teach on the East Coast, and that

Paul had been her student, learned stained glass from her, lived in the house that she lived in Mill Valley, and there's all these interconnections together. And she'd been very influential on a lot of the people – she did a lot of figurative work with – in her work that was very contemporary. Then she became known as Judy North and she came back just – now she's in this area again and I don't know what she – I think she does a lot of painting. She was married for a brief time to Joe Raffael, the painter –

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, yeah, right.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – who did a lot of fish watercolors and things like that.

MR. KARLSTROM: Sure, sure.

MR. LIPOFSKY: So she had several names, but she was important for the stained glass people in the area and important for me in one respect because she was so excited about what was going on and had such energy.

MR. KARLSTROM: Was she here in the, like, mid-'70s? Would that be about the time?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think so. I think – well –

MR. KARLSTROM: Was she with Raffael then?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, she was – yeah, Judy Davis Raffael, or Judy – I don't know.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, I think I had dinner at their house once when I first got here –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Could – yeah, they were quite social at that time.

MR. KARLSTROM: With some –

MR. LIPOFSKY: But that was the connection with Paul Marioni and the other people. And of course, then Paul came over to CCAC and started blowing glass, and eventually he sort of moved out towards – towards blowing – well he still does commission work in – architectural commission work in glass with his partner.

MR. KARLSTROM: Once again, we seem to have a situation where the material creates the connection. It's –

MR. LIPOFSKY: That's true.

MR. KARLSTROM: You know, because for me, stained glasswork – I mean, there are actually some factories that are still operating, like the Jetson Studio down in Los Angeles that did – for the big, new cathedral in Los Angeles, did all of the stained glass, and it's really amazing. It's historic, one of the big stained glass factories still operating, but it has very much an arts and crafts type connection, and one would think almost of William Morris, almost a medieval –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, there's still quite a number of businesses that do architectural glass and they're located around the country. And they still – there's still business for everyone.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah. But you – you looked a little bit – not askance, perhaps, but – at this effort for the stained glass people to hop on to your wagon, or rather the studio glass movement wagon. You didn't see that as a natural connection, I guess.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, it was a natural connection. We were pretty open. I mean, I think we were pretty generous. We didn't want to keep people out, but if I just talk personally about that, in the Bay Area it was a little bit pushy. They [the stained glass people] were really pushing to get their work in exhibits, and people complained. "Now, you know, you're having a show for sculpture and I don't know why you don't have any stuffed dolls in it." It was that kind of thing. They wanted to become part of everything. And I said, "Well, if the work is good, it should be part of it, but it shouldn't just be totally open without any" – I don't know what I want to say. But it was interesting, and it's good that they did push because they did get recognized and they did have some national prominence, and I think it was exciting and good. It was nice. There was a good group of people. They were all pretty opinionated and very pushy, and they – it was good that they were doing that, but it was a little difficult at times when – for the rest of us. And you know, we were fairly new and we weren't so established that – they thought we were but it was tough for us getting shows and dealing with what was going on at that time, too.

MR. KARLSTROM: I think that we've pretty well discussed your teaching career. We've talked about your travel, we've talked about demonstrations you gave, lectures, you moved around. We talked about the international aspect of your activity. I'm not sure that there would be anything more to add to that right now unless there's something you feel that we didn't touch upon. And this is specifically in terms of how your own, shall we say, philosophy of teaching, or methods of teaching may have evolved. Is there anything you want to say about that?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I think we've discussed that. I'm trying to remember what we - how much we did discuss on that.

MR. KARLSTROM: I think quite a bit, but -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. It was - yeah, I think we covered it well.

MR. KARLSTROM: Okay. Well, let's - here's another question that we've also talked about, there's no question about that: the ideas for your work. We actually have talked about that quite a bit as well.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yes, I think so.

MR. KARLSTROM: And I think if you're satisfied on that particular point in terms of this interview -

MR. LIPOFSKY: I don't know what we can add to that.

MR. KARLSTROM: No, except this whole idea of inspiration, again, it seems with you - you have very - you spoke very specifically about that, and basically - this is just to sort of review or reiterate it to check my memory - but it was situational to a large extent. This is what I - this is the impression I get after all of our hours of talking about it - whereas others would cite some experience in personal life. Other artists might cite that as leading to a change, or some focus on imagery. Again, I get the impression that you go into the studio and basically - there may have been some nice flowers in Japan that you described, or a particularly nice color, and then you found that that could be incorporated. But again, is that right? I mean, is that the way you think about it, that it was very situational?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Pretty much. There was one more story, one more situation that relates very closely to it. In the late '60s, early '70s, when the whole freedom movement out in California and out of the hippies, and just young people moving around, music, what have you, I went to a number of the events and I would take slides, take photographs of people, the way people were dressed, the way people were dancing, things like that, and I started taking - I start taking slides of clothing, and a number of them were women's rear ends - pants, what have you - and I was at the - I think it was Santa Cruz - no, on some beach below Santa Cruz - I forgot where it was now. There was some music thing going on down there and there was some women running around in striped bikinis. And I said, oh, that was great - and I think they were somewhat pink stripes. And I remember taking a photograph of this girl in a striped bikini, and I loved that stripe. Of course - and I said I wanted - that's what I wanted to do in the glass, in my glass.

And so, it was a few years before I got to it. I think, '72 that I worked in Italy, and when I got there, that image stuck with me and I used cane to make the stripes. I don't know if - yeah, I don't think that particular piece is in there, the catalogue, in the earlier - well, here, it's like this. Yeah. But there's another one.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And I picked up on the cane work that the Italians did related to that picture that I took, and that's sort of - I said, oh, that's what I want to do. And I use techniques that related to the bikini. I looked at color, because people were wearing really bright colors and a lot of colors, and I would photograph those chartreuses and the pinks and the things like that.

I went to England, arrived in London just as the Rolling Stones were doing their concert in Hyde Park. They were in the big park there, and I went around photographing all the wild clothes and things like that, everybody laying in the grass and listening to the music. And those things related. And I didn't always have that really direct relationship like that, the stripes, what I was able to use directly in England, but I think that influenced my work somewhat over the years, that those images that I saw - and it was something from the culture in those days.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well that counts.

MR. LIPOFSKY: But that was quite obvious. The bikini thing was very sensual you know, it was pretty obvious.

MR. KARLSTROM: Sure. But you're obviously - and it's not very unusual for those times to have that kind of interest in popular culture. It was interesting.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: And most people of a certain age - let's see, we're not too old - were participating. I mean, I certainly remember that. And so that defined the '60s, and I think most of us were - well, that is, then, a form of inspiration, I would think, for your work, as you described it.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, I think it came out of that. It came out of the times.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about the counterculture itself, and sort of moving it over towards political or ideological?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, early on I did a lot of little political statements on the glass –

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, you did?

MR. LIPOFSKY: – sandblasting words and so forth. There's some pieces in the catalogue; they're not all political. But I did a lot of that. So there were statements, I think, "No more war," and things like that. There was one piece that was shown at the Oakland Museum that was called *War and Pollution: Both Kill*, and it was a show about pollution. Now, just writing a little bit on my – on the glass – and these were small pieces – wasn't so significant, but those statements worked in the context and that came out of what I did when I was a graduate student, with the tombstones and the haiku and the political statements there. I continued it on.

Of course, the climate was right for that, too. That was what was going on politically and what was going on here in California, and at the University of California at Berkeley –

MR. KARLSTROM: Sure.

MR. LIPOFSKY: – and all the states. And we were very much involved with the anti-war effort I made bumper stickers.

MR. KARLSTROM: Out of glass?

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, not out of glass. [Laughs.] And so it's in the show. The bumper sticker that I made is, "Another glass blower for peace," which wasn't original for me. I saw that, and I think it was a lamp worker. Someone who did scientific glass blowing was marching in a peace parade once and had a sign "Glass blower for peace" – and I just kind of borrowed that. And we made bumper stickers with – and using the button that Mark Treib and I designed – Mark Treib designed it and I printed it up, the "blow glass" button on top of an American flag. And that pattern of the American flag, when we made that – well, it had to be the late '70s, early – late '60s, early '70s – I don't remember exactly when – that flag pattern, that waving flag, I've seen used all over now more recently. It was really close to what we did – what he did back in the 70s – back then.

And I used to give that button to everybody. I made hundreds of those buttons and gave them out whenever I traveled.

MR. KARLSTROM: Did you ever think during those years that your social concerns in a sense obligated you to incorporate issues or reference any of these issues in your art? Do you see what I mean? Did you feel that – what do I do? I make art. And what are the things I'm concerned about? These need to be addressed, and since I make art, I'll do it in the art – as with those anti-war words that you mention.

MR. LIPOFSKY: You know, it was sort of just intuitive. I never thought of it – I don't recall making a big issue out of it.

MR. KARLSTROM: It just came naturally. Is that right?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I had a surface that I wanted to deal with in my work. It was interesting, but it wasn't that interesting to me, and so I started adding statements and words and things to my work at one time. It didn't last a long time; I sort of grew out of doing it. But I made a whole series of things like that.

MR. KARLSTROM: So that was the Marvin Lipofsky hippie activist phase.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I never was really a hippie, never could become a hippy, but – [laughs].

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it looked sort of attractive, didn't it a little bit, at the time? All that freedom and –

MR. LIPOFSKY: No, I think – no, I don't know. I never thought of living in the woods and eating – [laughs] – organic –

MR. KARLSTROM: Nuts and berries.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, nuts and berries. Well, a lot of those students – well, I don't know. No, the students were not so much here, but people were around. You know, we'd go to the Haight every once in a while and the concerts. We went to the Grateful Dead and the Jefferson Airplane and things like that.

MR. KARLSTROM: I used to like to photograph Gracie Slick.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: I had a crush on Grace Slick.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Ah, she was quite wild in the beginning. I remember – there’s something else. I went to a party – I don’t think I told this – went to a – someone was having a party in San Francisco in a big hall – it was like an old social club, and I told some people about this party – it was an artists’ party – someone from the Art Institute; it could have been Sam Tchakalian – and I said, “I’ll meet you there – I’ll wait out in front of the building and so you’ll see me,” because I don’t know if I even knew exactly where it was.

So I was standing in front of the doorway and you had to walk up to the second floor – there was a great big ballroom up there. Someone used it as a studio. And I was standing with my arms crossed, leaning at the doorjamb and I saw these guys walking down the street carrying guitar cases and what have you, and they were really kind of wild. They had kind of big scruffy hair. And they said – a little guy came up to me and said, “We’re okay; we’re the band.” He thought that I was kind of a bouncer sitting in the front there. “We’re okay, we’re good. We’re the band.” So I said, “Well, sure, just go right up.” Then they start playing – and I think they were called the Warlocks; became the Grateful Dead. That was the Grateful Dead with Pig Pen and everybody. And if I would have told them, “No, you can’t come in here,” I could have stopped the whole career right there and they wouldn’t have made it.

MR. KARLSTROM: That was it.

MR. LIPOFSKY: [Laughs.] That was it. But I didn’t know much about them until later. And I think they were pretty well known around the Art Institute; they knew them well.

MR. KARLSTROM: Speaking of the Art Institute, I don’t know if we talked about this but we did talk about various communities at different times in the Bay Area, but back in those times, did you – yeah, but you were over here on this side of the Bay –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: – but did you have any connections with some of the people around the Art Institute –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah.

MR. KARLSTROM: – either students or teachers?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, we would go to parties over there once in a while. I think Sam Tchakalian was the main guy. He was real close to Pete [Voulkos]. And of course, Ron Nagle always lived in San Francisco. And then there were – there were a number of people who had things – or people went over to their studios. I think we talked a little bit about this earlier.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yes.

MR. LIPOFSKY: But it was a good exchange. I went more to Pete’s – Pete was the only one – well, not really – the only one I related to in the East Bay somewhat. There were other people who had big studios. Of course, Bruce Beasley not quite that early, but he was also – I’ve been down to his place a number of times. And then there was – Bruce had a casting studio prior to his other – the current studio, and then there were a number of people casting bronze and so forth. And those people seem to be active and people hung out around – around that.

But mostly San Francisco was the place that we went to, and I don’t know if there were many others. Now, I never went to the painters’ studios; I never went to those.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah, I was going to ask that.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And I think maybe – I don’t know if there was Elmer Bischoff and the thing – they had a big studio on Schattack Avenue, and I never sort of related to that, or I never – I don’t know what they had. What I think they had there primarily was drawing sessions with a small group of people. That was one of their social things, but related more or less to the sculptors or – well, it was everybody – everybody.

MR. KARLSTROM: But what about people like Joan Brown? Of course she ended up being at Berkeley.

MR. LIPOFSKY: No.

MR. KARLSTROM: That was later?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, much, much later.

MR. KARLSTROM: Much later.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Not Joan Brown. Howard Fried and, let's see, there was a couple other people from -

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, you mentioned Bob Howard, I think.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, it was once - that was only once, but I knew who he was and - let's see, what - I'm trying to remember some of the other people that were - a few people. Let's see - oh, gosh, they were usually associated with the Art Institute, the sculptors there.

MR. KARLSTROM: [Robert] Hudson?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Hudson wasn't in San Francisco at that time. Yeah, I knew him and he was - but there were a number of people who were - there are no longer studios around there, but they had studios down near the wharf, or South of Market - I mean East of Market, and that's all gone. Now I don't remember. But we'd meet at openings and things like that. The opening was - the opening social scene was probably the best. That's where people related quite a bit.

MR. KARLSTROM: What about - again, something we've talked about already, and it's, I guess, a matter of just sort of revisiting for a moment and making sure that we have you well described in terms of your relationships, but the whole world of organizations - national craft organizations and your relationship to these various groups and what - I guess in some ways - well, maybe how effective they have been, in what ways, this sort of thing.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, of course, my first introduction was as a - when I just finished graduate school and I was asked to help, through Harvey Littleton - in fact, we drove out to New York to the First World - First World - now I forgot the name of it - the "First World Congress of Craftsmen," held in Columbia University in New York. Then that was 1964, the summer of '64 - what month I don't know exactly - because there I signed my contract to teach at Berkeley. I had to get it notarized at a bank. And I think what - let's see, what did we do? I drove out with Harvey, and my job there was to help set up this small exhibit of glass in a space there. So I think it was Tom Gentili and I - he was from the American Craft Museum; he was a jeweler - set this show up - I sort of was the assistant - and displayed everybody's work. Nothing was very exciting. It was very - at that time, '64, was pretty - it was the Higgins lampworking, which was kind of insignificant. Not Higgins - I mean, John Burton's lampworking, and then there were some things from the Higgins - from Chicago, their fusing plates, as I remember, some of Harvey's work, and I can't remember who else.

So I set these pieces up on these cases. And then I helped set up the furnace - Dominic Labino built a small furnace and then shipped it out with - I think one of the students brought it out. And we put the furnace together. And in the courtyard of the education building [at Columbia University] we set it up with a propane tank and blew glass. So that was the World Crafts Council and the American Craft Council that I met a lot of people from that area.

So that was important for me because I met Sam Richardson there, I met Bob Arneson, I met Pete Voukos, and a number of European people. And as I was standing in front of the furnace when - actually, Tio Giambruni was there with me, too - he went to the conference - and he was the first person to blow glass out of the furnace. It was just melting, and I went over in the evening with him and we stuck a pipe in and I let him blow a little bubble before - they were going to wait until the next morning before they were starting, but we blew glass first. Nobody knows that except us. Now -

MR. KARLSTROM: Now we all do.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, now you all do. And I remember I was standing in front of the furnace - or standing near that little area - and this funny guy came up to me and he had big hair. He wasn't too tall; he was really stocky and he was smoking a pipe. And I was just standing there, and he came up, and he said, "Don't do this." He said, "Don't do this." He repeated it about three times. And he said - took out a card from his pocket and he said, "Go to the factories. Tell them Tapio sent you." And I looked at the card and the card said, "Tapio Wirkkala, Finland." And that's all he said to me. I don't know how he knew who I was or what I was doing, but he just - and I never - I didn't really talk to him, except I saw him - I bumped into him a couple of times. I bumped into him once on the street. He had a girlfriend there - I assumed it was a girlfriend - a textile designer, and she was - she was sort of helping him get back to the Columbia University. We all stayed in dormitory rooms. And he was drunk and he wanted to go into every bar. And I was walking down the street, and she said, "Please help me get him back here."

And we walked into one bar. I don't know; he had to go into this bar. And at that time he was designing his knife, this puuko, this Finnish knife with a nylon handle and a stainless steel blade. It was really a nice knife. I loved that knife. And he had a prototype, and he starts sticking it into the bar in the counter, the bar top. And, "Oh," I said, "man, this is just not the thing to do uptown in New York." And he had to have a drink. And then I helped

her - I turned around and helped her get him back to the university. [Laughs.] The next - I think that night or the next night he had a big reception at the Finnish embassy, and he got drunk again, and I know that he came back really late and he couldn't get into his room for some reason. It was locked or - I don't know, he didn't have his key or something. And so he went out and slept on a park bench, and a cop, a New York cop, woke him up in the morning and bought him a cup of coffee and told him that - and I don't think he knew who he was. I mean, here he was, he was one of the real big shots of - the big heroes. You know, he just had a big reception at the embassy and everything for him. [Laughs.] And that was funny.

That was my first relationship to Finland. That was my - so when I got to - when I first got to Finland I went out and bought a couple of knives. I always liked the women's knife. It was a little bit smaller than the man's knife. And I carried that knife around when I went to work for years. When I worked on my molds and would carve - used the knife to carve them, and then I left it - I lost it in Ukraine, in L'vov, and I asked them - they found it. They said, "Oh, yeah, we found your knife." I said, "Would you please give it to the embassy?" At that time the embassy was in Moscow. And they did, but with my - and they never contacted me that they had my knife or anything. I don't know; that was too difficult, but I don't know if they even cared about someone brought a knife to them and what they did with it, but I never got it back.

So I've never found another one of the women's knives, and they don't make it anymore. It's a collector's item now. I've asked people if they ever saw one I'd like to have one, because I have the male, which is bigger, but it's not as comfortable as the small ones. That was one of the nicer designed objects that -

MR. KARLSTROM: That came right out of that meeting in New York?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, so that was one of the first organizations - connecting with organizations. And from that - of course, I was involved with the Glass Arts Society getting started. We had a meeting at Penland. They had one - a year before they had met, but then they didn't really make an organization until the second meeting at Penland, and we sat around tables in the dining room and said that we should organize. Then Henry Halem was then selected as the president. That one slide I took there of the people who were at the meeting.

And I was involved with the NCECA [National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts] organization for a long time. I was a graduate student in Wisconsin. I accompanied Don Reitz to a meeting in Chicago - I drove down with him - and it was a meeting of the American Ceramic Society. It was actually a technical group, and the technical group had one committee - one section where a lot of the people teaching ceramics were members and they would get together. And they decided at that meeting in Chicago - it had to be '63, maybe '62, someplace in there - that they wanted to break off from the national organization and organize an organization for the ceramic people at the universities. And they called it - later on they called it the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts. And they selected that name because it sounded very official and they could get money from their schools then to go attend the conference because of that "Education" and "National" and everything in the title.

And I used to go to those meetings because they included glass from the very beginning. So we always had a panel - once in a while they'd have an exhibit or something someplace, and when we went to a school we were hosted in that university or school, which had a glass program or something. Then we had a project there; we would do something with them. So they always gave us a panel. I helped organize a couple of those. We even blew glass in the field house of the University of Kansas, in the Jayhawks field house at the end of the floor right behind the basketball stand, right at the end. I remember that; that was pretty bizarre. It was the biggest building - [laughs] -to blow glass in. They put up a furnace.

Then I helped organize a conference here in Oakland, the CCAC ones.

MR. KARLSTROM: So did you have something to do with getting glass included with the ceramic arts?

MR. LIPOFSKY: I don't think I had anything - it just happened. I don't remember - I don't know who wanted to include it. Well, some of the people who were involved with the organization taught glass and ceramics. So a lot of the early people who were teachers, who started glass programs, came out of ceramics. So they had a dual position; they taught both glass and ceramics. So I wasn't that involved - I mean, I went to the conferences but I wasn't that involved in the very beginning because I was doing my program that was quite - took a lot of - time consuming, but I did go to the earlier conferences. I've gone to almost all - I think I missed two: one in Canada and one in Philadelphia. The one in Philadelphia - I don't know, for some reason I just didn't have any money and things were busy and so I didn't go to it. And so I've been to them all, and I still go to them, and people always ask me the same question: what's a glass guy doing at this thing? I say, well, I've been to all because I was there from the very beginning.

MR. KARLSTROM: So is that your main connection in some ways, or over time?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, yeah. I've been on some panels, too. I ran a panel with a bunch of - with some clay artists -

Richard Shaw, Patti Warashina and Richard Notkin in Las Vegas.

MR. KARLSTROM: Oh, yeah, Patti. She's -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah, and I was the moderator. It was great. It was great. And - oh, forgot the other person's name.

MR. KARLSTROM: So I gather, though, you were active as a participant.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I participated in some conferences.

MR. KARLSTROM: You didn't just show up.

MR. LIPOFSKY: - and I participated in the programs on occasion.

[END TAPE 4 SIDE B.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I have always enjoyed it. I like to travel, and it was a time to go to someplace that you wouldn't normally go and to go see all the exhibits; again, visually seeing the exhibits that they put up. [Laughs.] For the most part, most of the exhibits aren't very good, but there are always a few that are worth seeing. Visiting a new city, visiting the museums, what goes on; I have always liked that.

MR. KARLSTROM: This also seems to tie in with what we were discussing earlier. You were talking about magazines and what you found stimulating, what you were attracted to, and books and the idea of encountering new visual situations, new visual material, whether it's through *National Geographic* or *Smithsonian* magazine or the various crafts publications, and I gather that part of your interest in travel is similar to that.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I think so.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: I always like it. It's good. And I liked the conference. I don't - I go to some of the lectures and presentations, but it's always worth going to it. There's always something to see, always something to learn.

MR. KARLSTROM: And do you see some of the same people? This is where your typical -

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, sure.

MR. KARLSTROM: - there's sort of a core group. It's a way to keep up with your colleagues and friends.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Sure. Sure. Yeah. Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: That's fairly standard.

How would you describe, though - you have described in personal terms how these groups were useful and interesting to you, a role they play. But in a more general way, do you have any thoughts about that? I guess, beyond the obvious, it would be a matter - what have they actually contributed? In what ways have they really contributed to the field and to the growth of studio glass and related activity?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Oh, one thing was, I went to the conferences, and I actually - I have gone to a SNAG [Society of North American Goldsmiths] conference. I haven't gone to any blacksmith - but when I was a member of the board and president of GAS [Glass Art Society], I went to the other conferences to see how they planned them.

MR. KARLSTROM: I see.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And because I was the site coordinator, or was the coordinator for a couple conferences, and I wanted to know how people did it. And I can't believe that a lot of people didn't really know how conferences were planned or couldn't pick the good things, the good ideas out of other people's - and we patterned the Glass Arts Society a little bit after NCECA, because that's the only other organization we really knew about.

And I've been to some American Craft Council conferences, a couple, over the years, and been to a lot of - some European things, too, when they had the international organization. I think I went to the - I went to Vienna, I went to Mexico, I went to Japan with American - World Crafts Council, and I participated in all those conferences also. Canada - went to Canada. So I went about - and then it sort of - it has petered out now. It doesn't operate anymore. But those were really exciting because then I met people from other countries and saw what was happening in those countries, and it was just great while the - Mrs. Webb, Mrs. [Aileen] Osborne Webb, and she was in her - and her friends, and they were very important people and funded the American Craft Council.

And so the first one was that conference at Columbia University, the First World Congress of Craftsmen.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, let's talk now and maybe kind of wrap up with this, turning, again, back to your work. Again, we have discussed working process and its change, evolution, over time. We know that you, by studio glass definition, prefer or tend – your default position is to work alone. On the other hand, you've worked, especially abroad, in these factories.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Right.

MR. KARLSTROM: So it's not as if you're limited to one approach or another, but –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, that needs help. And I have never had much help. I have had – I had a couple students over the years, but that was a long time ago; kind of part-time, come down and help me do things. One was when I was polishing the glass, and that was just too much to do for one person. I had a couple students help me. But I've always wanted to have somebody, but I didn't have someone as an assistant or to help me in the studio – but I never knew how to keep them busy all the time. Actually, what I wanted them to do were things that I just never would get around to doing because I was working on my glass. I didn't especially want people to work on my pieces. Number one, it would take a little bit of training, a little bit of time to develop a skill; not that they couldn't, but then again, if they made mistakes, I would feel pretty bad. And so, I thought it was best just to blame myself rather than somebody else when something happened.

MR. KARLSTROM: How generous of you.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Well, I just didn't want to train, want to deal with that. And then I just didn't really know – my studio, for the working – is not that large, so it's really made just for me; it's kind of – it's a one-person studio. So – but it would have been helpful to have someone to do some things that I just never get around to doing, but it hasn't worked out.

MR. KARLSTROM: What brought about changes? You know, looking at some of the changes – again, we have talked about it; I realize this – but looking at whatever changes you would view as significant in the development of your process, of your methodology, can you attribute them to anything specific?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, the changes in my general work happen when I got to a new situation in work, a new factory, a new studio. Then that promotes the biggest change, if there is one, and of course the big change was when I went from that *California Loop Series* to working in the factories. And well, that was – [doorbell rings] – whoops. Okay, pardon me. I'm going to stop that.

[Audio break.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, Marvin, we're coming towards the end. We're very near to the end, which will be a total of about six hours of interview, and that's good. I have to say it is good. It has been good. I have learned a lot, which is a good sign.

We left off – this is, by the way, track two on disc six. We left off trying to think if there was anything we missed earlier on in connection with process, with methodology and changes that came about. And I could ask you that one more time, but I gather that you feel that area has been – was pretty well covered during your interview.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I think that my process is primarily intuitive, and I don't do a lot of thinking about what I'm going to do. I have tried to think about making changes or doing something new, but so far I haven't come up with anything that I feel comfortable with or haven't found a situation that allows me to change or change my form or do something that's easily – that I can easily move into. So I'm going to just continue, for the most part, doing what I've been doing, hopefully that I can move the work and move my kind of sculptural concepts a little bit, changing slowly, moving into something that I haven't done, color-wise. Forms are pretty much the same, but they're always different. If you look at the series of work, they have a general context, but they're all different. And I will let the work situation or the – develop as that – as I find it.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, are there any – speaking just about technical considerations, are there any advances that you're aware of or anything on the horizon that could possibly be incorporated into your methods, into your process, where you feel that they could aid and abet your expressive –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Mm-hmm. Well, I have wanted to do some things. There – I have had some other ideas, but it has to do with either fusing the glass or melting the glass into more solid forms, and although I several years ago tried to start that, I never got very far with it. And I guess I could – there are opportunities to change, but change is always painful. It's always slow, as far as I can see.

And my life has just been kind of one of chance, in many respects. Getting into glass, using glass, has been a

chance. It was by chance that I went to the University of Wisconsin. It was by chance my first class was in ceramics and that Harvey Littleton was just organizing the students to blow glass. It was by chance that that job became available at the University of California my last year as I graduated from school, and then I moved to California. It was that chance of - I didn't look very hard for a job; well, there weren't any jobs at that time. And that - my chance - being a young professor at the university, opened me up, opened my eyes up to a lot of things. It was - it's a chance that I had great opportunities to travel. I began by making those opportunities a little bit, but then I started being invited to a number of places. And that - I feel that's somewhat chance, too, that I didn't plan these events. Being involved with the Glass Arts Society and all the glass - the studio glass movement is all part of that chance, too.

So I think that's - I sort of wait to see what's going to happen next and how I can use it. It's again that challenge to see if, under what circumstance I find myself in, I can use it to create my work, to make my work, to find something new, or to use something old, whichever it may be. I'm not upset if it turns - it's not so greatly new; I'm just looking for something that I feel is good, that has some quality to it. I don't know if that's too strange or too vague?

MR. KARLSTROM: Too vague?

MR. LIPOFSKY: - too vague. [Laughs.]

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it seems to me that you took very good - made good use of the opportunities, the chance, the opportunities that presented themselves. And that finally, one can describe one's career as lucky, and I have colleagues - and to a certain extent, I feel that way myself about my job, that I have just - I have been lucky, in the right place at the right time. I had a job that there were only like three others exactly like it in the country, and then for maybe ten years there was only one job: I had it, and it suited me perfectly. So one can say that's luck. But you know, turning that back to you, you can say chance and opportunity, but I think the - always that the main thing is the use that you can make of those opportunities.

And I suspect - maybe for my last question would be, how would you characterize your career in that respect? What really came to matter to you? You had - you became very proficient at it. You were a pioneer in studio glass and all these things; everybody knows that, and we have talked about it. But what really came to matter, and maybe in a bigger sense, in relationship to your endeavor, to your vocation, your career?

MR. LIPOFSKY: Ah, wow. Sharing. My teaching philosophy was sharing, in some respects. I wanted to share, so I wanted to learn certain things. I didn't know what, but I wanted to share my experiences with other people. That has to do with teaching. I like to lecture, like to talk, showing the slides of the places I have been and what I have seen, and I like to share that with others and share with students or people who are interested. Maybe by what I have done, it will help someone else seek something out or look at something in a new light. And that's primarily what I have been. Now, it doesn't look like I'm this huge generous person, kind of - but I have always shared with people. I don't know learning to inspire - that was kind of more important to me than the lesson plans.

I have never been very good at lesson plans and business - [laughs] - making a business plan; I don't even know what it is, planning out your life. Goals, that was one of the problems: whenever they asked me what my goals were, I never had an answer. I don't know. I have no idea. I don't have any goals. I think the biggest goal is just to get up the next morning and be able to do something. I mean, that's great - having an opportunity to kind of do something. So I have never had - I have never thought of my life or thought of anything as far as goals.

MR. KARLSTROM: Or strategy.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Strategy - nah, it's just as it comes up, you deal with it. Of course, I have always thought, and I used to tell the students that you can't just go live in the forest and expect people to know you; you have got to come out of the forest so someone can see you - [laughs] - if you want to be an artist and - people have to know you. They have to know your work. It has to be able to be seen or something, so you can't kind of hide. So there has to be something public about what you do, and that's important. Well, sort of -

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it sounds to me like the final thing I would be looking for, I suppose, is - or interested in is how you feel about - what is it like for you to be able to look at a career retrospectively? It isn't over, although you had a retrospective exhibition; as a matter of fact, it's on now at Oakland. It's how we started out this interview, by talking about that. But looking back over this career and without knowing what you were getting into, it seems to me, by taking advantage of the opportunities and all of the chance, you basically helped - were involved in creating and bringing to, I would say, a higher professional level, if you will - creating a field within the crafts movement: studio glass. And that must give you, I would think, a certain satisfaction. Very few of us can say that about what we do to be in there almost at the beginning or at the beginning, and then help guide the growth of a field that then became quite important.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Well, I never thought about it. I never really looked back. I look back in some respects when I talk

to people or tell stories or give a lecture, but I know – I don't – [laughs] – don't on my own think back very much about what we do. Now the problem is trying to remember – [laughs] – those things that happened and trying to put them in context or date them, that they are important or they do have some relationship.

It's again this idea of sharing things with other people. And indirectly, I know that I have helped create a movement, but it wasn't a conscious thing, and I think Harvey consciously thought what he was trying to do to promote glass. I don't think I had that kind of motivation – because I think he's very aware of what he did and how he did it and to do it. And I just did it, and what the consequences were, were whatever.

MR. KARLSTROM: Yeah.

MR. LIPOFSKY: And I also was interested in maintaining it, that – to keep the teaching, to keep the program, to keep the things going, to keep my work going. I mean, there was times when I could have just said, nah, I don't want to do anything anymore, and not do it, but I always look for that – opportunities to keep going. I have made a lot of work. It was very interesting.

I don't know if I mentioned this before. This woman – I was sitting at the museum on Sunday. I had taken some – a person down to look at the show, and I was waiting out in front of the museum, sitting on the cement there. And an older woman came along and sat down next to me, asked, "Can I sit here?" And I said, "Of course." And she said, oh, she loved the exhibit. She, I guess, recognized me from the photos and said, "I really loved the exhibit." She said, "I really liked your work." She said, "And I'm from Seattle." And I said, "Oh."

MR. KARLSTROM: Ooh!

MR. LIPOFSKY: And she said, "Yes." She said, "Yes, and I never liked Chihuly's work."

MR. KARLSTROM: [Laughs.]

MR. LIPOFSKY: But then she took – which – this happened on occasion, and so I have just – some do, some don't. And then she said, "Don't you ever sell your work?" I said, yeah; "Yes, I sell my work." She says, "Well, the exhibit – it's all in the collection of the artist." Well, I said, "Well, there are a few pieces from people's collections that we have," I mean – and she says, "Yeah, but most of it is from collection of the artist." And I said, "Well, yeah, I don't sell everything." And she said, "Well, you should sell your work – [laughs] – you should sell more." Well, I said, "Well, you know, the museum didn't have that much money to bring work in. They had a small budget and we brought a few important pieces in." And she said – but – [laughs] – then she looked at that and said it looked like I never sell anything. But I do have a lot of my own work, and I don't sell everything I have made. And some of the pieces are better than others, and some relate to different people.

I have noticed that people wait a long time. Several people have told me how long they have waited to buy them. They have looked at my work for a number of years and have never found the right piece of my work that they related to. And that's sometimes been six, seven years that people say, we have been looking at your work, and now we have found something we like, and we're going to purchase it. So that has a lot to do with – I haven't had many sellout shows. When I have shown it with the Habatat Gallery, Leo Kaplan Modern, with the Holsten Gallery at SOFA New York, I have done quite well. But I also had a good body of work, and the work was good, and the gallery is good, and the venue is very good. The New York exhibit the people who come to New York are serious people, as well as the SOFA in Chicago, but more so in New York, that I have done very well with my work there.

But selling has never been the main concern of mine. It's nice to sell. You need to make a little bit of money, but the most important thing is just making the work, for me. And I thought if I sold my work, then I must be doing something wrong because people – it's too easy for people to accept it, and that if people weren't buying my work, then maybe I was doing something right, that the pieces were not that acceptable because in the – people like glass for various reasons, and – never really sold many of the *California Loops*.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, I'm glad you got over that.

MR. LIPOFSKY: [Laughs.]

MR. KARLSTROM: I mean, that would be pretty selfish. That's – you say what you do about sharing. That wouldn't be very –

MR. LIPOFSKY: Yeah. Well, even though the people who wrote essays were – thought that they were quite important. Now some major museums do have some of those pieces, in Australia and in – the Corning Museum has a loop – has one of those pieces, but not too many – something in Germany.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, it's a wonderful show, and like many artists, you seem to have made wise choices, I

think, about what you kept out.

Anyway, I feel that we did a really successful interview.

MR. LIPOFSKY: Good. It was good. Thank you so much, Paul.

MR. KARLSTROM: Well, thank you.

MR. LIPOFSKY: It was a great session. And it was hard, but it was a great session.

MR. KARLSTROM: It's always hard work. But anyway, you can - we can all look forward to it appearing on the Internet before too long. All right. Thank you, Marvin.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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