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Oral history interview with Michael John
Jerry, 2004 November 15-16

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Michael John Jerry on November 15 and 16, 2004. The interview took place at the artist's home and studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and was conducted by Jan Yager 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.

Michael John Jerry and Jan Yager have 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

YAGER: This is Jan Yager interviewing Michael John Jerry in the artist's home and studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on Monday, November 15, 2004, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number one, session number one.

Michael, could you tell me when and where you were born?

MICHAEL JOHN JERRY: I was born August 18, 1937, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Even though my parents did not live in Grand Rapids, that was my mother's home, and she went home to have the baby. At that point, the family was living in Detroit, Michigan. That's where my father's offices were.

MS. YAGER: Tell me your father's name and when and where you think he was born.

MR. JERRY: Where and when? He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as far as I know, and his birth date, I'm not sure about. He would be 87 or so now-somewhere around 1900-1908, 1909.

MS. YAGER: Actually, I do have that. He was born 1904.

MR. JERRY: Nineteen oh-four, okay. All right.

MS. YAGER: Woodville, Wisconsin.

MR. JERRY: Woodville? Okay-[laughs]-Woodville is a little tiny village in northwestern Wisconsin, I believe.

MS. YAGER: And tell me your mother's name and where and-

MR. JERRY: Cherry Barr-maiden name-and my mother, I'm not sure about her birthplace. I'm not exactly sure about date either, but her childhood was spent out here in Denver, Colorado. Her parents were involved in ranching, outside Denver, and that, until Depression time-until probably 1929, 1930. The family businesses, many of them went bust, and her parents and her brother and sister and she moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

MS. YAGER: How did they choose Grand Rapids?

MR. JERRY: I'm not certain. I think there was another family business in Grand Rapids that was still healthy, and I think the men who were involved in the ranching side of the family came to Grand Rapids to work for one of the relatives, who was in the brick business. And that was a very, very large-there were many streets in Grand Rapids that are paved with Barr Bricks. There are-probably half the public schools that are still standing in Grand Rapids are constructed with Barr Bricks. And they were able to ride through the Depression on the strength of that particular business. They lived well, even during Depression times. They lived pretty well. So somehow they got through it all.

MS. YAGER: How did the Depression affect your father's family?

MR. JERRY: Oh! Big time. I would say, it probably has a lot-it ricocheted down into my generation, and maybe even further. I hope not. Well, my father-his father was a machinist and his mother was an elementary school teacher-in those days, being a school teacher meant two years of state normal college, and she could-and I don't know how long she taught, but he died before I was aware of him at all. So I don't know-my father's father died-well, he was a teen I think-of pneumonia. But the Depression-because of his father's foresight, his father kept all his money under the bed through the Depression and was able to buy homes, and bought, at one point, probably two city blocks of one neighborhood in Milwaukee during the Depression-buying homes for \$500, \$600 apiece. So when he died, he left a great deal of property. Unfortunately his wife didn't manage it very well, and it all ended up in pretty poor condition. And by the time she died, there wasn't much left of it.

Yeah, I think my-I'm trying to think-my father's attitude about money was a result of Depression times, and it's not an unusual story. If he were living now, he'd be mortified-[laughs]-at the idea of credit cards. Credit was not something-you either paid cash or you didn't do it. He was always-in his career, always extremely careful about money. He would call it a good year if he gave the state back money. Instead of running a deficit like we all do so we get more next year, he'd run it-he'd go with X thousand back to the city or wherever he was working, and of course, that-he was a workaholic, too, so he worked very, very hard. And that's-all of that ricochets into my-positively and negatively, and I have some of those traits-[laughs].

MS. YAGER: Tell me-both of your parents were artists. Can you tell me a little bit about your father's-he was a painter-

MR. JERRY: Okay, the best I can. My father-his parents lived in a section of Milwaukee where English was not spoken-very, very little, even in the public school. German, and something called *Plä Deutsch* [sp], was the language spoken. So when he emerged from school-public school-he was pretty much unable to deal with the outside world.

MS. YAGER: Did he speak German and this *Plä Deutsch* as well?

MR. JERRY: Yes, oh, yes, for sure. And one of his hardest times was restructuring his whole language, which he did as a young man. So as he headed towards arts school, he realized pretty quickly that he wasn't going to go anywhere unless he redid his whole language structure. So I don't know exactly how he did that-whether he went to-he must have gone to school, because-of some sort-because he would recite-when I was a kid, he would recite grammar stuff to me. He had all of that drilled into him, and he spoke the German version of English, which is what *Plä Deutsch* was. It was the worst of German slang and American slang. And it was just awful. There was no sign of it left. He worked very hard, and he wrote well. He-and I don't know how long that took-probably several years for him to eradicate that part of his background.

He went to an art school that was part of the Milwaukee Art Institute [Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design], and it was a typical museum school, from what I can imagine, like Chicago Art Institute, like Boston Museum School [School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston]. All-much of art was being taught in museum schools at that time.

MS. YAGER: What was the name? Was it-

MR. JERRY: I think it was called the Milwaukee Art Institute, which became eventually-that educational arm of the Institute became the Layton Art School [Layton School of Art; closed in 1974], which now is no longer. And then, in those days, there were certificates that you had attended, and that was it. All this degree stuff came after World War II. And then at some point-I don't know about dates, but he did go to New York and spent time at Art Students League [New York, NY] and was a student of Thomas Hart Benton-

MS. YAGER: I also have-

MR. JERRY: -who he, you know, later in his life, went to see on occasion, before Benton died.

My mother went to art school in Washington, and I don't recall the name of the school. Now, it might have been-might have been, like, the Corcoran [Corcoran College of Art & Design, Washington, DC]. I'm not certain about that.

MS. YAGER: There's the Maryland Institute [Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore] down there.

MR. JERRY: Maryland Institute, okay, well, that's true. I'm not really certain; I'm very fuzzy on that. But she, from what I could tell, was involved mostly in the commercial side of the art world, and her early jobs had to do with advertising of the day, whatever that meant-fixing up photographs, you know, whatever they used people for. But that was very short-lived.

When she went home after art school, went back to Michigan, where she of course, eventually met my father-because he was involved in the WPA project at the time-she had also gotten very involved in-let's see, how can I say this-theater, via marionettes, puppets, and she was a major player. I think she was maybe even president of the Puppeteers of America at some point. I'm not certain about that, but certainly in the region she was very involved with that. So we had a lot of friends when I was a kid who were really puppeteers-serious puppets, serious plays, as well as children's plays. And then of course, film came along and pretty much knocked that out.

And then, from there, as I was growing up, both of my parents became teachers.

MS. YAGER: Before we get to that-

MR. JERRY: Before we get there-all right-

MS. YAGER:-I wanted to ask you a little bit-now, your mother was the Western Michigan supervisor for the Index of American Design.

MR. JERRY: Oh! Well, that's-that's helpful. [Laughs.] Well, that's probably where she met my father then.

MS. YAGER: Right, and your father was the director of the Works Progress Administration for the state of Michigan.

MR. JERRY: Right-that's right.

MS. YAGER: And it says here, "Unemployed people of all abilities were paid to use their skills to benefit society. President Roosevelt-this was the first relief art program in the United States, and it became a vital part of the democratic process."

MR. JERRY: Right.

MS. YAGER: And I had read that your father was very interested in social causes, and-

[Telephone rings, audio break.]

This is disc one, track number two.

Michael, we were talking about your father, Sylvester Jerry, and his attitudes-he was involved with the WPA and had a strong interest in social causes.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Yeah, so it fit him well. [Laughs.] Part of my father's work life as a young man had to do with-he worked for the auto industry for a while. Milwaukee was a major blue collar town that produced-they didn't produce a single automobile, but they produced tons of parts for various automotive-particularly the Nash plant down in Kenosha, Wisconsin. So he was involved with that, but he also was a strike breaker, and I'm not just sure where, but he talked about going into plants with armed guards and things like that.

MS. YAGER: What sort of work did he do? I mean, his training was as an artist, so what did he do?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, he just sold his skills-well, manual skills. I think he put lead on seams of cars as they went by on the assembly line. Yeah.

But I know, later-later on when-I'm talking about the socialist thing-when he took the job as director for the museum in Racine [Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts], there was some opposition to his appointment, and it got quite nasty. There was another individual who thought that he should have the job, and they did some detective work and found that my father had been in the Soviet Union for a period of time as a cultural-in a cultural exchange program before the war broke out. They put what they thought were the dots together and declared, actually in the *Milwaukee Journal*, in an article saying that he was-you know, he was a communist and he should not be allowed to dah-dah-dah-dah-dah. Well, that all blew over, and of course, he went on to have a career in Wisconsin without any problem. But he was a socialist-[laughs]-no doubt about it. So the WPA was right on.

MS. YAGER: And your mother's role with the Index of American Design?

MR. JERRY: I have no idea about that. She never spoke of it-not a whisper, as far as I know.

MS. YAGER: This would have been before you were born really.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. And that-that Index of American Design might have very well been a WPA project in itself.

MS. YAGER: Yes, it was.

MR. JERRY: They were doing renderings, and they were recording and doing all kinds of stuff. That's interesting; I learned something. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Now, he was-I also read that he was head of the Kalamazoo Art Institute.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, for a very short period of time. That must have been when the project-when WPA shut down, and it didn't shut down at the same moment in every state, but at the time it was over in Michigan, the time between his work for the government and his time that he took-the time that he took the job in Racine-there was this period of time when he did that, and he got started in the museum business, but he also traveled. He was part of the exchange program I mentioned before, and so he had been well traveled. In fact, he was in Berlin when they burned the Reichstag down. They just got out-that group. They headed for the train in the middle of

the night and got out of that country. So he talked-he didn't talk very much about any of that, but that was-that was part of his connection with history there. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Now, then he was invited to be the first director of the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine, Wisconsin. That was-I have down 1941.

MR. JERRY: Nineteen forty-one?

MS. YAGER: Does that make sense?

MR. JERRY: Well, I would have said it would have been a little earlier, but I'm not absolutely certain, and that's close enough, and that-of course, that museum didn't exist. It was on paper as part of a will that the last remnants of the Wustum family willed this physical plant to-which was a home-willed it to the city as a fine arts museum. And lo and behold, I don't think they had what happened in mind. They had traveled-they were farmers, and they had traveled a little bit, and they collected all this weird stuff like armadillo baskets and Indian beaded this and that and-

MS. YAGER: This was the Wustum you said?

MR. JERRY: This was at the Wustum, and a lot of it was still there. And I think they had it in mind that it was going to be that kind of a museum, you know-a natural history museum, but the way it was stated in the will-legally, it didn't direct that. It said fine arts, and fortunately there were people in Racine at the time who helped define what fine arts meant.

It took, I'm sure, a turn that wasn't intended, but it served the city well, and they have their own historical museum downtown, and they didn't really-and the collection that the family had was not worth showing, so you know-but the building-it was a house. It was filled with furniture. It's like people had just walked out, and the whole building of the museum, the gutting of the interior was all-a lot of it was done with Wisconsin WPA labor. All the furniture, the carpeting, any kind of furnishings were done by WPA project people for the state of Wisconsin. And he hired some former WPA people that he had met in Michigan to come in and do the design work for the interior and for signage and all the rest of it that happened to that building. It was a major do, and I don't know when it opened. Do you have anything there? Does it say?

MS. YAGER: Well, I think 1941, but I can check on that.

MR. JERRY: Oh, it opened in '41. Okay, so what I'm just talking about probably started in 1938, 1939, because there were-there must have been at least a year or two of dealing with this-this structure which wasn't designed as a museum.

MS. YAGER: This is sort of a big, Victorian farmhouse with large rooms.

MR. JERRY: Yes, yes, that's right, with a cupola on the top and the whole thing.

MS. YAGER: -and very commodious rooms and, you know, wonderful front porches, and then it's on 13 acres of land.

MR. JERRY: Yes, yes. That's right. And the land-in the will the land said "park." The word "park" was part of the will, and so my father hired a park designer and made a master plan. And as money was available, they created that-all those gardens on the one side of the building, which now has been diminished some from the time my father was there, so-because of finances, politics, whatever-it covers the same amount of land, but there's less of it, so it's a little lower in maintenance than it was.

MS. YAGER: So it was open seven days a week, free of charge-nurturing and creative atmosphere, and you and your siblings lived upstairs.

MR. JERRY: Well, we lived-

MS. YAGER: Or toward the back?

MR. JERRY: We lived in-I don't know what the structure was originally, but we lived in a small house that was attached to that building, which must have been-just thinking, must have been help for the house, where those people lived. Yeah, it was pretty small! [Laughs.] There were three of us, my brother and I and my sister, and of course, my mother and father, so there were five of us living in-boy, I don't think there was a thousand square feet there. It was a tiny place, and it was Bruce [Pepich]'s office for a while. The living room was his office, last time I was there. I'm sure that's all changed by now. My bedroom is a library. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: He has a beautiful office in the new museum [Racine Art Museum] now.

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Oh, I'll bet he does. I bet he does.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, with wonderful windows and views.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, probably one of the curators has the office that he had out on the site-out on the older site.

So it was years of planning, and my father was, sort of, you know, a major cultural guru in Racine. They did concerts, they did film programs, they did all sorts of stuff.

MS. YAGER: And so it expressed the ideals of the WPA.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I would say. A lot of classes, a lot of-you know, he developed an art school there, and mostly for people in the community, both young people and older people; employed a lot of the local artists, many of them who were illustrators-that's how they made their living-and who were really serious painters. There were probably a dozen of them that taught painting and drawing and printmaking. And then, of course, he taught-he and my mother both taught for the University of Wisconsin extension service in Racine, too, off and on. My father taught painting. My mother got involved in enameling and metalwork-hence, my direction. There was a studio there for-in the lower levels of the older museum structure, there was a ceramic studio, and next to that was another studio that was used for enameling and for some very light metal work.

MS. YAGER: So what was it like to have two parents as artists and live in an art center? It obviously rubbed off.

MR. JERRY: Well, it was pretty hectic and there-the things that I remember as a kid were-there was no privacy in our lives because we were in the public face all the time. And my father being a money manager, there was only one phone. The phone for the museum was the phone for the house. So when the phone rang, it could be anything: somebody asking for, you know, restoration of some crazy thing or-so we were in the business all of the time. My father, because he was open seven days of the week, most of that-all of that time got covered by him. There was no front desk person during all of those years. He was the person in the gallery greeting people as they came and left, and closed up in the afternoon. Then he would do office work at night, and we didn't see a whole lot of him, though he physically was there somewhere. Plus this huge piece of park land that had to be maintained. There was a crew for that, but he did-you know, he did get involved with it. At one time, Jackson Perkins [Jackson & Perkins] had major experimental rose beds in that park, and he maintained it.

MS. YAGER: Jackson Perkins.

MR. JERRY: Jackson Perkins was a major rose grower-big, big time.

MS. YAGER: There were lots of rose bushes in the flower gardens when I was there.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, but there were like twice or three times that much when my father was there, and they were a major pain in the butt. Roses are not easy. Oh, my Lord, they are like kids.

MS. YAGER: High maintenance, yes. Yeah, a lot of diseases and such.

MR. JERRY: Oh. Oh, God, endless. So that, plus running an art school, which he did pretty much single-handedly, except that he did have his staff. So I as a kid got to know all the local artists. They were there all the time, and if they weren't there teaching, they were at the dinner table. A lot of them, especially the younger ones like Jim Hoffman here-these people were not making very much money at the time, so they were around a lot-Frank Ruzicka, who later became head of Parsons School of Design [New York, NY]. Frank was on his knees weeding next to me because we both worked for the city, and in the summertime particularly, that was my summer job: working for the city, maintaining that park-along with whoever else was around it and needed some money. My father would hire them. All of them were artists of one sort or another. So that, I guess, goes back to his WPA thing.

In fact, rarely, when I think back on the crew that was there during my growing up-with maybe only one exception-they were all either painters or potters or school-you know, public art teachers or whatever. So I got to know that whole community of artists, and on Sunday, we would go-my father and I-my mother must have said, "Take Michael and get out of here for a while"-so his idea of fun was going to visit another artist. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Now tell me the names of your siblings.

MR. JERRY: My brother, Christopher, and my sister, Sylvia. My brother still lives in Racine and has a family-a grandfather now-worked for the city for almost all of his work life; completely non-involved in the art world. Same thing with my sister. My sister, although, probably had a little bit more creative bent to her than my brother did, got involved in social services and was-I don't know what her title is now, but probably Director of Resettlement for people in Indianapolis and Indiana.

MS. YAGER: And where were you in the ranking? Like, which of you was first?

MR. JERRY: Oh, I'm the oldest.

MS. YAGER: You're the oldest?

MR. JERRY: I'm the oldest and I'm-

MS. YAGER: And you were born when?

MR. JERRY: I was born August 18, 1937. My sister-my brother came along four years later-four and a half years later, and then my sister, 11 and a half years later. So by the time I was headed towards college, my sister was still a young person. As a consequence, we're not very close. On the other hand, my brother and I are pretty close.

MS. YAGER: Now tell me a little-like, can you remember the very first experience you had with metal or anything like that?

MR. JERRY: Well, let me-you were asking about the benefits a minute ago, about being in that kind of environment, which was extremely unusual.

MS. YAGER: Pretty industrial strength.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, right. It was hard not to notice what was going on. Which included the lifestyle of all these people, too. These are not people that made a great deal of money, even those of them that were illustrators. It was-you know, I grew up knowing that being an artist, was-[laughs]-certainly not going to be financially rewarding. That was pretty well ingrained in me early on, you know. I could see it all around me. But people seemed to be happy with what they were doing, and that was enough for me. But I knew pretty well what I was getting into, at least at that point in history.

My first art experiences were not really in the public schools. Of course, as a young teen, I was-I went to life drawing classes once a week, because it was being taught right-30 feet from my bedroom. [Laughs.] So, I-for some reason, I got involved in the drawing thing.

MS. YAGER: Thirty feet might be an exaggeration. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Actually you're probably about right. So I did that as a teen, and then, at the same time, I was involved in music pretty heavily as a teenager. I was a saxophone player and played in orchestra, dance band of the era. I thought for a while that I would head that way, and then I was also heavily involved with mechanical drawing, as it was taught in industrial arts programs and public schools at the time.

I thought for a while that I would head towards architecture, because I had a tremendous amount of drawing experience at that point and was hireable. I actually hired myself out as a draftsman for the Case Tractor Works in Racine.

Racine was a major producer of farm equipment, and Case was one of the biggest ones that survived. So I did that-I did that for a couple of summers, and so I had a lot of that kind of drawing experience, which of course now has all been replaced by computer.

So the life drawing was the beginning of it-you know, formal classes, and then my mother's involvement with enamel and enameling led to metal, of course, and very minor, very, very minimal-she was not a metalworking person. She was a two-dimensional person-lots of enameling, lots of tile. There's a big sculptural piece outside the building of a Saint Francis there that she did. And a lot of fiber-she did a lot of fiber, and the Johnson Wax Home at Wingspread [Racine, WI] had some major fiber pieces of hers.

The metalwork, probably, came about mostly in the high school program. There was a high school teacher whose name was Bill Francis, and he had had, I think, a course or two at the University of Wisconsin in his preparation for teaching. There was some encouragement there to do some metalwork, and I guess I had an interest in it. So between the school and the studio at the museum, I started to make some pieces, some simple pieces. That eventually led to a portfolio that I submitted to the scholastic art awards system.

MS. YAGER: Before we get to that part-I want to get back to that-go back a little earlier in your childhood, and name a favorite toy or a favorite game.

MR. JERRY: Didn't like games; still don't. I'm not a game person; I wouldn't know one card from another-didn't care for games at all. My-to entertain myself, I did a lot of writing, which is very strange because I don't handle the language very well, never did. I was a borderline dyslexic. I had a lot of trouble with reading and writing as a

kid, but I used to write stories, just for myself, not to show anybody. I could while away hours writing stories, and none of it is reserved or saved.

MS. YAGER: Do you remember any of the themes?

MR. JERRY: Not at all. [Laughs.] Not at all. And I suppose I made things, too. Young boys at that time-there were a lot of models, a lot of activity making models, and I probably-

MS. YAGER: Models of-

MR. JERRY: -of airplanes, cars, trucks, whatever. And then I got into the model railroading thing. And I would do-oh, gosh, what would you call them-train layouts and all of that stuff having to do with model railroading with the-

MS. YAGER: With the landscaping and-

MR. JERRY: -landscapes and buildings and some of the electronics of it, and it got pretty big. And then I discovered girls, and then I sold all of that stuff and got into cars. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: What kind of cars?

MR. JERRY: What kind? Oh, Lord. Between my brother and I-we, yeah-I'm still involved with it. I've got two cars just sitting down-the one you saw, which just came from New York, and then I've got another one in storage. I'm still playing.

MS. YAGER: What was your first car?

MR. JERRY: Oh, Jesus-a 1937 Desoto, I think, which never even got on the road it was in such bad condition. So by the time-I had that before I had a license, and it was unrepairable [*sic*], as it turned out, so that went to the junkyard.

The first thing I had on the road was probably a 1941 Ford. My father, because of his upbringing, didn't believe young people needed a car and wouldn't let me drive the family car, ever. He had all kinds of reasons.

MS. YAGER: What was the family car?

MR. JERRY: Family car was always a wood station wagon. Well, it started out with a 1939 Ford Sedan, which he used to travel the state of Michigan in with his job with WPA, but after that it was always-we always had station wagons-until later in his life, of course, and they didn't need that kind of space. But for hauling paintings and all of that, that was the vehicle. There were no SUVs, like there are now.

So I spent many happy times sitting in the back of a station wagon on trips. And my father would, of course, sand and refinish the wood-[laughs]-and all the maintenance-those things were high maintenance. So, I was, in terms of transportation as a teen, like a lot of teens. I wanted my own vehicle, and I-there was no way I was going to drive the family car, so I would get summer jobs. And I went through 10, 15 cars before I went away to college. My brother, too. Between the two of us, it was amazing.

MS. YAGER: How could you go through so many? What would have happened to them?

MR. JERRY: Well, you know, it's like anything else-if you buy one old car and you fix it up, and then there's always a better one, and then the peer pressure to own something better, more powerful, more this and that.

MS. YAGER: So it wasn't that you were crashing them.

MR. JERRY: Oh, no, no, no. Not at all. You know, sometimes it was easier to buy something new than to fix up the old, because it was in such bad condition.

MS. YAGER: So what are the two cars that you have right now?

MR. JERRY: I have a 1971 MG GT car, and then I have a 1961 TR3 Triumph-both British. I got caught up in British cars when I was a young teacher. I had-my day-to-day car was a Jaguar, and I just fell into that. It wasn't anything that I-and I did Jaguar cars all the way through my teaching. I had one, two, three, four-yeah, I think I had four of them all together. In Syracuse, I had-yeah, I had three different ones in Syracuse. So that's sort of-and my interest in cars had to do with-more with the visual side of it. Mechanics I pretty much left to others, although I got more involved with it later, but mostly in the metal.

MS. YAGER: The restoration of the skin of the car?

MR. JERRY: The restoration of the skin of the car, and that's what I have right now-that pile of stuff you went by coming in here. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Are there any pewter parts? [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Gosh, I wish. It'd be a whole lot easier than working with steel, but no.

MS. YAGER: Tell me-oh, another question. Were you a Boy Scout?

MR. JERRY: Ahh! Where did that come from? Yes, I was involved in scouting for a while, which was a very, very good experience due to the scout leader that I happened to come across when I was a kid. That's my first trip to New Mexico-was to come out here to the Philmont Ranch [Cimarron, NM], which is in north-in the northwestern part of the state, a huge ranch on the bottom part of the Rocky Mountains, and it's called Philmont. It still exists today, and kids and their leaders come from all over the country, where they spend anywhere from a week to a month traveling, hiking in the lower part of the Rockies with-not mules, but we had burros. So we traveled with burros.

But I had had an operation on my foot prior to that, so I wasn't able to walk the whole thing, so I got kind of transported around in trucks of one sort or another, until I was able to do some of the hiking.

MS. YAGER: What an amazing experience.

MR. JERRY: Oh, it was incredible. Yeah, it was absolutely-yeah, I mean, we carried everything on our backs and on the burros. So that was my scouting experience.

MS. YAGER: Now, the scouting-the reason I ask that is that it seems to come up in so many discussions where people had their first exposure to craft-

MR. JERRY: Oh, through scouting.

MS. YAGER: Through Boy scouting or Girl scouting-Camp Fire Girls and that-

MR. JERRY: By that time, I had so much other exposure, those crafty things that they used to do in scouting didn't interest me too much, at least at the level they had it. It was beading and making a bow and some arrows, a wallet-all pretty much kit stuff. Now the better camps have shops in them and so forth. That was not my experience with scouting. It was more outdoors and canoe trips and things like that than it was the craft side of it. My craft experience started with the museum, at the Wustum.

MS. YAGER: At the Wustum, yeah. And tell me the name of your elementary school.

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Elementary school-Lincoln Elementary School, which is now housing for elderly people. It's still there, and it's one of those projects where they went in and divided it all up for people who live in low-fairly low-income living, I would guess.

MS. YAGER: Do you remember a favorite class or a favorite teacher?

MR. JERRY: In elementary school? Well, school in general was-except for a little bit of junior high school-school was very difficult for me. School was not a wonderful experience. I always sat in the back of the room because I was unusually big for my age. So the only way they could work out those desks where the seat and the next desk were a unit was to put me in back, so that I could have a large seat. And that was my experience all the way through elementary school, which put me in the back, which was probably pretty good because I didn't get called on so much. Reading-I'm a very slow reader. I had lots of problems with reading, had outside tutoring when I was a kid to get me up to some kind of speed so I could carry on with the reading that I needed to do. When I got to junior high school, things changed a little bit because there was an industrial arts program.

MS. YAGER: What was the name of the junior high school?

MR. JERRY: Washington Junior High School.

MS. YAGER: And so tell me about the industrial arts program.

MR. JERRY: So the industrial arts thing came in, and in Wisconsin-unlike New York where all the craft areas were taught as part of industrial education, in Wisconsin it was more restrictive than that, so it was woodworking, some printing-weird, but-

MS. YAGER: Printing, like woodcuts-

MR. JERRY: Commercial printing, letterpress stuff. And I suppose Wisconsin has a history of papermaking, and so maybe that's why that was there. Then they had this drafting program, and that-I must have taken the first two or three courses there, and that has paid off big time for me all through my career. Being able to see dimensionally all the way around and-God, that paid off big. So I continued doing that in high school, but I did some woodworking, made these stupid little projects that I didn't even know what they were for, but it was the discipline of working with those materials that was-yeah, I had a good time.

MS. YAGER: So the junior high, it was-

MR. JERRY: Junior high was then-I'm trying to think-three grades, I think-seven, eight, nine, yeah, and-

[Audio break, tape change.]

-then high school. I went to high school, and it was Horlich High School, because Horlich Malted Milk was made in Racine. [Laughs.] It's now a Canadian company and not longer-I don't think Horlich is even-they made the milkshakes-all the Horlich mixers and all that stuff, so hence Horlich High School-one of several high schools in Racine, but that was on my side of the town.

MS. YAGER: Now, did you have shop classes in either or industrial-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, industrial education classes, yeah. I'm trying to think. I continued the drafting thing-took all the courses they had to offer and more, and I don't know how I got more, but somehow they worked it out so I could do more-kind of an independent study thing.

The other offerings were headed towards the trades. I think the industrial education, particularly at the high school level, had-they had the hope that they were preparing some young people for various trades. So in wood it got to be, like, building construction, printing, electrical work, things like that, and that did not particularly interest me. Now, I don't know why. It may be that my parents wanted to see me on an academic track to get ready for entry into college, and so I don't know what interference there was there. And then I was involved in a music program in high school, too. So and that-I was involved in a marching band outside of the high school for a number of years, a dance band, which took up some weekends, plus music lessons, and you know, that was pretty absorbing.

I was not a sports person, so I wasn't involved in football or basketball or any of that. And, of course, the marching bands had a lot to do-the high school marching band-so I was always at the football things doing that. There was another street band performance kind of thing that I was involved with, and that was outside the high school. So I met a lot of the young people who were headed towards serious music during that time, and then I don't know what happened. I guess I felt I just wasn't motivated enough to head towards music as a serious pursuit.

MS. YAGER: Do you remember any particular teachers that stood out?

MR. JERRY: Well, in high school, this person that I mentioned a minute ago, Bill Francis, probably was the most influential person at that moment, and I think Bill did some teaching for my father, too, because anybody involved in the arts was connected to the museum. It was a straight line, whether you were a high school teacher or an illustrator or whatever. They all found their way and were friends with my parents. And Bill was certainly one of those, but he was also a high school art teacher at the time.

Bill went on-I think he got a-finally got himself a Ph.D. in Education and ended up at University of Texas in Lubbock. And he's probably retired at this point. I had no connection with him after I left high school. But he did-he was very helpful in getting a portfolio together for these Gold Key Awards, and I only entered it once, and I got nine or 12 gold keys, and my portfolio went on to a national thing, and my first year of college was paid for by Scholastic Art Awards.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, I thought that was very exciting-

MR. JERRY: And then, of course, later on I became a judge for it, too-[laughs]-which was really nice. That was a real treat. That happened in Syracuse.

MS. YAGER: The Scholastic Art Awards, they're still going on right now, aren't they? I believe they are.

MR. JERRY: I've sort of lost touch with them. Each state has-had a program, and-I think each state did. And there was a sponsor. Usually it was one of the big stores or something that had space to manage all that, and, of course, the high school art teachers were involved in it heavily.

MS. YAGER: Do you remember what you entered in the competition?

MR. JERRY: Probably, best guess, maybe half a dozen pieces of jewelry, a piece of hollowware-

MS. YAGER: This is high school, so you were doing jewelry at this point?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, mm-hmm, oh, yeah. And, let's see, some drawing, some figure drawing, some block printing on fabric. That's about as much as I can remember.

MS. YAGER: What would the jewelry have looked like?

MR. JERRY: Hmm. I know there was a fish. [Laughs.] Everybody did fish, abstract fish of one sort or another, and, in fact, I may still have it here.

MS. YAGER: Would this have been wire or sheet?

MR. JERRY: Wire, sheet, and wood.

MS. YAGER: And wood? What kind of wood?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, whatever was around-probably some walnut, a pair of cufflinks with some silver wire embedded in it. It sat like a stone on a silver background with some prongs that came up alongside it. The fish had a piece of-I had access to lapidary stuff, so it had a piece of tiger's eye running down through the middle of it. The hollowware piece was very basic-was a conical form, like a chalice almost, with a simple cup shape on the top of it.

MS. YAGER: So you were doing hollowware in high school, too?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, well, again because this art teacher, Bill Francis, had had a little bit of-he had worked with, probably, Arthur Vierthaler at the University of Wisconsin, because Fred [Fenster] wasn't there yet. And Arthur had-I don't know what his whole background was, but had some hollowware experience and passed it on to his students, and it got passed on to me.

MS. YAGER: I had read somewhere that Wisconsin required metal experience in the public schools.

MR. JERRY: Oh, in the public schools? Might have.

MS. YAGER: And I think it's unusual.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I would say. I don't know where that would have-

MS. YAGER: I've always been kind of interested in how many metalsmiths have come out of the Midwest.

MR. JERRY: Right. Well, there's another thing going on in Milwaukee, and I never quite-I was never part of it because I was long gone by then, but there were several silversmiths with long careers in Milwaukee, mostly liturgical stuff-and I'll come up with a name in a minute, but there were a number of people there. In fact, there's a book out there by one of them, now who's probably deceased, but they came out of industrial ed programs. So I don't-there was no sign of it in any industrial ed program that I was connected with as a kid. But maybe-maybe it was seen as part of-there were schools of industrial education that-

MS. YAGER: There's one in Milwaukee at least-yeah.

MR. JERRY: There's a name for that.

MS. YAGER: I can look it up.

MR. JERRY: But anyhow, the idea was they were training people for trades, and I think metal and ceramics might have been part of that-

MS. YAGER: But there was the Milwaukee Handcrafts Project on the WPA sort of thing. There was an awful lot of-in fact, I think that Wisconsin was the model for the WPA program nationwide-

MR. JERRY: Oh, is that right? Something was always going on there.

MS. YAGER: And there were some strong leaders: Elsa Ulrich [sp] and-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, that sounds familiar. She was a good friend of my father's.

MS. YAGER: Oh, really?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, yeah. Well, and there was-well, we'll get into that later, but there was a woman at University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, which didn't exist then; it was the Layton School of Art, and then they've had this extension thing going on, and, of course, now the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee is huge. It's almost bigger than the main campus now-really big. And Layton dissolved. There was never any metal program at Layton that I know of. That dissolved-the faculty member created the new Milwaukee School of Design or whatever. I don't even know if it even exists anymore.

Yeah. I'm trying to think of some names. I got invited to show some work in a-I think it was an anniversary of the Milwaukee Metalworking Silversmiths or something or other, probably 15 years ago or so, and I went to the opening because my folks were alive then and my brother of course lives there, so it was a good opportunity to go. And I'm trying to think of some names. I don't-no, all my notes have to do with later, but there were some active silversmiths there, and I suspect they were part of this craft program.

MS. YAGER: I was interested-I wanted to talk a little bit about awards, too. The very earliest award you ever had, do you remember that?

MR. JERRY: Oh, my Lord. Well, the earliest recognition that I got was the Gold Key Awards when I went off to school. Nothing that I remember prior to that-

MS. YAGER: Did you get a literal gold key or was it a paper or-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I've got nine of them somewhere.

MS. YAGER: An actual key?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, it's a little tiny thing about like that, and of course-

MS. YAGER: Really? About a half-inch?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, about a half-inch long and it's a key. And I'm sure embedded in it somewhere it says Scholastic Art Awards. And those were given out for individual pieces that were submitted to the program. That happened in Milwaukee every year, and it was sponsored by one of the big department stores, I think.

MS. YAGER: I thought this was-it said that it paid for your first year of college.

MR. JERRY: Yes, it did.

MS. YAGER: That's a pretty astounding and sizeable award if you were to put it into-

MR. JERRY: Oh, in today's context, absolutely-absolutely.

MS. YAGER: I mean, that was a very major thing. MR. JERRY: But that was a national-that did not happen locally. You were able to submit individual pieces, which the majority of the students did. But then if you felt bold enough, you could submit a portfolio for regional judging, and then in Philadelphia, I think, there was a national gathering of these portfolios that had made it through the regional thing. And at that time, in a group of other people at a national level, that's when I got this thing.

MS. YAGER: Now was there-did it specify that you had to study art in college?

MR. JERRY: I don't think so, but I think the assumption was certainly-

MS. YAGER: Yeah, that you were so talented-

MR. JERRY: -that you were going to use this to further your art education. The certificate probably said something like that. And I'm not even sure that I had picked out a school at that point.

MS. YAGER: Your parents must have been quite proud of that.

MR. JERRY: I would have guessed so, because I certainly, on an academic basis, was not college material. I can tell you that now.

MS. YAGER: Well, you were a visual thinker.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. No, I was definitely left on SAT scores. [Laughs.] I wouldn't have gone very far, I'll tell you that.

MS. YAGER: I worry about those SAT scores things now, how many people it will keep out.

MR. JERRY: That's right. And it sorted itself out, and, of course, as time went by I learned to compensate for my inabilities to deal with the language, and that, of course, has changed over the years, and I was able to deal with it as much as I needed to.

MS. YAGER: Before we move on, there was also-I noticed-in the '60s, Wisconsin State Fair Arts and Crafts Division-

MR. JERRY: Well, you're right. That would be the next-when you talked about awards a minute ago, probably the next-nope, nope, earlier than that. While a student at the School for American Craftsmen in Rochester, New York, there was a regional-I'm trying to think-there was a regional art exhibition sponsored by the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester. And my first sojourn out into the exhibition world was in one of those exhibitions. I don't think-I didn't win a prize, but I certainly got included in the show as a student, which was pretty risky then, because as a student we were not allowed to show any work that we made in the school. They felt that the faculty had too much input and it wasn't fair to other people on the outside. So whatever I did in terms of exhibitions as a student, I did with work I made away from the school. And that's how I got away with it. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Now, how did you make a decision to go to Rochester?

MR. JERRY: Oh, go to Rochester?

MS. YAGER: This is Rochester Institute of Technology?

MR. JERRY: Institute of Technology, yeah. Well, at the time-we're talking about 1956-57-metal programs were far and few in between. They were mostly in museum schools like the Boston Museum School. There was a little bit going on off and on at the Chicago Art Institute. There were Rhode Island School of Design, maybe. There had been, in a major magazine at the time-I'm trying to think-*Collier's* probably-

MS. YAGER: *Saturday Evening Post*?

MR. JERRY: -or *Saturday Evening Post*-an article about the School for American Craftsmen. And my folks saw it and they said, "Gee, this looks like just the thing for Michael." And on the basis of that, I chose that school.

MS. YAGER: So did you drive out to go and see it, or just went?

MR. JERRY: No, no, no, no. I just went-got on a plane and went. Just got on a plane and went on the basis of that. I was thinking about the Chicago Art Institute, because, of course, it's regional, was a great school. I knew all these artists like Jim that had gone there. They had really good experience there, but there was no metal in the program. It was a big ceramics program. I met a lot of potters and ceramics people in the Midwest that had gone there, but the metal thing, I suspect, came and went, because a sculptor had had some experience with metal and did a little work, but there was no major-

MS. YAGER: So you had already narrowed down to metal, and this was just from high school experience with Mr. Francis-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, high school and that experience I had in my folks' place of business. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: For the enamel and-yeah.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, that's funny because I never touched enamel. I never got involved with enamel. It was so-handled at such an amateurish level I just couldn't ever deal with it. I never introduced it into the school. It was out of-it was just-which is silly because, you know, a lot of people went on and did beautiful and great things with enamel, but it just wasn't for me. So color got left out of my experience until now.

MS. YAGER: Now, did you know the metals people other than Mr. Francis when you were in high school through your parents?

MR. JERRY: The exposure that I got, which was very influential-my father had a small exhibition of John Paul Miller, and I remember it to this-

MS. YAGER: Where was this exhibition?

MR. JERRY: At the Wustum.

MS. YAGER: At the Wustum, of John Paul Miller-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, doing the granulation thing, and they were exquisite. I mean, there were the bugs and all the

animals and crabs and stuff that he was doing, and I thought, wow, incredible! And roughly, probably somewhere around the same time, I would go in and out of Chicago with my folks a lot. There would be an exhibition and everybody wanted to see, so we just got on a train and went down to Chicago for the day.

And the exhibition that really knocked me out was a major exhibition of Danish silversmithing sponsored by, I think, the Danish government or embassy or something or other. Major, major, major-hundreds of pieces from that period of 1945, maybe even earlier-maybe the Jensen pieces before the war, maybe. But all of that stuff that happened at Georg Jensen's and the smaller shops after that-and then, as it turned out, I ended up working with the person who made those things. I didn't design them but made them. That just-all that contemporary Jensen stuff just-

MS. YAGER: Was this at the Chicago Art Institute?

MR. JERRY: This was Chicago Art Institute.

MS. YAGER: And the John Paul Miller Show was at the Wustum.

MR. JERRY: At the Wustum. It was a little traveling show, and, of course, museum people love things that are already put together, you know, because financially it's a lot easier. And this was probably something that was traveling around and my father picked up on it.

MS. YAGER: He did have a show in Chicago. I remember him saying it was a very significant show that may have traveled.

MR. JERRY: Well, of course, when they're installing these shows, I played in the crates and, you know, I was there and the pieces were up there, not behind. So, yeah, sure, I got to see all that stuff firsthand. The Danish show just knocked me out. I remember it to this day, seeing that big fish platter-the big version, about like this, which Hans Christensen-

MS. YAGER: Which you're saying is like four feet long.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, they made different versions of it, you know, of the big one sitting in a case in the middle of the gallery. I can picture it still to this day. Then it turns out that Hans was the model maker at the time and had made the piece.

MS. YAGER: Wow. This is Hans Christensen, who you then studied with at Rochester.

MR. JERRY: Right, that I ended up-and probably a part of the decision to go to the School for American Craftsmen was that there were-all the faculty were either Danes or Norwegians or Germans, or whatever, and in fact, at that moment Hans was not a faculty member. I think it was Jack Prip.

MS. YAGER: Okay, yeah. John-

MR. JERRY: Jack, as he was known then, was teaching for two or three or four years there, and I missed him. I came in when Hans came to the school. It wasn't his first year; I think maybe it was his second year, because he couldn't speak English.

MR. YAGER: That's amazing they hired him.

MR. JERRY: And that led to a whole bunch of other stories. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Wow. So this-tell me about-this is great. Now, the Scandinavian show that just planted all those seeds-then you went to Rochester Institute of Technology, the School of American Craftsmen. So tell me about some-

MR. JERRY: Nineteen-that would be 1957, 1958. And the school at that time was in the downtown area of Rochester. The whole school of technology was down there, but it was in an old Victorian house, very much like the one I grew up in, almost exactly, with the cupola on the top and the whole nine yards. It had already been remodeled. There was a little gallery space and a lecture space downstairs, and then the studios-wood, ceramics, metal, and fiber-were in the other major rooms of what was an old house.

And at that time, the faculty-Hans was the steady member of the metal faculty. In other words, he was there when I came, and he was there when I left. The other half of the metal studio, that job changed many times. And as I learned out later, after I had left, a lot of that had to do with Hans's personality, which I had never had an inkling as a student. And now I can guess why that job changed.

But at any rate, in the metal studio at the time was Larry Copeland. And Larry's background I don't know too

much about. He was a graduate of Cranbrook [Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI] and probably at a time when the Cranbrook metal shop was just being reopened after the war, because they closed it during the war. So he came from a Cranbrook experience, which meant then a minimal technical background, but he was a very creative guy-more multimedia. I think he liked to work in wood; he drew a lot. But he was not the metal person that Hans was, not by a jillion years. They were completely different, which, of course, led to problems.

But Hobart Coles and Frans Wildenhaim were in the ceramic studio at that time. Tage Frid-

MS. YAGER: Oh, yes.

MR. JERRY: -the woodworker, was in the woodshop, and the same thing sort of happened there: the other half of the job rotated.

MS. YAGER: Strong personality men.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, very strong personalities. There's only one way to do things, you know. And we would tease them all, because Swedish was the language of the studio pretty much. Hans had no English. Tage-very little. They bought houses close to each other, so there must have been a neighborhood thing going on in one of the suburbs, where they didn't speak English at all.

And as it turned out, Larry Copeland had been a prisoner of war and ended up in Europe teaching English to Swedes or something. He could speak Swedish. So now in the metal shop you got that language going. Tage would come up from down below and they would speak Swedish, and then, of course, they all had some multilingual skills, so German was not too difficult. Frans was-

MS. YAGER: Now Jack was Danish.

MR. JERRY: Jack was Danish. [Laughs.] And I'm sure they knew they could work-I mean, most Europeans are multilingual people anyhow. Somehow they got it-between the Danish and the Swedish, they got it, amongst them. It used to drive us bloody nuts and led to some speech patterns that I still use occasionally, which is kind of annoying, but putting words in people's mouths. He'd be reaching for a word-

MS. YAGER: And you'd try to help him. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: -and I'd punch it in, and he would go, "Yeah." [Laughs.] I still do that occasionally, which is not very nice. So, Larry Copeland was there for the first two years that I was there and encouraged-just by his approach to design and his creative energy, I started thinking about Cranbrook, and I decided to leave. So I got a scholarship to go to Cranbrook. I got an Associate and Applied Science degree, which was part of the institute-you know, Associate and Applied Science degrees are far and few between right now. Mostly technical schools gave them out in the east.

MS. YAGER: Before we get to that, Hans-I have marked here, that-your experience when you were at Rochester, that you had to experiment in secret-

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Yeah, yeah.

MS. YAGER: -and that may have motivated the switch to a different school. Can you talk a little bit about that?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. The way the program was run then was one faculty member came in Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and the other one came in Wednesday, Thursday, Friday. So we had this overlapping day. And that's where we'd get into trouble, during that day, especially when you had somebody that had technical skills that were like magic and the other person was still struggling. And it was obvious very fast, as a student, what the differences were. But I liked the spirit of Copeland, and he was very easy to get along with and easygoing, and Hans was very rigid and there was only one way to do things. And as long as you were in his group, that was great. If you moved outside of that, then you were in big trouble.

MS. YAGER: I remember when I visited RIT one time, considering it for school, and Hans said, "If the tool's got a plug on it, it's no good."

MR. JERRY: If it's got a what on it?

MS. YAGER: If it had an electrical plug. [They laugh.]

MR. JERRY: That's funny. Well, Hans was-he had some rules, and, of course, surface embellishments of any kind, textures, chasing / repoussé, forget all that. That wasn't in his vocabulary and he never spoke of it. It only came up amongst the students, because, of course, periodicals and books started to come out, and we were becoming more aware of what was happening-historically had happened with metal, at least in the Western world, and we

would start to ask questions. And, of course, Lawrence Copeland-what did I say his first name was?

MS. YAGER: Larry.

MR. JERRY: Larry, okay-he was open to any idea. If you wanted to stand on your head and work and, you know, make a big puddle, he was up for all of that. That came from his Cranbrook side. And Hans would have rules: no casting. [Laughs.] You just didn't do that to metal. Even though we would try to explain to him that the sheet and wire we had came via an ingot, nope, he didn't want to talk about it. No casting. Zero. Casting machine had been removed from the shop-gone-kiln, everything, gone, gone.

MS. YAGER: Who had taught there before?

MR. JERRY: Well, Jack had been there before. I don't know how much work he did with those techniques, but I can't imagine-well, of course, I could, because he probably came from a very similar background.

MS. YAGER: He did, but he was also very open-minded.

MR. JERRY: Oh, oh, oh, yeah-way different than Hans. They are not alike at all.

MS. YAGER: Because I studied with Jack for one year.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I kind of thought maybe. Oh, yeah. I would have-when I look back on it, God, I wish I had had my experiences with Jack rather than Hans. He and I were good buddies. We got along really well. I had no problems with Hans at all, but I-now when I look back on it, whoa-[laughs].

So anyhow, no casting, no chasing, no repoussé, no engraving. You didn't-you just didn't do that. So that created a lot of problems, so any exhibitions that I was in-I found the old casting machine. I would get it out on Saturdays. We were allowed to use the shop on Saturdays only. It's not like today when we have open studios and stuff like that. We went to school eight hours a day, and so every hour that we weren't in an academic situation, we were in the studio. So there was no night use of the studios. There were night classes for the community taught in the studios at night, but that was the way it was.

Occasionally they'd have the studios open on Saturday, and that's when I would come in and do the other things. Because at that time I was already aware of a whole bunch of other stuff, because Ron Pearson's Shop One [Rochester, NY] was two blocks away. And we were all aware of him and what he was doing there, plus, of course, Frans and Tage Frid were part of Shop One.

So we were sort of seeing faculty work almost continuously.

[Audio break.]

MS. YAGER: This is Jan Yager interviewing Michael Jerry in the artist's home and studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on November 15, 2004, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc number two, session number one.

Michael, we were-just before break you were talking about your time at the Rochester Institute of Technology School of American Craftsmen.

MR. JERRY: Well, as I said earlier, it was the right kind of experience for me, and it was very interesting because of the faculty that were there: one, in that many of them didn't speak English very clearly. But during my second year-I was a sophomore student-through-I think through Olaf Skoogfors, who had been at the school before I arrived and continued during some of the time that I was there-Olaf introduced me to Ron Pearson.

And Ron had a studio in Shop One, which was a carriage house behind a large home that was only about three, four blocks from the school-a place I was already familiar with, but I didn't know Ron that well. Ron needed some help. He needed some bench help, and so I started working for Ron Pearson after school and on the weekends and working with others. I wasn't the only person. There were several people who were working part-time for him, doing production work that he was doing at the time.

MS. YAGER: Now this was 1959 to 1960, I have?

MR. JERRY: That's about it. And Shop One at that point was still close into town. Shop One eventually moved to another site later, but I wasn't around when that happened. I think Jack Prip had just left and had gone to Rhode Island.

MS. YAGER: Who started Shop One?

MR. JERRY: Shop One is Ron Pearson, Tage Frid, Frans Wildenhaim, and another woodworker whose name I've forgotten. I think that's it. There were the four or five of them, and then that partnership changed. Jack Prip may even have been part of that in the beginning, but, of course, he moved away. Tage moved away-went to Rhode Island. And so they took on some new partners as time rolled on. Ron was probably the consistent partner there. The rest of the partnerships sort of evolved. In fact, at one time Tom Markusen was a partner.

MS. YAGER: Was Tom a student at Rochester?

MR. JERRY: Tom Markusen? No, Tom was one of Fred's students from the University of Wisconsin very early on. And Tom taught at State University of New York at Brockport.

MS. YAGER: So can you talk a little bit about-you had, was it an apprenticeship or an actual job with-

MR. JERRY: That was a job. I got-in terms of influences on my work and how I work and so forth, a lot of those impressions happened during that time. I mean, it was the first, full-time serious metal person that I knew well, other than the teaching faculty. And Ron was making his living from his work and had been for quite a while. And I sat right across from him; we had a common bench. We sat across from each other-actually where Jack had shared. He and Jack had been partners for a while. So when Jack left, that was about the time I came in-or several of us did.

MS. YAGER: And were all of the things that you made sold at Shop One or-

MR. JERRY: No, Ron had, oh, I'd say 30 to 50 places distributing his work-a lot of museum shops-but there was a whole, you know, a whole craft sales things going on at that time. There were more and more of them coming on. And he would make the work and then he would travel. He'd peddle it.

And he had not only the jewelry line that he was doing, but he was doing these big hollowware pieces, too. And he was spinning them. So in the wintertime he would spin these shapes, and then he'd hire somebody to buff them, you know, a professional buffer, and then he'd load up his car and he'd take those things out and sell them. Bronze bowls-there was a whole line of them. He got very well-known for doing them, and eventually turned the whole line over to a stamping company in Rochester. They produced them for, oh, I don't know, three, four years or so.

MS. YAGER: Now, what was your role there?

MR. JERRY: My role was to do multiples. So what Ron would do is he would make the first piece, the prototype piece, we would call it, and then he would do six to a dozen of them and sell them.

MS. YAGER: Now this was jewelry or-

MR. JERRY: Jewelry.

MS. YAGER: Okay.

MR. JERRY: Jewelry-I think all of it jewelry.

MS. YAGER: And made in what material?

MR. JERRY: Silver, some gold, but mostly in silver. And he would do the first batch, and he would keep very careful records on how much time it took. And he had three-by-five cards in a file, and every piece had a drawing, the weight and the material, all the information that would go into pricing. And then he'd have an hourly-or a minute actually. A lot of things were made in minutes. So he had the time on there that it took him to make it, and then he established an hourly rate for that time. So it didn't matter if it took me two days to do it or five minutes, except it didn't quite work out that way. So I got paid by the piece. That's fair enough, but I had to get it to a point where he was doing it, which, because of techniques are fairly simple, it didn't take me too long to exceed his limit, and then he'd rethink the price. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Were these forging with a hammer?

MR. JERRY: Some of them were forged. Yeah, I used to make a tie clip in seven minutes with his name stamped in it, in a package, polished, but I'd do a hundred of them at a time-and a lot of casting.

Ron was basically a self-taught person. He had one year at the School of American Craftsmen when it was down at Alfred [Alfred University, Alfred, NY] and couldn't afford to go to school any longer, so he opened a little shop at-because it's a ski area-he opened a little shop. And he was cutting things out of thick plate and then filing them to shape. He didn't know anything about casting, and then finally got introduced to that. And then, of course, rubber molding and all the rest that goes along with castings. But he had a whole line of forged things.

So we did a little bit of both.

And every year he would add to the line, pull things out that weren't doing well and maybe add 15, 20 new pieces. And the rest of his time in the studio was spent, one-he was the quality control person, of course; he would look at everything before it was packaged. But he would do the one-of-a-kind stuff, so he had a big commission business going, and that ranged from jewelry to hollowware to enamel pieces-you know, quite a range that he was capable of doing, but it's pretty amazing because he was a self-taught person.

But his father was an art educator, and in fact, he ran his father's business for a while after he died. He had a by-mail art program going, and I don't remember the name of it now, but I remember the file cabinets with all of the material in it. And I think it had to do mostly with art appreciation and art history, and it was by mail. And Ron was finishing up all those contracts, so he had all-this huge wall with slots in it with all his paperwork in it.

MS. YAGER: I always remember those, you-want-to-learn-to-draw-this course-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, this was up from that-quite a bit up from that.

MS. YAGER: But it was by mail?

MR. JERRY: Mm-hmm [affirmative], all by mail. Yeah, very interesting. So I suppose that, you know, Ron's beginnings-Ron was pretty politically active, and he, I think, originally went to school at the University of Wisconsin and studied political science. That's where he was headed, but then-I don't know if that was after the war, but he was a merchant marine, was a merchant sailor.

MS. YAGER: I didn't realize he was from Wisconsin.

MR. JERRY: No, he's not from Wisconsin. He just went there to school.

MS. YAGER: His training in metal-

MR. JERRY: His training in metal was at Alfred. I'll show you some-sorry. Have you seen that? That'll tell you.

[Audio break.]

MS. YAGER: We're starting back on track two. Michael, you were in the middle of-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, we were talking about my experience with Ron Pearson in his studio, which, of course, was also part of Shop One. And people who came to Shop One had to walk by the studio door, so it was a very kind of busy place, but it was a great experience because I think that I had discovered then that I didn't want to make multiples, after sitting in front of piles of a hundred cufflinks or a hundred brooches. It got-the money was great, but it was not a life that I thought I wanted to pursue. And at one point, as I was finishing school, it was suggested maybe I would like to be part of his operation, and it was a time to make a decision about all that, and it didn't take me long to figure out that I really didn't want to do this if I didn't have to.

MS. YAGER: Now, you also, at that very same time were working with-

MR. JERRY: Toza and Ruth, yeah. Well, Toza-

MS. YAGER: -this is Radakovich?

MR. JERRY: Radakovich, yeah. Toza and Ruth had just moved to Rochester, and Toza was a painter and had been an art director for a major magazine in Yugoslavia. And he more or less escaped from the country, and I think they worked their way through Canada. She's an American, but immigration was a problem, and they finally got all that cleared out and found themselves in Rochester.

And Toza taught at the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery, an evening class in painting, I think-

[Audio break, tape change.]

-and then attended the School for American Craftsmen as a student for a few minutes because he wanted to touch down with Hans. And Ruth had been a student at the School for American Craftsmen when it was at Alfred. In fact, she probably knew Ron Pearson; they probably were classmates. I'm not absolutely certain about it, but the timing fits.

So she was the metalworking person, and his metalwork came through her experience, plus workshops and things that he could attend. But they were, I think still are-I mean, their jewelry is fabulous. Toza had-has, because he's still alive-Ruth died at least 15 years ago, but Toza is still in California, where they eventually

moved. And he was involved in all sorts of design activities. He was working with a boat builder to do fiberglass doors for houses; he did playground equipment, all sorts of things. He was a very, very creative guy-is a very creative guy. I don't think he's making jewelry right now, but when the two of them were at their peak, which probably was that time while they were in Rochester, they made some fabulous things.

And they did some-and that's where I came into the picture. They did do some multiples, and that wasn't their primary thrust, but they saw that that would be helpful economically. So they didn't do things by the hundreds; they did things maybe six to a dozen pieces at a time: silver and gold and-let's see; what else was I going to say about that? I was pretty heavily influenced visually by those folks. I still love the work; what can I say? [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: What did you do? What was your job?

MR. JERRY: My job was forging parts for pieces and also doing pretty much what I was doing for Ron Pearson, and that's dealing with casting-not physically casting but dealing with castings afterwards.

MS. YAGER: This would be filing and polishing?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, filing, polishing, stamping, some simple soldering. It was at a time when those-when neither Ron or Toza knew about other things-other industrial techniques that would have made it have even gone faster, like stripping fire scale chemically-all of that. I used to file the fire scale off. I mean, that's why I was filing, not so much to make the shape better or to make the surface better; I was filing to get rid of the fire scale. Well, you know, it's very deep on casting, and now there's an alloy where you don't have any fire scale to begin with, plus bonding, plus all those other things. And the techniques were finishing; they weren't-they didn't have any knowledge of tumbling and vibra-tumbling [ph], all of that, which would have made their life a lot easier.

So I was that person, so I got to know them pretty well. And then eventually I took over Toza's job as teacher at the museum. My first teaching experience was at the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery. And there was a small metal studio there, and they also had children's classes. So I taught ceramics to young children on Saturdays, and I taught one or two classes a week at night in this metal shop. And that's what Toza and Ruth had been sort of playing with since they had arrived.

MS. YAGER: Now, they had gotten their metal training in another country?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I think Ruth-the School for American Craftsmen at Alfred, and I think Toza, through Ruth-they did have-I remember they had some really nice Scandinavian stuff in the house, and I think they had been in Denmark, but whether either one of them had gone to school there for any short period of time, I don't know. I really don't know that part.

MS. YAGER: Now, let's see, you were at Rochester for two years; then you decided you needed a change.

MR. JERRY: I needed a change, so I applied to Cranbrook, and I got a scholarship to go there for my first year, and off I went. And Dick Thomas, of course, was the faculty member at the time, and that's where I met all of my peers my age. Fred Fenster was there at the time; [L.] Brent Kington was there at the same time I was. Let's see, who else was there? A sculptor-his last name was Haskin-Don Haskin.

MS. YAGER: I have Al Pine.

MR. JERRY: Al Pine was either-Al Pine was before me.

MS. YAGER: And Barry Merritt?

MR. JERRY: Not at Cranbrook. Barry Merritt is part of the Rochester scene. Barry I didn't know the first two years I was there.

I went away to Cranbrook, and during that time Barry enters the School for American Craftsmen and eventually becomes a benchworker for Ron Pearson and then goes off on his own. In the meantime, his brother becomes-takes over Barry's job with Ron, with no training, I don't think, and becomes his lifelong foreman. So Barry Merritt's brother and his family moved to Maine with Ron.

MS. YAGER: And what was his name?

MR. JERRY: I don't know his first name. I haven't a clue. I never met-I don't think I ever met him. I just-I heard these things through Ron and Barry. But he turned out to be a super-he ran the whole shop, as far as I know, and he was the only person, I think, that Ron took with him to Maine when he moved there.

And then Barry stays, does his own thing, opens a gallery or two in Rochester, and then sort of disappeared. Nobody knows where he is now-very strange-very strange event. Well, he would leave galleries behind in deep

debt and disappear. That was his-he just-he was not a very good businessman. He was a great guy, did some very creative stuff, ran what appeared to be a really nice gallery in Rochester, and then all of a sudden in the middle of the night he was gone.

MS. YAGER: What was the name of the gallery?

MR. JERRY: I don't remember.

MS. YAGER: I wanted to ask you about the people that you studied with, but before that, the scholarship that you had at Cranbrook-was that a full scholarship for room and board and tuition?

MR. JERRY: No. I was married at the time, so living on the campus was not an option, so I lived in Pontiac. No, it was tuition.

MS. YAGER: And did you have to teach as well?

MR. JERRY: No. No, that was not part of the scene at all, except what happened, all unknown to me, during the time that I sort of signed up for Cranbrook, Dick Thomas gets a contract for a book, and what he was doing was trying to gather some people that would function by themselves. That's putting it kindly. They did hire a person to come in and fill in, but he was basically a model maker, so he was a technician-kind of a low-grade technician. In the meantime, Dick's writing this book.

So the shop was sort of left to run itself, and so I came-I was the only person of the group that had any extensive metalworking experience. Everybody else had had one course or two courses, but they had two years of college education, so they had most of their academics out of the way. They were intensely interested in doing some metalwork.

Now, at that time, Cranbrook also was undergraduate and graduate. Cranbrook had a problem after all the GIs left, where they had enrollment problems. So they opened an undergraduate program. So people like Fred Fenster were graduate students. I was an undergraduate student because I had just two years of school. Fred had already graduated from City College, and Brent from Illinois and so on and so on.

So anyhow, because of the background I had-and then Dick Thomas brought in another man. What was his name? Gudmund Jon Elvestad. And Gudmund was already a journeyman goldsmith from Norway, and as far as I could tell, he was there just for a place to base himself so he could travel around the country. And I'll get that name for you if we remember. I think it's in Dick's book, if I still have it. The book was-

MS. YAGER: What was the name of the book, and what was the topic?

MR. JERRY: The topic was-it was a general metalsmithing book, covered some jewelry techniques, mostly larger pieces, which was Dick's personal interest [*Metalsmithing for the Artist-Craftsman*. Philadelphia: Chilton Co., Book Division, 1960]. A technical book, a show-and-tell-lots of pictures of tools. Dick was-he was a pretty good researcher, so he would research his stuff-you know, what's the stick called, what's the hammer called-completely pointless activities-and didn't know how to use half of it.

Dick was self-taught-pretty well self-taught. He was a painter and an art educator that taught in a high school, I think, for a year or two after the war, and then they opened a metal shop, and he sort of brought the metal shop back to life after having been closed. He might have been a student of Fleming's [Baron Erik von Fleming], the English silversmith that they brought-Cranbrook brought in before the war, or maybe even attended one of the Handy and Harmon conferences. I'm not sure about that, but his experience with metal was extremely limited.

MS. YAGER: I'm trying to-was von Fleming-I'll get his full name-

MR. JERRY: Von Fleming, I think-Erik-

MS. YAGER: Erik von Fleming.

Well, anyhow, so Dick opens this shop and gathers-the one talent he seemed to have was sorting people out, and the atmosphere in the shop was great. Now, a problem with me, and the reason I left-I didn't stay there for a full two years-the reason I left is that I was doing a lot of teaching, and it's very flattering in the beginning, but it got to be a drag after a while. Every time I'd do something: how do you do that? And these were friends of mine, and they were very intent on finding out, and a lot of them had been working trial by error, and, you know, wow, wow, wow, and after a while I just-

So Dick had also another talent. He was giving lectures on liturgical craft. And I don't know just how that came about, but out of those lectures-not to the students, but we're talking to greater audiences away from the school-he would get commissions, and he would bring them into the school and he'd say, "Listen. This is what's

needed; I think you have the skills for that and you have the skills for"-and then he would spread them around as an educational device, which was the justification. And that worked, really. Well, as those commissions got more complicated, then it narrowed down real fast. It was either me or this Swedish guy who had no hollowware experience.

So Fred and I got together, and we did a number of these commissions-big ones: whole church, all the metalwork in the church, two or three of them.

MS. YAGER: Goodness.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, we made a ton of money.

MS. YAGER: Oh, you got paid for these as well.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. We did all our own contracts; we did the whole thing top to bottom, dealt with the client. In fact, Fred and I rented a house at one point-a whole little house; turned the whole thing into a studio to do these things. And after that was over, I decided that I wasn't getting anything out of this experience. It was all very interesting-I made some money and so forth-but I wasn't going to get anything out of Dick. And the more I saw of the book and his preparation for it, the more I realized that he just didn't know what the hell he was doing. He had no clue. And I knew that as a second-year student. I knew that he was way out of his league.

And, I don't know; Fred stuck it out by force of will. He and Brent stuck it out. Mostly, I would say, by trial and error, although Stanley comes to Cranbrook after I've left. So Stanley-

MS. YAGER: This is Stanley Lechtzin.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, Stanley was living in Detroit at the time. He had graduated from Wayne State [University]. And he was running a business-was doing custom jewelry things out of his studio in Detroit, and he decides, enough of that, and he wants to teach. So he needs an M.F.A., and that was an easy way for him to get it; just drive up from home.

And so he comes in-so he and Fred got together, and they enjoyed each other's company for years. And Brent finishes out, goes to Illinois [Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL], Fred finishes out and goes to the army, and he worked for-he probably told you, he worked for the military as a civilian in Detroit for a number of years. And then at that moment, I'm coming out of school, and he and I are applying for the same jobs-[laughs]-both of them in Wisconsin, and I got one; he got the other. So it worked out.

Yeah, but the Cranbrook thing was-well, it always is the camaraderie of other students, I suppose, but in terms of Dick Thomas, I can't say much positive about it. In fact, it could even-he was a little sour also, and he just wasn't a terribly pleasant guy to deal with, not for me, and everybody-I think that all of these folks had a hard time with him, never went back. I went back once years later. I happened to be, actually, visiting my wife's brother down the street and, well, let's go up to Cranbrook; it's a beautiful place to walk around and so forth. And Dick was there, and he was busy filing away the theses of the last 30 years or so, and I just-I don't know what motivated him at all. He did horrible things with metal. He tortured metal just terribly. I just had to walk away and keep my mouth shut because it was so bad. [Laughs.]

So I go back to the school-and then also, I was out of school for one semester, living in Pontiac. My wife had a job at the phone company at the time, and so we hung out there. And then, what was the major crisis? Some major crises in the Middle East came up, and the draft was still functioning. And not being in school and the draft active again, I was right in line, and my father, being a city official, was able to find out where I stood in line, and I was coming up fast, and so I had to get back into school real quick. So I marshaled my resources and got back into school in the summer. So I went to school in-

MS. YAGER: Back at Cranbrook?

MR. JERRY: No, back at the School for American Craftsmen.

MS. YAGER: Okay.

MR. JERRY: I went back to Rochester.

MS. YAGER: Okay.

MR. JERRY: And that summer I finished off my undergraduate degree and stayed for a master's degree.

MS. YAGER: Well-

MR. JERRY: So all my graduations are from the same institution, which looks weird, but I did spend three semesters at Cranbrook.

MS. YAGER: Now, when you were at Cranbrook, do you remember some of the work that Brent Kington was doing, for instance? What was he working on at that time?

MR. JERRY: No, I don't. The toys that Brent got to be known for early on in his career, they emerged after I left. Before that time, I think it was a lot of experimental stuff, one thing or another. He was trying out a lot of stuff. He had come from a good program. I'm trying to think where he came from-Kansas [University of Kansas]? I think so. And I don't remember the person who was teaching there [Carlyle Smith], but a number of good-Bob Ebendorf came from that same program. Wendell Castle came from Kansas.

MS. YAGER: Is that where Carlton Ball was?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, it's a person I don't relate to, but there was somebody there for a long time that evidently was a really good teacher. In fact, the whole school probably functioned pretty well, because, like I say, Wendell came from the same environment.

MS. YAGER: Wendell Castle?

MR. JERRY: Wendell Castle here, yeah. Yeah, he's not a metal person, of course, but we all know him for other things.

MS. YAGER: What kind of work was Al Pine doing at that time?

MR. JERRY: Al Pine-you see, Al probably-I don't know how Fred would put it, but Al probably was the reason that Fred Fenster was there, because Al had gone before and Al had gone to California. So I was not aware of-I mean, I was aware of his name; I never saw any work until it started getting published, during the time that he was in California.

MS. YAGER: So people didn't-you didn't see work in the studios?

MR. JERRY: The work from a previous group? No, there was no-like, Stanley used to keep a piece from every student, for instance, and he had a case in the studio. He had one of Al's pieces. He had at least some indication of what had transpired, but not at Cranbrook.

MS. YAGER: I thought they did select work.

MR. JERRY: Well, they might have eventually, but not during that time. The only thing that was left behind was a thesis.

MS. YAGER: So you didn't do a thesis because you didn't stay after that?

MR. JERRY: No, no. One, I was an undergraduate student; I was not a graduate student. I don't know that it was even required of undergraduate students. I'm not sure.

MS. YAGER: And what kind of work was Fred working on?

MR. JERRY: Fred, of course, had come from New York ,so his experiences had been all those folks down in the Village making jewelry that I saw when I was a young student, as a freshman.

MS. YAGER: This was in Greenwich Village?

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: Sam Kramer and Art Smith.

MR. JERRY: Oh, Sam Kramer was there, Art Smith was there, a whole number of people, and they were fabricating-you know, piercing and fabricating sheet, and laminating stuff together and so forth, and his experience-of course, as he probably told you, he came from an industrial arts program, but his interests seemed to be at the time-because he had never had the opportunity-is the hollowware side of it. And that's how he and I got together, because I had hollowware experience. So, by hook or crook, he taught himself how to do it, with a little help from me. Dick was spinning at the time. Dick was a spinner. He would design a form and he would send it down to the spinning shop in Detroit and they would spin the shape up. And that was his metalwork.

So the hollowware thing was his, and in fact, in Dick's book-and who's the British historian, Goldsmith

[Goldsmiths' Hall, London, exhibition venue and home of the Goldsmiths' Company, London]-

MS. YAGER: Peter Gainsbury?

MR. JERRY: No. I'm thinking of-the head of the Hall [Goldsmiths' Hall] was Graham Hughes.

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: Graham Hughes's book [*Modern Silver, Throughout the World, 1880-1967*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1967] has probably Fred's first finished piece of hollowware in it, a photograph of it. So that seemed to be-my memory of it seemed to be his strongest-his interest.

Brent was a different kind of character. He was a very disciplined guy. We did some furniture together. There was a designer who had graduated from Cranbrook who was designing and marketing furniture out of his studio in Bloomfield Hills, and he needed some prototypes for a Chicago furniture market, and so Brent and I and Fred, I think-yeah-the three of us got together and built these couches out of aluminum, and he liked that. I could see that Brent really liked that.

MS. YAGER: How would you make a couch out of aluminum?

MR. JERRY: Well, we made-it was a chair-or, excuse me, a couch-with ribs on it like that Eames chair over there. See the blue one? It had these-

MS. YAGER: So aluminum piping?

MR. JERRY: -multiple ribs tied together by bars that go across and then the cushions were bolted up from underneath. And, yeah, it was a fabricated affair. And so we all got to work on that.

MS. YAGER: Do you remember the name of the designer?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, Hugh Acton. Hugh Acton. He's probably still functioning somewhere. And, again, all these things sort of add-like Hugh Acton, he didn't make anything himself, as far as I could tell.

What he did is he used Detroit, and Detroit has all these little shops that do this and that. There's a spinning shop here, there's a machine shop over here. And he designed the parts, and then he had a warehouse, and he had several people working for him, and they would fabricate these things in the warehouse-just bolt them together. And some of the stuff was shipped that way. So he had this whole line of furniture with Knoll fabrics on them, because Knoll had a showroom up there close to Bloomfield Hills, and he had a whole business running that way. He made some nice stuff.

So we sort of learned a little bit about that. And then Fred, of course, he worked for a fabricator. He did stair rail holders for some new buildings-the bit that comes from the wall out that holds the stair rail. I remember him casting those in bronze by the dozen and finishing that. So he added that to his experience.

MS. YAGER: What were some of the liturgical pieces that you made?

MR. JERRY: The liturgical pieces were-I'm trying to think; how did I get into that?

MS. YAGER: You said with Dick Thomas, would bring the commissions.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, Dick would come in, and on several occasions I ended up with the most complicated piece, which was a chalice, let's say.

MS. YAGER: And now, would you design the chalice-

MR. JERRY: Oh, I would design it.

MS. YAGER: -or Dick would-

MR. JERRY: Oh, no, no, no, no-the whole thing. He said, here it is, here's the people you contact, that's it. It was a pretty brave move, because, I mean, he didn't know at all that much about any of us in terms of what our capabilities were. So designed it, presented it, got the contract to do it, and then we all got busy.

So I would do the chalice if the denomination required it-and most of them did-chalice, cruets, lighting fixtures, collection plates. Oh, what else? It seems like there was some more stuff than that.

MS. YAGER: Do you remember where any of these churches are?

MR. JERRY: Well, the only-one there was one in Bloomfield Hills, but I don't remember the name of it at all. There's the one in Ohio that we did was the head of the furnishings committee. There's always committees you've got to deal with with these things. And the head of the furnishing committee was Mr. Huff of Huff bikes. They were made in-not in Cleveland-I think in Cincinnati. That's all I remember about that. And that was an Episcopalian church. I think the one we did in Bloomfield Hills was a Lutheran church.

MS. YAGER: Would these have had any gemstones or anything on them or appliqués?

MR. JERRY: Some-no, I don't think so.

MS. YAGER: Fairly like modern-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, a very-[phone ringing.] Excuse me.

[Audio break.]

MS. YAGER: Starting back on track three, you were talking about the liturgical pieces.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, these vessels were generally pretty clean, minimal decoration, traditional to some degree in their shape. What else can I-

MS. YAGER: Did you have to have meetings with people for the design?

MR. JERRY: No, because we dealt with the whole thing long distance. So we did drawings, and, of course, because of my drawing background, I ended up doing that. So we made a formal presentation-mechanical drawings and a rendering of-I think we presented about three different possibilities. They chose one, as simple as that. We came to an agreement on the price and we did it. I remember I got the chalice back on the first one. They sent it back because there was an engineer on the committee and he took a height gauge and he measured around the rim of the chalice. It was off by half a 64th, I think. [Laughs.] They sent it back.

MS. YAGER: Just torque it a little bit with a hand-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I tortured it a little bit. Phooey. So anyhow-

MS. YAGER: And these were sterling silver?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, they were all in sterling, except for lighting fixtures. We wouldn't do those-we did them in brass. But that kind of got me started thinking about that whole thing, that maybe there was a niche for me, because I wanted to make larger pieces, and so I continued doing it. When I went back to the School for American Craftsmen, I did almost exclusively-I was going to say mostly-liturgical pieces as a student-as a continuing student.

MS. YAGER: Now, these were for commission-

MR. JERRY: No, these were not for commission.

MS. YAGER: -or speculative?

MR. JERRY: This is all speculation. No, commission was not involved, and at the School for American Craftsmen at that time, materials were free.

MS. YAGER: Even silver?

MR. JERRY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. YAGER: Really?

MR. JERRY: But you didn't get the piece when it was over, though, either.

MS. YAGER: That's interesting.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Let's just go over that for a minute. No, at the School for American Craftsmen up to I don't know what year-[phone rings].

[Audio break.]

MS. YAGER: Starting back on track four, let's see, you were talking about the pieces that you were making at RIT, liturgical-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, so my master's thesis, such that it was, had to do with liturgical hollowware: finding out what the requirements were, restrictions on material, size, shape, and then I did, think, probably five pieces, including a monstrance, a chalice and as least two or three other pieces. But, as I mentioned, the materials were supplied by the school. That was true for wood and clay and fiber, but the school owned the pieces, and what they were doing was using the pieces for promotion for the school-small exhibitions that would travel around the country to promote the school-and after two, three, four years, then they would notify you that the pieces were available for the material.

So I could buy-

MS. YAGER: To purchase-

MR. JERRY: I could buy the materials-I could buy the pieces for the materials.

MS. YAGER: Oh, interesting.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, well, it was an interesting scheme, and the problem with it was that was when I was making the least amount of money, and I let most of it go because I wanted new material. [Laughs.] I didn't want all that bent-up stuff. So a lot of it I bought-I did buy a few pieces, but I don't have any of it now. A lot of it I just gave away.

MS. YAGER: And the pieces that you didn't buy, what happened to those?

MR. JERRY: Now, the pieces that I didn't buy-well, the story is they just went into the scrap, but I don't think it ever happened. I think what happened is that-and I saw a small catalogue one time. All the work that was available and had already been checked out with the people who made them and didn't want them-and that includes dining room tables-

MS. YAGER: Or couldn't afford to buy them. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Couldn't afford to buy them-tables, chairs, yard goods, whole sets of dishes, all of that, it was offered to the faculty of the institute for the materials. So the faculty-all of the faculty, the whole institute, many of them have all this stuff in their homes.

MS. YAGER: This is interesting-very wild.

MR. JERRY: It was an interesting way of dealing with it, and then, of course, what would happen then, because no school is-at least that kind of school was in a really wealthy place. Mrs. [Aileen Osborn] Webb would come by every-actually she came by about every semester, and the story was that at the end of the year, whatever was minus, she just wrote a check for.

MS. YAGER: Whatever was what?

MR. JERRY: Minus. So if I took out 100 ounces of silver and I only turned in 92 in finished work, what happens to the eight? Well, one, they used to bill us for that, but still there's stuff lost in that move, and she would just pick up the tab on it.

MS. YAGER: And how much was silver at that time?

MR. JERRY: Silver was 90 cents an ounce.

MS. YAGER: So silver-

MR. JERRY: When it went to a dollar, I thought there was going to be a riot-[laughs]-which is really funny, especially today when I'm paying \$7.50 and \$8, you know?

MS. YAGER: Now, so a chalice, the cost of it at that time-

MR. JERRY: Well, the cost of-

MS. YAGER: -for you to buy it back-

MR. JERRY: The cost of materials, probably-oh, I don't-the cost of the materials were at the new silver price, not the old price. So if I bought-if it was originally a dollar an ounce and then 40 years later it was \$1.75, or whatever, I paid the replacement cost. So it would cost me \$40, \$50, \$60.

MS. YAGER: It would have been nice to have it now.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, well, you always look back and say, oh, gee, what a stupid thing.

MS. YAGER: I've not heard of that arrangement anywhere else.

MR. JERRY: No, you wouldn't.

MS. YAGER: It's an interesting one.

MR. JERRY: No, it was a very-you know, these days, [if] you're working that kind of material, it's on your dime.

MS. YAGER: That's right. Yeah. Goodness.

Hans Christensen, did we talk-

MR. JERRY: Well, we talked a little bit about him, and then, of course, the people-maybe what we didn't spend any time on is the people that I met and worked with when I was at the School for American Craftsmen both times. That's when I came across Olaf Skoogfors, for instance, probably a name that we would most recognize. Burr Sebring, Colin Richmond. Both of those people became head designers for Lunt and for Oneida. That's where they were going. They were older students coming in and-

MS. YAGER: Now, Lunt was-

MR. JERRY: A silver company.

MS. YAGER: And Oneida was-

MR. JERRY: Is a silver company.

MS. YAGER: Silver and-oh, okay. Also china and things like-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, they had a side of china.

MS. YAGER: Okay.

MR. JERRY: China and even plastic-even inexpensive melmac or plastic ware of some sort. They tried to diversify real quick before they all collapsed.

MS. YAGER: And are these both-were they located in New York State?

MR. JERRY: Yes, Oneida's silver company is in Oneida, New York, about 30 miles east of Syracuse, New York. Lunt, I'm not sure [Greenfield, MA]. All those older silverware companies, most of them are in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, Rhode Island. That's the center of the metalworking world for a long time, and that's where you'll find those places. They knew where they were going and they went straight there. And, of course, the catalogue that the School for American Craftsmen used to put out, that was one of the things that they were selling, the designer.

And, of course, that's what I wanted to do, too, but I took one look at it and I said, no way in hell am I going to put grapes and bananas on edges of bowls, and that's what they wanted me to do partially. The best offer I got was to sort of take over where Jack Prip was at Reed & Barton, but probably because of my age, I guess, and experience, they wanted me to work half the week in a traditional way, and the other half of the week I could work in a fashion like he did. And I-

MS. YAGER: Which was what? What was the fashion that he worked-

MR. JERRY: Well, his Scandinavian stuff that he did for Barton.

MS. YAGER: I see.

MR. JERRY: You know, he did a couple lines of flatware. He made that onion pot that people know so well. He did a whole series of things for them that he made. The rest of the people are on paper. That was the unique part of Jack's job there. It was the first time in this country, I think, that a designer and the maker were the same person. That's a European thing; that's not an American thing. It's an industrial design thing here. Then, of course, a lot of industrial designers think they can design anything; it doesn't matter whether it's silver or whatever the hell it is. Oh, really? [Laughs.]

But Jack went in and said, listen, you know-and I think they treated him very well-we need a line of pewter, and we'll give you six months or a year, and these are things that we're thinking about, and you go make them. That's what drove him crazy, there because he would come to the meetings with finished pieces and put them

down the table, and the rest of these guys had these renderings, and I think he got tired of that after a while, just struggling with-and none of them were good sellers. The industry just wasn't promoting that.

MS. YAGER: Well, I wonder how much-

MR. JERRY: It just died.

MS. YAGER: -of it was marketing.

MR. JERRY: You know, it was all-and I could see it. International Silver [Meridien, CT] was still going at the time I did my tour of all the silver companies looking for a job, and they had every single piece of flatware from day one of almost all the companies on a chart around the wall, and they knew what the sales figures were on all of them. And the sales people came in and said, well, we need something closer to that, closer to that, and that's what the design people did. Are you kidding me? Not for me.

And then at International he said, "I have a hypothetical problem here I would like you to respond to." He said, "How would you feel if we put you on a plane at 3:30 in the afternoon for a trip to Florida, and during the time you're in the air, design a set of flatware for this company who-people you're going to meet when you land."

And what it was was a premium-you know, they used to give away flatware for soap or maybe even cereal. There was a lot of grocery store premiums going on then, and you could get two spoons if you bought this and that and four more next week if you bought this and that, and that was a real thing. They were going down to some company that wanted to give a premium away. They couldn't spend any design time on it, because there was no money in it, so you had airtime; that's it. I don't remember how I responded. My jaw must have dropped down. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: How long did it take to get down to Florida at that time?

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Oh, man. But that's later. I started talking about people that were there [RIT]. That's how we got off on this.

I did meet some other folks there-a name that you see from time to time, and that's Mary Kretsinger, and Mary came in for, I think, a year at some point, and she was from Kansas and she's an enamelist, and for some reason at the School for American Craftsmen at that time there was an enameling studio-very small but very well equipped-and nobody taught enameling. There was nothing around that indicated that at any time had anything been taught in there. And she came in and did some enameling and added to her metalworking repertoire. So I had a chance to spend some time with her.

Fred Lawrenson, California metal person-Fred was there for at least a year during the time I was there. Fred, I think, taught at the University of Wisconsin for a short while and then ended up in California. I think he's deceased at this point.

I met Bernie Bernstein, a very close friend of Fred's, probably his closest friend. Bernie came in for summers working on a master's degree in summer pieces, so I would see him at the summer session. The School for American Craftsmen ran a quarterly system, so the summer was a quarter-a whole quarter-and a lot of students who were in the workplace already would come in the summertime to add to their mostly-people seeking master's degrees.

Let's see. Ron Sonnugatuck. [Laughs.] Ron came in when I was gone-when I was at Cranbrook. Ron came in, and I only knew him briefly when I came back, and Ron, of course, is in Alaska. He teaches at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks. And Ron is a native Alaskan-very, very good silversmith. I ran into some of his work in a museum when I did a workshop in Fairbanks a number of years ago.

MS. YAGER: Does he have a daughter that's a silversmith?

MR. JERRY: Oh, he may have.

MS. YAGER: I believe I just saw a show-

MR. JERRY: Is that right? It's an unusual name.

MS. YAGER: It's a very unusual name, yes.

MR. JERRY: Very, very-I don't know his whole story, but he was a pretty interesting guy. Then there were various other people who sort of wandered off and did other things-became model makers. A lot of people came to the School for American Craftsmen because they liked tools, they liked to make stuff, but they hadn't any ambitions to do anything visual much with it. So they became model makers-a lot of them became professional model

makers-really good. And in fact, Ron Pearson, the other part-time person I worked with, was a graduate of the School for American Craftsman, and he was the head model maker at Bausch & Lomb, and he liked doing this on the side. And a number, of course, went off to the silver industry in one capacity or another.

MS. YAGER: Tell me about-

MR. JERRY: As it turns out, on an aside here, is that Lawrence Copeland, who I worked with as a freshman, who was the partner of Hans at that time, Lawrence Copeland becomes head of design at Oneida after he leaves the School for American Craftsmen. Then I lose track of him, and it turns out I met him at a conference somewhere. He went back to City College-NYU maybe-became head of the department or something. He was looking to hire a faculty member when I ran into him, so he was still busy at it. But that was probably 15 years ago now.

MS. YAGER: I'm interested in your-you said that you went around to these different silver companies because you were considering this as an opportunity for a job.

MR. JERRY: Right.

MS. YAGER: Tell me about that. How many companies did you go to? What were some of them?

MR. JERRY: Well, let's see. The ones that I remember most were, first, International Silver. International Silver was still alive and well then. They no longer are. They went under. They were a very, very big company in a broad range of stuff. They were into stainless at that time and then went-their products went from stainless all the way to high-end sterling. And I would say-what I remember-they were dealing then probably with the lower middle of that business. That seemed to be where the heart of it was, including premiums. That's where that one question-then the other side of it was Reed & Barton, which is a really classy old, old, old company. It goes all the way back to Paul Revere, just about making the high-end silver. A lot of it's sold in Texas and the South, and very little on the stainless end and the plated end, from what I can tell. And Oneida was sort of in the middle, also a company that's taken a dive. It doesn't even exist anymore, I don't think, except the name.

Lunt, a very small company-pretty traditional. They were all very traditional, and that was the disturbing part of it. I had this vision that I was going to change everything and that the people-general public-wanted something more than this, but as it turned out, they didn't, and the silver companies never promoted anything else; they just rode it out and now, of course, they're stuck with their own miseries. International went down. Oneida is now a marketing name only; all the stuff is made in Korea.

The last time I was in there, they had this huge new plant-huge new plant. The design department was automated, and it was computerized. They could make dies right out of the design department through the computer. They were set up really well, but they couldn't compete. So we walked around the plant, and there were people with clipboards going around looking at machines trying to figure out how they could use them to make toys or anything else to try to get this plant going.

And there was a palette of ice buckets, I remember. I said, "Oh, what about this, you know?" He said, "See those?" He said, "Those just came in from Korea. We can buy them in that shape, already stamped out. We can buy them in shapes cheaper than we can buy the materials here."

MS. YAGER: Goodness.

MR. JERRY: Oh, geez. [Laughs.] Oh. So, the history of American silver companies would be very interesting to explore.

MS. YAGER: Did you know Margret Craver?

MR. JERRY: No. No. The name is very familiar. She was connected with Handy & Harmon during-

MS. YAGER: Right.

MR. JERRY: In fact, didn't she run that program for them?

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. No, that's before me. That's closer to Ron Pearson's beginning. That would be probably mid- to late-'40s, early '50s maybe.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, it was right around World War II.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. And that was-you know, Handy & Harmon was very-still, when I was a student, so very kind and anxious to have business, and then all of a sudden they decided they didn't want to deal with anything

under 400 ounces or whatever it was, and they sort of walked away from the craft thing, and-what is it?-St. Louis sort of picked up, and then some of the other refiners, like Hoover & Strong, got bigger. Now Handy & Harmon doesn't exist anymore.

MS. YAGER: I'm not sure.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I think it was bought out and then it went under. It's amazing-just amazing.

MS. YAGER: All right, let's see.

MR. JERRY: Well, if I could, before we move forward, just looking at my own notes and coming across another name which will pop up maybe a little bit later, but as a young person, late teens, and as I would come home from school-from college, I got to know Michael Monroe very well. And Michael grew up in Racine. He went to a different high school than I did. He was younger than me by about five years, I think. He decides to go to art school, and he ended up in Chicago at the School of Design for awhile, and then I think he ends up at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, and then eventually Cranbrook. But during all of that time he's working for my father. He's doing the advertising, he's hanging exhibitions, he's getting the basics of the museum business.

MS. YAGER: Now, Michael, I read that he started taking classes at the Wustum-

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: -when he was four or five years old.

MR. JERRY: When he was a young kid. Yeah, that I wouldn't be certain about, but I got to know him as a young adult. In fact, he and my brother were very close for a while and hung out together, young bachelors. But Michael did-Michael worked night and day for my father. He was a major contributor to the Wustum. He did all the advertising, as far as I can tell. He did all the signage, hung shows, did all of that stuff. And of course-

MS. YAGER: And that led him over to the Renwick [Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC].

MR. JERRY: Well, yeah, and he went to Cranbrook and-he was a very talented guy. In some ways I wish he'd stayed in the studio, but he goes to Cranbrook and-well, do you know his story at all? Well, he goes to Cranbrook as a painting student, I think, meets his wife-to-be at Cranbrook. She was a student there. He doesn't even finish. He's a semester away from finishing, and they come from New York and grab him for the museum job at Oneonta, the State University of New York at Oneonta.

So he goes there without finishing his M.F.A., and somehow he finishes it by mail, or he goes back and forth and does some work, whatever, and they finally give him his M.F.A. Then from Oneonta they just come get him for the Renwick. They say, hey, you want to come work for us? And he was running the gallery there, but he had his start at the Wustum with my father-very close; very close to the family. He gave a really nice Wendell Castle-big Wendell Castle piece to the museum in honor of my folks.

MS. YAGER: To which museum?

MR. JERRY: To the Wustum. His ties are pretty heavy-duty to that place. And, of course, the last time I talked to him, both his parents are still alive.

MS. YAGER: And now that would be at the Racine Art Museum, I'm assuming?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, well, you know, they have these two-

MS. YAGER: The collection-

MR. JERRY: They have these two buildings now, and I don't know how that's operating-you know, what shows happened where and so forth.

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: But it becomes a part, that piece of furniture becomes a part of the collection that the Johnson lady gave to the-

MS. YAGER: Karen Johnson Boyd?

MR. JERRY: Karen Johnson Boyd gave to the museum, which I'm sure gave impetus to the structure that's there now-I don't know whether financially or not.

MS. YAGER: It's a beautiful building.

MR. JERRY: But those are all-you know, the Johnson folks-the company never really gave a whole lot to the museum. They did those two major shows-"Objects: USA" and then they did that big painting show, and they gave some things when it was over, gave some things to the museum, but they never were-they'd give about \$500,000 a year to the Racine Art Association-that was all-but the women-[laughs]-that was another thing. And my father spent a lot of groundwork on that. They would always-they'd come out and they'd chat with him for a couple of hours and leave a check for a thousand or two, and he didn't know about it, but in the end it paid off. It's amazing, because Johnson built the museum at Cornell [Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY], not in his hometown. Geez. Oh, that really got to my dad, I'll tell you. Oh, big time. Cornell was a school he did not graduate from, I believe. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: So, too close-

MR. JERRY: Yeah-[laughs]-geez. They ought to figure that out. But anyhow.

MR. JERRY: The level of philanthropy from the Johnson family and other leaders in Wisconsin is pretty astounding.

MR. JERRY: Is it?

MS. YAGER: I mean, Ruth Kohler is there.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, the Kohlers. Well, the Kohler case, they have-the Kohler Works [Kohler Co., Kohler, WI] had-and I still think they have the record-the longest strike in the history of labor in the United States. Oh, terrible-they shut that place down. There were boycotts by all the contractors. It went on for years, and finally somehow, when they settled it, all these good things started to happen. And trying to regain their reputation, I think that's a lot of what motivated that.

They do shows in the gallery up there, and I've been in a couple of those, and I see their brochure; they're sending these packets of stuff, you know-very busy at it in that little tiny town. But anyhow, they have a nice guest artist program and it's been fruitful. Good for them.

MS. YAGER: Let's see, I'm looking at some other peers. Philip Fike is one.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, well, Phil was older and he was already teaching at Wayne State when I arrived at Cranbrook, and I don't recall whether I met him there or not. I have a feeling not. I think my first contact with Phil was at a SNAG [Society of North American Goldsmiths] conference in Chicago many, many, many years ago. And he was always a great storyteller. He had these great stories to tell about students. And he would go on for hours and hours, and that's what I remember. He was a very, very interesting guy. Then, of course, I always look him up at conferences when he comes, so I got to know him a little bit, and heard a lot about him from Stanley, of course, over the years, and was aware of his fibula thing. I think I visited the shop when I was in Detroit once, so I stopped by.

MS. YAGER: How about Earl Krentzin? He was a Detroit metalsmith as well.

MR. JERRY: Oh, Earl, no. I don't think I ever met Earl. We were talking about him earlier. He had already been-he's older-been through the University of Wisconsin. Well, he may-I think-Fred used to talk about him a little. He may have been even hanging around in Madison when Fred first started to work. I don't know if Fred-

MS. YAGER: He taught one year, I think, in Wisconsin.

MR. JERRY: Oh, he taught one year with Art-with Vierthaler.

MS. YAGER: I believe so, yes.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, that sounds about right. I know he hung around a little bit afterwards, but I wasn't too sure how long. No, I never ran into him. I was teaching up in Menomonee, Wisconsin, at that time, and it was 250 miles away. I didn't get down there very often, especially in the beginning.

MS. YAGER: How about Paul Mergen or Skip Hunter?

MR. JERRY: No. Hunter is one of Fred's former students, I think-maybe Buffalo, University of Buffalo. No, those folks are not in my range of-

MS. YAGER: Now, you talked-let's see, so you-

MR. JERRY: So I did the silver conference.

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: We were kind of on that a minute ago. I did-at the encouragement of the director of the School for American Craftsmen, who was-what was his name-[Harold] Brennan-and he tried to be as helpful as he could to find jobs for people, and he was pointing me in that direction, so it seemed reasonable; it was in the catalogues, so it was part of-seemed part of the mission of being there. The other option, of course, was to open your own studio and get to work.

MS. YAGER: And you already had a family at this point.

MR. JERRY: No, I had no family. I was married, but no children.

MS. YAGER: Oh, okay.

MR. JERRY: Children didn't come along until almost seven years later. No, I was flexible, and I went to look at these jobs, and I felt that they just weren't for me. They were not something I wanted to spend my life doing, so then what were the options? So while I was hanging in limbo-it was summertime after graduation already, and I had made this trip. I knew I didn't want to do that. My option was probably to stay with Ron Pearson and develop that into something, like Barry Merritt's brother did, but on the other hand, I knew I'd get probably swallowed up in Ron Pearson. I didn't want to make his work forever. So that didn't look too good for the long run.

And so Harold Brennan, who was the director of the program at RIT, he was on the phone with somebody and said-one day he called me in and he said, "Would you be interested in teaching?" I said, "Well, what's the deal?" And so he had some connections with some people in Minneapolis who had connections with people in northern Wisconsin, and they told me about this college that had some real strong industrial ed programs and they needed a designer. They needed to sensitize these kids visually, and I said, "Well, okay, let's take a look." And so I got involved with looking at that, and I decided, well, the clock was ticking and I needed a job, so I was back in Wisconsin, which was familiar territory.

So I took the job, and it was one of those things where I didn't compete with anybody and somebody just called somebody and said, hey-

MS. YAGER: This was at Stout?

MR. JERRY: This was at Stout, University of Wisconsin.

MS. YAGER: State University?

MR. JERRY: State University of Wisconsin at Stout is the whole title of it. So off I went, and I taught this two-dimensional design to industrial education students. That's how I got started. I didn't do any metalwork for probably the first two years I was there. And then-

MS. YAGER: You mean because you were focused on-

MR. JERRY: I was focused on teaching. I didn't have a physical situation that was good at the time to work. It seemed to be being a new teacher and not prepared for it, in many ways. I'd never dreamed in the world that I would be teaching-good God, no. But, in fact, that was a negative when I was a student. That was considered-if you can't do anything else, there's always that, but ooh. And I slid into it, and the first years were pretty rough because I didn't really have any teacher preparation; I was winging it. And I had the night school thing and the day thing with children in Rochester, but that's a whole different thing when it is for credit and so forth.

So I took this job, and then eventually they decided to start an art school from scratch, and so I was in on the ground floor of that. And there are 37 faculty members over there now, with a big physical plant and well-equipped studios and all of it. So that was pretty interesting starting up. I moved from one old house to another, was in an old garage for a while-these are school studios now-redoing, redoing, redoing and making do and making do. And finally at the time I decided to leave, they built this building, and now two of my students run the program. Strange-strange how it worked out, but anyhow-actually, three of my students. I can't figure out how that happened, but that's what did happen. And I went back about two years ago and did a workshop, and I probably will go back this winter to do a workshop there.

Not a bad start. They did support me to a couple of summers as kind of guest artists, where they set me up in a studio and I could get all my tools out. And I just worked. I worked for three months for a couple of summers, and they paid my salary.

MS. YAGER: As a guest artist?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, but people could come around. You know, they'd stop-a guest's parents who were coming in to look at the school. I got all kinds of people in and out of there, and it was fine. It was very nice. They were very sympathetic.

The problem for me was-and maybe it was the plus-is that the people that I worked for, they didn't know what to do with me initially. How do you-there's no art school, so now what do you do with this design person: department foundry-no, I don't think so; woodworking-no. So I ended up in the industrial graphics department, which I already was-you know, I was already familiar with all of that. I knew what they were doing; they didn't have clue what I was doing. And they were all professional educators. They were all Ph.D.s, mostly from Stanford, who were really convinced they could teach anything. They were-absolutely. And-[laughs]-that's where we had some struggles, but we got over it.

MS. YAGER: Why did they think they could teach anything?

MR. JERRY: All you need to know-you ask people who are professional educators. These are people who-what can I say?-studied education-not the field they're teaching in, but they studied education, and all you-I was told by a department chairman, "You just give me the goals of the course, how long the course is, and in X number of weeks I'll have it ready to go. I've taught 37 new courses since I've been here," he says.

MS. YAGER: It's interesting, because in-

MR. JERRY: And I'm going, what the hell did I just do? I just spent seven, eight years of my life going to school.

[Audio break.]

MS. YAGER: This is Jan Yager interviewing Michael Jerry in the artist's home and studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on November 15, 2004, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc number three, session number one.

Michael, when that tape was ending you were talking about professional educators, and if you wanted to go on with that a little.

MR. JERRY: Well, coming from the kind of background that I had as a student, this was a very-well, I was going to use the word strange; that's probably not so good, but it was a very different way of approaching education, as I understood it, having been an art student. And, of course, they were very different-completely different worlds. And I'm trying to-and I was always able to be diplomatic about it, but it was-there were some struggles. For instance, I had such a heavy workload because I had all the male-I had half the male students in the university to deal with, and my classes were 30 and 40. And fortunately-

MS. YAGER: Thirty and 40 people?

MR. JERRY: Forty people.

MS. YAGER: Really?

MR. JERRY: And they had drafting rooms that big, you see, so they had a physical setup for it. They had these huge old drafting tables where-

MS. YAGER: And only men were in these classes?

MR. JERRY: Only men were in the classes because the school was divided between home economics education and industrial education. That was the primary goal of the school. And the president of the school realized that times were changing, and he did everything he could to improve the quality of the general education, as well as start to move these people off of pounding nails and stuff like that, and he did.

MS. YAGER: How many students were in the school?

MR. JERRY: Oh, at that time maybe-probably 10, 12,000, something like that.

MS. YAGER: Oh, large.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, it's not a little-it wasn't a little place, and it was booming, and still is, strangely enough. I don't know why, but-you know, it's in a godforsaken place in the world, 75 miles east of Minneapolis-St. Paul, in northern Wisconsin-bitterly cold, tough winters. But anyhow, I'm not sure what their success is. They have some reciprocity thing with the state of Minnesota, so students can come back and forth across the border without the penalty of being out-of-state students, so that probably helps some.

But at any rate-and it was a school that had the highest rating for industrial education in the country, so if you were interested-like Fred was when he was a young person-if you were interested in industrial education and looked into it at all, you'd find that Stout was either number one or number two or three on the list. Again, very strange, but nevertheless that was their specialty, and to this day it still is. But it's been changed. You know, it's all computerized now; it has to do with robotics and all of that stuff, not making toolsheds and stuff like that.

MS. YAGER: Do they still do the home economics?

MR. JERRY: It's not called home ec now; it's called human development, probably, at this point. It has to do with economics, social studies, social problems, more in that direction than how to cook. When I was there, they were still how to cook and how to keep a nice home. Oh, Lord, it's hard to believe, and the students wore white shirts and ties to class.

MS. YAGER: Did you, to teach?

MR. JERRY: I don't think so. I might have in the beginning because all my colleagues did. I probably did for a while, yeah. Yeah, but then as time when by there, we hired a director or head of a newly forming art school and he brought in some people. There were a few people in the home economics area. There was one person teaching ceramics-an M.F.A. from the University of Ohio, so he was a good guy, had good sense. It was a job, so that's kind of why he was there.

There was, I think, a fiber person and maybe an art history person. I think there was just three of them there in home economics, and then I came on the industrial ed side, and about two years after I was there, I think, then this art school was formed and got its own curriculum and its own-now it's the biggest unit of the school. Again, another strange-

MS. YAGER: So you stayed there for seven years.

MR. JERRY: I stayed there for seven years, yeah, and at that time-well, a bunch of things started happening. The first SNAG conferences started happening during that period, so the Minneapolis-St. Paul gathering, which was really the first one-first formal one where we all chipped in for the rooms. [Laughs.] Oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: Tell me about that.

MR. JERRY: Well, there's room rental, you know, so much for a conference room. Well, the people in the room paid for the room. [Laughs.] Pass the hat, you know. This is at the St. Paul Art Museum, and at that time they were in a new facility, so it was pretty nice. Prior to that, though, that's when we all met in Boston-Boston or Washington? Yes, Boston. I'm trying to think. The first-the second SNAG meeting-yeah, the second SNAG meeting-

MS. YAGER: No, SNAG is-

MR. JERRY: No, it was in Washington, because I remember going to the "Objects: USA" show, I think, at the same time.

MS. YAGER: Washington state or Washington, D.C.?

MR. JERRY: Washington, D.C.

MS. YAGER: Okay.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. And I don't remember everybody that's-there's debates about who was there, but it was Ron Pearson and I, a couple of Canadians. Alma Eikerman says she was there, but I don't think so. I'll have to think about that one for a minute, but anyhow, that meeting was there at the same time I'm at Stout, so all this activity is going on and I'm anxious to get going. I just sort of felt bogged down.

MS. YAGER: To get going on your own personal work?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, on my own work more seriously and also the school-the population of students came mostly within a radius of about 150 miles, and mostly on the Wisconsin side. When you look at the map, you'll see that there's not much there, and the students are bright and alive and so forth, but they are really culturally deprived kids. They have no idea-they've never been into the big city. Some of them have never been out of the towns they've lived in. And so you were starting at a different level-a whole different level than you would if you were in a major school somewhere.

And what else? The town was the focal point of an agricultural community. That was the other industry in the area. There was the university, and then there was this agricultural thing going on that had been there for like a

jillion years, and it was all depressed. So I think there were two or three bars on every block. It was a very, kind of, depressing place to live, and people, when they're together too long, too much, they get aggressive, and they behave in very strange ways. On one occasion I was shot at by a neighbor repeatedly at my house with my kids and my wife in it, and on another occasion I was at a birthday party and somebody put a gun to my head, and it turned out to be a felon that was wanted by the Minnesota police. And that was it.

MS. YAGER: Why were you shot at by a neighbor?

MR. JERRY: A drunk, angry neighbor. It's just people out of control, people with nothing to do.

MS. YAGER: And you're saying with all these bars on the corners, was there high alcoholism?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, high alcoholism-just drugs and alcohol and intolerance. A black student in that town was a major problem for those local people. In fact, once a foreign student was killed in a bathroom in one of the bars after I left because he was an African student. So-there was one Jewish couple in the town. [Laughs.] For some reason they're still there, if you can believe it. They put up with that crap all that long. And just bad treatment all around, you know. People treat you badly in restaurants. They'll say, "Oh, boy, we didn't used to have to lock our doors." They'd say it loud enough so you could hear it, like you were some kind of street trash.

MS. YAGER: Now, why would that be? They could tell that you-

MR. JERRY: Well, it's animosity between-the community needed the university because it supplied jobs; it pumped money into the community; it was the major business. But people didn't like it. They didn't like all that liberal stuff. They don't want to hear about that. And as soon as you got connected to the university in some way, if they knew you were connected to the university, especially if you were a faculty member, the townspeople were just-and the drunker they got, the angrier they got. And-

MS. YAGER: This was when Vietnam was starting?

MR. JERRY: This was, let's see-

MS. YAGER: You left in 1970.

MR. JERRY: Kennedy was shot while I was there. I remember that vividly. And there was already crosses, thousands of them, in the center part of the campus.

MS. YAGER: Crosses for-

MR. JERRY: Just reminding, you know, how many people had died.

MS. YAGER: Had been killed.

MR. JERRY: Let's see, from that period I met a lot of good people through the faculty. Most of them had come from the University of Minnesota campuses in Duluth, where the new director came from. He brought, I think, four or five people from there, and some of them are still there.

MS. YAGER: So in 1970-

MR. JERRY: And jobs, of course, are getting harder to get during all of this. The whole thing is tightening up. The big boom of student population-things are still good, but they're tapering off. I mean, it was never easy to get a job as a painter. [Laughs.] It was fairly easy to get a good job as a metalworking person then, but not for those folks.

So I decide that I want to get out of there, but I don't do anything about it. I thought for a while I'd just quit teaching and I'd go set up shop someplace. And I thought about that for a while, but I had two children by that time, so that was not an easy decision to make, and I really couldn't do that. So I hung in there for a while, and then I got a call from John Marshall in Syracuse, and John was-at the time he called me, he was looking for a sabbatical leave from Syracuse, and he wanted to take that leave and then come back to a department that had two people in it. And again, it's in the old days when you could just call somebody. So he said, "Would you come out and look at this job?" And I said, "Well, as soon as I can get loose, I'll come."

So a couple of months passed, and in the meantime John-Cleveland undergraduate-the director is the former Cleveland head of-

MS. YAGER: John Marshall, you're saying-

MR. JERRY: John Marshall, yeah.

MS. YAGER: -went to Cleveland.

MR. JERRY: Went to Cleveland.

MS. YAGER: Okay, right.

MR. JERRY: And John-

MS. YAGER: Institute of Art.

MR. JERRY: The director of the art school at that time was an ex-Cleveland administrator also, so they're like this already. And there was a struggle in the art school and the-that director-I don't remember his name right now-but he falls out of favor with the faculty, and John went with him. They didn't grant John his leave; they didn't grant John his-his-what was it? Maybe there was tenure reasons thrown into that, too. It was a mess. He was just on the wrong side of the fence. He had gotten too many favors out of this dean and they were waiting for him. So he got denied all of that stuff. Whatever he wanted was denied. The director is on the way out the door or has already left.

There's a national search going on for a new director of the School of Art, and during that search, the director of the School of Art in Seattle comes to look at the job. He meets John, they get on great, he walks out the door with John. [Laughs.] So John goes to Seattle-all this is happening within, like, weekends, it seems. On the meantime I'm waiting to get on a plane to come out. By the time I come out, John's packing up to go forever. He got the job-[laughs]-you know, bim, bam, boom. I was on deck. There was a new person hired who was-

MS. YAGER: A second person?

MR. JERRY: No, there wasn't a second person yet. There was a new director hired at the same time I was hired. So he and I got along okay. He came up from Florida, and he was actually running two jobs at the same time for a while. So I interviewed with him, and he had hardly been in Syracuse for more than five minutes. So he's hiring me, and John's on his way to Seattle, and that's how I ended up at Syracuse, because of John's choice actually.

And then, of course, I walked into a shop that was really in good shape. John did a fabulous job of creating, out of little or nothing, a beautiful workplace in a physical situation that was never built for metal, but he made it work, and it was the best it could be. You couldn't have dreamed for a better setup than what he left me. And he did the same thing in Seattle, too. I visited him out there, and he had a small space out there, but, boy, I'll tell you, it's just fabulous.

So I'm there alone now. I'm teaching alone in the metal shop and things are going well. But at that same time, as I'm coming into Syracuse, the year before, I go to the blacksmithing workshop in Illinois with Brent [Kington] [blacksmith's workshop, Carbondale, IL, 1970]. We were all invited down, Fred and I. People from all over the country came to that thing with Alex Bealer.

And Alex Bealer was, I think, from Georgia-was a former advertising executive turned blacksmith historian, and he writes the book [*The Art of Blacksmithing*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1969] that still-I see is still in Borders. He writes it from a historical perspective, but he also sets up a shop for himself so he can experience all these things that he's finding out about that part of American history.

So he comes to Illinois, and Brent sets this thing up out in the woods. It was fabulous. Ron Pearson comes, Fred and I. Oh, there must have been 30 to 40 people there sleeping in tents and-Brent set up all these workstations, about seven or eight of them. Oh, what's-his-name from Georgia came up with-he brought an anvil on the train. I'll never forget. He just had a big show in Racine. What was his name? He's back in the South teaching now-married one of my students. Let's see. I don't know.

MS. YAGER: He does really kind of-

MR. JERRY: He did a lot of really funky things for a while-a lot of old tintype photographs. Oh, come on; I'm talking about a major name now. It'll come.

MS. YAGER: We'll have to come back to that-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, we'll have to come back.

MS. YAGER: -because I know who you mean, too, and I can't think of his name.

MR. JERRY: Okay, I think he's still teaching. But at any rate, that was one hell of an experience. When I went back to Stout after that experience, I set up a blacksmithing thing at Stout for a summer program, did that, and then I left. Then I came to Syracuse, and when I got to Syracuse, I immediately put in for a big gas forge, and I set up a

blacksmith shop in the metal studio at Syracuse. And that was my primary medium at the time. I did lighting fixtures and all sorts of stuff-pots and pans-well, that one that's in the-

MS. YAGER: In the Metropolitan [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York].

MR. JERRY: -the Metropolitan, that's sort of a transition, where I was making a lot of it. But I was making frying pans; I was doing all kinds of kitchen stuff. And then after a while, I think when it came to the blacksmithing, it just physically got more than I could deal with, and I wasn't in a situation where I could have a studio at home. And then the metal shop got moved, and the blacksmithing part of it became part of sculpture, and I would go down and give workshops in sculpture. I acquired a power hammer and a good forge, and we were able to continue on a little bit.

But in my personal work, oh, I would say maybe three years out from the time I came to Syracuse, I was pretty much away from that, but it had a tremendous influence on my other work because it was a spontaneous way of working that I was not used to.

When I was a young student, all the work had to be planned out in entirety: drawn, rendered, completed on a piece of paper, and that's how you got your material.

MS. YAGER: This was because of Hans's training?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, because of Hans's training. Then you sat down with the drawing, you talked about the material, a little bit about what was going to-one thing was going to follow another, and then the material was yours and you executed it with what help you needed and counsel that you needed. And everything was done that way in all the shops, except ceramics-I'll bet not in ceramics, but surely in the woodshop it was. They made these huge drawings of dining room tables and stuff. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Life-size?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, gosh-well, so they could make templates and stuff like-well, that's the same with the metal shop. We make templates off their drawings. That's how we made the pieces. The template had to fit the piece or you didn't move on for the next step. It's simple as that. That curve has got to-if it comes out too far, oh, no, no, no, no, you've got to put it back. You've got to learn about how to deal with material.

So anyhow, that's my background. So as I emerge out of school and start teaching-and, of course, I'm free to do damn well what I please, and so I continued working that way while I was at Stout, for the most part. I did a major piece of hollowware there as a gift to the university from some group, and I did a lot of flatware design, no sets of any kind, but I did some-spent a major time playing with some flatware, along with some jewelry.

But as time rolled by, and certainly by the time I got into the iron thing, there was no time to diddle around with the metal's hot and you've got to work. Now, you can slow it down, you can have drawings and fuss around like that, but I didn't approach it that way. Probably because of that week that we spent there-we just worked; we just took a piece of metal and-

MS. YAGER: Now, this was a whole week that you did this?

MR. JERRY: This was a whole week of intense-Bealer would give a talk on how everything worked. He would start with making a fire; he'd go through a whole-I think that we were using coal fires then-coal-fired fires.

[Audio break, tape change.]

Yeah, it was like night and day; when it got dark, we quit [laughs]-sometimes not even.

MS. YAGER: And he wanted to see people doing in action things that he was researching historically?

MR. JERRY: He was-he had already done that, and from what I could tell, he was making objects, but historical objects, as a way of finding out how-why these marks are here, why that curve is like that and that one isn't like that. So he was a researcher, and he was interested in it from that perspective. So he was not talking about what this stuff looked like-not at all, not at all.

And there is a film, by the way-if you ever want to see it-somebody has got a 30-minute film on that week, and I don't know who owns it, but maybe SNAG has a copy of it, and I'm interviewed in that. So a bunch of us were interviewed. And who did it? But it was very interesting-they were all-[laughs]-cold metalworkers for the part. And-

MS. YAGER: Nonferrous.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, nonferrous metalworkers. And of course the relationship was-were obvious. It just got a little hot here and there. [Laughs.] You know, you had to be careful; people get burned, and man, things would melt in fire and all of the typical stuff.

MS. YAGER: There is something, too-I mean, the little bit of blacksmithing that I have experienced-there is a lot of energy because everybody is-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: -kind of around this forge and there is-

MR. JERRY: Like glass people.

MS. YAGER: Yes, yes.

MR. JERRY: Same way.

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: It's insane.

MS. YAGER: The flame, the smell, the smoke, the noise-

MR. JERRY: There is always something to do, and you know-

MS. YAGER: And it has to be done a split second. You have no time to-

MR. JERRY: You have no time. If you are forge welding, it's got to happen right then, and you can't linger over it and have a discussion. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: So this would be very-I mean, I've talked with a number of people that have been just completely pumped by that experience-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. YAGER: -at that workshop and it just, you know-

MR. JERRY: That's exactly what it-exactly what it did for me. But then as the pieces got bigger, unlike Al-now, Al worked alone for a while-

MS. YAGER: This is Al-

MR. JERRY: Al Paley.

MS. YAGER: Okay.

MR. JERRY: Now, Al worked alone for a while, and when he moved to Rochester to take that job from Tyler [Tyler School of Art, Elkins Park, PA], he was pretty well-he was making a lot jewelry-a lot of the jewelry that we know. But he was also-had a blacksmith setup in his garage. And he was making smaller objects-tabletop kind of objects. But as they got bigger, you know, you realize very quickly you can't do it alone-there is just no way. Even if you feel physically able, your body won't take it.

I will never forget, I worked-I hired a student and we were just tapering rod of the awl by hand. So I needed somebody to hold it, because it weighed, I don't know, maybe 30 pounds or whatever. And all I wanted were these huge long tapers.

Well, working with a 20-pound hammer thing like that while it's hot, and so you've got to work fast. And at the the next morning when I got up, all of the muscles in my hand, all of them-it was like I had black gloves on-completely bruised.

So I was physically able to work the day, but-

MS. YAGER: But not the next day?

MR. JERRY: No, no way, I couldn't touch-I could hardly touch anything, you know. And, of course, Al discovers the same-some of the same kinds of things, and, of course, he has a huge crew now that does that big stuff. Even Stanley-Stanley messed around with some iron for a while after that experience. And I think even though people didn't continue, I think, as you said, it had a hell of an impact on all kinds of people.

MS. YAGER: And on the visual-you know, the twisting of metal-there were certain things that were unique to iron that then were imported into silver.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I know, unique to ironing. You can translate some off-some of it doesn't work very well hot, but you know, for instance, Tom Markusen went ahead and he translated that all into copper, and as it turns out, copper is like clay under-and that's where that pot that the Metropolitan has. That started out with a chunk of copper that thick, and I forged that pot-the copper portion-

MS. YAGER: With the stretching method.

MR. JERRY: -with the stretching method with a 20-pound hammer. Boom, boom, boom-[laughs].

MS. YAGER: So that was a stretched cooking pot?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, stretched. It's got an edge on it that thick, which is the-

MS. YAGER: About a half-inch thick.

MR. JERRY: -which is the beauty part of it, you know, because I upset the edge. So looking down from the top, it changes as it goes around. But, you know, wonderful, fantastic way to work. And I would have never taken a shot at that, probably, even though as I enter into Syracuse, I realize by the design of the studio that John, coming from Cleveland, is a person who stretches his hollowware.

MS. YAGER: Because that was what Fred Miller-

MR. JERRY: Exactly.

MS. YAGER: -specialized in.

MR. JERRY: Which comes from English folks that visited from Handy & Harmon-that's the way they were doing it. In fact, he was emphatic about it. He made some cracks one time to somebody about me because I would seam pieces like the Danes do. "Oh, I suppose you're going to learn about seaming." You know-[laughs]-like it was some dreadful disease that you were going to get.

And he made these beautiful pieces with nice, thick edges on them, and he left, and he did a lot of commissions for the university while I was there, so I had a chance to see his work up close and personal. And I had to repair some pieces and so forth.

So I-you know, I got a chance to see that stuff. And I could tell you-if I had 20-we had 25 ball-peen hammers. I thought, 25 ball-peen hammers, what the hell am I going to do with those? That's three pounds, big ball-peen hammers. What was he doing with those? And then, you know, I find evidence of-he made the students keep track of each course of stretching, so they would get a feeling for how and where the metal was placed-good idea.

Well, once I saw that and I saw a few bits of scrapping around, and I knew what he was up to so. He just-he used that method regardless of anything, and I never taught that way. I showed them how to do-whatever I knew, I would give the students, and I did. He was-John was pretty rigid.

MS. YAGER: They were both teaching at the University of Washington?

MR. JERRY: I have no idea, you know, and when I visited him, she was there, and he took a bunch of us to the studio, because it was away from the downtown area, and we went off-and went to his studio and went to lunch. It was very, very nice-some Syracuse people that he knew when he was teaching-and it was very pleasant. But I didn't see Mary Lee Hu around. I said, what's going on here? And I find out later-actually since I've been here-that it was just not good between them.

So I don't know-

MS. YAGER: That would not have gone over well.

MR. JERRY: He was very rigid; he was a very rigid guy. In fact, the metal studio at Syracuse was locked all the time. The only time people were allowed to work-and graduate students were allowed to use all the outside time in the studio; undergraduates were not allowed in the studio except at class time, and the student population had dwindled down to pretty low.

So when I came, after a couple of semesters of my being around, the population went sky high on the place. I had all these people from architecture-Bruce Metcalf was in architecture at that time. The architectural school

kind of fell apart, and there was this opportunity, without saying I'm going to be a metalsmith forever, to come over and see what it is all about. And bingo, he never left. And a whole bunch of people did that.

MS. YAGER: I didn't realize Bruce was one of your students.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, oh-[laughs]-yeah. Harriette, too.

MS. YAGER: Oh, really?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, that's why I mentioned her today. Yeah, undergraduate-Harriette was undergraduate, went to Tyler-

MS. YAGER: This is Harriette [Estelle] Berman?

MR. JERRY: Berman, yeah. And Bruce, undergraduate, went to Montana-some godforsaken place. Somewhere in the Northwest, and he didn't stay [Montana State University, Bozeman]. I don't know-he had some problems there that are just-the guy, the metal person was a building a house and was never around, and so he kind of got disgusted with the place then.

So he goes to New Paltz [State University of New York, New Paltz]-Bruce hangs out there-doesn't enter the school as a full-time student, but he gets to know Kurt Matzdorf really well and starts working for Kurt in this studio. And in the mean time, he gets enough money together for a couple of credits, so he can use the studio at the school. And so he did a fair amount of work; in fact, I think he did a major piece that won one of those sterling silversmith design things when it was still going. Then he goes on to Tyler and battles it out with Stanley. [Laughs.] They almost kill each other. [Laughs.] Now, I guess, from what Bruce told me-actually, Bruce is teaching there. Did you know he was teaching a course on aesthetics or something like that?

MS. YAGER: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MR. JERRY: I said, what?

MS. YAGER: But not at this point.

MR. JERRY: Probably not.

MS. YAGER: I think it-

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: -spiraled out.

MR. JERRY: Spiraled out. Well, Stanley treated him pretty badly. I don't know; I don't know what the whole dynamic of that was.

MS. YAGER: Who were some of the other students that you had during your-you were there for 30 years at-this is Syracuse University.

MR. JERRY: Thirty years-gosh, one of the things I would-a number of things I wasn't really particularly good at was keeping that network together of students-together in a sense that I would run into them, but I never kept a family-type thing going, and that I regret. So-

MS. YAGER: There is still time; I'm sure they would be happy to come out to Santa Fe. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Actually, I have a couple who want to come out and spend some time-students that I left in Syracuse.

A lot of them, as they scattered-certainly Bruce and Harriette-a lot of people went into higher education. Ron Verdon-a name you won't recognize-becomes head of the art school at Stout. Ron was a graduate student in metal, had been an undergraduate student with me at Stout, so he kind of followed me out to Syracuse. Humphrey Gilbert, another undergraduate student of mine, ends up a faculty member there, and he did his master's degree with Fred. Tim Alberg-Tim was a graduate of Stout, came to SU in the last 15 years anyhow, and now is a faculty member there. That's really-all of that is pretty weird.

I would say a fair amount of them went into higher education. A lot of them just drifted off. They got into other media. One of the kids went to BU [Boston University] for a master's degree and ended up in glass. And I think probably a university is a different kind of place than a place like School for American Craftsmen; it's a whole different kind of thing, and it took me awhile to adjust to it, but-because I was used to being in a studio every day, all day, completely consumed by it-not so in the university. Kids had other things to do and the-you know, it

can be a little distracting.

But on the other hand, those students, especially in a good art school, get exposed to all sorts of stuff-that's stuff they have never seen before; they get involved in this media that later on becomes their main-I ran into a woman, you know, in Baltimore's crafts scene. She has been out there for 20 years, 25 years. She was a metal student and she was a major basket maker. You know, she just-in her fiber experience at Syracuse, she touched down that, and then as things evolved in her life, that's what she ended up-and she makes these beautiful baskets. Yeah, went to Norway, did some more fiber stuff after school was over, and there she is. [Laughs.] It was fine.

And a lot of them are-a lot of them are in their own studios one way or another. But I can't give you any major names much beyond. I may remember some more.

MS. YAGER: I remember-well, someone mentioned Eureka Village Square or something in Syracuse-that there were a lot of students of yours at one time.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, Eureka is like Shop One might have been, although Shop One was a little more serious sort of place. It has been running for, oh, my gosh, 25, 30 years in Syracuse, doing most of their buying at the major craft fairs. But that is true; there are probably a handful of ex-students in that place.

MS. YAGER: Can you talk about Arthur Pulos? He had been teaching silversmithing or metalsmithing at one point, I believe.

MR. JERRY: Arthur? I don't know his whole career very well. He was out here in the West for a while and-let's see, where did he come from? I'm not even sure about his beginnings. I was aware of him probably as a late teen. I went to the American Craft Council conference in Geneva [Wisconsin]. And Arthur was there and was at a session-a metal session-and I was sitting in the back, and I remember him standing up in the back and they were talking about some kind of technical thing.

And Arthur had probably-almost at the same time, he set up the silver studio at-I want to say Shelburne [Shelburne, VT], but that's not right; it's the other-it was the one in the South-famous reconstruction-

MS. YAGER: Williamsburg?

MR. JERRY: Williamsburg. He-whichever the powers-to-be decided, they wanted a working silver studio, and it must have been a major gift of equipment. They didn't know how to deal with it; didn't know what it was or how it worked. So they hired Arthur at one point, when he was younger. And Arthur breaks up all-breaks open all these boxes and stuff right out on the grass up there. And they set up a thing and they work outside. The silver thing isn't even up yet.

So he's the researcher, and it turns out that's where his forte really was, I think, in research. He researched all of that. He's been mostly self-taught. But he did-have you seen any of the work at all? Hollowware, flatware-he was in a world's fair, he was in-oh, boy, he was in some major-some major shows of the day working in metal, teaching out here somewhere. Somebody asked him to come to Syracuse to teach in the metal shop-this is before John Marshall. So yeah, he said, "Well, it's good, I have a family"-so out they went.

As he's headed towards Syracuse, the head of the industrial department dies. It's now August. So the school didn't know what the hell to do. You know, we can't find anybody and much less an industrial designer. So they said, "Arthur, can you handle this for a while so we can get this thing straightened out?" He says, "Sure, I'll do that." And then they went off and found another metal person-[laughs]-which was Barry Merritt-for a year.

Arthur goes into the industrial design studio, as thorough and disciplined a guy as he is, and he made a career out of it-he never turned back. He did major-he is a world figure in industrial design. And he always liked to take a shot at me, as he felt my work was self-indulgent and elitist, and he would-and he knew that I knew where he came from-[laughs]. But it was a natural transition for him.

I think he started to do some flatware, and where are you going to go with that? You know, are you going to make flatware by hand? I don't think so. So you better-you're a designer. And then he had some hollowware pieces in a faculty show early on, and what happened? A major medical instrument company-I'm trying to think of their name; they're based outside of Syracuse-asked him would they design-would he take on the project of designing some medical instruments that they needed. And those pieces are now in the Museum of Modern Art as an example of some America's best industrial design. But that was his first major commission.

So he teaches, he heads the department, he builds his department up big time-there are four or five faculty members full-time. In the meantime, he heads up his own studio in town. He has got like six, eight people working for him. He's got people come from Japan-I mean he was just-he was a major player. He was so busy I

hardly saw him. I saw him at meetings a lot and we would exchange words. And he was just flying fast all the time. Really nice guy. And then retired and his wife had Alzheimer's, and he thought he was going to be the caretaker and then down he went.

But I got all of his tools; got all of his silver. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: You got all of his tools?

MR. JERRY: I personally don't; no, I turned them over to the school, as I said earlier.

MS. YAGER: Well, yes, you were talking at lunch and we wanted to get this on tape.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, he didn't know what to do with them, and I said-

MS. YAGER: He had-you said that he had kept his silversmithing tools-

MR. JERRY: He kept the whole studio.

MS. YAGER: -all boxed up-

MR. JERRY: All boxed up-materials-

MS. YAGER: -and was hoping to-

MR. JERRY: -everything but a striker. Well, there probably is a striker in there, too. He had it all there.

MS. YAGER: And he was hoping to return to silversmithing.

MR. JERRY: He was hoping to return; he was hoping-

MS. YAGER: And then decided not to.

MR. JERRY: Well, he got this commission to do these two major histories of American industrial design-a publisher came to him. And he had done some writing earlier that got some notice somewhere, probably in an industrial design journal somewhere. And he was also structuring a class in the history of industrial design, because there was no academic chunk that you could call that. And he got really heavily involved in that, and that was it. He never turned back after that. Lovely man.

MS. YAGER: I have a statement that he had written an essay for *Craft Horizons* in 1958-

MR. JERRY: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MS. YAGER: -which is before you were there with him.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, that's true.

MS. YAGER: But it says-he's talking about, "the colonial smith used every device conceivable, saw no reason to mark it as hand-wrought. Today the industrial designer is obligated to serve society, not to reflect it. The craftsman who considers himself an artist, on the other hand, owes his major allegiance to himself. He serves us best by synthesizing and reflecting." Sounded like him.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah. Arthur also wrote-if you were interested in a little more about him-he was asked to do a crit in *Metalsmith* or in *American Craft*-one of the two-not too many years ago when a commission was made to architects to design coffee pot, teapot, sugar bowl, creamer, and tray. Do you remember that? They are very architectural-looking. Okay.

So that was done in Italy, and those pieces were made by various silversmiths, not the designers, for the most part. And then there were photographs of that, and not long afterwards, he's-[laughs]-he's given the photographs and asked to do an-and there is an article about that and it's not very flattering-[laughs]. Should have given him American metal-you know, he really speaks up for, you know-not necessarily a cool thing to do.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, I don't know how all the architects are getting all the opportunities-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, well, there is one on jewelry, too. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Yes, that one really frosted me.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, exactly.

MS. YAGER: Architects designing rings.

MR. JERRY: However, your-when we were talking about shows that I saw as a young person, somewhere along the line I also saw that major show of Dali's.

MS. YAGER: Salvador Dali-I saw that show-

MR. JERRY: [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: That was fabulous. In Detroit-did you see it in Detroit?

MR. JERRY: No, I saw it in Chicago, I'm sure. Yeah. Now there is a-you know.

MS. YAGER: Yes. He gave the designs to artisans-

MR. JERRY: He gave the design-artisans to do, and then there was a fund-I didn't know that it was a fund-raiser. That was the purpose of the show-to send it around to museums to raise funds for the museums.

MS. YAGER: I didn't know that.

MR. JERRY: You didn't know that? Somebody found-somebody did a little research somewhere. Yeah, I read it in a book.

MS. YAGER: Very interesting.

MR. JERRY: Isn't that interesting?

MS. YAGER: When I was in high school, we did a field trip down to the Detroit Institute of Arts to see this show of Dali gold works that were incredible-the elephant with the long ostrich legs-

MR. JERRY: Well, the famous one with the lips.

MS. YAGER: Yes. And the pulsating heart.

MR. JERRY: Heart.

MS. YAGER: They were astounding.

MR. JERRY: It was absolutely enormous.

MS. YAGER: And it was-you know, incredible jewelers who were-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: -creating incredible renderings by Dali.

MR. JERRY: Fantastic. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: That's very-that's a much better fund-raiser for a museum than the things they are coming up with now.

MR. JERRY: Now. Oh, yeah. I mean, if I wouldn't-

MS. YAGER: That's interesting.

MR. JERRY: I felt a little ripped off went I went into the Folk Art Museum [New York, NY]. You know, huh? What? I had my daughter with me; I was going to show her, you know-huh-

MS. YAGER: You mean the "American Masterpiece Jewelry Exhibition" ["Masterpieces of American Jewelry," August 20, 2004 - January 23, 2005] right now?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah.

MS. YAGER: It's not related-it's a stretch to think of it as folk art.

MR. JERRY: It's a real-

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: -somebody's personal collection, yeah.

MS. YAGER: Let's see. Now, you talked-Arthur Pulos-you had said that all of his tools-

MR. JERRY: Went to the Universal-

MS. YAGER: He was trying to figure out what to do with them.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. He, in a casual remark at an opening-it must have been a faculty show-he said, "You know, I've got these tools I don't know what to do with." And he just sort of blurted it out, and, boy, my ears perked up, because I had just been given another gift-a similar situation-somebody who had been in the jewelry business for like 50 years gave everything to the studio. So I was sort of the in the mood. [Laughs.] I said, "I'll house it with your name on it, and I'll set it up for research, only graduate students." He said, "Fantastic, fantastic. When can you come and get it?" Well, I was over there the next morning and loaded up the truck full of stuff.

And it was a smattering. I think it certainly wasn't his whole-there were holes in it that he couldn't have worked with exactly what was there, so he must have lent stuff out to his kids or something or other. But a lot of it was stuff I didn't have-old stakes and hammer shapes that I didn't have, and those things are always helpful. So we made a cabinet, and it's still there.

MS. YAGER: Does it have his name on it somewhere?

MR. JERRY: It has his name on it, yeah.

MS. YAGER: And you told me that he just couldn't give up the torch.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, I was sort of surprised because he had-in his thoroughness, he even had opened a lot of the boxes in his garage and put a big four-by-eight sheet of ply wood out, and he had these things all laid out and wanted to make sure that-you know, that this was in good shape and that I really-that we could use them, or he should just throw them away, and I thought-scooped it all up.

So I'm loading this thing up, and I saw the b-tank with prestolite-light thing on it, and I walk over-he said, "No, no, no." [Laughs.] He said, "I think I can use that," and he got more possessive by the second. It's-

MS. YAGER: I think I would feel that way. A jeweler's saw and a torch-you can always find some reason to-

MR. JERRY: Oh, of course. Oh, sure-a file-

MS. YAGER: -need them.

MR. JERRY: -you can always use that good stuff.

MS. YAGER: We were just talking about if there was a power outage. Well, we could always cook with the acetylene torch.

MR. JERRY: Oh, sure. Sure. Sure. [Laughs.]

So Arthur-Arthur is for me-just finishing up on him. He's tucked away in industrial design and heavily committed. He was a good faculty member; he was a good-as they say-faculty citizen, in that he served on a lot of committees, and that's where I saw him the most. We weren't socially connected. And I-most of the time when he saw me, we had good respect for each other, but he always would take his shot at me for-

MS. YAGER: For being old times.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, being old time and, you know, making a few special objects and-[laughs]-kept me straight. But I would have-from time to time I would have his faculty come over. Some of them had worked in silver companies before as part of their career thing, and they would come over and do a rendering thing for the kids-something like that, some kind of drawing thing, which was really nice. They were very good at that. Boy.

MS. YAGER: What is your teaching philosophy?

MR. JERRY: [Laughs.] Oh, Lord, I really hate those questions.

MS. YAGER: That's a big one.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah. I might need the night to think about it.

MS. YAGER: What would be a favorite lesson plan, or one that you found very successful?

MR. JERRY: Well, I had-when I was at Syracuse-I don't really remember a structure that I had for the metal shop there in Wisconsin. It's just been too long. At Syracuse I had 30 credits to deal with, so that meant 10 three-credit courses that had structure, and less structure as time went by. So by the time they hit the last three credits, they hopefully were moving out on a more personal kind of direction. But up to that time, I structured most everything around technical stuff-that's how I would walk through the whole thing.

And that and crits-after each piece was done, everything stopped and we'd have a crit on the work. And then in the meantime, of course, I'm trying to acquaint them with work that's already been done-both contemporary and historical stuff-as I best I could with the facilities that I had. In fact, in the end, Barbara and I-Barbara Walter became my partner and we'll talk more about that later-but Barbara has the shop now. And at that time, I had gone to England-we're moving away from what you just asked me; maybe we can deal with this tomorrow-but Syracuse had a program abroad and we owned buildings in Florence, in Barcelona, in London, and in one other country that I wasn't in. But anyhow-so I was asked to go to Italy.

So I go off to Italy for a summer and take a bunch of students and we do that. Another-two years later, I get asked to go to London, and that was for a year and a half, so now, that's void back on the campus. So that's when Barbara comes to the program.

Barbara was out in Oklahoma; she had come out of Southern Illinois-no, Northern Illinois-and she was teaching out there under some real difficult circumstances. So when she had a chance-when we picked her as my temporary replacement while I was away in London, she comes to the program and takes it over.

Then lo and behold, when I come back, she is still there-[laughs]-and without a job. And she eventually gets a full-time faculty position as a design teacher for the foundation program. And then we work it so she can split off with that, and she becomes part-time in the metal shop, part-time in the foundation. So I have now myself and half a person; that's how she enters into it. And during that time I was away, she handled the whole show. And as I was saying a minute ago, it was a technical thing, though; Barbara comes more from jewelry experience than anything. So she had some experiences with larger things but not very much. So there was a problem there.

So she brought in Heikki-Heikki was still teaching at the time.

MS. YAGER: This is Heikki Seppä?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, she brought in Heikki Seppä and a couple of other people to kind of keep that part of it alive, because I was doing both-I was doing both things equally, and I did right up until I quit-but I based it around technical things. The problems would change as I would get bored with them-you know, if I was piercing out something, I would build a problem around it. And the same thing with-sometimes we would just do technical stuff, but most of it was built around doing pieces of one sort or another. And I did stay away from casting for a while; I didn't introduce that until later on, because I knew damn well what would happen there-you know, that's all they would want to do. [Laughs.] And that was Hans's problem, too, I'm sure.

MS. YAGER: So seductive.

MR. JERRY: Well, you get stuck in it, you know. And it's a different media-you're working in a different medium, and kids gravitate to-because of the ease of dealing with the material, or seemingly ease of dealing with the materials-kind of like ceramics. They tend to glom onto that. But by placing it a little further along, I kept it equal with everything else, so that didn't happen.

And then we did the hollowware thing; it started off small and went through everything; tossed everything at them I could, and it took the 30 credits to do that, you know, especially if you did a major piece in connection with those things, whether it was reticulation, or granulation, or whatever it was; a lot of it was work time, like it is in another studio.

But a philosophy-I think as I see people-some of us-actually, some of my ex-students, which I dearly don't understand-being an example, I see, is a major-being an active example as a working artist in the studio is absolutely a must, and I think a program in Wisconsin that-none of them are making anything. I don't understand it. They are not actively involved in the field.

You know, I come in with SNAG's stuff-whenever I went, there was always something going on that I would bring into the studio, other than just the usual content there. And they knew that. We would go to shows together; we would go to Baltimore to see the craft show. Because I thought they should see that, as one of the phenomenon that is going on and didn't exist when I was a young person-talk about shows, show talent, show catalogues-all that stuff that people who are involved bring to it.

MS. YAGER: I read a quote that you kept your own work out of the metals department.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, pretty much I did. I did bring my own work as examples at the metal shop, and the reason for that goes back to my experience with Hans. He was pretty dictatorial, not only in how metal was worked but in the form-in the form, very much so. And that was one of the reasons-I didn't point out really strongly enough earlier-one of the reasons I went to Cranbrook-I had a whole portfolio of stuff I wasn't allowed to make. And when I went to Cranbrook-

MS. YAGER: I'm not sure what you mean by that.

MR. JERRY: He didn't like them; he didn't like the shapes.

MS. YAGER: You mean, you had done drawings, but you were not allowed to execute them?

MR. JERRY: I had done the drawings, and presented them, and no.

MS. YAGER: Goodness.

MR. JERRY: And I was-I considered myself at the time at the level-whatever level I was at, which I was probably the best student he had during that time, and then not counting Olaf or any of those people who went before me, but, you know, we got along famously. But there were things that he just couldn't tolerate. So I said, this is ridiculous.

MS. YAGER: Yeah. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: This is absolutely ridiculous. Well, the other part of it was we had a painter that was attached to the School for American Craftsmen who also taught painting-not in the craft school but in the fine arts school-but he also taught design and he was very good at it. And he knew what was going on in these shops. You know, the Scandinavian thing, and he never said anything about it, but by the problems he would give, they were all jarring-[laughs]-"Have you looked at this, have you looked at that, maybe you should looking right here," and-

We never-we, as students, never once, outside of art history, had any kind of slide presentation at all of any work of anybody's. There was one kind of work going on and there were-you know, fortunately there was a lot of room there, but after a while it gets pretty boring. I made my last Scandinavian piece the first year I got out of school; that was it, and I have never made another domestic piece of hollowware like that. It was all shiny and clean, and beautifully done and, you know, people loved it and so on, but that's-I can't work that way. I knew then that that was the end of that story.

But a lot of those design tendencies I still have. I can tell when I sit down to draw. I say, where in hell is this coming from? Oh, Jesus-[laughs]-I'm doing the flatware thing right now and it leaks out. I have a commission to do a place setting for eight, all different-really nice-for a woman in a Baltimore. I just did the first two pieces, and I just had to watch it all the time, you know, because I was headed down that trail.

So I'm very conscious of that, and I think that quote really comes from the-I didn't want to do that to students; I didn't want to do that students. And you know, they would ask-asked all the time, and once in a while I would do-if I was doing a history thing, let's say, I would handle the metal in this art history-metal history-class that we had. Barbara would handle everything from 1960 on, and I would handle from art nouveau up, the best I could with what I had. And, you know, during those presentations, I would have some of my own work ahead. That was about as much I would-

MS. YAGER: I remembered-

MR. JERRY: Except in demonstrations. See, that's the other thing, I would do demos. In order to make them go fast, I would have multiples in various stages so that I wouldn't consume too much time, and just in those demos I suppose you could get some notion of where-and, of course, there are going to be faculty shows. [Laughs.] And then students would see the work. So I think they got a sense of it, but I didn't-

MS. YAGER: It didn't-

MR. JERRY: I didn't want to make a-

MS. YAGER: Legislate-

MR. JERRY: -a program out of it.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, yeah.

MR. JERRY: Oh, Lord, that's awful.

MS. YAGER: I felt that way about Alma Eikerman, and it was very strict.

MR. JERRY: Oh! Oh, geez, there is another one. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: Now, you worked with Alma?

MS. YAGER: No, I went to-I was considering grad school, and I was told to go down there-

MR. JERRY: Oh, of course.

MS. YAGER: To Indiana and-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. YAGER: I was terrified that she-I had this nightmare-[laughs]-I remember-when I was down there that she was going to ask me for every thought I ever had and she was going to put it in the drawer by her desk and lock it up. And in two years, when I was done, I wouldn't want any of it anyway. So I didn't go to grad school for about six more years-[laughs].

MR. JERRY: Oh, really?

MS. YAGER: Because I don't want anybody messing with my artist's soul; I really wanted to stay away from that.

MR. JERRY: Well, she was a piece of work, that lady.

MS. YAGER: She was strict.

MR. JERRY: Oh, she called me-well, I never forget it; I was in Wisconsin at Stout, and I must have been contemplating either leaving or hiring a second person. There was-as it happens sometimes, a university or the unit you are working for, they want this position that looks like it will happen but they haven't got permission yet, but you've got to start looking or you're going to be in big trouble.

Well, as it turned out, they did get permission, but I was already-the word was already out that there might be a spot. Boy, oh, boy, she called me; she said, "How come you haven't called me!" I mean, she yelled at me on the phone. She says, "I've got all these wonderful girls down here, you know, what have you got against women!" I mean, Jesus Christ. I said, "Alma, whoa, whoa, cool down, I haven't got the position yet." "Oh, oh," you know-"Well, I-well, certainly, you call me as soon as"-okay, okay-[laughs]-I give up. She was something.

But she turned out a lot of good students. It took them all a long time to get out of her thing-

MS. YAGER: Yes, yeah.

MR. JERRY: Do you know who I just saw-had a show here-God, I wish this stuff was here; it was really fabulous; it was from Georgia. Richard Mafong.

MS. YAGER: Ah, yes.

MR. JERRY: Have you ever met him? He's kind of a quiet, gentle soul.

MS. YAGER: No, I never have. I met Jon Eric Riis not too long ago, but-

MR. JERRY: Well, he and Eric have a show here on Canyon Road.

MS. YAGER: Both of them? Oh.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, there was fiber stuff; it was a really nice show. Oh, gee. And what Richard-Richard just got connected maybe-oh, by the look of the work, I would say maybe a year now, maybe a little longer, with a younger guy who was a pattern maker. So he is a precision woodworker basically; that's what he is-a trade-it's a trade thing, but it's diminishing because of computers.

But he ran his own-he was a freelancer; he would do this for different companies. These are making-I don't know if you've ever seen them; they are beautiful; they make them out of mahogany-a part for a casting so that they can sand cast that same part 1,000 times. But it's done within an inch of its life and he's doing these big, beautiful wood chaturm [ph] shapes, and Richard is doing the metalwork on, then lacquered. Oh, my Lord, are they gorgeous. Oh! They are in the \$8,000 to \$12,000 range. [Laughs.] And somebody said, "Boy, I hope they don't dry out while they're here in Santa Fe." But anyhow, they were gorgeous; they were just-he is retired now,

Richard is. Yeah, it was great seeing him; I haven't seen him in years and years, and years, and years.

MS. YAGER: I remember the work that they did together-Eric Riis and Richard Mafong-

MR. JERRY: Together, yeah.

MS. YAGER: The textile and metalwork.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah. These pieces were just absolutely beautiful.

So I get to see people here in this little town of 7,000, whatever. People come through here all the time. Actually Harold O'Connor was just here.

MS. YAGER: I think that there is a magnetic force in this area-

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Yeah, you think it's just swirling around [makes beeping noise].

MS. YAGER: -that draws metalsmiths.

MR. JERRY: Harold showed me a nice thing. He handed me his business card, and it's a CD-ROM. It's got his images on the business card. You put it in the machine.

MS. YAGER: Wow. Wonderful.

MR. JERRY: Fifteen images. [Laughs.] What's it coming to? Huh?

I could add a couple of things within the timeframe that we're talking about. I'm just thinking, as I'm looking at the cover of that jewelry book, is that as a freshman student with Lawrence Copeland in tow, we go to Greenwich Village. I don't know whether-I may have mentioned this before, but I see all that is going on in New York, which I had no idea at all because we're cloistered away in this little bit of Denmark-[laughs]-up in Rochester. Seeing that kind of work really helped balance out a little bit. Of course, it also probably had a little to do with my escaping to Cranbrook for a few minutes. By then I knew what I wanted to do, so when I came back, I wasn't so pliable.

Yeah, it's a pretty funny-it's not so funny-I guess it happens all the time. People are so committed to a thing they believe they've got the answers to the whole thing, but-[laughs].

MS. YAGER: It must be hard to be a teacher and, sort of, keep your hands off, you know.

MR. JERRY: Well, yeah. It's very hard. And along those lines, I think one of the hardest things I had to learn as a studio teacher in metal was how to deal with mistakes, because I hadn't made any, as strange as that sounds. I was always finished first; pieces were perfect, according to the standard at the time, and I never had to fix anything. So now all of the sudden I'm faced with 20 students that need fixing. You know, this breaks, that melts. So putting out those fires, I got-it really added a lot to my own repertoire, especially things like that technically. Oh, my God. Things you don't have to deal with. [Laughs.]

And as a student, I would see Hans do that with other students, but-emergency things where he was running, it was such an emergency. I don't think I ever had to do that, but I really learned about-I taught myself how to deal with all of those crazy things that happen in a studio full of students who are sometimes half-asleep. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: The thing that I always admired about Jack Prip in the one year that I had studied with him was that he would give an assignment and everyone would come in with a wildly different thing, because it was just so open-ended, and he never imposed-

MR. JERRY: The problem that he gave you.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, yeah.

MR. JERRY: I am really-always regretted not being able to-I had lots of conversations with him, and he was always around Ronny's place, and they were working on that Hickok thing together when I was there as a student.

MS. YAGER: What's the Hickok thing?

MR. JERRY: Oh, okay, well, Hickok jewelry was in-Hickok was a major men's jewelry manufacturer and their plant was in Rochester. At one point, Ron and Jack take on a design contract for them. And I don't know exactly how it went, but they didn't work at the site-at the plant site; they worked in Shop One. And they-I don't know whether

they were-it was the number of pieces there were to do. There was some boundaries on it.

Anyhow, they produced men's jewelry for Hickok, one-off pieces that could be turned into production, or not and they must have made hundreds, the two of them. And they would give like half the day on it. So half the day they would work-for two years or so-they would work on these pieces, then the other half they would do their own work, Ronny through Shop One and actually Jack, too; Jack sold stuff in Shop One. And then that project came to some kind of natural end, and then eventually Hickok went belly up.

But it was an old, old-they used to sponsor local-not local-regional shows at the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery. They were very active in design, you know, and in the art scene there, but yeah, that's when I first met Jack; they were doing that project. Trying to give Hickok a new look, and I think that's what the plant was hoping for, too, that somehow they would get a new niche in the market that they didn't have; I really don't know.

MS. YAGER: Do you think that companies are doing that now? Are there companies?

MR. JERRY: I don't know, I don't know. The American design thing is a really-I always thought-again, from my background, that there is a-Europeans have a much healthier approach. I mean, people were designing stuff for clay; they were potters, they were people that had some sensitivity in materials; the same thing with metal, and that is why they were so successful for so long. In America, we separate the material in the process from the visual thing, and I think that's-I think it has caused a lot of problems-a lot of throw-away stuff, stuff that doesn't work, stuff you wished would go away. [Laughs.] I think the industrial designers-I mean, they have one hell of a responsibility.

I think Reed & Barton-I don't think they ever went back to that program that Jack was doing for them and it just didn't sell so, eh, who needs that, you know.

MS. YAGER: I always wonder about that it didn't sell anything, because I'm convinced that if the taste level is so not there, then you could-people would buy whatever the three products were offered were.

MR. JERRY: I know what you mean, yeah, variation.

MS. YAGER: I just-I don't believe that people are that highly developed in their taste that they go, "No, we definitely would like to stay with this; we don't," you know-when I was growing up as a kid, my mother had 1950-style furniture, and she was not-you know, it was just on the market; it was out there and you bought it because it was there. It wasn't that she was seeking some specialty store.

MR. JERRY: She didn't have to go-uh-huh, uh-huh [in agreement].

MS. YAGER: And so sometimes I wonder if the real challenge is to convince the company or the marketing people that this could sell just as easily as what you have-

MR. JERRY: The marketing people run those programs. It's the marketing people that seem to have control over that whole thing and say, "I can't sell it," you know.

MS. YAGER: I guess it's a short-term versus long-term thing, because if they-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: It would take a certain amount of time to introduce it to the market, and that's the part that they're not willing to wait out.

MR. JERRY: Well, with silver companies-typically would go to all the colleges and universities, and they would go and they would give away-there would be some give-away to get the girls to come in. So the girls would come in, and they were asked to pick out a pattern, and that was the tools that they used. They had thousands of those responses.

I think the problem in the silver thing was that people bought what they did because-not because it was more functional or necessarily even beautiful; it just gave them a past they didn't have. And some form of that-

MS. YAGER: Or some association with their mother or their grandmother-

MR. JERRY: In association with stability, wealth-

MS. YAGER: Hollywood. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Whatever.

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: And that's why the most-when I was at Reed & Barton, their most ornate stuff-and, boy, it was ornate-the candelabras and stuff. He said, "You know where all of this goes? It goes to Texas." People want to display something that just shows some kind of tradition, but it's not there, and it's just-

MR. YAGER: So somehow the artists and designers are not doing our job.

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] And then stainless steel came along, and they made stainless steel look like silver; they went through that. Those poor tools slamming out that stuff-[laughs]-stainless is, like, hard as a rock-[laughs]-I mean, the technology, they can do anything. But now things are changing. Of course, the Germans, and Europeans started-there's all kinds of nice-looking flatware, mostly in stainless. [Laughs.]

MR. YAGER: Not by us, you mean.

MR. JERRY: No, not by us. Not by us ever again, I don't think, the way I hear it. Even, you know, Ron-do you know the pattern *Vision* that Ron Pearson did for International?

MR. YAGER: No.

MR. JERRY: Okay, well, there was-I think I still have it-there was a flatware competition, probably 35 years ago. Arthur Pulos was in it, Ron Pearson was in it, Lee Dessau [ph] was a colleague of mine, a design colleague-an ex-Cranbrook guy-but he is a designer; he's in it. And I don't know who sponsored it. It may have been one of the silver companies. But anyhow, part of the deal was, if you were chosen, they would manufacture your thing.

So Ron's piece, which was a simply forged piece-he designed it right on the handle. But part of the deal was that the handle and the knife-it's a simple-

[Audio break.]

MS. YAGER: This is Jan Yager interviewing Michael Jerry in the artist's home and studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on November 16, 2004, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number four, session number two.

Michael, you had given me a few things to look over over the night, and one of them was a very wonderful article by W. Scott Braznell, "The Early Career of Ronald Hayes Pearson and the Post-World War II Revival of American Silversmithing and Jewelry Making." It's a really well-written article, great research; reveals a lot. One of the most interesting things that I found in there-well, there are many interesting things, but one thing that I thought was very interesting, is that-because you had worked with Ron Pearson-Ron Pearson, as a child, spent summers at a crafts colony in Milton-on-Hudson in Poughkeepsie, New York, and the colony was founded in 1906 in Racine, Wisconsin. I thought that was such an interesting connection.

MR. JERRY: Wow, that's-

MS. YAGER: And it was connected-it was founded by Danish-American metalsmiths, Anderson H.-Anders H. Anderson and Johan Morton. And then Ron Pearson's father established a ranch in Taos, New Mexico. These are such interesting little connections to me-

MR. JERRY: Wow! Yeah, it's been a while since I read that article, so, yeah, whew, for goodness sakes.

MS. YAGER: These migratory paths that are very clear cut.

MR. JERRY: Oh, my goodness, yeah, yeah.

MS. YAGER: So I thought that was so interesting that you, coming from Racine, and then working with a man who had also got his training in Racine, although there had not really been a connection sort of-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, not at all.

MS. YAGER: Because he was born in New York.

MR. JERRY: There wasn't any remnants of that, certainly-as a kid growing up there, I-the only thing that I recall, because the museum was remodeled and furnished by a WPA craft project. And that was the only project that I was aware of as a kid, you know. So this is-this thing that you were just reading is kind of a new thing for me.

MS. YAGER: And the indication of Danish silversmithing so early on in that area, in 1906-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, that's a puzzler also. You know, certainly, Wisconsin was-there are more Danes-there are more Danish descendants living in Racine than there are in Copenhagen.

MS. YAGER: Goodness.

MR. JERRY: In the last figure; so the whole-the community was, what-all the bakeries were Danish, you know-some of the customs-you walk into a home any time during the day and there would be Danish pastry and coffee-the people conducted business over that-[laughs]. Oh, yeah, a major Danish community. So I'm not surprised, although those names don't ring a bell with me. That probably was in the early '30s, I would guess-early to late '30s. Is there a date on that?

MS. YAGER: Nineteen six.

MR. JERRY: Nineteen six. Oh, gee-[laughs]-I guess that's very early.

MS. YAGER: But they planted some seeds that flourished.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right.

MS. YAGER: Definitely before your time.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, that's my father's time.

MS. YAGER: Right, yeah, yeah.

MR. JERRY: -when he was growing up in Milwaukee.

MS. YAGER: Before we go on any further, there were a couple of names we were trying to come up with yesterday. One of them was Richard Pousette-Dart-was the metalsmith that I wondered if you had any knowledge of.

MR. JERRY: I just, in fact-as I was looking for this new jewelry book, I came across his name. It doesn't ring a bell at all and not even in the slightest.

MS. YAGER: And the metalsmith that you were trying to recall his name that escaped you for a minute was Bob Ebendorf.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, I came across Bob when the SNAG thing was put together-when we would start those first meetings-I wasn't at the meeting in Chicago when Philip Morton had this idea and he gathered a few people and then they agreed to meet again Boston and would be-would, the few that were there, introduce others.

And so Ron Pearson contacted me-would you like to be part of this? That's how I became part of the-so when they had the Boston meeting-which was an organizational meeting-that was my first contact with the idea of creating the SNAG group.

MS. YAGER: Do you remember any of the discussions?

MR. JERRY: Not really. There was-I know Stanley Lechtzin was also there, and I know as things progressed, not only in Washington but later on in Saint Paul, even though we had a conference, but there was still a lot of organizational stuff to go through. And there was a group that wanted to make this organization a very elite group and that somehow people would have to be judged-

MS. YAGER: Based on some sort of a guild system.

MR. JERRY: A guild system, and the person that headed that up was Kurt Matzdorf. Now, if you know Kurt's background, he graduated, I think, from the University of Iowa and is basically a self-taught person. The person there at the time-there was a metal person there at the time, whose name I don't remember but it's just as well, evidently had some real personal problems that he was struggling with. So Kurt was pretty much left to his own-so he designed his program, did it, and graduated-[laughs].

But he struggled hard for what he had, and he was very adamant about making this organization a very elite kind of thing. And Stanley was on his side for a while. And it got down in Saint Paul-people were getting up out of their chairs and heading for each other's throats. Oh, it was-and that's when Stanley walked out; that was the end of his relationship with SNAG. He did not participate, did not encourage, but as-of course, as the years went by, he mellowed-mainly encouraged his students to participate, in terms of writing articles for the little journal that came out in the beginning and then, of course, as it progressed into the magazine.

And then, of course, he's been at conferences and talked, and so forth. But he's never been a player that way, because they opened up-of course, people realized then that in order to have a functioning-you need resources. So how are you going to do that? You have to have a broader base than the 10 of us that were sitting there. I mean, it was ridiculous, and then they started mentioning names. Well, who would you allow in? "Well, no, no-we can't have her because, you know, she's not very serious. She works at her kitchen table at night." I remember Stanley saying, "That kind of person we're going to have in the organization?"

It was like, well-and I think there may have even been at that time-that remark may have not been directed at a woman; I think it was Richard Mawdsley. Richard was starting out then, and I don't know about his background, but he's a lot younger than the rest of us, so, you know, and he's making these wonderful, complex things, and he was doing it at his dining room table. [Laughs.] He's living in a small place. Was that going to be the measure of this thing? And it was-it went on, and on, and on. And I think Brent Kington was president at that time. I think he got elected, if I remember right. Brent was running the thing at that point. Phil Morton had already stepped back. And it was hard.

Have we interviewed Brent yet?

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, well, I'm sure in his story, there'll be some about that situation, and his memory will be better-etched better in his mind than mine, because he was trying to direct this boat. And, boy, it was a struggle. And Kurt had these standards-I don't know where he got them from, but, boy, he-and then even later on, he got in-he was chairman of the educational committee that met prior to the SNAG conference at the Metropolitan in New York I don't know how many years ago-20-plus years ago.

And I remember being on the committee and sitting with him, and Bob Ebendorf was on board at New Paltz at the time, and trying to talk to Kurt about, you know, he wanted an approved curriculum and-like the Industrial Design Society of America has a basic curriculum that they used to measure programs around the country and they sanction or don't. And that's the kind of thing that he wanted. And, of course, it never flew anywhere.

MS. YAGER: Did he get any training beyond the self-teaching in Ohio?

MR. JERRY: He seemed to have-and it may be because of one of his youngsters. His son went into architecture, and most of his son's training was in England. So there is some connection between England and Kurt. And if you look at the work, you can tell; it's pretty conservative stuff, beautifully done, and as I said yesterday, Bruce Metcalf, who can't be more than 100 miles away in terms of what he does and was doing then from what Kurt was doing. [Laughs.] But they got along famously and there is a Bruce-or one of his first writings for either *Craft Horizons* or for *Metalsmith* was a biography with pictures on Kurt Matzdorf. It's somewhere. It would be very interesting again, now that years have passed.

But it was-the beginnings of that organization-it was a bit of a struggle.

MS. YAGER: I know for a while they had the distinguished member.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, that was probably a-one of the compromises that was made. But they needed membership fees to do the kind of things they wanted to do. The conferences cost an incredible amount of money. And as I said yesterday, they passed the hat to pay for the conference. [Laughs.] I remember being quite shocked-but I shouldn't have been, because where were the resources going to come forth for all of this? But it didn't go down easy. [Laughs.] Not at all. And Phil Morton's role in all of this was very strange. To this day I can't figure him out. He stopped-he's a Minnesota person and-

MS. YAGER: He has passed away now.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, well, that's an interesting connection with me at Syracuse. He had such a varied background-the metal and the jewelry thing was sort of one stage in his life. And he did it, and he did it with all the vigor and discipline that he could manage, and then he moved-he became a psychiatrist or something in the end.

MS. YAGER: I think he may have had some of that training beforehand.

MR. JERRY: Yes.

MS. YAGER: In fact-

MR. JERRY: In sociology-I think he has a degree in sociology or he had a degree in sociology.

MS. YAGER: On the back cover of the book that he wrote [*Contemporary Jewelry: A Studio Handbook*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970], he mentions that he-and I've spoken with him one time-he learned his

jewelry skills-his wife was taking a jewelry course-a WPA jewelry course-

MR. JERRY: Oh, for goodness sakes.

MS. YAGER: And he came to the class. And that's how he learned to solder and work metal, and that began-

MR. JERRY: Well, the big surprise for-I shouldn't say surprise-I never quite understood why he disappeared. He put those meetings-to get those SNAG meetings together when we were forming the thing, he ran the meetings, he had a tremendous amount of enthusiasm, he seemed to be flexible, he was not joining one side or the other. I thought he did very well. By the time the conference in Saint Paul came around, he was already gone.

MS. YAGER: But he served as an incredible catalyst.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely. It would never had happened-

MS. YAGER: And that may have been his only-

MR. JERRY: Without Philip Morton, it would have never happened.

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: It may have later on in the history of the thing-

MS. YAGER: Not in the same way.

MR. JERRY: But generally artists don't like to put organizations, or even belong to them, much less put all that work in it. And actually, when Brent took over-Brent had a lot of organizational skills, a tremendous amount of organizational skills, which proved later-he became director of the school of art for Southern Illinois and I'm sure ran it very well.

But Phil just disappeared, and then I hadn't heard about him-he came by Menomonee at one time when I was teaching. And he wanted me to read the first couple of chapters of the book. And he had-actually, he had mailed me some copies. So I read it, and then he stopped by-he just came off the highway one day, and we met at a restaurant, and we talked about the book. And I don't even remember anything about it particularly, whether I made some suggestions or whatever, but he seemed to be satisfied, so he went on to Minnesota.

MS. YAGER: Now, this book was called *Contemporary Jewelry: A Craftsman's Handbook*-

MR. JERRY: Right.

MS. YAGER: Holt Rhinehart, Winston, 1970.

MR. JERRY: And then it was republished, I think, on several occasions. For those of us that were teaching beginning students, it was certainly one of the major choices as a backup to what we were doing in class. So I used it as a textbook for a while.

MS. YAGER: You were cited in that book-

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: As one of the influential, young contemporary jewelers in America, and I think there are 10 of you.

MR. JERRY: There are some pictures.

MS. YAGER: Eleven.

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: And I was struck that so many were-had Midwest connections, but now I'm starting to see these connections.

MR. JERRY: Well, he was a Midwesterner, too. And he had also some relationship-old-time relationship with Ron Pearson. And I don't remember-I don't remember exactly what the-but they knew each other pretty well, at least in those early-at a time when I was a student probably, but I don't know when-I don't remember what the connection was.

But as it turned out, I'm now-as I move on and I'm in Syracuse teaching-oh, probably for 10, maybe 15 years out from my beginnings at Syracuse-it turns up that Phil Morton is revising his book. And I didn't get a notice on it,

but Barbara Walter, who was working with me by then, she had gotten this notice from Phil Morton for some pictures to upgrade the book. And I looked at the address, and he's in a dinky little town north of Syracuse. I said, "Oh, my God, what? What's going on?" And it turned out-I think it was a healthcare facility of some sort-he was already declining and-but I never saw him while I was there. He never came-he didn't come to the school. It was just really strange. [Laughs.] He just had a lot of things in his life he wanted to do, I guess, and he was sort of portioning it out. He had a lot of-

MS. YAGER: Get the plates spinning and-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MS. YAGER: And then get some more plates spinning.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, exactly, exactly-a very interesting guy.

MS. YAGER: They gave him an award of recognition-SNAG-recently, which was well deserved.

MR. JERRY: They were hoping to get-when he was in bad shape, I know, at one of the conferences, they were hoping to get him there, and his daughter came, I think.

MS. YAGER: Yes, yes. At the end of the tape yesterday, you were in the middle of talking about a flatware piece that Ron Pearson had designed called *Vision*.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, mm-hmm.

MS. YAGER: Can you talk a little bit about that?

MR. JERRY: Well, I wasn't in his studio when he did that, and I don't remember the sequence of events here. But certainly that competition produced a catalogue-a small catalogue with pictures of the artists and the pieces, and I think even some-a little bit of writing about why they looked the way they did for each of them. And somehow I acquired that. It's all in shambles at this point because their binders come apart, but Ron was part of that.

In fact, a group of metal people had gotten together at the invitation of one of the silver companies, and they were invited-they were invited to-I don't know whether it was International-it was probably International Silver Company. And a group of them went and spent two or three weeks at International. And I think what International was hoping to do was to somehow out of the group get some employees-some designers-

MS. YAGER: A talent search?

MR. JERRY: I think that was their goal. However, in the meantime, this competition is going on, and I think that-I think there is a connection between that competition and what International was looking for.

And so they went to the plant, and Ron talked about it in the studio later when I started to work for him, how they-the means of production was not part of the experience of people working by hand. So they got introduced to all of that and how the corporation worked. And a couple of them stayed on-those names just faded into-they went into the design side of it. But they did promise to make one of the patterns out of the competition, and they chose Ron's to do that.

And his pieces were-you can tell in an instant that a craftsman was at work here, because there are very logical forgings. And I'll bet he even designed them while he was hammering on them.

The unique thing about that particular project, in terms of making that flatware-the industry had been-it was used to producing-making a knife and a fork and a spoon in a very particular way, and knives were always hollow-handled-the old industry-a fork-a cajillion years, as far as I know, from the beginning right up into contemporary times and they are still doing them. The knives were hollow, and the blades were inserted and electronically welded in place, and usually the handles were filled with cement or tar, or something to give them some weight.

Well, Ron's piece had-of course, came with the handle. It wasn't hollow; it was a very simple forged element with a stainless steel blade probably just pressure-forged into a hole. Now, what was the industry going to do? They had promised to do this, and there was quite a-Ron said it was quite a struggle to try to get-because they had been used to doing things in a very-the whole plant was set up for it.

MS. YAGER: The front and the back, and a stamping machine.

MR. JERRY: There was tons of equipment. You know, the two halves of the knives were stamped; they had been

brought together; they were soldered the long way around. The buffing machines came in, and, you know, they had had a city block, probably, dedicated to making-[laughs]-flatware that way.

And so he came along with this idea, and they provided the engineers, and they came up with a way of locking that stainless steel handle into that-or stainless steel blade into that solid handle. And it was like-I mean, to hear Ron tell the story-it was like he turned the place upside down to try to get this down. Because it was just not in their vocabulary at all. So that was interesting.

In fact, I've tried to find pieces of it just to have, and I haven't been able to come across it. I came across Jack Prip's pattern for Reed & Barton-contemporary one. Some kid came in the studio one day-[laughs]-at Syracuse and was selling it for the material. And I said, "What?" And he says, "Oh, my folks split; she got four, he got four, and she doesn't want them anymore. Are they are of any value?" And I said, well, I mean, all I know is what the material-I just put them on the scale. So I have the place setting of Jack's-I don't know what the-they had names for all of these things, you know.

But Ron's pattern-and they did, they did a lot of PR off of this competition, and as a seller, I don't know, I don't suspect it did very well for very long.

MS. YAGER: Where was International located?

MR. JERRY: It was in Massachusetts, and I don't-Massachusetts or in Rhode Island.

MS. YAGER: Attleboro, around that area?

MR. JERRY: Gosh, I don't remember; I remember a very small town-huge plant, very, very small town. And like I said yesterday, they had seemed to be involved in everything-in every degree of-from stainless to cheaply plaited stuff to high-end stuff. It was completely different than Reed & Barton. Reed & Barton roots, I think, probably went further back-International was, I think, initially a combination of companies-small companies. That had probably come out of individual studios in the early part of the country.

MS. YAGER: And had a more innovative strain in it.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, maybe, but on the other hand, Reed & Barton, look what they did.

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: What they did with Jack was-you know, everybody went, what? [Laughs.] You're doing what? They're allowing you to do this and this, and this? They go, oh, my Lord, you know. Finally, something is-that Danish model where the craftsmen-whether it was clay or metal, or whatever, they were the designers-not as we know industrial design now.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, there is a gulf in between all of these things, which is evident in the work that is available.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, and I don't know, that model never worked here. Not as far as I know.

MS. YAGER: I still have hope. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: It just-it didn't work and I don't know why-what contributed to that. Of course the rise of industrial design was booming. But I now-as I observed it being taught at Syracuse, industrial designers got further away from the material by the day. And now I don't think there are any material-handling classes left in industrial design.

MS. YAGER: That's seems-that's a mistake.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I don't know quite how to assess that.

MS. YAGER: I play this game with myself. You know, when we're driving around looking at buildings-oh, look, that building was designed with foam core-oh, that one was drawn with a pencil.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, the origins of-

MS. YAGER: That one was, you know, because you can tell-you can tell-what material the designer was thinking in to arrive at the final design.

MR. JERRY: Yup.

MS. YAGER: So now they'll look CAD/CAM.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, probably. And I don't know, maybe they can plug in the characteristics of the material-[laughs]-now. But I was-as I met former students-because the industrial design students would show up in my studio, because some of them really didn't want to be industrial designers; they did that to please their parents because there was a job at the end of that trail; but they would come into the other studios, and they really wanted to be makers. And that was a problem. It was a problem for them as students, it was a problem for the faculty, and sometimes those kids got bounced out of industrial design because they really wanted to make furniture or they wanted to-

MS. YAGER: Use their hands.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

MS. YAGER: And materials.

MR. JERRY: Well, they want to control over the thing from the beginning to the end, and, as designer, you are a part of a team, which includes the salespeople and, boy, I'll tell you, that's a real shocker-[laughs]-for a young person to realize that there's a salesman to tell me what flowers and bananas are going to go on the end of those spoons. I mean, I see-

MS. YAGER: So maybe the solution is to get the salespeople into the art classes.

MR. JERRY: Maybe, maybe. You know, when we talk about education and the difference between training and then education, you can go on forever about that. And part of the problem is that they don't get an education; four years probably isn't enough. So they don't get a well-rounded education, and, of course, the tendency now with art schools, you know, all the students are in job-related programs right now. And the studio side of most art schools is bleeding to death. And as they get more numbers of students, they get more control over the curriculum, and eventually any art-related stuff, as you and I would have known it, gets removed from the curriculum.

MS. YAGER: Marginalized or removed?

MR. JERRY: Yes, marginalized. Absolutely, except for a few kids that say, "Oh, wait a minute. You know, I don't want to do this; I want to be a sculptor; geez, look at this fantastic stuff." You know, a few of them will do that, but as those curriculums get harder and harder in terms of confining those kids to just-because they are preparing them for a job, and they-the faculty feel that four years is just not enough. And the foundation program? Are you kidding, no, no, let's get rid of that. Oh, yeah, oh, yeah; it's happening, and it's happening everywhere.

It's really-the studio arts program that I was a part of at Syracuse is dwindling away. It used to be the core of the art school; it no longer is the core of the art school. In fact, in one department, film and video-film, video, and photography-computer graphics removed themselves successfully from the art school. Yeah, so it's-and industrial designers wanted to do that for a long time. Every meeting I went to, and there was a discussion about curriculum, and industrial design would be, if we could just get rid of our foundation program, we could do our business.

Well, you know-and in the context of the university, that's-you're running a training program in an opportunity that nobody takes advantage of-[laughs].

MS. YAGER: What do you-

MR. JERRY: And that's what I would-talking about the difference between a university education and a School for American Craftsmen education, there is a big difference there-there was. But things changed there, too, for the better.

MS. YAGER: What do you consider the foundation courses that they were trying to eliminate? This is basic drawing and design?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, basic drawing, basic 2-D design, 3-D design, two semesters of art history from the cave to the-[laughs]-20th century, which is a little time to have for that. These programs-the film and video programs all developed their own history courses: history of film, history of industrial design, which they needed. I mean, I would have-if I had had the time and the energy later on in my teaching career, I certainly-and Barbara is going to do that now, I think-develop a craft history program-[laughs]. You know, RIT did that, the School for American Craftsmen probably 15, 20 years ago, and sadly, sadly needed. The kids have no idea in the world about, you know, the continuum that they're part of.

MS. YAGER: I always felt a real disadvantage with that-

MR. JERRY: Oh, gosh, yes.

MS. YAGER: Of all the art history courses I took, none mentioned jewelry; none mentioned metal.

MR. JERRY: Oh, no. Oh, no, no, no, no, not at all. No, there was no time for that; they hardly got to architecture, much less anything else. And it's a lot of content there. And those faculty were specialists in one thing or another and surely didn't have anything to do with what we were doing.

MS. YAGER: You know, it's interesting because one side of me thinks that this world would be better if everybody took one drawing class. You know, if they just got a little peek at this other world of visual thinking.

MR. JERRY: A little peek-[laughs]-yeah, yeah. Not to gain the skills of drawing but just for the whole involvement, absolutely.

MS. YAGER: Just to know this world exists. Sometimes I wish our presidents were elected by how well they drew.

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Well, the art media study people, the film video and computer graphics people, they couldn't see it; they couldn't see any reason why a film student should have connection with a drawing class.

MS. YAGER: Wow.

MR. JERRY: And they would fight every meeting-I mean, they made a career, some of them, and they're friends of mine, colleagues of mine, who just-at every single meeting where there was curriculum discussed-they just felt it was a complete waste of time. So the art media people-art media studies, it was called at SU, but-and the industrial designers found themselves in a similar need. They would have pounced-they would have destroyed that program. And I think finally, it is-and it's going to happen that they will-that they have eroded it now so much that-I don't know. I think it's a sad, sad state of affairs. Who knows what's going to happen? Anyhow.

MS. YAGER: I'll ask you a little bit more about that as we go along.

Let's see, one of the areas that I wanted to ask you about-if you had had involvement with any other educational institutions devoted to craft. Now, you had some experience at the School for American Craftsmen. Did you have any contact with Arrowmont [Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg, TN] or Haystack [Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME] or Penland [Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC]?

MR. JERRY: No, I did some teaching at-let's see, three different places outside of the mainstream of what I was doing. One of them was-let me take a minute to remember names. There was a summer art school in the peninsula-

MS. YAGER: Peninsula School of Art-Fish Creek, Wisconsin.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, Fish Creek, Wisconsin, yeah. That probably was the first-while I was still teaching in Wisconsin-that was the first summer gig that I did. And it was good-it was a good experience. As usual in most of the summer places, the student body was quite a range. There were a couple of college students there; there were a couple of people on vacation.

[Audio break, tape change.]

It was a very-as I found out later and taught in a few of these-in a few of these other places, I realized that was probably a pretty typical situation. Fish Creek was the home of Chicagoans. It was a cute little place inside the peninsula of Wisconsin, and a lot of Chicagoans spent their summer up there, so there was a real Chicago kind of atmosphere. And the woman that owned the school and started the school was a filmmaker-a documentary filmmaker, and-

MS. YAGER: What was her name?

MR. JERRY: Well, I remember her first name; it was Madeline.

MS. YAGER: Oh, Madeline Tourtelot.

MR. JERRY: Oh, for goodness sakes, you've come across that name. Her claim to fame was a documentary film, and we were cloistered away to watch all of them. [Laughs.] And one of them was-one of the films that she did was on Cage, the musician.

MS. YAGER: John Cage.

MR. JERRY: John Cage, yeah. She had some connection to John Cage, and she did a-probably it was at least an

hour-long film-

MS. YAGER: I think-did she have a connection with the University of Chicago-

MR. JERRY: Oh, I'm sure.

MS. YAGER: -or Chicago Art Institute?

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: One of the institutions there?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. I'm sure she did; I'm sure she did. I did that just one summer, and, of course, met other people there who were teaching that later on I would see again-

MS. YAGER: She also was involved with Oxbow, in Saugatuck on the other side of the lake.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. I know-

MS. YAGER: Did you ever go to that one?

MR. JERRY: I know Saugatuck well because the Chicago Art Institute-had-that was their summer program, and I had family friends who taught in that program and I would visit. I never taught there; there was no metal program there. It was strictly painting, drawing, printmaking, and there might have been a little bit of sculpture-in a beautiful setting. I mean, it was right on the lake, sand dunes. I mean-it was a lovely-it was an old fishing village, I think, they took over. And I thought about going there as a student one time. People were encouraging me to go there, but somehow it just didn't work out for me. But I visited later on several occasions.

MS. YAGER: I know that Philip Fike taught there many summers-

MR. JERRY: Oh, is that right?

MS. YAGER: -and he convinced them that he was a little sculptor. So, he did small metal castings-

MR. JERRY: Oh, oh, okay. Well, there's several different things going on in Michigan now, you know. The Saugatuck thing was strictly a summer-there was no-the facility wasn't able to handle winter. You could look right through most of the buildings, you know. [Laughs.] There was a roof on them I remember, and the rain didn't come in much, but it was a pretty fragile bunch of buildings.

But also in Michigan is the-going on is the music camp. Interlochen [Interlochen Center for the Arts, Interlochen, MI]-

MS. YAGER: Oh, Interlochen, yes.

MR. JERRY: And connected to the music camp is a small arts school, and a number of people taught there. I don't know this about Phil's experience-whether-I would have guessed-if I had to guess, I would guess it was probably more Interlochen than it was Saugatuck, but who knows? I don't remember any facility on Saugatuck for dealing with dimensional materials.

MS. YAGER: Yeah. It was-he just really liked being there.

MR. JERRY: Oh, well, I'm sure.

MS. YAGER: He convinced them-

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Oh, that he had something-

MS. YAGER: That he could pass as a non-art-non-craft person, I guess.

MR. JERRY: Right, right.

Yeah, Interlochen. I meet people from time to time that were young students at Interlochen, but that was geared more towards really talented musicians-kids who were still in elementary-oh, not elementary, but secondary education. But I think now they do offer credit, through somebody's auspices.

Then I taught when I went to-during my time at Syracuse, I got invited to come down to Penland. And I did the Penland thing at least once-I keep thinking about it; maybe I did it twice. So, anyhow-so I had that experience of teaching there and a lovely spot-real mixed bag of students, from high school kids that didn't want to go to

college to, you know, retirees-it was the whole range. The whole place seemed to be like that. And it was a, you know, a very friendly place-good food-[laughs]-a good place to hang out. The arrangement at Penland was a little strange, I thought. You know, the faculty worked for nothing.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, that's why I've never gone there. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: You know-and well, the same thing happened in Maine, you know. The faculty was-

MS. YAGER: At Haystack you mean?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, they were expected to provide two weeks of their nonstop services for food and shelter in a lovely place, and a lot of people went for it. A lot of people went for it.

But I came across it later-in New York, there was a-I'm trying to think of it-I think his last name was Sibley. Sibley's is a very large department store in that part of the country, and one of the offspring of the family had gone to the School for American Craftsmen, as a potter, I think. And he comes out of school with access to resources that were beyond-

MS. YAGER: What do you mean?

MR. JERRY: Well, he had financial-he could do anything he wanted-

MS. YAGER: Oh, okay.

MR. JERRY: -and not a particularly talented person. And so he decides to-he's going to do a summer arts school on the model of Penland and-

MS. YAGER: Haystack?

MR. JERRY: Haystack. So he acquires a piece of land on the edge of a vineyard down in the Finger Lakes area in a little town where there's this huge, old, old, old vineyard. And got some buildings together and remodeled. And, now, I got invited down to do that. I was blacksmithing at the time, and they wanted to do a summer blacksmithing program, so I came down to do that.

But it was the same sort of thing, except that it wasn't as well organized. He had a board of directors because it was-he had set it up as a nonprofit thing. His grandmother, I think, provided the resources for the place, and he tried to emulate-and it died within, I think, five years or so-it went under. And it was to be a big, family thing-you know, bring your kids, and-it just didn't have enough of the right stuff that Penland seemed to have and that Haystack-well, Haystack was such a beautiful setting. And I've never been. And I know Ron was-when he went to Maine, he was, I think, maybe even on the board of directors for a while. And so was Fred Woell. Fred Woell was a major player in the Haystack thing when he was there.

But those have been my only outside experiences, so I did touch down in my Penland experience. My wife at the time also taught at Penland.

MS. YAGER: What was her name?

MR. JERRY: Marilyn Davidson. And Marilyn had been one of my students-an older student-at Syracuse-has a piece in the Metropolitan, has a piece in the V & A [Victoria and Albert Museum, London], and just walked away from it-wanted to be an artist.

MS. YAGER: Is that what she's doing now?

MR. JERRY: She tried, but just didn't get famous enough fast enough, and then found living in New York was a lot more that she bargained for. So she's still there. She's a buyer and runs the museum shop for the Jewish Museum in New York right now, and is a freelance designer at this point. I don't know really exactly what she's up to, but she's not a maker anymore.

MS. YAGER: You spoke about-going back a little bit-you had mentioned that you had had some occasions to meet Mrs. Webb and some contact with America House.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, yeah. Well, the School for American Craftsmen, as people probably know, it moved around a little bit. And it started at Dartmouth [Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH], and Mrs. Webb-there were two, I think, two sisters, and she sort of single-handedly would-Anaconda Copper money was where the fortune was. Both sisters became very philanthropic, and Shelburne Village in Vermont is her sister's baby. All of those buildings were dug up and moved, and that whole thing was created by the Webb money.

And Mrs. Webb was-evidently had some connection with ceramics, because I remember visiting her in her apartment in New York and there was a studio there.

MS. YAGER: Of her own?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, she continued to make stuff-never showed it. She handled it almost at a therapy kind of level. But she had this vision that she was going to revive American craft, and, of course, it started before the war, and then it sort of lay dormant for a while, and then, of course, when those veterans came back, there was a strong interest in wanting to do something other than go back to factory jobs.

So Dartmouth started the program, and then it was moved-shortly after that, it was moved to Alfred, New York-University of New York at Alfred-which seemed like a wonderful match-up, because they had such a great clay program going at Alfred. They had a technical clay-they had a clay engineering program and they had a studio clay thing going there, and it still is an outstanding school for ceramics.

So they moved the-they moved the then-faculty and equipment and so forth-they moved that to Alfred, and the relationship didn't work so well, probably because it was a state school. And the administration of state schools is-there's a big hierarchy and Mrs. Webb was used to dealing closer to the thing, you know.

So there was a deal made with the Rochester Institute of Technology, and she moved that program-lock, stock, and barrel, faculty, the whole thing-moved it to Rochester. And shortly after that, I became a student. So it had been functioning in Rochester only a handful of years before I arrived, and she took a very personal interest in the school. And she was-as far as I know, she was financing the whole doggone thing. And so she would show up every semester, and I suspect that when she did, it had to do with the administration of the school and so forth. And her coming around to the studios and talking to students and-always guided by faculty, of course-was a side to business.

And as we said yesterday-I think we had it on tape yesterday-that materials were basically free, so the students were not constricted by their own resources. That's why so many large pieces, particularly in the metal studio-it would have been mind-boggling to have supported-

MS. YAGER: That's interesting.

MR. JERRY: -the material. It would have never happened, and it didn't happen anyplace else. Even-there was some larger vessel-making things going on at Boston Museum School, maybe a little bit at Chicago Art Institute, at Cleveland, but if a student wanted to do a coffee or a handlebar scale thing-

MS. YAGER: A two-foot or something-

MR. JERRY: -it was okay. If you could get by that faculty member on it-

MS. YAGER: -if you could get the approval from Hans-

MR. JERRY: That's right, from Hans, yup-and/or from Jack at the time that he was there. Jack came to the thing, I think, as they were moving into Rochester-I'm pretty sure that's what happened.

It was a metal person that Ron-see, Ron Pearson, his background included some time as a student at the School of American Craftsmen while he was at Alfred. And Alfred's kind of a ski area, and so what Ron did-he started his jewelry business in Alfred because he couldn't go back to school-he didn't have the money to go back to school-so he starts his jewelry business in a chicken coop-a converted chicken coop-making jewelry the hard way-selling it to the ski people in the wintertime-that's how he got started.

So he sort of followed the school as it turned out, Ron did. And he shows up at Rochester almost at the same time they're recreating this school for the third time.

MS. YAGER: And then relocated near Haystack-

MR. JERRY: What's that?

MS. YAGER: And then relocated-

MR. JERRY: Oh, and then relocated into Haystack when, of course, the motivation then was-because he had just built a studio in the suburbs of Rochester-beautiful studio-really a nice setup-separate from the house, by, I don't know, a hundred feet or so.

But he had been in the Merchant Marines or Coast Guard or something and he loved the sea. And his move to Maine had to do with sailing. [Laughs.] He really wanted to sail again. And he would go there, evidently, on trips

from Rochester in the summertime to sail. And I remember him talking fondly about sailing, and so that's what happened. And he takes-I think I said yesterday-he takes Barry Merritt's brother with him-

MS. YAGER: His name is Larry, by the way.

MR. JERRY: Larry? Okay.

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: So Larry, who I never knew-I knew Barry, of course, but Larry becomes his shop foreman and-who literally ran the place. And then eventually Jack's son comes to Maine, and-

MS. YAGER: This is Peter-

MR. JERRY: Peter-Peter Prip comes to Maine and I don't know how many others-at the peak of that time in Maine, I don't know how many people he had working-probably about better part of a half a dozen, I would guess.

MS. YAGER: I wanted to move on to your work. How do you describe yourself, and when-when you meet someone at a restaurant-

MR. JERRY: Oh, God, that's-

MS. YAGER: -and how you describe your work?

MR. JERRY: I remember going way back to craft-actually, Lake Geneva, when I first came across Arthur Pulos.

MS. YAGER: Lake Geneva, Wisconsin?

MR. JERRY: Wisconsin. There was an American Craft Council Conference, and that was before the clay people were organized, that was before SNAG, that was the gathering. If you wanted to spend some time with other people wrestling with some of the same problems you had, whether it was ceramics or metal or whatever-those were the conferences you went to.

MS. YAGER: Was this part of the Midwest Designer Craftsman?

MR. JERRY: Well, they were probably the organizer, but it was a national conference. People came from all over, and not only studio people and people just starting to teach, but there was still military people there, because the American Craft Council had some roots in rehabilitation after the war. And so there were-I remember quite a contingent.

MS. YAGER: I read that there was a department connected with the Museum of Modern Art? Through the Scott Braznell article-a very interesting-and they taught jewelry at the Museum of Modern Art through the military connection.

MR. JERRY: That's right, and so those people were around. I don't remember having-I was a real young'un-you know, I was 17, 18 years old at that time, but I do remember Arthur. He was very outgoing at that time.

But getting back to your question, a lot of the discussions at those kinds of conferences, and I remember even at that one, was who are we? The same question. Are we designer craftsmen? Are we craftsmen? Are we artists? And those things would go on into late nights-

MS. YAGER: Are we silversmiths? Are we-

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Goldsmiths or-you know, and it came up, many years later in this SNAG thing. You know, are we goldsmiths? Are we the society of American goldsmiths? Oooh, boy. That went on for days-trying to figure it out. And it still goes on. I would guess people aren't as anxious about it as they used to be, but oh, my goodness, you get a bunch of people together in a room and they'd be at each other's throats over these issues.

MS. YAGER: So what did you settle on?

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] What did I-well, from that early experience till now, it's evolved. It's changed. You know, we were all designer craftsmen in those early years, and that seemed to satisfy most. And then, of course, as a lot of us became part of art schools-now, then what? Now are we artists? Is it important at all? And, of course, the older faculty-as the younger faculty came in and these craft programs got big-time in the '50s, '60s, and in the mid-'70s-I mean, the programs blew up-huge! I mean, students hanging off the rafters! Everywhere! And then, of course, you've got the painting faculty over here and the sculptors over here, and, you know, what the hell is going on here? And do they make functional stuff or not? It seems to be a neverending thing.

So when people ask me-it depends on who's asking me. If they are in a-some visual related field-museum people or whatever-then I can sort of stagger around and I can get them to understand what I'm doing. It doesn't take very long. If it's somebody who's outside-art activity-any art activity, then, of course, it becomes much harder to describe.

I think what's happened to me is, one, my interests in the metal thing are very broad, which was very helpful and encouraged, I think, by the kind of teaching I had to do, the responsibilities I had. So I was a one-man metal shop for more than half my teaching career, and I felt responsible-the responsibility was to give them as-with the time that I had-a complete experience as I possibly could. So that meant, wearable work-that hollowware of one sort or another-flatware, whatever. But the common thread that ran through all of it for me, and, of course, things have changed, was there was always some functional connection. And I felt, in terms of the craft world, that was the connection that I had for all of it. Plus the process part of it, which I loved.

I love the material. I still get excited when I go down and discover something new, and teaching was ideal, because even though personally I wouldn't be working on all of those fronts, technically, it would constantly remind me of the potential of a lot of this stuff. So as I tried to excite students about working, I would also regenerate myself. I got as much out of it as they did. And then-plus what I was saying the other day was that, you know, having to deal with students in trouble taught me a lot also.

MS. YAGER: Bailing people out.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, and so I learned a lot. I learned a great deal. And now, of course, I can function. I don't have to even think about materials.

MS. YAGER: What do you think it was about metal that drew you-

MR. JERRY: Boy. Well, in our previous conversations about my early education, I suppose-I thought initially I would probably be a musician. That was one of my early thoughts. And/or an architect. But, unconsciously I think those-both those activities involved others. I had to be part of a group or a team or whatever-and it would probably-you know, I never thought about it in those terms, but I probably liked the-being able to work from beginning to end. Now it could have been clay, it could have been wood, it could have been any of those things, but I like being able to control a thing from beginning to end and not have to involve others. And I think I said yesterday, I never liked to play games. And I-more solitary and interaction with not others, but with myself. And interestingly, I ended up teaching, which is really sort of weird. But in terms of my own work, I liked that.

MS. YAGER: Well what do you think-

MR. JERRY: And I would expose myself with the work at my own pleasure. And even though, as an academic person, I had to play a certain game or rule-so I had to participate in X number of exhibitions and all that-but that didn't seem to be a problem. I made the pieces, and if somebody liked them, that was great. If not, to hell with it. You know. So, I would send things off to shows, and I was fortunate. It was the right time. It was the right time for me to be making work. There were only a handful of us; I knew everybody at that time, or at least I thought I did. You know, there were people on the West Coast-Adler for instance-he was a wonderful silversmith. And I didn't know him. And there were a number of other people. The Cleveland people I didn't know, but at least I knew-I mean, I had a conversation with John Paul Miller as a student because he came to the School of American Craftsmen because he judged one of these Hickok shows that I talked about yesterday. And, you know, I would meet people that way. But there weren't many of us. And so my-

MS. YAGER: Is there-what is unique about metal that isn't in wood, that isn't in clay-

MR. JERRY: Yeah. I know what you're trying to get at. Hmm. Interesting.

MS. YAGER: I mean, I liked the fact that my hands didn't have to get wet. When I did clay and I looked, I had cold hands. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Cold hands and your nails would fall out and you'd shrink up like a prune. I don't think I thought about it in those terms. I certainly had-because of my museum life with my parents, I certainly had access-there was a fairly well-equipped ceramics studio and I had no interest in ceramics at all. I don't think I ever-well as it turned out by osmosis, I did-I must have learned something about clay, because I taught ceramics. [Laughs.] You know, I mean, I hardly stayed ahead of those kids, but I did. I taught ceramics at the Memorial Art Gallery in Rochester. I probably couldn't have taught the next course, but I did get by.

But it never interested me for a second. I like the precision of it-probably-I was interested in mechanical things. I was drawing. I did a lot of life drawing as a kid. When I got into junior high and high school, I did a lot of mechanical drawing, and it seemed to lend-there seemed to be a connection there between that and the metal, although it could have been wood-although I didn't know any wood people. Furniture makers were not in range.

My father was a painter, so most of the people that I met via my parents were two-dimensional people, not three-dimensional people. And I somehow-somehow I never thought about painting.

MS. YAGER: Now some of the metals-

MR. JERRY:-probably because of what seemed to be-and this may have been in the back of my head, too-the economic hardship of being a painter. Good Lord. The only way painters made a living was one would teach you, and if they didn't have degrees-which many of them didn't have-because they didn't come out of this crazy system that we have now-they came out of museum schools. And most of them were painters, and maybe their wives were potters or something, but I never came across a wood person. And I don't think, other than my high school teacher, that I mentioned before-I don't think there was any metal people that I came in connection with. It was those exhibitions that really-the Danish one that I talked about before-the Miller exhibition that my father had in the gallery, and those things-that exposure.

MS. YAGER: I read last night in that article that Gudmund Elvestad-that he began working in pewter. Was that your first introduction to pewter at Cranbrook?

MR. JERRY: No. Let me think. No, not at all. Actually, my first experience with pewter was at the School of American Craftsmen in the first two years that I was there. Now that was another battle scene because-well, couple of things. Technically, if you're working with pewter in the same shop, you're working with precious metals. You've got a disaster in the making, and I saw many of them.

MS. YAGER: Because of the low temperature of the-

MR. JERRY: Well, it fuses-it fuses at the annealing temperature or higher. It fuses with silver and combines. There's a new eutectic point and combines and it melts!

MS. YAGER: And then you have a hole in it-

MR. JERRY: That could be a major hole. I saw it happen, it was awful.

So by the time I arrived-now, I don't know about Jack's connection with pewter. I think he had, maybe early on-that he did some work in pewter. And, of course, he did-later on, he did a lot of really wonderful things with pewter-big container forms.

And so when I arrived at the School of American Craftsmen, there were these map cases out on the studio. I never paid much attention. Drill press was sitting up on top. Pulled him over one day-there were these huge sheets of pewter, every gauge imaginable, top to bottom. I said, "What's this?" And Hans would turn bright red, you know, and he'd say, "Don't touch this stuff. No. No."

MS. YAGER: [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Well, Larry Copeland, on the other hand, thought, you know, that would be cool. So we beginning students were in a separate room at that time, and so he started out on a pewter project and pulled all that stuff out. And Hans must have been absolutely-having a conniption, because the stakes and hammers were common to both areas. And I think their first battle probably was over pewter. So I make-this is very interesting-I make a tall, cylindrical coffee pot, probably about that high-

MS. YAGER: About a foot and a half high.

MR. JERRY: -and a sugar, creamer to go with it, with a rattan-wrapped handle, which was a very Danish kind of thing at the time. Well, I thought that was marvelous, and you know, I could pull it together with Scotch tape and weld the seams and do all this stuff with it. And-but that was it. When that project was over, everything got put back, and probably they were having a battle on the side about this issue, because some of it got into annealing pans and people did have some accidents.

Well, this same piece, which I-a little collection of things-I gave to my parents as a proud kid, as a gift. And it wasn't part of their lifestyle, so they stashed it away somewhere. And it comes out years later as my father died. And my mother says, "Geez, you know, I've got this thing, and maybe you should take it." And I said, "Okay, I'll take it back." It was in wonderful condition. They had never used it.

Well, as it turns out, the Brooklyn Museum has it now. [Laughs.] The sugar and creamer and coffee pot that I made when I was probably 20 years old, maybe 19, for their-they were gathering together stuff-I don't remember what the show was-"Early Modern Design" or something like that-and lo and behold, it was-the two guys that ran the 50-50 Gallery in New York-I'm trying to-I can't remember names right now-he came by Syracuse one time, wanting to see the ceramic collection at the Everson [Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse], because Everson is a major gathering place for contemporary ceramics. And he stopped by to see me, and he

bought almost everything I had in one afternoon. And he was a dealer, of course, and he had a client list. And I think the relationship between he and his partner was coming apart, and I remember he wrote me two checks-one on a New York bank and one on a California bank.

And in that group of pieces was this piece I made as a kid. And he turns around and sells it to the Brooklyn Museum because they were putting together an exhibition of work of that period. I don't even remember what they called them-called the show. So there it is. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: How did you determine the prices to sell those-

MR. JERRY: Oh, Lord, I don't even remember. Well, to get back to an early question that you had about Mrs. Webb, the school and America House-as students, we were required to take a course called production planning. And production planning had to do with, supposedly, had to do with making multiples and going through the experience of dealing with the gallery. And in that case, it was America House, because America House was connected-it was a *Craft Horizons* and America House and School of American Craftsmen were really Mrs. Webb's creation.

And what would happen is that the people that ran America House would come to the school, once a semester, and talk about what it was like to deal with this kind of work with the public and would make design suggestions even or what seemed to be selling.

And so we would make things, and there was a student organization which packed it-so we had all these conversations about pricing-how to do that. We became for the first time conscious of time-that's an issue that doesn't get talked too much about, but it did there. And I did a series of-I did, I don't know-six, eight pieces of hollowware all alike that got sold at America House, and we got paid for it. And so that was my first connection with America House and so then, of course, Ron Pearson-that was his major outlet at the time. He was way over six figures with America House then.

MS. YAGER: That's impressive at that time-a long time ago.

MR. JERRY: Ooooh, my. I said, "Ron, are you kidding?" He said, "No. I do that well there." And that was one of about 15, 20 places he was doing.

MS. YAGER: And what was the price range of the work at that time?

MR. JERRY: Oh, the pieces I did for Ron-probably as low as-I used to do a forged tie clip for him; I did it in seven minutes beginning to end, and it probably sold for \$25 or so. And other silver pieces that he did would move, but they were a lot-a lot of it was under \$100.

MS. YAGER: So this was a lot of work.

MR. JERRY: It was a lot of work, and, of course, at a whole different overhead situation than we would have now. My work-

MS. YAGER: Chicken coops are pretty easy to come by-[laughs].

MR. JERRY: Of course at that time, Ron was well versed on casting, and he was having other people cast for him, so that was my introduction to all that, too. We certainly weren't casting in school, much less making multiples. And he was running his, you know-probably 75, 80 percent of what he was doing was cast. And as time went by, he got more and more involved with forging and doing stuff with the rolling mill, pushing material around more. So I was there during that time, which was very healthy for me.

In terms of pricing my own work, which was your question-and I still do it. And it's the only foundation I've got for this thing, and that is the cost of materials, the time I'm putting into it times whatever I think I'm worth an hour, plus a percentage for overhead for running the studio, and if I can squeeze it out, a little bit of profit-and that's my wholesale price.

MS. YAGER: Do you do anything for magic? You know, like that one piece that just is so good-

MR. JERRY: Well, that's what we were talking about at lunch a little bit yesterday you know. No, I generally don't. So I just make sure. The hourly rate has changed. It's gone from five dollars to 50, 60 an hour. But the rest of it is-that way of thinking about the value of the piece has stayed with me. And that's how I do it.

MS. YAGER: I remember there was a page in Philip Morton's book of exactly the time card and all of that-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. And if you're making one-of-a-kind things-that's not an easy thing to do. How do you do that?

MS. YAGER: How do you charge for those special experiments?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. The experiments. The stuff that goes bad.

MS. YAGER: I've often thought you couldn't really do that type of pricing until the third piece.

MR. JERRY: Um, probably right. Oh, third-yeah. Like I said, Ron Pearson would do 12 at least before he felt he had a grip on it, but then, much to my disappointment, I would get faster than him, because I was only thinking about one thing-getting this piece done. And then I would get the process thing down so well that he would have to go back in and re-price. That would be the killer. You know, Michael, you're making them now three times faster than I did. I've got-and he had a real social conscience. And he said, "It's overpriced. I know can sell this brooch for less."

And the other thing that he would do, and I've never had to do, because I hadn't had the teaching-that I was making mostly one-of-a-kind stuff, but he would place new pieces in a group with the pieces that he was selling ongoing, and he would see how they would fit pricewise. So he didn't want to kill a piece with a new piece. So he would adjust the price after all the process of time and materials and overhead and so forth. He would do that. Sometimes he would bump it up. Sometimes he would bump it down, but again, we were only talking about a few dollars one way or another at that time. I'm sure with today's prices, things would be a lot different. And, of course, the cost of the materials would fluctuate. There was a time when silver and gold was going crazy. People were just going nuts.

MS. YAGER: It went from three dollars to \$30-

MR. JERRY: They had tons of inventory out, and it was going sky high. And the replacement value was just going out of sight-an awful time. I was in London when the worst of it was going on. God, I'd see people-

MS. YAGER: That was in the early '80s-

MR. JERRY: Yeah. People with-what do you call it-pillow blanket-bags-whatever, with the family silver in it-

MS. YAGER: Pillowcases-

MR. JERRY: Pillowcases-outside the Johnson and Matthey [Johnson Matthey PLC, London] in the jewelry district in London.

[Audio break, tape change.]

MS. YAGER: This is Jan Yager interviewing Michael Jerry in the artist's home and studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on November 16, 2004, for the Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution. Disc number five, session number two.

Michael, right before that tape ended, you were speaking about Johnson and Matthey and your time in London, when people were lining up to sell their silver.

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Yeah. That was, of course, when the Hunt brothers [William Herbert and Nelson Bunker Hunt] in this country were manipulating the silver market, and the silver market went over \$30 an ounce in London. And I happened to be down in that district looking for tools. And just generally looking around and coming upon-Johnson and Matthey had-it wasn't their major place, but it had the look of a small bank with some big scales in it. And there were enormous lines that doubled over, probably the length of the city block twice over.

And what people were doing was selling their family stuff for the price of the metal, and it got pretty tense because there was a group of people that felt that Johnson and Matthey were going to take these things and sell them as antiques, which they surely were-ah, they potentially were. Not the intent of the seller, of course, and that was the shameful part of the whole thing. If they had that value, what's going on here? So what they were doing was smashing them on the floor.

MS. YAGER: [Gasp]-to guarantee that they would-

MR. JERRY: -to guarantee that they would never rise again as an antique. So while all of that-

MS. YAGER: [Laughs] You know what that reminds me of as you say that? It reminds me of the Spanish coming into this area and smashing all of Montezuma's gold gifts and melting them down for the queen.

MR. JERRY: They saw it just as a material. And so that-I observed that for a while, but the whole thing was so shocking. And then as people waited, because it took time for you to get to that point in the line, there were-I

don't know what you would call them-but there were dealers out on the sidewalk, independent people, with scales in their hands. And they'd grab one of these pillowcases, stick it on a scale like it was a slab of meat, and make a deal, so the person didn't have to stand in line.

I don't know what the price difference might have been or where that silver was going, but it was-vivid, vivid memories of that whole scene. It was awful, just-I don't know what was happening in this country, of course, but it was-oh, God.

MS. YAGER: Tell me about your time in London. You were there through Syracuse University.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I was there through Syracuse University. We had-oh gosh, I don't remember how many students, but our program did several things. One, it placed art students in the various art schools in the London area. We tried to match up students' desires and needs, and supposedly this was initially called a junior program abroad. So supposedly most of these kids had been in school for at least two and half years or so of our basic art school training. Well, it didn't always work out that way. So sometimes there were younger people there. Sometimes there were some older people, but my job was twofold.

One, I was to keep track of these kids. Here they are in a major city. They were supposed to be in school every day, and as it turned out, the English system doesn't always function that way. It's more tutorial. And they, coming from a structure-the kind of structure that we have here, especially for an undergraduate education. So the tendency was for the English students not to show up day after day, and when something was due, they would quickly put it together and bring it in and have the crit, which was the time-the formal time with the faculty member. The rest of the time, the faculty member kind of came and went, and if you wanted some help with something, you went to his office or he'd walk around occasionally. So we wanted those kids in school all the time, so it was my job to go around and make sure that was happening and also to schmooze with the faculty members, because they were eventually going to have to grade these kids, which is something they weren't used to doing-using an American grading system.

So a little varied thing, and then I was-I had to organize a lecture program that was made up, mostly, of guest speakers from the art community in London. And I would make those contacts-some of them from faculty members that had been there before me and some of them were contacts that I had made because I had a more personal interest in dimensional stuff. I had potters in, I had a metal person in, as well as illustrators and painters, and we went to private studios and listened to people talk about their work. And that was called the London Arts Scene, so I was responsible for putting that together.

MS. YAGER: Who were some of the metal people that you connected with?

MR. JERRY: Oh, geez, um, man. [Laughs.] Well, Tony Laws was somebody I saw a good bit of. Tony Laws taught at University of Wisconsin, actually, as a guest artist for a year or two. Fred Fenster knew him fairly well from that experience, and I had not met him, even though I was teaching in Wisconsin at that time. But I ran into him in London because he was running a metal program-a very serious, technical, metal program-training people for the jewelry and silversmithing trades. And I can't remember the name of the school right now. It may come to me, but he was running that program, and he had a house south of London.

On my second trip there, he-like a lot of London artists-the only full-time jobs in the art school were maybe the chairmen of the departments. Maybe there was a full-time technician. You know, let's say a typical metal shop. All the rest of faculty were adjunct faculty-what we would call adjunct faculty. They would come in and teach one course. They would come in and teach two. A lot of them taught in two or three different schools to put a life of teaching together. And I guess that's kind of true. That would be probably pretty true in New York, too, where you have a pool of people-of good people; you can run a school like that. So the chairmen of the departments were the major schedule arrangers and all of that, but they were all backed up with-so anyhow.

I met Tony, and Tony Laws had his own gallery and workshop down in Covent Garden. Interesting enough that Arline Fisch was a fairly close friend of Tony's, and when she would get a sabbatical, oftentimes she'd come to London and rent bench space from him. And actually, the longest time I've ever spent with Arline was over dinner in London, because we had her over to the house and had dinner with her there. And then I met and spent some time with Turner, Bob Turner. And with Wendy Ramshaw.

MS. YAGER: Can you talk about those?

MR. JERRY: Ahh, not a whole lot. Wendy-sort of an aloof sort of person. I met her again in the States. She was a guest at University of New York at Brockport, and I was giving a lecture there and a demonstration. And she was also on the same program, came in, talked about her work, and left immediately.

I had dinner with her along with Barbara Cartlidge. And Barbara Cartlidge ran her gallery in London called Electrum. And I got to know Barbara Cartlidge pretty well. And as we were leaving, she and her husband invited

myself and my wife over for dinner, and there was Wendy Ramshaw and Bob Turner. So I got to know them. Wendy is not easy to get to know. I would guess over a period of time she might be, but she's not a very easy-going kind of person-not easy to get close with. Barbara Cartlidge on the other hand, was very outspoken, very warm, very friendly-she entertained in her gallery, mostly Europeans, a lot of Germans, a lot of people from the Netherlands-she had good connections. And I think she personally made some stuff herself. I think that's how she got started, from what I understand. But she was just coming off of-she had suffered from-what was the malady called where you can't leave the house?

MS. YAGER: Agrophobia [agoraphobia].

MR. JERRY: Agrophobia. She had a real bout with agrophobia, and that had gone on for a better part of two years. And she-when I met her, she had other people running the gallery, and she was just starting to be able to walk around the neighborhood and go down to the post office box and something like that.

MS. YAGER: I remember one time when I was in London, she had open call every Friday at the gallery. And I went in. I just wanted to meet her just because it's a legendary gallery, and they said, "Come on Friday. She's here every Friday." This was a different time, and there was a line of artists-you know, a small group, and she was so kind to people. I was so impressed. You would hear her in her office talking to the artists.

MR. JERRY: She never said, "Get out of here with that junk!" [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Yeah, and she'd say, "You know, I can see some good ideas. I hope you'll come back in six months and show me how they've grown." You know, she was very kind. And then when I went in, I said, "I'm just visiting." She said, "Oh, you need to meet"-and she'd get on the phone and call, you know Jacklyn Mena [sp] and a couple other people and-I was very impressed with her.

MR. JERRY: Oh, she was certainly very connected to the metal scene in London.

MS. YAGER: And how about Ralph Turner? Do you remember having any conversations?

MR. JERRY: Not much. I know the little bit about the program at the Royal College.

MS. YAGER: Isn't that David Watkins?

MR. JERRY: That's David Watkins. That's Wendy's husband, actually. I'm thinking about him right now. But you know, that's the only graduate program in England. So if you go to graduate school, you gotta go to the Royal College. You get accepted there, or you don't go to school. [Laughs.]

And that's very interesting-the work is very minimal, and he's taken that program and aimed it at industry. Very interesting. He's going to try to change the look of English tableware or whatever. He's on a mission to do that, which I think, being the only-I think is an interesting thing to do, but being the only graduate program-what about the folks that are wanting to head that way? I guess they gotta go to European school, other European schools, or come to America.

Well, we know Ralph Turner's books, and they're very sort of-I guess you would expect to be pretty English-sided. [Laughs.] Those crude Americans. A few people did some interesting things. A little black and white of Stanley's or somebody like that you know, but mostly it had to do with English people.

I was quite surprised, actually, at what was going on there when I was there. I mean, all the view from this side is pretty stodgy place, but not much interesting was going on. But in just about all the schools I visited, even the technical school that Tony Laws was-there were some very, very interesting things, and of course, the technical side of what they were doing was very high. I have a lot of respect for English metalworking people.

MS. YAGER: How about your time in Florence, Italy?

MR. JERRY: In Florence, no contemporary people at all. Florence is-I suppose if I had been there longer-there were a lot of expatriates working in and around Florence-painters, sculptors, people that had moved there-more inexpensive place to live. They probably were figurative people. Florence is, you know, it's a living museum. And you can walk on the Ponte Vecchio and see tons of jewelry, but all of it is traditional stuff. I saw no contemporary stuff. I was hoping to see when I went to Bologna-that's the home of the two Italian sculptors-made tons of jewelry-did a lot of cuttlefish bone casting. Oh, God. Major sculptor, 20th century and his brother-well anyhow. Bologna is a modern city.

MS. YAGER: Modigliani?

MR. JERRY: No. No. Newer than that. Come up a little further. Um. No, the Modigliani-oh, [Alberto] Giacometti had a brother that made furniture and so forth, but no, it wasn't-not him. Oh, he's French anyhow.

MS. YAGER: Bruno Martinazzi? Who were some of the-

MR. JERRY: No, he was in Italy working-I didn't meet him when I was there-doing the fingers and the noses and stuff that we know him for. My time there was pretty structured. I had students to deal with and a lot of field trips.

You know, I was robbed there twice. So I had at one point no passport. It was-there were some rough places there, but, oh, gosh, I wish I could remember-him and his two brothers-because Alma Eikerman worked for one of them. And she got-for her work-they were preparing for a jewelry show, a major jewelry show in Italy, and she helped crack the show. She was a bench worker in trade for one of their pieces, which was-which I remember seeing in her home in Bloomington. Oh, God. Terrible, terrible, terrible. We'll come back. [Telephone rings.]

MS. YAGER: Starting up on track two.

You were talking about the Italian sculptor/jeweler.

MR. JERRY: Pomodoro. [Laughs.] Pomodoro brothers. And my hope was to go to Bologna and see them, but I wasn't able to get beyond a secretary on the phone, so that was the end of that experience. But Bologna is where you'll find contemporary American-excuse me-contemporary painting and sculpture-all kinds of contemporary activities in all the craft areas. But Florence is-it's really tied up in its tradition. There may be pockets of people working, but I never came across them. In fact, it was hard to find Italian teaching staff that was working in some modern or contemporary way. So many of them were doing classical portraits and stuff like that.

And we were finally-didn't do anything in metal-well, actually, we did. We had a metal program there, but the program was a shock. It was owned by an expatriate, Japanese-Hawaiian-I think he was from Hawaii, immigrated into Italy, and whose name I don't remember. Then he had this studio, which was his personal studio, and then he backed away from it and started entertaining students from these foreign programs.

And in Florence, I think there were at least 40 American universities running programs. The place was amass with students, and I didn't really sense that until somebody said, "You know, we're trying to get together with the other universities to create an English library here for art history." And I said, "Well, how many could there be?" And I got this number and, "Oh, my Lord. There are that many people?" Oh, yeah.

So we had a metal program there, which I visited on several occasions. I was not impressed at all with it. I didn't encourage students to go. I didn't say so, but I felt their time there was pretty much a waste. Now as time went on, that program got a little healthier. And I'm not that sure why, probably because the owner of the shop is not teaching there. He's hired other people from different countries to come in and teach. So the students later in my time at SU had a little better experience than they had initially.

MS. YAGER: Have you done much other travel?

MR. JERRY: Well, let's see. I spent some time in Barcelona. I was really hot to see the Gaudi stuff, so off to Barcelona and hit all the major Gaudi sites. I went back to Italy several times, not for the university but on my own. And those trips also included time in Athens and some of the Greek islands. Spent time in Alaska-did a workshop for an art guild in Anchorage. So I spent the better part of a month up there, and then as a tourist laying on the beach in Mexico. That's about it, I think.

MS. YAGER: Have any of these-

MR. JERRY: Of them-well, because I had a car-that was the other thing. I bought a-because I was going to be in London and on that side of the lake, as they say, for so long, that I was advised and was given some help in seeking out a trustworthy automobile. So we came into Amsterdam and I was able to find this dealer fairly easily and bought a car. So I had a lot of flexibility. And I visited most of the art schools in the car-did some stuff in the tube [London subway], most of it in the car-and then took the car back across and drove through Belgium, Switzerland, a little bit of Germany, down through northern Italy, all the way down to Brindisi, and stored the car, and went to Greece. I probably spent more time in-well, more time in London, of course-but the next country I probably spent the most time in was Italy.

MS. YAGER: Did any of these travels have an impact on your life or your work?

MR. JERRY: The work. Yeah. I think it had some impact on the work, especially Florence. Although in a different way. Florence, of course, is the physical surroundings of the place. I think everywhere, there's stuff going on. There's interesting architecture; there's all kinds of architectural details, which I also had a little bent for anyhow. And there you could buy old architectural drawings and things like that, which I really fell in love with. And actually, there are some pieces in my repertoire somewhere that are a direct-I lived about a block away

from one of those archways in Florence, for instance-I thought that was really cool-

MS. YAGER: The Roman aqueducts?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And then, yeah, so I did some pieces there that-and of course, I visited-I was in and out of the Uffizi [Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence] all the time. And I was-all the museums and historical sites. We were fortunate. We had an American, again an expatriate-married a Swiss woman-he was an art historian. He was-still is, I think-had a full-time job in Italy-had a nice little farmhouse outside of Florence-teaching art history. So he handled both Italian and English very well, and he would do these on-site art history lectures. [Laughs.] So he's plenty busy.

Seeing what was there and of course, we'd go to Pisa and a variety of the other Tuscan cities in the area. And then, of course, we ended up on the coast at Carrara, looking at the marble quarries-where the chunk came for the David-and all the marble studios, which was really interesting-visiting a marble shop where there were-artists rent spaces and an air line. And they were carving sculptures for shows in Europe because they couldn't-there were Americans there, there were French, there were Israelis-and most of them were working on-they were established people working on pieces that were more easily shipped from Italy than from God only knows where else.

MS. YAGER: And when you say an air line, you mean for pneumatic tools-

MR. JERRY: Pneumatic tools. Oh yeah-[laughs]-they were hanging all over. They usually ran them in the ceilings. And they were these drops and dust everywhere-I mean, talk about health hazard. Oh, my Lord. This place was just a pile of dust. Most people wore masks, but it was pretty casual.

But seeing marble handled on that scale, and then along with that were large art bronze foundries in and around the Carrara area-major, major people-Henry Moore was using one of them-still. And you know, a team of specialists and people who have been casting for generations. It was really interesting, really interesting to see. And as an artist, you could rent a space. We met people there that would just rent a cubby and do their wax or maybe just do the clay, and then get on a plane, and go away, and then wait for the piece to arrive.

They would take it from that point, or you could screw it up, have it cast; you could do all the chasing and repoussé thing yourself. You could drop it in their lap at almost any point, and there would be various keys and things for that. So there were various people working there from all over and every visual direction imaginable. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Which-what dates-

MR. JERRY: It would be 1979, '80, '81. In fact, my wife at the time thought she would go back and rent a space and produce some work. It seems so ideal because you really-you didn't have to move anything. If you did a bronze piece, it might have gone from the bench outside the door, and they built the kiln right around the thing and burned it out right on the spot and poured it on the spot, too. So there was a lot of nice opportunities there-it was really wonderful. But no contemporary work-saw none at all while I was in Florence.

MS. YAGER: So we're on these-

MR. JERRY: So-I've just interrupted, but-so most of the programs there-university programs from different schools around the states-their emphasis was art history more than the studio experience. I think a lot of them-like us-offered studio experience, but it was more of a round-out, add academic obligation than it was to advance painting or whatever it was.

MS. YAGER: Well, now that you've mentioned studio experience-can you talk a little bit about how your studio is set up, or how an ideal studio is set up, and what works best for you as a working environment?

MR. JERRY: Well, that's a lot of things that-it certainly depends on the individual and what they're hoping to make in terms of scale and everything else. In my case, the amount of square feet I had, which was about 650 to 700 square feet, sounds like a lot. If I were just doing some jewelry, working on that scale, I probably wouldn't need half of that. And the reason I need more is because I'm also doing hollowware, and I think there are probably 120 hammers down there, and you know, tons of stakes, and all of that takes up room and a separate bench, because a lot of what I do is in pewter. And so I need a separate space for that. And plus storage and everything else. It seems to-but I have-I'm capable of doing just about anything. I have an electroforming setup if I want it. I haven't even broken it out yet, because I just, since I moved here, haven't done anything with it, but it's all sitting there in a box. But I sort of put the studio together here as I needed to.

In Santa Fe-it turned out-I think this same thing happens in other communities where people retire to-they think they're going to be jewelers in their retirement, and they go out and spend a tremendous amount of money on

equipment and find out that it takes more than that to produce what they were dreaming about. The stuff sits around for a while, and next thing you know, it's for sale. So I rounded off my studio here in about six months with used equipment that had only been used once or not at all and just tons of material. People were willing to get it out because they just wanted the space. I was running into thing-I couldn't believe it. I had to stop finally. I was buying whole studios.

MS. YAGER: Where would you find these things?

MR. JERRY: Well, let's see. First guy was a painter and decided he wanted to make some rings for his family, so he bought all of the equipment. He bought a vacuum-casting setup, bought a kiln, bought more wax than any of these places have in their stock, and he made six rings.

MS. YAGER: And how did you find out about it?

MR. JERRY: They advertise in the paper.

MS. YAGER: I see.

MR. JERRY: So I shot over there and sure enough, so now I have-now I have a vacuum-casting setup down there, which at full price would be about \$1,000; I probably wouldn't have done it for quite a while. I would have stayed-I had a spin cast, a centrifugal caster, and I would have stayed with that. But there it was, and so what I did-what I started to do was pass things on that I didn't need. So, in another case, it was a woman who was a commercial jeweler here-she worked for a commercial shop here, set up her own studio at home and then had carpel tunnel so bad, she had to give it all up. So there it was, the whole thing-for jewelry.

I bought things I didn't need and just turned them around and passed them on to other people-students mostly-former students who were out there trying to put shops together for the first time. And rolling mills are an expensive thing, so, you know, I came across-I-the last rolling mill I turned over was \$200 bucks or less-perfectly good, just, and nobody wanted it-

[Audio break.]

-and I still hear about it. I kind of have to shut my ears. I still look at the want ads. I can't help myself, so I'm always scouring the want ads. And sure enough, a full lapidary shop for sale-fastening equipment, everything. That was just running in the paper recently. I'd say every month somebody's trying to dump some tools for one reason or another.

MS. YAGER: You made a comment that in Santa Fe-about being a jeweler-

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] It's not an unusual activity here. Not at all. It's a very different scene. In Syracuse, Barbara Walter and I probably were the only serious metalworkers in the whole town and with a smattering of a few other people doing probably more commercial-like stuff. Here-you know, there are three, four on every block. You mention what you do and people say, oh yeah, my brother-in-law-he does this, and my son is involved with this and that-and there is a tremendous amount of working of metal here-let's put it that way. Now whether it's art or not-that's one of the things about Santa Fe is true with painting and sculpture and everything else here. I mean, there's a lot of very expensive, mundane work here. And you have to sort through it just like any other place, but I was-I'm still amazed at the high quality of the Native American work that's being done here. When I say high quality, I'm talking about the quality of the craftsmanship of the work. And within their visual tradition, some of them have moved out on the edges of that very nicely and are doing some really terrific work.

MS. YAGER: Any particular people that come to mind?

MR. JERRY: Nothing comes to mind. No particular-well, the one-the person that comes to mind, because his widow lives here and I met her on a camping trip-Laloma-Charles Laloma-his wife-his widow lives here in Santa Fe-[laughs]-I met her over a campfire in a faraway place, historical place that we were looking at. Yeah, she lives here-she's trying to put a book together now. Laloma sort of broke away from-some of the materials are the same-he just used them in a lot of different ways. And there are-there is a young following of that here.

MS. YAGER: I think, if I remember-I was just at that show-the "Native American Totems to Turquoise" in New York ["Totems to Turquoise: Native North American Jewelry Arts of the Northwest and Southwest," American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY, October 30, 2004-July 10, 2005] which I believe he did, and also I believe-was it his daughter, or a niece of his-

MR. JERRY: Oh, did he have some pieces in there? There's a daughter that runs a-that, I guess, runs the business.

MS. YAGER: Well, I think that she's-

MR. JERRY: That's not a daughter of the woman that's here. That's a previous marriage. So-he's been married a couple times. And he's an Alfred graduate. Can you imagine? [Laughs.] She told stories about him coming back to the pueblo to live from Alfred. And, of course, at Alfred-he got what was hot in American ceramics, and when he got back to the pueblo-he was a ceramic person, not a metal person. And he eventually-first of all, in his pueblo, only women made ceramics. And so right away, he was in trouble.

MS. YAGER: What tribe was he? Was he Hopi?

MR. JERRY: I don't remember which one, but she tells the story of that-it was unheard of-women made ceramics, not men! So he was already in a problem. Then he was making these contemporary things. One thing led to another, and finally it heated up so violently that they burned his studio down. And I don't think he ever looked back. I think at that point, he shifted to metal and moved out of the pueblo. [Laughs.] Just-well these traditions-they're very-

MS. YAGER: So then he took up metalwork.

MR. JERRY: Then he took up metalwork, and as far as I know, he's pretty much a self-taught guy. Now it may be that there were some craft guild around where he-

MS. YAGER: Had he studied ceramics at Alfred?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, a potter. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: I didn't know that. I remember coming to an Indian market one year, and he was here and people were following him around like he was a rock star. I mean, he was so highly admired-

MR. JERRY: And he, he liked that. [Laughs.] People tell me that he drove his huge Cadillac around Phoenix with the top down. He just loved to go out-to go for a cruise. He had a showman-of course, I never knew him, it's just-they're almost Sam Kramer stories-really outrageous. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: He was at a conference out in California one time, I remember, and they were asking what advice he would give a young artist. And he stood up and he said, "Take a psychology class."

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Oh goodness, goodness. No, when you say that, it brings to mind-conjuring up-when I was in England, I spent some time with Henry Moore. Yeah, well, he was quite an elderly person then, but we visited all of his studios and estate. And he couldn't walk with us. He had an old Rover car and he would drive from one studio to the next, because it was sort of spread. It looked like it had been a farm a long time ago, and then all of these building were converted into one thing or another that related to what he was doing.

And God, there must have been seven, eight buildings, I think. Not all of them huge. Some of them only had one piece in progress, right smack in the middle of it-huge, public piece that was going somewhere-and he had a team working for him, but when we came back to his studio-he had a print studio. And then he had a studio that he made maquettes in. And I have footrests downstairs in the shop of him at the time I was there. And he sat in a big soft chair and he talked. And somebody said, "Well, what would you recommend, you know, for a youngster?" "Learn how to draw!" And then he went off on it. And, of course, he did all these wonderful drawings during the war, and there was evidence of it all over the place.

MS. YAGER: How many people were working there, do you think?

MR. JERRY: At that time, there seemed to be half a dozen. And of the half a dozen, there was one person who-I think he was German, but I'm not certain about that-who was doing, kind of like the shop foreman. Because what seemed to be happening there is that Moore was doing these maquettes, and I don't know whether he made presentations with those maquettes or not. They were quite small. The biggest one was maybe a foot high and all the way down to-you could put it in your pocket-out of plaster. And he'd carve away in this huge room-it looked like a snowstorm hit it-and a big fan down on the end and rows and rows of shelves with all these hundreds of maquettes -Henry Moore maquettes on them.

But then, I don't think at that time he was physically able to be involved in up-scaling those and going forth. So that's what the team did. And they had what sculptors have had for a long, long, long time-they had scaling systems worked out, so they could bring the scale up real-in Styrofoam with-yeah, pretty close in Styrofoam and then plasticene over Styrofoam. And so the stands that were modeled on were all squared off-the maquettes were off to the side on the modeling stand all squared off. There were height gauges, all kinds of measuring devices to convert one from the other.

He would-I'm remembering now-he would come in and deal with surface, because when the scale changed, all of that changed drastically. So a lot of his pieces aren't real smooth, and some of them have these rough, claylike

textures to them. He was in control of all that as far as I could tell. So he'd come in and sort of finish it off. Then they'd make molds of it. I think they were making molds there, so they didn't have to move the pieces. Then the molds went to the founder. And he had used-over his lifetime-a number of different foundries. One of them was in the southern part of England, and then I think in Germany and maybe in Italy, too-wherever the price was right. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: He was successful in getting his work shown.

MR. JERRY: Oh, God, yes.

MS. YAGER: In many institutions.

MR. JERRY: Actually, when we were talking earlier about Cranbrook-one of the things they sold to regain their lost endowment from the newspaper people was a huge Henry Moore-they let go. A big, reclining, very typical, reclining figure-probably from the '40s-always was a problem because it was checking-it was splitting up and there was constant restoration on it. So that was one of the things that was sold-it was probably half the endowment. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: How did things-did they do this through an auction house? The Cranbrook thing-

MR. JERRY: Oh, the Cranbrook thing went through an auction house in New York, and I don't remember which one. And they were very careful they didn't dump it all at the same time, because they knew they would end up dragging the prices down for others. And they were very careful about that. And there is a book called *The Cranbrook Years* [there are (at least) two books: Bruce N. Coulter. *Forty Years On: A History of The Cranbrook School*. Bloomfield Hills: Cranbrook School, 1976; Alec C. Child. *Cranbrook: The First Fifty Years*. Bloomfield Hills: Cranbrook School, 1968], I think, out there. I think that's the title of it. And I think the book was done about the same time-and maybe, who knows-that may have been a money raiser also to try to get the school back on track, because tuition was almost zero there. So if you got accepted, the tuition was minimal.

MS. YAGER: Is it still that way?

MR. JERRY: I don't really know. I don't know whether they've-I would guess that tuition has come up. But I remember asking for an assistantship, I think, and they said, "No, no, you're not going to need it, da-da-da-da." Well, it turned out I got a scholarship to go there anyhow, but it wasn't covering a lot of money-my living expenses and so forth were a lot more than the tuition by a long shot. So tuition was not an issue for me. I would guess now that it's probably up there. I mean, if you've ever been to Cranbrook for a while, I mean, the maintenance on the place alone-and now, of course, all new buildings, new sculpture studios, ceramics, all of that is all new in the huge building. The landscaping on the place has been altered. There's a new entry to the place-major, major, major. So whoever's managing the economics at Cranbrook is doing real well, doing really well.

MS. YAGER: Can you talk about your own work processes? You were talking about how Henry Moore would do these things with Styrofoam and-

MR. JERRY: Some models and stuff, yeah, okay. Well, and that has to do with a little bit, too, with the way I have my studio obviously. When I was a student, the discipline that I was given, directed to, whatever-

MS. YAGER: Implanted? [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Implanted under my skin? Yeah. Because of that Danish training that many of the people that went through apprenticeships, as those in Scandinavian countries went through. It included some of things that we couldn't get away with now-[laughs]-because of the time that it would take.

And so when we were to do a major piece, a problem was given, and people would draw-of course, at that time, that was the way you would approach it: draw it-and eventually you would end up full-scale drawing, and then that drawing meant that it was a mechanical presentation. So it was a top view, a side view, which could get very complicated because of curved lines that are going in two different directions. But that's what we had to teach ourselves to do. So that was not a problem for me. Because of my high school experience, I had all that mechanical drawing experience. It was a breeze for me. I had no problem with any of that.

The problems come later. One is executing it. Of course, that's-that was the deal. So we were taught to put two different hats on. I would create this thing on paper, all the way up to a finished drawing, get permission for the material, and then execute the piece. I functioned that way for seven years because that's the way I did everything. Now I didn't do that with the jewelry, but-

[Audio break, tape change.]

-and I did a lot of drawing, but that was a lot less formal-but for the hollowware, it was always designed different, and then another hat went on and executed-

MS. YAGER: Now, did you not do that for the drawing because you didn't do any jewelry under Hans?

MR. JERRY: That's probably true. That's probably true. The people that I worked with-well, in those first years, it was Lawrence Copeland-much more flexible, free guy, didn't know from that kind of drawing at all-and so sketches were just fine. I mean, he wanted to know where we were headed, but we didn't have to commit to a formal drawing.

And with Hans, once you committed to that drawing, your task was to make this piece exactly as it was in the drawing. And, of course, from the beginning people were not so apt at doing that, but as time went by, people got more skillful and got more control over the material and-

MS. YAGER: And you denied your imagination-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Sure. Well, all of that had to happen before. You didn't have an opportunity to unless you could convince him, over a long period of time, that that spout-you wanted to straighten it out a little bit. And you know, it would take a lot of diplomacy to deal with this. And it didn't happen often.

So when I left school, the first couple of major pieces that I did, big silver commissions that I did, I executed the same way. And I suppose I would have, whether it was commission or not. But it was helpful because I had to deal with other people. I had to be able to say, "This is what it's going to look like," and, you know, "Do you like it or not? You can change this, whatever." When it got finalized, I assured them-which I could do because of that experience I had with Hans-that I could make this exactly the way I drew it, even though it was a brand-new experience for me. The piece was way out on the edges I hadn't been before, but I knew I could do it.

And so making presentations that way is still helpful, and you still talk to people that can't see and can't-they just can't.

MS. YAGER: Can't visualize?

MR. JERRY: They can't visualize at all, especially when they're spending a lot of money. And-

MS. YAGER: Do you know, when I talked to Fred Fenster, he said that-here's a quote from him. "Michael had notebooks full of the most wonderful designs. Michael Jerry is one of those people. He draws like a savant. He can-I've never seen anybody like this before or since."

MR. JERRY: [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: "He can start anywhere in the object and draw it, starting at any point, and draw it in any perspective."

MR. JERRY: [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: "And he doesn't sketch. He draws the line as if it was on the page already."

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Oh, gosh. Isn't that kind!

Well, I certainly had a facility for drawing, and that came from the museum experience, all the light drawing classes that I went to as a kid, which was-happened under some-it caused a lot of problems with my father, because these were nude models, and I'm a teenager, sitting in a class of adults, you know, and I'm talking to the nude model, who's standing over my shoulder, criticizing my drawing. And that really drove some people pretty crazy-even got into the newspaper, at one point, I guess.

MS. YAGER: [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: And my father stood his ground.

So anyhow, that drawing experience, plus the mechanical stuff that I did as a high school student, that's what led to that. I mean, without that experience, I would have been dead-just as dead in the water as the rest of them were.

MS. YAGER: So-

MR. JERRY: But the other thing I think about-somebody came up with a design theory like this, but I was able to-probably less able to do it now than I did then, but I was able to sit down for a couple hours and run ideas up,

down, east, and west, as far as the idea would go. And I used to talk and draw at the same time with these students around. And a lot of that's what Fred's talking about. I did a lot of the design work for these liturgical pieces when I was at Cranbrook, and I would just sit down and-what's the problem here, you know, one of the-problem being the design, da-da, da-da, da. And I would just sit down and draw, and they would just watch. [Laughs.] And so I had a real facility for spelling out ideas on paper.

MS. YAGER: Can you-now when we were-took a look into your studio earlier, you had a form-

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Yeah. Things have changed. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: -you had a form that was-

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: -do you want to talk about that?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Things have-things changed. They changed radically probably 35 years ago. I'm still fairly a young person, and a couple of things are happening. One, I'm doing demonstrations in front of students, which have to be done pretty spontaneously. And I soon left the drawing, and I started to make models of work, particularly-

MS. YAGER: Three-dimensional-

MR. JERRY: Three-dimensional models of work. And it started with simple-what I call paper doll constructions, just a crisscross, with two slots, and put it together and a little glue, and there-it's standing there. And so I get some sense of the space it's taking up and what happens to space around it and so forth. And that was easy to do because I just pulled that right off the drawings. I already had two views of this thing, so, being, you know, it was easy.

And then, well, you know, that's not completely satisfying, because what was happening is that the mechanical kind of drawings that I was asked to do as a student were not producing pieces as I saw them in my mind's eye. The volume-the space they took up-a lot of the details in relationship to the volumes and stuff, you can't get that by drawing. There's just no way in hell. And I sensed that and started to make the models. Then I got into model making. And I would take these simple paper models, and I'd cut them out of some masonite, glue them together, fill in the corners with newspaper and plaster them. And the next thing you know, I was filing and shaping plaster.

MS. YAGER: Now these are for what kind of forms, for-

MR. JERRY: Full-scale pots, containers.

MS. YAGER: For teapots or-

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Yeah. For liturgical stuff, too, you know. I would do that.

And then I started painting them, and then-and putting high-gloss finishes on them and putting real wood handles on them. And oh, they made wonderful presentations, but I'd already spent a kajillion hours making these doggone things.

And then the models got bigger and bigger, and I was, you know, in-two, three feet and big coffee service things. And geez, I-what the heck am I doing here? My studio looked like a plaster shop.

And so I quieted down on that for a while. And then I-what I would do is, at that point, I lined my studio with what we would call kraft paper now, big-

MS. YAGER: The brown paper?

MR. JERRY: The brown paper.

MS. YAGER: Wide, on the rolls-

MR. JERRY: The cheapest thing you can-on the rolls. And I would just put it all the way around, and I'd start on one end, and I'd draw till I was exhausted. And I'd have, you know, maybe 30, 40 things, big-started the nebulas of an idea and then the expansion of that idea, till I thought I had exhausted-then I'd start another one. I'd go the way around. And I'd have more stuff than I could possibly make in a lifetime. And people do remember that who have been into my studio.

MS. YAGER: So you would have a client come in and look at that?

MR. JERRY: I'd have a client come in, but you know, colleagues would come in and out. And you know, Fred's memory of his memories of my doing that, I'm sure-and, of course, kids who came from non-art backgrounds-they were there. They had a lot to deal with, making these funny little-

MS. YAGER: You had such a leg up-

MR. JERRY: -little drawings on the corner of sketch pads and stuff like that-[laughs]-and I'm, you know, whipping around. Yeah, I'm sure, from their point of view, it was pretty amazing.

So what's happened now is-oh, at the same time, I should say, students-I had to do demonstrations for students and show them how to do things. And I was making hollowware in front of students, spontaneously. So I would seam up a cylinder, and I'd kick it around in a couple of days with them, not continuously, but off and on; I had a finished piece, which-I didn't look at it that way, because I hadn't gone through all this other stuff. I said, you know, wait a minute. [Laughs.] This is pretty-this is a pretty nice thing. And I didn't do all that drawing, didn't do any model making, anything at all.

So at that moment or close to that moment comes the blacksmithing thing, with Brent Kington down in Southern Illinois. So Fred and I get together, and we drive down there. And that whole spontaneous thing came at me, which I translated into jewelry, and then, of course, I did a lot of blacksmithing. But any hollowware that I did was done freely; it was not done-with only maybe the roughest, roughest sketches. Most of the decision making was made in the material as I was working. And that, plus the blacksmithing, which I was doing without any drawings at all, that changed my life right there. I was free of all of that stuff. But I had those skills, and when I need to return to them, it's easy.

And so what's happening now is I've been pretty much doing-I think almost for a year now-almost all jewelry. But the hollowware that I did earlier, when I first came to New Mexico, I started almost immediately making models again, but not finished models, much more spontaneously made. So I'm using Styrofoam-a Styrofoamlike material that florists use. It's that green color that you saw at the studio. And I'm just hot-gluing that together, and then with some sandpaper and-

MS. YAGER: Hot-gluing it just to get enough volume for-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, just to get enough volume. And then I have a band saw, so I can go and I can whip out a couple of cross-sectional shapes real fast. And the rest of it's done with a cheap coarse file and some sandpaper, and the whole thing takes 15 minutes, maybe. I can do that-

MS. YAGER: And this is such a nice, soft material, you can almost compress it with a thumb.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, absolutely, absolutely. But it's sturdy enough so it can hang around in the studio for a while. You can drop it on the floor a few times. It starts getting softer and softer edges, but it hangs out long enough for me to get what I need out of it.

MS. YAGER: And do you do this for yourself?

MR. JERRY: That's for myself. That's for myself.

MS. YAGER: Okay, this is not for clients.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, it's for myself. I know I'm going to go through a certain amount of work to get that form, and I don't want to blow it big time. I don't mind blowing it with a jewelry thing. If I take a-if I take a curve or a side road and go down and it doesn't work out, I haven't lost 10, 15, 20 hours, usually I haven't. I can just set that aside, and maybe I can cut it up and use it in a different way. In hollowware, I want to be a little more certain about where I'm going.

And what the model does, it helps me, one, figure out basically where I'm going to go with this, but it also helps me figure out how I'm going to fabricate it. I've got it right in front of me, and what are my options here? And if I'm working in silver, I have less options, of course, than I do when I'm working in pewter because-

MS. YAGER: Why is that?

MR. JERRY: Because you can weld the pewter.

MS. YAGER: You can-

MR. JERRY: Weld it.

MS. YAGER: What difference does that make?

MR. JERRY: There's no seam.

MS. YAGER: I see what you're saying. So you can-

MR. JERRY: There's no annealing. [Laughs.] The metal is soft. It never works hardened. So you have that, so there's none of the annealing that goes on with making larger pieces in other nonferrous metals. But the ability to weld a seam-and if you hammer over it, there is none.

MS. YAGER: And disappear it. Make it just-yeah.

MR. JERRY: It disappears. It just disappears. And that probably is the major reason I got involved with it again, partly due to Fred's workshops that he did for me at Syracuse, reminded me of some of these possibilities, and I started back working with pewter again.

MS. YAGER: I mean, pewter, there's-the difference in how you work with it-it's far less time-consuming than the silver. There's also an economic issue for the customer? I mean, does this radically bring the prices down or not?

MR. JERRY: Well, yeah, that's an interesting problem that I have to deal with because-well, one, the intrinsic value of the material, there's a big difference. You know, I don't know what a foot square of 18-gauge sterling is right at the moment, but it's up there; probably \$100 or so, maybe more, maybe \$140 even. A piece of pewter, 16- to 14-gauge pewter, is about \$45. Then you have the time that it takes to-

MS. YAGER: So it's about a third of the cost?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. So right away there's a little bit of difference, but that can also be negative, too. It's not a precious material, so psychologically you've got to jump over another hurdle because of that.

MS. YAGER: Yeah. And people that are not as familiar with it as a material to use-

MR. JERRY: Yep, yep. And it's amazing; a lot of people will ask me, "Well, can you use it?" And I say, "Well, of course you can use it, you know," and then I have to think of where that question's coming from. Well, you know, they've been to museums, they've seen early American pewter stuff, and it's all black. People died when they were 27 years old because they ate off of spoons, and it was a tin and lead alloy. That's not true of contemporary pewter. It's a tin alloy with copper and a little-

MS. YAGER: Is it antimony?

MR. JERRY: -antimony in it. Yeah. So this is perfectly, perfectly safe. So not being-not having to anneal, being able to weld the joints and solder-if you choose to, you can do some soldering. Soldering, you have to be careful that it doesn't have any lead in it, especially if it's a functional piece you're making, and in some states there's real hard laws about-Californians have a real tough law when it comes to lead.

MS. YAGER: For safety?

MR. JERRY: Safety, oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: Health of-

MR. JERRY: So there's tons of lead and tin solders out there, and you have to be very careful about-oh, there must be 100 alloys out there-solders, for one application or another, and some of them have lead in them. So you have to be careful about it. If it's a sculptural piece you're making, of course, you don't have to think about it. But like other soldering, because it's a different alloy, it's got a color difference, just like silver solders do, and so you want to try to avoid that. So I have, and I believe Fred, too-I'm welding more and more the joints now than we used to. Some-

MS. YAGER: That means using no solder?

MR. JERRY: No solder.

MS. YAGER: You just are heating the pieces until it sort of blends together?

MR. JERRY: I'm-I don't know what Fred's doing now, but you could put-you put pellets of itself down. So if you sheared off a thing at the shearer and you've gotten along, you just cut it up into little pellets, you lay along, and you fuse those right into the surface. And you can hang onto the pot in your hand while you're doing it, which is another-

MS. YAGER: Because it doesn't transfer heat.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, it doesn't transfer heat anywhere near as fast. You can hold things together with masking tape while you're soldering or welding. You know, you-

MS. YAGER: You really meant that when you said that. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. No, no, true, absolutely true. Yeah, I've held spout forms onto coffee pot bodies with masking tape, soldered them on. You got to be careful you don't turn the torch on the masking tape, of course, because it goes up in flames. But yeah, it's a whole-it's a different thing that way.

However, the forming of it is-the tools and equipment to form it with are pretty much the same as it is for silver and for copper and brass, the same kind of hammers and sandbags and whatever you're working with. But pewter, being as soft as it is, does not like to be raised, for instance. If I were raising a silver thing, I lay it down and it stays where I put it. With pewter, it doesn't work that way.

So if I'm making a bowl, let's say, a hemispherical shape, today, what are my choices? In silver, I could-if it were a heavy enough alloy, I could dap it down. I could do the whole thing from the inside. Or I could turn it around; I could raise it on the outside. Pewter, I don't have those choices, because the metal's so soft, while I'm working on the one side, it's falling out on the other. It just-doesn't go back out a flat sheet, but you can spend a lifetime trying to raise a piece of pewter.

So what happens with the pewter is that, one, either you dap it down-which is a stretching situation, so you have to use heavy sheet-gauge-

MS. YAGER: Heavy gauge?

MR. JERRY: So a 14-16 and 14. Not many people making pewter out of 18-gauge. So that's one way of doing it. Dapping, pewter takes to that, or repoussé, whatever you want to call it, takes to that very, very nicely. But typically you would just-you'd fold it up like you would cut an orange, like a map. Fold it up, you'd weld those seams up, hammer 'em over, and be done with it. It would be fairly-it would be fairly easy and very fast to have that same simple form.

And so-and Fred often describes it in his workshops, you know, it's like working-it more has to do with tailoring and seamstress kinds of activities, where things are cut and pleated and-well, you do the same thing. If one thing's too big around on the bottom, you take a long sliver out of it, scrunch it together, and weld that seam, and hammer it over, and it's fine. You haven't raised on it. You haven't beat it to death. You haven't done any of those things.

So it makes it go faster. So for me, while I was teaching, it was a faster way to work. I didn't have to linger over pieces for weeks and weeks and sometimes months in order to get a piece finished in silver. In pewter, I could see it in a week and still be teaching full-time, going to meetings, and all of that stuff. I could have this thing in front of me very fast, and I really liked that. And I think the blacksmithing was spontaneous activity, that blacksmithing of-well, can be. I shouldn't say all of it's that way, but it can be.

That has all somehow added up to what's going on with me right now. So I'm back to models for the larger pieces and I am making choices. And then I reserve, of course, decision making for while I'm working on it. I always change things while I'm working.

MS. YAGER: Have you ever worked alone? No, I mean, have you ever had other people working with you on pieces?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Not often. I was never very good at directing others. That was probably another one of my problems as a teacher, because I had all these people working for me, and getting them to do things, I felt that by the time I explained it and showed them how to do it, I might as well have done it myself. And I still have a tendency to think that way, although I've learned to give up some stuff to others.

Yeah, towards the end of my time at Syracuse I had, oh, I don't know, maybe a dozen paper models that I had made on a visit here to Santa Fe. I entertained myself. I didn't have any tools to work with here. I was here for a month. And so I sat around with cardboard and stiff paper and glue and came up with all these shapes.

And I got back to Syracuse and I wanted them all. I wanted to make them all. And there was no way I was going to be able to do it myself, so I hired one of my graduate students who had just finished up. He needed a job for the summer. I taught him how to weld the pewter. And he came from Virginia Commonwealth [Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond] as an undergraduate. He had a good metalworking background. And away we went. We made, I don't know, eight or nine pieces. So when I came here, I had those pieces with me,

and those were some of the first things that showed up in Patina.

MS. YAGER: Patina Gallery?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, Patina Gallery here in Santa Fe. It went okay. It went okay.

If things go well, I may be headed that way again now. There are some things I'm tired of making over and over again, and they're selling well. And I can teach somebody how to do that who's interested, I think, pretty quickly. There's people standing in line to work with me for one reason or another, either for short-term or long-term, and so I'm thinking about it. If sales of the work move any further, I won't be able to do the work myself, and I'll turn over the repetitive work to others.

MS. YAGER: What piece, or type of thing, have you created most frequently? I mean, you said that there were certain things that you-

MR. JERRY: Oh, would do over?

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: The kind of work that I would do repetitively, one just like the other-I mean, as close as I can do with my hands-it's the jewelry side of me. I'm doing a series of silver bracelets and rings right now with three different finishes on, and I think I'm at 30 bracelets now and probably almost that many rings. And I'm tired of it.

MS. YAGER: And these are in silver?

MR. JERRY: These are in silver.

MS. YAGER: Do you ever make pewter jewelry?

MR. JERRY: No.

MS. YAGER: Is that not heard of?

MR. JERRY: Pretty much not heard of, because pewter is so soft, it's so easily damaged, that there's no work hardness. So you can't forge on it to harden it or pull on it to harden it. It just isn't going to.

MS. YAGER: So these are forged silver bracelets?

MR. JERRY: These are-yeah. Well, I don't know what you would call forged or not. I'm not altering the thickness much. They are being formed from sheet material, a single sheet of material, one piece, except for the hinge pieces, of course. Then I have to add the mechanisms to it. Kind of reminiscent of maybe some of the Heikki Seppä stuff, that kind of hollow forming. Very simple. I can do it fairly quickly.

MS. YAGER: So the anticlastic method, where you're-

MR. JERRY: Well, yeah, he developed some kind of vocabulary for all of that. And I think he did a good thing, but he created sort of a monster, too, because a lot of-some people did some really great things with that. I think a lot of things that Heikki did were interesting experiments with hollow forming. But they grew tiresome quickly.

He wanted to make his mark really badly. And I like his book [*Form Emphasis for Metalsmiths*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1978]. I always had it in the classroom. His reasons for heading in that direction, I think, were good, but the forms weren't all that inventive. And people have been making spouts and handles forever, and that's basically where that is. So I didn't find it so revolutionary as some people did, who were probably coming from more jewelrylike programs. But he did some good things. He was a good promoter. And I get a kick out of him. Now he's on an island out on the coast of Seattle [Bainbridge Island]. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Washington State, yes.

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

So those things I would do over, but I don't-and I suppose that's why I didn't really hook up with Ron Pearson as a younger person. Doing repetitive work like that, it's a way of solving an economic problem, but it is not something I would care to do. And so some of my portfolio, in the price lists that go with it, it will say, "Sold, but will revisit." Not remake, but revisit. That's as close as I'm going to get. On a couple of occasions on the hollowware, the piece in the case in the other room here, the one that's kind of on a slant, that's the third one of those I've made. But each one is a little different. Basically the same, but each one has a little different flavor to it. And then, of course, some serving pieces. It's mostly the smaller work that I would duplicate, or revisit.

MS. YAGER: Now, you've done jewelry, flatware, hollowware, liturgical work.

MR. JERRY: Awards. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Awards?

MR. JERRY: Awards. Yeah.

MS. YAGER: For?

MR. JERRY: For Outstanding Faculty Member of the Year or-

MS. YAGER: Would these be in the form of a plaque or a-

MR. JERRY: Usually ended up in a sculptural piece. A tabletop sculptural piece. With those things there's always a budget, you know, so I have to figure out how I can do something interesting with, most of the time, minimal amount of manipulation of the material. Not always, you know, not always, but often that's "Best Salespeople of the Year" and kind of the thing that Olaf used to do. He made some great presentational stuff. Olaf.

MS. YAGER: This is Olaf Skoogfors?

MR. JERRY: Skoogfors, yeah, made some really nice presentational stuff. And I've done-oh, Jesus-film awards, a whole variety of things. They're not a big part of what I do, but being a faculty member, that's when I would get involved, because through the art school, "Oh, do you have anybody that can do this?" And then I would get a phone call: "Hey, listen. Joe's here and he wants X bronze presentation pieces for The Entertainer of the Year," or something or other. And then if I had time, I'd say yes. If not, I'd say, no, I'm going to pass it on to my sculptor friend or something, or Barbara would do it.

MS. YAGER: Can you tell me, in your long career are there one or two or three pieces that just stand out as sort of the epitome of your style and your work?

MR. JERRY: Over time? Hmm. Well, I think when it comes to the jewelry side of what I'm doing, I think the piece that the Craft Museum, or the now Museum of Art & Design, the piece that they have from the Johnson Wax collection probably is, of that period of time, five years or so on either side of that, that's probably pretty representative of what I do.

MS. YAGER: Can you describe that?

MR. JERRY: It was a forged silver neckpiece that is sort of torqued around the neck, came down in two parts, ended up in a square that was pierced with-more than a hemispherical-shape, that had a moonstone or something hidden in a black interior in it. I think that's the closest I can get to it. So that's certainly one.

Then I did a piece which was stolen, interesting enough, a hollowware piece, when I first came out of school, done in the style of what I was doing at the time. But it was a large coffee pot and sugar and creamer, the last big silver piece of domestic hollowware that I did. I've done plenty of other things in silver-or, I mean, in pewter-but last really big piece.

So I had a commission to do that, and lo and behold, I checked in on it, and I have people who are teaching in that-

[Audio break.]

MS. YAGER: This is Jan Yager interviewing Michael Jerry in the artist's home and studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on November 16, 2004, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number six, session number two.

Let's see.

MR. JERRY: Where were we? [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Can you tell me-let's talk about content and intent of your work.

MR. JERRY: Oh, boy.

MS. YAGER: Where do you get your ideas for your work?

MR. JERRY: Where do I get 'em? Well, can't really answer that the way you might want it. I don't go someplace to get it. What I'm doing right now is a sum total of my life's experiences, and, of course, with everybody that's

different. I always believe that-well, I shouldn't say believe. I always remain curious; visually curious, like all kinds of music; I'm constantly involved, whether-I have a huge library, love looking at all kinds of work, and I have for just about ever. And I suppose-and I've thought myself more about what's gone before than I did when I got it shoveled at me in school. I found that part of it very interesting and find it just as exciting today as ever. So they don't come from any particular direction.

I suppose if you look at the work, looked at a whole bunch of it, you could probably pretty well figure out-I hope not too easily figure out, especially in the hollowware-what my influence has been. And I still think about that a lot, especially now when I've been making so much jewelry, which probably I'm a little freer with than I am the hollowware, seems to be the case.

MS. YAGER: And these influences-you're referring to the Scandinavian-

MR. JERRY: Well, you know, certainly the way I started. You know, I didn't start making metal objects in probably the most typical way. That experience with design via, you know, the Scandinavian experience at a time when it was at its height in terms of all kinds of design, and it went on through the whole time when I was younger. So I-it's hard to deny by looking at the work that I did-[laughs]-I didn't come across to that at some point, even, of course, not having studied there, but by working with somebody that was very dogmatic and so forth when it came to what I did visually.

And I look at the work now and I say, well, you know, still reaching for more interesting surfaces and so forth as a reaction to something that happened almost four years ago. But that's okay. I'm not-it's more of a process of not only making the work, but thinking about the work and its shape and its form and so forth than it is that finished piece. I'm pretty much done with it by the time I get there.

But yeah, it-it is a collection, just that, just as simple as that. Just a collection of my-what I have chosen to look at, I suppose. And that's another question, you know; why do I look at one thing and not another? But I try very, very hard-always have and always ask my students to, too-is to look at all kinds of work, and not only metal, but a whole variety of medium. I always had a strong commitment to the metal thing, but that-who knows? I don't know. I'm doing some stuff in wood now, and I'm messing around with glass beads, and I'd never dreamed in a million years I'd be doing that.

MS. YAGER: Are these recent influences from being in Santa Fe?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, perhaps, mm-hmm. Yeah, I think so. I think so. I'm-you know, I'm not about to pick up a piece of turquoise. [Laughs.] Or a piece of coral, either; I would be very careful about doing that here, because there's just-it's so saturated with work that uses those kinds of materials. I think they do beautiful things with them, but it's --

MS. YAGER: It's charged. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Yeah, exactly, exactly. So if I do use any, you know, traditional things for this region, I'm very careful about how I do it and I do it very subtly. I don't smack people in the face with it. I wouldn't use, you know, a pound of turquoise for a belt buckle any more than I would-[laughs]-just no way.

MS. YAGER: When you're sitting in your studio, do you like to have music on?

MR. JERRY: Always.

MS. YAGER: Do you like to work in the day or at night?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, I'm a daytime person. Not a-never was a night person, except as a student, of course, trying to finish up stuff. But I've always, always worked in the daytime, and my schedule now is never less than four hours and probably between five, five and a half, six hours, seven hours maybe, a day. I'm in that studio working. And especially since the house was finished, that's been my schedule. And probably so long as I am able, that probably will be my schedule.

MS. YAGER: Now this house is such a lovely home in Santa Fe, and you have a view out of your studio window that's the same view that we're looking at right now. Can you talk about-I mean, it's so beautiful. You're up on this hill and you can see great distances.

MR. JERRY: Well, it's certainly-it certainly is restful and peaceful, and with especially some music, I'm not intimidated by it. I'm sort of constantly in-I've been here not very long; I've been here four years, and I look out and I see that mountain over here on the right-hand side that's all white with snow already, you know. Golly! [Laughs.] You know, look where I am!

MS. YAGER: Will you be a landscape painter? [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Yeah! Oh, my Lord! And I see these skies. You see these paintings from the Southwest and you go oh, sure, sure, you know, it can't-it can't look like that. People who come from the East to visit us, they look at these sunsets that are here and they are bloody spectacular. You couldn't dream of it. And then you realize where all those landscape paintings came from over the years from this part of the country. You know, oh my Lord. I don't know what, if any, effect it has on the work, except it is a very peaceful existence here, and if I want to go do something, it's here. I can go to the bookstore, I can-

MS. YAGER: Now the other thing, in your home you seem to have collections of things. Can you talk about what you are interested in collecting?

MR. JERRY: Well, about the time I get interested in collecting things, the price goes sky-high-[laughs]-and I can't keep up with it. Years-many years ago, when I was first teaching at Syracuse-in fact, Bruce Metcalf was a student at the time-you know, I asked-I thought, well, there's a whole vocabulary of tin toys and how they're put together with tabs and cold joints and painted and stuff like that. And I thought, well, okay, "So let's take a look at that." With students I did this. "Let's take a look at that and see if we can learn something about that kind of metalworking." And I was taking a look at that, too, of course, and I got interested in collecting tin toys. But I'm not a nut about it. I'm not at every toy auction, and I just can't afford to be, but I keep my eyes out. In the living room there's that whole border of stuff, you know.

MS. YAGER: Oh, the trucks and-

MR. JERRY: And then people know I'm interested in it and they'll say, "Geez, you know, back in the garage there's this da-da-da," and I say, "Well, okay." And sure enough, the last big round of toys that I got was from a woman who-the kids were playing with what had been her husband's toys, and wonderful old trucks and stuff, and finally she was cleaning out the garage.

She said, "I can't stand it anymore. Come look." She had a trunk full of stuff. She says, "What will you give me for the whole thing?"

I said, "Well, you really should go to the bookstore, get a book out and find out what this stuff is worth. That's easy to do."

"I don't want to take time. I don't want to take the time to do that."

I said, "Okay. Remember I told you." [Laughs.]

So I offered her, I don't know, \$300-400, and I got all these wonderful pieces. And that's what happens.

And in Santa Fe, there's a tin tradition, you know, amongst the Spanish craftspeople, been pushing tin around for a long time; lighting fixtures, sconces, all sorts of stuff. And then, from that, artists have started to pick up on it, and the next thing you know, they're running old tin cans and olive oil cans and doing all kinds of neat stuff with it. So-

MS. YAGER: Did this influence Harriette Berman, the Santa Fe tin-

MR. JERRY: I don't know. I never had a chance to talk to Harriette about that, whether it did or not. We talked a little bit-those are-it's the lithograph thing on tin. And I always thought there must have been a toy plant close by. But she said that-she told me one time that she collected most of the stuff at garage sales and things like that. That's where she was getting it. And so I don't know. I don't know whether she had been in this part of the country-because there's a lot of it here.

MS. YAGER: No, but I mean-

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: -as a student of yours.

MR. JERRY: Oh, as a student of mine? I don't think so. I-no, I couldn't lay claim to that. She was an undergraduate student and then went to Tyler, worked with Stanley and got an M.F.A., and then went out to the West Coast. And that was pretty much it.

MS. YAGER: You also have African crafts --

MR. JERRY: Well, yeah. Santa Fe has in its galleries some pretty interesting collections of African work here-lots of masks. Some of it was made yesterday, and not very well. But if you look carefully, you can find authentic pieces. And there's a lot of it here. Just walking down the street, you just bump into it, out and about.

So we've had some opportunities at flea markets, buying from some importers. And then, of course, our friend- we have several friends who have immigrated here from South Africa, and I suppose that has a little bit to do with it. And then, of course, my wife- she went on a buying trip to South Africa for a business that she was going to generate with two or three other people. And that didn't pan out, but in the process of that, spending time there, she came back with a number of things- the big wire motorcycle downstairs-

MS. YAGER: Some fabulous pieces-

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: -about four or five feet long. Fabulous.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Yeah. Amazing. I wish I had had it as a teacher, talking about what could you do with a piece of wire, you know. It's incredible.

And there are some carved doors down there, and there's some masks that we were able to buy here. And then a lot of the other stuff- well, there are ethnic trade shows here, too. And we've picked up some metal pieces here that would be hard to find anywhere else, except in New York, maybe in California, and dealers from all over the country come here for these big ethnic fairs- very serious, museum quality stuff, all of it. I've seen pre-Colombian gold pieces for sale here.

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: I couldn't believe it. I said, "How is it you have these pieces here at all?"

MS. YAGER: Yeah. Yeah.

MR. JERRY: -because as far as I knew, you couldn't get that stuff out of the country. But he had a whole- he had a case of five of them. They were all major pieces. And there it was, right on the counter for sale, you know-

MS. YAGER: You can touch it-

MR. JERRY: -then aisles and aisles of that stuff. And it happens here. So there are major collectors in Santa Fe, which means that there are people gathering around to make sure they have plenty to look at.

And when they talk about building homes here to display the work, they're dead serious about that. A lot of people have homes here that are really containers for their vast collections. And I've been in those homes, and it was unreal, just- you can't imagine the degree of collecting and the seriousness of it here in Santa Fe. It's just incredible.

So there are a lot of people selling work. A lot of people come through here selling work.

And so we're sort of on the fringes of it. We pick up the bits, you know. [Laughs.]

But the toys, I've always- I've always been interested in the toys. Mostly it has to do with, I think, about the metalwork and how they're constructed and painted and so forth. And actually, I don't know how much of that rubbed off on Bruce, but a fair amount, because I- he- I remember, as a student, he researched old lead toys, toys that were made from molds, and some of them were just stone-made out of slate. And he showed it at Tyler. I thought Stanley was just going to blow his brains out, because he thought that it was just awful.

But he made this whole village of fighting characters out of lead. He carved them out of stone; poured them, like lead soldiers were always done; painted them. And he had one group fighting against another in a village that he made in printmaking fold-up, like dollhouse kind of construction. So he did that as a printmaking project. [Laughs.] And this thing was on display in the Tyler Museum- you know, student museum's shelf-

MS. YAGER: I think he's still interested in those little houses and things.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Well, he's still- he has these little- he has these caricaturelike things. He was a cartoonist while he was in the school, and he did all kinds of signage and did a lot of advertising for rock bands and so forth.

MS. YAGER: He always- his bench at the studio-

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: -he's got kind of a long bench.

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: And one half of it will be the pieces that he's working on that are jewelry-related, and then the other half of the bench will be a model of some sort, a train or a truck or some kind of mechanical vehicle.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Used to take those plastic things and cut them up and rearrange them. [Laughs.] And of course with Bruce, you know, I said, "Bruce, you can't do that." "Oh, really?" Next morning I'd come in, and had he had worked his way through whatever it was-I said it couldn't be done. And he loved doing that for me. [Laughs.] He was always challenging the situation here. No doubt where he was going.

MS. YAGER: Can you-some of the questions I have here-

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: -in what way does political or social commentary figure into it, into your work? Does it ever enter in?

MR. JERRY: Certainly not in any literal way. I have from time to time made some work with more literal content in it, but I feel very-always felt uncomfortable doing it. Thematic exhibitions-people will contact me and say, "Would you like to participate in the show? This has got a theme." That's happened recently.

In fact, there was-Bruce is used to doing that.

MS. YAGER: Bruce Pepich.

MR. JERRY: Pepich, yeah. He did a whole series of shows that were thematic. At least one a year I was in. And so, with some reluctance, I would do it.

And occasionally it turned out quite well, mostly a play on words, one way or another. It's a lot like my colleague Barbara Walter, not-I don't now if you're familiar with her work, but they're all puns, of one sort or another. And I did a piece of hollowware a couple of years ago that was supposed to have something to do with tea, so I turned that into a golf tee and a golf ball and built up-built a piece around that theme. But that's as far as it's ever gone. I'm much more formal. So, no.

MS. YAGER: How about an element of play, either in the process or in the piece-

MR. JERRY: Oh, definitely in the process. When it comes to the jewelry particularly, I have moved far away from any-I don't even draw anymore, I don't think. I'm trying to think-I might draw to work out a mechanical problem now for jewelry, but I'm dipping right into the material. And what I have down in the studio now is a bench full of stuff.

And I'm running out of stuff now, but over the years I've collected bits and pieces of things that didn't work out, for one reason or another. And they become a resource for new pieces. And so now I-and in fact sometimes I sit down and just make stuff. I experiment with this or that, and it just lays on the bench. And oh, over the last couple of years, particularly those pieces of jewelry that you saw yesterday, yeah, most of that is my stuff, rearranged. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: With a spontaneous-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, exactly. Right there, right there, physically, I might make an element and add to it. Sometimes I'll put it over a clean piece of paper, and I'll draw an element and make it. But the guts of the piece is really coming from objects that already exist, either made by me or by others.

And those bead forms, plastic pieces that were made years ago, these are all-you know, I'm looking at them with different eyes now and I'm able to generate pieces out of them. And I like working that way. I can't seem to quite do the hollowware thing that way, maybe because it takes too damn long, even in pewter, to make bits and put them together that way. So there's definitely two different things going in that way.

So I play. I play a lot with bits and pieces and parts and paper models and wood models. And that's why I have a band saw and a sander, initially because I made models with it, and still do. The coffee pot in the other room in the house here that I said I had made three of, that came directly out of a wood model that I had made just playing around with shapes and forms. And actually, it came from some old architectural molding. If you look at it carefully, it's a cornice of a building that I sawed up and discovered and changed the scale a little bit. But that's where that came from. So it sort of gets into where ideas come from, I guess. Constant observation. I don't believe that without being curious about everything, you're going to go very far, because you've got no well to go to.

MS. YAGER: Do you think that your gender, race, or ethnicity has anything to do with the work that you produce?

MR. JERRY: Well, not ethnicity, although I'm part Native American, but not culturally. There's little or no

connection there.

MS. YAGER: The Germanic side of you is probably more-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, but both sides of the family are so mixed that there really isn't anything there that I would-except maybe attitudes and how I use my head and so forth, but certainly, no, no direct connection there that I can think of.

And gender? I don't wear my work. [Laughs.] And I can't help thinking of Bruce. Bruce often wears his work. Not for any particular reason that I'm conscious of, except for a ring, maybe, but that's it. And I make a lot of jewelry. And I suppose being a male, I get into trouble with it. I make it too big, too bold, maybe too masculine. I don't know. But every once in a while my wife has to remind me, "Whoa!" You know. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Well, Bruce wears his pins.

MR. JERRY: Sure he does.

MS. YAGER: He never wears his necklaces. And I often challenge him, "Wear that, and then see."

MR. JERRY: [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: You do approach things differently when you approach it as a wearer.

MR. JERRY: Oh, I'm sure. I'm absolutely certain of it. And I try now particularly, because I am doing a lot of jewelry, I try it out on people. I get reactions from bright, intelligent, sensitive people that are around me, friends and so forth. You know, they'll say, "Whoa, how in the heck are you going to get that on?" Or, "That's too sharp," "it's too heavy," "it's too this or that-all things that I'm conscious of when I'm working, but occasionally I slip by a few of them and make something that's too heavy, doesn't fit, doesn't this, doesn't that.

MS. YAGER: I always found the time I was doing the craft fairs to be amazingly-you know, within two hours you would have gotten 40 comments, and 30 of them would have said, "Oh, it's really too heavy," or "It pinches."

MR. JERRY: Right. Yeah. Yeah.

MS. YAGER: And so quickly you were redesigning the pieces as they tried them on.

MR. JERRY: Right. Well, one of the advantages of the craft fair at any level is that you're talking to people.

MS. YAGER: Direct contact.

MR. JERRY: You'd have direct contact with people and you'd get a reaction. And it's not like making a piece and sending it off to a show. You never hear about it until it comes back, you know, for the most part, or even into a gallery. Now occasionally I'll get a phone call about a piece that somebody's seen, would like, and it's too big for them or whatever, and I'll revisit the thing, maybe.

And that's the nice part about having two galleries here, two places where I'm selling work, is that I can get immediate response, because all they have to do is pick up the phone and they know they're not bothering me. On some occasions I'll get in the car and I'll go down and meet the person, the potential buyer and so forth. And I do that pretty regularly, actually. Not for a \$300 piece, but if somebody's spending \$4,000, \$5,000, \$6,000, I'll be in the car and I'll be down there in a couple minutes and meet the person, make a display stand for them as part of the deal, and get reaction.

And it can be as varied as-you know, the last two big pieces that I sold, the woman was going to wear the pieces, but I think she's probably going to get more enjoyment out of displaying them as sculptural pieces.

MS. YAGER: On the wall or on a table?

MR. JERRY: I made her display stands; very simple display stands for the table. She said, "I'm not going to buy this and not have it out. It's insane," she said. I said, "I agree with you." [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Well, what would the display stands look like?

MR. JERRY: In this case the pieces worked pretty well all the way around. She wanted something very simple, and so it was just a pedestal form on a stand and a groove in the wood. They were done in walnut. A little groove in the top that held the-they were neckpieces, both of them.

MS. YAGER: And it was a wood-toned-

MR. JERRY: Yeah, a little wood piece, yeah. It was just a simple thing for me to do, and that's the way she wanted it.

MS. YAGER: It could be a really good idea for more-

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Oh, exactly. Oh, for sure.

On the other hand, I don't know if you noticed yesterday, but there's a piece I made early on for Nathalie. It had a huge, what appeared to be turquoise bead, really glass, and it's sitting on a stand like a sculptural piece down there. And I think that's the problem with it, why I haven't sold it, because people can't visualize themselves having that piece on. And one of these days when I have a moment, I'm going to go down, and we're going to do something about that.

MS. YAGER: This is Nathalie-

MR. JERRY: Fitzgerald.

MS. YAGER: -Fitzgerald, and her gallery is called Nathalie's?

MR. JERRY: No, her gallery is called Casa Nova.

MS. YAGER: Thank you.

MR. JERRY: All right. So I think in that case it's working against me, and what I have to do is put the piece on a mannequin, and I bet it will be gone in a couple months. I went in with the idea that I would probably provide stands of one sort for all the pieces, and some of them went with stands and some of them didn't.

MS. YAGER: I used to make an archival box for each piece.

MR. JERRY: Oh, geez.

MS. YAGER: And then you would open up the box and it could be a display mount for it.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. No, I think that's a fantastic idea.

MS. YAGER: But it's time-consuming.

MR. JERRY: Oh, it's very time-consuming.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, as much as the piece sometimes. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Oh, sure.

MS. YAGER: Not always.

MR. JERRY: Oh, boy, I've made boxes, shaped boxes-I'm not a woodworker, so it's a little bit of a struggle-for some major pieces. And I like doing that. I like that container idea. I would like to do more of it, but, of course, it is time-consuming. And somebody says, "Whoa, a box is going to cost \$600?" I say, "Well, I worked as fast as I could."

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

A couple of the topics that I want to get to, selling your work is one, and the development of the market and how that market has changed in your lifetime.

MR. JERRY: Ooh.

MS. YAGER: That's a big question.

MR. JERRY: Ooh, boy. Well, certainly things have changed.

MS. YAGER: The market for American craft.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, the market for American craft. Earlier today we talked about America House for a minute. And, of course, in terms of what Mrs. Webb did for the craft field, she saw no outlet-I mean, it's one thing to educate people and make wonderful things, and then what are they going to do with it? So America House was created for that reason or for that idea. And there were many America Houses. There was one in California and there was one outside of Detroit.

But little by little, people started opening galleries that were specifically aimed at craft, and now we have a major network of them-for clay, for multimedia, for wood, for-my goodness, there's hundreds of them now-and there was no further need for America House, and that's when they pulled it.

MS. YAGER: How important are-

MR. JERRY: They decided they didn't have to do that.

And, of course, the craft fair thing is a network that didn't exist when I was a student. There was no hint of it even. Now maybe there was some clothesline things going on with painters in some small town somewhere, but the notion of a major wholesale retail craft fair wasn't even on the horizon. And so what's happened now is this huge activity.

MS. YAGER: I think the idea of wholesale and craft don't go together. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Wholesale and craft don't go together. [Laughs.] Well, then you-then you have to find a way to get the work in front of people. But it is a way of marketing, and a lot of young people-I did one craft fair to educate myself a little bit because I hadn't participated in any of that because I was making my living teaching.

MS. YAGER: Which one was that?

MR. JERRY: I did the Washington Craft Show, the first time or the second time they did it. Very small, it was to raise money for the Renwick, I think. I think that was the purpose of it. Small amount of space, inside, and I went as a babe in the woods. I had never even been to any of these things. So these young people coming in with their booths and, you know, the lighting and the carpeting and the chairs and everything. That was a real eye-opener. So I photographed as much as I could while I was there, sold some work, and mostly absorbed the experience, which I took back to school with me. And then I would take students to the Baltimore Craft Fair, give them some idea what that-what that potentially was like if they wanted to be headed in that direction. So that's-

MS. YAGER: I'm not sure that that's a venue that fosters major work.

MR. JERRY: No, no, no, no, no, no. No, no. Thanks for the jam there, because that has changed a lot. The craft fair scene, as I've seen it as a nonparticipating person-only visiting and talking to people that make their living from those things-I, in fact, went to Baltimore Craft Fair, my wife and I did, last year, just to see what was happening in that venue, kind of venue, and it was terribly disappointing. The level of the work-not necessarily quality in terms of how-skill quality-

MS. YAGER: Technical skill was pretty high, yeah.

MR. JERRY: -was very high; so high in some cases it went right into a commercial-it crossed that line. There were people standing around in suits and ties selling, you know, gold and diamond jewelry. That's not the-that's not the experience that I certainly knew, and I was hard pressed to find anything.

But there were a few old timers there, people who, you know, the economy slowed down a little bit, so they felt they had to be-they had to be at these shows to let people know they were still alive and well.

Like Michael Good was there, amongst all this other stuff. Michael, for the kind of thing that he does, he does it really well. He's very inventive. He was quick to show me all the new pieces. He's experimenting all the time, really had his act together there. And there were young people who were just coming out of school, a couple of them. That was really fun to see. And they were-they had no idea what was going on. [Laughs.] They brought their schoolwork with them and it was fun to see.

But it's gotten to be a commercial-it's gotten to be a trade show, a big commercial trade show. And even though the sponsors of those things over the years promoted the best of American craft, come to these-whatever it was, the Rosen-well, the Rosen shows are not even in the picture. But the American Craftsman's Council shows always tried-their promotion to get people to believe that this was the best that was happening, and it wasn't even true then, and it's really far from that now. At least you used to be able to go and you'd see-you'd see somebody, and their M.F.A. work would be in the back, and then in front would be what they knew or felt they needed to do to attract customers and to have a life outside of the academic thing, which was slowly dissolving away. And now I don't know.

MS. YAGER: I brought my thesis work to Baltimore in 1981 or 1982, but the expense of the shows now and the amount that you really need to turn over in order to finance-

MR. JERRY: Oh, absolutely. And you stay in those cities, the cost of hotels and all the rest of it. It's big business now. When I was at the Washington craft thing, that was probably 15 years ago now when I did that, maybe even longer, and there were young people there. A lot of people sold out. In two nights they-in two days it was

gone. And when I would go around and talk to potters and fiber people and so forth, this was the way they made a living. And they all seemed to be 31, 32, 33, 34, somewhere in the there, and they were making \$30,000-40,000 a year back in wherever they were living off of these fairs, and they seemed perfectly happy and content. I thought, well, that's one way of doing it.

But then you get into galleries and that's-I'm learning more about that now than I did years ago. I always sold work, but galleries come and go. I had some successes in New York. But as soon as I would have some reasonable success-[laughs]-the gallery would fold, disappear, sometimes with the work, you know. Oh yeah. Oh boy. There are nightmare stories out there about galleries which-I'm sure you've heard 'em.

MS. YAGER: I have marked down here that you had participated in an international trade fair in Munich, Germany, a couple times.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, mm-hmm.

MS. YAGER: Can you talk about that?

MR. JERRY: Not a whole lot. And I did that in Yugoslavia. There was a trade fair in Yugoslavia that I participated in.

These-I didn't travel to see them, so I have no idea, but my feeling was that they were truly trade fairs trying to show the best work, mostly from European industry and some individual craftsmen that were making their living from what they were doing. And it had-definitely had a commercial bent to it, all of them, I think.

Now why they invited Americans to participate, I don't know, but many of us were not doing that kind of work. But they seemed to always be interested, so I participated. But I never saw the shows, so I-I mean, I got these very handsome certificates and stuff that I participated, but other than that-not until I went to Pforzheim did I get to see-one of my many trips. I spent some time in the gold museum in Pforzheim [Schmuckmuseum, Pforzheim, Germany] and saw some great work, fantastic work.

MS. YAGER: Do you remember a particular piece?

MR. JERRY: Nothing particular, no. A lot of historical-they had a lot of historical stuff there as well as contemporary work, because they had been there for a number of years. But I remember spending time with the director.

MS. YAGER: That was Fritz Falk?

MR. JERRY: Fritz Falk, was it?

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah. Spent some time in his space, and he was interested in American work. I'm not sure that they had acquired any pieces yet at that time or not, certainly not from me. I'm not part of that collection.

MS. YAGER: You have work in-let's see, I'm looking at museums that you have work in.

MR. JERRY: Well, the Metropolitan thing certainly is one of them.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, the cooking pots.

MR. JERRY: Well, what had happened there-what led up to that was I had gotten a Ford Foundation grant to do an exhibition and to produce a catalogue, and that show was put together and held at the Everson Museum in Syracuse. And it was a very simple color catalogue, and it actually wasn't even bound; it was a fold-up, six-page thing that folded up.

MS. YAGER: This was of your own work, or-

MR. JERRY: Of my work-of my own work and my wife's at the time. Included her because I needed-we needed some volume, even with the small space that they gave me. But out of that I had all these catalogues that were part of the deal, and we just threw them out, just threw them to the museum and so forth, and bingo.

MS. YAGER: You mean, you mailed them out?

MR. JERRY: Yeah, I mailed them out.

MS. YAGER: Okay. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah, just mailed 'em out with a note. And bingo, curator at the Metropolitan called and said, "Listen, when you're in New York, bring some work; we'd be very interested in seeing it."

MS. YAGER: Who was that?

MR. JERRY: A young woman who's left there. I can't think of her name right now. She went on to other museums. A big automotive thing somewhere, in Detroit, maybe. Memorabilia? I don't remember. But she bought a number of pieces when she was there, or acquired a number of pieces, contemporary pieces. I'm trying to think of who else. I haven't seen it all together, but there probably is upwards of 15 to 20 pieces there of contemporary stuff.

Who's the hollowware guy at Iowa that does the big electroform pieces that are silver-plated? Big, soft, kind of pillowy forms.

MS. YAGER: Chuck Evans?

MR. JERRY: No, not Chuck Evans. No, an Oriental name. Chung Hi-

MS. YAGER: Oh, Chunghi Choo, a woman.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, woman, excuse me. Woman. Yeah. She had a piece already in the collection when we arrived. And there were several other things. There may be a Miller piece there. Maybe.

MS. YAGER: John Paul Miller?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Maybe Bob Ebendorf.

So she thought it was important to gather these things now, instead of later, and so she went to work and invited people in. So anyhow, we arrived. And at that time, the week before we arrived there, they had a major theft within the Metropolitan. A Roman head, bust, somebody walked right out of the place with it. Heavy, heavy, heavy piece. And they were, like, nuts. The whole place was, like, vibrating because of this thing. And it was right out of the main gallery on the first floor, I think.

So some of what we had was in briefcases, but I had a lot of stuff that was bigger than that. And I had it down in the car, but I couldn't get in the museum. They wouldn't let you in the museum with anything. I mean, you just had to about strip down to get into this place.

And then she came up and she said, "Well, do you have some work with you?" I said, "Yeah." So we went and looked at work that we had in the briefcase, and she got very excited, and she chose a piece of my wife's. And then she said, "Well, you have more work with you, don't you?" I said, "Yeah, but the guards wouldn't let me bring it in." She said, "That's okay, let's go. Where are you parked?" I said, "Well, we're down in the garage." She said, "Okay, let's go down."

So I went down in the garage and spread this stuff out in the back of my station wagon. [Laughs.] Just like a peddler, you know? She says, "Oh! Oh! Oh!"

MS. YAGER: The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. That cooking pot that you saw there, it was picked out in the garage of the Metropolitan. I can't believe it. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: And this was a purchase?

MR. JERRY: Well, no. Here's what happened. She said, like a lot of museums, "Well, I've got to run these by a committee," because they're not allowed to act alone, especially a younger curator like that. "I've got to run it by a committee, and then we will look for a donor."

A short time after, maybe less than a week, both of us were leaving the country and were going to be gone, I think-I don't know if it was an Italy trip or I was going to London or not. I believe it was to London. I was going to be gone for a long time. So she picked a piece out and explained what was going to happen, and it turned out she got committee approval somehow. I don't know how that quite worked out. Yes, they wanted part of that 20th century collection.

And we looked at each other and said, you know, for the little money that was involved, we gave as a gift both pieces. And there was a lot of stink about it.

MS. YAGER: Why?

MR. JERRY: It got out into-well, I think there were photographs of the pieces shown as new acquisitions at some point, and then somebody in the SNAG thing, and I don't remember who, wrote a pretty nasty letter to *Metalsmith*, I think, or maybe it was *Craft Horizons*, I can't remember which, but anyhow saying, "The Metropolitan shouldn't be doing this; they should be paying for everything. Goodness knows, a museum that big," blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, went on and on. And it was a really sour grapes letter. And lo and behold, the woman who was the curator then, she fired a letter back, very nicely done, but saying, "Listen, you know, it's not the case; this was the situation," and so on and so on. So it went on for a while. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: How do you feel about that normally?

MR. JERRY: Since then, everything that has gone into museums has been paid for.

MS. YAGER: Purchased by?

MR. JERRY: Purchased by either an individual who has turned around and given it, or an organization has bought it and turned-like the Johnson 10 years ago, they bought that whole show. That whole "Objects: USA," they bought every single bit of it, and they just gave it to various museums. The clay stuff went to the Everson, for the most part, and then they spread the rest of it around the country.

MS. YAGER: Now the piece that was in the "Objects: USA" show, I heard Merry Renk speak recently, and she said that her piece was commissioned.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. You're right.

MS. YAGER: Was yours?

MR. JERRY: No. A piece already existing. Lee Nordness and the curator of the craft museum, they made a trip, the two of them. And they hit Wisconsin and-Lee Nordness and Paul Smith.

MS. YAGER: Paul Smith.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. And Lee Nordness was part of the deal because he had put the painting show together for the Johnsons. And that was his entry. And so he was connected to the family. Of course, Paul probably had a lot more input than Lee Nordness.

MS. YAGER: Connected the the family-

MR. JERRY: The Johnson family.

MS. YAGER: Related? As an associate or a family member?

MR. JERRY: No, not as an associate or family member, but as an art dealer. He was a New York art dealer. Had nothing to do with crafts. He wasn't in that business. He was in early American painting or something, I think.

MS. YAGER: I see.

MR. JERRY: And somehow he made a connection with one of the Johnsons, and that led to the painting show, which there was a lot of criticism written about. That it wasn't-a lot of major names were sold to the Johnsons, but not good paintings. That's how the criticism went. And some museums wouldn't even take it when it was given to them. So he didn't have a good track record right from the beginning. Everybody knew it except them. So it was great that he didn't try to do the "Objects: USA" alone. He got Paul Smith to go with him. And so he went around.

So some people got commissions. Fred's piece is a hollowware piece in "Objects: USA," and that was a commission. They saw a bunch of ongoing work and asked him to make a piece. By the time they got to me, in the north-[laughs]-I had work around, and they saw the piece they wanted. So that's how that went.

MS. YAGER: And did you know that they were buying it at that time, or was it after the show toured?

MR. JERRY: Oh, no, no, they bought it then.

MS. YAGER: Right then and there.

MR. JERRY: Oh, they bought it right then and there.

MS. YAGER: That's wonderful.

MR. JERRY: You know, I don't think they physically took it. They had me mail it to New York. But yeah, they were

on a major buying spree. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: That was a very important show for the field.

MR. JERRY: Oh, my Lord. I look back at it now and it's, my goodness, yeah.

MS. YAGER: We need patrons like that.

MR. JERRY: They did a much better job on that than they did on the painting show. Much better. Much, much, much better. I give that mostly to Paul Smith for doing that. And that's how I got to know him. That was my first. And the last time I saw him was 9/11 in New York.

MS. YAGER: You were in New York for 9/11?

MR. JERRY: I was in for the opening of this-

MS. YAGER: Was that that day?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. So I wandered over there, and Terry and I wandered over there bewildered, you know. And here's Paul, his nose on the door, the place is dark, no workers, of course. They all dashed. And-[laughs]-he recognized me. He says, "Oh, come on in, come on in."

MS. YAGER: So that happened in the morning. Tell me about that a little bit.

MR. JERRY: He was in the middle of putting the show up, because he curated this thing. The show in the German bank next door was installed. That was up, but it was locked, of course. New York was completely shut down. So there he was. And who else? There was another person there. Somebody connected to me, he said, "So," he said, "we're-we haven't got it all out yet, but come on in and look." So we're in the dark looking at this stuff, pulling it out of boxes. I had a nice chat with him, and he signed one of the catalogues for me. And that was the end of that.

MS. YAGER: Is that why Tom Joyce was in New York for 9/11?

MR. JERRY: Probably. There were a lot of people there, came for the opening. Oh, Lord.

MS. YAGER: How did you find out what had happened?

MR. JERRY: We were staying midtown, Terry and I. We had a corner room. I don't remember the location exactly, but there were four hotels. There was a hotel on each corner. And I was first up and looking outside, just looking down on busy New York. It seemed odd. It seemed that things were-that something wasn't right. People were pouring out of the subway and then pouring back again, and that seemed a little odd.

And then I noticed none of the cabs or limos were leaving the hotels. People were rushing out to get in a cab, and cabdrivers were going, "No." That was kind of weird.

I thought, well, I hadn't been in New York for a while. Oh, I'm just not used to the New York scene. Then I turned the TV on. Then, that-of course, that was-it-I don't remember whether the second tower was down at that very moment or not-hard to tell. But then, of course, going out into the street and seeing this cloud of smoke coming up Fifth Avenue, you know, I thought, oh, my Lord. I never saw New York so empty. We walked right down-we walked down Broadway for a while. We walked right down the middle of the street. No was nothing, zero, zip-nothing moving, nobody around.

And then, of course, we tried to figure out how we're going to get out of here. The phones were down. I mean, it was really getting pretty spooky.

In the hotel, of course, nobody was going anywhere, so staying an extra day or two wasn't a big problem. The restaurant stayed open. And so all of that went all right. But all the plays-we had tickets for plays-all of that washed away.

Walked down to the train station; I think we tried to get the train out of there, and the place was jammed, just jammed. There was no way we were going to get out on a train.

So we got one of the last rental cars out. We were in a neighborhood-we stayed one night with Terry-Terry has a cousin that has an apartment in New York and we stayed with them for one night. And there was a Hertz place in the neighborhood, in a parking garage, maybe just had a few cars, and we went in. We got the last one. And the next morning we drove straight through to New Mexico-[laughs]-from New York. Oh, we-

MS. YAGER: Really? You were supposed to have flown?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: Oh, my goodness.

MR. JERRY: Oh, the airports were all closed down. There was no telling when any of it was going to come back. And, of course, we had flown out there initially. But boy, I'll never forget going across the George Washington Bridge. There was a big sigh of relief. [Laughs.] Oh, my Lord. And we drove from New York here, I think, in a day and a half or-yeah. We got here pretty quick. We wanted to be home.

MS. YAGER: Oh!

MR. JERRY: And then poor Paul-all the publicity and the invitations and the catalogues and, you know, all of that. I don't even remember what they did. They did have an opening eventually, about three or four weeks later. And then they extended the show for-because the attendance was really good. So they extended it-I don't know-three or four weeks beyond.

MS. YAGER: I was there mid-October, and you could still smell the smoke. It was-

MR. JERRY: Oh! Oh, Lord.

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: And my daughter, she-let's see. What was she doing? She was still in Hoboken. She hadn't gotten on the train to come into Manhattan yet. So she ran down to the park. There's a waterfront park in Hoboken and-overlooked the whole thing.

MS. YAGER: Right.

MR. JERRY: So I had, like, every minute shots of this whole thing from Hoboken.

But I-thinking about the museum for a minute, I did go-Terry and I stopped in there-no, not Terry-my daughter, my older daughter, Allison, and I stopped in the museum when I went to visit-about a month ago, now-and thinking, well, you know, museums rely pretty heavily on their shops right now-sales that they make in their shops. And I thought, well, maybe the museum shop's got some interesting work in. I'll stop in and look. And, boy, that was a major disappointment. A lot of commercially made-I would say almost all of it was commercially made stuff, in the Museum of Art and Design. It used to be the Craft Museum. I said, "What the hell's going on here?" Really fancy cases with lots of glass and-I mean, it looked like a commercial jewelry store. That was really disappointing.

But they're headed towards a new building now. So-but I don't know what'll happen.

MS. YAGER: Well, tell me about America House. What did that look like inside?

MR. JERRY: Well, America House looked like just about any other craft venue. They were in two locations in New York. When I-

MS. YAGER: But there wasn't much around at that time yet, was there? I mean, wasn't it there --

MR. JERRY: Well, the place was full, full of stuff, one way or another. And I think they included, oh, people who were not making brooms, but people who were sort of the fringes-you know, some nice ceramics, but somewhat traditional. So they included people like that. And, of course, the roots of American Craft Council came out of folk-really folk craft, including embroidery and all the rest of it. And so there was a little bit of that going on, Appalachian kind of stuff.

But then people like Ron Pearson were there, and they were already working. And, of course, Ron worked it into big-time business. And when they moved, they moved up across from the-no, they were next to the Modern then-

[Audio break, tape change.]

-and they had a big store, oh geez, a major, major, major, major, major. And thinking about what I saw at the craft fairs, I would say this was much closer to what people were really doing. That's the kind of work that was there, not stuff turned out just for the place, like the craft fairs are now, you know, I mean-so. A few brave souls come with one-of-a-kind furniture. I found it very interesting, as a student. But I had also been used to being in and out of Shop One. And it had very much the flavor-only on a bigger scale-that Shop One had.

MS. YAGER: What do you think is-how should people handle these things in the future, you know, selling things, and-what formula will work?

MR. JERRY: I haven't figured it out yet. I'm still in the process of trying to figure that out. And I think things change as I try to figure it out. You think you got your finger on the solution, and then somebody throws another hooker into it. I was talking with Terry this morning about how it used to be. It used to be, one, you never went into a gallery with consignment stuff if they were buying stuff. You didn't do that. You said no to them. You either buy it or not. Or if it's full consignment, well, then that's another thing and then you can decide whether you want to join them or not.

And then the price structure was different. Let's see how did it go? It was like 60-40 on consignment and 50-50 if they bought it. So there was an incentive for them to buy it. But that all went away. I don't know when; probably sometime when I wasn't looking-[laughs]-it went to this 50-50 thing. And I don't know how it got there and-

MS. YAGER: Well, and it's only 50-50 if it sells.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, right. If it-you're right. You're right about that, because we're talking about consignment now.

But being at Syracuse and fairly close to New York, I had all kinds of colleagues who were sculptors and painters, and so forth, trying to deal with New York galleries, and it was worse than that. They would go 60-40; they're the 40, and then they'd pay for the opening and the hauling of the work.

MS. YAGER: Who would pay for the opening?

MR. JERRY: The artist. Pay for the wine, whatever he wanted to do; pay for the catalogue, pay for the poster. So as it turned out, they'd have to sell one major piece just to cover the raw overhead of being there. And sometimes all they walked away with is, you know, a paragraph review in *ARTnews*. Oh, brother! That really-people got tired of that.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, this is the "pay to play" term now.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. You might as well have a vanity gallery and run it that way instead of the way they seem to. And now they don't want to-if you approach any of those places with a contract, they'd throw you right out of the place. In New York? Oh, my Lord. And there are certain days of the week that you better not show up, you know. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: So how do you think it will go in the future? Or what do you think would be the best-

MR. JERRY: Best? Well, it's tough to say. Ebay. [Laughs.] But I don't think that's going to do it either, because the work is represented by a very small image. You have no idea about how it feels, what the-tactical thing is completely gone. Unless-as you said the other day-unless the work is known somehow-

MS. YAGER: Previously.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, previous experience with it, with a lot of-

MS. YAGER: And then they can recognize the little postage-stamp-

MR. JERRY: But how do you get that kind of exposure? Museums, private and public museums are-they do exhibitions of work. But as things get tight for them, they tend to find ways to-

MS. YAGER: I wonder about this getting tight for them, though-

MR. JERRY: Well, money.

MS. YAGER: -because they seem to have a lot of money for the new buildings.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, but donors for brick and mortar are a lot easier by far to find than people to give for programs, for catalogues and-a lot easier. That's true. I just came from a university that they did that the best. They built buildings and buildings and buildings, and finally they got to a point they couldn't even afford to run the janitorial service in them. So they had to say no, because we can't afford the upkeep, because we can't afford to heat the thing, you know, because we're a tuition-based operation here. Tuition is 71 percent of our resources. So if you're down 100 students, whoa, all of a sudden there's a problem. Now the Harvards, the Yales, and so forth don't have those problems because they have these huge endowments, but a lot of schools and museums, you know-

MS. YAGER: I'm starting to think there should be one percent for the art. If they want 99 percent for the building, one percent should go to the actual stuff in the building.

MR. JERRY: Well, a lot of states have that. A lot of states have-

MS. YAGER: I mean actual art museums.

MR. JERRY: Oh, art museums. Yeah-

MS. YAGER: You know, directing one percent of the patrons' gifts to the actual content.

MR. JERRY: When I was in Alaska, I was hosted by a person who actually had been a former student of mine, was a sculptor, and he was living off one percent for artists. But what he was doing is, because Alaska was so far away-[laughs]-people would get these commissions done in the lower part of the states and have no way of possibly making these pieces and shipping them, and some of them were huge, maybe two, three stories. The pieces had to be made in Alaska. That's the way it turned out. Some artists came and did that, but they needed people. They needed people sympathetic to what they were doing. So other sculptors who had welding skills and so forth hired themselves out and they-[laughs]-and they did very well.

MS. YAGER: Kind of like the Italian in a quarry in Italy.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, and so every time they-right. They'd add to a-and the one percent went-every time they added a room to the prison or they added an elementary school wing or whatever, one percent. And that seemed-

MS. YAGER: But it was never applied to the museums.

MR. JERRY: Never applied to the museums, no. No. Well, the museums-well, like the Racine thing. The way that is structured, the city-it's a department of the City of Racine. He goes to departmental meetings with his budget like-just like sanitation does and anybody else does. There's no endowment. There was no endowment with that museum, unless he's created one, but I don't think there is there. So all of the programs and all of the exhibitions that happen there come either with public-corporate support, and I don't know how successful he is at that, but come from the Racine Art Association, and this comes from yearly dues that people pay in, \$100.

MS. YAGER: Well, you said they do have a very beautiful gift shop.

MR. JERRY: Okay. So-well, of course.

MS. YAGER: I don't know what percentage of support that gives, but-

MR. JERRY: Well, they were doing that a little bit in the older building. They didn't have a lot of room for it there. But I'm not surprised at all. They used to rent paintings.

MS. YAGER: They still are.

MR. JERRY: They had a program of renting stuff out.

MS. YAGER: They still are. I remember that-

MR. JERRY: They still are? [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: I remember that in the Detroit Institute as well.

MR. JERRY: People look for-

MS. YAGER: I think it's a wonderful way to introduce people to the experience of living with art.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, it's not too bad, if the stuff didn't get damaged. [Laughs.] Not a bad scheme at all. And a lot of times those rental fees in the contract went to the cost of the painting. So if you rented it for a long enough time and threw in another couple of hundred, you could own it.

MS. YAGER: And you might have gotten used to it and really been attached.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Yeah, really want it, you know, and then just buy it outright.

MS. YAGER: I wanted to ask you if you archive your work or how you sign or mark your work.

MR. JERRY: Oh, gosh, I'm terrible with that. I don't think I had a name stamp-oh, Lord-for years, years and years and years. I was very, very, very bad at that. Good at recording the work photographically for my own purpose,

for my own, but in terms of people having to deal with this work later, I was awful. I sign everything now.

MS. YAGER: How do you sign it?

MR. JERRY: I have a hallmark. I have a maker's mark that I use.

MS. YAGER: That you stamp into it?

MR. JERRY: That I stamp into it. Sometimes pieces get so-the elements are so small that I can't do that very easily without hurting the piece, so some of it goes by, but I try very hard now, for the last dozen years or so, to make sure that everything is stamped. And sometimes I would simply sign the pieces instead of stamping them, particularly the pewter.

MS. YAGER: With what sort of-

MR. JERRY: With a stylus, just a sharp instrument. And with pewter I could get pretty deep. So some of the pieces that are out there, some of the pieces that are here, actually, have my signature on them rather than a stamp.

MS. YAGER: Do you date things?

MR. JERRY: No.

MS. YAGER: You keep a photographic record?

MR. JERRY: Not for any particular reason. I just never got the discipline to do that.

I photograph everything. Nothing goes out of here without being photographed, and that's been true for years and years and years now. So I have a photographic record, mostly-because of the time that it was-mostly in slide form. Now we just acquired a slide scanner, and now everything goes on disc and we can do a whole variety of things with it now. But I find now that in this in-between period, that I'm still shooting slides. I'm not using a digital camera yet, because people ask for slides, still. So I find myself in between now. And it works okay. Terry does spend a lot of time, especially if I don't put too much energy into the slide taking, she's over there with Photoshop trying to make it look good. [Laughs.] A tremendous amount of time goes into doing that.

But I've always photographed my own well enough for publication, so I've never gone outside for that. A lot of people, of course, go outside for that, but I found it so costly-I had one photograph professionally shot in the last 20 years, and the one shot cost me \$1,000. That was for the cover of *Metalsmith*. That was a professional shot. Terry, because of her background, she and I set the shot up; he would Polaroid it occasionally during the day. We spent a whole day and early evening setting this thing up, and he would come by and adjust lighting and we'd take some Polaroids and then make some changes and so forth. That went on all day long. And so Terry and I did most of the work in the end. He just adjusted the light and took a shot. But that was \$1,000. I can't. No way. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: No way!

MS. YAGER: When you talk about publication, periodicals, are there any that have been significant to you over time?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Yeah, for sure. In terms of periodicals, it would be obvious. *American Craft* magazine was in front of my face as a young-when it first came out. Not the pre-war stuff, but certainly after the war. My father was in the gallery business and that magazine was constantly around. So I was aware of a lot of things because of that. And, of course, *Metalsmith* keeps me in touch with some things that are going on in the metal field. Occasionally I have subscribed to *Ornament*, and I do see that. I buy it on the newsstand now when it's interesting to me. The Society of-what's it called-Silversmiths? It's out of Rhode Island.

MS. YAGER: Society of American Silversmiths?

MR. JERRY: Silversmiths? Is that what it's called? I belonged to that for a while, and he was publishing a two, three-page thing, nicely done. I got that. Now he's online with it.

MS. YAGER: This is Jeff Herman?

MR. JERRY: Jeff Herman, yeah. So he stopped publishing that and now does something online. I've never looked at it.

MS. YAGER: Are there any writers that you have found significant in the field of American-

MR. JERRY: Oh, writers. Well, as you know, darn few of them until-I mean, other than historians writing about the work, and that is far and few in between. I enjoy reading Bruce's stuff.

MS. YAGER: Bruce Metcalf?

MR. JERRY: Bruce Metcalf, yeah. I enjoy reading that. I think Jamie Bennett, he did a nice thing on hollowware once for *Metalsmith* and has done some things since then. Now there's some younger people coming along.

Yeah, in the craft field there was-well, as you know, there was no criticism being written at all. These periodicals were simply mostly somebody's explanation of an exhibition. You know, so and so showed, and they showed this and they showed that. But there was very little-huge void there. Very little going on in terms of criticism, because the criticism was-I suspect because these groups were so small, everybody knew everybody, and jeez, you know, what am I going to do, get up on a stand and yell at Brent for something? No. I wasn't about to-the whole thing was too young to do that.

But I think now there is room for that. And their work is so diverse now; there's so many people working in different things now. I think you can have that kind of conversation now. And the potters, the same way, I suspect, although they seem to-my God, I go into a magazine shop now down the street here, and there are, like, five periodicals-ceramics-all of them really good, nicely done, beautifully edited. Lots of activity there. Even there's a glass periodical right now. There wasn't much going on at all-

MS. YAGER: Do you think it's a-do you prefer things written by artists, or would you prefer things written by historians or scholars or critics?

MR. JERRY: Well, the things I read that historians do are so loaded with mistakes most of the time that I just-I can't deal with it. They don't research thoroughly enough. They use wrong descriptions for process stuff. And if I get into two, three pages of that, that's it. I can't bother with it anymore than that.

MS. YAGER: I didn't feel that way about Scott's article.

MR. JERRY: No. No, no. Although I-

MS. YAGER: I thought that was so unique to the field.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Interesting enough, he doesn't-I worked for Ronny for a while, and he doesn't mention me in there. I don't think my name comes up in that. So he missed somehow. [Laughs.] That had to do with his sources. And maybe it was just too far back for him to go and maybe-and that's the trouble with the field, of course, nobody's keeping track of all that stuff.

MS. YAGER: It's all vaporizing.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, it just vaporizes. No, I thought he-you know, as a-

MS. YAGER: But that's so unusual. We don't have many-

MR. JERRY: No. No, no, not at all. Not at all. And so it's been left to-basically it's been left to us-

MS. YAGER: Ourselves, yeah.

MR. JERRY: -to do that. And that's not easy, especially, you know, when you're involved in the thing yourself, and how are you going to turn around and say, well, this kind of work has got no value? Oh, really? [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Do you think that artists should write something about their own work themselves? Should they-I mean, this type of thing where we're doing this oral history, I think it's so important that the artist is speaking in their own words, in their own voice, about things, but it's different than writing.

MR. JERRY: It's different than writing, and my handicaps early on-I'm borderline dyslectic.

MS. YAGER: Fred said that he went to Penland, and he was at the gathering, and there were maybe 30-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, we were all sitting around, yeah-

MS. YAGER: -and everyone except he was dyslectic, and that's only his determination that he's not-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. And dyslectic children. Brent. Bob Ebendorf is terrible. I don't think Bob could write a sentence. Now, maybe now. But I used to get stuff from him-post cards from him from one thing or another, and

I couldn't read it. There was no-

[Audio break.]

MS. YAGER: This is Jan Yager interviewing Michael Jerry in the artist's home and studio in Santa Fe, New Mexico, on November 16, 2004, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number seven, session number two.

Michael, as that tape was ending, we were talking about the-

MR. JERRY: Writing-

MS. YAGER: -artists writing or not writing, as you said.

MR. JERRY: Or not writing. Yeah. Yeah.

Well, I don't know, it seemed, at least for a while, that a lot of us came from, as I said a minute ago, borderline dyslexia to severe dyslexia. And I've certainly experienced it in students as time goes on. I don't know what percentage of us found ourselves with that handicap. But I know we all produced children who had similar problems. And that was all revealed when we got together for some major event and, "Oh, yeah, you know, I've got this problem, and my son does, and my daughter does."

So that may be part of it, part of people not writing. It certainly is with me. I'll be real up-front about that. Although I've thought about doing books off and on, it comes and goes, and then, of course, I'd rather spend more time in the studio than I would writing. So it never happened. But-

MS. YAGER: They're different languages, you know-

MR. JERRY: What's that?

MS. YAGER: -the text world and the visual world are very different.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Text world, yeah. Well, some people-you know, there are people who emerged that did, certainly, the text thing really well, you know. Oppi Untracht knocked himself out. And he told me that he had two volumes, two volumes as big as the one he-as the last one he did, and they made him cut it back-

MS. YAGER: Oh, goodness.

MR. JERRY: -because they didn't think anybody could afford it. And they're probably right. The two volumes would have probably been 200-plus dollars. So, you know, he-

MS. YAGER: This is his major work, which I don't know the exact name of. [*Metal Techniques for Craftsmen*. New York: Doubleday, 1968; Robert Hale, 2001.]

MR. JERRY: Well, there are two of them. There was an early one [*Enameling on Metal*. Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1957]-

MS. YAGER: Yes.

MR. JERRY: -and then he worked on this major volume that had to do with jewelry techniques exclusively of other metal concerns [*Jewelry Concepts and Technology*. New York: Doubleday, 1982]. The first book had to do with a broader range. You would have had to have known something about working with metal before you could have used the book to advantage. So it never got used as a textbook, as far as I know. His other book probably didn't either, because that was too expensive. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: But it still has been considered the "Bible" in certain ways.

MR. JERRY: Oh, sure. Well, funny, because I've got a piece-a photograph in the book. And I had a chance on several occasions to spend some time with Oppi and his wife. And I was going to read the whole thing front to back. [Laughs.] I never did! I do that with everybody else's work, you know, because I'm just curious about-

MS. YAGER: You mean, you'd go-

MR. JERRY: I would read the whole, thing, yeah.

MS. YAGER: But that one was just too dense?

MR. JERRY: Just to see where the mistakes were and so forth, you know. [Laughs.] But not that one. I didn't get

very far on that one.

And, of course, then Tim McCreight came along and did his job on basic metal techniques. He's got a whole series of them now, and I think he's done a really nice job. When I-towards the end of my teaching time, I used his books in the classroom for beginning students. They were great. I probably would be still using them. I don't think anybody else has come along, done anything that I would-for the price-they were like \$7, \$8. I think they finally got to \$12. You know, that's a whole lot different than Oppi's book, at probably \$110, \$115 now. People wish for those for graduation presents. [Laughs.]

But the writing thing-very, very few people have emerged. It takes time to do that. You know, I, as a student, watched Dick Thomas do what he did, which is pretty much a technical thing, and it just absorbed tremendous quantities of time.

And that's why I probably never became an administrator. I got my feet in the pond a number of times, and I just-I didn't want to give up my studio life. I was chairman of the department two, three times, and, you know, that was a chair of departments that had 12, 15 people in them, making budget stuff and doing salaries, doing all that stuff. Forget it! Just-uh-uh, not for me.

So I never headed that way, and I easily could have. On several occasions, I easily could have. But no.

MS. YAGER: I wanted to talk a little bit about community that you feel a part of. Is there a community that's been important to your development? You know, we talked about the community at Wustum that your father had created.

MR. JERRY: Right. Yeah.

MS. YAGER: There are also some national craft organizations. We've actually touched on some of those-SNAG-

MR. JERRY: Right. Right. We have. The SNAG thing.

MS. YAGER: How about ABANA? Are you a member of-

MR. JERRY: I was a member of ABANA.

MS. YAGER: This is the Artist Blacksmith Association of North America?

MR. JERRY: Yeah. I was part of ABANA early on. In fact, the beginnings of that were at that workshop that Brent put on at Southern Illinois, that we all attended. And out of that, I believe, came the beginnings of that. And I have been to ABANA conferences off and on over the years. But as I got further away from blacksmithing, my interest sort of dwindled away at that point.

ABANA was-is-a very mixed bag of people. You have people who are sculptors, who are working seriously. They're manipulating iron hot in one way or another. There are artists working, like Brent Kington.

And then you have people making historical knives. You have a whole group of people that are involved in blacksmithing that are doing historical work. And that-those people are also part of ABANA.

And there-that causes some problems, because the traditional functional work, all the way to the other end of the scale-not an up-and-down scale, but, you know, horizontally-you've got a guy who's wanting to make some sculptural pieces.

And there, I sensed-the last ABANA conference I went to-I don't know how long ago it was-but there's some real tension in that organization because of the great differences of the kind of work people are interested in doing in that group and all the-all certainly legitimate. But some get more attention than the others, and I think that's where the problem comes. The Al Paleys of the blacksmithing world get a great deal of press, and the people who are making beautiful old gates for a reconstructed thing in Louisiana somewhere also do, you know-they work-the work is nicely done and so forth, but it doesn't have anything to do with the 20th century. And that causes some real problems.

MS. YAGER: Are there any-

MR. JERRY: I didn't like the feeling of it at all, the last one I was at, because there seemed to be two camps: artists, many of them teaching, and then this group who were the "real" blacksmiths, who were making their living from one form or another.

And if you look at their publication-they have a magazine. They used to have a magazine, and that's what you'll see in the-you'll see this great, diverse-SNAG doesn't have that, that kind of-that particular kind of diversity. It

just never happened. We don't have commercial jewelers joining SNAG. They just-they have their own organizations. They have commercial-there's all kinds of commercial journals and things for those folks. So it never happened in SNAG, but boy, it sure happened in ABANA. And there were a lot of struggles, fights. [Laughs.]

I found them very-always very interesting, the lengths people went to to demonstrate work. People came from England. People came from Germany.

MS. YAGER: Mexico, I remember seeing.

MR. JERRY: What's that?

MS. YAGER: Mexico, I think.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, came from all over. I would see people do things-you know, technically do things that were just absolutely amazing. And then I would see people do demonstrations and make objects that were so horrible that you just wonder, why you would do that to a piece of metal? It was just horrific. And people applaud because it was technically-it was like going to the Olympics, you know? It was kind of like that. The whole scene was like that, who could do this-

MS. YAGER: Yeah, public competition. That's interesting.

MR. JERRY: It was-it was kind of like that. It was fun. It was kind of like a carnivals-like atmosphere. I'm trying to remember what-people were doing tricks with power tools and huge, huge air-operated hammers. And I remember the German blacksmith at an event. He took a box of matches, small box of matches, pulled one match out, just lifted it up, and with this thing that weighed tons he very carefully put the match down back in the box, and everybody roared. I mean, it was-[laughs]-it was like the feat of the century. And then he took his watch, nice watch, and he put it down on the anvil and he put something on it. I don't know what it was, a penny? I think it was a small coin, maybe a dime, and put a little bubble gum or something on his thing. It was like a 150-ton press forging thing. And he brought that down and he picked that dime off that watch without smashing it. Oh, people went crazy. [Laughs.] That's ABANA.

Now SNAG used to have a certain amount of that going on.

MS. YAGER: They had the saw-

MR. JERRY: They had these sawing contests, yeah. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Yes. What was that? You had to-

MR. JERRY: Solder.

MS. YAGER: Saw and-saw, solder, file, or did you-

MR. JERRY: Well, it was a whole little-yeah, a little thing. You ran around and did this stuff.

MS. YAGER: And if you broke a blade, it was slowing you down. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Right. That didn't last all that long. Well, it went on for a few years.

MS. YAGER: They still do it at Yuma [Yuma Art Center, Yuma, AZ], I think.

MR. JERRY: Do they?

MS. YAGER: I've seen a few mentions of it still, yeah.

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Well, that's Michael Croft keeping that alive, I think.

MS. YAGER: Are there any annual gatherings that you like to go to now?

MR. JERRY: I'll be going to a SNAG conference that's coming up in Cleveland. I'll do that if I don't have to travel too far. I don't-I didn't go to Florida. It was just wrong timing. I was still working on the house and building the studio and so forth, so I didn't do that. So I'll probably off and on. As long as some of the-some of the old-timers will still show up, I'll go to do that. It's good to see-that's the last time I saw Fred, actually, was at a SNAG conference. And I saw Heikki in St. Louis, and saw Brent there, actually. Yeah, actually there were quite a number of us there that were originators of the group. Yeah, I'll do that. I don't think there's anything else that would tempt me in terms of conference. No, probably not. An exhibition would-[laughs]-somewhere, you know.

MS. YAGER: What exhibition would you travel for?

MR. JERRY: I would go to New York for an exhibition of some sort, or further. It's almost cheaper to go to London than New York anyhow, so-[laughs]-you know, I'd do that in a flash if there was something-some major thing going on. But I don't crave it. I have enough, I think, enough connections via phone and so forth that I keep track of some people, and-yeah.

MS. YAGER: One other question. Do you think of yourself as part of an international tradition or one that is particularly American?

MR. JERRY: I think one that's particularly American, although, again, because of my beginnings, I've been away from that long enough, I think, now that, yeah, I think it's more American. And when I spent time in London, I remember giving-I would go around and give talks about American metalwork. And Michael Croft actually had been there shortly before I arrived. He had gotten a grant or something; he had been in London, and he put on a real show; showed up in cowboy boots and cowboy hat and did a-you know, a three-slide thing going and music and the whole long thing, and they were-they were still talking about it when I got there, you know, this showman.

MS. YAGER: This cowboy. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: This cowboy. You know, what is that all about?

So my thing was much more-well, certainly less showmanlike, and the reaction-well, what can I say? They thought Americans-in London, most of the faculty and people who were working thought Americans generally were quite crude, that it really had a lot to do with the Wild West, and, you know, we weren't really refined folks.

MS. YAGER: It's funny how-

MR. JERRY: And that was very surprising. Goodness knows there have been enough exchanges of exhibitions and photographs and books and so forth. I didn't quite understand how they got off on doing that exactly, but anyhow-

MS. YAGER: For the opening of my show in London, we wore sheriff's badges. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: A friend of mine bought them, and all of us came to the opening in sheriff's badges.

MR. JERRY: Oh, God!

MS. YAGER: So you get tempted to play into these clichés-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, for sure.

MS. YAGER: -that they're almost expecting.

MR. JERRY: For sure. You know, it was an eye-opener for me to be there and see what was going on from a long tradition. You know, goodness sakes.

MS. YAGER: Yeah. We are kind of youngsters in-

MR. JERRY: Absolutely, absolutely.

MS. YAGER: In fact, one of the questions here-where does American craft or American metal rank on an international scale, in your opinion?

MR. JERRY: Wow. [Pause.]

MS. YAGER: Such a big question.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, it's a big question. My gut feeling is not terribly high. I think there is a lot of things happening in Europe and lots of stuff happening in Japan and Taiwan.

MS. YAGER: Metalwork?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah; oh, yeah. Well, what's happened in Taiwan is that-there are art schools in Taiwan, but they only go-they don't go to the graduate level. So what happens to the Taiwanese kids who want more education, they end up in Germany, they end up in France, they end up in England, and they end up in the United States.

And then they go back, and that mixture is producing some very interesting work.

I had a Taiwanese graduate student and was invited to Taiwan to teach for a year, actually, but then-so I did a lot of background stuff, and the economy in that part of the world went to hell; it crashed. Japan and Taiwan, big, big, big problems five, six years ago, and they lost all their funding and it was awful. But during the time I was looking into it, I discovered, you know, all this activity. And in Japan, oh, my Lord, there's a whole-well, a whole history of metalwork in Japan that most of us never saw as students. I hardly even saw what led up to the very thing I was involved with, much less seeing Far Eastern, any of that work. Beautiful work. Oh, my God. There's a whole bunch of people; Korea, too, South Korea. A lot of South Korean metalworkers have gone through American programs and have gone back, and now that's all mixed in with their culture, and fantastic things. It's a very difficult question.

I see German people here, Michael-oh, what's his name. German, German, German. Michael, Michael, Michael.

MS. YAGER: What kind of work?

MR. JERRY: Jewelry, high-karat gold.

MS. YAGER: Gold, big stones?

MR. JERRY: Stones.

MS. YAGER: Zobel? Michael Zobel?

MR. JERRY: Michael Zobel, yeah. So I see him every year here, because he comes and he does a show with Patina, and then he leaves some pieces behind.

Now, I don't know if he's representative or not, but I think probably the Germans and certainly Japanese-I don't know why, but I think that work overall, the European, the contemporary European stuff, even stuff from Australia. I would meet Australians in London who teach in Perth, some very interesting things.

I don't know that it's even worth-well, maybe if I were still an educator, still teaching, I might want to look at all that carefully again and figure out what's going on, but in terms of the work, I don't know if Americans are very high on that list. Very bold, innovative stuff, different periods of time. I'd hate to be in a position to have to measure it, because it's just my experience.

MS. YAGER: You were quoted one time as saying there's no tradition of American metalsmithing to draw upon. That can be some disadvantage.

MR. JERRY: That was quite a long time ago. Yeah, that was quite a long time ago. Well, I saw it as an advantage, I think, a definite advantage.

MS. YAGER: Ah.

MR. JERRY: Didn't have all that garbage to go through. I suspect that in England particularly, those kids-oh, Moses, they went through this whole long process of trying to sort out traditional work from what-and you still look at a lot of English work and you still see-

MS. YAGER: It doesn't go too far.

MR. JERRY: It doesn't go too far. Beautiful stuff. Oh, my God, I'm absolutely knocked out sometimes. When I see what the engravers are doing and people who make medallions, the medal, whatever you call that, medalists, the awards, and all the opportunity. I mean, every mayor of every village has a thing that he wears, and there's lots of opportunity for ceremonial metalwork. But-[laughs]-you know, very traditional kind of stuff. Every once in a while somebody breaks out, and it's a gas when it happens. But here, we didn't have those. We had a lot of other problems, but certainly the traditional metalwork, it was all European stuff to begin with. Even Paul Revere started to strip off all the decoration and stuff, but most of it was pretty traditional.

MS. YAGER: What do you see as the place of universities in the American craft movement?

MR. JERRY: Well, they certainly have been a major player. I don't know about the future. I'm not very optimistic about the future. I see these programs dwindling away; fiber programs going down the tube; Heikki Seppä's metal shop going down the tube, which was a real shock. And it's going on a lot right now. And I think it's going to create some real problems.

You could build a case for the School for American Craftsmen the way it was originally set up; however, because the emphasis was so heavy on the individual media areas, the minimal general education, they offered the most

minimal. And the faculty loved it, of course, because they had you day and night for-all day, every day. And the amount of work we were able to turn out as students was phenomenal. I can't even get that out of graduate students. The amount and the intensity of the work as an undergraduate there couldn't be matched anywhere, but it was at the cost and the expense of a good general education. I did college English and sociology and all of that, but it was right down to the state requirement, I'm sure.

Now things have changed because now they're competing with universities, and they have made some changes and are probably doing a great-better job, a great deal better job than when I was a student there.

In the meantime, of course, the university programs just blossomed. But in the framework of the university, that caused certain problems, because some programs where the students were, it was almost like high school, where they went two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon, and you know, it was all split up. That was really bad.

At Syracuse we had six-hour class periods, so at least you could get going on something and-

MS. YAGER: That's quite a long period.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Well, but the problem with it was, is where are you going to get six hours? If you expect the kid to have X number of credits academically, then it forces them to take certain courses that are offered during the time that they're not in the studio. So it limited their access to the university, which was really not good either. I mean, here you've got a very good school with good departments all around, and not able to get at it. So they adjusted; they changed their structure a little bit.

I think probably the best case you could build would be a good craft program within a university context, some way. And I'm afraid what's going to happen now is that those craft programs are going to be gone, and we're going to go back to some kind of technical training, or somebody's going to come up with a completely new solution to this problem of giving people-taking care of people who are interested in clay or fiber or metal or wood, and at the same time getting them a good education. Now, maybe one has to happen before the other; I don't know how that's going to wash out. But it's not heading in a good direction from what I can see-not because they're not doing good things and the shops aren't well-equipped, and so forth. I think a lot of them are. But the universities are run by money people, for the most part.

I mean, look at most of the-most of the chancellors now have money-gathering backgrounds; they are business people, not-it's usually the second person down, the head of academic affairs, or somebody like that who is in charge of the day-to-day function of the school. But at the top you're going to find money people all over the place, and they run it-they're trying to run these schools like businesses, and they, I think, forget what a university should be. And, you know, it's not a training institution. But they can't help themselves; they're in the training business.

I think all the little programs-English lit-Syracuse had programs from undergraduate to Ph.D. in all those academic areas, but they were tiny, tiny programs. Where were the students? They were in engineering, they were in the sciences, they were in the commercial side of the art school, which grew bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. And it's pretty much true everywhere. There are pockets around where it's better balanced, but in most art schools now, the commercial sides of the schools are running the schools, and that's where the volume of students are, and that is where the faculty is. And things like painting, sculpture, printmaking, and of all things, the craft areas, which have opportunities for students to go in a whole variety of directions afterwards, they seem to be going down right with the rest of them.

MS. YAGER: I was speaking with different people, and I'm really struck by how artists and-educating an artist or inspiring an artist or sponsoring an artist-how important that was at one time. I was noticing that in 1932 that your father was sponsored for three months to study in Paris.

MR. JERRY: Right.

MS. YAGER: And this became sort of a very important, significant event for him, I would assume.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

MS. YAGER: I have read of awards where artists were sponsored for one or two years, or so many of the leaders in the field, like yourself, came in on scholarships.

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: You know, does our society value artists now? And how could we make a case for our value?

MR. JERRY: Well, I have to avoid that for a second, and-my father's time in Paris was when Picasso was close by.

And one of the things I kicked around as a kid was a catalogue that Picasso had done a drawing for my dad in.

MS. YAGER: Wow!

MR. JERRY: It was just laying around the house. [Laughs.] Finally my dad said, "Geez, you know, maybe I ought to do something with this." And he took it to an auction house in New York, and they sold it-sold it for the signature, not the drawing-[laughs]-got more for the signature than the drawing.

MS. YAGER: Interesting. Interesting.

MR. JERRY: And it was a one-person show in Paris, and my dad knew Picasso's art dealer at the time and-[laughs]-he had this thing. And it was-I never paid any attention to it until, of course, I was an adult. And I said, "What?! You've what?!" [Laughs.] He said, "Oh, yeah, I'm going to New York. I want to sell this."

Well, anyhow, back to the question about support and-[pauses]-it is kind of interesting. I don't hear about that kind of support anymore. You know, there were Prix de Rome. There were Fulbrights.

I think-I served on the Fulbright committee for three years, giving out money for projects. But you don't hear about them anymore. You just don't.

MS. YAGER: Well, I think it still exists-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: -but they are not-you have to come with some money in order to-it's partial support now.

MR. JERRY: Partial support now? Yeah. Well, I'm not surprised.

And I must say the work that I saw, that I was looking at for two, three days-work that was submitted was, for the most part, not very good. The people who submitted work were just looking for a place to take a vacation. That's the way I felt. Some of them were very serious, and they had made their connections in the countries they wanted to go to and had documentation of that. And usually those people were looked upon very favorably, if the work wasn't too bad.

But some of the presentations were lousy. And some of them, you know-of course, the industrial design people who were looking to get away to Italy or France or wherever, they were really slick and highly polished. But the artists, for the most part-potters, woodworkers-it was not very encouraging, I must say. I was shocked, actually, at the quality-

MS. YAGER: So-

MR. JERRY: -quality of work at that time. And that's probably the fault of the representative. Most major campuses have representatives of these organizations. And in our case, I was never aware of this person. I was given a name at the first judging thing that I did, and I went back, and there was an academic person who-I don't know-from some reason or other said, "Okay, I'll hand out the paperwork," or whatever. And it just wasn't done very well.

MS. YAGER: So we're not even making our own case-

MR. JERRY: No. Uh-uh. Oh, gosh, no. Not at all. Not at all.

When I was a student, Fulbright was a worthwhile thing to go for. And I had friends that-I never thought I had the abilities then to write the kind of proposal that was needed for Fulbright. The writing part of it was extremely important for Fulbright. That-and-but I had colleagues that took shots at it. They lost out 'cause Fulbright-some countries participate and some don't. The Scandinavian countries, where all my peers wanted to go, said no. They didn't have any spots for people outside the country, and you can't switch countries. So if you pick Denmark and you don't get in, that's it. You can't shift yourself to Australia.

MS. YAGER: I think Arline Fisch and Bob Ebendorf won a Fulbright.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah, both of them.

MS. YAGER: And actually, Earl Krentzin did, and he actually got a call that the country that he wanted was full, would he mind going to England.

MR. JERRY: Oh, really. Oh, well, they don't do that now. You have to reapply next year and so forth.

MS. YAGER: Yeah, this was long ago.

MR. JERRY: But, yeah, there were a lot of-a lot of people took advantage of that program. And any number of others. The Prix de Rome was a big prize. Oh, my Lord, that was a-that was a-

MS. YAGER: A full year of support, yeah.

MR. JERRY: That was a full year, complete support, studio, food. You got fed. You got travel money. But it was not offered in the craft areas; it only was painting and sculpture. And even-even these, you know, these art-kind of art camps that are around-I'm not thinking of Penland or anything like that, but there are other supported summer programs where they give you lodging, a studio, and a place to-

MS. YAGER: Artist colonies?

MR. JERRY: Artist colonies, right. And writers, musicians. So people that don't want to be in New York-[laughs]-in the summertime grab it, and people have great experiences at those places, really terrific. But none in the crafts; they can't afford the studio. They can afford the space.

MS. YAGER: Oh, is that the reason?

MR. JERRY: There's-the equipment is just killer.

MS. YAGER: There's also some prejudice as well.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Oh, for sure. Oh, for sure. Every one of those that I looked at, there was no way unless I hauled a major trailer filled with stuff, you know, or just drew or wrote or something like that. That would have been okay, but I wanted to work, so I stayed put.

MS. YAGER: But when you don't have those inner changes, I mean, I think there's some synergy to those experiences-

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: -that can fuel you for quite a long time afterward.

MR. JERRY: That's right. Yep, yep. Well, and then actually my wife at the time went to one of those camps, and I just remembered she did that. But she got so energized she moved to New York. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: An interesting-

MR. JERRY: I said, "Bye!" [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: The interesting thing about the difference between those is that those were-you went to be an artist. In the craft world you go to be a teacher at a summer place. Do you know what I mean?

MR. JERRY: Well, that's the way it is, but-

MS. YAGER: You're-it's a busman's holiday kind of thing.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, sort of.

MS. YAGER: But you were not-there wasn't one where you just went and created your own work?

MR. JERRY: No, I don't think so. You know, potters had some things where you can do that. But no, no.

MS. YAGER: Kohler, I think you can.

MR. JERRY: What's that?

MS. YAGER: I think you can at Kohler.

MR. JERRY: At-oh, yeah, at Kohler you can.

MS. YAGER: I think there-it's a place out west in ceramics, that's right. But that's more the rarity than the-

MR. JERRY: Oh, it is more the rarity. Yeah, it is more the rarity. And it's-Penland really has a good track record. They had a program for residential people. You could come and live there if you were getting started. You go to Penland, and they give you a little apartment there and a studio space, and you would do some work for them.

You would teach a class or two or something during the year. But the idea was it was a startup situation so you could go on and work for a couple of years and move on. That was great, and I suggested that to many, especially the younger people. But-and that was a nice environment, I must say, you know, even though it was no pay. [Laughs.] Not only that.

But I thought, okay, all right, I accept this. So I went and I did and I gave. And then they came around and said, "Well, you know our auction's coming up, and it's tradition that all the faculty leave a piece for this auction." [Laughs.] What? Are you crazy?

MS. YAGER: This is-

MR. JERRY: I did. I made something, you know.

MS. YAGER: Well, the peer pressure is so strong.

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah.

MS. YAGER: It's an inversion of the institution supporting the artist in some ways.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: One of the questions: Could you discuss the difference, if there is, between a university-trained artist and one who learned outside of academia?

Do you know any? Can you put a face on it?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. I can put a face on it. Met any number of people who-most of them German-school people, mostly in Pforzheim, some from Scandinavian countries. And, you know, you're going to be talking to a guy that is not an academic soon. And I think it depends a whole lot on the individual. I'm thinking of a goldsmith in Philadelphia now. Another taught drawing at Tyler for years and years and years. He was-he attempted to go to Tyler, and Stanley threw him out. That's the story he tells. And he was such a bad student that they just couldn't tolerate him.

MS. YAGER: Who was he? Do you know? Can't remember?

MR. JERRY: Had him up for a workshop in Syracuse once, and he was great, just fabulous. The jewelry is kind of high-karat gold. They're not cast; they're carved out of high-karat gold. Tony Lent.

MS. YAGER: Tony Lent.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. Tony's just one of those people. You know, he just-he for some reason didn't fit in a kind of university-like environment. And not that he wasn't-I'm sure-not that he wasn't bright enough, or anything else. I mean, his mother was a faculty member, for God's sake. And he just-it didn't work. And so he found himself in Pforzheim. He spoke a little Yiddish, and so he could deal with the German fairly well, and he went to school there. And he came back and dug in. I think-isn't he head of the department at Fashion Institute [Fashion Institute of Technology, New York City] now?

MS. YAGER: That's right. FIT in New York.

MR. JERRY: Yeah, he did part-time teaching there for years. He went back and forth, just kept his hand in the teaching thing. And there he is. Not that that's his success. I mean, the work was incredible. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Fabulous, right. Yeah.

MR. JERRY: Unbelievable! [Laughs.] But Harold O'Connor is another one. Harold, I think, is Swedish-maybe-background. Craft background. And no academic titles after his name here. And you know, he's still on top of it. Boy, they sell tons of his stuff here. And he does workshops everywhere. He ran a school for a while up in Taos. And he's a very-I spent an evening with him lately-very bright guy.

MS. YAGER: Maybe it makes you work harder.

MR. JERRY: I don't know. Wait till you meet Tom. That's a fascinating story, I mean, just fascinating story. You sit down, talk with him, and you swear he came out of some high-end academic program somewhere. He's never been near a school, as far as I know. But he was curious enough, and it drove him. And he's educated himself, you know?

I think that can still happen. I wouldn't design a thing that way. [Laughs.] That's another problem. How do you-

and for me or a person with my background and abilities and inabilities, I would never have fitted into a university program. No way. So when I hit the School for American Craftsmen in its infancy in Rochester, it was perfect for me. Perfect-

MS. YAGER: And Cranbrook? Was it like that, as well?

MR. JERRY: -perfect for me.

Well, Cranbrook by that time-yeah, you know. Cranbrook was a pretty major disappointment for me.

MS. YAGER: Were there any academic classes when you were at Cranbrook?

MR. JERRY: Oh, yeah. Oh, sure. Because most people who-undergraduate people, the few undergraduate people that were in the studio were people that came from colleges or universities who were through with their general education. They went to liberal art schools, most of them, and just happened upon somebody who was doing some metal, or maybe they had one class, or two classes-that's all they had. And so Cranbrook didn't have to deal with their academic needs; they already had it-most of them already had it. I didn't, because of where I came from.

So they did-yeah, they offered courses in philosophy. They brought people in from Wayne State, taught-did lecture courses at Cranbrook, both for graduates and undergraduates. So there was some academic stuff going on. But I knew if I stayed, I would have to have gone to the University of Michigan Extension Service somewhere, north of Pontiac, to pick up some credit that I needed to complete the degree. And that period of time for Cranbrook didn't last very long. They were able to acquire enough interest in their graduate program to drop that messing around with undergraduates. That was only for-that was short-lived; 10 years at the most.

But I think there's a case for both. People like myself, maybe people like Tom Joyce, who just had different motivations and are at a different point in their lives. But a lot of these kids that come to art school, they get a decent-they get a good education; they get a good academic education, especially in the medium-sized universities. Now, I'm not so sure about the Midwestern schools right now. They're so huge. You know, you never see a faculty member, as an undergraduate, in an academic area. It's done by video and huge lecture courses. Even at Syracuse they were-a lecture course with 250 students in it. Jesus, you hardly can see them, much less any-there's no interaction, and so forth.

But I think there's a good case for the university setup as it kind of is right now. But I think there's another good case for another kind of education; I don't know exactly. Other people have tried to do it. Harold O'Conner tried to do it with his school. Wendell tried very hard. I don't know if you know-

MS. YAGER: This is Wendell Castle?

MR. JERRY: Wendell Castle put together a wood furniture design school. And I'm not just sure how he structured it. There was no degree for a while, and then somehow he connected with somebody else, he went nonprofit. It was a way of dealing with his own studio because he could, you know, I'm sure, write off saws and equipment and so forth. But he ran that school for probably 15 years down in southern-down south of Rochester. And eventually it became part of the School for American Craftsmen, in terms of equipment and so forth. They bought him out, and he went back to working in his own space by himself.

So there have been attempts, and I'm sure there are a lot of them around like that, where people had students who were highly motivated; they were intent on getting at the material and wanted to do it right now, not when they're sophomores or not when they're-you know, not then; don't put me through all this crap, let me get at it.

And some people respond to that really well, and others don't. And I don't know if we can have one system that deals with it. And I think obviously not, because there are all little pockets of things going on. There are little noncredit things going on in metal-the Revere Academy, for instance. Some people go through there and they become just technicians. But I'll bet you out of there comes other people who are doing interesting stuff with what they've learned. Same thing in New York. There's something going on in New York, too.

MS. YAGER: Where in New York?

MR. JERRY: Well-what is it? There's an institute there of goldsmithing, or something, that I hear about.

MS. YAGER: The Kulicke-Stark [Kulicke-Starke Academy, New York City] one or-

MR. JERRY: Maybe. But even the Y.

MS. YAGER: The 92nd Street Y.

MR. JERRY: Yeah! I mean, for God's sake!

MS. YAGER: A tremendous amount of stuff happens there.

MR. JERRY: There's a tremendous amount that happens in a place like that. Now, who is that servicing? Maybe people who are already in the workforce who, you know, steal some time here and there to go do it. But there are other options. And the way this university thing is going, I don't-it may be that it sorts itself out so that schools that have really good programs survive, and those that don't, die, and something comes along to take their place. I don't know. I don't know. But my position wasn't re-filled.

MS. YAGER: I thought Barbara Walter-

MR. JERRY: Barbara Walter was already a faculty member.

MS. YAGER: I see what you're saying.

MR. JERRY: She and I were already sharing the shop. She took on a slightly larger load when I left, but they didn't re-hire. So depending how you look at it, Barbara was split. She was a foundation faculty member that taught in the metal studio half the year. Half of her total time in a year was spent in the metal studio. When I left, she came into the department, which is Studio Arts, which is the umbrella over painting, sculpture, ceramics, fiber, and printmaking, I guess. And her position was never filled. So what happened, there's not a split person anymore. Barbara has the whole bag alone, like I did in the beginning, with whatever graduate students she can find to do adjunct teaching.

Don't know. I really don't know what's going to happen.

MS. YAGER: So these are big challenges.

MR. JERRY: There are big challenges. People in education right now have major challenges ahead of them. They're wiggling and squirming and trying to come up with new programs, and new names for old programs, and everything they possibly can to try to keep these things going. In the meantime, of course, the university looks at it as, "Well, it's captured space; we can't use it for an English class this afternoon because it's got all this crap in it." Then it's very costly. So if you're not running a class in there every morning and every afternoon for the full week, it's a big negative for the school.

And even though you say, "Listen, outside time is as important, almost, as the instructional time, so you have to allow these studios to be functional for some nonstructured time so students can come in and work and deal with problems without having somebody wipe their nose." There's less understanding of that, less sympathy for that as time goes by. That's true in ceramics, and fiber, it's the same thing.

Don't know.

MS. YAGER: You've led a long life in the art and craft world.

MR. JERRY: Yeah.

MS. YAGER: I'm quoting you here.

MR. JERRY: Oh, gosh.

MS. YAGER: This is an old quoted statement.

MR. JERRY: Oh, that's why I don't like to write! [They laugh.] "You said." Yeah?

MS. YAGER: "My peers and I have experienced an unusual phenomenon in the art world. To use an astronomical metaphor, all of the moons were in the right phase."

MR. JERRY: Yeah. At the time that was written, yeah, I would say that again. I think if I were a youngster now trying to decide what to do, it would be a whole lot tougher than it was for me. A lot more choices. Choices of media, choices of schools to go to, a whole lot more choices. And, of course, the economy in the country when times are tough, it puts a lot of pressure on all of the cultural stuff, whether it's a concert or it's a school teaching music or whatever it is. Money-Syracuse Stage-excuse me, Santa Fe Stage, which was operating here for a number of years, just went bankrupt and closed. It was a major headline in the newspaper. And why is that happening?

And my parents-which is good for my-my parents said, you know, whatever-money was not ever-making choices; whatever it is you want-you do; we want you to be passionate about it and enjoy it. And that-boy, all the

moons were in the right phase for me. I went-[makes whooshing sound]-and a lot of people did then. But now I think it's tougher. It's a lot harder now.

And I see what they're putting faculty through now. Oh, my Lord! To get tenure now-oh, it's crazy. They're completely out of control with what they're demanding of people who would like to teach and who have something to give. They're killing these people. They're just killing them. They want so much for tenure now; I don't think I'd make it.

MS. YAGER: Well, I think it's in their interest not to have too many people in tenure.

MR. JERRY: Oh, well, sure. That's why it's going the way it is.

MS. YAGER: Yeah.

MR. JERRY: You know, they don't want people-tenured people. They got so frightened, when enrollments dropped, that they were going to be stuck with tenured faculty members and nothing for them to do that they're doing everything they can, one, to get rid of tenure. That's a major thing now.

And the numbers of adjuncts teaching now has gone up. If you-parents never ask these questions, but boy, if you'd ask a question like, "Well, you know, what percentage are adjunct teachers; what percentage of those are graduate students," parents would be shocked, especially in the major schools. There's no-[laughs]-no clear fix for this.

MS. YAGER: The paths need to be cut again, I guess.

MR. JERRY: Yeah. I guess so.

MS. YAGER: Is there anything else that's important that we talk about that we haven't covered?

MR. JERRY: Hmm. [Pauses.] I don't really think so. The only thing that comes to mind, because we were just talking about education and the problems that it presents and what the old solutions were and maybe, you know, what new things we could think about-it's a struggle between trying to get students enough capacity to work in a particular medium, much less think about a broader-you know, supposedly in art schools, that's what we were trying to do, too, is to give students a broader range now, so they had some facility for working with clay and wood, and hopefully all that come together in some new work.

And because we were segmented away in these things called metalsmithing and ceramics and so forth, those crossovers weren't happening as much as I think they should have. And again, you only have them-the undergraduate student, you've only got him for four years. So what are you going to do? It's hard enough, I always thought-hard enough in four years and 30 credits to get them so that they at least had some facility for working with one material-[laughs]-much less more than that. And-but the program attempted to make sure that they got into other studios. And sometimes it works. And I think in those cases, boy, it worked good, you know.

MS. YAGER: What about the issue also that-I mean, you had exposure to art and craft from very early on.

MR. JERRY: Right.

MS. YAGER: And I wondered: Do the students coming in now-have they had exposure previous in, you know-

MR. JERRY: Well, the high schools, at least those that I know about through students in the eastern part of the country, many of them-most of their creative experience has been two-dimensional. So that's for sure. You could say that across the board. When you look at their portfolios, most of it had to do with painting and drawing and various combinations of that. The next thing you might see would be some ceramics. The school would buy a kiln and there would be some involvement with ceramics. Quite a bit. Metalwork, zero. Zip. Very, very, very little. I think primarily because of liability problems with torches and all the rest of it. I know I've talked to high school teachers who said, "Oh, my God, no! I couldn't possibly. My principal would die if they knew I had a torch up there." I heard that a lot over the years. So very, very little exposure to metalwork.

So when they come to the university not media committed, like I was-when I went to School for American Craftsmen, I went straight into the metal studio and that was it. That's the way the whole place operated. There was no wandering around. There wasn't even an afternoon class in ceramics you could take. It was a direct line. It's changed now. Students at the craft school can move across the board a little bit. But in an art school, a lot of them were not exposed.

So the bright ones would come into your studio never having even known an artist, hardly, outside of their high school art teacher, much less been in a serious studio, and say, "Wow! This is fantastic!" And the next thing you

know, you'd have them as a major student. Or same thing happened in ceramics. So we felt as a faculty we needed to expose these kids to as much as we could as fast as we could, rather than to mainline them. And for the most part I think it worked out pretty well, but it's costly in terms of time. And by the time you get that done, you get some foundation program, you get them introduced to a whole variety of media, you're already into junior year. And, boy, they have just two years in front of you to get serious about anything. Phew. That's a problem, just time. It's just not long enough. Not long enough.

And then you add the economy to that, and the parent wants the kid to have a job when it's all over, and the administration keeps hinting that you should talk to parents about what kind of wonderful job this kid's going to get when it's over. Well, you know, it doesn't happen like that. We had a student sue us. Yup. It wasn't in my shop, thank God. But we had a young woman whose parents were RISD people. Both the parents had graduated from RISD. They were designers in New York, had been in and around that business.

And so the daughter comes to Syracuse. And what does she do? She majors in sculpture. And she goes home after graduation, getting a C or-she was not a very good student, but nevertheless got grades, got a degree, got out, went to New York, looked in the newspaper and there were no jobs for sculptors, and went to various other sources to try to find a job as a sculptor. I'm thinking, what? Who built that expectation into this kid? Well, partly the parents, but I don't know.

So the parents said, "Well, at RISD we had"-this came out later-"this great placement thing, and everybody gets placed into jobs. And they have a system for this, and it worked for us, and you don't have anything." Well, it wasn't really true, but this kid couldn't find a job as a sculptor, and so they sued the school for not assisting this-

MS. YAGER: How did it go?

MR. JERRY: -for not preparing this kid for a job as a sculptor.

MS. YAGER: How did it end up?

MR. JERRY: How did it end up? I don't know. The suit-I'm sure the suit never went through, but it really shook the place up. So next thing you know, we were having people who were making their living from-

MS. YAGER: This will get rid of art departments quick. [Laughs.]

MR. JERRY: Yeah, yeah. Oh, my God! It was-it was pretty spooky. And my friend, Roger, who was the major sculpture person at the time. Jesus, he was so great to students. He did everything he could to find them jobs, but most of the time, you know, they were an undergraduate student in sculpture? You know, maybe you get a model-making job somewhere, or you can go work for another sculptor or something like that. But you know, to launch a career as a sculptor as an undergraduate? No way in hell, not going to happen. And parents were mad as hell. They had this kid home again, I think. [Laughs.] Oh, Lord!

MS. YAGER: I mean, they have a point, and yet it's-

MR. JERRY: Yes. Well, especially if at somewhere along the line the school falls into the trap of talking about jobs and training. And the minute they do that, the minute it's printed in the catalogue, they're liable for it. Anything in a catalogue, that was in the catalogue and in the program of study for four years, any of that material is legally binding, so they had a case. And the school, I'm sure, has been a lot more careful about what they say to people, especially in the studio areas. Guarantee a painter a job? Are you kidding me? [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Well, if the WPA was around.

MR. JERRY: [Laughs] Yeah, you'd have a job in a hurry doing the presidents. It's funny; my dad told me a story. He had this guy he didn't know what to do with and he wasn't a very good painter, but he was-there he was. He needed to make something, make a living somehow. So my dad found him a job in a library, painting all the presidents. Went on for years. It went on for the whole project. This guy went off in his studio and started with the first one, worked his way all the way through, and, of course, there were new presidents-[laughs]-during the time. You know, yeah.

MS. YAGER: You know, Michael, when I walked into your home the first day-you know, you're here in Santa Fe. It's such a-it's the center of culture and art, and I didn't have the chance of seeing you in Syracuse, New York. But I did have the chance of visiting your childhood home in Wustum-or in Racine, Wisconsin.

MR. JERRY: In Racine, yeah.

MS. YAGER: And although you're sitting here in Santa Fe, the first painting I walk in and see is by James Hoffman, one of the really significant paintings from the Wustum-from that time of great energy and support for the arts. And you have made major contributions to the field of metalsmithing, adding to the history of Wisconsin

metalsmiths. You've done that in Racine, in Menomonee, in Syracuse, and now you will continue to do that in Santa Fe. It will be interesting to see how the beauty of-out your window-seeps into your work.

MR. JERRY: [Laughs.] Seeps into the work, yeah. Well, thank you. Thank you very much.

MS. YAGER: I want to thank you personally and on behalf of the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, for agreeing to this interview, and most importantly for your major and ongoing contribution to the metalsmith's art.

MR. JERRY: Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure.

MS. YAGER: Thank you.

MR. JERRY: Exhausting pleasure. [Laughs.]

MS. YAGER: Thanks.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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