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Oral history interview with Harold O'Connor,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a digitally recorded interview with Harold O'Connor on October 11 and 31, 2007. The interview took place at artist's home in Salida, Colorado, and was conducted by Dinah Zeiger 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.

Harold O'Connor and Dinah Zeiger 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

DINAH ZEIGER: This is Dinah Zeiger interviewing Harold O'Connor at the artist's home in Salida, Colorado, on October 11, 2007, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number one.

So, Harold, let's start off with talking about your early years. What was your childhood and family like? Where were you born and when?

HAROLD O'CONNOR: Okay. I was born in 1941 in Utica, New York. My father was a doctor in Watertown - no - outside of Utica, New York. I forget the little town. I spent the first five years of my life, well, around Utica - I think it was Waterville, New York, where they lived. He had a practice there. And my other relatives lived up near Messina and Ogdensburg up in northern New York. So I spent the summers up there on the farm. My grandfather was a farmer. And he came from Canada, crossed the St. Lawrence to see my grandmother, and they got married. And he started out with nothing, then he got one farm. And then when he died, he had three farms. But I used to spend summers up there.

In 1948, my father took a job with the state of New York at the state hospital. He became a psychiatrist. Before that, he was a regular physician. And he worked then for the state system in New York. And he took a job in a place called Willard, New York, on Seneca Lake. This is a little town of 200 people.

MS. ZEIGER: Wow.

MR. O'CONNOR: So that was near Ovid, New York, about three miles away. I went to early school there, until ninth grade. And then in ninth grade, we moved to Rochester, New York, and I went to high school in a suburb of Rochester, New York.

My mother was an artist. She did all kinds of art, and she had a lot to do with the home bureau and crafts. So my early exposure to crafts was when I was very small. And even when I was a little kid playing with toys and stuff, I was really good at piling things up high, and they wouldn't tip over. So I spent a lot of time as a kid alone, because I was an only child. I spent a lot of time with my dog out in the woods and roaming around. So I've always been handy with doing handwork and making things.

So in high school I took a little art. I remember in, I think it was sixth grade, I made a little canoe out of plywood, and I put it on Seneca Lake. And then went out there and it actually worked. So that was my first thing, shot, at making something bigger than something small.

And through high school I wasn't a good student at all. I was bored, I guess. I barely got through, and I didn't really think about art until later. I thought of psychology, I guess because my father was in the medical field and psych. And I had spent every summer since I was 16 working in the state hospital in the summers on the grounds and stuff. And I really didn't know, after I got out of high school, really what I wanted to do.

But I came out to Colorado, to Gunnison, Colorado. That's where I first started college. I got accepted in two places, because my grades were so bad.

MS. ZEIGER: The college was in Gunnison?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. The college was in Gunnison - Western State College. And I like to ski, so that was another thing coming out here. And I majored in psychology, and I spent a year, and then I quit. It got to a point of saying I really didn't know what I wanted to do. And I told my parents, I said, look, it's a waste of my time and your money. So I went back to Rochester, New York, and then I worked full-time at the state hospital in occupational therapy for a year and a half. And then I had another job periodically in a little machine shop that made commercial apple-peeling machines.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: It was the only company in the world that made them.

MS. ZEIGER: How interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: They were even - some German company tried to beat them, but they were too complex, the German machines. And this machine had been invented in the '20s by this guy's grandfather. And it would take the apple and core it, split it, all in one operation. And if it didn't work, you hit it with a hammer. That's how crude this machine was. But they just kept going and going and going. And so I worked on that several -

MS. ZEIGER: Did you actually make them, fabricate them?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Yeah. I ran a multiple-drill press and some other machining operations. And there was only, like, 10 people. It was like a family operation. And they sold them all over the world, these things. So that's the other job I had.

But then I went back to - I came back to Western State again. The second year I went back, there was a traveling, interim professor filling in sociology. He was an anthropology professor, and I had never even heard about anthropology. But this guy changed my - he was one of the guys who changed my life into another field.

MS. ZEIGER: What's his name?

MR. O'CONNOR: His name was Clendenen. He's dead now, but I don't know his first name. He went on to be a professor at University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. But you know, you talk about people being influential in your life. This is how I tell - and I tell this to students today - I say, you know, there's people you come across in your life - I'm even telling my own son - that you are influenced by. It may be one person who changes your whole life direction into some other road. Well, I got turned on to anthropology. So I applied to a couple of schools, and I got accepted at the University of New Mexico and also the University of Kansas. And I said, oh, Kansas, I don't want to - that's too flat for me. So I decided to go to Albuquerque.

And it just happened - another thing of luck I've had in my life in the education things is I happened upon the times at the schools that I attended that were their golden years. And this just happened to be, like in the anthropology department, I remember, down there, we had a famous linguist by the name of [Stanley Stewart] Newman. And then we had Richard Basehart, the movie star's, brother. He was an authority on Africa. And then there was Frank Hibben, who discovered Sandia Man outside of Albuquerque in the mountains. And I do forget the lady's name who was there, but she was one of the country's authorities on the Southwest Indians. I wasn't really interested in the Southwest Indians that much. I was more interested in the Arctic and other cultures.

And all through my life, this has been a foundation of what influences my art, has been the anthropology, because of the way I look at things. The way people look at my art, they say lots of times it looks like things that are dug up, just because of the patinas and the colors of the metals and how things come together.

And my love of travel was influenced. In fact, I've been traveling since I was 13. I went across the states twice when I was 13 and 14 by myself.

MS. ZEIGER: How did you do that?

MR. O'CONNOR: I took a Greyhound bus one year.

MS. ZEIGER: Interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: And I went from Rochester, New York - I went down to Filmont Scout Ranch.

MS. ZEIGER: And where's that Filmont - in New York?

MR. O'CONNOR: Cimarron, New Mexico.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, Cimarron, New Mexico.

MR. O'CONNOR: So I went from Rochester to New Mexico alone and then next year took a train. So I've been going, traveling a long time.

So I attended New Mexico from about '62 to '64, and my last year at New Mexico I was really into what I was doing. And I collected; I read a lot of anthro books and stuff. And I was really into it. I went on some digs, and I was really into it, but I kind of got turned off by a professor saying, you've got to have a master's; you've got to have a doctorate to do things. And I'm more of a person who wants to get - I want to use my head and my hands

together. So I just got turned off.

And the last year I was at New Mexico, I dropped everything, and I took metalworking classes - I think three jewelry and metalwork classes in the art department. And I said, I don't want a degree; I just want to go and do my work now. And I was real lucky there, too, because then I think my professor - I haven't called my professor in two or three years, but that would be still going. He lives in Albuquerque. His name is Professor Ralph Lewis. And I told him I couldn't work around other people, that, you know, I couldn't spend a lot of time in class. And he says, that's fine; just work at home, bring in the pieces for crit. So periodically, I'd bring the pieces in crit. And I remember that first semester I made 50 pieces, and the requirement was four.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, my gosh.

MR. O'CONNOR: And I've always been prolific, even if I didn't have to do things. I wanted to. I just like making and designing - expressing, I should say.

So from - I don't know how I got to Denmark, like, who is the person who got me there. The inspiration is Georg Jensen, because back in those years - I mean, 40 years ago. And my field is really young in the States. You got to look at the art craft movement in this country. It basically started after the Second World War. And so it was really young. There was little, not much happening that we know of today. And so I know Georg Jensen and Denmark and crafts. And I don't know where I got the address, but I wrote the craft schools in Copenhagen and got accepted as a guest student.

MS. ZEIGER: What year was that?

MR. O'CONNOR: This was 1964. I didn't speak Danish. In fact, all these countries I went to I don't speak the language. But I look at art being 90 percent looking at it.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: I do regret that I missed out on the philosophy in their languages or the theory -

MS. ZEIGER: Theory, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: - chemistry, whatever. But most of it's like seeing and doing. Also there's different ways of learning. Like for me, the best just, for me, is to see something done, then I do it.

MS. ZEIGER: I see.

MR. O'CONNOR: Another way is other people have a knack; they can read it and do it. And I can't do that.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah, I can't do that.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, the other way - somebody once said to me, or often - I mean, it's like, what's the difference between somebody who went to school and somebody who learned it themselves? I tell them that the difference is that the person who learned by themselves, what they're doing works for them now. And they explored or work-flogged this until they can't flog anymore. Let me grab something else, and they'll do that. The person who's educated, who went to school, knows most of the possibilities of what he can do. He doesn't have to do them, but he knows what can be done, and that's the difference.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: The other thing between an artist and a craftsman is a craftsman knows every time what's going to happen. When he starts to work - hey, I'm going to make 10 of those; I'm going to make 100 of those - he knows exactly what the end product is. The artist has an idea. He works on it. He may change it along the way, and that's the difference, that I say, between an artist and a craftsman. I don't have people working here because I don't know what that end - I have an idea what it's going to be, but I change along the way if I want to. And I can't say that to somebody, change it along the way.

MS. ZEIGER: Can I back you up for just a second about deciding to take these metalwork classes. Why metalwork? Why did you choose that one, of all the things that you might have chosen in the art department?

MR. O'CONNOR: I've always liked little things.

MS. ZEIGER: Uh-huh [affirmative], the toys you made and things?

MR. O'CONNOR: Building little constructions. And so I've done ceramics before, but it's precise. The other thing is that the metal is precise. It's also one of the hang-ups of metal. It's because if I tell you how to do something

with metal, once and you do it the way I do it, it'd do the same thing the rest of your life.

MS. ZEIGER: You can, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: But with ceramics, the difference is when you - every time, I don't care who you are, anytime you put something in a kiln and fire it, you can't tell me that it's going to come out perfect every time.

MS. ZEIGER: It's a crap shoot, yeah. [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: No, right.

MS. ZEIGER: Absolutely, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: So the reason I got into the metal, I guess, is because I had always been good at little things, putting little things together, the toys and stuff.

MS. ZEIGER: You just had an affinity for the material.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: So back to Denmark. You get accepted, and you go to Denmark in 1964. Was it a program of apprenticeship, or was it a more formal, like, university program?

MR. O'CONNOR: Formal. They had all the crafts.

MS. ZEIGER: What was the name of the place again? Where did you go? Do you remember?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, it's the National School of Arts and Crafts.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: And there were a number of foreign people there. There was another American; there were two Germans; there was a Swedish girl. It was small. There was only eight of us, I think - very small in that particular class, department.

MS. ZEIGER: That's quite an honor, though, to have been accepted into something as an outsider in a national school.

MR. O'CONNOR: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. ZEIGER: So what did you study? How long were you there?

MR. O'CONNOR: I was there six months. And I studied enameling. Which somebody asked me recently, is there one thing that you have tried in metal that you said wasn't for you? And I said, enameling. I said, it just - you know, I like it, I did it, but it's not for me personally. I enjoy it. And maybe it's because I did so much of it when I was in high school. And then that's the first thing I did when I was at Denmark. I mean, I did some really nice pieces. But no. Then there was stone setting, silversmithing - not making hollow things but the silverware. I wasn't really ready for Europe because of their training. I was -

MS. ZEIGER: What do you mean?

MR. O'CONNOR: I was bucking the system, because in America it's, do your own thing, free-form -

MS. ZEIGER: And what is it there?

MR. O'CONNOR: - which means no form. There it's a three-and-a-half-year setup, regimented what you do and based on centuries of working in an apprenticeship system. But it wasn't an apprenticeship system, because it was a school that has all the art classes, and everything relates to - like your drawing class, your painting, and everything relates back to what you're doing.

But I left there. As I say, I wasn't ready for the discipline. I didn't know at the time. From there, I went up to Helsinki, Finland.

MS. ZEIGER: And were you in a school there or an apprentice program?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, I was in a national arts school there.

MS. ZEIGER: You must have been doing something that was very impressive for the Europeans to let you come

into their national schools. How did you apply for them? Did you have to send them photographs?

MR. O'CONNOR: I just sent slides, yeah. I sent what I was doing.

MS. ZEIGER: And what were you doing at that time? What were you making at that time? Do you remember?

MR. O'CONNOR: It was more or less Georg Jensen things - shiny.

MS. ZEIGER: Functional?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Well, it was jewelry.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, jewelry, okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. A lot of these places I was the first American ever to go to there.

MS. ZEIGER: Maybe nobody had asked before.

MR. O'CONNOR: Maybe nobody asked. I mean, that's what holds back a lot of people, when I talk to Americans. They say, well, I don't speak the language, so that holds them back.

MS. ZEIGER: So you go to Helsinki, Finland. How long were you there?

MR. O'CONNOR: I was there another six months.

MS. ZEIGER: And again, what was the program like?

MR. O'CONNOR: The program was not as restrictive or regimented as Denmark. It was, sort of, do whatever you want to do, and that was according to the teachers that I had. Now, here we go again. I had one teacher who just saw me working, and he said, I know the school you should be in. And this was in Germany.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, really?

MR. O'CONNOR: And I saw him 17 years ago. Now, I went there in 1966 to Finland, and I had not seen him since. And we just happened to be - I had an international seminar class, and we were in this town outside of Helsinki, and he happened to be in this gallery.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, my gosh.

MR. O'CONNOR: And he said, I don't remember you. I said, but if it wasn't for you, I wouldn't be standing here talking to you.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] Isn't that interesting?

MR. O'CONNOR: But he wrote a letter to the head of the school in Pforzheim, Germany, which is the gold center of Germany. And he got me into that school.

MS. ZEIGER: So then you moved to Germany. How long were you there?

MR. O'CONNOR: I was there a year.

MS. ZEIGER: And is that an apprenticeship program, or another school structured like a university?

MR. O'CONNOR: No, that's another structured school.

MS. ZEIGER: But it was strictly for gold?

MR. O'CONNOR: Gold and silver. And they taught hollowware also, making bowls and chalices. It's the gold center of Germany, and it's probably the most well-known town in the world for gold and teaching. There's 10,000 goldsmiths there.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, my gosh.

MR. O'CONNOR: Was, until things have been moved to China, so they've lost more than half of their firms. Also in Pforzheim is the only museum dedicated to the history of jewelry in the world [Schmuckmuseum].

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, really?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Do you have pieces there?

MR. O'CONNOR: Not yet. There's two schools. There's the apprenticeship school, which is called the gold and watchmaker school, and that's up on the hillside. And then the school I went to was called the art and work school. Now it's part of their university system. At the time I was there, 90 percent of the school was dedicated to jewelry, and now 10 percent or 5 percent.

MS. ZEIGER: What is the rest of it?

MR. O'CONNOR: It's disappearing. It's regular fine arts.

MS. ZEIGER: Why is it disappearing? Just to jump ahead here.

MR. O'CONNOR: It's disappearing because the market has changed. It's hard to get apprentices anymore in Germany and Europe. Also because of the European market, EU. All these individual countries that had their setup, as far as rules, like your famous German apprentice system and this, now has to be watered down because of the other countries that are in. The 27 countries that are in there, now they have to rewrite everything for a common. So now you can go out and practice without a license or go through the system.

MS. ZEIGER: So the apprenticeship system is breaking down -

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, yes.

MS. ZEIGER: - actually, the training system is breaking down?

MR. O'CONNOR: Right, right. And it's becoming more like the university fine art system. Before, you had to know a lot. You had to have the basis to get into the school. Now it's anybody can walk in. That school, that time, was the foundation for my life's work, that one year. Without that, I would have never progressed to where I am today. Okay, the teachers, compared to the United States - here, a teacher has to teach everything. There, a teacher teaches one thing. He teaches design, so I had a design teacher. I had a stone-cutting teacher. I had a stone-setting teacher, an engraving teacher, a repoussé and chasing teacher. They have history classes for jewelry, sculpture, drawing, model-making. So all these courses come back to what you're doing. Also the schools are supported by industry. They get a lot of money from industry, because they need good help. Where are they going to get good help if they don't help the schools out?

MS. ZEIGER: It's definitely training craftsmen, right?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah, to know your craft.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Also at the school, they had classes for art metalsmiths and commercial metalsmiths. So you had people going into production, and they would be in one room. And then there were two design teachers there, world famous or internationally famous design teachers, Klaus Ulrich, and my teacher was Reinhold Reiling.

MS. ZEIGER: What was his last name?

MR. O'CONNOR: Reiling.

MS. ZEIGER: R-E-I-L-I-N-G?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, Reinhold Reiling.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay. And who was the other one?

MR. O'CONNOR: Klaus Ulrich.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: Also a professor there, only teaches 16 hours a week or something.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, right.

MR. O'CONNOR: They don't have to be there every day like a lot of the schools here.

MS. ZEIGER: That's a difference.

MR. O'CONNOR: And they are encouraged, they are expected to progress in their own work in their spare time.

MS. ZEIGER: So you said that it was so profoundly influential. It sounds to me as if what you really learned there were the mechanics of your craft.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right.

MS. ZEIGER: What else did you get from that? Because that wouldn't have been enough. I mean, that's a solid foundation.

MR. O'CONNOR: I think for the design classes of design - now, what would happen there is that the teacher would come in, and he'd throw out an idea, and we'd all work on it for six weeks. Okay, if you're going to compare that to the system of our system here, it's that if you have a class here and you say, well, such and such, go, take 20 people, for instance, and go work on that. You'll have 20 people going in 20 different directions. What happens in those classes is you say okay - well, just for instance, a couple of classes that I came across in my travels is they had just finished up a project on a wok cooking spoon or fork. Okay, you got 25 people, or let's say 20, because it's easier to relate. You got 20 people. Say those 20 people come up with, say, 10 to 20 designs. You've got 400 ideas; you don't have one.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: That's the difference. So when you come up, coming in you've got all these different ideas that have come to fruit.

MS. ZEIGER: Other ways to solve the problem.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, yeah. Or I'm going to make - the problem is a teapot with such and such - the same thing. They make a paper model first. And I always say, too, about, like, the thing is, a workbench is a workbench. It's not a place to sit there and work out ideas. That's a bench over there for drawing and ideas. You work them out there first, because it's cheaper. It also saves you time instead of getting over to your bench and you start working and you say, oh, I've got another idea. And then your work really slows down, and that happens with everybody.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah. So it taught you discipline.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yep.

MS. ZEIGER: Did it teach you more about the tools of your craft, as well?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. And the difference in the school was, too, one of the things was we learned how to do everything by hand. But we also learned how to do it with machine.

MS. ZEIGER: In Germany, in goldsmith school.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: What was the purpose of that?

MR. O'CONNOR: Because some would go to work in factories.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, I see. But how did that shape your work if you learned also to do on a machine?

MR. O'CONNOR: It shaped it - later on I used some hand tools that are motorized.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, but not big machines.

MS. ZEIGER: So you knew how to do it.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: It gave you versatility.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right, mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] The possibilities, again -

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: - [laughs] of what's available.

MS. ZEIGER: So you've now spent two years in Europe, right. And one year in Germany, what happened then? Where did you go after that? Did you come back to the states?

MR. O'CONNOR: I went from Germany - and I knew a few weeks after I went to this place, to Pforzheim, that I really had to get everything I needed in a year.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: I just couldn't really stay for two or three years. So I worked hard there. Also at the time of the school was the golden years, again. And most of the people that are my colleagues, from who I went to school with, are internationally known today, lots of them. And they had, at that time, too, they were still rebuilding after the war [World War Two]. The town was destroyed twice. And so in '67 they were still rebuilding. But we had lots of international, lots of foreign students, just lots of them from all over. So that was interesting, also.

MS. ZEIGER: Sure.

MR. O'CONNOR: And I had gotten married, too, when I was in Finland. So my wife was with me, and she was doing art. And then we went back to Helsinki for the summer, and then I came back the fall of '67 to Rochester, New York. And then it was, well, what am I going to do? Where am I going to set up? Whatever. Well, I went from Rochester, New York, in the fall - my wife came back to the States - and then we went to Penland, North Carolina, to Penland School of Crafts. And I was the first resident metal craftsman in Penland.

MS. ZEIGER: Really?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. And it was a stepping stone. I mean, I had all my tools. I had everything to set up a shop, but I didn't know exactly where to plant down yet to work. So we spent the winter there and then in early spring headed out West. And I remembered Gunnison, vaguely Crested Butte, because I had been there once or a few times because I was skiing then. And I came into Crested Butte, and the Volkswagen bus broke down, and that's where we landed.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] That's the Colorado story of the '60s, isn't it?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, yeah. [Laughs.] So I got a little - I set up a little studio in Crested Butte on an alley. And back then, there were 200 people, in dirt streets. You could buy a house for \$800, and I didn't have any money. And so it was a little coal shed. It was seven feet by fourteen [feet]. And it's still there, and I often said, if I had enough money, I'd buy it and take it away, because it was, you know, my beginning. And so the first winter was really hard, because the alley wasn't plowed, and people had to trek through to get there. And you did a lot of your PR in the bars and telling people where you were. And then the next year moved on to the Company Store, the big building in Crested Butte on the corner there.

MS. ZEIGER: On Main Street.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, they had a bunch of shops, and I had a little gallery space, a workshop gallery in there for two years. And that's where I got my start. And I found out along the way I didn't want to deal with the public. I'd much rather do my work and also teach. And in the summer of 1970, I went back to UNM in Albuquerque and got my degree - my first one. It was six hours I needed to graduate, and I quit in 1964, because I didn't need the degree.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: But then I wanted to teach. In 1970, I decided I wanted to teach, so I needed the papers. So that's the reason I went back, to get that out of the way. And then closed up and just meandered. We spent six weeks in Dallas before January 1971, before going down to San Miguel de Allende in Mexico. And I enrolled down there, and I got a master's, M.F.A., in San Miguel.

MS. ZEIGER: University at San Miguel?

MR. O'CONNOR: San Miguel - yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: An M.F.A. in metaworking from there?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Isn't that in the silver district?

MR. O'CONNOR: No. You're thinking of Taxco.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, okay, all right, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: This is 200 miles north of Mexico City. It's an artists' colony. And they have two art schools there - yeah. So I spent six months there and got a master's. And the master's is based on, for every 30 hours work you get a credit. So I've never been asked about it. And why I went down there was here I applied to get a master's and several schools wanted me to take beginning art, and I had already had all this. I had already had the two years of these schools in Europe, the background behind me, all these hours. I mean, in Germany, it's 46-hours-a-week school for three and a half years.

MS. ZEIGER: That's full-time.

MR. O'CONNOR: Full-time.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: And a guest student - that's what I did, 46 hours. And I had 800 pieces done also. So I'm not going to start again. So it worked.

MS. ZEIGER: I'm going to back up for a second and ask you to talk in a little more detail about your experience at Penland. Because that was fairly early in your career. Did it shape any of the work you did later? Or was it kind of a resting place for you to get yourself together?

MR. O'CONNOR: It was a resting place, yeah. And it was very early, because there was only 12 people there in all the crafts.

MS. ZEIGER: Early in its existence.

MR. O'CONNOR: Real - yeah. I mean, it had been around for several decades, but it was basically the beginning of what is going on today.

MS. ZEIGER: Very influential today.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. It was more like a residency.

MS. ZEIGER: So you were there for about six months?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: About that. So now, it's evident that your choices about going into Europe were very instrumental in how you learned craft, and also that shaped your sensibility about it. When you went to Mexico, I mean, it also has a kind of a tradition, a metals tradition. Did any of the work or what you were exposed to down there have some kind of impact on your work later?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: Or was it, again, more instrumental just to get a degree?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, instrumental. No.

MS. ZEIGER: So you come back to the States with your M.F.A. Where did you come then? Where did you stay or go to?

MR. O'CONNOR: I went to Canada. I got a job at the Alberta College of Art [and Design] at Calgary, and I was in Canada four years. And I taught the jewelry at Alberta College of Art. And then I set up, designed a workshop for their new school. And I did some innovative things in Canada.

MS. ZEIGER: What kinds of things?

MR. O'CONNOR: The first year I was there, I started working with the plastics. I was using plastics for models and then using the lost-wax process of casting. This plastic was like Styrofoam, but it's polyethylene plastic. And when you heat it with a torch, you get an organic form, very three dimensional and a very tactile surface. I've always been interested also in tactile surfaces. And so this is material that came around radios, and it's very thin. It's maybe two or three millimeters thick. And where it's not thick after you heat it, then you have to apply wax to it and vest it and burn it out the same as you would with regular waxes. Anyway, I had never seen anything like it, and nobody else had, either. So it was exciting.

MS. ZEIGER: Did it change the look of your work?

MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, yeah, yeah, completely - built from constructing and fabricating things to something that's very organic. They're very - yeah, I'd say they look like things you'd find in the woods, tree bark. They were rough. And I did that. That went on for a year, and I got some articles in Canadian craft magazines on it. In fact, a goldsmith fellow in London has a couple of pieces from that series. And then I worked on a series, usually. I'd get an idea from my travels or social things, and I'd draw up a series of work, and then I'd find out how to make it. So the design comes first and then the mechanics are second. And I - let's see, '71, '72 was the plastics.

I saw a movie called *The Incredible Journey Through the Human Body*, and it's where they shot people into your arm, and they took a voyage around the human body.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: And so something must have stirred me there, because that was a whole series of about 40 pieces or so.

MS. ZEIGER: The nature of the pieces was what?

MR. O'CONNOR: Was -

MS. ZEIGER: Small scale?

MR. O'CONNOR: Small scale. It was jewelry, and it was like *Vertebrae*. That was the name of one, and that was made - and also, I enjoy combinations of different materials, opposing materials, ivory combined with plastic, with metal. So this was a carved vertebrae out of the ivory and cast resin and metal. Let's see, Spinal Column - this was a series that looks like your backbone, and it had little hinges underneath all the bones so it articulates when you wear it. Let's see, one was called *Bone and Marrow* [1973]. And I used actually some bones that would have the cell structure in it filled with resin and sliced like you'd see in a microscope and put down. And so the challenge in the series was taking something that's soft, your body, and then executing it in hard materials.

MS. ZEIGER: And permanent materials.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Right. And is it jewelry for wear?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Ninety-nine percent of my work has been wearable pieces - or 99-point-whatever. I had some that are miniature sculpture, but almost all my work has been wearable, and it has to be light in weight, light enough to wear - those are the restrictions, yeah. Well, I've gone through that. Sometimes earrings and - yes, too heavy.

I was still in Canada, but I lost my job. And so I had to think of - I started teaching. [Laughs] And my first workshop was in the basement of an alternative school, one weekend teaching primitive casting techniques with sand and charcoal and cuttlebone. Cuttlebone is what they give birds to chew on in their cage.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: It's white stuff, and it's soft, and you can press an image into it and then pour the hot metal into it. And you get a rippled effect -

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: - like fish scale. And so that's what got me started.

MS. ZEIGER: And who were your students?

MR. O'CONNOR: They were hobby people.

MS. ZEIGER: All ages, old, young, mostly kids?

MR. O'CONNOR: Mostly middle - middle age, young. I mean, 30s to 50.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: I will say that in the time I taught at Calgary-Alberta that 90 percent of my students are professionals today.

MS. ZEIGER: That's amazing.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. I had good students.

MS. ZEIGER: So, sort of, your workshop business starts from losing your full-time job and starting to make a living doing the workshops and doing your own work.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right.

MS. ZEIGER: I want to back up just a minute, and then we're going to take a break. You've been so many places outside of the United States. Do you see yourself more as an internationalist, or someone who's following an American tradition?

MR. O'CONNOR: International.

MS. ZEIGER: And what is it that shapes that position for you? Or do you think there is an American tradition?

MR. O'CONNOR: I think, because I've always been outside the system, that it is international for me. If I was in - if I had been educated in the United States all the way through and gone through that system, then I would be an American thing. I'm an American in certain ways.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: I'm an American - because people always ask me, why don't you live someplace else? Why don't - you know, you're so international. One thing is that I have the freedom here to do what I want, so far. I have the market. There is still a market in this country for art. Now, if you go internationally - I'm not saying the whole world, but I'm saying in Europe or so - they have more government help to the arts and stuff. But generally, the buying public doesn't have the money to support the arts the way -

MS. ZEIGER: Americans do.

MR. O'CONNOR: Our money here in this country basically comes from individual people who are philanthropists and help the arts. I miss - I love to travel. I love to go places. I loved interacting, but I miss a certain physical locality of the world. I've been every place in the world - not every place - but all the places I've been, I always come back to a corridor between Denver and Santa Fe. Now, there's got to be something as to my niche.

MS. ZEIGER: It speaks to you.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Absolutely, right. Yeah. Why don't we take a break, and we'll start when we come back and talk a little bit about the business of art, okay?

MR. O'CONNOR: Sure.

MS. ZEIGER: Good.

[END OF MD 01.]

MS. ZEIGER: This is Dinah Zeiger interviewing Harold O'Connor at his studio in Salida, Colorado, on October 11, 2007, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number two.

So I want to talk now about the business of art, your career as an art maker. Let's start with exhibiting. We talked a little bit about setting up these workshops and using that as a form of income. Are you an artist who exhibits his work a lot? And do you remember when you started exhibiting, what that experience has been like?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, I exhibit. I enter competitions. I still get thrown out of competitions. I had work in galleries. I don't do any shows anymore. In fact, if we want to just talk about shows to get started -

MS. ZEIGER: Yes.

MR. O'CONNOR: - that was the first thing that I had to do about selling my work, was when I came back to the States from Europe in 1967, I spent all summer doing sidewalk shows or little park shows around Rochester, New York. And the first show I ever did was in the front of an outdoor drive-in movie place in Buffalo, New York. And then I did several weekend - yeah, we shouldn't say sidewalk - weekend shows that summer. And that turned me off right away, because I just couldn't take the abuse of people coming up to you, like they know more than you do about what you're doing or jewelry or whatever you're making. I mean, it's insulting. I think

where the shows work - and today, there's very wonderful shows - where you have to pay to go to a show, you get better people. If you're just cruising through, then you can heckle your way.

The last show I did was, I think it was 1991, a Smithsonian craft show in Washington [D.C.]. And to me, that was just fantastic. For me, it was a great show, really nice people, very appreciative, did well. But that's the last show I did.

MS. ZEIGER: Well, what about exhibitions? Because I see something hanging here in your studio. I see some posters for exhibitions.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: So distinguish those.

MR. O'CONNOR: Exhibitions are really - it's important if you're an academic person, if you're in a university, too - publish or perish. I tell people I do everything that a person at a university does, except I don't have a university that I work for. I think it goes back to my original teaching experience in Canada and writing articles. I used to write a lot of articles; you get put in craft magazines years ago. I don't do it anymore. I just don't have the time or the inclination. Basically, two kinds of exhibitions: one is for show, one is for selling.

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: And then you have invitationals, and these are where you're invited to exhibit in a group show. I've done all sorts, and I think they all have their place. And then there's also one-man shows, where you get a body of work together and show it, where you're concentrated on what you're doing. All this brings to artists' credibility. Who are you? What have you done? What's behind you? So they're all valid. You'll have to give me more.

MS. ZEIGER: Do they further your work? Do they help you sell? Or do they bring you enough recognition that it makes your career possible?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yes.

MS. ZEIGER: They do.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: They've brought me enough, because you're sitting here talking to me.

MS. ZEIGER: That's true. [They laugh.] You've had a long enough career. Also you started this in Europe and came back to America. How has the market for American craft changed over your working life as an art maker? Has it grown? Is it a more sophisticated market?

MR. O'CONNOR: It is more sophisticated, definitely grown. I think a big difficulty now is with people that are retiring, getting into my field, getting into the craft field. All areas of the craft field are exploding with classes, people doing, occupying their time. So they're going to, of course, flood the field. But then, you know, there's room for everybody, because what I'm doing is so different from what other people are doing. And it's always been that way.

The thing about what I do is, one, I don't mass-produce. I hardly ever do multiples. I've done a few in my life, but usually everything is one of a kind. The imagery which I have, where the source of my ideas are different and unique from other people, and I don't even look at jewelry as jewelry. I look at them as little things you can wear. A lot of people are always saying, why don't you do sculptural, because your work is sculptural? It's a matter of I'm familiar with the tools I use, and to get into sculpture and stuff is an entirely different setup of time, space, whatever. I say if you want a sculpture, commission me and I'll make one. But I'm not going to sit here and do it on spec. My whole life has been on spec.

Galleries do not buy my work outright. It's not safe enough. So everything I do, I make the work and hope somebody will like it. And luckily, enough people have.

MS. ZEIGER: So in terms of the metalwork craft world, has your work been influential in shaping the landscape of it for dealers and for buyers alike? I mean, has your work led the way in some ways?

MR. O'CONNOR: They tell me it does. I don't go to the big national craft fairs - Baltimore and this and that. But people tell me that ex-students of mine - of course, you're going to be influenced by people. And I tell people -

they say, are you worried about, when you teach people, emulating you? Well, they might as well emulate somebody good. And if I worried about people taking what I do, why would I teach?

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: And I'm thinking of other things way ahead of where people are. I do say that the general public or people will look at a piece of mine and they'll take maybe 30 percent - 20 to 30 percent - of whatever's going on, and that works. They can go for years on that little thing. But people do that I've run into. I've taught thousands of people in my lifetime, and lots of those people are doing these fairs. And lots of my ex-students are very successful people.

MS. ZEIGER: How many workshops do you do a year?

MR. O'CONNOR: I probably average six to 12.

MS. ZEIGER: Wow. Approximately how long do they last? Are they a week long?

MR. O'CONNOR: They can be two days, three days, five days. I'm really a specialist in two days. But then, I can do a five-day, or when I had my private school, I did two-week sessions.

MS. ZEIGER: So tell me about your private school. Where was that and when was that?

MR. O'CONNOR: That was - and again, I've run these - I started running them in Crested Butte, when I went back to Crested Butte, Colorado, for the second time. After Canada I came back to Crested Butte, lived there again for three years. And I did a private school, summer school, there. I did that more than three years. I remember the first class I had was in the motel room - rented it and did it.

MS. ZEIGER: Set up workspace and - yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. And then the next year got bigger, the next year bigger. I mean, it kept getting bigger and bigger. And so I've done them in various ski resorts. And then when I lived in Taos [NM] for eight years, I had a formal setup for the classes.

MS. ZEIGER: Talk to me about, sort of, the commercial market and dealers. Do you have dealers? What are your relationships like with dealers?

MR. O'CONNOR: Again, with my dealers - I don't say they're gallery people, gallery owners - I have been very lucky. I'll knock on wood for that. I have hardly ever been burned. I've been burned good, but I haven't gone through a lot of the things that a lot of craft people - bad stories, bad dealings with people. I've dealt with reputable people in my life and good galleries. Now, I didn't start selling and concentrating on selling my own work until 13 years ago.

MS. ZEIGER: So mid-'90s.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. I was kind of forced into it. Before then, I was making money from my books that I self-publish and author, and my workshops. And so I really didn't need - I wasn't pressured to make more work, even though I make a lot of work during the year. My feeling about gallerists is you can have a contract written down, but if you can't deal with these people, then there's no sense working with them. It doesn't mean anything to have the things written down. No, I deal with people on people-to-people.

MS. ZEIGER: So you have several galleries that represent your work.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, I have several, but I don't have a lot.

MS. ZEIGER: All of them in the West? Where are they?

MR. O'CONNOR: I have them in Taos and Santa Fe.

MS. ZEIGER: Any back East?

MR. O'CONNOR: Those are my best. I have back East, but I can't get to them.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah. It's more difficult.

MR. O'CONNOR: I say to people, too, it's good if you can get to the gallery to see what's going on.

MS. ZEIGER: Why is that?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, they may have your work in a drawer.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] True.

MR. O'CONNOR: They have your work there, and then somebody will call up or go and they'll say, do you have any of Harold O'Connor's work? And yeah, it's down here in a drawer. Well, if people walk in, don't see it up here in the showcase, then how are they going to know your work's there? Being paid -

MS. ZEIGER: Right. Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: - it's a long way to go get paid. Even very, very good galleries, some pay on time, some don't. So that's things to watch. I don't do anything out of the country, because that's a real long way to collect.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: And they know that.

MS. ZEIGER: You were talking about being an author. How many books have you written? And how do you publish them? How do you sell your work?

MR. O'CONNOR: Okay, I did five little books.

MS. ZEIGER: What are they?

MR. O'CONNOR: My first one was *The Jeweler's Bench Reference* [Crested Butte, CO: Dunconor Books, 1977]. And that's still going today after 30 years.

MS. ZEIGER: And what is it?

MR. O'CONNOR: And that's a handbook for people who work every day - crafts people. I wrote it for myself, and it's based on the Kodak darkroom guide of years ago - a little, tiny book. I wanted a little, tiny book. I wanted something with all the information that I need. And I said, if I need it, other people will need it.

MS. ZEIGER: So what kind of information is that, just in general for me?

MR. O'CONNOR: Measurements.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, I see, okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, the sizes of rings, how do you figure out the size of a ring, the thickness. Say you want to make some colored gold - what kind of metal, how much silver do you put in; how much copper do you put in? If you're soldering things together and putting them together, how do you do that?

MS. ZEIGER: A basic cookbook.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: So you're still selling that today. When did you first write and publish that?

MR. O'CONNOR: Nineteen seventy-seven.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, my gosh. And you said it's self-published.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: So you -

MR. O'CONNOR: So I go to a printer.

MS. ZEIGER: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: Now, I've sent these things off to big printers, publishers; I got rejected. I said, I've got a good idea; I'm going to do it myself.

MS. ZEIGER: So you self-publish.

MR. O'CONNOR: I self-publish.

MS. ZEIGER: How many have you sold?

MR. O'CONNOR: Forty-five thousand.

MS. ZEIGER: Of that book.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: And how do you advertise that? How do people know about it?

MR. O'CONNOR: Okay, the first time we did it is that we took ads out in metalsmithing hobby magazines for a couple of years and sold them direct. And then it gets to the point where big distributors of tools will start ordering. And today, that's all I sell to.

MS. ZEIGER: Distributors, and they resell.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, yeah. And so *The Jeweler's Bench Reference*; then I had one, *Procedures and Formulas for Metalsmiths* [Crested Butte, CO: Dunconor Books, 1976]. That was a one-time publication. And that evolved into *The Jeweler's Bench Reference*. Then there was another one called *Creative Jewelry Techniques* [Crested Butte, CO: Dunconor Books, 1978]. That was in 1978, and that was a bit of an ego book.

MS. ZEIGER: About design?

MR. O'CONNOR: No, techniques, again.

MS. ZEIGER: Techniques.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, *New Directions in Goldsmithing* [Crested Butte, CO: Dunconor Books, 1975], that was another very small book on just a few little techniques.

MS. ZEIGER: All of these are self-published?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, and if they don't move, then I don't do them again.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: I mean - and then I wrote a book on the flexible shaft machine, which is a thing like a dentist tool, in 1983 [*Flexible Shaft Machine Jewelry Techniques*. Crested Butte, CO: Dunconor Books, 1983]. And that was on all kinds of uses for this tool, because it's the most used tool that we have as jewelers - motorized.

MS. ZEIGER: So that one sells well for you, too, still?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, mm-hmm.

MS. ZEIGER: And it's still self-published?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yep.

MS. ZEIGER: So you being an author or publisher is a cornerstone of your own business or your own support, right?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. I basically have three things. I have my own work, I have my books, and I have my workshops. Now today, I could live off my jewelry, because what I'm seeing with the books is they're slacking. I don't know why, but there's a lot of competition out there in the last 10 years. But it's still steady. This year's my busiest year for workshops that I've had in a long time, to the point where I have to say no.

MS. ZEIGER: What accounts for your jewelry becoming the best-seller, your biggest support in your art making?

MR. O'CONNOR: Maybe I have good galleries. You know, when people ask me, they say, what's the best gallery to be in? I say, the one that's selling for you. I don't care what name it is. I don't care where it is. You can have a big-name gallery not doing anything. So you know, I'm amazed at what comes out of Taos. It's a great little place. I tell people, too, about business. Take the help to lunch. They are more important than the owner, because if they don't like you, they're not going to push your work.

And I had a story recently. This woman in the gallery, she says, we had a great month. See this guy's work over here in the corner of the display case? He did \$300. We did mucho. Why? Because he's nasty to the help.

MS. ZEIGER: Pushed it in the corner.

MR. O'CONNOR: So there it is. So always be nice to the help.

MS. ZEIGER: That's very good business advice.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Absolutely.

MR. O'CONNOR: And I have another thing; it's that I never make what I can't repair.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Because my rings are so different, and the shanks that I have a hard time repairing myself. And you know, when we talked about technique and machines, there's a machine that came out several years ago in my field. It's a laser welder, and it's hugely expensive. But I got a friend up on the highway here, and I take stuff up to him, and he's helped me out. The thing is that you can weld metal next to paper and not burn it. I mean, that's the beauty of this machine.

MS. ZEIGER: Right, sure.

MR. O'CONNOR: So I had a ring recently that I had made 10 years ago, and the person wanted it made bigger. And there's no way I could - I mean, I could have taken it apart, but it would have been too much work.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Take it up to him, it's done. So you know, there's advances in my field, but there's no way I'm going to spend the funds to get this when I got friends I can -

MS. ZEIGER: Pay to help you?

MR. O'CONNOR: - pay to help me.

MS. ZEIGER: Absolutely.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yes.

MS. ZEIGER: Sure. So let's talk - you were talking about paying the help, and that's really important for your career. But when you think about how you've developed as an artist and an art maker, were you ever a member of a community, an artist's community or a group of people who were part of your support network, maybe influenced your development? Or have you always worked alone?

MR. O'CONNOR: I've always been alone.

MS. ZEIGER: So you're not a community-oriented sort of an art maker, except for maybe going to the local pub. We were talking about that when you were in Crested Butte.

MR. O'CONNOR: You know, I would be, and that happens in Europe a lot.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Like you'll see a group of three or five jewelers together, and they go and they have shows together.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: Very seldom happens here.

MS. ZEIGER: Why is that?

MR. O'CONNOR: It's always the American individual -

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: - like how many co-op workshops do we have in this country?

MS. ZEIGER: Right, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: You go outside this country, and they're all over the place.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Like there'll be five, eight, 10 jewelers get together, and they pool. Why should I buy 10 rolling mills? Why should we spend all this money when a number of us could be using the same thing?

MS. ZEIGER: Especially this is an expensive business -

MR. O'CONNOR: It is.

MS. ZEIGER: - to be in -

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: - to set yourself up.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah, I think so, too.

MR. O'CONNOR: It is today.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah. You touched on this briefly when we were talking about people who influenced you. But when you think back on your career and also on the work you make all the way through, what have been the most important influences for you? I mean, it might have been a person. But could it have been an art trend or a technique, materials? What is it that made your work your work, or makes your work your work?

MR. O'CONNOR: I think it's the textural surfaces. When I look back at work I've done, for 40 years or 35 years now, I've been using textures through a rolling mill, through embossing metal. When I look back, I say - you know, because I teach this - I say, geez, I've been doing this from the beginning, these textured surface, not shiny. After Denmark, I got away from the shiny thing.

Influences - the turning point for me was a summer school in Austria, in Salzburg, at an international academy of fine arts course. It was a month long. And I tell people I made two terrible pieces, so I was very unproductive. But after that, I looked at my work entirely different. I looked at it more as art than jewelry.

MS. ZEIGER: What was it about that course that did that?

MR. O'CONNOR: Because the people were working with ideas instead of, well, let's just do a technique. Let's just make things. People, you know - the thing in Europe is they look at us as we're makers of things, not ideas. The difference between classes here - summer classes - mostly the summer classes here are technique oriented, because the people taking them don't have the techniques. Now, most of the people, going over 50 percent to more people in Europe, people taking the summer classes, have the training, so they know how to handle the tools and what they're doing, so the classes are on ideas.

MS. ZEIGER: How do you teach ideas?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, my way to get ideas to teach people was you can't put it in a brochure, because nobody will sign up. [Laughs.] What you do is along with the class you're doing for two weeks; as soon as they're there, they're not going home. And I tell people they're not going home. These people have come for a class. Then you can tell them what and tell them to go out, take your camera, go out, go down the alley, take some pictures of parts of buildings and stuff and things. Come back or get it developed overnight, and then we would glue it down to foamcore, and you'd have a little paper pin. And then you'd look at that, and then you'd transpose that into metal, so there's an idea. But you can't advertise it, because they won't sign up. People would say to me after a two-week course, you know what you ought to do? You ought to run a class on design. I said, I've tried it; nobody signed up. [Laughs.] So that's how you teach design, unless you're in a structured school classes.

MS. ZEIGER: When you went to the workshop in Austria, when was that? I mean, where did it fit in with -

MR. O'CONNOR: Nineteen seventy-two.

MS. ZEIGER: So it was after you had come back -

MR. O'CONNOR: Early on.

MS. ZEIGER: - to the States.

MR. O'CONNOR: It was when I was in Canada.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, when you were already in Canada. So when you went into that workshop, and you sat down in a class the first time, what was the idea that was thrown at you? What was the approach that happened there?

MR. O'CONNOR: There wasn't any.

MS. ZEIGER: There wasn't one?

MR. O'CONNOR: I didn't see the instructor, professor, for 10 days or at least a week.

MS. ZEIGER: So what did you do?

MR. O'CONNOR: There were 22 people -

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: - and they were all working on different stuff, things. You know, and it's interesting, too. I was going through slides the other day. And I looked at this, and I said this professor, this class is the only one I have not been influenced by this man's work.

MS. ZEIGER: And yet it changed your career.

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] Right. I mean, what he did was interesting work. But again, it was shiny things. It was multi-layers, very thin metal and things. And I saw, you know, but I didn't - I loved it, but I never made anything like it. But that course changed my life.

MS. ZEIGER: That's fascinating.

MR. O'CONNOR: And the other unique thing about the jewelry class was in the bell tower of the castle. It's a castle above the city.

MS. ZEIGER: Right. And you were even up above that.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Fabulous.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. And it was just like one day, a guy showing me his jewelry that he looked out a window at the rooftops, and then he made several pieces of jewelry inspired from a - it's being able - and I say about my work is that I can look at anything and make something out of it. And it will inspire me, anything I'm looking at, my travels, nature, whatever. That image gets transposed into a piece of metal combined with other material.

MS. ZEIGER: A visual, tactile expression.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, right.

MS. ZEIGER: I want to talk some more about your writing career now for a minute, because you write, you've written, a lot of articles, as well as your books.

MR. O'CONNOR: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. ZEIGER: How important is it for you to have someone write about your work and publish it in craft-specific publications? Does that further your work? Do you need that? Or is it more important for you to publish it, you to be the writer of it?

MR. O'CONNOR: No, I'd like other people to do it.

MS. ZEIGER: You do.

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] I don't want to write it anymore.

MS. ZEIGER: Why not? Well, anymore, but think about it -

MR. O'CONNOR: I did it one time.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: I think it's a thing is that I can say I'm not hermit, basically. I may live in a little town that's quiet, but I'm not that type of person. I like to go out to a café. I like to talk to people. That's why I like Europe. I tell people, when I want stimulation, I go to a city. I go to see what's going on, and then I come back to a quiet place. But I'm not, as a lot of people I know or meet, especially painters. Painters are contemplating - a best friend from the University of New Mexico who has the first ring I ever made, and he's just that very solitary, very private person. But I'm not like that. And I tell people, when I get out of where I live, I'm an entirely different person. As soon as I hit the town line. [Laughs.] Because when I go and teach, people say, oh, God, you're so -

MS. ZEIGER: Outgoing.

MR. O'CONNOR: - outgoing and inspiring. [Laughs.] And I can remember a lecture I gave up in Seattle once. And this guy said, "I haven't done any work in 10 years. After seeing your thing tonight, I'm going to go to work now, and I am so inspired!" And I said, geez, I'd like to go to that guy's lecture. I'd like to go to mine. [Laughs.]

MS. ZEIGER: So how about these specialized publications? And I am thinking about, like, *Metalsmith* -

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: - or I suppose people write about you in *Ornament* and other magazines of this kind.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Is being recognized and written about in those publications important to you and your work?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. I mean, it's ego. I mean, of course, you like to be recognized by your peers and that you're doing something of value.

MS. ZEIGER: Right. Who do you think is the best interpreter or writer about your work? Another artist, or someone who is not, in fact, a worker in that field, a craftsperson herself or himself?

MR. O'CONNOR: I think over the years, the best article I ever had was written by a friend of mine in Taos, in *Lapidary Journal* [November 1996, Larry Audette].

MS. ZEIGER: Because the person knew you?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, yeah. And he's a musician. Yeah, another person's a poet and a writer who wrote a good introduction to a catalogue once.

MS. ZEIGER: So it's not so much understanding the technique -

MR. O'CONNOR: First it was going to be free, and then I published it, and then he decided he wants some money for it; it's good. [Laughs.] So I said okay, you know.

MS. ZEIGER: So it's not so much that someone writing about you and your work is firsthand knowledgeable about techniques so much as that they understand how you make things and why?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, yeah. It's not the technique, even though - you know, I say to people in my workshops, I have never invented anything new. I've just made things a little easier to do, more efficient.

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: Because again, you work alone.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: And that's been an influence on not only my work; it's my work habits. I used to just flog myself, like because I work for myself, you're not worthy, so you've got to work 10 hours a day. I used to spend - I can remember in the '80s I would go down to the studio, and I would just be torturing myself all day long, and nothing's coming; nothing's coming out. Now I may work two or three hours at a time, and I get up, and I leave, and I come back. But I'll tell you, what I get done in those two or three hours is more than I got done in six or seven hours before. You know why I've done so much in my life, too? I could never please my parents. It's the guilt. [Laughs.] And another thing, too, is I have more fun now in the last years when I gave up perfectionism. It's a thing you can never achieve. I started enjoying what I do and say, hey, I can't make this stuff. You know, there's always going to be somebody better than you. Technically, I know dozens of them. Technically, they're great. Imagination, they don't know what it is.

MS. ZEIGER: Because yours are works of imagination -

MR. O'CONNOR: Mine I have fun doing. You know what's nice to hear? Is when you go to a show - you were talking about exhibitions and stuff -

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: - you go to a show, and people say, you know, you really enjoy what you do. And I say, you're right.

MS. ZEIGER: It comes through your work.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: So tell me, you've touched on this, but give me maybe a little better map of it. Compare your early work to what you're doing today. Are there similarities in that early work to what you do today? Or are they completely different?

MR. O'CONNOR: I think because I've worked on themes, I can say that there's - now, what I did from 1976 to '78 - now, okay, I'll back-step just a little bit to 1975 when I came back from Canada to the U.S. Now, I came back to Crested Butte, because I didn't know any other place. I came back to something familiar.

MS. ZEIGER: Sure.

MR. O'CONNOR: The flip side of that is you can't go home. I went back; it had changed, I had changed, and I never met up again.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: But I spent three years. My first thing back in Crested Butte was I went up into the mountains. I looked at some old bones discarded in the woods, and I designed a series of work that was a little miniature relief. I call them miniature wall reliefs, and they are about this big. They're about half an inch to three-quarters of an inch. They were framed - eight-by-10 [inch] frames. I made 64 in that series in two and a half months.

MS. ZEIGER: And were they casts?

MR. O'CONNOR: They were all fabricated.

MS. ZEIGER: Fabricated.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: And made of what metals?

MR. O'CONNOR: Copper, silver, and gold - teeny, teeny pieces. In fact, I only have two left.

MS. ZEIGER: You showed me.

MR. O'CONNOR: Anyway, the thing was, I went out and designed the piece, then I transferred the sketches. I work on millimeter graph paper, so I get it the exact size of what I'm going to make. The thing is, if you're constructing pieces, it's like I tell people, either they're building a shack, or they're building a house. If you're building a shack, you don't have to draw anything. You just hammer stuff and put it together. If you're building a house, you have to draw it out. So I drew them out, and then I made little, teeny templates out of exposed X-ray film, like a template, for drawing for all the parts. And then I sat down after that, and I scratched out all the parts and then made the pieces. It was like production, but they were all one-of-a-kind. And it went bing, bing, bing, bing.

The next series I did was old mining equipment, tools. And the inspiration for that was, first of all, it was the old miners in Crested Butte; they were characters.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: And both gold, silver - and coal mines; they had big coal mines there. So I went up to the mine site, and one particular guy that I met there had a mine, and he would come every summer and work. His goal was to go in vertically - horizontally?

MS. ZEIGER: Horizontally.

MR. O'CONNOR: - horizontally to the main shaft and drain the water out of this mine so he could walk through it. Now, this was a 20-year project for him, and he was 76. And he did this every summer. So I would use the

camera. I'd go out and take pictures of these huge machines and then transpose them into pins that were an inch by an inch and a half, the exact size of a 35-millimeter negative or slide. So these huge things became these little miniature machines.

Now, when I show people overall my work, they go to this and say, oh, yeah, this is really neat. Well, it's because it's mechanical.

MS. ZEIGER: And representational?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. You don't have to think.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: People don't want to think, either. So that was - and I think it's the technical stuff, the machinery, the technical, the parts, even though they're all hand-done. So I hate to think, God, in 40 years, that's the best thing I did, was 1976. I mean, I look at it as a certain thing I did.

MS. ZEIGER: What's more recent work like? How does it differ from that?

MR. O'CONNOR: In the last 10 years or more, I've been interested in Japanese gardens. And when I lived in Denver, I lived half a block from the Japanese botanical gardens. So I used to go to the Japanese gardens a lot. I think there's something about the serenity. I can't explain it. And why, being an Irishman, why would I be interested in the Orient? But I'm not interested in the rope work of the Irish Vikings, not at all.

MS. ZEIGER: The interlace patterns.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, maybe because I'm less interested in repetitive things than one of a kind. I think it goes back to being university-educated. I say to people that are doing craft work, doing repetitive things, doing inexpensive things, this and that, I say, why would you spend so many years going to a university and so much money invested in your education to go out and do factory work? It doesn't make sense to me.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: So it comes back, again, to the one of a kind, the balance, maybe the balance of the Japanese gardens, maybe -

MS. ZEIGER: The certain imperfection of them, too, always.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: That's a part of it, is the flaw in it.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right, right. I don't know why, but I've been pretty content with that for a number of years, then I wanted to get off it. I wanted to go on to something else. But that's been a real struggle. The work in the last year has been inspired from beach pebbles from New Zealand.

MS. ZEIGER: What about them inspires you?

MR. O'CONNOR: That - [laughs] - I just - well, the different kinds of pebbles. And I thought at the time, because I've been there four times, and I thought that I could really be inspired by the nature and the things. But something has not worked. The work works -

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: - because I inlay gold beads and granulation. Granulation is a very old technique. It's been 4,000 years with us of putting little gold beads on the metal surface, very ancient. So I combine that into the modern. So that's my latest. And I just finished a necklace which I say is the end of this series. I mean, I usually like to sit down, design a piece, and work on it and finish it. This took two months, not every day, but I say, that's the finale of -

MS. ZEIGER: Done with that one.

MR. O'CONNOR: Done with this series, and I will get on to something else, which will most likely be architectural element things.

MS. ZEIGER: I see.

MR. O'CONNOR: I'm going to - Frank Gehry, interested in his work. The other thing is that my influences have

been from sculptors -

MS. ZEIGER: Interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: - not jewelers. My work is 3-D. I admire people who can do 2-D work, but I've never had enough of the drawing classes. I've never had enough of the two-dimensional work in my life to be influenced enough that way. So it's always been three dimension. I think in three dimension, some people think in two.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: I've never made work like David Smith, the sculptor; however, I can relate to his life more than any other sculptor.

MS. ZEIGER: Why is that, do you think?

MR. O'CONNOR: Just by reading his papers, reading his writing, reading the thoughts that he has that he's talked to university students about. And the other sculptor that I admire is [Eduardo] Chillida in Spain.

MS. ZEIGER: I don't know him. What kind of work is that?

MR. O'CONNOR: Huge - he lived in San Sebastian, Spain, and he had access to huge shipyards. So his work is like steel. It's 18 inches thick, cut into semi-geometrical things. But the work goes for like four inches up. He just died recently, but he's one of my favorites. [Aldo] Calò, of course, [Constantin] Brancusi, [Isamu] Noguchi, very inspired by his work.

MS. ZEIGER: Organic shapes.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. The organic shapes.

MS. ZEIGER: Absolutely, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: So, very much the sculpture.

MS. ZEIGER: Do you do work on commission?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: Never? So you've never done any commission work?

MR. O'CONNOR: No, I have. I don't like to.

MS. ZEIGER: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: I had one a year ago, commission from hell.

MS. ZEIGER: How come? I mean, is it -

MR. O'CONNOR: First of all, if you're doing your own work, you've got your head set in a certain direction.

MS. ZEIGER: Sure.

MR. O'CONNOR: To do a commission, you have to jump out of it; you have to please not only yourself, but you have to please somebody else at the same time. And it was the first commission I had done in years. And when I got done with it, it was too hard, because you're taking a lot longer than your own work. And I thought back after finishing this of all the things I could have made in the same time, and I would have enjoyed it more. So no commissions.

Now, I won't say no ever, forever. I would say if somebody says to me, make something, then fine. But when they put the stipulations on it -

MS. ZEIGER: It has to be this, this, and this.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: No, then that's too much for me. Other people just love doing commissions, and that's all they do. I've got a friend who's spent his whole life - he's a jeweler, 30 years - doing commissions. I bet he hasn't

made five pieces for himself. So when he gets done with his life, what's he got? He made a lot of money, but he didn't do things for himself. I have friends in Europe who every year say, it's very important for an artist to do things - and they do commission; that's all they do is they do repair and commission - but every year they do things for themselves. And they say, it is so important to do things for your own soul. I just finished, before the necklace, a couple of rings. And it was the funnest thing that I've done in a couple of years.

MS. ZEIGER: Why?

MR. O'CONNOR: They were just so different. And who's going to buy it?

MS. ZEIGER: You don't care.

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: It doesn't matter, yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Somebody will. They'll turn around, and bingo!

MS. ZEIGER: What are they? I mean, can you give me a description of them?

MR. O'CONNOR: It's a semi-geometric shape on top of a semi-square band.

MS. ZEIGER: Interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, but they're organic, again. It's stone set in this - it looks like a wedge shape. And then it has granulation on top and set like the granules are rolling off the ring. Just a fun piece, fun.

MS. ZEIGER: How long does it take you to make a piece like that, just time-wise estimated? You're making about three cents an hour?

MR. O'CONNOR: No, I'm not.

MS. ZEIGER: So you're more efficient than that. You can make them more quickly.

MR. O'CONNOR: I'm not a starving artist.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah, good. I'm just wondering -

MR. O'CONNOR: I'm an efficient artist.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah. I'm just wondering, does this take you days -

MR. O'CONNOR: It's 45 years plus the time it takes me to make it.

MS. ZEIGER: A great answer. Let's take a break for a while -

MR. O'CONNOR: Okay.

MS. ZEIGER: - get a little bit of air here.

[END OF MD 02.]

MS. ZEIGER: This is Dinah Zeiger interviewing Harold O'Connor at his home and studio in Salida, Colorado, on October 11, 2007, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number three.

So we were previously talking about, sort of, the career aspect of your work. And we've kind of talked about your work off and on, but I'd like to spend more time talking about the work itself. Tell me about your work environment, as a starting place. What do you have to have as a place to do your work?

MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. Can I backtrack just a little?

MS. ZEIGER: Sure. Absolutely.

MR. O'CONNOR: You know, when we were talking about galleries?

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: I have a gallery in Atlanta, and this woman has 40-some pieces of my own - for her -

MS. ZEIGER: Herself?

MR. O'CONNOR: - that she bought. That's more than a collector. And she is also archiving my work over the years.

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] What's her name?

MR. O'CONNOR: Her name is Martha Connell.

MS. ZEIGER: Canal?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: As in, C-A-N-A-L?

MR. O'CONNOR: No, it's - Connell, C-O-N-N-E-L-L.

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. It's the Connell Gallery in Atlanta. Now she says there are two kinds of galleries. There's one that's a gallery, an art gallery - art and craft gallery; and then there's a shop - a gallery shop, craft shop.

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: Two different places.

MS. ZEIGER: Sure.

MR. O'CONNOR: So the gallery does more for you. A shop just sells your work. The gallery places your work in museums and collections. That's another purpose of the gallery. So anyway, I just wanted to mention her because she's been very, very influential in my development as an artist - and progress, and placement.

MS. ZEIGER: How so? I mean, why? Because she could -

MR. O'CONNOR: I was - I just happened to be in a juried - or, yeah, I was in a juried show in her gallery - juried by somebody else. She didn't know who the hell I was - in 1964, I mean 1994; and then loved my work; and then, from then on, has supported me and just - great, almost like family.

MS. ZEIGER: Influential in being able to get your work to other people?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yes. In fact, she was the first one to get my work into the Smithsonian [American Art Museum, Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C.].

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: And then supportive of teaching, and whatever - I mean, the exhibitions, and your work.

Okay, work environment. It has to be a quiet place. There has to be light. I don't believe in people working in closets. And that seems to be a real typical thing of my field - of jewelers. Secretive. See, we're in a secretive - jewelry is secretive. Always has been - goldsmithing. And it becomes - it's a characteristic of the field. Because, again, as I said before, if I tell you how to do something once, it's - metal is not forgiving, so you can do - if you do it right, it happens the rest of your life. That's why people - [in a comical voice] they don't show you what they're doing. And then there's another thing, is that when people come to your studio, they pick things up. We're "picky." We're always picking - and I do the same thing.

MS. ZEIGER: Touch, touch, touch.

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] Work environment. As you see, I have everything I need around me. I don't go - I don't waste time having tools all over the place. So when I sit down basically to work, everything's within arm's reach. And that's important to me.

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: Again, working alone, you have to be efficient.

MS. ZIEGLER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: You can't have things strewn all over the place where you can't - I know people - they spend

half their time looking for stuff. I can't afford to do that. So that's the important thing in a work space. And people not to be - I guess that's why I don't have a shop open to the public. My friends that have shops have hardly any time to work. In fact, if they want to work, they have to come in at night; they have to - they have to work on a day off, to do their own work; or, they come in an hour or two early before the shop opens just so they can have some time alone to do their work.

They're always up and down, up and down, up and down. So that's - that's the basic thing. And I can work in - you know, people that don't know about jewelry say, [in a comical voice] "Aw, you don't need - all you need is a little desk; you don't need any room." Well, you do need room. But I'd say this - this is 12 by 22 feet. That's a really good space. I could work in half the space and would still be comfortable.

MS. ZEIGER: Well, you have some fairly large tools that require electricity, and -

MR. O'CONNOR: Right. I do need - I do need electricity; that's one of the things I need. I do have a machine that operates - it will; it's battery operated. I can operate it by battery, and it's got a solar charger if I wanted to go solar.

MS. ZEIGER: Be self-sufficient?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: So there's things I can do. Not, you know, the gas, I definitely - you know, I would need that; I couldn't be totally - I'd still have to buy gas, but. -

MS. ZEIGER: Do you worry - you know, you were talking about jewelers, goldsmiths working in small spaces, and rather secretly - do you attribute some of that, perhaps, to the nature of the material that we - you know, you work in a precious metal, and often with very expensive stones - that there's some aspect of that -

MR. O'CONNOR: Sure.

MS. ZEIGER: - protection, or security involved in it?

MR. O'CONNOR: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. ZEIGER: Do you worry about that here in your own shop?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: You don't? Because you don't keep things in your shop.

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah, okay.

So earlier you were talking about sources of inspiration, and that you've got a multitude of sources of inspiration. Have they changed a great deal over your working life? Or where do they - where have they been coming from? You've told me some of them. I mean, some of them I think are fascinating.

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, some was on the human anatomy; then there was the plastics; then there was the mining equipment; then there was the bones found in the woods; architectural elements from trips; Japanese gardens. So yeah, every few years I will change into something - a different - I think, if you saw an overview of my work, that you would probably - you know, people, when I give a lecture, illustrated lecture, of my life's work, they'll say there is a common thread there - by how they see the pieces made.

But I could show you pieces, probably, if you weren't aware of my work, that you wouldn't think - if you looked at my work now, and looked at my work 20 years ago, or 30, you would not be able to tell it was the same person.

MS. ZEIGER: What changed in it?

MR. O'CONNOR: Just the influence of the ideas. And the techniques, the different techniques involved in making the pieces - whether they're constructed, or cast, or the different stones. And I started out using precious stones, but I don't - my favorite stone is called "spectrolite," from Finland. In this country it's called labradorite because it was discovered in Labrador, Canada, and it's - it looks like an opal - the colors. And then the second-best comes from Madagascar, and that's what we usually see in gem and mineral shops, -

MS. ZEIGER: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: - the work - the stone from Madagascar, because it's probably more plentiful. The darkest, or the most intense colors, come from one spot in Finland. And that's been my favorite stone for years, and I think it's because of the different colors; it comes in every color of the rainbow.

MS. ZEIGER: Is it easy to work?

MR. O'CONNOR: It's not.

MS. ZEIGER: It's not.

MR. O'CONNOR: It's brittle. It's hard, but it's brittle. And it cracks on - and it's hard to photograph -

MS. ZEIGER: How come?

MR. O'CONNOR: - because you have to align it on a certain angle. And so you could have the stone in a piece of jewelry, and it's black. But if the light shines at a different angle, then it's all colors of the rainbow. It just goes, "Whaaah" [makes excited, sweeping noise].

MS. ZEIGER: Interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: So that makes it very hard to photograph, with the rest of the piece.

MS. ZEIGER: I would think that perhaps technologies, and advances in new technologies, have also played a part in shaping how you do your work, and what it looks like. I mean, you were talking about the plastic earlier, but there must be other technologies that have come into the arsenal of tools?

MR. O'CONNOR: There are, but I don't have them.

MS. ZEIGER: You don't use them? Well, but you talked about the laser.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, the laser, and then there's another machine that's a lot - it's more inexpensive than the laser.

MS. ZEIGER: But see, you're still relying -

MR. O'CONNOR: I'm still using basic -

MS. ZEIGER: - on the same technological tools that you started with. That's hand tools.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right. Yeah. And I actually use a torch - that I put the air in it with my mouth. It was a standard European torch with propane gas and air. And I use propane, and oxygen - I mean, regular things that are used by everybody else - for certain jobs. And then for melting metal I use acetylene; so that's another hot gas.

But my basic construction that I do - and why do I use it? Because I'm familiar with it, that's all. I just tell people - it's like when I teach, I say, don't go buy a torch like me, or this other thing that I sell, if what you're using is fine. There's no sense in going to buy something else.

MS. ZEIGER: For you it's -

MR. O'CONNOR: But, for me -

MS. ZEIGER: - knowledge of the tool, and absolute familiarity with the technique so that you can be efficient with it. And it lets you then be more - what? - expressive of yourself.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right.

MS. ZEIGER: Because you're not worrying about the tool?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: I mean, here's the thing, too, by - the saying, "amateurs buy tools, professionals buy metal."

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] Have sources of metals changed over the years?

MR. O'CONNOR: Not for me.

MS. ZEIGER: No?

MR. O'CONNOR: No. And the more you work, the more you're in the field, you don't have lots of catalogues and stuff. You deal with maybe three people - three or four.

MS. ZEIGER: And you said you use primarily copper, silver, and gold?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, now I use silver and gold - combination.

MS. ZEIGER: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Not all gold. There isn't any reason for me to use all gold now. One, the expense of it; one, the imagery that I do, I like colored metals, so I want to have the combination of the silver and the gold.

MS. ZEIGER: Has your actual process in working changed a great deal over time?

MR. O'CONNOR: Efficiency. That's it. And I also - like, I'm trained as an old - classic goldsmithing. I take my pure metal, and I make karat - color and karat - of what I want. So I'm able to do everything.

MS. ZEIGER: And you begin with a design on paper?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yes.

MS. ZEIGER: So your process starts on paper, before you ever start working with the material itself?

MR. O'CONNOR: Right. But, recently, I don't draw as much as I used to.

MS. ZEIGER: How come?

MR. O'CONNOR: I don't know.

MS. ZEIGER: Is it because your shapes are more organic, perhaps?

MR. O'CONNOR: Maybe I'm just doing more of the same things.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: I do things intuitively. There's been some - there was one show I wanted to do, intuitively. Like, you don't - you're not drawing.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Also, with experience, when I sit down now to work, I am consciously aware of what I'm doing, which I didn't before. And that's just something I've noticed in the last few years. I'm actually aware of things, processes, of which, for 30 years, I didn't. I never thought of these things.

MS. ZEIGER: They were mechanical?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. And now I'm thinking about - I'll be making something and I'll say, "Whoa, this is why I'm doing this," or something. It's something that I never thought of before because it was just pure mechanics. It was rote. I say, you have to go by the rules in order to break them.

It's like when you teach people in classes, and they take so many workshops - they're workshop junkies. They take a workshop from one guy here, and the next month, "Oh, I'm taking a workshop from this guy"; and then "Well, he told me to do it that way," "Well, she told me to do it that way." And I'd say, well, you do it this way, this week, with me. And then you sort out what you don't want.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: But you've got to learn the rules first, and then you can go and break them - because they see the way I work; I don't work the way people write about.

MS. ZEIGER: Meaning?

MR. O'CONNOR: In books. I had different methods. They just, you know, people watch - when people see me work, they just -

MS. ZEIGER: Is that a product of the discipline that you learned in your European training?

MR. O'CONNOR: It's the discipline, plus all the things you did in the 40 years since.

MS. ZEIGER: So the experience, coupled with the discipline, gives you a certain technical ability, a technique?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, it's a way to put things together -

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah, absolutely.

MR. O'CONNOR: - that I'm using methods that are developed out of need. And, yeah, I'm doing them because it works. And I'd say, okay, you want to get good? Charge yourself \$50 to \$100 an hour. Let's see how fast you get. See how much you improve. Because if you're paying the plumber that much, you're paying the guy that fixes the car, why aren't we getting it?

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: You know, I used to - back to business, I used to go to galleries, and I'd say, "How does that person get so much for that piece?" Because he's got guts. That's all it is. It's because I know how long it takes to make that piece, and I know how many pieces that guy can make a year - or she. They can charge that much because they say that they're worth that much.

MS. ZEIGER: Absolutely.

MR. O'CONNOR: Another good thing about a gallery: They'll help you with your pricing. Now if you go in that gallery - and this is people I work with, too, I say, well, help me out on it. "Oh, I don't know anything about it." What do you mean you don't know anything about it; you've been in that business for 20 years, and you're telling me you don't know how to price my work - or somebody's work? Come on.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs.]

MS. ZEIGER: That's what they should be doing. Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. They should be helping the artist along the line. Well, you set the price - it's like a supermarket.

And gallerists, they don't want you to change work. They don't want you to grow. They're familiar with what they're selling. "Oh, you want to change?" - I've had gallerists say, "Oh, you want to do something different?" "You don't want to make that stuff you did 15 years ago?" "We know it'd sell."

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] Yeah, these are good - these are coming from art galleries - art galleries. [Laughs.] "You want to change?" [Laughs.] "You want to grow?" No. [Laughs.]

MS. ZEIGER: It's a tough business, isn't it?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: It's tough for the artist to be in that business.

MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, another thing. Don't get in art if you don't like rejection.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah. [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] Because it is - it's the toughest field. You've got to take the "nos." And you've got to - you've got to have a lot of faith in yourself. It's like, if I'd have stopped with that first book of mine - and taken those rejections from those big companies, and quit, I wouldn't have sold 45,000.

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Absolutely.

MR. O'CONNOR: So you've got to say to yourself, I got a good thing here, and somebody's going to say yes.

MS. ZEIGER: Well, you made them say yes, because you published it.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right. And then, the thing is, when people ask me to do another, I wouldn't do it with a big

company -

MS. ZEIGER: Now?

MR. O'CONNOR: - because you only get 10 percent.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: And why should I? I've got all that behind me. I know what the market is. I've got that market already built up. So there it is.

MS. ZEIGER: You already know what that is.

I want to go back and talk about the work again. Just a minute ago we were touching on influences of the work, and ideas - where your inspirations come from. Do you think that any of your work, or do you see any of your work as something that is socially or politically oriented? Are you making any commentary like that with the work you do?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: Why not? I mean, it's just not where you go? Does it then have a spiritual or religious -

MR. O'CONNOR: I can't afford it.

MS. ZEIGER: - aspect to it?

MR. O'CONNOR: I'll tell you, probably the only thing that was ever political was the mining work. Now I didn't get a write-up in the *Denver Post*. I had a beautiful show, and a woman came in and reviewed the show, and when I told her it wasn't political, she didn't write it.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: She said, "Is this a statement on mining?" - negative statement. [Laughs.] Why would I spend all the time making this, for three years - I don't know. I have another saying: "You've got to be paid to play." And I wasn't being paid to play. So that's the only thing I've ever, in my whole life - I'm not political - I'm not political until a couple, or three years ago - never thought about politics in my life, but certainly not in my artwork, no. I'm not interested.

MS. ZEIGER: The art is not expressive of that kind of a trajectory?

MR. O'CONNOR: No. People say - people say, as you said, spiritual - people look at my work and they say, "Yes, it's spirit - there's spiritual things there." Well, okay, whatever you see. Maybe there is.

MS. ZEIGER: But it's not deliberate by you to be manufacturing that into the thing you're making?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: But there is an element of playfulness in it.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Play is important, isn't it?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Right.

MS. ZEIGER: I mean, you were talking about - in one of the early series that you did that had the articulated spines and things, and it seems to me that there's an element of play in that.

MR. O'CONNOR: No, I did a - I did a whole series on puns.

MS. ZEIGER: On puns?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, puns on time. Nineteen eighty-two, my father was dying. I got a call from Florida. I was sitting at the workbench - I was working that day, and I wrote down, "Time is running out." His time was running out. I never made the piece - drew it, but I never made it. That phone call started a whole new series of work on how society thinks of time. So I did a whole series - with names like *Serving Time*; first you think of -

MS. ZEIGER: Jail.

MR. O'CONNOR: - behind bars. But this was a dinner - that was that ring you told me about - a place setting.

MS. ZEIGER: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: Okay. And then I redid that same piece 10 years, later because they wanted that series for a traveling exhibition. So I redid that into a Japanese dinner -

MS. ZEIGER: Interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: - kind of, chop sticks, and rice, and whatever.

Then there was *Geologic Time*, layers of different colored metals - and it was inspired from an oxbow in the river in Utah, in the Animus River - a fly fisherman sundial. It had little fishing flies - little flies around.

MS. ZEIGER: So in this - in this series, because you make jewelry, were they rings, or pendants, or pins, or watches?

MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, there were - they were watches that don't work - watches, timeless watches.

MS. ZEIGER: So they were meant to be worn, right?

MR. O'CONNOR: They're all worn.

MS. ZEIGER: Time running out?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yep. And there was a *Neighborhood Watch* - inspired from a sign on a street. And you open it up and there are two houses and people looking out at each other.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] Those are playful.

MR. O'CONNOR: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. ZEIGER: They're wonderful.

MR. O'CONNOR: And *Pocket Watch* was a pocket, not a watch.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: *Retired Watch* was just stones and watch parts - what they give you when you retire -

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: - *Retired Watch*.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: *Grandfather's Watch*, grandfather sitting in a chair. So those were funny.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah. That seems to be a kind of a theme that does run through a lot of your work, isn't it - that element of play in it? But you said you like toys.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Do you ever make toys?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: Toys have not been a part of what you make.

MR. O'CONNOR: No. I have a friend who makes toys - little toys.

MS. ZEIGER: At that little, tiny scale - right.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay. Tell me about your sense of the importance of metal as an expressive form. It's not particularly common, is it? I mean, when we think about expression, oftentimes, I think for many people it would be painting, or sculpture, or even clay, but I'm not certain that metal would necessarily rise to the top of that. And yet, it is an expressive form for you. What makes it that way?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, somebody said recently what I "do" with metal - like the current workshops I do are various ways of surface embellishment on metal, either applying metal to metal, or taking a special silver and heating it, and it becomes very organic - from the shiny, into mountains and valleys, sort of things. And somebody remarked in a workshop this year was, what you "do" with that - "Boy, I didn't know metal was that fluid, or you could just take the torch, and you could heat that and just take that stuff and move it around." I think it's just what I can do with it that's -

MS. ZEIGER: It's malleable?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. That's why I always go back to Europe for inspiration, because they're still - it's amazing. I'm always amazed at what new things that they can do with a hammer - what they can, what form they can get; or what they can, push that metal and do it - instead of casting something in wax and you don't get to know what metal can do, how they can draw it out, or things. They've got stuff today in metal - like little silk threads, like - it's the process they do, I mean, a whole new thing.

The thing about my field, too, is you can't learn it all. It's too much. You have to specialize. You have to narrow it down - like I don't do the enameling anymore; I don't do - something else; there's just so many techniques.

MS. ZEIGER: So for you, for example, is the function of a piece important - of that object important to you? Is it important in the making of it?

MR. O'CONNOR: I don't look at it that way -

MS. ZEIGER: So functionality -

MR. O'CONNOR: - only that it can't be too heavy.

MS. ZEIGER: Why not?

MR. O'CONNOR: Because you can't wear it.

MS. ZEIGER: Can't wear it, okay.

MR. O'CONNOR: It's like those earrings you were talking about.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Now, I did that recently. I had to go back and make them because they were too heavy. She said, "So, could you cut them in half?"

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: So I can have two - too heavy.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] So looking back over your career, where do you see yourself now going? Where are you moving toward now?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, some things I'd like to do, I'd like to do some bigger metal. I'm interested in - I have lots of friends that are blacksmiths; I've always been interested in iron, but I've never done any.

MS. ZEIGER: That would be interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: That's something that I could pursue a little bit. Even hammering big hollow things - like, just go and work with somebody. I got a stonemasonry outfit, even though I think it's - it has never interested me. Except a couple years ago I bought a teeny one which, again, everything fits in a foot - and, in fact, it's called The Big Foot, and to me, I can take it in a suitcase. I can go anywhere. I say, oh, boy, this will be neat to go some place, and you could rough-cut some stones.

I don't want to do the whole thing because I'm not - that's a whole field to itself, again, the metalwork to stone. Stone is a whole field; I'm not - I'm more interested in the making of things.

I'd like to get on - now the thing about the series, too, that I've worked on all my life, is that each series has presented a design problem and a technical problem. That's why I design the work first, and then I find out how to make it. And for some reason I haven't done that in the recent years.

Maybe also doing work with amber, or something, because I have connections in Poland and East Europe.

MS. ZEIGER: Amber's a little different from stone, isn't it - it's a resin -

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, that's - it's hard. It's hard to work because it's brittle - brittle and soft. I did a piece - a while back my dog died and I had her cremated, and I used part of her bones in a piece - and it was with amber, and then these bones; and then she loved to travel, but she couldn't go to Europe - so she traveled around Europe in a show for two years.

MS. ZEIGER: Great. [They laugh.]

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] Recently somebody said [laughs], "Well, what about your friends?" Then I took the box of my cat and my dog - and they're on the bookshelf - and I said, you see, these are my friends. I see them every day, nobody gives me any back-talk, and they're great, so. [They laugh.] But there's lots of things to do. And that's a technique - a design and a technique. I'm not - as I say, I'm done with the beach things - and it was good for what it did.

But, you know, the other difficult thing is that I've been at this 45 years without a break, and no sabbatical. And I look at things today that are "in" - techniques and things - and I did them 35 years ago. There's a Japanese technique that's in vogue now called "mokume-gane." And it's laminated metals of copper, silver, gold, and it's - *mokume-gane* in Japanese means "tree bark," because it - wood grain.

I looked, and the first time I did that was in 1974, when I learned it on my own. I went back to Germany for a course last year, or the year before, to see how somebody else does it. Now it was interesting seeing how somebody else does it. I don't know if I'll do that way; maybe I like my way better, but it was nice to see how - because it had been bugging me, how somebody else does it. It was very interesting.

MS. ZEIGER: You continued to go for training for yourself.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Where do you seek that out, Germany being -

MR. O'CONNOR: Seek? Europe. Mainly because there's more specialization going on, and the schools are - they're inexpensive for what the course is.

MS. ZEIGER: What about - like national crafts organizations, like the Society of North American Goldsmiths, are they important to you? Do you participate, or are you involved in their activities?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Yeah, I've given several lectures at their national meeting. I've been a distinguished member since 1974. I mean, they're very important to the field.

MS. ZEIGER: In what way, I mean -

MR. O'CONNOR: For education.

MS. ZEIGER: For education.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, for the universities and students. And it's a good source, and communication. There's a very important website now in Barcelona for jewelry, for contemporary jewelry. It has everything of what's going on in Europe, so that's very - I keep in with that.

MS. ZEIGER: Is Barcelona a center for jewelry-making in Europe?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, in Spain.

MS. ZEIGER: I didn't know that.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Very much so.

MS. ZEIGER: Metalworking?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Very good art school there, it's called Escuela Massana. They have a big department of 15 teachers, 140 jewelry students. It's all the arts.

Lot of action in Europe going on. Here it's - we don't have that, again, it comes back to that "American," "individual" - in Europe there's a lot of interaction between schools. Students will go from one school - go down from Germany to Barcelona six months; go from Barcelona and go up to Germany - and you don't get that kind of interaction here.

MS. ZEIGER: Do they still have an apprentice system there?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Would you have benefited from an apprentice system, or would that have been of value to you?

MR. O'CONNOR: I don't think so.

MS. ZEIGER: Because?

MR. O'CONNOR: Because I like the art of it.

MS. ZEIGER: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] Repetitive? - forget it. I worked in a factory once, after I got out of school; I didn't last long. That's going to be the same thing - making the same thing over and over and over and over.

MS. ZEIGER: Distinguish for me, between the apprentice system and the university system. What would you do as an apprentice?

MR. O'CONNOR: Okay, an apprentice, you may solder backs on earrings for a year - and that's all you do; you do nothing; you do one thing.

MS. ZEIGER: You don't design; you don't craft.

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: You just do this one thing.

MR. O'CONNOR: Now in the German apprenticeship system, you do, if you're working in a shop - because people have worked for my friends in years past - you will work for them, and then you will have to go to school so many months a year, or weeks; then you come back. You work again, then you have to go to another place to go to school. So there is this; you have to go and get your technique - technical training.

MS. ZEIGER: There's an interrelationship between university and the apprenticeship?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Well, it's a tech school, yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Tech - yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: So you were saying earlier that a lot of the goldsmithing - the trained goldsmiths in Germany, that work has shifted to China.

MR. O'CONNOR: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. ZEIGER: Why?

MR. O'CONNOR: Cheap. Can't compete.

MS. ZEIGER: What's - the labor is cheaper?

MR. O'CONNOR: Can't compete.

MS. ZEIGER: So what happens to those people who've been trained metalsmiths?

MR. O'CONNOR: They go and work for a car company, and they work on little transistor parts. There is a town in Germany - the Schwabisch Gmund, which is like Pforzheim. But they were more into silver, and big things - not only, but jewelry, too. But a friend of mine said, when they closed their factories, they took the hammers, and they took all the beautiful tools to the dump. Just a shame. There's history, down - and you can't buy these things anymore. Shame. That's a destruction of tradition.

MS. ZEIGER: A craft tradition.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: In this country, do you think it's - metalsmithing, goldsmithing is healthy? Do you think it's a vibrant craft tradition - healthy and long-lived? Or do you think it's being undermined by new technologies and trends?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, I'm sure it's undermined, but at the same time I think that the more - probably the more that things go industrialized, or forgotten, there is unique quest for the individual and the handmade.

Why is it that people today, in the last couple years or so - that the really good crafts are selling better? Because those who have the funds, have the wealth, want better things. So it's - it may not be healthy on one side, but on the other side it's doing better. I'm doing better. Why, when the economy is not good? It's just that people who have the wealth, and the support for this type of thing is - they're doing better and they want better things.

MS. ZEIGER: Well, and you, as a teacher, also extend the tradition by teaching.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right. Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Do you have students who come back to you, workshop after workshop, or run off?

MR. O'CONNOR: Some. Yeah. I used to say, I don't want to see you again.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: Because, if I did a good job - you're doing it here. But, I don't know, I've looked on Google and they've had some statements there by former students who say, [in a comical voice] "He changed my life." [Laughs.]

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] Harold, thank you very much for your time. This is a wonderful interview, and I do appreciate it.

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, thank you.

MS. ZEIGER: Thank you very much.

[END OF MD 03.]

MS. ZEIGER: This is Dinah Zeiger interviewing Harold O'Connor, at the University of Denver, in Denver, Colorado, on October 31, 2007, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number four, actually, of the total.

So, Harold, last time we were talking, we didn't talk about, sort of, your practical experience living in Taos and working there, so let's talk about that. Tell me about what you were doing in Taos, and how you got there, and what was the nature of your work there.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, I was - in 1985 I was living up in the San Luis Valley, up on Colorado - a small little village that I was in, which happened to be like my going from Denver into another place, but this was - I stopped and stayed in this little village for a year. And then I knew I had to get out of this place - because there was no inspiration, there was nothing going on - and so I made a trip down to New Mexico.

MS. ZEIGER: And what year was this?

MR. O'CONNOR: This was in 1985. And then was looking for - I was looking in Albuquerque, because I had gone to school there; and then I looked in Santa Fe at some places, and I had - I knew a couple people there. I'd never been to Taos before in my life. And I came through Taos - and how I ended up in Taos is that a friend of a friend had a house, and he was going to Salt Lake City within a week, and there I was. I went back to this little town, and we were moved in a week. Bingo.

And I started out working at home and then I got a small studio; and then another studio came up - probably within six months. And it was in a building run by the Couse Foundation. And the original Couse man was - I forget his first name, but he was one of the seven original Taos artists that came and populated Taos around the turn of the century [Eanger Irving Couse].

And his personal studio was an old convent. And his painting part of the studio was in where they held mass. And then down below this studio, or this complex, was a number of studios in a row. And so I rented a couple of those for the summer. And that's where I originally started my summer schools and things in Taos.

And then I kept the studio for eight years. And during that time, too - in the '80s, mid-'80s, I was experimenting with titanium. Titanium was a refractory metal - you can't weld it with traditional materials, but it does color, various colors of the rainbow, with different amounts of electricity put into a bath. So it's very colorful.

And at that time, there was - it was very hard to get at that time, because the only places that sold it were big companies back in Ohio that were making acid-proof tanks for - container tanks for acids and stuff. So it hadn't

hit the common denomination, you can say. And I did a whole series on that, with the titanium.

And that series started one night - it wasn't in Taos, but it started in Denver. I was at some friends' house one night, and I saw a book there, and it was on African ornaments, snares, and things for animals. And seeing that started this whole thing of what I could do with this wire - because I used a lot of the titanium wire.

And then the other things that I was doing in Taos, I was interested in the mixture of the cultures of the Indian, the Spanish-American, and the whites living together. I think the - it was like living a hundred years ago in northern New Mexico. It's a different part of - in spirit - from the rest of New Mexico. It's people who came there with the Spanish when they came.

My work during that period was characterized by cages - constructions of things in side cages, suspended in air. And it may have been resembling part of how I felt at the time, maybe. But a lot of the images, too, resembled, subconsciously, Native American or Asian influences. When people saw my work, they'd say, "Oh, it looks Southwest," but it would be more - I'm more interested in the old Southwest than I was the contemporary Indian. I was interested in what was at Chaco Canyon, and Canyon de Chelly, and the prehistoric people.

Also, being around an energy in Taos that is not found in a lot of other places. I mean, you'll find the same "like energy" in Santa Fe, both these places having lots of artists; and the populace - the general populace accepting the artists, because these are the people who, with their work and endeavors, bring tourists into the community.

And so it was [laughs] - it was interesting, a couple years ago I went back. I was down at Taos - and I go period periodically, but one day I was in my favorite little café, and outside, and this guy looks up and he says, [in a comical voice] "Harold, you're the jewelry guru" - and I hadn't been there for 15 years. [Laughs.] But I was like, wow, you know, that you could still - that these people remember you from - and it's a funny thing of, say, like, you may be gone 15 years, but to them it was yesterday.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: So the time in Taos was really good - meeting lots of different artists, and some exhibiting widely. I was fortunate once to have a picture of my work on the cover of the educational television -

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, magazine? Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: - magazine. And I made a piece specially for them because the guy wanted - he wanted color. And so this worked in with this titanium things I was doing. And then the imagery was - like a shield from the Southwest. It's always been one of my favorite places, as far as working, and the people that I knew there, and still know them.

MS. ZEIGER: How long were you there?

MR. O'CONNOR: I was there eight years.

MS. ZEIGER: Go back and talk a little more - or expand a little more on your summer schools. What were they about, and who came to them?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, it started out - or what they were is specializing in specific jewelry techniques - as laminating thin gold to silver, different forming methods, reticulation. These classes were - you would work design into them, in a two-week course, while people were there.

But you can never advertise design because people won't sign-up for it. They'll do things when you get them there. So they were all - they started out as, and continued on, as specifics. And I'm still teaching these specific techniques, different techniques.

MS. ZEIGER: I know you said previously that a big focus of your own work was in, sort of, the mental design aspect of it, rather than the technique of it, but that it was difficult to get students to come ever, if you're just telling them, well, we're going to "think design."

MR. O'CONNOR: Right. And the difference in America, too, with your semi-skilled person that doesn't have a formal training at the universities for design and whatnot, is that they are more interested in the techniques of things, because that's what they're lacking in. So here in our country we have more of those classes than we do for, say, concepts - conceptual things. Whereas in Europe, it's the opposite - there's concept versus learning the technique, because the people taking these classes, most of them are already trained formally in school.

MS. ZEIGER: But you've also taught in Europe, so let's talk about that - move on to teaching there, and what you've taught, and where.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, besides going to school in Europe, my first exhibition time in Europe, I think, was around, probably, 1972, or earlier. I was invited to an exhibition in Hamburg, Germany, on - it was called "Experimental Jewelry." And this was - yes, this was when I was living in Canada, and teaching at a college there, and I was working on this new plastic forms and things, so people invited me to take part in that.

Also in 1972, I was invited by the secretary of the Artist Union in Romania to visit him and to give a talk to his group there. And a little - yeah, it was before the downfall of the Russian state, and so it was a quite interesting - very interesting to go there and see the regimentation of the country.

MS. ZEIGER: Was it still an apprentice system there? Or was it an education at universities?

MR. O'CONNOR: I didn't get to see any of that.

MS. ZEIGER: You didn't see any of that?

MR. O'CONNOR: No. I saw exhibitions; I did get in to see an outdoor sculpture symposium - that people came, and they were working for a month. This is very common in Europe, to have symposiums. And a symposium there is not going and sitting and listening to somebody. That's called a - if you're go and sit and listen to somebody, that's called a seminar. But here, if people say a symposium, it's sitting - it's really -

But over there it's like people get together from different places, and they come and they work. And whoever sponsors them is put up for several weeks, or a month, and then they donate their sculpture to a sculpture park, or the organization who invited them.

MS. ZEIGER: Is this a collaboration, teaching environment?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Yes. Other place is Czech Republic - I've been there seven times. I was invited to six - five - symposiums, north of Prague, for jewelry. And I was, I think, the first American ever to be invited to these places.

MS. ZEIGER: And what made you and your work so popular some places like East - well, all of Eastern Europe, but in the Czech Republic, for example?

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] Well, it's - I guess they acknowledge good things - I mean -

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah. How did they get to know about you - maybe that's the better question?

MR. O'CONNOR: Okay, the first time I got invited to a symposium I was traveling and visiting schools -

MS. ZEIGER: In Eastern Europe?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, in the Czech Republic. I went - in fact, I went in the wintertime. And one man who I had previously - okay, the first introduction was that I had submitted work to international competitions in this town called Jablonec, north of Prague. They, every three years, would have this huge competition, and I was in, I think, two or three of the exhibitions - and then one year I actually won a prize, so people knew my work.

And then I was traveling through, freelance, one winter, and this man that was head of the competition exhibitions, sent - we visited another jeweler, a very renowned jeweler, in Czech Republic, by the name of [Jaroslav] Kodejs, and he said "Oh, you must take part in this symposium next summer." So it was through him recommending me to the head of the museum in Tornov, north of Prague, that I got invited the first time, to that symposium.

MS. ZEIGER: And when was this?

MR. O'CONNOR: This was in 1993. And I actually went to the Czech Republic a year before it was - when it was under the Communist rule, and then a year after it was free. So it was really interesting to see the tremendous change that had happened.

MS. ZEIGER: And were these symposia specifically for jewelers, or goldsmiths?

MR. O'CONNOR: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. ZEIGER: Again - I'm sort of interested, is that something that's maybe an industry there, or historically important to them, culturally?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yes. Yeah, and the Czech Republic in this area - Bohemia, which I never knew what Bohemia was - "a Boheme," I equate it with Mexico with water.

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] The same attitude of the people, but Bohemia is a province north of Prague. This is where glass beadwork was developed. It was also, Jablonec, was the glass costume jewelry capital of the world before the influx of the Chinese work. And now it's - they can't compete.

But they had factories - in fact, I was one of very few people to visit a factory in Jablonec that made costume jewelry - 5,400 workers in this factory.

MS. ZEIGER: And when was this?

MR. O'CONNOR: And they make - this was in -

MS. ZEIGER: Early '90s?

MR. O'CONNOR: - 1993. No, it was before '93; it was - it must have been 1990. It was the year before they got free, because it was still communist. And this man got - was able to get me in. I was a guest of the factory and the organization.

But they made glass and brass jewelry - the whole town, in that whole part of Czech Republic. In fact, that part of Czech Republic is called the Sudetenland; it's the southern part of Germany. Now when the war ended, after the Second World War, they took those people from Jablonec and transplanted them north of Munich, in a place called Neugablonz. And that is a town which specializes in glass and costume jewelry in Germany. So they took their workers and they repatronized them back to Germany.

MS. ZEIGER: Okay. Now did you, when you were doing these symposia in the Czech Republic, were you teaching like you do here, or were you more of a consultant, or just collaborating?

MR. O'CONNOR: Collaborating. Just taking part with other - meeting people from, say, eight different countries.

MS. ZEIGER: And did you come away from those with new ideas for your own work?

MR. O'CONNOR: Sometimes. And what usually happens in these symposiums is the sponsoring people get these people together; they work for 10 days - say, five to 10 days. They are given a place to stay; they're given pocket money; and they make a piece and they donate it to the town museum.

So over the years, this town museum has got this incredible collection of international jewelers' work - a great idea.

MS. ZEIGER: Beautiful.

MR. O'CONNOR: In 1994 I was in Estonia, and that workshop took - I did a workshop there at the art academy, and that came out of three students that I had had in Finland in 1990, who said, you've got to come to Tallinn to do a workshop. So I was invited there in 1990 - well, it was feted in 1994 or '95, in there, to do a workshop. A very exciting work in Estonia.

MS. ZEIGER: How come? What makes it so?

MR. O'CONNOR: It was the freest country in the Soviet Union, during the communist times, to study art. In fact, I've met Russians who said they went to Estonia because it was out in a little corner, out of the way, and nobody would be bothering them. And it's one of the places - even today, I am astounded at the - and so impressed with the quality of work coming out of Estonia. The imagery is just - it's mind-boggling.

MS. ZEIGER: Wow. Does it also have a history of jewelry making?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yes. Yeah, they have a hundred and - average of 110 jewelers for a population of 1.2 million people. And that's a lot of jewelers. Very heavy history in the crafts, because Estonia, even though it's like - the language is close to Finnish, and that part of the world, they were part of the Hanseatic League in Germany, the trading league, so that they are very linked to mainland Europe - all those Baltic countries. So, very exciting things there.

I've been to Korea twice. I've lectured at eight universities in Korea.

MS. ZEIGER: When did you go to Korea?

MR. O'CONNOR: I went to Korea in '88, first time. And how that came out of, was that I got a catalogue in the mail from a professor by the name of Professor Kim, from Andong. And he had an exhibition in Flagstaff, Arizona,

of a sculpture work, metal things, and I was going to Japan at the same time - which I did, I went to Japan to a glass conference because some friends of mine who dug glass beads came through, slide in and said, "Oh, you've got to go to Japan to this glass conference because, you know, it's so cheap to go."

And I would have never gone to Japan; it just happened to go to - okay, in going to Japan, there was also a Korean airline which allowed you to stop over in Seoul. So I wrote this guy out of the blue, and I said, there's a chance I could be in Korea next summer; I'd like to meet some craftsmen, if possible. I'll be there a week, blah-blah. Three weeks later, I get a - "Here's your itinerary."

MS. ZEIGER: Oh, my gosh.

MR. O'CONNOR: So these are things - like my whole life has been this way. Like, hey, you take a chance; what do you got to lose?

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: And you've got - and then I got a trip around Korea.

MS. ZEIGER: I'm very interested in Korea. It has a very old metalworking tradition, too. So what did you take there, and what did you come back from there with?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, I gave - again, there, I lectured there on what I - on my work, my life's work. And then I did demonstrations of - with the granulation, because it's an old technique that they use, and then reticulation of the silver. I mean, these were short lecture demos.

But what I came away with was an incredibly small country that has so much energy, and so much artistic things going on. I mean, we don't think much about Korea in this country, but they're a dynamo. Half of the population lives in two cities. One city has 12 million; the other has 11 million -

MS. ZEIGER: I had no idea.

MR. O'CONNOR: - and they're side by side. There's so much in electronics, so much in [inaudible] - but they're - their culture is so old. They came from Asia, and they taught the Japanese ceramics; they taught the Japanese metalwork.

MS. ZEIGER: Do they have a different training system for artists and craftspeople there than the United States? Or is it also primarily through a university system, rather than an apprentice system?

MR. O'CONNOR: I think they do have, probably. I'm not aware of the - I'm not, I don't know about an apprentice system, but I'm sure they have that. But they also have the university system - college system - where they learn the crafts. Every college and every university has a huge art department. And they also have, like, an art - like in painting, they have Western painting, and have Eastern painting department.

And then it's not uncommon for Koreans to have two or three degrees. They get a degree - usually get one or two degrees in Korea, and then they come to the United States, and they study at our best schools. And then they go back, and a lot of them teach - or they go off on their own, but -

And, you know, the other, the other interesting thing that comes up in artwork, too, is - and not only in Asia but in Europe - is the documentation of everything. Anytime you have an exhibition, you've got a catalogue. Anytime you have a symposium, you've got a catalogue. They document everything that's done. Which -

MS. ZEIGER: Why is that valuable?

MR. O'CONNOR: For history.

MS. ZEIGER: And for you, too, right?

MR. O'CONNOR: And for me. I'm obsessed about collecting catalogues of contemporary art - in metalwork, in jewelry, around the world - and just to be aware of what's going on. I think it's this quest for - it's a quest for learning; it's always seeing what's going on and just being aware of the possibilities of things.

But versus our culture, is this not collecting thing - of art and things. I mean, in Europe, people, if they're not selling the art, they make an exhibition catalogue; they make a thousand copies; and they sell them. So if you're not selling the art, you're selling a book. [Laughs.]

MS. ZEIGER: Absolutely.

MR. O'CONNOR: And I think it also gives you a visual thing of reality, of where you've been. And that's the basis for where somebody's going to go. You know, as far as - again, on the teaching thing, the most interesting place I've taught is in Northern Canada - in the north, near Greenland, and the Inuit people, 1,300 miles north of Ottawa on Baffin Island.

MS. ZEIGER: And when did you do this?

MR. O'CONNOR: I did that in '90 - let's see, 2003. My whole idea of - it goes back to the anthropology again - the studies of anthro; I loved the Arctic; I always wanted - I wanted to go there all my life, and then something - then it finally turned up that this college up there wanted to have me come up for a couple weeks. It's the most interesting people I've ever met. They were the happiest people I've ever met - with nothing. I mean, they have the things we do; I mean that's - I didn't think they did, but -

MS. ZEIGER: They do live in the 21st century. [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: They do. My whole idea of the Arctic was dispelled in about 20 minutes after I got off the airplane [laughs], but I did - some of the people in my class did live at Cape Dorset, and they left. They live in where it's very sparse.

But aside from that, they laughed all day long - giggled and laughed nine to five, and they were joking. And the other thing about them is it's a community; it's a family. If anybody does something, everybody's there and say, "Wow, that's great. How'd you do it?" - you know, and they just - the supporting each other. Well, they have to, or they're dead.

MS. ZEIGER: Right.

MR. O'CONNOR: And when I left - and the training there is to support the tourist industry, and to make items, too, that - with their spirit, of selling down south in Canada, in Montreal, and different places.

MS. ZEIGER: And what materials did you work with there?

MR. O'CONNOR: We worked with silver. And then they have native gold up there, that's mined there. There was copper, and ivory, and bone.

And when I left, I think it was six or seven of my students gave me presents that they'd made especially for me. It was - it was just incredible. And I got to eat some whale - or walrus - frozen walrus meat that had been pickling for six months. And I ate it, and I said, [in a comical voice] "Ha-hahh, I am one of you."

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs.]

MR. O'CONNOR: So that was - that's one of the highlight places of - and people, I just - and I'm still in touch with some of them. In fact, one of the ladies called me earlier this year. It was late at - late, my time here, because there's three hours difference - and she said her father had just died, and she wanted to know if it was imposing on me to call me and talk to me. She wanted to talk to somebody -

MS. ZEIGER: Interesting.

MR. O'CONNOR: - and he was a famous artist there, and he was 85. And I said, no, it's, you know, like - so it was really touching that she would call me.

MS. ZEIGER: You made a connection.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: And it was with a number of those people.

MS. ZEIGER: So from being there, did that experience - is that reflected in the work that you made after you came back from there? Are there elements of it -

MR. O'CONNOR: No, but I'm thinking about it. And that's the thing, these things - these themes and things may take years to ferment. I've got posters of different archeological things from the Eskimo and the Inuit, and so it's not to say I won't, and I wasn't influenced. I was very influenced; it's just how to transpose what you did see -

MS. ZEIGER: Into that object.

MR. O'CONNOR: - and the feeling with these people, into your own work, right.

MS. ZEIGER: I think you said earlier, when we were talking, that there are elements of your trips to Korea and Japan that filtered through to your work.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. For years - in the '90s, and now into 2000, into the early 2000s, the Oriental gardens - just today I was looking in a shop here in Denver, and it was an Oriental shop. And I looked at this book on Japanese gardens, and it's - it's something of the order, the way the placement of objects, and that has a spirit about it, that keeps influencing, keeps drawing me to those things.

Even like - I took a group of students to Machu Picchu - 12 students in, I think, '89. And I would have never gone there, except a friend of mine has a hotel in a small town in the Valley of Machu Picchu, and said, if you bring the - if you get the people and bring them to Cusco, we'll arrange everything.

So we went down there, and that was two weeks. And I had - it was just a mind-blowing experience, because it's so different from Europe, or Asia, or North America. It's because it's native - it's native peoples. And I was like a little kid; when I got off the airplane, it was, "Wow!" I didn't even want to do anything because I just - it just was like bubbling it up, seeing the culture.

MS. ZEIGER: It's very oriented toward - it's a stonemason's culture, too, isn't it?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. They cut stones, and they're still questioning how the Incas made their - cut their stones, and built those buildings, and things.

MS. ZEIGER: Because there's no mortar in them, is there?

MR. O'CONNOR: No. And the other thing that was really nice about Peru was it's like Colorado. It's the same altitude; it's the same climate. It was like being around Salida [laughs].

MS. ZEIGER: [Laughs] I want to talk - just to back-up a little more - to talk about materials, because I was very interested in what you were saying about using titanium. You've used a number of new or different elements in making your work, over your life, haven't you?

MR. O'CONNOR: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. ZEIGER: Talk about some of those. What have you used?

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, in the '70s I used this polyester - or polyethylene plastic, which was things wrapped around radios and TVs. And boy, I remember when I first came across that. I was up in Canada teaching, and I'd known somebody in Toronto at one of the craft magazines - that owned a magazine and was editor, and I called her up and I go - man, I was just so excited, I said, "I've just come across these forms that are," you know, "wow, it's organic, and - ." Very exciting. It's a different medium of usually constructing things, than - this was immediate, getting forms through heat and tactile surfaces.

And then plastic resin in the '70s, early there. Experimenting with things that weren't expensive; they were just - they were hobby, supply stuff. I did, also back then, photoetching, which became popular, where you would put a photograph on a metal plate and then etch the image into it. And I was using stuff right from a hobby shop, so it was, again, very high-tech techniques with low cost at that time. And then -

MS. ZEIGER: Response to new material.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. And then the thing about the titanium is I saw - I think when I started that, there were - there couldn't have been 12 people in the U.S. doing it. It was a very, very early time. And it was brought here by a fellow by the name of Ed de Large from England - and just stunning work he had done with that technique.

MS. ZEIGER: And did that technique influence the series of work that you did? Was it the material that influenced what you were doing?

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. It was the African snares and cages, and very lightweight, and light in feeling - wires, and then - because it's very strong. And a lot of it was threaded with nuts and bolts together, the titanium, because you can't solder it. And they couldn't join it, in traditional terms. Yeah. You can today, but back then we didn't have the - we didn't have the technology to do it.

MS. ZEIGER: So the forms grew out of the material, quite literally.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Right.

MS. ZEIGER: They were, sort of, hand-in-hand.

MR. O'CONNOR: Right. And there were some things - well, the thing that I - the thing with the titanium, early going, was - the allure - was the great colors. However, when it got commercial, and when people were doing fairs, and stuff, and selling this for \$10 - you know, \$6, \$10, \$12 bucks, I dropped it like a hot potato, because there was no way that I - because of the kind of work that I do, that I would - could, or even think of, competing.

And I never thought of my work competing anyway, with anybody, because it's - it's always been my own, my own direction, my own way. The thing is, even today is, when I - or let's say, the other materials back then were the plexiglass; that was early in the '60s, people using plexiglass in the '60s, and '70s, in carving.

I don't know, they've used Corian, and things that's common in the last 10 years; there are more -

MS. ZEIGER: What is Corian?

MR. O'CONNOR: Corian is what they use for kitchen -

MS. ZEIGER: Countertops.

MR. O'CONNOR: - countertops, yeah. It's a neat material. But combining also the new materials with the old - with the natural materials, and various combinations of natural materials.

[Laughs] I had a piece the other day, and somebody was looking at it. It was ebony with gold and - in ivory. And somebody said, "What is that?" [Laughs.] Because it doesn't look like anything I do. I said, well, it was just part of a special series, or competition I was working on.

MS. ZEIGER: Now, have we talked enough about the time in Taos, and the work you were doing there? It was an important period of your life.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. And I can say it still is. [Laughs.]

MS. ZEIGER: Salida is where you've been now, how long?

MR. O'CONNOR: I've been in Salida 15 years.

MS. ZEIGER: So it's the place where you have done the bulk of your recent work.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. The thing about where I live now is that I go away for stimulation. The thing of Taos is you are stimulated by your environment in Taos.

Also, artists are like little children. They make things and they show them to people, and they say, "See. Do you like it? or, you don't like it." And, for an artist, they have to have feedback. And this is what I'm lacking right now, is I go away for that feedback because I am not in that environment that Taos or Santa Fe provides, because you have to have - feedback is saying, "I don't like it," or "I like it" - not, "What is it?"

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah.

MR. O'CONNOR: [Laughs] So I've been able - in the environment that I have in the last 15 years, is that it's quiet; it's peaceful; it's living in a place where there is no crime to speak of. It's pleasant, climate-wise. I know that if I go away and I come back in two months, it's the same. It's going to be the same, and everything's going to be there. And I can walk in and start to work. So it's reassuring in that sense.

MS. ZEIGER: Yeah, continuity.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. But I will say that, also, when I go into my old studio in Taos - and I still do - is that's a different universe. That that's my sacred place. And even my studio, and where I live in Salida for 15 years, is my little world. I'm at peace there, and I'm able to develop my ideas there.

MS. ZEIGER: So you kind of need the isolation, in a way, to get the work done, and you need -

MR. O'CONNOR: I need both. The thing about the studio in Taos was it's only a block off a busy street. It's not even that - half a block. So you're in your studio alone, doing your work; people don't come in and bug you, and disturb you, but when you want to go to the café, and you want to talk to people, it's a half a block away. And, as I said previously, I'm not a hermit. I like my solitude, but I also like to talk to people.

And so what I'm lacking in the surrounds of Salida, or so, is I get them when I go. I get that when I go to the city, or I go to Europe - I have friends all over the world. I mean, -

MS. ZEIGER: Have you just come back from a trip to Europe, or are you getting ready to go?

MR. O'CONNOR: No, I'm getting ready.

MS. ZEIGER: Ready to go to Germany again?

MR. O'CONNOR: Germany, possibly Poland. And this is to see museums and see what's going on in shows.

MS. ZEIGER: I know that you told me that you had also done workshops or done work in the Soviet Union. Were you not in Moscow?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: No?

MR. O'CONNOR: No. I visited.

MS. ZEIGER: Visited - just visited, but not -

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah. Years - '67, St. Petersburg.

MS. ZEIGER: You weren't there to work?

MR. O'CONNOR: No.

MS. ZEIGER: You went to look at the Fabergé Eggs.

MR. O'CONNOR: Oh, that's - that's what I would do next time when I go.

MS. ZEIGER: Great. So is there anything else we've left out that you really want to talk about?

MR. O'CONNOR: I don't think so. I think it's - I think we've covered it. You know, I'm a world man. I'm not purely American - I'm American, but my view is a world.

MS. ZEIGER: It's not strictly Western, either.

MR. O'CONNOR: No. In fact, recently I've inquired to see it in Dubai [United Arab Emirates] to see if they - they have jewelry department, and I'm waiting to hear on that. So - I've never been there. It's exciting.

MS. ZEIGER: Also it's a culture that has a tradition of jewelry making.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yes.

MS. ZEIGER: That Arab culture. There'll be delicate kinds of things.

MR. O'CONNOR: Yeah, very much so. So we'll see.

MS. ZEIGER: Great.

Harold, thank you very much.

MR. O'CONNOR: Well, thank you.

MS. ZEIGER: I really enjoyed it.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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