



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Candice Groot,
2014 November 4-6

Contact Information

Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Candice Groot on 2014 November 4-6. The interview was conducted at Groot's home in Evanston, IL by Leslie Ferrin for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Candice Groot and Leslie Ferrin reviewed the transcript together and have made corrections and emendations which appear in brackets appended with their initials. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

LESLIE FERRIN: Hi. This is Leslie Ferrin. I am in Evanston, Illinois, sitting with Candice Groot. Candice, say hi. Let's see—

CANDICE GROOT: Hello.

MS. FERRIN: You sound good. We are surrounded by art and there are a couple members of the family here. Candice, do you want to mention who the family members are? The four-legged ones.

MS. GROOT: Well, there's Iris, who's a hairless Chinese Crested; she's our oldest. And then there's Rose and Willie who are Basenjis. And in addition to that, there's Jack the parrot and Felix the parrot.

MS. FERRIN: So we may hear from them as part of this interview. [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: You might.

MS. FERRIN: We're just going to jump right in and get the biographical material over with. So, maybe you could say exactly where we are in Evanston. Where are we in Evanston?

MS. GROOT: We're at the southeastern corner of Evanston, not too far from Chicago. Just a couple blocks.

MS. FERRIN: How long have you been here?

MS. GROOT: Since '96.

MS. FERRIN: And did you move here with the collection or has that been—

MS. GROOT: I moved here with the collection; it was a lot smaller than it is now. But I've lived in Evanston since '87.

MS. FERRIN: So, when and where were you born?

MS. GROOT: I was born in Berwyn, Illinois in 1954.

MS. FERRIN: And where did you spend your childhood?

MS. GROOT: In Western Springs, Illinois, another suburb.

MS. FERRIN: So all of this is in the Chicago area?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: What is your family background?

MS. GROOT: Well, my mother was trained as an English teacher and my father had part ownership of a garbage company called C. Groot. [As in Cornelius, my grandfather's name. -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: C. Groot?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Were your parents interested in art?

MS. GROOT: My mother was very interested in it. My father died when he was very young, but my mother was

very interested in art. She went to the schools and gave, kind of, like, art history lectures and so forth. And she actually took some classes as well.

MS. FERRIN: In what type of art?

MS. GROOT: Painting.

MS. FERRIN: Did you paint with her? Was it something you shared?

MS. GROOT: No. My sister did—

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: —but I didn't.

MS. FERRIN: Did you go to museums and—

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So that was—

MS. GROOT: The Art Institute, we went very often.

MS. FERRIN: So, was she encouraging about you and your sister to become artists or do artwork?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Yes, she was. She would get the equipment and give those as our gifts for Christmas and so forth.

MS. FERRIN: And just one sister?

MS. GROOT: No, I have four older sisters.

MS. FERRIN: You're the youngest?

MS. GROOT: I'm the youngest.

MS. FERRIN: Baby.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.] Yes. And they all did—except for one, they all did some kind of art. Like my oldest sister is a painter. I have another sister who is a printmaker/weaver. And then another sister who was an archaeologist.

MS. FERRIN: And when you were in school, high school, were you doing art at that time?

MS. GROOT: I was, but it was on my own. I grew up in and went to school in Dutch religious schools, private schools, and there was no art program at the time in any of the grades. So, for instance, I only knew Dutch people until I left for college.

MS. FERRIN: So you speak Dutch?

MS. GROOT: Yeah—no.

MS. FERRIN: No?

MS. GROOT: I don't speak Dutch. No.

MS. FERRIN: But they were all Dutch and—

MS. GROOT: Yeah. There's little pockets of Dutch around Chicago area, so there's private schools. And in Indiana.

MS. FERRIN: And no art?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: And no art?

MS. GROOT: No art. No, I did it on my own.

MS. FERRIN: With the encouragement of your mom and her supplies.

MS. GROOT: And my sisters.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, yeah.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So when you went on to college, that was when you met non-Dutch people and—

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Then I went to a Swedish Lutheran college, so I all I knew were the Swedes.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] And what college was that?

MS. GROOT: It was Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. And was that where you started taking art full-time?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And did you go for studio art or teaching or both?

MS. GROOT: Both. I had a B.A. in Studio Art and Art Education.

MS. FERRIN: And did you go on to graduate school?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. I got my MFA from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

MS. FERRIN: And were there particular teachers that led you to ceramics?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Over graduate school, Verne Funk was a big influence on my work.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And you guys have remained friends throughout?

MS. GROOT: Yes. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So, in graduate school, did you focus on ceramics at that time—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —and sculpture?

MS. GROOT: And also sculpture, yeah. And papermaking.

MS. FERRIN: Besides Verne Funk, were there others that you had your eye on at the time?

MS. GROOT: Oh yeah. A lot of the—I guess we called them the old timers like Robert Arneson, of course, was working, and Peter Voulkos is working. So they all had somewhat of an influence. And Richard Shaw did have an influence as well.

MS. FERRIN: Were you attending conferences as a student?

MS. GROOT: Yes. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Do you recall any of those really early ones?

MS. GROOT: Not really. I know I went to—my first one I went to in 1979 or '78, and that was at Penn State. It was the last Supermud that they had, and they combined it with NCECA. But I really don't recall what the demonstrations were.

MS. FERRIN: No explosions or—

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: No?

MS. GROOT: [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: Just remember you went. And when you—

MS. GROOT: It was good to see what other students were doing at the time.

MS. FERRIN: How big a conference was it? Do you remember?

MS. GROOT: I think it, maybe, at most 2,000.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: At most.

MS. FERRIN: How many conferences do you think you've been to?

MS. GROOT: Well, since, I guess, '78, I probably have missed about three of them. So I've gone to almost all of them.

MS. FERRIN: That's important.

MS. GROOT: It is important. You know I've gone—I've worn different hats, so I've gone in different directions as I went to the conferences. Like when I was teaching, then it was important to get images down so you could use them in your classroom and so forth.

MS. FERRIN: How would you do that? What kind of—with a camera?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Then were you taking slide film?

MS. GROOT: Slide film, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: One picture at a time?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: Do you still have those slides?

MS. GROOT: Now I go as a collector, so that's really nice. And also to see new artists—

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: —and what they're doing.

MS. FERRIN: Do you have the slides you took as a teacher over your years?

MS. GROOT: Oh yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Oh yeah.

[They laugh.]

MS. GROOT: There were a lot of them.

MS. FERRIN: It'd be interesting to look back at those.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember any of the—you know, as you look around the room, do you remember any of these pieces from that period of time?

MS. GROOT: Oh yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Were you collecting at that time?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] The Robert Arneson ones and Christine Federighi. She had—she was in a slide lecture of mine for some reason. But—and Richard Shaw. There were a lot of—lot of them that were important; some were changing how people saw ceramics.

MS. FERRIN: When you were in the middle of it, did you still see it that way? Was a change taking place?

MS. GROOT: No. I don't think so. I think that happened later.

MS. FERRIN: So, it just was what you were doing at that time?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Interesting.

MS. GROOT: But I changed a lot too in graduate school; so that, I think, is important.

MS. FERRIN: Did you go right from undergraduate to graduate?

MS. GROOT: No. I spent one year off and I went to University of Wisconsin in Madison as a special student, so I could use their facilities. And then once a semester I got a critique from Bruce Breckenridge. But that was important because I learned how to do slipcasting and learned how to fire up kilns and repair kilns. I do a lot of that work, so that was good for me.

MS. FERRIN: And how did you choose the graduate school you went to?

MS. GROOT: Well, at that time I was at Madison, Steve Reynolds was a visiting artist in Madison and his teaching job was in Lubbock, Texas. So, with him—and then Verne Funk was just going to start in Lubbock and I liked his work a lot. And I think that's—and I liked Steve's work a lot. And I think that's kind of important when you're—choose a graduate school that you like the work that professors are doing.

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember any of the other students that you went to school with? Did they—

MS. GROOT: Oh yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Did they continue in their careers?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Some have and some haven't.

MS. FERRIN: Do you want to name a couple of them?

MS. GROOT: Well, Ves Childs, she was a drawing major. And she still does some drawing, but she's a very good friend. She became a ballroom dancer/instructor, of all things, and I just can't picture it.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: Anybody else come to mind?

MS. GROOT: Well, there's Seth Seiderman [ph], he was a clay artist. I think he teaches in Australia. So a good variety—he's supposed to still do art, I think.

MS. FERRIN: So then you—how did you go about getting the teaching job?

MS. GROOT: Well, I'd been looking for a teaching job, and I'd had a show in Minnesota with a friend of mine. And at that time the clay professor at Gustavus was getting several people pregnant —[Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: Oh my.

MS. GROOT: —and eventually lost the job. And I kind of took over, and I stayed there for about six and a half years, I think.

MS. FERRIN: Did you like teaching?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I loved it. I loved working with students. Did other stuff I didn't quite like.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, the administrative?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Some things don't change.

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] Do you remember any of the students in particular? Have you kept in touch?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Actually there are some and they're still doing art work, which is really nice to see. So—

MS. FERRIN: So did they go on to be teachers or producing artists?

MS. GROOT: Well, some of them have become teachers and producing artists. Others have another job as well and do the art on the side. That's a lot like university teachers do.

MS. FERRIN: Have any of the people that were your students made it into the collection? Have you collected their work?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.] I started collecting when I was in graduate school, because you usually trade pieces with different students if you like their work.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: And that's how the collecting started.

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember your first—the first piece you collected?

MS. GROOT: Yes, it was a Peter Voulkos plate. Other than the graduate students' work.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. How did you come by a Peter Voulkos plate?

MS. GROOT: Well, I was driving to my sister's house in Rockford, Illinois and they had—in Chicago they had a Jack Earl show. And I really liked Jack Earl a lot, but I thought his prices were too high.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: So, instead I bought a Peter Voulkos plate.

MS. FERRIN: How big was it?

MS. GROOT: It's about 18, 20 inches.

MS. FERRIN: And it was less expensive than the Jack Earl?

MS. GROOT: [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: Oh.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, it was less expensive.

MS. FERRIN: Wow.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And do you still have that plate?

MS. GROOT: Oh yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And then did you end up buying any of the Jack Earl?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Not then?

MS. GROOT: Later I did.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Now you really have a lot of his work.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I do. Different periods of his work.

MS. FERRIN: Are you good to keep going?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: Are you good to keep going?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, good. So with those earlier exhibitions—so you've just mentioned this one of Jack Earl, are

there others that you remember back then that—like your second acquisition? Or—

MS. GROOT: Not a real lot, because then I moved to Minnesota right away after graduate school. And they didn't have very much clay at the time.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: They didn't have very many galleries either, so I didn't see a lot of clay. And you really had to come down to Chicago in order to see some. That's what I did.

MS. FERRIN: You'd come down during holidays and go see all the exhibitions?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember the galleries that you would visit?

MS. GROOT: Exhibit A was the one with Jack Earl and Peter Voulkos. And I think they had an Arneson there, too, at the time. Was Alice Westphal—

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And then—

MS. GROOT: Perimeter Gallery [ph] and—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: —Esther Saks Gallery.

MS. FERRIN: Chicago had it lively.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: [inaudible]—did you go to New York?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: California?

MS. GROOT: [Negative.] Oh, once in a while to California.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Once in a while.

MS. FERRIN: But your collecting was based in the galleries—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —here in Chicago?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Did you ever imagine you would be surrounded by this much—

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: —collecting at that time?

MS. GROOT: No, I didn't think so. But—

MS. FERRIN: Kind of happened gradually?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.] So I also started with doing artist cups —

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: —because they were affordable.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And there's always cup shows around, so those were easier to find as well.

MS. FERRIN: Did you collect teapots as well?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Not on purpose?

MS. GROOT: Not on purpose.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: I only have about five teapots actually.

MS. FERRIN: Well, we know where the rest of them are.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: How did your collecting ideas start to build on one another? So Voulkos being the vessel and Earl being—

[END OF groot14_1of4_sd_track02_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: Okay, where were we? So we were talking about the vessel tradition and the figural tradition, and you've gone through cups, and then the platters, and then the figural sculpture. Was it like that straight through?

MS. GROOT: Well, I mainly collected sculpture because that's what I was from, the ceramic sculpture. I know when I began doing my own work I did do pots, because you always do in school. But I didn't find those interesting for me. I needed something more, so my work turned out to be very narrative and so did my collection. [inaudible]

MS. FERRIN: So, of all those early artists—[Jack -LF/CG] Earl, Richard Shaw, [Robert -LF/CG] Arneson—they were very much speaking politically or personally—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —and was that they type of work you also did?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And so you were teaching and producing and exhibiting?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Were there shows? Solo shows? Group shows?

MS. GROOT: Most of them were group shows, but I did have a couple solo shows.

MS. FERRIN: Who were the galleries you worked with?

MS. GROOT: I worked with the Bloomington Art Center in Bloomington, Minnesota. That was the main one that I worked with as far as—

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember the titles of any of the group shows? The type of themes that were—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, those were all over the country.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Applied for shows, group shows.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Were they figural—

MS. GROOT: They were more sculpture oriented. My work was more architectural. Which, I think, is why I like Jack Earl's work.

MS. FERRIN: Because he—

MS. GROOT: [inaudible]

MS. FERRIN: Because of the shapes of the buildings and the—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —scale of the work, the constructions?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. So when I was little that's when we moved to Western Springs, it was a new suburb, and that was my playground with these houses going up all the time. So that's how I got interested in doing buildings.

MS. FERRIN: So when you were younger, were you working with making clay buildings or dioramas or—

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember taking pottery classes and firing a—

MS. GROOT: [Negative.] No, my sisters would teach me. Like, for Christmas one year my sister gave me a silk screen and some ink and taught me how to do it. So then for the next year we were doing silk screening.

MS. FERRIN: So you were always doing, sort of, by yourself—working by yourself?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Now, were your sisters the same way?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, pretty much.

MS. FERRIN: So, it was sort of, the way you grew up was entertaining one another and yourselves through making things?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Sounds like Little Women.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] Five little groups. Did you have—when you went with your sisters, would you go to these exhibits together or was that more just you and your mother?

MS. GROOT: I think mainly me and my mother.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Because the sister right above me, there was a three year difference. So, like, when I was in high school I was the only child at home, except for my freshman year. And during that time she would take me to the Art Institute.

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember a couple of rooms there that were particularly interesting to you?

MS. GROOT: No, I don't remember them.

MS. FERRIN: Or to her? Nope? Not like the Cornell boxes or—

MS. GROOT: [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: No? [Laughs.] Are there rooms there now that you really like?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: Are there rooms there now that you really like to go back to at the Art Institute?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Any one in particular?

MS. GROOT: Not really.

MS. FERRIN: Just, the whole place?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Just a spectacular place.

MS. FERRIN: So, when you were thinking about your career as a student, were there other choices that you were weighing besides art or art teaching?

MS. GROOT: Well, it was mainly art. At one time I had a minor in religion, but I ended up not using that. The Dutch religion doesn't allow women to become ministers, so that was kind of out.

MS. FERRIN: Did you think if they had, you might have gone down that road?

MS. GROOT: I don't know. I don't know if I could be that conservative. At least I'm not now, and I wasn't actually in college. I don't think I was that conservative.

MS. FERRIN: Was your family religious?

MS. GROOT: Well, in a way they were, but my mother was more of a liberal parent than a lot of the friends I had—their parents. But the Dutch religion is very strict. You couldn't have dances in high school except for square dancing. We were lucky that we could play cards [inaudible]. Of course we had dress codes and you'd get measured every day and that kind of thing, your skirt. [I had bible class and chapel every day. I was up for homecoming court but was blackballed because I skipped chapel, and I was on the chapel committee. -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: Oh, okay.

[They laugh.]

Depending on how high on the knee it is and—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, six inches from the knee up.

MS. FERRIN: Well, given your collection, it doesn't seem that religion except as commentary—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —it's very provocative. To somebody who is strict, it would be, kind of, the polar opposite.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So, do you feel like your collecting in some ways is a response to or reaction to?

MS. GROOT: Oh, it could be a reaction to it.

MS. FERRIN: I can't imagine your teachers walking in here and thinking anything but "Where did we go wrong?"

[They laugh.]

MS. GROOT: That's true. But I have some pots that they would really like. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: Okay, that's what we'll show them.

[They laugh.]

So, it doesn't sound like there was any other choices along the way, that it was pretty focused on—

MS. GROOT: I went to a liberal arts college, so there wasn't a lot of choice. You can have a lot of business courses, that kind of thing, or nursing or teaching.

MS. FERRIN: So, have you done any other educational experiences? Any of the workshops or—

MS. GROOT: I've attended some, yes.

MS. FERRIN: What kind of things did you attend?

MS. GROOT: I attended—well one during graduate school I attended Richard Shaw, what do you call it, workshop. It was two weeks long, it was really nice—

MS. FERRIN: In California?

MS. GROOT: No, in Connecticut actually. [University of Hartford, '78 or '79. His family played in a band at night. -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: I think that's one of the ones—

[END OF groot14_1of4_sd_track03_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember—

MS. GROOT: And my friends, high school friends, are still religious.

MS. FERRIN: Are they? Have they come over? Have they been here to visit?

MS. GROOT: [Negative.] That would be something.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] Well, that would be something.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: That workshop by Richard Shaw in Connecticut, I've heard about that because there were other artists in the northeast that have credited that workshop with giving them, sort of, a ticket to sculpt, you know, do things in the northeast that were so specifically functional. And then when Richard came in I think he opened some eyes, opened some doors—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Do you recall much about who was in the class with you or what you learned at that time? Do you remember your experience?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. It was really exciting. I didn't know that much about how he made his plates and how he made other things, like the little scraps on his plates, and so forth, or on his books or whatever. So that was exciting to see, so he would work along with us. Everyone would work at the same time, which was nice. And then at the end of the day, he and his wife would have his band and they would play instruments and sing. So, that was fun too.

MS. FERRIN: How many pieces of Richard's do you have in the collection?

MS. GROOT: I think probably six.

MS. FERRIN: Six. That go through his career?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

[Animal noise.]

MS. FERRIN: So, that was probably in the early '80s—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And do you remember—

MS. GROOT: Late '70s.

MS. FERRIN: Late '70s? Okay. Do you remember other workshops?

MS. GROOT: No, I don't. They were hard to find at the time, to tell the truth.

MS. FERRIN: Penland. Haystack. Did you go to any of those, like Penland or Haystack?

MS. GROOT: [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: Did you know about them? Or —

MS. GROOT: No. [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: Okay. So you were more following the sculptors, maybe, than the craft schools?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Because Richard was a sculptor from the Bay Area —

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: —and you knew about that. Did you ever go out to the Bay Area to go to classes or workshops out there?

MS. GROOT: No, I didn't. I did also go to Oxbow for a couple years.

MS. FERRIN: That's here in the Midwest, right?

MS. GROOT: It's in Michigan.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And that was nice, you learned different things.

MS. FERRIN: Different mediums?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Not ceramics?

MS. GROOT: No, I did like a printing—printmaking course and jewelry course. I think that's about it.

MS. FERRIN: When you started collecting, did you also collect paintings or prints or works on paper?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So, side-by-side with the sculpture?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Was there any artist you're following in particular?

MS. GROOT: No.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: Eclectic.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.] Yeah, I mean, I love all the paintings that I have. You know, Donald Roller Wilson, I have a lot of his work.

MS. FERRIN: When did you first start collecting his work?

MS. GROOT: Must have been the '80s—late '80s, I think, is when I started collecting his work. There's something just very new and exciting about his work that I thought was new and exciting. And I like the way he paints. If you notice, a lot of the paintings I have they paint the same way. Kind of idealism kind of painting.

MS. FERRIN: The idealized animals or surrealists figures —

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: —but they're all very fine, very skilled painters.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, he's very skilled.

MS. FERRIN: Did you have pets at that time? Did you have your own pets?

MS. GROOT: My own what?

MS. FERRIN: Pets.

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah I've always had cats.

MS. FERRIN: When did you start with the dogs?

MS. GROOT: When I felt old enough.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: To settle down?

[They laugh.]

MS. GROOT: Settle down, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So, in the late '80s I started dogs.

MS. FERRIN: So is that when you—I'm sorry, when did you move here? Is it mid-'90s?

MS. GROOT: Well, I moved into Evanston, Skokie-Evanston area, in '87 and then in this house in '96.

MS. FERRIN: So, did you move here after teaching, when teaching ended?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Did you intend for it to end? Or did you think it was just, you were —

MS. GROOT: No, I thought it was a temporary thing and that I would find another job teaching. At that time I was suffering from depression, so I didn't look for another job for a [inaudible].

MS. FERRIN: And—

[Animal noise.]

[END OF groot14_1of4_sd_track04_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: You mentioned depression; and a lot of artists have depression, deal with depression, and side-by-side with creativity.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Well, I had one of my colleagues, when I was teaching, harassed me for the last few years I was teaching and that caused a lot of depression. I got really burned out of teaching, and so the best thing to do was either to fight it or to quit. And I fought it for a while, but then it just didn't seem worth it. So I decided to quit and move away.

MS. FERRIN: [inaudible] moved on—

MS. GROOT: And then it was hard to do artwork, too, when you're depressed.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: So I stopped doing work for a while.

MS. FERRIN: What brought you back out?

MS. GROOT: Well, they have good medicine for it now.

[END OF groot14_1of4_sd_track05_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: They have good medicine for it?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, for depression.

MS. FERRIN: So that was in the '80s, and you just have been maintaining the medication?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

[END OF groot14_1of4_sd_track06_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: So with the medication you've been able to manage the depression—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —but sometimes it still comes and goes?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] Medication only works for a certain amount of time and then you have to try something else. So it varies. This last time it took me over two years to find something else, and that's a long time to be depressed.

MS. FERRIN: I know, I remember.

MS. GROOT: So—but now I have been on this medicine for a long time and it's been working good.

MS. FERRIN: You also have told me about insomnia and being a reader.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: What do you like to read?

MS. GROOT: Well, mainly mystery books and biographies, because they would help me fall asleep. And I feel, also, that it would help me find the way—do the perfect murder.

[They laugh.]

MS. GROOT: From these mystery books.

MS. FERRIN: Do you have a list of—

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: Do you have a list of ideas of who you would murder or—

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: —is it just sort of speculative? [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: No.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: You don't seem like the neighborhood murderer, but that's what they always say.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: Well, it's interesting to think about what you read and how that relates to some of the artwork. Can you talk a little bit about the stories that are told? Or—

MS. GROOT: About what?

MS. FERRIN: Your artwork. The pieces, either your own artwork or what you collect.

MS. GROOT: What I was doing in the '80s is these architectural [inaudible], where I made shadows of furniture in these buildings, and shadows of the walls of the buildings, and made them three-dimensional; so that if you looked at a chair you might see seven shadows from the chair depending upon your light source.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And whenever they overlap, the shadows would become thicker and thicker and thicker. And that's what I was working on for a long time. Now I'm trying something totally different. These are wall pieces. I'm working with found objects and decals. And quite different than I'm used to, but it's a good way to work.

MS. FERRIN: What I've seen, it looks like they're layered stories.

MS. GROOT: Yes, they are. Yeah. I have [Parrot squawks.]—Jack. I have a few series going. I have a hunting season going, and I have a clown series going, and a dog with tongues going. So there would be a photograph on a two-dimensional surface, and then part of the photograph would become three-dimensional; say, the tongue of a dog would stick out then from the two-dimensional flat surface.

MS. FERRIN: And you make about a dozen pieces a year?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. About that.

MS. FERRIN: Do you have a—so you have a place in Michigan where you— [A studio located in Holland, MI. Spent summers and holidays. Sisters also have cottages there. -LF/CG]

[END OF groot14_1of4_sd_track07_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: This is day two, and it's midmorning, and we're in one of Candice's collection rooms. And the room sort of—it's about 20 x 20 and has about 50 pieces maybe.

MS. GROOT: Easily.

MS. FERRIN: Maybe a few more than that. And right next to us is one of her newest acquisitions, the piece by Beth Lipman, and it has a broken piece, but that's intentional, so it was kind of a surprise, but then I realized it was intentional. It's glass from 2014?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And she was also the winner this year of the—

MS. GROOT: Last year, not this year, '14.

MS. FERRIN: —last year—of the first prize.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Had you looked at that piece before the jurying process or...?

MS. GROOT: No, I hadn't seen it before.

MS. FERRIN: Was it part of the jurying process?

MS. GROOT: I can't remember.

MS. FERRIN: So—

MS. GROOT: Because they're allowed to send 20 images.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, okay, so it could have been and then—

MS. GROOT: It could have been one of them.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. It's one of her more domestically scaled works.

MS. COYNE: This one was done this year, so it wasn't in the jury. This one wasn't in the jury, no.

MS. FERRIN: This is Lauren. Lauren, can you introduce yourself?

MS. COYNE: I'm Lauren Levato Coyne, and I have worked for Candice for four years, this week.

MS. FERRIN: Congratulations.

MS. COYNE: Yeah, introduced to Candice by Leslie Ferrin.

MS. FERRIN: Well, I was looking at our—the book this morning that we sent a note to Candice and "Sex Pots" by Paul Mathieu and the list of people, and it was Lauren. Hi, neighbor. So it does go back to that moment.

MS. COYNE: Yeah, it does. Yep.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. So one of the things I thought, working in this room, we could sort of look at the scope of the collection because there are so many different pieces that are integrated into living in the house here and that there's works that are older works and then the—like the Lipman, something very contemporary. They are the—what would you call this one, this category of the collection?

MS. COYNE: That's in the—that's in the clock.

MS. FERRIN: Clocks.

MS. COYNE: Would we put that in clocks or automatons?

MS. GROOT: It's a clock.

MS. COYNE: Clock, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So we have—there's a lot of clocks and watches and timepieces that —

MS. COYNE: Paintings.

MS. FERRIN: —paintings. Some other categories that are in the room here: the platters, and then painting of the platter, painted platters, and the automatons.

MS. COYNE: There's none of those in here.

MS. FERRIN: That's another room altogether.

MS. COYNE: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So is this room primarily the sculpture?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: What would be the earliest piece in this room?

MS. GROOT: An early piece? Well, the Ken Price is an early piece, over there on the floor. And the Patti Warashina is a real early piece.

MS. FERRIN: Were those pieces you bought early?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So those—

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: No, you—

MS. GROOT: They're early for the artist.

MS. FERRIN: Right, but you sought them out after—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —because you were filling in what you wanted for the collection.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: Well, Patti's are so fragile, it was—must have been hard to find that one.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: This one actually just arrived.

MS. FERRIN: The Patti Warashina?

MS. COYNE: That Patti Warashina. But which is the other one you're talking about?

MS. FERRIN: The Ken Price.

MS. COYNE: Yeah, this one just got here about a month or two months ago.

MS. FERRIN: And was that a piece you bought at auction?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So when you're looking at your—to purchase, you're looking at the artists' websites, their studios? Tell me a little bit of where—like, when you're trying to find something, when it's on your list.

MS. GROOT: Well, a lot of the work I was familiar with before; I just didn't own it. So, like, I knew about that series with Patti Warashina, and finally something came up on an auction block that allowed me to buy that.

MS. FERRIN: Did you see it originally in an exhibition or just knew that?

MS. GROOT: Just knew that it was part of a series that she did.

MS. FERRIN: And what was that series?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: What was the name of that series?

MS. GROOT: I don't know.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: I don't know what the name is, but she was doing these very small figures about women's work.

MS. FERRIN: And then the Price, tell me about why you chose that Ken Price to represent—

MS. GROOT: I like the geometry of it. It doesn't fit well with the collection, I don't think, but it's a good piece of his.

MS. FERRIN: And then the John Byrd, the —

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: John Byrd horse. Was that the first John Byrd you—no?

MS. GROOT: No, I have his—I—that's more recent than that. The Karen Gunderman on the wall, that's an older piece. So I bought that quite a few years ago.

MS. FERRIN: And what drew you to that particular piece?

MS. GROOT: I like what she did with the landscape. She visited Peru often because her husband is from Peru, and she would kind of mimic their landscape there in an abstract way.

MS. FERRIN: How old is that piece? What, '80s?

MS. GROOT: In the '80s.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. And the vase next to that, Grayson Perry?

MS. GROOT: The what?

MS. FERRIN: The vase, the vase. And how did that one come to you?

MS. GROOT: Well, that came through me—to me from an auction house. I really am smitten with his work. I like his work a lot. But I only have one piece right now.

MS. FERRIN: So he's on your list.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You were always seeing—wherever you see his name, you're aware of what's —

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —coming on the market. Can—

MS. GROOT: And the Rudy Autio is an older one, too.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, that's a gorgeous piece. So you bought that one early when it was first on the market, not—

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: —so through a gallery or when it was first made?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] through a gallery. Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And is that a Hanson?

MS. GROOT: The what?

MS. FERRIN: The figure.

MS. GROOT: Which one?

MS. FERRIN: The female nude. [Unknown. Not Hanson. -LF/CG]

MS. GROOT: The Jeanclos?

MS. COYNE: No, this is the Jean—the Jeanclos.

MS. GROOT: Oh, that one. Yeah, I don't know his name.

MS. COYNE: I don't either, actually.

MS. GROOT: But he always does women, and they're always nude, but I can't remember his name.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] And then we have Richard Shaw—

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —who we talked about yesterday. And how does that one fit in in terms of his time period or year? What—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —is that one you've had a long time?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I've had that a long time.

MS. FERRIN: That's "The Walking Man"?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And then one of my favorites in your collection is the Jack Earl.

MS. GROOT: Jack Earl. Yeah, that's a beauty. That's a real old piece.

MS. FERRIN: Well, it has the burned wood frame, and it's the all-white series.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And do you remember finding that piece or the moment—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, well, someone found it for me and thought I would like to have it, which I did.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: So was it from a private collection?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. And the Jeanclos, the sculpture there?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I have several of his pieces, too.

MS. FERRIN: That's gorgeous.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: Do you—

MS. GROOT: It's much larger than he usually works.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Do you remember when you found that piece?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. That was exciting.

MS. FERRIN: When was it?

MS. GROOT: Well, I found—I found this through an auction house.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] You do your homework.

MS. GROOT: I do my homework, yes.

MS. FERRIN: What—so it was a—the other pieces of his, were those through galleries that you purchased?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. But this one, you kept an eye out for a figural piece?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then the—

MS. GROOT: And they're very, very fragile, so it was very tenuous coming from—it had to come from Europe to here, and it made it all in one piece, so that was very good.

MS. FERRIN: So there are five men. One of them is birthing a head. Tell me a little bit about the five figures that have —

MS. GROOT: Oh, the Richard Stipl pieces?

MS. FERRIN: Richard?

MS. GROOT: Stipl.

MS. FERRIN: Stipl.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Well, he does these figurative, and they all kind of look like they're in pain a lot of the times. This particular piece, I really don't know what it's about. But I have several of his work.

MS. COYNE: When you found him, you bought a lot right away —

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: —like, as soon as you had discovered who he was.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Well, I waited, like, about four years before I bought a piece of his.

MS. COYNE: Oh, really?

MS. GROOT: Because I didn't find one that I really wanted.

MS. COYNE: Oh. And then you got three right in a row —

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: —and then two in the past year, that one and that one in there, bought them last year.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So that's the three men with the books.

MS. GROOT: Tattoos.

MS. FERRIN: Oh.

MS. COYNE: No, that's not the same artist, actually.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, okay.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, not this one.

MS. FERRIN: It's in the other room?

MS. COYNE: It's in the other room, and then there's one in the hallway and three pieces out in the entryway.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And where is [Stipl -LF/CG] from? He's—

MS. COYNE: He's Hungarian, I think, Hungarian or Armenian.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I think maybe you're right.

MS. COYNE: Yeah. He's from—he's from a former Soviet

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I knew that.

MS. COYNE: —country so...

MS. FERRIN: So it could mean war or starvation or—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —it could be anything. It could—it looks very Eastern European angst.

MS. COYNE: And he deals with a lot of that in his work, and that—he's—when we go into the other room, he has a lot of tattoos that are displayed in this sort of Russian gangster style, and they all have this that symbolism. And then he's done other work that has a lot of—like a black Sabbath, an unholy Sabbath sort of feel, too. So...

MS. GROOT: Some of his work was really erotic as well.

MS. COYNE: Oh, yeah, like the piece that has—uses his wife's hair as eyelashes—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: —long, long eyelashes. And it's really funny. Sometimes spiders will get into the eyelashes here in the house, and so [Laughs.]—

MS. GROOT: If you leave the doors open, the eyelashes move.

MS. FERRIN: Wow, that's creepy.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: So there's a glass piece down there.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, it's by Janusz [Walentynowicz -LF/CG]. It's, you know, one of the tools they use when they make glass, so he made his own tools.

MS. FERRIN: The anvil, yeah. And it has a rose in it?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: A rose is embedded in there or—oh, a flower?

MS. COYNE: Yeah, it's a rose.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So, you know, when you think about this period of time that you've been collecting, glass, you know, has had a real heyday, and you don't go for all that much in the way of glass.

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: So you have, in this room, these two pieces. Can you talk a little bit about what you've observed of glass while you've been collecting sculptures?

MS. GROOT: Well, the glass pieces I have mainly are from cast glass, and you can tell that they're originally made in clay, so it's—they're almost like they're clay; they're not really glass. And I also like the soft surface. I only have, I think, two shiny ones, but usually the shiny ones turn me off.

MS. FERRIN: And what about Beth [Lipman -LF/CG]'s—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, that's one of them.

MS. FERRIN: —since hers is so shiny, you know?

MS. GROOT: It's shiny, but it doesn't turn me off, because it's about destruction and that kind of thing. I think Janusz is a good example because I have several of his pieces, and they're all very—it's the soft surface. And when he—when he kept growing as an artist, he started making them shinier and shinier and shinier, and he really lost a lot of what was the joy of his work by doing that. It was too slick.

MS. FERRIN: He lost it for you or lost it for him or—

MS. GROOT: For me.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: But I think a lot of people felt that way.

MS. COYNE: You don't—

MS. FERRIN: So can—

MS. COYNE: —you don't have a lot of perfect surfaces in your collection.

MS. GROOT: A lot of what?

MS. COYNE: Perfect surfaces.

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. COYNE: You have a lot of marred and textural.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] Not really a lot of color, actually, if you think about it.

MS. COYNE: [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: Well, people like Lucero's work or Sergei's work or Jason Walker's work, where the form and color are integrated into the sculpture, but yeah. Or Russell Biles, he's colorful. Or Viola, you know.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: She's a riot of color. So talk a little bit about this Lisa Clague piece because she's been one that the foundation has been—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, she's won a couple awards—not the big one but a couple of second- and third-place awards. Well, I always am challenged by her work because she's got these animal and human parts put together. This one is quite a large one, and she's got all these very small pieces that—I don't—they're almost like fetishes, I guess.

MS. FERRIN: They're kind of like, yeah, body—you know, like a 3D tattoo or—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So when you were to look at the—review the submissions, and she didn't get the big prize, would this have—you just sort of learn a lot through going—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —through the submissions. And then the brain flips, and you become a collector, and even if they didn't—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —get the big prize, sometimes you acquire a big piece somewhere in that same time period. I think a lot of the artists have felt blessed, you know, in their support and, you know, that having to purchase a piece is almost, in some ways, you know, equal or, you know, in some cases, better because they know the piece is going into this collection—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —that sort of supports the foundations. Do you—when you're thinking, do you think or just respond

when, you know, you want to buy something or give—

MS. GROOT: I don't really know.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] It just happens organically?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Lisa Clague's -LF/CG] been very influential with a lot of young artists. I hesitate to say that they're copying her, but they are [Laughs.].

MS. FERRIN: Well, there are quite a few of your figural artists that have taught and, you know, you need to know the derivatives from the original, and that must happen in the process of doing the—reviewing submissions.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You can see who's been teaching.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. You can sometimes tell that.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Do you remember a point in time when there was little figural work being produced?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] At the beginning, there wasn't a real lot.

MS. FERRIN: So "the beginning" being the early '80s?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So when you were—

MS. GROOT: '88—'87, '88.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. So what happened, do you think?

MS. GROOT: I don't know what happened. But it's bound to come back. I mean, there's always been figurative work, so it has to come back sometime. Maybe people saw that, like, we did reward people who were doing the figural, like Judy Moonelis and Christine Federighi. Maybe that had an influence, too, on what people were doing. I don't know.

MS. FERRIN: They could see the support for their work. Well, I know when Sergei arrived in this country, it was around that same time period, the late—you know, the early '90s. And from my experience being on the front line, all of a sudden, I saw so much more work being done. And I think what you said about the foundation rewarding an area that had not had economic support and then with—you know, within the sort of SOFA environment where a lot of this work was being shown, it was—you know, it sort of flipped. So at the beginning of the '90s, it looked one way, and at the end of the '90s, it looked another.

MS. GROOT: Don't you think computers had something to do with it?

MS. FERRIN: Like what?

MS. GROOT: Because you—well, because you would see more work on computers, whereas before, you didn't really know what people were doing, but now it's easy to locate figurative work or installation work, that kind of thing.

MS. FERRIN: But I think the demand, though—it was like the chicken and egg, but I think you're right. So when did you start using the computer to research?

MS. GROOT: I don't really know. I put it off for a long time.

[They laugh.]

I did until they—there was a website, I think, for auctions, and that's when I decided to get a computer. It must have been about 2000, I would think.

MS. COYNE: Was that before or after you stopped going to Europe for the antique auctions?

MS. GROOT: It was before. But she can work in any scale, which I really liked, too. In the other room was just with this tiny little piece, and it's just beautiful. It's—

MS. FERRIN: Well, you also—so this is Lisa Clague we've been talking about. So a couple of the other artists who

you watch as the new work comes out and as the submissions come in, are there others in this room that—

MS. GROOT: Well, I keep track of Tip Toland and Paul Day because I like their work a lot.

MS. FERRIN: So the foundation was very important for Tip.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: When she won the big award—

MS. GROOT: That was very important. Well, you can see the size over there of that small piece there that she was working on; that's scale.

MS. FERRIN: It's like a puppet, yeah.

MS. GROOT: And then she turns something out like this, which is, you know, quite large.

MS. FERRIN: And why was that?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: Why did that happen?

MS. GROOT: It's because she—when she won the award, she bought a new kiln, and it was large.

MS. FERRIN: Simple as that.

MS. GROOT: That's all she really needed was a new kiln, and she just really exploded.

MS. FERRIN: So these are single pieces? So this is about—I don't know—five feet, like life-size.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And she went from dolls to life-size with foundation support.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, and she made some of them larger than life.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. And then somebody like Peter Vandenberg was working large all along but in stoneware. So there's a difference in their technologies, right?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So was it—Vandenberg was probably one of the earliest figural sculptures. Was he somebody you followed?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, he was part of the California scene. See, I followed that scene to see what people were doing because a lot of new things came out of it.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, it was very different than the East Coast scene.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And so the two-faced Obama?

MS. GROOT: That's Joseph Seigenthaler. He's one of my favorites. I have several of his pieces. He's a Chicago artist.

MS. COYNE: And he's won the award, too.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: And his figures are always larger than life.

MS. FERRIN: Scary sometimes.

MS. GROOT: Sometimes scary, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And Judy Moonelis, she's somebody that you really have loved and cared about, and you have a lot of her work. She's been a big part of the foundation's early history.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. It's hard to find her work.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, because she—I don't know if she's showing right now but—

MS. GROOT: I don't know.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. And how—you probably have a dozen pieces of hers out of—well, many, considering the—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And she's worked with the figure when her—I think it was her mother who was very sick.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: That piece that you have over the birds' cages was—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —about that period of time. So do you find that the purchasing of works that are figural—or do they come out of a personal experience for you? Do you—

MS. GROOT: Oh, yes, definitely.

MS. FERRIN: So your mother passed away from cancer. Her mother passed away from cancer.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Yeah. Well, Clifford Rainey's piece is really about that. And, you know, considering he was on the cover of the foundation catalogue, and the catalogue is dedicated to my mother and my sister, who both died of breast cancer—it was actually a coincidence. I didn't know that I was going to put that on the cover.

MS. FERRIN: And then when you looked at it afterwards, you—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —it's a piece with a single breast with a big rock underneath it. It's—yeah. That's interesting, in retrospect.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Do you have other pieces that deal with cancer that you—

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Point—you want to point at any that are around or...?

MS. GROOT: Well, we'd have to go to a different room. I don't know if they deal with cancer as much as, you know, some kind of illness, that kind of thing.

MS. FERRIN: Now, do you think that comes out of your sort of direct sympathy? Or when you're looking at it, does it ring a bell or...?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, sometimes.

MS. FERRIN: Before we leave to go to the next room, do you want to—because I'm plugged in, do you want to talk about the person who's just doing the Earthenware?

MS. GROOT: The what?

MS. FERRIN: The Earthenware, the two pieces there.

MS. GROOT: Oh, the Paul Day pieces?

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: Well, those are just really spectacular. The way in which he deals with the space is just something else. And no one's doing that now.

MS. FERRIN: So they're very dimensional, very accurate. They're—

MS. GROOT: All in perspective and—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, the single-point perspective. And where is he from and how—

MS. GROOT: He's in England. He's from England.

MS. FERRIN: So does he send you pictures as he completes work now?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I contacted him—well, these pieces I bought through Garth Clark, but I contacted Paul this year, actually, because I wanted another piece of his. So then he sent me slides and so forth—not slides, images.

MS. FERRIN: [laughs] Now, about this Jack Earl, tell me a little bit about—because that's such a noted piece, this Jack Earl—

MS. GROOT: Oh, the Jack Earl?

MS. FERRIN: that you have. She's got a dog—

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: —and a window on the back. It's one of his "Dosey Does."

MS. GROOT: Little boy.

MS. FERRIN: So you have—so you really have his whole career kind of covered.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Maybe 20 pieces? And he's—

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Why don't I unplug, and we'll go to the next room?

[END OF groot14_2of4_sd_track03_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: Oh, really?

MS. COYNE: —[all the art handlers who come -LF/CG] they're all—yeah, because they say, "I've never seen one of these in the Midwest. I only see their work in California." And then I always forget the name of the duo that made this.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, Chapman brothers.

MS. COYNE: That's it. Yeah. Jake and Dinos Chapman?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: Right? And she's got the porn that goes with this upstairs. [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: Yeah. We have to get that recording put on a CD—

MS. COYNE: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: —so I can see it.

MS. COYNE: [Affirmative.] Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So explain what this is. It's a head with a penis nose and it looks like it's beheaded. And it's a—how did you come by this piece?

MS. GROOT: I don't remember, tell the truth.

[They laugh.]

MS. GROOT: It was a long time ago.

MS. COYNE: But it comes with a print of a section of the porn that it was used to make. It actually—

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So it was a prop or something?

MS. COYNE: No, no. That head had sex with a woman. [Laughs.] So—

MS. FERRIN: Okay.

MS. COYNE: —it was used as an actual porn video. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: Okay. So we're in another room which is filled with sculpture.

MS. GROOT: Living room.

MS. FERRIN: The living room. And there's no furniture. It's just sculpture—

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: —and paintings.

MS. GROOT: There's one chair.

MS. FERRIN: One chair.

MS. COYNE: Musical chair.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: So as you go into this room, there's a pair of vases by Steven Lee; and it's on either side of a wall of clocks, timepieces. And those are—are they a certain category within the collection or mixed timepieces?

MS. GROOT: What do you mean?

MS. FERRIN: These—are these all from one—

MS. GROOT: Oh, they're all clocks.

MS. FERRIN: They're all clocks.

MS. GROOT: And they all are animated. So the dogs—

MS. FERRIN: Oh, the tongue goes in and out.

MS. GROOT: And the tail. So they all move in some way, like his eyes and jaw move and she's got—

MS. COYNE: And I think they're all from the 1800s.

MS. FERRIN: So where did you—how did you get started with the clocks?

MS. GROOT: Well, there's something about time. I was always obsessed with it.

MS. FERRIN: That you were going to be late?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. And I'm always on time. I'm never late.

[They laugh.]

MS. GROOT: But I like to use that move. They kind of—they have kind of a gimmick.

MS. FERRIN: And this is?

MS. GROOT: It's a glove stretcher.

MS. FERRIN: A glove stretcher?

MS. GROOT: You put it on your gloves.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And it's a man—

MS. COYNE: Fornicating with a pig.

MS. FERRIN: Put it into words, that's what it is. [Laughs.]

MS. COYNE: Made out of ivory.

MS. FERRIN: Made out of ivory, yes. Some elephant died for this. It says, "Roger, the pig." So when you were purchasing these, were these on the trips to Europe?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And you would go on a bus?

MS. GROOT: I'd go to Amsterdam, or I'd go to the Netherlands, and also England. And especially in England they had a lot of clocks to look at.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And watches.

MS. FERRIN: So were these specialized for clock collectors? Trips—

MS. GROOT: No. [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: Or just antique collectors?

MS. GROOT: Everyone would collect their own things.

MS. FERRIN: And they would—you'd be on a bus and they just—

MS. GROOT: Go to all these shows that they would have. Antique shows.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Did that sort of feed these collections?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Definitely.

MS. FERRIN: And you once did the internet and the computer, you were comfortable there. You didn't have to travel, but—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You were able—and you knew all these dealers?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] And some of the dealers still look for me.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So if they see an erotic pocket watch, they'll give me a call about it.

MS. FERRIN: Do you think you have the largest pocket watch collection of erotic pocket watches?

MS. GROOT: I don't think so.

MS. FERRIN: No? There's other people that—

MS. GROOT: I think there's probably some other people that have them. But it is large.

MS. FERRIN: How many pieces do you think you—

MS. COYNE: Thousands.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. COYNE: Thousands.

MS. FERRIN: Of watches and clocks, erotic—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. COYNE: Thousands. Yeah. The watches alone are probably near 2,000 and the—but I'm just guessing, because there are still so many that are uncatalogued. Then the small, erotic ivory pieces are—you've got hundreds of them.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So things like the glove stretcher?

MS. COYNE: Yeah. And those are mostly on display, so the ones that you see in the hallway.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. COYNE: There aren't really too many of those tucked away. They're mostly all out. So those are in the hundreds, but the watches are just—there's so many watches.

MS. FERRIN: So, in terms of continuing with collecting, that part's still very active, also? I mean, you're pursuing new—more of these, alongside of the sculpture—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —alongside of the automatons. So basically it's one brain, not segmented, you know? Like, I'm trying to segment it so I can understand it. But you don't really—

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: —you know, it's like, it's all part of the same point of view.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: And it all sort of makes sense. Like if these glove stretchers are right next to a pair of, you know, antique gloves that are made by a contemporary artist, Ellen Greene, who puts vintage tattoo imagery on it. So these themes sort of repeat themselves even within the huge collection—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: —[inaudible] just within a small, tiny area.

MS. FERRIN: It's almost like your art became the collection. You moved from being an artist producing—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: —and that interest of yours of putting images together of the shadows, and building on the shadows, you just transferred that.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Did that happen, you know, when you sort of stopped at making the artwork?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. I think that some of the pieces reflect that. In that, like Steven Lee's pieces, because they deal with a destruction, and some of my pieces dealt [inaudible] architectural; they dealt with destruction, usually time causing them to destroy themselves, that kind of thing. And Peter Voulkos, of course.

MS. FERRIN: So that time period of—you know, when you came home to Chicago, left teaching, the Peter Voulkos was one of those purchases?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Is one of these platters one of them?

MS. GROOT: The top one. That's the first piece I bought.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And then during that time, did you—were you collecting all categories? You know, and that's when the European trips started too?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So what gave you the permission? How did you end up giving yourself permission to—

MS. GROOT: Well, for one thing, I hurt my back. And the way to get out of that, you know, is you have to exercise, and I'm not very good at disciplined exercise, so I'd go to flea markets.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And you walk all day long—

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: —and that's how I strengthened my back, and that's how I started collecting. You just don't walk past stuff, you have to collect.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] So—and then walking the gallery area in Chicago?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So did you, you know, just sort of do it and not think about the future? Or—and you just did it from purchase to purchase, or did you start a list and start—

MS. GROOT: No, I just bought what I thought I fell in love with.

MS. FERRIN: But now you have a list?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And you're filling back in. But this is 20 years later.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: The beginning was just a passion for unusual—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —objects, sculptural, figural.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And now, it's looking back, you start to see the stories that have been told through your choices.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So let's look at this Arneson, because he's one of your most—there's a lot of Arneson.

MS. COYNE: There are, yeah. I think there's around 60—

MS. FERRIN: 60? Yeah.

MS. COYNE: —or so pieces now, because she's been really acquiring these actively. The small busts.

MS. FERRIN: Small busts? And those are—they're not additions, but they all are about the same size. But they're all different.

MS. GROOT: Well, I think he used one mold for it.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] But he moved that mold around a lot.

MS. GROOT: But he changed it.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So tell me a little bit about why Arneson or—

MS. GROOT: Well, when I was studying in ceramics, he was the top guy. He and Voulkos, of course—

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: —were the top people. I really liked his sense of humor. I think you can look at my collection and

you can see a lot—that you need a sense of humor—

[They laugh.]

MS. GROOT: —to walk through it.

MS. FERRIN: Well, I think he's—you know, I mean, if you were to say it was Arneson and other people that reminded you of Arneson.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: I mean there's so many people here who are dealing with his, you know—you know, the finger in the eye.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You know? And I think he was that leader, for, you know—for not just you, as an artist at your time, but, you know, countless.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. Then—

MS. GROOT: He was a big influence on so many people.

MS. FERRIN: And he died—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —young, of cancer.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then Voulkos, you know, he's sort of unique in the collection. You talked about the destruction, the kind of the—you know, the slashing and the poking. When you look at some of the pieces that are vessels, is that something that you've been carrying through?

MS. GROOT: Well, I think the destruction part of it, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You have a beautiful—

MS. GROOT: There are several pieces, I think.

MS. FERRIN: You have the stacked—the stack in the other room of his.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Is there anything else you've been wanting to fill in with his work?

MS. GROOT: Not really. I do like his plates a lot.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Every once in a while I'll buy a plate of his. But those are the things I'm more interested in.

MS. FERRIN: And that's a Marilyn Levine pair of shoes?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And tell me a little bit about her, because she's sort of in that Bay area.

MS. GROOT: Well, that has to do with destruction too, in that they're old.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And they really look old.

MS. FERRIN: Do you have her—anything on your wish list for her? Or—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, a jacket. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: You don't have a jacket?

MS. GROOT: I don't have a jacket. [Laughs.] I have gloves and I have boots. And I have cups, but I don't have a jacket.

MS. COYNE: And a suitcase.

MS. FERRIN: And a suitcase?

MS. COYNE: And a suitcase.

MS. GROOT: A suitcase, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And she died of cancer.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Well, ceramics is not the least toxic form of art. [Laughs.] Silica can be a trigger, so. Okay. So now you have this giant Peter Gourfain. Now he's somebody that, unlike Arneson, very few people know about his work.

MS. GROOT: I know. Isn't that strange?

MS. FERRIN: Have you ever been to his studio?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: In Bedford-Stuy? He's got—he was very active in the '60s and '70s.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] Now he just does prints.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. But he still teaches at Greenwich house.

MS. GROOT: Oh, I didn't know that.

MS. FERRIN: Do you have any of his carved wood? Or—

MS. GROOT: No. [Negative.] I just have the *Ohio Pot*. And oh my God, I have a hand pot [ph], too.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: The hand sticks [ph].

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] So, Christine Federighi, tell me a little bit about her; because she was one of the early recipients and you were very—

MS. GROOT: Yeah. She was the second person who won the grant. I like her work because it's very anonymous.

MS. FERRIN: Anonymous?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: It's figural but—

MS. GROOT: It's anonymous.

MS. FERRIN: And Adrian Arleo, same with her?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So Christine [Federighi -LF/CG], did she help you sort of conceive of the grant?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. She was on the board of the foundation for many years.

MS. FERRIN: And how did that happen? Was it her idea? You guys—

MS. GROOT: We just hit it off.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah?

MS. GROOT: And I respected her opinion a lot.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: She helped me jury sometimes. And so I knew she wasn't crazy.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: She had a good eye?

MS. GROOT: And she had a good sense of art. And she died of cancer.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Young, very young.

MS. GROOT: Very young.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. The cat down here, is this—whose work is the cat?

MS. GROOT: This one?

MS. FERRIN: That one. Yeah.

MS. GROOT: That's Heffernon. [Gerald Heffernon, "Sphinxster" -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: Heffernon?

MS. GROOT: Jerry—not Jerry, I can't remember his first name.

MS. COYNE: I need to look it up. Which I can, real quick.

MS. FERRIN: That's okay. So I was actually thinking it might be a Lucero piece that was an oddball one; so it's not.

MS. COYNE: No, it's not. No.

MS. FERRIN: But looks like you have about—

MS. GROOT: [Heffernon -LF/CG] actually was a journalist, so he produced this catalog of all his work. And it was like he did a dog series. Some of them actually moved.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: They're all made out of mixed-media materials.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And the catalog actually was more interesting than the art itself.

[They laugh.]

MS. COYNE: Oh, that's funny.

MS. GROOT: But this a really nice one. I have some of his dogs.

MS. FERRIN: So with Lucero, you have the poodle, the yarn poodle, and the yarn pair of—

MS. COYNE: Dog casseroles, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —casserole-headed dogs. And then a cast cement dog, here with a ceramic head.

MS. COYNE: And several other pieces too.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. He's another one that you've continued to—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —acquire over the years. He just, sort of, fits?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, he fits very well.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. The destruction, the dogs, the careful painting. This piece here—

MS. GROOT: Gertraud—

MS. FERRIN: Mohwald?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: She passed away.

MS. GROOT: Hit by a bus.

MS. FERRIN: Bus. Yeah.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. I thought of her as a woman Arneson.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. And she's European.

MS. GROOT: How she uses different materials in her work. I have several of her pieces, too.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: I like it a lot.

MS. FERRIN: And then Akio Takamori.

MS. GROOT: I have several of his pieces, too.

MS. FERRIN: Well, he certainly fits.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.] Yes, he does. He's got the erotica; he's got the destruction. They're humorous many times.

MS. FERRIN: Humor? Yep. He's kind of straight-faced when you meet him, but there's a lot of humor.

MS. GROOT: I heard him give a lecture one time. And at the end of it, everyone looked confused. And finally someone said, "Well, Akio, aren't you going to talk about the erotica of your work?" And he got kind of nervous and he said, "Well, I didn't know my audience."

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: So Akio, Chris Gustin, Kurt Weiser, John Gill, Andrea Gill, they were all in the same class at Kansas City Art Institute. Do you remember when you started to see their work? Do you recall that time period?

MS. GROOT: No, I don't remember that. I think I was probably in graduate school or I was teaching—

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: —and that was very isolating, so I probably didn't see it.

MS. FERRIN: So it's only afterwards that you have sort of—

MS. GROOT: I mean, I read a lot.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: That's how I caught up.

MS. FERRIN: Well, they—it's interesting, I've been doing a little research into the importance of certain exhibitions; so one of them was *Objects: USA* and the other was *Young Americans: Clay/Glass*.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. I do remember those.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. They were influential.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And the artists themselves, you know, if you ask Richard Shaw now, you know, or Ron Nagle, or, you know—

MS. GROOT: [inaudible]—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: —he was there. So—

MS. FERRIN: So do you remember going to those? Visiting, seeing them in person?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Just sort of in retrospect, in the book?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: What about the *Young Americans*? Because you would have been a young American at that time.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, but a little too young. [Laughs.] I do remember those two.

MS. FERRIN: Did you apply for them as an artist?

MS. GROOT: [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: No? Just in looking at their work and—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: But you don't remember necessarily seeing them specifically? Those shows.

MS. GROOT: I do remember *Young Americans*.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Seeing those.

MS. FERRIN: And which venue? It traveled.

MS. GROOT: I don't remember that.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. I looked at the list, and I was like, I don't remember where I saw that.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: But it was interesting, sort of reviewing who was selected at that time—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: —and asking a couple of artists about it. So, okay, we have Lydia Buzio here, the platter and the jar over here.

MS. GROOT: The what?

MS. FERRIN: The jar. Lydia Buzio.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.] It's a beautiful piece.

MS. FERRIN: Gorgeous.

MS. COYNE: Do you need an extension cord?

MS. FERRIN: That would probably be helpful.

MS. COYNE: Yeah. I'll get you an extension cord. I have a question though, before I forget it. You have said before that you buy the work that you like, that really strikes you. Is there anything that you didn't like when you first saw it, and then you came around to it and you had to have it?

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah.

MS. COYNE: Do you know any, off the top of your head?

MS. GROOT: [Tip Toland's -LF/CG], the three figures.

MS. COYNE: Oh, that's right. Yeah, you said that.

MS. GROOT: So, I went to the show opening for that, and I didn't really care for them. But then I saw it in a different area, and I fell in love with them. So—

MS. COYNE: And that's when you bought that.

MS. GROOT: It's a good example.

MS. COYNE: Yeah. Yeah. And those are significant.

MS. GROOT: But that happens sometimes.

MS. FERRIN: So the piece over there with the baseball bat?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. COYNE: Oh that's—

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] That's a funny story.

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: The piece with the baseball bat.

MS. GROOT: Is a funny story?

MS. FERRIN: Remember you told me about trying to buy that piece?

MS. GROOT: Well, I tried to buy a piece from the gallery and it kept coming broken.

MS. COYNE: Three times.

MS. GROOT: Three times. They didn't know how to pack them.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. COYNE: This is a consolation piece.

MS. GROOT: So then I finally got this one, which is actually a lot nicer than the ones I was looking at before.

MS. FERRIN: Somebody was watching out for you.

MS. GROOT: He should be at Miami.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. So it's a baseball bat going through a vessel. And it's standing in this room in a very threatening sort of pose, because everything in this room is fragile. This piece here?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] That's an older piece, too. Can't remember her name. She's in New Mexico.

MS. FERRIN: Gina Bobrowski.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, Bobrowski.

MS. FERRIN: I think she was in one of those *Young American* shows.

MS. GROOT: She was what?

MS. FERRIN: She was in one of the *Young Americans*.

MS. GROOT: Oh, was she?

MS. FERRIN: I think so. Do you remember where that one came from or when you—just it's been here for a long

time?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: Been here a long time.

MS. FERRIN: And Margaret— [name may be incorrect -LF/CG]

MS. GROOT: I liked her glaze use.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Because it's loose?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, expressive.

MS. FERRIN: You have Margaret Keelan over here and she's figural. The doll figure.

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: What drew you to that one?

MS. GROOT: Well, again it has that destruction, because it's—the wood is rotting.

MS. FERRIN: But it's ceramic.

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: It's ceramic.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, it is ceramic.

MS. FERRIN: But it looks like rotting wood.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then next to that is a cooler. Tell me what this cooler is with the beer, the beer cooler.

MS. GROOT: Well, the beer is sitting on a cooler.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: [inaudible]. The beer cans are made out of liposuction [fat -LF/CG]—

MS. FERRIN: Ew. [Laughs.] So it's about plastic surgery?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And where did that one come from?

MS. GROOT: It's one of our artists who won the grant.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, okay. So—

MS. GROOT: Tim Blum.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. And it came in through the process, the exhibition?

MS. GROOT: When he had a show, he had—this is one of the pieces that was in the show of his. So I bought that one.

MS. FERRIN: And that was early.

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: Early in the foundation.

MS. GROOT: Yes. [Affirmative.] Yeah, he was very young.

MS. FERRIN: At the time?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: I think I read something that maybe—did he pass away, or did the other—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: He did also?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So you're dealing with artists who are dealing with major life issues as part of their work, and Cindy Kolodziejski is one of those. This is a piece that was made after her husband—

MS. GROOT: Killed himself.

MS. FERRIN: And he hung himself. And this is a piece that is an armature holding a vase as if it was a hung vase.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Her work's always been powerful.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Do you have other works of hers?

MS. GROOT: No, I don't. I wish I did, because I like some of her erotic pieces that she had made. But I just don't see them.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. I don't think she's worked that much since the tragedy.

MS. GROOT: That could be.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. And you have a wonderful piece that—Myungjin Kim.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: The bird with the dead bird behind it.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, that's a sweet one.

MS. FERRIN: It's sort of sweet and destructive at the same time.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: You've told me about pieces that you loved that you haven't been able to live with though.

MS. GROOT: Which one?

MS. COYNE: And you didn't buy them, because you couldn't live with it. Beth Cavener [ph] is one of them. There was—was it—*The Wolf and the Bunny*, I think? There was some piece that was about rape, I think, and you said you couldn't—you loved it, but you couldn't live with it—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: —and then—so you didn't buy it.

MS. GROOT: I had that problem with Arneson, too, and I kicked myself. Because when he had cancer, and he was doing these large busts that dealt with the cancer, and they're gorgeous pieces, but I knew I couldn't live with it.

MS. FERRIN: Because it reminded you of—

MS. GROOT: Of my mother.

MS. FERRIN: —your mother and your sister.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.] Now I wish I had one, but—

MS. FERRIN: And so those—so sort of violence against women or cancer was an area that you stayed away from purchasing, but—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And now you're feeling a little less—like, you know, that part's been worn down—

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: —by collecting. I'm going to pause this, and we'll get the extension cord.

MS. GROOT: Break time?

MS. FERRIN: Yep. You want to have a cigarette?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: Do you want to go have a cigarette and then we'll start up again?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Okay.

[END OF groot14_2of4_sd_track04_r.mp3]

MS. GROOT: [Lisa Clague -LF/CG] had that one in Milwaukee, and she had the other two pieces. No one would buy the other two pieces, because they saw this.

MS. FERRIN: Hey, it happens.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: People fall in love with what they see. So Chris Antemann—and these two pieces look great next to each other.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So Chris—when do you remember meeting and first seeing Chris's work?

MS. GROOT: Do I have a what?

MS. FERRIN: When do you remember meeting and seeing Chris's work?

MS. GROOT: Well, it must have been at a SOFA show.

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember her period with the goats and—

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: —the Wild West?

MS. FERRIN: No, I don't remember those.

MS. FERRIN: So it was more of the figurines, the European.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I do remember that.

MS. FERRIN: That's where—that's where your knowledge of her work started?

MS. GROOT: Started, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And Lisa Clague, was that also at SOFA, the introduction?

MS. GROOT: No, I think through the foundation.

MS. FERRIN: So basically, these exhibits that we were talking about, the older ones, were these big surveys.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And then SOFA and then [NCECA -LF/CG] became a more regular place—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: for you to see work.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] Because Chicago doesn't have a lot of clay galleries. They don't have any. So it would have to be at other places that I could see them. But I also saw them through the foundation because people would enter, and I'd get to know a lot of the people who were entering and their work was just, you know, fabulous.

MS. FERRIN: Do you think—was that part of your intent was to sort of have an opportunity to see a lot of material?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You had the—it was sort of a combination of factors, but, you know, as the foundation—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —continued year to year, you became able to—and then you'd go to the fairs or the exhibits and be able to put a face with that—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So to a young—

MS. GROOT: And I also read a lot, so that also helped. I couldn't see the thesis in person, but I saw them, you know, through magazines and so forth.

MS. FERRIN: So what would you tell a young artist who was aiming to get in the collection? What would you say? How would—

MS. GROOT: Just keep working and keep working.

MS. FERRIN: And keep applying.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, definitely. Some of the people have applied—I think one of the winners has applied every single year until she got it. [Christina Bothwell -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: So that's—I mean, that takes guts and a lot of strength.

MS. FERRIN: Because of dealing with rejection?

MS. GROOT: Yeah [Affirmative.].

MS. FERRIN: So when she finally got it, what was the trigger for you, having seen all this other...?

MS. GROOT: Well, she—throughout the years, she just grew. Her work grew, and it just became better and better every single year. And since I go through all the slides at one point, I could see this progression. It was a very nice progression of what her work was going through. And eventually, I think she hit—just hit it on the nail.

MS. FERRIN: And did you, then—during the course of this time, would you have purchased her work?

MS. GROOT: No, not at that point, I didn't.

MS. FERRIN: So when she got the award—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I try—I try to get the first place winners—I try to get a piece of theirs if I can, if I can find the room.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: Some of the installation people, it's kind of hard.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: So...

MS. FERRIN: Have you ever thought of getting another space to reflect the growing scale of your interest or...?

MS. GROOT: It's real difficult because I like living with the art. I think that's important.

MS. FERRIN: You've always said that, that, you know, having the ability to walk around and look at it is...

MS. GROOT: Yeah. So that's why I move things around a lot. Some things I can't move, but I do move things around a lot because I want to keep seeing it instead of—because it's just a very small storage space upstairs that I put pieces.

MS. FERRIN: So David Regan, he's another one you followed for years.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Yeah, I like his work a lot. Black and white.

MS. FERRIN: And it's sort of a—

MS. GROOT: And the humor.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah? And the relationship of two dimension to three dimension—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —The painted surface and the—

MS. GROOT: And that's what's happening in my work, too, the two dimensional becoming three dimensional.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. That piece above it, is that an Arneson?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. It's of his house on Alice Street. He did a whole series of Alice Street houses, and that's just one of them.

MS. FERRIN: And then in this room, there are a couple of the glass pieces. Janusz?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: With the bound figure, like you said, being able to—it's transparent but...

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And what about this other one here?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. I forget who made that.

MS. COYNE: Which one? The—that's a design group from Italy. It's a very long, cumbersome Italian name [Laughs.] that I can certainly look up. [Gagliardi Art System -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: But it's a hairy man and—it's, like, a doll-sized hairy man in a cast glass or plastic?

MS. COYNE:

It's acrylic.

MS. FERRIN: Acrylic.

MS. COYNE: Yeah, it's suspended in acrylic so it looks like a formaldehyde—

MS. FERRIN: Man.

MS. COYNE: —man. Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And how would you have found that piece?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: How would you have found that piece?

MS. GROOT: I found that at Art Basel, Miami.

MS. FERRIN: When did you start going to Basel?

MS. GROOT: About five years ago.

MS. FERRIN: And that's been a regular for you?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. It's just fun to look at so much art. They don't have a lot of clay there, actually, but it's just great just to see so much stuff and new stuff.

MS. FERRIN: And old.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Oh, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You've found some [artists -LF/CG] there.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And you've been watching the market change.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Do you think you'll see a lot more clay there this year?

MS. GROOT: Maybe. We should, I think.

MS. FERRIN: Well, with the Whitney and—

MS. GROOT: Because of what happened in New York—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: —at the Whitney and stuff, so it'll be interesting to see if it is.

MS. FERRIN: So basically, your travels each year are in [NCECA -LF/CG]—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: —the shows in New York, when you can get to them—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —the SOFA show here—

MS. GROOT: And Basel, Miami.

MS. FERRIN: —and Basel, Miami, and anything else?

MS. GROOT: Just through the foundation, I travel to—we meet in a different city every year. So I usually check the galleries out, too, but I usually don't buy stuff, because it's kind of separated from the foundation, from my collection, that kind of thing. But that's pretty much it. That's enough.

MS. FERRIN: That's a year of travel.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then you spend your summers working on your own work.

MS. GROOT: Yes. Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You've really had a regular pattern, too, doing this same thing each year, and you've been able to watch a lot of things change gradually—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —that way.

MS. GROOT: It used to be all the clay artists, what they wanted to do with the grant money is they wanted to

work in bronze. And then it used to be they wanted to do glass. And now it's the 3D printing.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, yeah?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Everyone wants to do that. I'm not sure how they would use it but...

MS. FERRIN: Maybe to make molds of things they couldn't've made otherwise.

MS. GROOT: I guess.

MS. FERRIN: I'm still not clear, myself, on how it works.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I'm not either.

MS. FERRIN: But you've been seeing people apply and say that in their applications for what they want to do?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So originally, it was clay people wanting to use the funds to create a bronze edition?

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: And what's your opinion of that?

MS. GROOT: Well, I don't really like the material.

MS. FERRIN: Bronze?

MS. GROOT: Bronze.

MS. FERRIN: Because...?

MS. GROOT: Some of the—some pieces are nice with the—if they have experience with the patinas. But otherwise, it's so technical-oriented that I think it takes away from the image. And just to do it just so that you can have an edition, I think, it's ridiculous, too.

MS. FERRIN: So if somebody were to apply with that as their reasoning for what they—their project proposal, do you throw it away because you don't—

MS. GROOT: Well, no, it depends on their reason, so that would work. If the work was real good, then he would get into the top whatever numbers.

MS. FERRIN: So you start—when you start reviewing, it's just the work.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then you get into the—

MS. GROOT: The application form and what they want to do with the money.

MS. FERRIN: And so when people who said they wanted to do it—work in glass, did you have the same feeling about that as bronze?

MS. GROOT: No, I didn't. I think that would have changed their work a lot, and change is good, so I didn't think that. But with bronze, I mean, you can just do the duplication—or resin, too. That's another one that they want to work with.

MS. FERRIN: So it sounds to me that you like it if it moves their—

MS. GROOT: Work forward.

MS. FERRIN: —creative process.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Not for the market.

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. COYNE: She's thrown—she has thrown out applications that were in the top 10. Like, they were ready to go—or the top 40, I guess. They were ready to go jury, but then there was one artist who said something really stupid that—what was it—that he wanted to use the grant money, basically, to pay for a museum exhibition. It wasn't to make the work for the exhibition, but it was the weight—

MS. GROOT: It was to pay for shipping. That's another thing.

MS. COYNE: Yeah, and it was a—

MS. GROOT: And you know they're going to ship it anyway [Laughs.].

MS. FERRIN: Right.

MS. COYNE: Yeah. It was a very substantial artist that she had wanted to get the award, and out they went.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: So in the—so as each year goes by, you see these trends of what artists are thinking about in terms of the new technologies.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: I remember there was a time you and I talked about photography and video.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And there was a moment that you started to move into being able to purchase specific—or, you know—talk a little bit about photography and video and the way your mind has changed about that.

MS. GROOT: Oh, it has changed, but they—I don't know how to put it. I think a better example is with the computer and using photographs with the computer or designing what they're going to be making. One winner, John Powers, who won a couple years ago, I think his work is all computer generated. He even can control his saw with the computer. Things like that—that just blew me away. I don't remember where I was going with that.

MS. FERRIN: Well, I was thinking like when we first would go to the fairs, I would say, what are you looking at? You know, there's so much photography. There's so much video. And in the beginning, it was—you were just absorbing the information.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And now I see, you know, that the foundation is, you know, video incorporated into sculpture, or in your collecting, there's, you know, certain bits of photography here that fit some category of destruction or figure.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: Tim Tate's probably the best example of that.

MS. GROOT: Who?

MS. COYNE: Tim Tate.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And with Tim, you know, he's such a big personality, did he—was he part of changing the way you thought of this or...?

MS. GROOT: I think so, yeah, because I have changed a little bit in my like or my dislike with glass, and I think Tim had something to do with that.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: And how video can be part of a piece. It doesn't have to be the only part of the piece.

MS. FERRIN: We're standing by a piece, I remember, when you—

MS. GROOT: [Dirk Staschke -LF/CG].

MS. FERRIN: I remember standing in the room when we were at Bellevue Arts Museum [in 2010 -LF/CG] with some of the collectors. You weren't able to come on that trip. And I think—I don't remember how the information came across to me, but—and I don't remember even if I was a part of it, but this piece was hanging on the wall. The show was fantastic. Many of the artists whose work is in your collection was in that—was in the show. I mean, it was called "Clay Throwdown!" from the Pacific Northwest. And, you know, Akio was part of the jury. And you know, just it was such a cross-section of people, and they were creating new works for this exhibition. And I just remember that moment when [the purchase took place, "No Strings Attached" (2012), -LF/CG] Lauren sort of told me how important that was to him as an artist. And then he went on to [receive the People's Choice Award and the foundation's third-place award in 2012, which helped fund the solo show at Bellevue Arts Museum -LF/CG]—maybe tell—of that show—I mean, there was some major works in that show.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, he did. So do you remember his early work?

MS. FERRIN: Yes.

MS. GROOT: They were little Doug Jecks.

[Dogs barking.]

MS. COYNE: Now the dogs are going to start—pause. I'm just going to make everybody shut up.

MS. FERRIN: His early works were like a piece of an arm sticking out with a—

MS. GROOT: Well, that's actually later. He had Doug Jeck as a teacher, and the work looked exactly like Doug Jeck, same kind of figure, same size, everything. So it was nice when I saw this show. Then I'd seen another show—it slip casting with the fruit and so forth—that I didn't really care for. But when I saw this show, you know, you can see he just finally became himself instead of doing the stuff that other people were doing.

MS. FERRIN: So you'd been watching [Staschke -LF/CG]. Doug Jeck—

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: —was—you know, had been a recipient of funding. And you probably have some wonderful pieces of Doug's.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So you were watching [Staschke -LF/CG] grow. And then when this show at Bellevue came along—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —it was—. So then he went up—

MS. GROOT: I follow a lot of artists, especially the young ones.

MS. FERRIN: Well, they're, I'm sure, you know—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —unaware of that. Because of the sort of anonymous nature of a foundation looking at their materials, they don't know how important that is for you in terms of watching them grow.

MS. GROOT: Beth Cavener is another one. When she applied to the foundation, she was actually—she couldn't use the work. It was work she did at a student—it was all figurative. And it was wonderful figuratives because I remember looking at the work and then looking at her application and figured out she's still in college

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: —and throwing the application away [Laughs.].

MS. FERRIN: And then picking up the phone probably. So when [Staschke -LF/CG] got the award, it was, I think, right around the same time period, so it was almost like the award and your purchase went side by side for him.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And that was at some point in his career that there was a lot going up and down?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Do you recall what that was?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. COYNE: I do but...

MS. FERRIN: Well, Lauren, why don't you fill this one in?

[They laugh.]

MS. COYNE: He was—because, for whatever reason, his studio was extremely expensive, and it was a challenge for them to continue at with the studio. And they had had some personal crises that I don't know if I'm at liberty to talk about, but some family—deep family tragedy. And producing the show at Bellevue put them in a substantial amount of debt, so, like, it was—he was probably going to stop making work because of the amount of debt, but then Candice purchased this piece, and it literally saved his career because he was able to get out of that debt.

MS. FERRIN: And then he was given the People's Award and—

MS. COYNE: Right.

MS. FERRIN: —needed to produce a whole show.

MS. COYNE: A whole show, right.

MS. FERRIN: And the award was just the show, not a year's worth of—

MS. COYNE: Right.

MS. FERRIN: —support to make the show.

MS. COYNE: Right. And that's the show that put him into debt. I believe that the show put him in debt. So—but then he got out of it. And I just recently saw his studio in Portland because they moved, and it's a beautiful, beautiful studio, and he's starting to make work now that is destructed so—I don't know if you've seen the new—his new stuff, but it—there's a lot of destruction happening in it.

MS. GROOT: I'm excited to see his new work.

MS. FERRIN: Well, he—so many artists, I think, have that same story, that you were both buying and awarding work and that their careers would—I mean, it's remarkable—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —you know, to look at the history of these younger artists and how they were sort of fed through these two sources of funding.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And that's a great success story there. Beth [Cavener -LF/CG] is another one, and I think Chris [Antemann -LF/CG] is another one.

MS. COYNE: And Chris had applied six times. It was her sixth time that she won the award. And there are some people, like Richard Notkin, he's applied every year.

MS. GROOT: Not yet.

MS. COYNE: Not yet.

[They laugh.]

MS. GROOT: So did Christina Bothwell. [applied every year -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Well, or somebody like—let's talk a little bit about Sergei because he doesn't do paperwork. I do his paperwork, and, you know, it's, like, my fault that he doesn't apply.

[They laugh.]

MS. COYNE: Apply? Leslie.

MS. FERRIN: I'm smacking myself now. But you've been so—you've bought his work steadily—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

[Sergei Isopov -LF/CG].—from the time that he came to the U.S., which was the early 90s, this time period we were talking about with the figures. And, you know, I think he always felt like he didn't want to take the money from someone who truly needed it. You know, because he was successful financially, it would have been embarrassing to him.

MS. GROOT: Oh, I see.

MS. FERRIN: You know, so I think what you've been able to do for artists had been artists who were not able to do it for themselves or, you know, the market didn't support them to do those big changes, like buy a big kiln.

MS. COYNE: Or take the time off work. It seems—my observation is that she buys work—she's got the eye or the knowhow or whatever of somebody that's going to get the grant. So she's either bought a piece, like, just before they're awarded it or then immediately after.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: And that, yeah, pushes them into a whole new level of making.

MS. FERRIN: So the foundation has been going 25 years?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: It's had a huge impact on, you know—the artists who have been involved with the foundation, it's had a huge impact.

MS. GROOT: There's only a few that have kind of disappeared.

MS. FERRIN: Well, some of them died, you know.

[They laugh.]

So they couldn't help it. But I mean, and that's important, to think that the foundation money was the thing that kept them working. Yeah. So [[turning to sculpture in room] -LF/CG] Patti Warashina.

MS. GROOT: Another one, another series.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: With her pyramids.

MS. FERRIN: That, the—you know, so the feminism in the—in the sculpture series. And she was in that Bellevue show also with that set of figures that went around. They were whispering to one another.

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: That's a very—you know, have you been out to the Northwest to travel?

MS. GROOT: A little bit but not very much.

MS. FERRIN: Mostly that work was coming to Chicago, so you could see it all here—

MS. GROOT: Yeah [affirmative].

MS. FERRIN: —each year. Talk a little bit about the [Lazlo -LF/CG] Fekete [and, above it, -LF/CG] the piece on the wall.

MS. GROOT: Oh, the Kris Kuksi?

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. I remember when you started to—you had magazines out.

MS. GROOT: I saw his work, actually, in Miami—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: That's the first time I saw it. And I've always—well, I've always worked—liked miniatures so—and he's got a lot of miniatures in his work, so off of that, I was loving it.

MS. FERRIN: And then it has the dog.

MS. GROOT: And the dog is there, so that's good. And there's destruction all over the place in that, and I like the scale of the piece.

MS. FERRIN: And then the Lazlo—I'm probably mispronouncing it—but Fekete or Fekete.

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: Lazlo Fekete? Fekete?

MS. GROOT: Fekete.

MS. FERRIN: How did you pronounce it?

MS. GROOT: Fekete.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. So he's somebody who went back to Europe, and we haven't seen much of his work.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: But it has all the elements of destruction.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. COYNE: She just got a new piece of his, that one there.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I just bought that one.

MS. FERRIN: Wow. So that's a figural piece, and whereas this one's more about the vessel. Well, it has figures in it.

MS. GROOT: Well, it's more about function—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: —actually more because it's like a giant soup tureen, the piece on the side of the placemats—or the place settings, I should say.

MS. FERRIN: I can't imagine, actually, you know, seeing it with food but...

MS. COYNE: Yeah, really.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, this is a—

MS. GROOT: And that's just gorgeous.

MS. FERRIN: Wow. This just a head of his, huh?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: It's light.

MS. GROOT: Isn't that wonderful?

MS. FERRIN: So then there's [Stephen -LF/CG] De Stabler.

MS. GROOT: The what? Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: The [De Stabler -LF/CG] piece. Do you have more than one of those or...?

MS. GROOT: Yes, I have one in Michigan, an old one.

MS. FERRIN: And did you—was that part of the early part of your collecting because you—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —he's one of the originals.

MS. GROOT: He's a great artist.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: Isn't there one in the living room, too?

MS. GROOT: Huh?

MS. COYNE: Don't you have one in the living room, too—I mean the family room?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Where did this one come in in terms of when you were buying? Was it an early—

MS. GROOT: It's a more recent one—I guess, about two years ago. Right before he died, he had a big show and —

MS. FERRIN: And that's the figure. It's—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —you know, sort of disintegration, age. So [[moving] -LF/CG] over here are some of the automatons. And is that an area that—when did that start?

MS. COYNE: The automatons?

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: After the watches [Laughs.]. Well, I like the gimmick of them and how they move. And they're so old, and they still work.

MS. FERRIN: They're fun.

MS. GROOT: And a lot of them are funny.

MS. FERRIN: They're very funny.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. Like this guy, he whips his—

MS. FERRIN: His pet?

[Winding noise.]

[Music playing.]

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: So—and they're not electric; they're all wind-ups.

MS. COYNE: [Affirmative.] And they have—

MS. FERRIN: Mechanisms?

MS. COYNE: —these watchmakers that started making them, right?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, they're clockwork.

MS. FERRIN: And so is there—you have another room that has a lot more of these in it. Are they sort of infiltrating here because you ran out of room, or they just landed here?

MS. COYNE: We just didn't get them in there yet, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. COYNE: They just arrived in the past few weeks, so this thing's sort of sitting here until we figure out where they're going to go.

MS. FERRIN: It's a staging area.

MS. COYNE: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then there's a giant penis in front of a large corpulent woman painting.

[They laugh.]

And the penis is about four feet high. And what's it made out of?

MS. COYNE: Acrylic.

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. COYNE: Latex.

MS. FERRIN: Is it latex?

MS. COYNE: Yeah, it's latex.

MS. FERRIN: So where would—so where do you find something like this, like online?

MS. GROOT: Yeah

MS. FERRIN: And is it—

MS. GROOT: Why, do you want one?

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: Well—

MS. GROOT: There's a bronze one up for sale, too.

MS. FERRIN: I don't know. I think the latex is a little more lifelike.

[They laugh.]

MS. COYNE: She's got a closet full of this stuff, too.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: Oh, boy. So those—your Dutch upbringing

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: —and then this at this point—you know, let's say you were 10 years old. Now, at 60 years old, you have a closet full of penises. What would the Dutch say? What would—

MS. GROOT: They would be—oh, they would be so frightened [Laughs.].

MS. FERRIN: Would they think you—I mean—

MS. GROOT: Were crazy.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Would they have you institutionalized?

MS. GROOT: Probably.

MS. COYNE: Well, it's the Dutch reform because just regular—the regular Dutch people have a great sense of humor and are pretty—

MS. GROOT: Yes, but there's Christian reform, and there's Dutch reform. And I was Christian reform, which is actually stricter than—

MS. COYNE: Oh, jeez.

MS. GROOT: —the Dutch reform.

MS. FERRIN: So do you think part of filling a closet with penises has something to do with sort of like—what do you call it—for every action, there's a reaction?

MS. GROOT: Oh, sure. A lot of—lot of—this is a lot of a reaction to the way I was brought up through their school system.

MS. FERRIN: And were you always in trouble in school?

MS. GROOT: No, but I was kind of like a black sheep, but I wasn't really in trouble.

MS. FERRIN: So you weren't drawing naughty pictures—

MS. GROOT: No, no, no.

MS. FERRIN: —and sent to the corner?

MS. FERRIN: That was all inside you but hadn't come out yet?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Okay [Laughs.]. So with the penises, they—I mean, there's the closet full of sort of things that are from the porn industry maybe?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: You know, like the penis nose head over here?

MS. COYNE: Which is actually artwork but—

MS. FERRIN: But—

MS. COYNE: —was used in a porn, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Okay.

MS. COYNE: So yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then—but these other things are more strictly out of porn shops, you know, are sex toys and party favors—

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —yeah, which you always give at parties that I have a whole stash of at home. So—but then you have a lot of watches, the erotic watches, a lot of things that are related. And how did you start that? Or did it not start all at once in the—

MS. GROOT: Well, the first ones were, the ball clocks, and those—I found those very kitschy and very funny, and that's how I started collecting those. I got more serious with the pocket watches, but they were still funny. So it's part of my sense of humor.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: And that there is funny.

MS. FERRIN: It's very—its placement with this, you know, woman with the varicose veins and—it's almost like she's waiting for it to come into her life or—

[They laugh.]

—you know—I mean, the placement of a lot of these pieces, it must be intentional. You're like, "Well, where are we going to put that?"

MS. GROOT: I think Lauren put it there. I didn't—

MS. COYNE: I put it there just because it's off-gassing a latex smell, and it was in my office, and it was like

making my tongue feel strange, so I brought it out here until it doesn't stink anymore, and then it can come back into my office [Laughs.].

MS. FERRIN: I don't know. I mean, that lady—look at her.

MS. COYNE: I know. That's pretty great.

MS. FERRIN: Look at her. She's like, you know, looking at—like, "What is—what's coming in the door?" [Laughs.]

MS. COYNE: I think she buys these things just to make me take a picture with it—

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. COYNE: —because as soon as I got it out of the box, she's standing there with the camera.

[They laugh.]

MS. COYNE: And then all the workers that come into the house, you know, everybody takes a picture.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: You said one time that the people who come and help clean turn things around—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —because they're very Catholic.

MS. COYNE: That was—

MS. GROOT: And I would just laugh.

MS. COYNE: Yeah. That was the old crew. This crew, oh, you can hear them in the other room. If she gets something new, they hoot and holler and all kinds of jokes.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then—so this heavysset woman is right next to the Dirk Staschke, you know, pig.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And the men with the tattoos, the Russian tattoos, do you—when you are trying to find a place for things, is that when things start to move around?

MS. GROOT: Well, I consider the whole area.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. So with the painting being this large, it's hard to buy another painting.

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: You can kind of get a bigger piece, you know, like the new Viola Frey—we'll just move a few of those things over.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then this grandmother's going to stand up, and she's vertical, so she doesn't take a big footprint. But how much of, you know—I mean, you've always said you want to live with it; you want to see it.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So you make room.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Well, it's a challenge [Laughs.].

MS. COYNE: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And there is no furniture.

[END OF groot14_2of4_sd_track05_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: Okay, so afternoon, back in the office. Gordon Chandler, another artist has stopped by for a visit, the dogs are all here, and we thought we'd start in this room because when we were here yesterday the birds were making noise and we didn't exactly talk about the art that's in this room and I thought maybe we could start with this incredible piece that grew here.

MS. GROOT: The Natsoulas piece?

MS. FERRIN: The Natsoulas, Tony Natsoulas.

MS. GROOT: Yes, well it's a portrait of Arneson, Arneson is in the kiln, and the kiln is being fired and at the same time Arneson is working on a piece, a clown. It has different elements of Arneson's series. Like it has a trophy and it has a typewriter, everything that Arneson would have put into pieces.

MS. FERRIN: And the bricks are the kiln, and each of the bricks has a word on it.

MS. GROOT: Yes, different words that meant something to Arneson.

MS. FERRIN: So you commissioned this from Tony?

MS. GROOT: Yes, I did.

MS. FERRIN: And he was one of Arneson's students?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So how did that come about? A conversation between you and Tony?

MS. GROOT: I was on his website and I saw it and he had done an Arneson before and I had just asked him if he still had it or whatever and he said, "No, but I can make you a different one." So I just gave him free reign. He could do what he wanted with it.

MS. FERRIN: How long did it take place?

MS. GROOT: It took a few months.

MS. FERRIN: It must have been—

MS. GROOT: It took a long time to put together, it came—it was all in pieces, it was like 30 boxes full of stuff.

MS. FERRIN: So had he worked in Arneson's studio? Or did—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So he really knew Arneson and all these souvenir images and ideas that are throughout his pieces.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And it's about 12 feet high?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, about.

Gordon Chandler: Eight.

MS. FERRIN: Eight? It seems like 12, but eight sounds good. And it came in 20 pieces?

MS. GROOT: Oh, more than that.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Thirty pieces at least.

MS. FERRIN: And he left it to you to put together?

MS. GROOT: No, no, no, he came and he put it together.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] Okay.

MS. GROOT: It took him a whole afternoon.

MS. FERRIN: Had he seen the collection before?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: He must have been jaw-dropping.

MS. GROOT: Yes, he was.

[Laughter.]

MS. FERRIN: Did he talk about some of the Arneson's that are in the collection?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Because he has been there while they were being produced?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Wow. So here's Anne Drew Potter?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And she's sort of a mid-career artist?

MS. GROOT: Well she's just beginning.

MS. FERRIN: You'd say early career. Yeah.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And where did you discover her work?

MS. GROOT: She was just, she was still doing her MFA show and that's when I saw her work.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And has she been a recipient of—

MS. GROOT: Yes, she came in third place last year.

MS. FERRIN: Excellent. Well she seems to be someone who's used that well and has continued to—yeah. So that's great. Okay, Charles Roller Wilson [ph]. So Gordon and I were looking at some of the paintings together and we had talked a little bit about him yesterday—

Gordon Chandler: It's Donald Roller Wilson.

MS. FERRIN: Donald Roller Wilson.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, Donald.

MS. FERRIN: So, there's smoking, there's animals there's—

MS. GROOT: They're naughty. Like that's naughty Betty like they each have a name, each character, and they have their own little world that they live in. But Betty sometimes smokes, so she's naughty.

MS. FERRIN: Smoking monkeys are naughty.

MS. GROOT: Right. Plus, she dresses something down a little bit to show her breasts.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] And then there are the side panels that tell stories.

MS. GROOT: Yes. This one doesn't have one, but the other ones do. They tell the story of that particular painting.

MS. FERRIN: So you have about a dozen?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, several.

MS. FERRIN: And when was the last time you acquired one? A few years ago?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, a few years ago,

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And underneath the painting are some actual animal heads?

MS. GROOT: A what?

MS. FERRIN: There are two animal heads? Monkeys?

MS. GROOT: Oh, my monkey heads?

MS. FERRIN: What are those? And they're also above your desk?

MS. GROOT: Yes, they're just sitting there right now because Willy wants to eat them.

MS. FERRIN: You said that the dogs like the taxidermy.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, they do.

MS. FERRIN: So most of that's downstairs?

MS. GROOT: In the basement, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And what does that collection involved?

MS. GROOT: Well I was going to—at one point, I was going to make a piece using some taxidermy dogs and dogs' heads, so I was collecting them. And then I changed my mind and now I'm stuck with all these dog heads because you can't sell them so they decorate my studio. I might use one or two coming up.

MS. FERRIN: You said one of the artists and one of the things I read is that you had to buy a lot of bats to make an artwork.

MS. GROOT: A lot of what?

MS. FERRIN: Bats, like flying bats. Hundreds of bats, we used the money to buy bats.

MS. GROOT: Oh yeah. That's Tim Blum. Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And you have—I think I've been here before where you have lamps that are the feet of animals?

MS. GROOT: Yes, in my bedroom.

MS. FERRIN: Okay.

MS. GROOT: I've always been interested in taxidermy. Even as a child. I don't know why exactly.

MS. FERRIN: And did you ever do it?

MS. FERRIN: What?

MS. FERRIN: Did you ever do it?

MS. GROOT: No. [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: You just—

MS. GROOT: I made models. That's what I did.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] So did that, the buying of taxidermy, start with the dogs for your own artwork?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So it's not something ongoing?

MS. GROOT: Oh, it is ongoing.

MS. FERRIN: Okay.

MS. GROOT: Because if I see a good taxidermy piece I can—upstairs I have about 40 taxidermy feet.

MS. FERRIN: Feet.

MS. GROOT: Feet that were made into ashtrays.

MS. FERRIN: So other animals, any animals.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Any humans?

MS. GROOT: No. Oh yes. There's one.

MS. FERRIN: A human foot?

MS. GROOT: A foot and an ankle, just the bones, and at the end of the ankle is the ashtray.

MS. FERRIN: So where—when were those produced?

MS. GROOT: Those were in the early 1900's. Some of them are older than that. Some of them are from the 1800's, but most of them I think are from the early 1900s.

Gordon Chandler: You're very ahead of the curve with the taxidermy because it's become very popular.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.] Yeah it has.

Gordon Chandler: So you were at the beginning for art.

MS. FERRIN: So above, or to the left of the Roland Wilson [ph] is a piece of jewelry we talked about, a Ted Noten?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And it's a mouse in acrylic?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And what else is in that?

MS. GROOT: And then also around the neck of the mouse, there's a string of pearls.

MS. FERRIN: And so did you—when did that come into the collection?

MS. GROOT: I bought that a long time ago and then it was just, it was the first piece he made using the acrylic. Now he puts in rifles and guns and all different things. He wanted to actually buy it back from me.

MS. FERRIN: And you didn't want to sell it?

MS. GROOT: No. But then he decided it was in a good home, so I could keep it.

MS. FERRIN: Has he ever been here?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: That helped the decision?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] So what other pieces of Ted's do you have?

MS. GROOT: I have—this is a series of rings like the engagement ring and the wedding ring and maybe a death ring and then I also have this necklace which has, you know, pins and with the identifying label of the animal, so it's like a—

MS. FERRIN: Science identification.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] That's one of his too.

MS. FERRIN: And then to the left is a penis ring?

MS. GROOT: That's a different artist.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. And so this forms a part of your contemporary jewelry collection?

MS. GROOT: Yes. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: How would you describe, what compels you to—

MS. GROOT: Well I do like the contemporary jewelry but I also have antique.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: I have a large collection of lover's eyes.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: But most of the contemporary jewelry are rings and necklaces, pretty much.

MS. FERRIN: And where do you find those, at the fairs mostly?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

Female Speaker1: Do you go online for that too?

MS. GROOT: I have, but I don't very often.

MS. FERRIN: And with that collection, is that all material that you wear?

MS. GROOT: Well some of it I wear, some of it I don't. It depends.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: Like I have one contemporary one, I can't remember the artist but I have a couple pieces of hers. And it's all little plastic asses of animals sewn together like a necklace.

MS. FERRIN: So like little kid's animals but just the rear ends?

MS. GROOT: Just the rear ends.

MS. FERRIN: I remember seeing you wearing that.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So with that collection, can you describe, is it basically the same as the rest of your collecting: Animal, humor, penises, destruction?

MS. GROOT: Yes. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So I think last spring you acquired one of Gesine Hackenberg's necklaces with the porcelains in the plate? The little cut outs.

MS. GROOT: Oh yes.

MS. FERRIN: So that one totally fits, you know.

MS. GROOT: Yes it did.

MS. FERRIN: It could be hanging next to these pieces by, those are [Richard Milette -LF/CG] or no?

MS. GROOT: The flowers?

MS. FERRIN: The bowls, or urns.

MS. GROOT: The what?

MS. FERRIN: The urns with Snoopy on the top? [collage of shards -LF/CG]

MS. GROOT: Right, aren't those —isn't his last name Powers, or not? He's the boyfriend of—

MS. FERRIN: Well there's—I was thinking of Leopold. Yeah.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, there's [Mathieu -LF/CG] and there's the other, Richard [Milette -LF/CG]. All right, we're spacing. Between the two of us we'll get this in an hour. But that fits with the necklace, it fits with the yeah, you know, all these things coming together.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And with the sense of humor.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, with Snoopy and this gorgeous urn with chards of you know, European porcelain. So, okay, and then we move this way, we have [Joseph -LF/CG] Seigenthaler and [Michael -LF/CG] Lucero. Where did these fit in, are these early Seigenthaler's that—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, they're pretty early. He did portraits of other artists that were influential to him so this is Giacometti up there, and this is, he looks just like his paintings, I can't remember his name that's terrible. [Ivan Albright -LF/CG]

MS. GROOT: That's okay.

Gordon Chandler: German?

MS. GROOT: What?

Gordon Chandler: Is he German?

MS. GROOT: I think so.

Gordon Chandler: Yeah, I know exactly—

MS. GROOT: I have no idea.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] Well and these are those bunnies. Was this the piece that we were talking about before that had to do with the rape? The bunnies? The rabbits of Beth's? These are just regular bunnies having sex?

MS. GROOT: Bunnies, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: The other one was more violent.

MS. GROOT: Right. And the little Viola Frey.

MS. FERRIN: That's the dog and the female figure? The Viola Frey.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And then face jugs [ph].

MS. GROOT: Those are, most are contemporaries, you have Micheal Lucero and you have Clayton Bailey and then the green ones are from down south.

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember how those came into the collection?

MS. GROOT: No, I don't actually. It was a long time ago.

MS. FERRIN: So it's just, now, they're all grouped together.

MS. GROOT: I think that was my first Lucero piece, maybe not. Maybe second.

MS. FERRIN: And then there's an alligator foot?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, it's cup.

MS. FERRIN: And you, and that's part of the cup collection?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, the cup collection is up on the wall. Those.

[Laughter.]

MS. FERRIN: And then another Lucero from the reclamation period.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, and that one too.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: That's the period I like the most.

MS. FERRIN: Because it had the older parts combined with the pieces he fabricated?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And is this a Doug Jeck?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Sort of the same kind of thing, the reclamation of the older piece with the contemporary.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then you've got a lot of this, [inaudible].

MS. GROOT: Well that's part of my desk actually which is made of out books and wood that looks like fabric and so forth. So these are little places where you put stuff.

MS. FERRIN: Slides? Like slides?

[Laughter.]

MS. FERRIN: And then the desk was made for you specifically?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And it's all wood and it's carved. Is that a local person?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, he's from Italy.

MS. FERRIN: He's from Italy but he works locally?

MS. GROOT: He works what?

MS. FERRIN: Locally?

MS. GROOT: No, no, no.

MS. FERRIN: No, no, the whole thing came from Italy. Oh, okay.

MS. GROOT: That's right.

MS. FERRIN: And then the desk looks outside to Lake Michigan?

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: And overlooking a Deborah Butterfield? So again, it's the destruction.

MS. GROOT: Yes, definitely.

MS. FERRIN: And the animal. When did that come to the collection?

MS. GROOT: I've had that for several years.

MS. FERRIN: And how did you pick that one out?

MS. GROOT: I wanted something a little different and I didn't want to take away from the view, and her horses were really big and I hadn't seen a lion one before. This one just seemed perfect for where I was putting it. And there's a Robert Arneson bench there.

MS. FERRIN: Oh right with the duck. And the little playhouse?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: A playhouse?

MS. GROOT: That's a dog house.

MS. FERRIN: Do they ever go in it?

MS. GROOT: No.

[Laughter.]

MS. FERRIN: So in this room there's some more Arneson. This one's a pile of bricks?

MS. GROOT: Yes, he was famous for his bricks.

MS. FERRIN: Yes. And when did this one enter the collection?

MS. GROOT: I've probably had it about five years I would think.

MS. FERRIN: What was the first Arneson piece?

MS. GROOT: Oh, *Mine Disaster* [ph], it's in the hallway, where he put firecrackers in the self-portrait and he blew them up. That was my first one.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Do you remember where and when?

MS. GROOT: It was a long time ago.

MS. FERRIN: Like maybe a gallery?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, or it was through a gallery, or I worked with Zolla Lieberman and they worked with Brian Gross's gallery in California.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] So most of the Arneson's came through galleries?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And then, later you've been able to, especially the smaller pieces, do those through auctions?

MS. GROOT: Auctions, yes.

MS. FERRIN: Did you ever meet Arneson?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Did you go to some of his solo shows in New York and California?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Do you remember any of them in particular?

MS. GROOT: I remember the one that, I told you about, when he had cancer and he made these pieces showing his cancer and how frightening they were. I remember that one very strongly.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, was that New York?

MS. GROOT: No, it was California.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Yeah, his shows were powerful. What else have we got in here? *The Smoking Man*, Jack Earl? So, you said that you had to search for that one for a long time.

MS. GROOT: I did, for 10 years.

MS. FERRIN: What—how did you know it existed?

MS. GROOT: Well I knew it existed because it was in a book. And I kept asking Frank Paluch to ask Jack Earl what had happened to the piece, did he sell it or whatever happened and finally he asked Jack Earl about the piece, where it was, and it happened to be sitting in his garage all that time. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: So do you think he had shown the piece or it just went right from the picture to the garage?

MS. GROOT: I think so, I think so.

MS. FERRIN: And do you think that's because of the smoking?

MS. GROOT: I don't know.

MS. FERRIN: Because there's a couple—

MS. GROOT: Because it's an older piece.

MS. FERRIN: Because things like taxidermy, and penises, and smoking are all things that galleries tend to stay—

MS. GROOT: Stay away from.

MS. FERRIN: That's—you know, naked Jesus, these are all provocative pieces that galleries might not show so—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: It's not surprising it was in the garage.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Can you talk about the Airstream [Actually a 35 foot Spartan trailer -LF/CG] that's parked in front of your house in Michigan?

MS. GROOT: Well it was an ashtray show, ceramic ashtray show, done by contemporary ceramicists so some people that are very famous, some people that are not famous in it, and it has over 1,000 ashtrays.

MS. FERRIN: A thousand?

MS. GROOT: A thousand. Because what happened is they traveled a lot and people would make ashtrays and then donate it to the Airstream.

[Randy Schmidt, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ; Gary Greenberg, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Clarion, PA; Tom Beldon, Central Arizona College, Casa Grande, AZ all participated in the Airstream (collection, music, performance). -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: So who drove the Airstream?

MS. GROOT: Who drove it?

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, from place to place?

MS. GROOT: The guy, what's his name?

MS. FERRIN: Now I can't remember either.

MS. GROOT: I can't remember his name.

MS. FERRIN: So it was basically, the first time I saw it was in a conference site.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, it was in an antique conference and they were going to sell the ashtrays and then I got to talking with them and they weren't selling very many of them as you can imagine, it's not a real popular thing. So I decided to buy the whole Airstream and ash trays put together.

MS. FERRIN: And then you parked it here right?

MS. GROOT: Temporarily, I was going to have a party at my house during SOFA and then they could go look in the Airstream, so it was supposed to be a temporary kind of thing but I got in trouble with my neighbors.

MS. FERRIN: Why?

MS. GROOT: Why? Because they didn't like it on my lawn.

MS. FERRIN: They didn't want a trailer in Evanston?

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: That was filled with ashtrays?

MS. GROOT: So I had to get an attorney.

[Laughter.]

MS. GROOT: And what the result was, I had to apply for a license for a garage sale.

MS. FERRIN: And then you could keep it?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So how long did you keep it here then?

MS. GROOT: Well, then I only had like a month left.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, because it was short-term garage sale?

MS. GROOT: Right, and then I was going to take it to Michigan. So, it was a mess. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: But the party took place?

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: And the artists from SOFA came and there's a soundtrack in it, right?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: What's on that sound track, do you remember?

MS. GROOT: No, I don't remember.

MS. FERRIN: I think it's all songs about smoking.

MS. GROOT: Well, they were probably.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, so it's basically a vintage Airstream filled with ashtrays. And now that lives in Michigan?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: Talk a little bit about other artworks that involve smoking. You have some of the automatons?

MS. GROOT: Oh yeah, I have a lot of automatons that are called smokers. And they each hold a cigarette holder and you put a lit cigarette in them and with the clockwork mechanism they bring the cigarette to their mouth and bring it down again and then eventually the smoke comes out of their mouth. There is one that is my favorite because it also has a poodle next to the man who is smoking, and the poodle emits smoke as well.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] Okay.

MS. FERRIN: Dogs. Okay, more on the smoking one. So here it is that, you know, you're a smoker and your artwork smokes; do you remember when people come to visit, how do they react to the smoking?

MS. GROOT: Well, I usually don't smoke when people come to visit.

MS. FERRIN: But in terms of the art work, does that, because it sort of rocks their boats?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, they don't enjoy it as much as I do, I suppose.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: But they really are, I mean they're a marvel how that happens, because it actually isn't the cigarette that's putting it to the mouth that gets them to smoke. That's not it, it has nothing to do with it.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Yeah it's the—

MS. GROOT: They have a pipe up their arm and that's where the smoke comes down and then it comes up pipe.

[END OF groot14_3of4_sd_track01_r.mp3]

GORDON CHANDLER: Have you had these repaired, or —

MS. GROOT: Some of them I had to, but —

MR. CHANDLER: And there's actually somebody who specializes?

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah. You can look all over the country for people.

MS. FERRIN: So, we're in the sitting room with the automatons.

MS. GROOT: Look at the painting.

MR. CHANDLER: Oh, wow.

MS. FERRIN: So, the girl is painting —

MR. CHANDLER: No, she's dusting.

MS. FERRIN: —dusting the painting, and the man is smoking.

MR. CHANDLER: The painting is reacting to her dusting.

MS. FERRIN: And the mustache is going up and down. Then there's this one.

MS. GROOT: [inaudible]

MS. FERRIN: So how did you get started on collecting automatons?

MR. CHANDLER: [Winding sound.] There we go.

MS. GROOT: From the watches.

MR. CHANDLER: Oh, he's good. [Laughs.] That's wonderful.

MS. FERRIN: It looks like he has Tourette's. Look, [inaudible.] So are these—when did—what part of collecting did you start these?

MS. GROOT: Well, because clocks and watches were animated.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: I got interested in some of these dolls, I guess you could call them—figures.

MS. FERRIN: And was this during the time you were traveling in Europe?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MR. CHANDLER: Oh, and the base turns!

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MR. CHANDLER: And the boat guy from the image moves.

MS. FERRIN: Amazing, the technology. So, I know when I've come here with guests before—"the tea party" and "the wedding" have been a great story. How did you find Kittens' Tea & Croquet Party and The Kittens' Wedding?

MS. GROOT: I found those through an auction. It was from a museum that was breaking up, or breaking up all the exhibitions. So it was this one man who made all these things. A lot of them were a little gross, in that—three-legged dogs and two-headed cats, and things like that.

MS. FERRIN: It was all one man? And his name was Potter?

MS. GROOT: Walter Potter.

MS. FERRIN: And, so, The Kittens' Tea & Croquet Party—there it is, on the cover of the book.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: *Walter Potter's Curious World of Taxidermy*.

MS. GROOT: So they're very, very old. Because the cats were actually raised for their skin.

MS. FERRIN: 18 —

MR. CHANDLER: Commercially.

MS. GROOT: Yep, for clothing.

MS. FERRIN: 1835 to 1918. And how many of—so you have two of these?

MS. GROOT: Actually, I have a horse head, as well.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So I have three.

MS. FERRIN: And how did this arrive here?

MS. GROOT: It was shipped.

MS. FERRIN: In a crate?

MS. GROOT: No, —

MS. FERRIN: No?

MS. GROOT: —no crate. It was just shipped —I think, by boat.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. Did you get them at the same time? All three?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: All three at the same time?

MS. GROOT: Yes. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So, how many kittens are in this? About 20?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, about 20.

MS. FERRIN: And they're playing croquet.

MS. GROOT: And having a tea party. And they had, like, rabbits in school and frogs doing whatever. So I had —

MS. FERRIN: But you went for the cats.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And Lauren was saying that they had disappeared. No one knew that you had purchased them.

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: And because of —

MS. GROOT: They didn't keep any records.

MS. FERRIN: So they don't really know where everything else went?

MS. GROOT: No. [inaudible]

MS. FERRIN: And then through social media, they came through [inaudible] coming to work here and social media they became known, and now they're on the cover of this book.

MS. GROOT: This is what I was for Halloween.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] Oh, Anne should see you wearing this.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: She'd be so happy. It's a pull-over professor mullet adult wig. [inaudible]

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.] So, not only a comb-over; it's a mullet.

MR. CHANDLER: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: Combination. I don't know, I think you should wear this to the opening tomorrow night. [Laughs.] Okay, so John Byrd.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Now, I see one over there.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then this was your first one?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

[Dog sounds.]

MS. GROOT: Willie, calm down!

MS. FERRIN: And so, what period of time is this? '90s?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, '90s.

MS. FERRIN: Then, was it shown in a gallery?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And you discovered it —

MS. GROOT: —in a gallery.

MS. FERRIN: You guys were made for each other.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: Definitely.

MS. FERRIN: So, this one is a dog with his intestines, and that's the ceramic component, and then the actual dog head —

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: —encased in acrylic.

MS. GROOT: And the squirrel head.

MS. FERRIN: And a dead squirrel with intestines and a squirrel head. So, did you—when you discovered this, did you then want to meet him and did you guys —

MS. GROOT: No, I didn't know him at all. I just liked the piece.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And you now have four? Five?

MS. GROOT: I have another one in that room. Yeah, I think I have four or five.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And has he been—he was part of the foundation. He won one year, right?

MS. GROOT: He's won, I think, a couple awards.

MS. FERRIN: A couple times.

MS. GROOT: Smaller awards.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Were you—so do you know him, now, well enough to, sort of, know his students and know what he's done?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And keep in touch with each other?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.] I see him at these fairs quite often.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Do you know what he's doing now? Are you, sort of —

MS. GROOT: [Negative.]

MS. FERRIN: What's coming next?

MS. GROOT: I don't know what's coming next.

MS. FERRIN: So he's—this dog is standing underneath a painting of a naked man.

MS. GROOT: Cary Grant. Not just a man.

MS. FERRIN: Cary Grant, yes. So this one's very handsome, unlike the woman in the other room, who was, sort of, heavy-set with all her —

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —veins showing. This is the idealized naked man.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: Is this a painter? I'm not familiar with the name of the painter.

MS. GROOT: His name is Kurt Kauper.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And he did a series of—actually, only three Cary Grants.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And I saw, you know, pictures of the series and I really want one, but he sold them all. And I just asked if he had another Cary Grant in him, —

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: —to paint. And he did! Then, —

MS. FERRIN: So—I got it.

MS. GROOT: I gave him, you know, leeway. He could paint whatever he wanted, as long as Cary Grant was in it.

MS. FERRIN: So how does this one differ from the others? Or —

MS. GROOT: I think it's larger than the others, taller.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: But there's some similarities, like with the columns.

MS. FERRIN: This one's a very happy face, very happy body, you know?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: It's, sort of, a difference from so much of the other work. Most of your other naked people have a little twist to them.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: He's so innocent.

MS. GROOT: Well, he was innocent.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: And then, over in the corner, here's one of the masterpieces of Chris Antemann.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: You want to say a little bit about this piece called *The Love Shack*?

MS. GROOT: It's what?

MS. FERRIN: *The Love Shack*.

MS. GROOT: Yes, it is called that. It's a beautiful piece and it's quite different than most of the pieces that I've seen of hers.

MS. FERRIN: It was, I think, 2009? Maybe 2010?

MS. GROOT: Could be.

MS. FERRIN: I think, at the time, the most ambitious piece she had made to that point had preceded her receiving the award.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: It was before that.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And then there's a photograph of a close-up of that piece.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] Well, one thing I like about the piece is that you can put it together—the two ends together, and it's still a very interesting piece because it forces the viewer to look inside of all these openings that it has.

MS. FERRIN: And it holds up very well over her career.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: It is a unique, sort of, piece, and for you, it's in this—it has the architecture, —

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: —you know, the diorama. Above it is a piece by, I think, Beth Katleman.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And she's been somebody who—you know, this is an earlier piece for her.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, it's an earlier piece.

MS. FERRIN: It's so interesting to see these and then —

MS. GROOT: —see her other work, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: What do you think of the new work?

MS. GROOT: Well, I like it. I think it's very good. I just don't like additions in [inaudible].

MS. FERRIN: Right, we talked about that.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: You didn't like the editions with the bronzes, either.

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: But I do have some editions.

MS. FERRIN: What about editions bothers you?

MS. GROOT: I think it should just be one piece and it should grow from that. I mean, that's—to have an edition is just really boring.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: It's the same thing over and over. It's like if—I guess it's more like a pattern.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: To do the same thing over and over and over and over again. So it should grow from what you're working on, to something new.

MS. FERRIN: So it's sort of like a waste of your time —

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —as a creative person, to be putting things and spending your time dealing with editions.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: It's an interesting distinction. And is that partly with the pottery that you have collected.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: All of it's unique. You know, the *Voulkos Vessel*. I mean, you really don't have much in the way of —

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: —of pottery.

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: But so much clay.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: That's, sort of, a good point for people who associate clay as being, you know, anything goes.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Whether it's made out of clay, you're very clear about wanting to see new ideas develop —

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: —from one thing to the next. Okay, let's look at Cristina Córdova.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: She's somebody you've acquired and has been part of the foundation.

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And she's, again, one of the leaders in figural works.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And influential.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I like her work a lot.

MS. FERRIN: Talk about some of the bigger pieces she's made. The [inaudible] —

MS. GROOT: I think they're very, very strong. I particularly like the one that she had made that was mainly out of wood.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] From about two years ago?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, that one. And there's also one in last month's Ceramic Monthly that included some clay objects with the figure. But I think those are very strong pieces.

MS. FERRIN: So what are the things that you said when you saw that piece, as you were running out of space?

MS. GROOT: Yes. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: What will you do if this next Córdova comes up?

MS. GROOT: I don't know. That's hard to say.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. It's a big decision to add in a large piece into the collection.

MS. GROOT: It is.

MS. FERRIN: Especially when it's not vertical, it can stand its own—it requires a wall. Well, what would be the —

[Dog howling.]

[END OF groot14_3of4_sd_track02_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: Okay, this is day three in the, sort of, mid-morning. We're in the family room, which is the office room, and I'm looking at the very—looks to me like a wild lake, but Candice just said it's nothing like it gets at times.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: But it's a blustery November day. SOFA starts tonight, and lots of people are coming into town. So, we thought, today, we'd start with the foundation, but before I start with some fixed questions, did you—was there anything that we haven't talked about yet that you, sort of, thought about last night, or —?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Okay, well just interrupt at any point. If something comes up that, just, you want to digress —feel free, you know? Just say, "You know what? I was thinking about that."

MS. GROOT: Yeah, okay.

MS. FERRIN: Okay so, the foundation began when?

MS. GROOT: In 1987.

MS. FERRIN: And the full name of the foundation?

MS. GROOT: The name?

MS. FERRIN: Of the foundation.

MS. GROOT: Yeah—no, it actually started out as the Candice Groot Foundation.

MS. FERRIN: Okay.

MS. GROOT: But I changed it, then, to the Virginia A. Groot Foundation.

MS. FERRIN: And Virginia is?

MS. GROOT: My mother.

MS. FERRIN: So what made you decide to change it that way?

MS. GROOT: For one thing, I wanted to stay more anonymous than I would have if it was named after me, and my mother had, you know, a profound influence on me, as far as art went, so it seemed—and she did with the

schools, too—the children and so forth. So, it seemed like a relevant idea.

MS. FERRIN: And did it have anything to do with when she was alive, or was it —

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: But was the foundation ever part of her?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: It was really just your idea?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And tell me, how did that idea start?

MS. GROOT: When it started, it was when the NEA grants were piddling out and there never seemed to be anything for ceramics.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I don't know if you noticed, but people who make ceramics, they always have another job besides just ceramics.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Because they don't get the prices that you get as a painter, say, or even a bronze sculptor. That kind of thing. So, I thought there was a need for it.

MS. FERRIN: Well, and you understood that personally.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, because I would have liked to have taken off when I was teaching. I would have liked to have taken off a year, that kind of thing, just to do my artwork.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So, I thought that was very important for artists to do.

MS. FERRIN: So, what was the, you know, like—this was something you understood was needed, but was there one moment that just said, "Okay, this is the day I'm going to do this, and this is why?" Was there something that happened in your life?

MS. GROOT: Well, I think it was more gradual than that.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: There really wasn't one moment, but I guess when I quit teaching.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: That would have been an important moment.

MS. FERRIN: And how was it structured in the beginning?

MS. GROOT: In the very beginning, it wasn't going to start until I died, but then my sister died and I had had her be the caretaker of the foundation. So, I thought I'd had better get it moving to be done the way I want it done.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So then, we [inaudible] and we started having grants right away, back in '88. [actually '89 —Stanley Shetka -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: In 1988?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And what were the first grant levels?

MS. GROOT: Let's see, there were mainly the same—well, actually there's just the first one in the beginning.

[Animal sounds.]

[END OF groot14_4of4_sd_track01_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: So, the first grants were—

MS. GROOT: We had—a sculpture grant was the first one, and then the second one was ceramics. [1990, Christine Federighi -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: And what were the amounts at that time?

MS. GROOT: Twenty five thousand.

MS. FERRIN: And there were three in the beginning? [In 1991, expanded to first, second, third place and five runners-up. By 1993, there was just first, second, and third place. -LF/CG]

MS. GROOT: No, just the first place. That was all.

MS. FERRIN: Okay.

MS. GROOT: Second and third came about because I felt so guilty that the second and third place people didn't know they were in second and third place.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: You know, so I might never see their work again.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: They might just stop entering. So we did second and third, and we also had some smaller grants, like a \$1,000 grant, at the very beginning. But then we stuck more with the three grants.

MS. FERRIN: So now they are \$35,000, \$10,000—

MS. GROOT: And \$5,000.

MS. FERRIN: —and \$5,000. And that's been going for about 15 years?

MS. GROOT: Not quite that long but maybe. It's close.

MS. FERRIN: So what—tell me a little bit about how you originally organized the juries, or the process?

MS. GROOT: Well, I thought it was important that the grant be done by artists, and—artists for artists. So that's how I started doing—having the first place winners, they had to spend two years on the foundation jury. And it's also very educational for them, because they don't know how they won, and this kind of thing.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And then they learn a lot from it.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Was there anyone in particular that helped you organize the, you know, founding papers, the—

MS. GROOT: Well, my attorney. That kind of thing. He was Bruce Blackburn.

MS. FERRIN: And is he still involved as your attorney?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So he's been—he knew what you thought in the beginning, and helped you create a—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —not-for-profit? Was there anyone else in the family involved?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Have they ever become involved?

MS. GROOT: No. Well, actually, I have a niece that's on the board, as well.

MS. FERRIN: Nina, right? Nina West?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And she helped you with the catalog, right?

MS. GROOT: Yes, she did the catalog.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Do you think she will remain involved on the board?

MS. GROOT: I think so.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Has she taken—I mean, was that a part of—

MS. GROOT: Well, it just started. She just started that.

MS. FERRIN: The board position?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: That's great.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, it is great. So, she'll go to her first jury, then, this spring.

MS. FERRIN: And who else sits on the board now?

MS. GROOT: Stanley Shetka [ph]. He's an expert in sculpture. And then the attorney is on the board, as well.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And myself.

MS. FERRIN: So it's a pretty small board.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And do they have strong opinions when you're making the awards, or are the—it's just like, church and state, this is the board and here is the award, committee?

MS. GROOT: No, they usually accept the jurors' decision.

MS. FERRIN: Recommendation, [Affirmative.].

MS. GROOT: Yeah, they've never not accepted it.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: But I mean, there's always that possibility, I guess. Because after we do the jury, then we meet with the board, and that's who the winners are and so forth.

MS. FERRIN: So, the board—has this been a consistent board? You know, the attorney, the—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —Stanley, and you. And now Nina has been added on.

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. So, talk a little bit about what happened—what Nina did in—it was the 14th anniversary, right?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. That was in 2002.

MS. FERRIN: Wow. Seems like yesterday.

MS. GROOT: I know, it was a long time ago. But she was in charge of getting all the work from the artists, and getting all their photographs, and putting the catalog together.

MS. FERRIN: And then an exhibit took place during SOFA?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, we had two exhibits. One show in the River North Gallery District [ph], and then one show at SOFA itself.

MS. FERRIN: And I think a lot of the artists came in for the—

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: —the opening.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, almost all the first place people came, which was nice to see.

MS. FERRIN: You've, over the years, established some very close relationships with some of the first place.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So in the beginning, the first-years were Christine—

MS. GROOT: Petiriki [ph]. She was on the board for a long time.

MS. FERRIN: And then, anyone else? Oh, Judy. We talked about Judy Moonelis.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then Wanxin Zhang? The guy who does the very tall, figural sculptures. Wang—I need to look at a list. The Chinese man?

MS. GROOT: Oh, Akio? [Takamori -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: No, no. But Akio is one of them, also.

MS. GROOT: Oh, you're thinking of Zhang. What's his first—Wanxin?

MS. FERRIN: No.

MS. GROOT: No?

MS. FERRIN: He did the big figures. The big, sort of Buddhist-looking, tall—I thought his name was—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, remember it was soldiers, kind of—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: —Japanese or Chinese. Yeah, that's Wanxin. [Chinese. Akio is Japanese. -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: Oh, okay, yes. Wanxin. I was think Wang and not Wanxin, yeah.

MS. GROOT: He's a good friend, too.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. So, have—and then, of course, Akio, you know—I mean, so many of these friends of contemporary ceramics dinners, these are the people who were there, and they've become kind of like a family.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: So tell us about your new family that came out of the last couple of years.

MS. GROOT: You mean the Groot Gang? [animals, pets -LF/CG]

MS. FERRIN: The Groot Baby. [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.] Well, I think they had an influence on a lot of different artists, which is important, too. But they—most of them had used the grant to really further their work.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: It's nice to see. They grew a lot during that year, which isn't easy.

MS. FERRIN: But I was actually referring to Beth and Alessandro.

MS. GROOT: Oh, them.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] The "Groot Baby".

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.] Yes, well, we have a lot of jurors that meet each other when they're on the board or doing the jury. I think Alessandro and Beth, they met at Archie Bray, I think.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: But Beth met Tip Toland at the jury, because they juried the same year.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And that was important, because they've done workshops together now, and Tip was able to pick Beth's [brain about the clay she uses and about the clay body to increase size -LF/CG] and so forth. So we do get a lot of collaborations going on.

MS. FERRIN: And then Beth and Alessandro ended up on the jury together also?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: No, they weren't at the same time but they were both first place winners?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And ended up working together.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And ended up getting married and having a baby. [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: And Tim Tate and Christina Bothwell—they both do glass and they worked together, too. They made some pieces together.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Which is nice to see.

MS. FERRIN: So the—

MS. GROOT: It's also nice to the artists, ones coming in, to see you judge their work.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Which is exciting.

MS. FERRIN: Who selected it, who—yeah.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And it's, sort of, like the—there's a reunion that takes place during the review among those two winners.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And then at other times too where, you know, people are sort of treating it like they're part of a family.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And the work that gets produced is a result, or, sort of—you've been engaged with watching it develop, and—talk a little bit about Chris Antemann and LH Project, because that seems to be something that's

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —evolved out of the—

MS. GROOT: Well, we started about a year ago. Our first place winners can participate at LH residency program if they want to and if they do clay, I think.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And I think that's really important, and it gives them an opportunity to go someplace else and meet other artist and work with other artists as well. So I think it's very important. We have had several artists—before we became together—we had several artists that did go to LH.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And it really was exciting work that they did. Like, Beth and Alessandro.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Yeah, so—

MS. FERRIN: And how did that concept come about? The idea for it came from—the idea for adding that part.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, it came from—LH asked me about it. I think they saw that I was getting some very good artists and artists who had participated in LH already, and it's a nice invitation.

MS. FERRIN: And you are now also on the board at LH?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So it's sort of like an extension of what you've done all along. [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: Candice is sitting here with a dog on her shoulder. [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: [Inaudible.]

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: What was the question? [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] It seems like the relationship with LH is like a lot of other things in your life; that it's grown organically from the artwork, to the artist, to more artwork, to—you know, it's kind of like a fertilizing of creativity.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: And the relationships with the people, LH is Jacob Hossbacher and Chris Antemann. And Chris was a first place recipient and produced that body of work that exhibited at Bellevue Arts Museum— [2010 -LF/CG]

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: —that same year. So, I think she understood the value of the grant for her,—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —and then saw the, you know, the opportunity to work in the studio there is so terrific, because the space is wonderful and being removed from the rest of the world—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —and then a lot of great work got made. [Laughs.] So, that was a great combination. So looking as you are right now at this, you know, aggressive cancer, have you thought a little bit about how these things continue?

MS. GROOT: Oh yeah, definitely. It's a big thing and I think I've got it. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: Really? [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: I'll wait for it to still just continue without any breaks in between. Quite often, artists—first place artists who have juried and so forth, they volunteered to jury again if I needed them.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And that might be a way to get the 150 or 350 artists down to the perquisite of 30 artists so that the other jurors have 30 top artists. So using them again, maybe having two people.

MS. FERRIN: Right.

MS. GROOT: Because there's a lot of dead wood in that 350.

MS. FERRIN: Right.

MS. GROOT: And—

MS. FERRIN: And that's the job that you do.

MS. GROOT: That's what I do, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And they've been submissions that have always been in an envelope, which—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —a CD, and, you know, and have you—I remember you laughing about how to move it into a digital submission process. Is that on the—is that happening?

MS. GROOT: Is what happening?

MS. FERRIN: Going on to a digital submission process, without—

MS. GROOT: Oh, yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, we do it digitally now.

MS. FERRIN: Okay, so—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —now you don't have to have the post—

MS. GROOT: Oh that's true, then they wouldn't have to meet, but it goes faster because I've had Christine Frederici help sometimes, whittling it down to 30. And it goes really fast if you're right there and just do it.

MS. FERRIN: So, now people submit using a digital system?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And so then the jurors, you'll designate to, or there'll be a system to weed it down to—from the—to the last 30.

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: And then a system will happen annually, the way it always has.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: With somebody like Lauren being the administrator—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —and being—still bringing the people together physically because you always felt that was important?

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] It is important.

MS. FERRIN: Because you would spend time talking about the submissions and the field. [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: The deal?

MS. FERRIN: The field.

MS. GROOT: The field? Well, our mission—do you want to know our mission?

MS. FERRIN: Yes. Yes, of course. [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: Okay, well it was to give artists an opportunity to work and do something they couldn't normally do. That's why it's important. And I think like Tip Toland; she's of course the example I always give because she needed a big kiln and they're very, very expensive.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So when she got the grant, she bought this kiln and her work has just improved remarkably.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: Just unbelievable. Ah, Willie [ph].

MS. FERRIN: I think they see a squirrel or something.

MS. GROOT: Or traveling, as well.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah. Well, I think what I was asking about was, like, the physical process of getting together to make the selection—

MS. GROOT: Oh, I see.

MS. FERRIN: —is when that conversation took place between winners and—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —the other winners. So that collaboration you were talking about, it's important to—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, definitely.

MS. FERRIN: Despite the fact that you could jury in front of your computer at home, you're saying you want that —

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I want that.

MS. FERRIN: The—

MS. GROOT: Talking is an important part.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah.

MS. GROOT: A lot of things change during that jury system. You know, seldom does someone pick someone in the first round and decide that's going to get it. You know, it's—I hate when that happens. But [Laughs.] it seldom does.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Because there's a lot of talking that goes on.

MS. FERRIN: Between—

MS. GROOT: All the jurors.

MS. FERRIN: About the 30 people.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So, describe, kind of, a typical jury. The—you know, it might start at 10 in the morning and go until —

MS. GROOT: That's what we do. We start at 10:00 in the morning— [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.] Okay.

MS. GROOT: —and we go to about 7:00 at night, usually.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: We have gone to 2:00 a.m. at one point, but otherwise it's usually about 7:00 or 8:00 that we finish up.

MS. FERRIN: And you go over each one of the 30?

MS. GROOT: Oh, several times.

MS. FERRIN: Narrowing it down.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Do you do a ballot?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Is it—

MS. GROOT: When we're down to about seven—

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: —we do a ballot, and then sometimes they have a winner right off the bat, sometimes not.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So we do more talking if we don't have a winner yet.

MS. FERRIN: Can you—

MS. GROOT: But after we pick the first place winner, then they go back and look at the other ones to see who was second and third.

MS. FERRIN: And at that time are you looking at their proposals?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So, the—

MS. GROOT: Well we look at the show record and everything that's in that application. But really, how they talk about their own work, because sometimes that's important and it's not always clear in the work that they make, what they're really after. But sometimes also what they plan to do with the money.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Because there's some—just some things we don't want to support, that they should find some other support for. Like shipping the work.

MS. FERRIN: Right.

MS. GROOT: That's a good example, because they're going to ship it no matter what.

MS. FERRIN: Right.

MS. GROOT: So why should we pay for that?

MS. FERRIN: So the best example, like you said, is the kiln or space.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

MS. FERRIN: You mentioned yesterday research, travel—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: I think—I think you've been pretty clear that it was, you know, sort of the combination of creativity that you were able to see in the work itself—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —but then that—combined with a, you know, a good project—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —that fed the creativity—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —not the market.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Although, the two things may end up together, but [Laughs.] that wasn't the intent of the grant.

MS. GROOT: Right. And the time. A lot of people just want some time away from their other job, and that's important too. Just spend your time working on your artwork without any worries and that kind of thing.

MS. FERRIN: So from the beginning until now, talk a little bit about how people found out about the original grant, and now how do they find out about it?

MS. GROOT: Well, we put ads in the magazines and in newspapers, and that's how people would find out. So they had to be able to read to [Laughs.] find out. And we still do it that way. What we do now was, we announce the winners and then we have a little blurb at the end that says about the foundation, and we also have the website for the foundation.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So you can see what artists have won, their work—new work, old work, and what's involved with applying.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And you had—

MS. GROOT: It's really an easy grant to apply for.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: The application form—there's not much space, so you have to be selective in what you put there.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] And with the website, now that everything is available for anybody, anywhere in the world, has it changed from being an American applicant to more international?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, we've had more international artists apply.

MS. FERRIN: Do you think that's because of the website, or because of some—

MS. GROOT: Well, I think they hear about it. Some of them, like, have visited the United States and they hear about it that way, or they know someone who got it that's very important.

MS. FERRIN: So, Alessandro being Italian—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Are there others that are international, that you see?

MS. GROOT: Well, like Janusz.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: He came in second one time, I think. Oh, and Clifford Rainey.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Yeah, there's several.

MS. FERRIN: So you've—with what has been funded, it's primarily been sculpture. A lot of figural sculpture. So things like design, and you know, that's in ceramics or pottery, have not—

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: Do you get applications for that?

MS. GROOT: We do. We still do. Originally, pottery was part of it.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And then I kind of cut that out. It just was very difficult to jury the pottery with the sculptural work.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And we were getting such horrible pots.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.] So I made it anything that's three-dimensional but not functional.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] So that's really—it's object based—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —not functional.

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: So with the catalog and anniversary exhibition, and you look back on that, what about that is important now? Because it's almost 11 years later.

MS. GROOT: What's important now?

MS. FERRIN: Like, what—you know, from that, do you remember, you know, the essays, the—you know, the artwork that was shown? Can you see, you know, sort of, from a distance what—

MS. GROOT: Well, I think we're getting more emerging artists getting the grant than we had before, and some of them are less well known than we've had before. So when we started, they were pretty well known artists already.

MS. FERRIN: And would you consider another anniversary exhibit at another time? Is that part of your thinking ahead?

MS. GROOT: That would be nice. I would like that. It's hard to find spaces.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: That kind of thing.

MS. FERRIN: And it's expensive.

MS. GROOT: It's very expensive. An art show is very expensive.

MS. FERRIN: So, I think one of the things you've talked about is, you would rather give the money to the foundation to feed the artists, and they're—it's always looking at the idea of doing an exhibition.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Can you talk about that? Because it's sort of like, how does the foundation decide about making expenditures outside of the direct grant?

MS. GROOT: Well, those decisions come from me.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So whatever things—anything that I think will help the foundation grow is important.

MS. FERRIN: And where would you see it grow from here?

MS. GROOT: I'm not really sure. I think, it's—we're going to hit more grants, not just one, two, and three.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: I would love to see like some more grants that are the \$35,000 grants, instead of just one.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So that can happen.

MS. FERRIN: And—with the sort of relationship of the collection and the foundation—do you see these things coming together, at some point?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So the collection would be put into the foundation?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, part of the foundation.

MS. FERRIN: Well that would sort of change things a lot and it's sort of foundation papers and structure.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Do you want to talk a little bit about how—

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: I mean you don't have to, but you know.

MS. GROOT: I don't really know, I mean, I—

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, it hasn't been clarified yet but that would part of what you could imagine 10 years from now.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: It'll look different because of that. [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: The collection would look different.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: You get, you know, pieces from the artists who were—won the grant.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: I have most of the first place winners, but some of them are—do installation works, so that's difficult in a small house to handle.

MS. FERRIN: And what about, you know, sort of the catalog idea of—the 14th anniversary had this wonderful catalog that Nina worked on, and Margaret Carney was the hired gun curator. So you know, the exhibition itself, like I said, is—that's very expensive, but the cataloging sort of lives on—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Is that something you've thought more about?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, working has happened on the catalog, but right now we just can't afford it.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Well, especially if you're thinking that the priority is for another grant—

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: —you know? And if that was the—if that was what you wanted the most, and the decision comes from you—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —the grant is more important than the production of a catalog.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: Well, and, kind of, knowing you also, it's not your passion in the same way as working directly with the artists, as opposed to working with a catalog—

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: —and photography, and paperwork that's involved with the catalog.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So that, sort of leads me to the questions about—what about the foundation? If you were to use your words, not mine, what are the most exciting things involved with the foundation?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I think—I think, like, the catalog is just a little frosting on the cake. It's nice to have, but the artists' work is more important than having a catalog. Or maybe we could do something like have a catalog of each artist. That would be kind of nice, too.

MS. FERRIN: Well, I think this whole issue of documentation—

[Parrot squawks.]

MS. GROOT: Jack.

MS. FERRIN: —letting it live online, and letting it live as a printed document—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.]

[Parrot squawks.]

MS. GROOT: Jack.

MS. FERRIN: You know, those are sort of fundamental decisions—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —and it's a huge amount of priority orientation to doing those two things, but it sounds like they're, you know, going to be organically done the same way. The rest of the foundation's progression—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —has been. Okay, I think we covered the parts that were the formal questions about the foundation and do you see anything—you know, you sort of are at an anniversary moment and a moment of kind of reflection; you know, 25 years. Can you think about sort of—what types of artwork are—how things have changed, in terms of the scale of work that you've seen as the way that might be going?

MS. GROOT: I think we'll get less figurative work now than did at the very beginning.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: In the beginning, we had a lot of figurative work. And we still get quite a bit I'll bet, but I think it's less, and they're not necessarily winners.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: It varies.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] We talked a little bit about—yesterday, with the collection—about new technologies. Do you see that—

MS. GROOT: About what?

MS. FERRIN: New technologies.

MS. GROOT: Well, yeah. Artists always like to—especially clay artists—always like to find something, some other material to work with that doesn't break. So early on, artists wanted to work with bronze instead of clay—

[Parrot squawks.]

MS. FERRIN: It's the squirrel.

MS. GROOT: —but later, it was glass.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: They'd want to do glass casting. And now it's that period where—

[Parrot squawks.]

MS. GROOT: Jack.

[Parrot squawks.]

MS. GROOT: Jack, stop it.

MS. FERRIN: So, if somebody were to apply and say they wanted to buy a 3D printer. Would you—how would you feel about that?

MS. GROOT: Well I think that's okay, if that's what they want to do.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: But they'd have to have some more ideas than just the printer.

MS. FERRIN: Like what they're going to do with it?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Okay. You want to take a break and maybe we could look at the Red Weldon's piece together?

MS. GROOT: Okay.

MS. FERRIN: Okay.

[END OF groot14_4of4_sd_track02_r.mp3]

MS. FERRIN: Okay. So we both think that things are somewhat coming to an end here. There's a lot of details of different individual parts of the collection, so one of them has been the work of artists who have responded to Candice's sort of ideas. And one of these pieces was a work by Red Weldon Sandlin called *The Ball of String*.

MS. GROOT: *The Big Ball of String*.

MS. FERRIN: *Big Ball of String*. Can you talk a little bit about that piece and how it came about?

MS. GROOT: That was one—[Laughs.]—that was one of my favorite books as a child. It's about a little boy that—he's sick so he's not allowed to get out of bed, but he still wants to play with some of the stuff that he's got. So he has this big ball of string and he uses the string with his suction cup gun. So if he needs something, say he wants his baseball bat, then he can shoot the baseball bat and the suction cup will stick to it, and then he takes it in. So he's got his bat; and he does that all day long.

MS. FERRIN: And this was a book you read when you were how old?

MS. GROOT: Oh, I don't know. Quite young, because it was read to me. In fact, my sister knows it by heart, because I'd always force her to read it to me. It was two books, that one and *The Fly Went By*.

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: Another one.

MS. FERRIN: So, tell me a little bit about how the idea for this commission came up.

MS. GROOT: Well, Red deals with books in her own art, so I thought she was the perfect one to do a representational sculpture, translating the book into a sculpture.

MS. FERRIN: And is this typical of the way you work with artists? That you'll see an artist and commission work?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. So I liked—well, with her I liked the fact I didn't have to give her any ideas at all. I like the artist to just take what they see in the book, and then—or in the piece whatever they are doing. [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: It's a rabbit this time.

MS. GROOT: They are having a good time. They're wild right now.

MS. FERRIN: So are there other pieces that, you know, you commission that are particularly meaningful? We talked about the Tony Natsoulas one.

MS. GROOT: Yeah, the Cary Grant painting.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: That was a commission as well.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Because as a young child, I guess, and in high school, I just fell in love with Cary Grant.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And I've seen all his movies and everything. And this artist had done several drawings and three paintings of Cary Grant nude, and they were funny.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative]

MS. GROOT: And they had all sold, so I asked him if he had another Cary Grant in him—

MS. FERRIN: [Laughs.]

MS. GROOT: —to do [inaudible] painting; which he did, so then I let him decide how to do it.

MS. FERRIN: Go from there. [Affirmative.] The piece that Red did has a little garbage truck on it.

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And was that her idea or your idea?

MS. GROOT: No, that was my idea.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: My grandfather came from the Netherlands and came to the Chicago area and started a garbage company.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And that's how my family supported themselves.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative]

MS. GROOT: As you know the Dutch are very clean people, so that was very typical. And when I was growing up, all my friends, their parents had garbage trucks too.

MS. FERRIN: Really?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. And, you know, it kind of depends on what route you had. Some just had one garbage truck, and that was enough if they had a good route.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: That kind of thing. So I wasn't aware of a lot of other kind of jobs that people had.

MS. FERRIN: Because everybody you came in contact with was part of the same industry?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: Kind of like my family with art. You know, the kids have grown up with artists everywhere around

them, and I think they're having trouble moving in to the rest of the world—[Laughs.]—and finding out that not everyone has artists at their dinner table or—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —in the bathroom when they want to be there. So that's—so tell me just a little bit more, because I think with the—we talked a little bit about the five families or the families that you were growing up with and did—and your father died a little bit younger—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —you know, so what were your memories there of the—you know, how it all came together? Because that is sort of unusual, you know?

MS. GROOT: Well, it all came together, because—my mother, she's a very strong woman.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And compared to mothers of my friends, I guess I would consider her very liberal. Because, as I said earlier, with the Dutch religion, that was a very conservative religion. Yeah. And—so I was allowed to do more things than just what the church said.

MS. FERRIN: And so she let you off?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN:
And you said at one point you had to go to church anyway, but—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: What would happen if you didn't go?

MS. GROOT:
Well, it was kind of like—it was a social thing too.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: And that—then on Monday morning you'd get grilled by your friends on why you didn't go to church at night. You know, because sometimes my mother let us watch *Bonanza*.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN:
Oh boy. So, you said Sundays you had to go twice—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —in the morning and then—

MS. GROOT: At night.

MS. FERRIN: But instead you got to watch *Bonanza*?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Our family watched *Bonanza* too. It was—eat steak, watch *Bonanza*.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

[They laugh.]

MS. FERRIN: You know, I didn't know that that was going on all over America. I thought it was just my family.

MS. GROOT: [Laughs.]

MS. FERRIN: So, you went to church on Sundays those two times, and then what about the rest of the week?

MS. GROOT: Then we had catechism on Wednesdays.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: Then in school we had Bible class every day.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.]

MS. GROOT: So it's a lot of doctrine.

MS. FERRIN: Do you have artwork in the collection that deals with biblical stories or—

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: So it really wasn't something that—even though you studied it in school, it's not really reflected in the collection?

MS. GROOT:
No, it's not.

MS. FERRIN: And with the way you were with these other families—and was yours the only one involved with art? Or were there other kids you grew up with that—

MS. GROOT: Involved in art?

MS. FERRIN: Art.

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: No. So it was really just your mom and—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: So your father's family was the Groot family?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: And he died young.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And your mother then stepped into a dual role?

MS. GROOT: Right. When my father died she had five children ages two to 10, so it was quite a—in a way, quite a schedule. I don't know the word I'm looking for.

MS. FERRIN: Well it sounds like she was managing a lot of—

MS. GROOT: It was a lot of work.

MS. FERRIN: Yeah, and did she also be involved with the business? What happened?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: So, she was working in the business—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, because a lot of times she took me with her.

MS. FERRIN: And was it here—it was in Chicago?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And what happened with the business over time?

MS. GROOT: Well after she died, then the business was sold to my uncle.

MS. FERRIN: Your father's brother?

MS. GROOT: Yes, because they both had like 50 percent I think, something like that, of the business. And then my cousins took over eventually, which is who runs it now.

MS. FERRIN: And what—can you just describe a little bit of the business? At first it was trash hauling with trucks, and then you said it grew into a much larger idea or new technologies?

MS. GROOT: Well it was always with garbage, but the Dutch people—a group of Dutch people got together and started another garbage company which is probably the largest one in the world, Waste Management. And one thing I found very interesting about it is that I've seen pictures of board of Waste Management and it's almost all women, because their husbands had died. So it was very strange.

MS. FERRIN: And these are all families from Chicago?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And these were the families you went to school with?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, and then Waste Management started gobbling up some of the smaller companies, and now they're international.

MS. FERRIN: So, are they involved with sort of the moving of trash around the world and—

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative]

MS. FERRIN: So is there any part of your collection that sort of reflects on that family history? You have the little garbage truck of Red's. Are there other—I mean you have so many different collections. Are there any that involve—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, not really.

MS. FERRIN: So things like, you know, garbage trucks themselves or—

MS. GROOT: I do have a garbage truck collection.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, okay [Laughs.]. So, those are vintage?

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: Sort of the different kind of like John Deere tractors except they're garbage trucks?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: But nothing else in terms of—

MS. GROOT: Not in terms of artwork.

MS. FERRIN: No ceramic garbage trucks?

MS. GROOT: No.

MS. FERRIN: What do you think your mother would think with this foundation with her name on it, and this collection that has developed?

MS. GROOT: Oh boy. I think she'd be pleased.

MS. FERRIN: Do you think her ideas would have grown alongside of yours?

MS. GROOT: Yeah. She would have a lot to say, I think [Laughs.].

MS. FERRIN: I would imagine [Laughs.]. Did she—a lot of people call you Virginia—

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: —because you know, you named the foundation after your mother—

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: —to, you know, gain some anonymity, except you ended up renaming yourself.

MS. GROOT: Yeah [Laughs.], didn't work. Just didn't work [Laughs.].

MS. FERRIN: Well, I think about my great-grandfather he was also a Russian immigrant, and he left us a little

seed money, and I started my first studio with that seed money, and I think he would probably be very upset with how risky I've been with, you know—

MS. GROOT: Oh, I see.

MS. FERRIN: —my life, you know, in the arts. Like, he would have been, you know, “Go to school, get a job with a title, and a salary,” and you know, “Don't waste your mind,” that kind of thing. You know, so that's my father's side of the family whereas my mother's was like yours, an artist, and you know, wanted to see us bloom creatively, you know, and that was way more important. So I would think that Virginia would be giggling away at —

MS. GROOT: Probably.

MS. FERRIN: —you know, the naughtiness and, you know, sort of the—is that Tess?

MS. GROOT: What?

MS. FERRIN: Tess, the naughty monkey?

MS. GROOT: No, Betty.

MS. FERRIN: Betty.

MS. GROOT: Naughty Betty.

MS. FERRIN: Naughty Betty? But that seeing, you know, her daughter who's been—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —acquiring art as a reflection of herself, you know, so anyways. Well if you were to commission a single object at this point, do you have sort of a list of things that you might do or—

MS. GROOT: Well, I have some small ideas, but they're not resolved yet.

MS. FERRIN: Well, maybe tonight you'll be walking around and—

MS. GROOT: Maybe.

MS. FERRIN: —the right things will come together.

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: All right, well I think I've exhausted all my questions, which is an amazing thing you know, because I could go on and we could just walk around again and pick up some other things, but I think we covered everything with the foundation and yourself as an artist and the type of—

MS. GROOT: Well one thing about this collecting business, because I have several collections, is that I think it stems from visiting my grandparents, my mother's parents.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, okay.

MS. GROOT: Because she used to—I think the grandmother, she died young too, so I didn't know her, but she had a collection.

MS. FERRIN: This is on your mother's side?

MS. GROOT: Yes, and I remember just staring at this collection of—and I don't remember what they were, but it was whole wall filled with these shelves filled with these objects, and the game I would play with was if I could have any one of them which one would I choose? And I think that started the collecting business.

MS. FERRIN: In your mind?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: And then kind of we talked a little bit about it, but you know, you started with a Vulcass [ph] plate, and then you said it was after you sort of gave up teaching you moved into the, you know, collecting, but collecting one piece a month is very different than kind of, you know, what internally gave you the permission to really—

MS. GROOT: Well I always have a like, guilt feelings [Laughs.] when I buy a piece.

MS. FERRIN: But not enough to—

MS. GROOT: Not enough to stop me [Laughs.].

MS. FERRIN: And did that, I mean how did sort of speed of collecting take place?

MS. GROOT: Like now I think of a collection in a larger sense. When I first started I wasn't thinking in that way at all, so there's some pieces that would be very important in my collection.

MS. FERRIN:
And those are the ones you're seeking now?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Fill in those important pieces.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative] Yeah. When I collect especially, well, with the artist I like to get a major piece of their work. Usually beginning with that, and then I go back and get some other pieces of their work.

MS. FERRIN: That shows their history—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —or development. We talked about the Arneson dog, we talked about the Viola Frey grandmother. Are there any others that are like the thing that got away that you're—

MS. GROOT: Yeah, that's true. There are worse things that got away.

MS. FERRIN: And you got them in your mind, and when they come up you—

MS. GROOT: Right.

MS. FERRIN: —you know.

MS. GROOT: [Affirmative.] You hope they come back.

MS. FERRIN: And you'll be going back to Michigan for next summer to continue work? Do you have plans between now and then to finish the mark too?

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Will you go out during the holidays?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, I go from Christmas to New Year's, I go as well unless the snow is real bad. But yeah it's very nice out there, very quiet, so like in the winter I just make these large platter things to set them up dry with plastic on them so that by next summer they're ready to be fired and everything.

MS. FERRIN: Is that because they might warp if they dried too fast?

MS. GROOT: Yeah, and crack.

MS. FERRIN: [Affirmative.] Well, it sounds like you have lots of plans, you know—

MS. GROOT: Yes.

MS. FERRIN: —that are going to continue regardless of the illness. And it sounds like you're also using those plans to kind of counteract the, you know, what could happen when you're feeling ill that now you can—you know you're going to Miami. You know you're going to finish this artwork, so I think it'll be exciting for all of us who've been part of your family—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: —to, you know, watch these things come out. And you know, every day is precious, so—

MS. GROOT: Yeah.

MS. FERRIN: Well, let's close things up now, and if afterwards you remember something, I'm sure that the

archives would be happy to add this into some files that go with this interview, and thank you so much for your patience with all these questions [Laughs.].

MS. GROOT: You made it easy.

MS. FERRIN: Oh, thank you.

MS. GROOT: You're a good interviewer.

MS. FERRIN: Well, I hope I get to do more, you know. Thanks so much.

[END OF groot14_4of4_sd_track03_r.mp3]

[END OF INTERVIEW]