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Oral history interview with Andrea Zittel,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Andrea Zittel on January 8 and 9, 2018. The interview took place at the home and studio of Andrea Zittel in Joshua Tree, CA, and was conducted by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Andrea Zittel and Hunter Drohojowska-Philp have reviewed the transcript. Their corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: This is Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, interviewing Andrea Zittel, at the artist's home and studio in Joshua Tree, California, on the 8th of January 2018, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, card number one. So hello, Andrea. Well, happy New Year.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Happy New Year.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And I've—I'm sitting in Joshua Tree. I get to look out over the view of acres and acres of hard-won land that you've purchased over the years to accommodate your studio, your home, your storage, and your homes for your various and sundry visitors. And I'm looking at you, and you're wearing clothes of your own design.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Mostly.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mostly.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Your skirt. You're wearing the black skirt?

ANDREA ZITTEL: The black skirt and a thermal shirt, because there's supposed to be a sweater over this, a winter uniform, and it's too warm. Because of climate change.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah. It is so much warmer than we ever would have thought during this winter. And I'm very—just for the record, you—[. . . -AZ]. The tiles on your floor are designed by you. They go up the wall. They're designed by you. The bookshelves—those are white, rough-edged bookshelves, are designed and molded by you. It's—what you're known for in this environment is really, completely addressing, as far as I can tell, every aspect of your living situation. Would you agree with that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Mostly. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And we'll go back to the beginning, but how—what is there about this arrangement that suits you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: You mean in the kitchen right now, or in the house?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: In your—in this lifestyle. [00:01:59] How did you—it seems like such a lot of attention to every aspect of every detail of your working life. How does it serve you? What does it do for you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think it's the autonomy that appeals to me the most. And it's the—it's less the fact that I've done everything, and more the fact that I am allowed to do everything living here. And it's a situation that's very conducive to that.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Meaning that you are—does that mean that you're in control of the ways things look?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, but also—well, I mean, this is like a really big thing that I'm always trying to figure out. I mean, kind of in control of the way things look, but also the way I live. But then,

you know, so, I can decide how to live here, but then I'm always pushing up against the conventions of our culture. For instance, today is a Monday, and I have an employee who works in the office. And we work in the office from ten to six, which are conventional hours. So, we've conformed to that. You know, if we wanted to, we could change those, but there's a lot of practicalities to take into consideration. So there's like certain ways that I feel like I have fit—you know, that my life fits into these existing norms. But I feel like, at least, being an artist and living here in this situation, it gives me the opportunity to move outside of those norms when I want to take the initiative to do so. And also move outside of the norms of the art world. You know, I think that's one of the reasons I wanted to come out here and to try and produce work in this slightly different way.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Which is so interesting of itself, because so many people, maybe not when you started, but now so many artists really want to be in the art world. I mean, it's become a culture of an operation unto itself, in a really elaborate way.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean, it's funny. I think of—so it's just changed so much since I started. [00:04:01] I started my career in the early '90s. It was a much smaller, more intimate art world. And also, because I started during a recession. And, you know, it was shrinking when I entered. So, and I was living in New York, and I was working in a gallery. So, I really felt like I knew everyone. It was like this small, intimate community that was pretty easy to understand. And it's so big now. And I don't understand it. And I think there's, like, multiple layers in it. And I think that—I mean, I would agree with you that people want to be in it, but then—I don't know.

It's funny, because I was thinking about this when I was hiking this morning, and I think there's a cost in that. Like, I think that it's so limitless in terms of, like, it's so big, and there's just no end. And as a single individual, if you are ambitious, and I'm ambitious, like, it can just eat you up because it's endless. And so, I've deliberately placed these parameters on my life that I have to push up against, but it helps keep me contained. And, I mean, I think I'm at a point in my life where I'm actually, like, really happy with the decisions that I've made. You know, like I'm—I've limited myself primarily to this one sort of area, this geographical location. And right now, I'm taking a break from doing shows and I'm focusing entirely on A-to-Z West.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And A-to-Z West is, I guess for want of a better term, an organization that you created based on your own initials, Andrea Zittel—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —to accommodate your vision of what you wanted to do out here in Joshua Tree. Is that correct?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Like you mentioned before, it's a bunch of pieces of land that I've slowly bought over the years and cobbled together. And there's structures on it, structures I've—that have come with the land, structures that I've built. And so, it's this pretty extensive grounds for my practice. [00:06:01] You know, indoor and outdoor space. And people come here. But I'm really happy being able to work here in this environment. And, you know, not always be working in these sort of—you know, like we normally—when you do an—like an exhibition in an institution, you'll go, and you'll install the show, and it's a big push. But, like, if you're not happy with something you can't change it. You're like, stuck with it. And then you leave it and it's over. And I have the opportunity to really evolve my work here in a way that makes me feel really good.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it's a—but then you've been doing it out here since the '90s. So, you've been—when did you buy your first parcel?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, I bought the first parcel in 2000.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: 2000.

ANDREA ZITTEL: But I started in '90 in New York with a very similar construct.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I want to go back to that in a minute, but I just want to say, just for the record now, how many acres—35 acres that you've managed to piece together on which your current property resides?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Now it's almost 70. I keep adding to it. So, I think this, where we are now, I believe it's about 68 acres. And then I have another—well, for my own practice, I have another

15, 20 acres in Wonder Valley.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Wonder Valley.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, which is 40 minutes east of here. But I'll have other projects out there. And then I have more pieces of land that we use for *High Desert Test Sites*. And then more land that I've decided to sell, because it's like—it's becoming, like, a lot, right now.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what—as long as we're here, let's keep on with Joshua Tree for a moment. So, when you—you were coming out in the '90s, but what inspired you to buy your first parcel of land here?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. So, there's so many factors, and it's funny because I've looked at different interviews I've done, and I've said different things every time. [00:08:00] And they're all different and they're all totally true. So, just on a personal level, my family, my grandparents and great-grandparents are from just south of here, the Imperial Valley.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, let's—before we go back that way, I'll—let's then pause then, for the record. We're going to go back to the very beginning. So, start with your grandparents and then we'll work up, okay?

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, my grandparents were ranchers.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And what were their names?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Opal Eshelman and Carl Eshelman.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Opal?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how do you spell the last name?

ANDREA ZITTEL: E-S-H-E-L-M-A-N.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: E-S-H—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] E-L-M-A-N.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Opal and?

ANDREA ZITTEL: And Carl.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: K?

ANDREA ZITTEL: C.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: C-A-R-L?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And , those are—that's O-P-A-L?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And those were your grandparents.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Your paternal grandparents?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Maternal.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Maternal grandparents. Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, yeah. So they, my grandmother grew up in the Imperial Valley, and my grandfather moved there. And so, they were ranchers. And my parents were teachers, and our district was on this sort of experimental year-round system. So, I would have vacations when my

parents were teaching. So, they would send me to my grandmother's ranch on my vacations to stay with her, so I wouldn't be alone at home.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] And, just out of curiosity—now, you have to stop and tell me your parents' names.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, okay. Gordon. G-O-R-D-O-N Zittel. And Miriam.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: M-I-R—

ANDREA ZITTEL: R-I-A-M.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I-A-M.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And, what did they teach?

ANDREA ZITTEL: My Dad taught German in high school. And my Mom taught elementary school.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay. And so, they were the—they were the—let's say, I guess, who was the—who were the grand—your mother's parents?

ANDREA ZITTEL: My mother's parents. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, yeah. So, I would spend a lot of time out on the ranch when I was a child. [00:09:59] And it just felt like that was my place. Like, I just felt—everything felt right. And then, you know, we were living in Escondido, which was this suburban community that was, like, it was very rural when I was born, but while I was growing up it turned into this sort of dense, you know, suburban network. And it just felt really weird.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And that's where you had been—were born, right?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what year were you—well, I know your birthdate is September 6th.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But what year—

ANDREA ZITTEL: 1965.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: 1965. Okay. And, so you were born in 1965 in Escondido. At that point, it undoubtedly was part of the post-war boom in California.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean, it was—but California's been growing, you know—like, it [still - AZ] hasn't stopped growing. And so, you know, there were maybe, like, two houses in our neighborhood when I was a baby, and then it was just a sprawl. By the time I was in high school there was a shopping mall—[laughs]—down the road. And, so that was just—felt, I don't know. You know, it always felt wrong to me. And I had nothing to compare it to, really. It just felt weird. And so, anyway. So, I just felt called to the desert. So that was the personal level. So, I knew I needed to be in the desert. El Centro itself, since then, they've—the, sort of, economy has changed quite a bit. And so now, it's larger, industrialized agriculture. Not small farmers anymore. And there's a big prison, which is another big part of the economy. So, it's not—it doesn't appeal to me as much. Even though I had thought about going to El Centro, this is north of there. I've been driving through here most of my life.

I came through here the first time with my photography teacher, Walter Cotten, when I was in school. And, I felt—we drove through Wonder Valley, kind of dropped down Amboy Road, from Amboy. And I just remember feeling the sense that I would live there someday, which is so interesting. [00:12:00] Anyway, so, but in the meantime, you know, I was living in New York, and I was an artist, and—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: We have to go—get you to that point first, which is essentially, you're in Escondido and from what I've read, you didn't really know that much about art.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: When you were in—did you do—were you a person who ever drew, or did anything crafty in your spare time?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I made things a lot, but I didn't make things that were considered art. So—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What kinds of things did you make?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Like, I could sew and knit. My grandmother was, you know, my other grandmother, my paternal grandmother was German. And so, she knew a lot of handcrafts like tatting, which is a kind of lace-making that you do with a bobbin on your hands. Like—so she taught me a lot of that. So, I could make things.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And you have to stop now and tell me what your—what your paternal grandparents' names were.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay. Frieda.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] F-R-I-E-D?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And Fred.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Zittel.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Zittel.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And they were, they were German?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And my grandfather died when I was pretty young, so my relationship was primarily with my grandmother, who I also spent a lot of time with. Both of them, just because my parents were working.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And where was she?

ANDREA ZITTEL: She lived in Long Beach.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you're learning—from her you learned to do tatting, and what else did you learn? Sewing?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Sewing, knitting, and crocheting, and I remember I would just do a lot of projects, like, make up projects at home, like, carve stuff and make weird paper-mâché stuff. But not really thinking of it as art. I just, you know, I was just kind of goofing around. And I was discouraged from taking art in high school because it wasn't college prep. So, I think my parents thought that, you know, that was, like, frivolous. So I never took art until I was in college.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, when you were just—where did you go to elementary school, and where did you go to high school? [00:14:00]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Elementary school, I kind of bounced around, because my Mom was a teacher. So, I think I went to her school for a while, which was Glen View. And I went to Juniper, which was on our side of town.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: These are all in Escondido?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And then I—we lived in Germany for a year, because my Dad had a Fulbright.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What year was that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: 1972.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: If he had a Fulbright, what was he studying there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He actually—they did an exchange, so he was teaching English in a German

high school. And he exchanged with another teacher who came and taught German at his high school.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What city were you in?

ANDREA ZITTEL: In Schweinfurt. It's S-C-H-W-E-I-N-F-U-R-T.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: F-U-R-T?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I think it means like pigs crossing, or something.

[They laugh.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was like—it had been bombed heavily in World War II, so it was like a kind of, very modern—it was a ball-bearing factory before. So, they had really bombed it. So, it was very modern. Like, everything was built, you know, '70s, concrete houses.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, that's your first trip to Europe?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I think so. Yes.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What kind of impact did it have? You would have been, I guess, seven or eight years old?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Six and seven. Yeah. And, I think, yeah. It—I mean, a couple of things. You know, because my Mom home-schooled us, she pushed us really hard academically. I mean—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: She home-schooled you when you were in Germany.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. We went to a school, and then we got home-schooled in the afternoon.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, yeah. So, I think—God. I mean, the biggest impact, I mean, besides seeing another country and experiencing another culture, is that it really made us—my brother and I felt like outsiders when we came back.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Like, we were outsiders there and outsiders in the U.S. Like, we had weird accents when we came back to go to school. And, like, a lot of just conventions were different. But, you know, like, in Germany, like, classes will go to a public fountain, and all the kids will take their clothes off and play in the fountain in their underwear, or in nothing. [00:16:05] And it—and you come back and do that in the States. I'm like, you know, really—people got really upset. So, I just came back with this sense of, like, I didn't know what was right and what wasn't. You know, what was appropriate, actually.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how old was your brother? What's your brother's name?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Wayne. W-A-Y-N-E.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how old is—how much older—?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He was younger than me. So, he was three. I think he was three and I was five when we went over. I'm trying to remember how that works, if I was born in '65, because it seems like I would have been seven, but—I don't know. That's my memory. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Seven.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Maybe it was the first grade. Second grade? First grade?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But did your—if it was a factory town, did your parents take you to any museums or anything like that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, we traveled a lot. My dad's really into culture and he listens to music, you know. And we would go to museums, but it was all old, you know, like historical art museums. So they loved traveling. The family joke was that they kind of ruined it for me, because I hated traveling so much, because I got drug around so—we did more trips after that,

back to Europe every summer. And I just grew to hate it so much. But—and then I'm still not crazy about it. I just tolerate it slightly.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, when you went to museums as a young person, you didn't have any kind of—did you have any, like, "Oh, my God. These are paintings. I want to do that." Anything like that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I really didn't care about paintings. What I would—what really struck me was how people lived. You know, we went to a lot of castles. We took tours. And so, I remember being, like, really intensely interested in, like, people's lifestyles, and how different they were historically. And that fed in with my feeling that everything, the way we lived, seemed wrong somehow or, like, off. So I spent a lot of time fantasizing about living in these different ways and wondering what that would be like.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:18:00] Well, certainly in—certainly living in Germany, even after the war, would be quite a bit different from—[laughs]—Escondido.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Right?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And we have a lot of relatives in Germany, too. So we, you know, I heard stories. You know. I mean, it was intense there that soon after [the war -AZ], you know, most people had, like, lived through World War II in one way or another, and there were a lot of really intense stories and stuff. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Of course. So you came back after 1972. But, how many other times did you go there when you were young, then?

ANDREA ZITTEL: We went back, I think at least two more times. It seemed like we went every third summer, '72—maybe '75 and '78 roughly. I think I went there when I was in middle school and my parents just decided I was, like, way too much of a handful and too sulky, and we went—like, they weren't going to take me. I don't know, and so then I didn't—I don't think I went back again until I was an artist and, like, having to show.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you went to Glen View Elementary, and then where did you go to high school?

ANDREA ZITTEL: To San Pasqual.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Or was there a junior high school?

ANDREA ZITTEL: There was. It was Del Dios. So, it was like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Del Dios?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And they were just, you know—it was the school I was supposed to go to based on the district where we lived. And I just got bussed there and it was fine. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Del Dios. And what was the other one?

ANDREA ZITTEL: And then the high school was San Pasqual.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: San Pasqual.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And the high school was weird. It was —we lived in an area that was growing really quickly. And so, they had to build a high school. And, so it was a lot of temporary, you know, like, those sort of prefab—it was just built very cheaply and very quickly kind of thrown together.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay. I'm kind of wondering in an off-hand way whether that made an impression, given your own ability to put up structures quickly when you need to.

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:19:59] Well, you know, I mean, I think I've always been really conscious of space, and how—and so, you know, there was no hallways. Everything's outside. And so, when it rains you're walking through the mud. Like, it just wasn't set up that well. And then I'm trying to remember if there were windows or not, but it just seemed like there weren't windows, and, like,

how the space feels when you're in it really affects you.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Especially if you're a student and you're there.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And I had been—done really well academically when I was younger, mostly because my Mom had pushed me so hard. And by high school, I was starting to rebel and do really poorly, and skip school, and I, like, I got into—you know, well, I was—I was about to say I got into a lot of trouble, which isn't totally true, because I don't think I got caught for a lot of the stuff I did. But I was really starting to spiral in a very bad way.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what was—what were you rebelling against?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Good question. Every—society, everything. You know, I mean, like if I said my parents—my parents were just an extension of society, and they were reflecting those expectations, feeling controlled, not liking what it felt like to be a young woman and be really powerless, I just felt upset and angry all the time. I tried to be really perfect and wasn't cutting it, and just decided if I couldn't be perfect, then I was going to, like, not even try at all, you know. Like, all or nothing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you slightly drop out of your high school studies?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I'm trying to remember how it worked. Like, it's funny, because now that I have a son—like, so, for instance, I'm trying to help him with his math, but I don't know how to do math because I quit going to my math classes. And then, I think I had to go to a junior college at night time to graduate from high school to get the math credits I needed, and I can't—I just kind of like became a mix of becoming invisible. I developed an eating disorder. I went from being a cheerleader to, like, hanging out with all the punk kids and going to music shows. [00:21:59] And, like, sneaking out my window in the middle of the night and rolling my car to the bottom of the hill, and, like, driving somewhere and spending the night, like, doing something. You know what I mean? Like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, by this time it would have been '75, like, early 1980s?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. It was the—I graduated in '83.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: From high school.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah. So, the early '80s in southern California was a very lively time to—

ANDREA ZITTEL: *Dazed and Confused* [the movie –AZ]. I don't know that that was southern California, but—yeah. It was, like—yeah, I mean, it was—it's funny because, like, I think it was a cultural confusion, too. I don't think it was just my confusion. Like, you know, like, the rapid growth and the kind of lack of any stability, or, like—and the quickly-changing values. I felt like it affected everyone. And—yeah. I mean, you know, it's like—I don't know. I keep thinking of movies for some reason. Like *The Ice Storm*. You know, there were, like—there were all these values that had been questioned in the '70s, too. I think parents in our neighborhood probably were swingers, you know. And it's just, it's just weird—anyway.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: No, it's true. It's a—that's a big shift from the '70s to the '80s. And I've interviewed a few—more than one artist who's been in that nexus of—operation. So, you're rebelling and you're not going to classes, but you do get into college.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. So—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Where did you start college?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So my parents, you know, they were always really, you know, like, the whole assumption was that I would go to college. And so, I think at some point—I don't think I have the facts very clear in my mind, but I know that I ran away from home at some point. I had an eating disorder, and my Dad found out. He got really upset. I left home. And then, so, their emphasis—they kind of let go of this idea of me going to, like, the college they wanted. [00:24:00] And then it was just, like, what if I didn't go to college at all? So, I convinced them to let me go to San Diego State, which was like—I didn't really want to go anywhere, but that was the easiest, you know—like, I knew I wouldn't have to struggle to get in. Like, I could have gotten

into a better school still, even then at that point. But, like, I knew it would be easy to get in. It was close enough to home to feel familiar, it just seemed easy.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you live at home?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. No, I was already like, ready to be out, and I moved out before I went to college, but it just didn't seem difficult in any way. And they did—what are those tests? Was it the Briggs-Myer, or the Kiersey-Bates—you know, those tests where they test you for your aptitude? So, they took me to San Diego and I had to do all those tests because, like, they didn't know what to do with me, you know, why was I so fucked up? And they—that, based on those tests, they said I should go to a big school for college, not a small school. And, I don't know why it said that, but it seemed like—it actually ended up working out well. So, I went to San Diego State, lived in the dorms on campus my first year, and then moved into an apartment off campus after that. And—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did your parents pay your tuition?

ANDREA ZITTEL: They did in the beginning, but it's very cheap for a state school. It probably was, like, \$400 a semester or something. And I did have a job while I was in school. And then I got in trouble one Thanksgiving because I said a bad word at the table. And they threatened to cut me off, and then I got upset. And so, I think I mostly paid—my memory is that I paid the rest of my school, but I'm not 100 percent sure of that. But I kind of didn't want to take anything from them after that, because I knew they could cut me off. But a state school is so affordable that I was able to just work and go to school. That was fine.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What job did you do when you were going to school?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I worked in the art supply store on campus. Which was really good, and it really helped me meet a lot of people. [00:26:03] And I got extra support. I sort of met a woman who was kind of my mentor at the time, who was my boss at the store. And then I also worked at the San Diego Museum of Art during my breaks, as a preparator. So, I learned a lot there, too. Like, you know, I learned how to build walls, and how to skim coat, and work with sheet rock, and a lot of things that came in handy—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is this all after you had—how did you find your way to the art department at San Diego State?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. So, the plan was that I would go to San Diego—my parents' plan was that I would go to San Diego State and study business, and that seemed fine because I didn't know what I wanted to do. And then I realized I was more interested in psychology, which I still am really interested in. And so, I started taking psychology classes, but I was still so screwed up myself, and I realized that as a psychologist—I would just be, like, deeply in that world of other people as messed up as myself, forever. And, I don't know why I took an art class. I don't know that it was like a pre-req for something else, but, like, it wasn't—like, art wasn't really an area I ever thought about, or identified with. And I took one art class which was taught by a grad student. And, you know when you just do something and—it's not like I understood it. Like, it had a lot of, like, exercises that were kind of abstract, but it just felt—like, I felt like it just felt right. And, like, I don't—the weird thing for me is that I don't know what art is. Like, I don't think I ever knew. And I didn't have a lot of assumptions about being an artist. It was just, like, this one class I took where he would give these difficult assignments, and nobody would understand them. And somehow my brain could do it, you know. I could—you know, a drawing that was only negative space or something, you know. And it was really fun.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, then I kept going back to the art department. And then I got my job at the art store, and then, you know, started to have a couple of—[00:28:02]—the nice thing about San Diego State, too, is that, you know, if you really applied yourself, you would stand out there.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I got a lot of extra support from the faculty once, you know, I decided to commit.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Were there any interesting—were there any faculty there who wound up contributing to your evolution?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. A couple of people. But, it's—I mean, it's, you know, everything's so complicated. Well, like, Gillian Theobald, who was a practicing artist, who was my boss at the art store. She wasn't faculty, but I felt like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: How do you spell her name?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Theobald. T-H—like, Theobald. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay. It's Gillian with a G, right?

ANDREA ZITTEL: G-I-L-L-I-A-N. And she still practices in Seattle.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I know her name.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, yeah. And I love her. And she was just so—she never had kids, and I sort of felt like she was the mother I wanted to have had. And I think she felt the same. And so, I think that—I know she was really influential on me. And then, the other person, which is more complicated, was—Walter Cotten was my photography professor, but then we ended up dating for several years, which back then was accepted.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Sure.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Where I realize now, that would never happen—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That was a lifestyle back then.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Still—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how old was he when you were dating him?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He was 40. I think he was 40 and I, like, was 20, and then I turned 21. It was a couple of years that we went out, like, through most of my undergrad. And then, it's funny, because—so I studied mostly photography, and some painting. And I know Janet Cooling was also pretty influential. And Gail Roberts.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Janet?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Janet Cooling. C-O-O-L-I-N-G. And she was this crazy painter from Chicago. [00:29:59] And it's not like I would ever paint like her, but she was just really fierce, and great. And—yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Those are the three people?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And Gail Roberts, too, in painting, was more nurturing. But, you know, it's like, painting was weird for me, because it's, like, what do you paint? You know? Like, I didn't even know—like, if making art was a question, like, why make art? Like, making paintings is an even bigger question.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What kind of photographer was Walter Cotten, and what did you learn about photography from him?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I mean, Walter was hugely influential in so many ways. Like, in to now. So, Walter photographed the American Southwest, the desert, in a more contemporary way. And he's passed away since, but he, you know, had two kind of parallel practices. And one is where he would drive around in the desert, and he just—like, he knew everything out here. He was the one who introduced me to this area and to a lot of the places I still go. And he would just do these repeat visits to things that he discovered. And, you know, always, like, hoping to catch them with the right light, or the right time. And there were these very beautiful kind of still clear photographs.

And then he also had this other practice where he would build installations in the desert. And he would have these sort of male protégé students who would work with him, and, you know, like Michael White, and when Michael got older, then Steve DePinto. But he would usually collaborate with another guy, and they would build these—and he was really interested in—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What did—Steve what?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Steve DePinto. Steven DePinto.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: D-E?

ANDREA ZITTEL: D-E-P-I-N-T-O.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's who was mostly collaborating with him when we were dating. And he— they would build these big sets that were kind of like ambiguous military installations. [00:32:01] Like, really kind of severe, macho, but very minimal, edgy stuff. It's, like, still what I'm drawn to now. Like, I feel like it just became deeply ingrained in my aesthetic.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Were his photographs of those buildings, like—was that the art— was that the result of having done the install—were the installations temporary?

ANDREA ZITTEL: They were temporary. They would just haul all this crap out to the desert, set it all up, do these photographs. And the photographs were the artwork. And they're very '80s, you know. Like in that—and it's funny, because I feel like it's almost that moment [now -AZ] when that work should be rediscovered, is—or you know, Boyd Webb. There's so much, so many photographers who were doing that, sort of those constructions, and photographing them. So, I don't know what I think about them as art. They were, you know, very much of that moment, but the—just, like, the act of being in the desert to make art was so exciting, you know. And, like, sometimes we would go out and there would be these crazy wind storms. And you couldn't do anything, and you would just be sitting in the car for like a day waiting for the wind to go down, so you could do like—you know, I just—I don't know. It was just really exciting.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Now, when he was taking photographs, were you also taking photographs?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I took my own. Yeah. And—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What would you take photographs of?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Of, you know, I was, like—I was his student, so—[laughs]—it was like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Of the Southwest.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, but, you know, mine were probably more romantic, because —they're definitely not anything that I would claim as my art now, but that was, you know, the direction I was headed in at that time. [This isn't totally true, I also built installations to photograph, but mine were interiors, that sometimes had bodies in them -AZ]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: When we talked—when you—was he also someone who taught you photo history, or art history?

ANDREA ZITTEL: A little bit, photo history. I wish I remembered more of it, but I know that in the classes he did teach a significant amount, yeah, of history of photography. [00:34:00] Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Because that was even sort of a new field then, and—

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's true.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —slightly. But that's an interesting way for—I think it's always interesting to know how many women come in through that portal, as it were, the photography.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know if this is something that I would want to say publicly, but I'll just say it now because I can decide later. I think it was very hard being a woman. And I think it's very telling that I was his girlfriend, but he never collaborated with me. And yet I was probably one of his strongest students. And, I felt like—I felt like he was always a little angry at me after I —like, he had kind of tried to send—I might retract all of—he tried to send his male students off to MFA programs, and they either weren't accepted, or they were accepted and that's kind of—decided to come back. And I was the only one of his students, I think, who kind of, like, really went out and did something. And I always felt like he was a little angry about that.

And he wrote me, like, a kind of shitty letter of recommendation that I think hurt me. And he told me this. He said that I didn't take criticism well, in my letter of recommendation for MFA

programs. Because we had broken up by the time he wrote that letter and I was, like, ready to, like—so I think that it was really hard being a woman in—a young woman in that world.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, I'm sure. And did you help him build the installations or it would just be him and his assistants?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was usually him and the other male—whoever he was collaborating with, and I would help them carry and set up, but it would just be the two of them drinking a lot of beer. Later I found out they were doing crystal, too, which I wasn't so aware of in the beginning. So they kind of drink a lot of beer, got speeded up, build these things, like, laugh about, like, you know, penis jokes and, like, you know, and shoot them. And they were all—they were kind of macho, you know, and I wanted—I didn't want to date him. I wanted to be him. It's funny. [00:35:58] Did you see *I Love Dick*, the TV version of it?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: And I love that one episode where they're showing the different women's relationships to him. And like the one who wants to be him. Like, yeah. Like, I think it planted that seed.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But I think it's—I think at that time, I mean, as a person, whether you're a man or a woman, you're at that age. You're looking to model yourself, sort of, after somebody.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Like, you want a role model. And if the role model for—is a successful artist at that point, there aren't very many female successful artists you could role model.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah. After, so to speak. So—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Even now, it's hard—I still, you know, or, like, as I get older I look for women to, like—you know, it's much easier if you can find role models.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It's easier to find—if you can, yes. Absolutely. And it's—but certainly, from my own experience, you know, you're not the only—[laughs]—woman I've ever interviewed who was really led down into her career through a boyfriend, or a male mentor of some sort. And I don't think there's any shame in it myself, but that's me. It's your interview. I just think that's—I think that, I just have—feel like people have to find a path of their own.

ANDREA ZITTEL: But I think the thing is, is that—and I had this—different versions happened with different men since then. I don't think they ever wanted me to do that. They wanted me to support them doing that, or to be on the side, like an accessory. So, it wasn't like I was led—yeah. It's more like you kind of have to, like, push your way in, too. You know, you see something, and you think, oh, that would be great for me, but it's not—like, I always felt like Walter got kind of angry once I decided to have a career. You know, he was a little passive-aggressive about it, and actually stopped talking to me later in his life. Which—yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That would be hurtful. But how did you actually—so, you're at San Diego State. You're doing this—you're taking classes in photography with him. [00:38:01] And did you take any other classes there that made an impact on you? Or did you build—did you do any sculpture? Did you do any—?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I did some sculpture. Mostly—so Walt and I broke up, maybe, in my last year there. And then, so I knew I didn't want to finish in photography. So I took an extra year. And painting was hard because I didn't know—[laughs]—what to paint.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what year did you graduate from UC—from San Diego State?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was five years, so '88.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And so, I started building stuff, because—also, photography had led me into that, you know, and it seemed fun to build stuff. And—[laughs]—I started to build stuff.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, yeah. I just started, instead of building stuff to photograph, I just started building things. But I was a little bit on the margins of the sculpture department at San Diego State, too, because that was a little clubby. It was mostly male. I don't think that that bothered me so much. It's just it was, like, foundry metal-based, and that wasn't my thing. So, I just had—they had, like, this kind of outdoor courtyard where you could work. And I remember I got a big corner of it and kind of just worked out there alone a lot, and made my piece to show, and never bothered me. And I'm—but it was really nice. You know, like everybody's, like, fine. Like, do it. Like, do your thing. And it wasn't until I went—I did sculpture at RISD then, and that's maybe when I learned more, and like was more involved with the school, and with the faculty.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: How did you choose RISD?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Very blindly. I knew I needed to escape. So, Walter lived in LA half the week, and then commuted to San Diego to teach. And I just knew I didn't want to be in LA or San Diego, because I needed to get away from—yeah. I just wanted to—yeah. To start over again.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So I applied to—like, I kept asking my faculty, like, what schools are good. And people told me weird random schools that probably weren't that great, but I just applied to all of them. Like—and then my Mom and I traveled back east. [00:40:01] It's so funny, because I thought Chicago was on the East Coast.

[They laugh.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: But, you know, then we went back to look at the different schools that I had applied to. And RISD, you know, it's just, like, I walked into the foundry, and they had just done a big bronze pour. There was loud music playing on the speakers hanging on the wall. And everyone was wearing, you know, foundry gear, sitting on the sofa, drinking beer. And, you know, you could see the hot molten, like, metal everywhere. And it was just, like, I want to go here.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Really? Oh, really? Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I was so excited by that. Yeah. I mean, it's funny, because I know they poured metal at San Diego State, but I had never really paid attention to that. It just seemed really cool. So, I went to RISD, which was a very technical school. And I—

[Crosstalk.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And just before we go to RISD, I just want to ask this. At this point, CalArts is really, like, the ultimate of the art schools in LA. Did you think of applying there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. [. . . -AZ] No, no one ever mentioned CalArts to me, and I also was just pretty sure I needed to leave California. I just—[my therapist -AZ] used to call it the "geographical cure." And I think I did it repeatedly until I moved here. When things weren't going well I just needed to move.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And then, one more thing about San Diego. Were you aware at all of the—actually, the University of [California] San Diego, where they had—where Allan Kaprow and Eleanor Antin were sort of all doing performance. Were you involved and aware at all of what was going on over there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: My brother went to school there, and so—and his joke about my school is that you had to be alive and breathing for five years to graduate from State. So, we had a little bit of a competition. It was just too close to home.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: No, but I mean, as an undergraduate, were you aware of the performance art and conceptual art aspects of University of California, San Diego?

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:41:59] Only marginally. Like, I would read about stuff in art magazines and I knew that those people taught there. But, to be really honest, you know, as an undergrad, I

was really—like, I was pretty naïve. Like, I had very patchy understanding of what was going on. I would subscribe to art magazines, and so—and we didn't really have any sort of critical theory classes or, you know—our art history, I think, ended with Impressionism. So, yeah. It was—yeah. I didn't—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, it wasn't a cross-reference between the two schools at all.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. I have friends who went to UCSD who were doing interesting work, and I remember, like, helping one of them shoot his film. So, I would go over there and, like, kind of help them with their stuff, but I wasn't aware of the sort of—yeah, the faculty and, like, some of the larger—I wasn't aware how important UCSD was at the time, and what—the resources that were right under my nose, possibly. I had no idea.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, you found them in Rhode Island.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Maybe. Yeah. I mean, yeah. When Rhode Island—I mean, the thing that RISD taught me was how naïve I was and how little I knew, because I had gotten kind of a false—you know, I had gotten my confidence bolstered at San Diego State because I stood out, which was nice. I think I needed it. But then I went to RISD and, you know, I remember the first day. I mean, going there was so hard. I drove across the country and immediately wanted to go home. I was so freaked out and called my Dad, and said, "I want to come home." And he said, "We don't have the money to get you home."

[They laugh.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I was kind of stuck there.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Did they pay your tuition there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I can't remember if—I don't think they contributed anything. I think that—I had scholarships, and I also worked my way through RISD. And I took student loans. In fact, I'm pretty sure it was, like, the loans that mostly got me through.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:44:00] Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: And like, the first—we had a critical theory class on the first day. I can't remember—Rob Storr taught it once, and I think Norman Bryson taught it once, and someone else. I can't remember who the first person was. But they gave us our reading list, and one of the students put his hand up and he's, like, "Oh, God. Do I have to read this again? I've already read all of this." And—[laughs]—I had never heard of any of it, you know? It was, like, so—I would sit in the very back and, like, hide, you know, so no one would know how little I knew. But it was, like, good. It was, like, this wake-up call. Like, you know, I realized I knew nothing. So, I kind of—I was working a lot, too, to get through school. So, I kind of slipped through. But then, ever since I've been trying to catch up.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And where did you—where were you working then?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I was, like, a monitor in the wood shop and I did, like, a lot of TA, and, like, just different jobs on campus.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you TA for any teachers who had made an impression on you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I TA'd for Pat Lasch who taught a class that was about shelters, that at the time—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: L-A-S-C-H?

ANDREA ZITTEL: —yeah. And at the time, I didn't know I was interested in it, but later I realized I had absorbed a lot from it. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Anyone else?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No, I can't—no, because I think—when I think back—oh. Oh, God. Okay. Yeah. So, I did do a lot of monitoring, which was, like—running the wood shop was, like, my thing that I would run, and I think I was, like, ran it and oversaw other people running it. But the thing that I did that made the most money going through school was—so again, I was dating somebody. I

was dating somebody who was fabricating work. He was a student, but he was fabricating work in the foundry on his spare time for other artists who were, like, well-known artists. So, I started working for him, and then for a while I worked directly for Ronald Jones fabricating these—he was making these big bronze AIDS viruses. [00:45:57] So, I would sculpt the original in plaster, Hydrocal, and then make molds of them, and waxes, and cast them in bronze, and—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what was the fabricator's name?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, Peter Watson. And he was a fellow student who was a year ahead of me, but was older. We ended up getting engaged.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Then didn't. Like, you know, that didn't work out. That was messy. Weird. Girl thing. [Laughs.] Anyway.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But he got you involved. He had—in fabricating.

ANDREA ZITTEL: In fabricating. Yeah. And I liked doing that. It was good. I learned so much. And making—you know, we made this giant piece for Vito Acconci that was kind of a—these big clamshell pieces.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I mean, it was kind of a disaster, because I think Peter was, like, way underqualified to fabricate those, and, you know, rented this freezing cold building in the middle of winter somewhere in Rhode Island. And we were all just, like, killing ourselves trying to make these things work. And they were cracking, and—but it was just really, really interesting seeing production on that level, being part of it, understanding how it works, and—yeah. I don't know. It was—I felt like that has helped me a lot. And then when I started producing my own work, I really knew exactly—you know, I knew how it was done.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And when you were at RISD, did you take art history?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was mostly contemporary, you know, like, theory.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you know about the contemporary art world in any kind of detail when you were there? I mean, art history?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, yeah. That's when I was starting to learn about it. Oh, so another TA-ship that I did was, there was a—I had a van. So, I was very comfortable driving, being from California. So, they needed a student to drive a big van-load of students into New York—for the New York—they had a seminar for undergrads where they would go into New York every Friday and, like, go around and see galleries. So, I would rent a van at the airport at the crack of dawn, pick all the students up, drive them into New York, and meet the faculty member in New York. [00:48:01] And so, a lot of times I would have to circle the block in the van while they would go in to see the galleries. But when we would get to downtown, I could park it in a lot and go in with them. So, I learned a lot from that. You know, just going into New York regularly and seeing all the shows with those classes, and then going in with Peter when we would go have meetings with, like, Ron, or Vito. You know, we would always stop and see a few galleries. So, yeah. All of a sudden, I'm getting an understanding of this world that existed.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And clearly it was exciting for you.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was really exciting. Yeah. Because, like, you know, growing up in Escondido, it seemed so—I mean, I don't even—I went to grad school just to get away. I didn't really have any great career aspirations. And New York was just so unimaginable. So, it was kind of nice because you just discover this whole world that you—you know, I think it's—so many people, I think they know about it, and they're reaching toward it. I just kind of, like, fell into it. And it was really great, because I didn't have this whole thing built up about it. I just kind of, like, landed in it, and was really excited by where I had landed.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it's a great opportunity. And did you have—you know, people talk now about how having a—having an actual working artist as a mentor, or as a—faculty person is important to them. You must have run into that quite a bit at RISD, as well.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was mixed. Yeah. Like, I think working for Ron, maybe I learned the most. We

had—Wade Saunders was a faculty member there. And so, he got into a little bit of trouble while we were in school because he was using the students and the foundry to produce all of his own work. So that was kind of a mixed bag, because we had a practicing artist in our midst, but he was, like, basically using every, you know, like, the whole place had turned into, like, a factory for his work. [00:50:00] So it was, like, good and bad. And I think—you know, I think I always felt kind of ambivalent about him, but I could see how it was potentially problematic when students were putting a lot of their energy into making his work instead of their own. I'm trying to think of who else was around who was practicing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Who made an impact on you.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And, you know, I think that—like, later, I met somebody who was more, you know, like that. And I think at the—you know, just—I mean, probably just working those jobs fabricating for people was my main—the main thing, because, like, our faculty, they were practicing, but not—it wasn't as immediate.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What was your sculpture—like, you're in the woodworking area and the foundry area. What was your art like then?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. So when I went to RISD, I actually didn't have that many technical skills. I had just been like building stuff, like, figuring out how to build it. Like, I could use hand tools really easily, and I could kind of use a table saw. So, I ended up taking a lot of classes. I took welding and I took bronze—and so I learned how to do everything there. And I just decided to try everything. And one thing that's—I think it's so different from students now, because when I work with students we're honing their identity as an artist. My whole, like, plan for those two years was to learn as many things as I could learn, and not even to—you know, and to try so many different things. So, you know, my own practice during the time there I—I cast work in aluminum. I cast work in bronze. I did, like, welded steel sculptures. I did wood sculptures. I did sound installations. I did very ephemeral installations that just consisted of masking tape on the floor. I took furniture-making classes in the furniture department and built furniture.

And then at the end, like, kind of stopped making art completely because, like, nothing—you know, where you just take in so much, but, like, nothing made sense. [00:52:01] And I'm trying to—there was—I had a critical studies—was it Ron Onorato? There was somebody who was teaching there at the time who actually was like very supportive of the idea of not doing anything, which was great. Or maybe Joel. Anyway. I might remember it later, but it was one of the—yeah. There was one of the two people we had. And that was maybe this really good time of just stopping. Yeah. And sitting—and then it was, like, after I left school that my real practice started to emerge.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: When you had—when you were at RISD, did they have crits? Did they have—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —weekly critical sessions of your work?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Totally.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And were they effective? For you.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, for sure. Because you learn how to think and speak critically about work. So, yes. And we had visiting artists who came in and gave us crits. So, I mean, that's probably one of the most valuable things that one gets from a program like that. They're also incredibly confusing, you know. And I—now that I teach, I can understand—I understand better the nature of those. Like, the nature of a group crit is that one person will say one thing that might even be—it might not even be central to the work. But then everybody will talk about that one comment. So, you can get these weird artificial consensus within these smaller groups that are very confusing for the student, because everybody's talking about this one thing and maybe that's not actually the most important thing for them to be thinking about.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And where are you teaching now?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I do studio visits at Columbia University. And I do these MFA seminars out here.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Where, where out here?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Here at A-to-Z West in Joshua Tree. We do—every spring we do an MFA seminar.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Now, how does that work?

ANDREA ZITTEL: We have students come from—like, we usually have 12 students at a time, and they come from all over. [00:54:01] So, like, right now, we're working with students from Columbia, Yale, Bezazel [Academy of Art and Design], which is in Tel Aviv. And the Royal Academy in Stockholm.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Wow. And so, they get credit for coming to take a class with you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know if they get credit. It's like a special thing that they apply for.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, and it is somewhat academic. We have readings and we have discussions, but it's mostly just, like, this experience that they get. But, yeah. For a few students if they want to apply.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's pretty—that's pretty marvelous. So, let's go back to your own experience. So, you're here in—so you're taking all these classes, and did you at any point at RISD have any support for your interest in working with fabric, crocheting, processing? Any of that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I didn't do textiles there at all.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Nothing.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was something that I had done in my previous, you know, growing up. I had had a lot of experience with that. But I don't think I brought that into my work there, ever. In fact, it's kind of recent in my own practice that I've worked with it directly, other than doing the uniforms. So, yeah. Not that so much. Like, you know, it's funny because RISD's known as a craft school. And they have that incredible weaving department.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: But I didn't really know about it, and I wasn't—I mean, this seems like a theme, right? Like, I'm going to these places but not—[laughs]—accessing the things that are the most amazing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, no. I was wondering because by that time, certainly, there's a whole movement of fabric-oriented sculpture, weaving and crocheting sculpture that emerges in that particular school, that area. And I thought maybe you had started to incorporate that. But that's not—you didn't even know, didn't think about that at the time.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. And as you say that, I'm realizing that's true. There were, like, Petah Coyne and, oh, who's the one who did the dresses? [Beverly Semmes -AZ] There were, there were artists doing, like, textile-based works as contemporary sculpture.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:56:01] Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: But I think for me that work was always too feminine. It didn't seem hardcore enough, or rigorous enough. So, I wasn't drawn to it particularly.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's interesting. So you, so here you are doing this hardcore work in—so what—you've done all these tech—you've discovered all these things you learned at RISD, but what did the work actually look like?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I mean, it changed a lot. So, in the beginning I was doing things very highly influenced by Walt that looked like faux military building or, you know, instruments or panels that kind of, yeah, looked like ancient technological objects. And I got pretty much hammered for that, you know, because they were, like, the surfaces were very—you know, like, artificially created. They were, like—they were very theatrical, like stage sets or something. So that was

fine. I kind of learned about that. And then I was, like, I cast a full set of bronze teeth. I was really interested in order. Like, I wrote a thesis about order that was pretty long, even though I don't think we needed—that wasn't really required. But I knew I was interested in order. And I was really interested in, like, divisions and segregation. Hence, the tape on the floor. But I hadn't quite figured out how to work with that yet.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Was that—was there really in your first—your earliest work then.

ANDREA ZITTEL: My second year. Yeah. I was, like, order. And there's something even now, like, when I say that word, it's like there's something about order that just, like, you know, it makes the whole world feel right. Or, you know, I've just started, like, writing every morning. And I was thinking yesterday morning about how things are positioned is so important. You know, it's everything. It's not, like, what it is. It's, like, how it's positioned in relationship to something else. Anyway.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, that's like the through-line in all of your work, and it's interesting it was there as early as that really.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Virgo, right? [00:58:03]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: A very—a complete—you might have all your star—all your planets in Virgo. So, when did you graduate from RISD?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Let's see. I think it was '90.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: With an MFA?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And after that you went to New York?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And have we finished with all the boyfriends in RISD?

ANDREA ZITTEL: [Laughs.] Yeah, I think so. Peter. Like, messy, as usual. Yeah. Broke up.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: They're all messy.

ANDREA ZITTEL: But then we got—yeah, got back together again later in New York. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay. So, you moved to—and you moved to New York City on your own?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Let's see how that worked. So, Peter—no. So, Peter and I broke up. He sort of had an affair and we broke up. So, he graduated before me, my second year of school. So, and then I was on the fence about staying in Providence, which I liked by then a lot, or moving to New York. And Peter really wanted to get back together again. He had since moved to Louisville, Kentucky, after he finished. And so, he realized he had made a mistake and wanted—and so I remember telling him that we couldn't get back together because I was moving to New York. And so, he went to New York and found an apartment, a two-bedroom apartment and, like, he's, like, "I found this place. Come live with me." So that's how I wound up in New York.

And he was from a family that had some money and was very ambitious. And I was kind of fine with that. Like, it's funny, because I still hadn't become ambitious myself yet. I was still thinking, well, maybe I'll teach. You know, best-case scenario. Yeah. So, like, I think when I moved to—in—yeah. So, we moved to New York when I finished. I moved in with him. Then my first job was working for Christian Marclay. [01:00:00] I cast those—he had the, you know, the pile of Hydrocal phone handles. So, I worked in his studio up at Times Square doing that. And then I worked, like, shortly at the—I think it was called BACA. It was, like, a theater space that my friend, Paul Ramirez, was involved with.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What's it called?

ANDREA ZITTEL: BACA, I think. It was in southern Brooklyn. And so, I just, like, was like a nighttime manager there, which meant that I would go there and just unlock the door and let people in and lock up afterward.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So these kind of random jobs.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And where were you living?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I was living with Peter in Williamsburg.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, in Williamsburg. Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: There on Kent Avenue. Yeah. Where I've kind of always lived, since then. And then I was trying to find more regular work, and I wrote Pat Hearn Gallery a letter saying all the things I could do. Because I—I could do a lot by then because I had also worked as a preparator at the San Diego Museum. And I could do photography. And I had also, I think, created a video program at RISD for money, and I had organized the visiting artists' programs. I could do admin work pretty well. And I asked her, I wrote a letter to the gallery saying, do you know any artists who need an assistant? And then she asked me if I wanted to work for them at the gallery. And my close friends who I had gone to school with said, don't do it because you'll get pegged as, like, a gallery person, not a serious artist. But I did it and I always feel like—I feel like it was the best thing. I learned more there than I've learned anywhere else. Like, it was amazing, like, reality check, everything. It was so good to just, like, be a fly on the wall in the gallery for a couple of years. And I also—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Why did you take it? What was the big learning—what was the big learning discovery there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Like, I learned a bunch of things. I mean, I learned how to run a career. That's where I really learned how to run a career. And, you know, because I was, like, helping all the artists do stuff. So, I understood how you do that. [01:01:56] What—how you consign work, you know, how you ship work, how it travels, how shows work, how people get interested in artists, how sales work, how to store work, or how to take slides and label them, and how to do an inventory. Like, all that stuff I never would have learned otherwise. And then the other thing is, is that she showed younger artists, like, maybe just barely older than myself. And then during the time I was there I was able to watch a lot of young artists come up, be, like, pretty successful, and I could see what they did with that, and how they reacted, and how that either helped or hurt them. And I felt—like, I saw a couple of artists kind of really—like, it went to the—you know what I mean? Like, get, like, pretty high on their own importance. And I could see that that, like, really hurt them a lot and it helped me put my own career into perspective when it happened. And I feel like I never—you know, I saw so many people kind of, like, come up so quickly, and then just vanish. That when it happened to me, I think I was much more pragmatic. It didn't feel heady. You know, I knew I was in it for the long run and it—I didn't need to be, like, the most important person. I just needed to, like, make sure that my work was taken seriously.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And who are some of the young artists—without talking about that—who are some of the young artists who were shown there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, like, I—she showed, like, a more established artist, who I thought was really amazing. She showed Sophie Calle, which was really exciting. She showed Gretchen Faust, whose work I was really interested in. And Gretchen kind of—I thought she was such a good artist, and she voluntarily dropped out of the art world, which was really strange. And Jack Pierson, who became like a lasting friend and who helped me, you know, show at Andrea Rosen. He's helped me so much. And Patty Martori and Thom Merrick. And, you know, she showed—I don't think she—like, she showed Peter Schuyff and a couple of painters, George Condo, who I don't know if they had shows while I was working there. And Lisa Hein, who I helped her build her installation.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I don't know that name. H—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. H-E-I-N. [00:02:00] And Lisa Hein was like a good, serious committed artist from San Francisco who Pat kind of discovered. But, like, her career never really took off. So, you know, I just got to watch that. I got to watch and see why it worked for some people, and why it didn't work for other people. And I remember at the time thinking that—I had a feeling that some of these artists just got overwhelmed, and kind of, like, almost psyched themselves. Like, I felt like artists dropped out partially because they couldn't handle it. You know, they would like do self-sabotaging stuff because, you know, they weren't ready for that.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yes. It's an odd dichotomy that the art world attracts people of great sensitivity and non-mainstream values, and then they have to—basically can't survive, unless both of those qualities are basically squashed, on some level. You know what I mean? You have to really have it. You have to have a tough—you have to be a little bit tough and you have to be able, at some level, function in society.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And in a weird way, I think it helps to view it as a job. And you can be an artist. Like, when I teach my class with my MFA students, it's, like, you can be an artist and do anything. And that's what I'm going to teach them. But if you want to be an artist in the art world, that's a job. Like, that's a profession. And that's something else. And I think if you keep the two separate it helps. So, I think you need to have a really pragmatic approach on a professional level, you know. And not make it too personal, or not think that you are all those things that people project on the artist. I don't know if that makes sense.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It does. And it's also true that that's historically—that there's a long modeling trajectory of that. I mean, artists in the Renaissance are doing a job.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You know, artists on commission are doing a job. It's sort of a—there's sort of almost, like, a fake news around the artist's image, that they just get to, like, float around their studio and do what they want, and then somehow get discovered.

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:04:05] Well, I'm way happier when I think about it as a job, because there's a lot of things that I'm not crazy about. And I'm like, well, if I did any other job, this is still better than that job.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: You know?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I like the way you put that. So here you are at Pat Hearn Gallery, and living with Peter Watson in Williamsburg. At that point, Williamsburg is not the sort of extremely hip place that it has become, I take it.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. It was really rough. And I remember—it was, like, the street we lived on was the street where all the prostitutes would go. So, whenever I would walk home from the subway I would always get propositioned because I had, like, bright red-dyed hair. I mean, I wore, like, these vintage dresses, and it was just so annoying, you know, to not be able to walk home without some guy like driving really slow and, like, asking, how much?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What was your apartment like?

ANDREA ZITTEL: We lived in, like, a really crappy—Peter didn't have a very good, you know, like—I don't know. It was, like, a really crappy, falling down apartment, but it was fine for the time. And then we broke up later.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you both work on fixing it up?

ANDREA ZITTEL: A little bit, but, you know, when it's a rented—I think the floors were, like, some sort of Homasote. You know, it's just, like, all the surfaces were cracking. So, we painted it and kept it clean, but there's only so much you can do.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's what I was getting to, was, like, isn't that where you started sort of controlling your environment?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. Well, so I lived in a bunch of places. I moved a lot. So, we lived there. Then Peter and I broke up. Then I moved into my own apartment, which was amazing, and very small.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What was the address of that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: That was at 72 South Eighth Street. And I remember going, like, looking at it based on the ad. I met with the landlord, and he goes—it was a really nice apartment, and—by my standards—and he goes, "Oh, there was a mistake with the price, though." And I'm, like, "Oh, here it comes." He goes, "It's not \$500. It's \$450." [Laughs.] So that was great.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Wow.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And I lived there for a while. But the thing is, is that I was working at Pat's for like minimum—like, some very low amount. [00:06:02] And I had my student loans. And I just actually couldn't handle that rent. And I remember losing things one by one, like, not having a telephone and having to use the payphone on the corner. And then the downstairs storefront came for rent for 350. So, I moved out of my apartment and moved into the storefront for 350. And I think that was the point when I really started rigidly controlling things, because it was, like, this 200-square-foot storefront. It was divided into two rooms that had nothing except, like, a toilet and a sink. And so when I lived there, that's when I started making living units and, you know, like, really, yeah. I mean, it's—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Tell me about the living units.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay. So—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Basically, what year are we talking about?

ANDREA ZITTEL: We're talking, like, probably 1991. And I had been making these breeding units for my animals before that. I was working with animals.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what were you doing with them? Because I read a little bit about that, but not much.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I started working with animals because I was still questioning art, and I didn't know what art was. And I thought, well, if I incubate an egg and hatch it, and make that chicken, am I its author, and is it an artwork? So, I don't know if that—like, that seems like kind of a weird thing now, but at the time I was engaged by that question. So, I did that. And so I had these quails running around my studio floor. And then I thought, well, I need to make a cage for them. So, I thought that I would make a cage—it's called a *Management Maintenance Unit*. So, it had everything built into it that they needed. And then I started cataloguing their eggs. So, the top of it had a cataloguing area, so, you know, it was still—like, when I think back, it's like it wasn't—it wasn't great work. I was just kind of, like, figuring it out through those pieces. I knew I was, yeah, like, really interested in, like, life, and living, and all those controls that go into it. [00:08:03] And, like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: This is all happening in the storefront. You've got all the quail running around in the storefront?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's before the storefront. I had another little space. I, like, was bouncing around a lot. But, yeah. Then we moved to the storefront. And I was also breeding flies in the storefront. So, yeah. So, I was breeding animals, basically. And I also was breeding chickens. So, a much better project was that I decided I would make my own breed of chicken that would be distinctly different than any other breed of chicken. And that would be my artwork. And getting into that was super interesting, because I started reading a lot of stuff about breeding of domestic animals, and realizing how totally constructed it is. I mean, it's completely invented. And breeds don't even really exist outside of human controls. I mean, we've invented breeds in dogs, and cats, and everything. So, that was my primary project in the storefront. So, I might be wandering a bit, but I was living there with the quail still, the flies that I had been breeding, and then the chickens. And then, I had this big dog that I had had since undergrad, that he went everywhere I lived with me.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, are the chickens in cages?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And did you successfully breed your own brand—come up with your own breed of chicken?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. I started breeding them together. And I would have headed in that direction, and I was getting some funny, you know, some funny weird hybrid chickens. But then I started having problems having chickens in New York City, which, it turns out, was illegal, which I hadn't realized. And ethically I was feeling a little weird about it. So, they were in the cages, but I would let them loose, but, I mean, there's so many problems with this. Like, what do you do with the roosters? Because you're in an apartment building in New York. How—you know, you can't really have a bunch of roosters, which meant that I would give them to my neighbors in

this sort of primarily, you know, Latino neighborhood. They all would be happy to take my pet chickens, and you know what's happening to them.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:10:00] Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I would have a lot of bad dreams at night about my poor chickens.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's really a project that I would need to do somewhere else. So, I did it for a few years and then eventually I didn't—I got interesting hybrids, but I never, like, made my breed. So, the person who I had spoken to ahead of time, who was sort of the expert breeder, said it would be five years to make one. But those are, like, five years of active breeding. Anyway.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you moved out—did you move over from the *Breeding Units* to the *Living Units*?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I did.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what is a *Living Unit*?

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, a *Living Unit* is a, you know, sort of an environment, a structure that has everything that you need to live built into it. And when I made the first one, I, you know, like, I mentioned I—there's even other places I'm thinking of that I lived in that I didn't mention because it's just, like, continually moving through these spaces.

I wanted to make something that was kind of like a house, but would go in the houses, other people's houses. You know, so, like, it would create some sense of permanence and stability. So I made my first *Breeding Unit* kind of along the same lines as the *Management and Maintenance Units* for the chickens. And I actually think the title of that piece was *Management and Maintenance Units*, because I was interested in, like, drawing that parallel with my own life. And I think it was about 54 square feet, 56. I had it all figured out.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: The first *Living Unit*?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And the first one was open. It was more like a—like, welded steel structure that was, like, a framework. And then all of the furniture would sit into it. Later they became more, you know, like, consolidated. So, they were almost more like cabinets or something that would open in different ways. But the first one that I made and I lived in was, like, this kind of frame, and there was a bed on top. And a plastic slop sink in it that I would take baths in. [00:12:01] And then a desk that was, like, my kitchen table and my desk, and a file cabinet for all my stuff, and then just the shelves.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And this sat in the apartment that you were—in the storefront.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Just—the backroom was 10 feet by 10 feet and it fit perfectly, like, in there, with a little room around it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And did you—so you saw that as your living—as something in which you lived, a sculpture in which you lived.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And in the beginning, I don't think I considered it an artwork. Like, these are my favorite things, but I don't know if they're art. I just did it. And then, Andrea Rosen was the first person who—like, she did a studio visit with me and sat in it. And we had a lot of conversations about it. And then she asked me if she could show it in her gallery. So, until then, my artwork had been, like, all breeding. And then she showed that. And then that just kind of opened the door for a new direction. And it was good. I felt—I actually, I still think that breeding work was interesting when I got to the point of trying to, like, you know, create a new—but I just think that it was really problematic in terms of the actual well-being of the animals. It was really stressful doing that work. And it was very sensationalistic. So, it was kind of nice to get out of that.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do you have—I want to go back to Andrea Rosen coming to your place in Brooklyn and sitting inside of this constructed environment and—and say—asking you if she could show it in her gallery. Is it—that's the first time you thought of that welded thing as a—that welded object as a work of art?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think so. I mean, I do things a lot of times that are kind of, like, you know, marginal, like, it's kind of art but it's kind of not. But I don't think of them as being things to exhibit. So I hadn't—yeah. When I made it, I had never considered showing it. It was made to be lived in. [This is not totally true. I did welded work in grad school as well as the two welded breeding units -AZ]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And after she—did she show it?

ANDREA ZITTEL: She did.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what year was that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:14:00] Good question. I don't know. Maybe '92, '93. I would have to look it up.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did she show only one of them?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And so, it was a two-person show. Simon Leung was the other artist. He was in the show.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] L-E-U-N-G?

ANDREA ZITTEL: N-G. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how did that first two-person show go?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was good. It was hard for me. So, it was kind of a challenge to figure out, if I was going to show it—like, making it to live in made total sense. But if I'm going to show it, then what is it, actually? And I had been reading a lot about the social evolution of the role of the artist. And I was really interested in how, historically, artists had been more along the lines of artists and craftsmen, who had sort of created goods for people, or, like, you know, they were commissioned to do things that people needed. And at the time, I was really interested in developing a practice along those lines. So, I thought that what I would do is show that as an example, and then somebody could commission one for themselves, and I would organize their own lives in the same way.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: And I did this piece with my friend, Jon Tower, that didn't involve a sculpture, but I completely reorganized his life.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Now, let me ask you this, because it's printed differently in two different interviews. Is it J-O-N?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think it's J-O-N.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Jon Tower.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, yeah. So, I did that, and so with—so that's how—yeah. And I also did two uniforms in Andrea's show for two other people besides myself. For Gretchen Faust, who showed at Pat Hearn, and her boyfriend at the time, Kevin Warren.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: When you say uniforms, what did they look like?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's funny, because I remember Gretchen being unsatisfied with them when I was done, which was, like, a bit of a reality check.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, like, wanting to, like, serve people's needs. I can't remember. I know there's photographs, but I think that they were, like, suits, I think. [00:16:00] Jackets and pants maybe.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But made out of what?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Wool. And they probably reflected my taste more than their taste. I wish I could remember. I don't know. I might have the letter somewhere that—we did an exchange and it ended up on a good note, but at first, she was, like, "We don't really like these."

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] Were they meant to be—is it the same uniform for you and for the other two people?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. Because like the whole idea was that I would analyze somebody and then, like, make the thing I thought they should have.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, it was, you know, also back to—like I said, I was interested in psychology. I thought, you know, it's, like, kind of, I get to do commissions for people, but I also get to manipulate them a little bit. So, I really like that push-pull where you're helping somebody, but then also maybe shaping them, or controlling them a little bit. So, there was that nice edge in it that I was into. And I still think that that's an interesting thing to do, but the problem is, is that for my personality, I find it excruciatingly difficult to do commissions for people, because—I think it's interesting if I do end up pushing them or manipulating them a bit, but it's really hard, too. Like, I don't—it makes me feel, like, sick to my stomach when I do it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But in terms of telling them what they need, they should do.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you can do it for yourself.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I can do it for myself, no problem. Yeah. I love manipulating myself because, you know, like I'm the only person who suffers. This is, like, a gender thing, I think, you know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, you talked also about your relationship with architecture, that—about—because your work is so architecturally sensitive. But, I wondered, you talk about how you're ambivalent about the nature of architecture and the way it sort of forces people to live in a certain way.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is that a correct assertion?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I struggle, yeah, with architecture because of that, because it's inherently fascistic. [00:18:02] I—yeah. I mean, I like it and I hate it because of that. Yeah, in reference to, like, making architecture, or just—?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I think someone asked you about the role of architecture because you're so clearly interested in the siting of the place, and the placement of the windows, and the placement of the doors, and the rooms, and you talk about your ambivalence in that. And—

ANDREA ZITTEL: If I—yeah. It's kind of more fun to be able to react against the authority of architecture than to be the authority.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I like that. Could you talk more about that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know. I mean, it's just something that I've, like, rolled around in my—I mean, this goes back to the Kevin Gretchen thing, you know, their things. Like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Like, their uniforms.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean, I think it's interesting to be in authority, especially for a young woman, but I'm not comfortable being the authority. So, you know, it's funny. As I'm—as we're speaking about this I'm wondering, like, oh, should I do it anyway? But then it's just—there's a difference between what's interesting and what you feel you want to do. There's got to be a sweet spot in there somewhere.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: In your relationship with your parents, to go completely—do another lateral move, was your mother or your father more authoritarian?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know. Probably my dad, but, you know, my mom was controlling in her own ways. Yeah. I mean, there's overt authoritarianism, and then there's the covert manipulation, the way things get manipulated and shaped.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, when you think about authority, do you think about your relationship with your parents?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't. That's interesting, though.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: [Laughs.] Yeah. I don't know. I really don't like to be controlled at all. I really am very resistant to it. And I only imagine that other people are the same way. So, I'm always surprised when I discover that there are lots of people who actually like being controlled or told what to do. It's so surprising. [00:20:01] But because I dislike it so much, it's hard to do it to other people.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's interesting. So here you are with your first two-person show, and what was Andrea Rosen's reputation at the time you had that show? I mean, we think of her now as, like, such a major figure as an art dealer, but what was she—where was she in her career at that point?

ANDREA ZITTEL: She was young. Like, when I think back—because at the time, she also seemed kind of powerful. But when I think back, she had probably only been open for a few years. She was showing Felix Gonzalez-Torres who was, like, a pretty big deal by then already. And John Currin, and Sean Landers. So, she had a good reputation and a good stable—but she must have been like one of these young galleries, you know. And she's such an odd person. Like, even then. We've always had a complicated relationship. And I remember—so she was interested in working with me, but there were other galleries that were, too. And she said, "Well, let's not make a commitment right away, because if we don't—like, you can kind of cash in on all this other interest in the meantime." So, it was okay, because I actually liked the other people interested in me, too, and I was, like, maybe—you know what I mean?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, then I remembered that the minute that somebody started to make a move, though, she was just like—[snaps fingers]—on it, and, like, she confronted me on the street, like, we were on Prince Street. She comes up and she goes, "I want to make sure our relationship's solid," or something like that. And I remember there were people standing around. They were all looking at us, like, what is this? It was really funny.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Who was your other suitor, the one who pushed her over the edge?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think I was talking to Wooster Gardens. It was Brent Sikkema and Olivier Renaud-Clément. And then there was someone else who I can't even remember now. You know, and it was all—it's very light, you know. It's no hard—but it's like, people are interested. And then somebody wanted to give me a show, but then she realized that if they gave me a show people would think I showed with them. So, she's funny. [00:21:59] Like, she's just so calculated with everything. But sometimes, like, her calculations can be like a little bit of a whim, you know, and they can change, and—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you showed this thing. Did you get any critical response for the show with Simon Leung?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I think so. I'm trying—so, okay. So, it's hard to, you know—then there was like this whole period of starting to show works. And I think that the main thing that I remember is that—I think people were really confused, because I did a lot of rhetoric that went with my work. Like, I was also interested in advertising and propaganda. And so, I did rhetoric around the works that were kind of like ads for them. And I—clearly I must have been influenced by Jeff Koons, too. Like, in fact, you know—sorry.

This is, like, segue, but I've just been thinking a lot about political subversive work now, and why I'm having problems with it. And I think I really have problems when values—like people put values out there in a way—when you put a value out there, like, this is a value, and this is right. And I think it's way more interesting when artists create something more subversive where you

don't know—you feel uncomfortable with it, and you don't know if it's right or not. So, I think I was trying to do that in my own way by saying, like, "This is the perfect way to live." You know, and so everybody couldn't figure out if I was being ironic or if I really was a fascist. And so I think I got pushed back on that until I finally broke down and started to say that it was a conceptual project. But in the beginning, I think people were worried that I really was a fascist, which was interesting, in a way, when you're, like, 23 and a woman, young girl, you know. It's interesting, maybe, to let people think you're a fascist for a while. But then I think it—I couldn't take it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, hang on.

[Audio break.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I'm sorry. Hang on.

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's okay.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:23:58] We've taken a little break to talk about cats and dogs. I'm sitting here with Andrea's two dogs, her two cats, and I'm not even sure what else is around outside the property. What else do you have?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, there's another dog somewhere in here.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, yes. There's the other dog that doesn't like—is not eating.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Tortoises and chickens.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Tortoises, chickens, what else?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Some fish.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay. So here you could do—you could be doing breeding with chickens out here.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know, but I would still have the problem with the roosters.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: The roosters. Yes. Well, you don't have neighbors here.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, but I think I could only handle one rooster at a time. And, yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I understand. So, let's get back to you. So, you had your big show at Andrea Rosen. People were —did you sell the very first *Living Unit*?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, no. I think Andrea ended up buying it in the end.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Very nice.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Later, yeah. So, yeah. I didn't sell it in the beginning.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: At this point you worked for Pat Hearn. To what extent did you think you should think about having work that could be sold?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Did I—what did I think what?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you think you should be able to have work that could be sold?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you think about art as a saleable item?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I was, like, you know, I was thinking of it as a job, you know. And I was always—I've always struggled for money. It's always been pretty touch and go. So it would have —yeah. It would have been nice, but it wasn't the main—you know. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, so when you showed the *Living Unit* and you showed the uniforms, was there anything that could be sold from the first show that did sell?

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, what I had hoped from that show was to sell a commission version of the

Living Unit.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Right.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And there was a collector named Lois Plehn.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: P?

ANDREA ZITTEL: P—I think P-L-E-H-N, or E-N. I'm not quite—it's funny how I remember names from back then, but I don't remember spelling.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:25:59] But she was going to commission one and we were in discussion. So that's kind of—the outcome of the show was that most likely I was going to do a *Living Unit* for her.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And I went to her home, and it was on the Upper East Side of New York. And I mean, she was really sweet. It was kind of hard to figure out how to make her a *Living Unit* when she lived in a whole townhouse. And then we did a bunch of discussions, and it kind of petered out. Like, I don't think we ever ended up doing something.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And was she actually a serious—she must have been a serious collector.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, yeah. She had a lot of artwork in her home and it was nice. And I think that she was just interested in my work and kind of engaged by that idea. But then, the practicality of doing it became more complicated. And I realized that was going to be the situation with a lot of people who could afford to buy my work, because then—you know, like, I couldn't—I don't think they were willing, or ready, prepared, to put away all of the stuff that they already own. Like, they weren't like me in they didn't—you know. So then, what do you do for them when they already have everything they need? And, yeah. So that was like—I guess that's significant, in that it was kind of a serious reality check for that plan. And I don't—at the time I actually don't think I was wanting to sell the *Living Unit*, mine, if I remember correctly, because I was living with it and I kind of wanted it back. It was hard while it was in the show not having it. So—cat's actually—no. Sometimes she's really sweet. Sometimes she's super wild.

So then after that, I decided that I would make new designs for *Living Units*, but that they would just—I've always been interested in cars and car culture. So, I thought I would make a new model every year, kind of like a new model of car. And then I would make as many of those as I could sell in that year. So that was kind of the new plan. So, I guess the first *Management and Maintenance Unit* was—oh, it was in '93. Now I can remember, because they're in titles.

[00:28:00] And then there was the 1994 *Living Unit*. And two of those got shown at MOMA in *Sense and Sensibility* that Lynn Zelevansky curated. And I think I sold one of those to Craig Robins, and one to someone else. And I know Peter Norton, their foundation, they purchased one of that model. And then there was the 1995—maybe they—no. Anyway. Sorry. No, the 1994 one—I'm getting them mixed up—was shown in San Francisco, Jack Hanley Gallery. Jay Jopling bought one, and I think—sorry, she's like on your—also, Australian dealer [Jennifer Flay -AZ] who worked in France and Paris. I'm trying to remember her name. I'll remember it later. She bought one. And then the next one was the one that was 1995, was in *Sense and Sensibility*. And, so I think I produced two of the '94, and then a couple of the '95. There were more of those.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I remember seeing the Peter Norton, the one that you put in Peter Norton's house. And it—or, it was in his house. It was in—okay. So, he's in this very beautiful, old Spanish, Mediterranean, large house overlooking the Palisade at Santa Monica, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. And it seemed—for one thing, it was very large. That one was like a trailer, it seems to me in my memory, that it was a very large living environment. And it had—if I remember correctly, it had like plywood and insets and like a little sleeping arrangement, maybe an eating arrangement. And I remember clearly thinking, what could this possibly be—[laughs]—as a work of art? Because it was very large and ungainly, really, and—in a way. [00:29:59] It was a—it was like having a house inside of a house.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And, I wonder about other people's responses to that. Clearly these collectors were sophisticated enough to—more than I was—to understand that you would be buying a little house to put in your big house.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, I never saw the piece at Peter Norton's house. There was another collector, Jimmy Belotti. And he was—oh, man. South America. He had one, and he used it as, like, a guest room, which to me seemed like a good solution if you weren't going to live in it yourself. But my fantasy was really that somebody would challenge themselves and try living in it. You know, in a perfect world, I mean, maybe somebody would have built a small structure, like, and tried living in there, and tried living in it, but, yeah. So, it was complicated, though, like what ended up happening with them.

So basically, I think what Peter did—so also, we customized his for him. So, he chose the colors, and the upholstery fabric, and, like, the microwave, and the coffee maker and everything. So, we kind of made it to his, like, to his requested specs. So in a way it became kind of a portrait of him, I guess. But then, they were—yeah. They weren't really working in the way that I had originally envisioned. And that's something that—that's why I continued to evolve them.

But the other thing that was really interesting about those early customized pieces, too, was that when I was making those, I thought—it was really interesting to see how far somebody would push with the customization. And so, a lot of times collectors would basically want it the way that I designed it. So, I was always interested in, like, what was it that they—that value. So, my work started to become more about value. Like, did they want my vision? Or did they want, like, their own sort of personality? Like, do they—and so I did one for Frank Kolodny who was, I think, in New Jersey, Princeton-based collector. [00:32:00] And his was, like, really crazy. Like, he really pushed it and, like, wanted the most extreme variations on his, which was really fun.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What's that mean?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He wanted panels to swing out. He wanted it—he wanted to be able to sit in bed and to have this whole panel swing out so that you could watch TV from—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: —you know, like, he kind of went to town with inventing ways that he could improve my design. But then there's other people who really, like, wanted it exactly the way I designed it. So, I remember that being—that aspect of that body of work being something that was really important to me, and that I thought was super-interesting, like, seeing what people actually—like, how much of themselves they wanted to put in it when they did commission something. And how much of the artist they wanted in it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Now, also, by this time, we know that you had been very interested in the formalist properties of actual sculpture and interested in psychology. How much were you, or were you at all influenced by a previous generation of performance artists, conceptual artists who used time management as a way of—as their way of formalizing their art?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Do you mean like—I can never pronounce his name right, but Taching Hsieh. Can—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, that's one person. I was thinking everyone from On Kawara, to Vito Acconci, to Joseph Beuys, to, you know, just people who had conceptual—the idea—even Chris Burden, the way he would conceptualize, you know, office space, or the way people were constantly thinking about the body, the—not the body so much, but performance in space and time.

ANDREA ZITTEL: You know, it's funny, because it's—this is another thing I've been thinking about more recently—this is an interest that has been very prolonged, like, throughout everything. But it's never something that I think I've gone directly and deeply into. But it's something that never goes away. Like, the body in space and in these spaces is, like, a core interest. [00:34:00] And I actually think that's something that I haven't fully—I'm thinking a lot about my work because I'm kind of in between bodies of work. And the body in space is something that I think I haven't fully developed that, to the extent of how I'm interested in it, and other people's work.

And you're bringing up time with On Kawara. I mean, the thing about On Kawara and Taching Hsieh about these artists that I really, really like, is maybe less about time and more about, like,

how integrated the art is into their daily lives. You know, it's like the practice is their life. And I—On Kawara I know was—it was a studio practice. But there's something, like, his work really deeply appeals to me because it's so pure and it's so constant over such a long period of time. Like, he, I—like, that work is some of my favorite work. I bounce around way more than he does. I feel like I'm ADD compared to him.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I was just—yeah. And I was—from what we talked about in your education. I didn't know how much you even knew about that work when you started your work in terms of understanding those—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Maybe not so much, but that was the moment—so when all this was going down, like, when I made that first *Management and Maintenance Unit*, the thing I was learning the most about was modern architecture. So, I was reading about Corbusier's, like, machine for living, and I read *The Fountainhead* for the first time. And learning a lot more about the Bauhaus and De Stijl and Russian Constructivists, and finding, like, a deep affinity. And with a lot of that work that I still feel, like, you know, I feel like my first cousins.

And then after that, maybe the years after that, learning more about artists whose lives had also become part of their practice. [00:36:00] And finding, like, more and more in that for myself, you know, and thinking, could—you know, so I know that we're talking about, like, artworks, and products, and shows, and stuff, but in the back of my mind, I'm thinking, can my life actually be my artwork, and how would that work?

And then the thing that really triggered everything for me in a really good way, and this happened after all of that, was reading *The Blurring of Art and Life* by Allan Kaprow, and the way that he defines performing. So I—because people bring up performance a lot, and I didn't feel like I was performing. Like, it wasn't really for an audience. But the way he describes performing, life is this thing that you perform for yourself. And, you know, the idea of, like, brushing your teeth and paying attention to it, or breathing and paying attention to it, which on one hand I feel like it's so much a product of that time, and like how people's intense focus on consciousness and sort of use of philosophy and religion. So, on one hand, it's, like, I know it was a direct output of that, but at the same time, like, in the '80s, that was still really interesting to me to think about a different kind of performance. And, more of an audience, less performance, and could that still be valid?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And did you then embrace that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I did, and I do. I feel like—yeah. It's interesting doing this, because I'm like—I should probably map—there's, like, core central things that I feel like, you know, the underpinnings of—but I knew that idea of performing by, as like a core, like, you know—if I'm a pier—it's like one of the pillars that's, like, holding up what I'm doing now, and my interests are, like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And it's most—to me, it's the most interesting part of performance art, is what comes out of the '70s and that, that durational—the durational performance art, as opposed to the audience-oriented performance art that comes later—

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:38:00] Like Vito Acconci.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah. And that has always interested me so much more than much of what happens today, which is more like theater, but, to me—but, and so it's interesting you absorbed that because so much of it wasn't around in the '70s and the early eight—well, actually probably the '70s, but I'm not sure if in the '80s, people were probably reacting against it. So, it's almost like you went—you leaped backwards in time and space to embrace it.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's something—I think a lot of people who taught, the generation before me, they kind of had been brought up on that. So, it wasn't considered—it wasn't cool. Like, you know, Ashley Bickerton, or Jeff Koons, or Haim Steinbach. That was cool, like, product-based art.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Correct.

ANDREA ZITTEL: But it was still like in people's minds. So it got planted in my mind where it just kind of stuck until later. I think that's when I really started to go back to it, and to think about it more, and get more deeply into it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And if we're—I'm thinking about it as I talk to you, in a way, your

work evolved as sort of a mesh of those two things, like the product orientation of that, of the '80s artists.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And the performance orientation of the '70s artists. And here you are in the '90s.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Meshing these two worlds.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And I'm still trying to figure out the life and living part. The performance part I'm still actively trying to figure out. Like, I feel like I haven't—you know, there's things that if I could figure them out, then that would make my work, like, really good. So, there are, like, things I'm still chewing on.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, that's a good thing. Keeps it moving along.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, now we're—so you're now at the transitional point of making things that are being bought by collectors. Do you remember, or are you comfortable saying how much those things sold for when they first were made?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. The economy's so interesting. So what's—and I don't know if it's like this now, but I remember when I first started selling my work with Andrea, sometimes I would sell it for less than it cost to make. [00:40:01] And her thing was, like, that's what you have to do to get going. So, I remember, like, early sculptures selling for, like, 3,500, or 4,500 dollars where, you know, I would take a loss on it. And I think that was good advice. I don't know if young artists now work that way. And then, yeah. Things just started to go up. I can't—there's, like, a whole period where I just can't remember at all—I think they sold for ten thousand for a while, or—still low. Yeah. There's—it's funny because, like, it goes up and then all of a sudden one day your work, you know, like, starts at 30 and tops at 200. I don't know. It's like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And the dealers are, are taking—in those days, would the dealer take care of all the—of everything, like the—how much would they take care of, and how much would you have to take care of?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, like, I don't—when you say everything, of the selling part, for sure. I don't like talking prices. I really don't—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I get that. The—oh, I see. You don't want to talk prices in terms of sales.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Fabrication I do. Oh, you mean of production? So, yeah. So, with production, I've—until recently, I've produced all my own work. And it was very expensive, and I would borrow money. And that's such a misconception with young artists, that once you show, somebody's going to pay for your production. I mean, yeah. Now my ideal way is to split it, but I can't always afford to split it. But I think that, like, works the best. But, yeah. So now it's like a mixed bag. Sometimes people produce for me. Sometimes we split.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: At this point, you're self-funding these really complex things that are made out of plywood, and metal, and upholstery, and plastic, and whatever, and microwaves, and this is all on you—just taking out loans and things—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —to get it done?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And it—I've always been pretty careful financially. So, you know, I would have a production account. [00:42:00] And so, when I sell a work, I take production off the top, and that would go back in the production account, so I wouldn't spend it. And then I had the other money that was my money. Or, like, that would go in production, too. And then, you know, there's a number of works that I would produce and we would throw out, you know? Like, I couldn't afford to store anything. So, I remember a work that was at Blum Helman Warehouse that was pretty expensive, like, a *Breeding Unit* that I'd made for the quails. Like, I gave it to the

bodega across the street, and they used it as a sandwich counter afterward.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: You know?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: There's a lot of that. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, there was a lot of money that was just, you know, just kind of, like, going down the drain, too.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you—so how does the work evolve from the *Living Units* then? And, you're in the *Sense and Sensibility* show at MoMA in 1995, is that a transitional moment for you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think so. Yeah. You know, it's when you're in those moments you don't realize it, but so, I was in that show. I was curated in the Aparto section of Venice Biennale. So that was definitely, like, a moment. Then Anthony d'Offay Gallery in London showed my work because of Sadie Coles, who I ended up staying with when she left the gallery. Yeah. And so, all of a sudden there was interest in my work. Then I got—I guess we're up to about 1995-ish. And I got this—so two things happened. In '94—so I had still continued to live in different places. In '94, I finally bought my first building in New York for \$120,000. It was called A-to-Z East.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And where's that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's 150 Wythe Avenue. I still own it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: One-Fifty-One Wythe?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Wythe. Yeah. And I turned that into a showroom testing grounds. It was really a thing, you know. [00:44:00] We did a newsletter and we did open houses once a week, and people could come and see different parts that we were working on in various states of, like, being used. I know I had done that before with the storefront on South Eighth Street, but I felt like this took it to another level, that then kind of then transcended into, like, what I'm doing here.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And A-to-Z East. When you refer to we, you're really talking about yourself.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah. There's no other person involved.

ANDREA ZITTEL: My assistants, if I had anyone. Usually I would have, like, one person who would help me at a time, but, yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But it's you.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's me.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: The royal we.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And at that point, were you living with anybody? Did you have a boyfriend or a partner?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. At that point, from—yeah. I would date people and sometimes they would stay with me for extended periods of time if it was an unhealthy relationship. [Laughs.] I didn't have, like, a partner who I was living with any more. I think later I tried again, but there was a long period where I didn't.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, when you bought the building, you bought it on your own.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I bought it on my own. It was 120,000 dollars, which is, like—and I justified it by figuring that I could rent the two upper floors and, like—or rent all three floors, and live in the basement for free if I couldn't pay the mortgage. So, it was, like, the best thing I ever did,

because that rental income now subsidizes me, my lifestyle still. And, you know, just as recent as last summer, I still consider walking away from the art world. Like, not quitting making art, but just walking away from the sort of commercial side of it. And I know I could live off of that if I needed to, which is so great. So, everything I do is by choice.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's what Donald Judd did with his Guggenheim.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Did he—yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: He bought Spring Street.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Took his entire—first Guggenheim, he took it and he bought a building. And it's, like, a really good—it's a good model of your—[00:45:59]in a way, it sounds odd, but it's important for artists to control their studio environment.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. Well, and we're usually willing to live places that other people wouldn't live in. But then, you know, like, what happened—my building was, like, in a shitty part of Williamsburg, but now it's nice, and I can rent it for more money and live off it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And also, it's the launching pad for A-to-Z East.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, what was your conception for A-to-Z East?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think it was similar to the previous storefront. So, I think—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Like, what products were you designing and showing to people?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Kind of everything. Like, everything that I lived with I made, including my food.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, tell me what everything consists of.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay. So upstairs, I cycled a bunch of different furniture prototypes through. There were three rooms on the middle floor. I rented the top floor to help pay my mortgage. Middle floor was, like, two—it had been a row house, so it had rooms that weren't necessarily assigned with functions, which was really nice, except the bathroom had been turned into a bathroom. So, I—one room kind of became an office. And then one room—the two other rooms were kind of evolved. So, I did a *Comfort Unit*, which was like a pit bed. So, it was just like a big, like, pit, and a piece of furniture. I did the *Ottoman Furniture*. I did the *Bofa*, which was a cross between a box and a sofa. I did the *Fleds*, which was the pads that go on the floor, a cross between a floor and a bed. Those were all the ones that roll off the top of my head right now. Small beds, yeah.

And then the downstairs, somebody made a kitchen in the front of it, and then there was just a big room in the storefront. And so, that was kind of a dining room, but kind of the studio. I just—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Go ahead.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —had an eight-foot long table that we would work on when we were making stuff. Like, we being, like, me and an assistant, somebody who was helping me. Or, like, I would eat on—or my assistant, Daniel, who was working for me at the time, was a bartender when he wasn't working for me. [00:48:02] So we made a small bar and called it Dan's Desk. And then we would serve cocktails there.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] What was Dan's last name?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Wineman. W-I-N—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: W-I.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. W-I-N-E-M-A-N, I guess.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, okay. He's a bartender and his name was Wineman.

ANDREA ZITTEL: [Laughs.] That's true. Or W-E-I maybe. I don't know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's funny. So how did people come to your—to see it? How were people invited?

ANDREA ZITTEL: We would do a little, like—God, that's so funny. I guess we mailed them out. Or maybe handed them out. It was pre-internet, so we would do these little, you know, like, photocopied, like, invitations, you know. "Cocktail Hour at A-to-Z." We called it The A-to-Z at the time. You know. What was it? Like, four to six or—I can't—I probably have old copies of them. And every Thursday night. So, we'd go out and buy alcohol and serve up—right, we only—I only used bowls for everything. So, they would set—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Even then you did that.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Right?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, they would serve them their drinks in bowls.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Now, were you making the bowls?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Not—I made one set of bowls, but they were silver and with copper—like they were copper with like a silver—I'm starting to lose my language.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it's been a long time.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, they were special. But when we had to have a lot of bowls for the cocktail evenings, we got glass bowls that were pretty generic, that we just used.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And were you—what other items did you—were you already making your own clothing?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yes. I started doing that pretty early on. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And , let's just pause at A-to-Z East to go back a little bit to your own clothing. At what point do you start designing and making your own clothing?

ANDREA ZITTEL: When I was living in that first *Living Unit* back on South Eighth Street.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And it was, like, a whole bunch of factors, but one was that I just didn't have room for a lot of clothes in the first *Living Unit* I made.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:50:03] Right.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And I just kept fantasizing about wearing the same thing every day. It just seemed like it would be so amazing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And, you know, there were a lot of preliminary ideas, but—that worked up to the idea of actually doing it. And when I did it similar to the *Living Unit*, it wasn't really an art project. It was just a thing I did. And I did it for a season. I made a linen dress that I really liked and I wore it for a season. My friend, Donna—I can't remember her last name—but she sewed it for me. Because I tried sewing one, and it was really shitty. And I'm laughing because I'm remembering the person who told me it was shitty was, there's an artist named Rainer Ganahl. He's around. He's my age. He drives everyone crazy. He's, like, socially super-inept. But he was somebody who, like, kind of saved my life, because we were friends back then. And not only did he tell that—that the dress I made was ugly, but he also told me that my work was mediocre.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know! [They laugh.] And, you know, and it was, like, I was so offended. And he says, "Your work is mediocre, but you're going to get attention because you know people and you're nice." And he goes, "But your work's still going to be mediocre." He's Austrian, so he's like, you know—and I went back, and I worked so much harder after that. Like, I felt like I had to be so sure. And then later he was, like, "Okay, your work's good now." That was crazy.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And after that you decided—but he also made your dresses for you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. I had somebody else sew them, because he also said, like, the dress I made, he said, "That's ugly. If you're going to do this, at least have a nice dress." So, I had a friend who could sew a lot better than I could. So, I showed her what I was trying to do and then she made it. And it was much better.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So subsequently, when—you would design them and have someone else sew them?

ANDREA ZITTEL: For sewing, yes. I'm really, really good at crocheting. So, when I do crocheted stuff I do them myself. And I'm starting to weave stuff now, and I'll weave and sew those. [00:52:00] But I'm just not good at—I don't like patterns.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: They're hard.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So how do you—I read—how did you choose—the linen dress was the first one. Subsequently, how do you tell someone else what kind of dress or skirt you want to make?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I would do drawings. I mean, sometimes I would find patterns, too, to show them. But, yeah. Pictures, drawings. Mostly drawings, I guess.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Now, curiously, for someone who majored in photography, you are a good draftsman, correct?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm marginal. So, like, I can draw clothing well because I grew up drawing clothing. But I'm not—I can't just, like, draw something out of my head. I can look at a photo and draw. I don't know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you can—you actually can—from what I've seen, you can actually—I mean, I think it was what really kind of struck me when I was looking at all the work, and how it actually—how well-drawn and how well-drafted, how precise all the detailing is.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's really labor-intensive for me. Like, I really struggle with it. And I've had people work for me who can just do it. And so, one of the reasons, like, I did this series of billboard paintings. And one of the galleries just asked if I would do more. Yeah. I'm just, like, oh, man. Because I can do it, but it's so hard.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Hmm.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's, yeah. So, I can do it, but it doesn't come easily.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, after you started with the first idea of having them make this one piece of clothing you would keep wearing, that has been in place since the early '90s.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It's never varied. You never thought, well, I'm not wearing my own clothing today. I'm wearing someone else's.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. I've given myself permission to stop. So, there've been little deviant-like moments when I've tried other things, because I don't want it to be too forced. So, I just thought I would do it as long as it felt good. You know, so then, a few years later, I got into a funny thing where I started wearing pajamas every day, like, all day. [00:54:00] And I never turned that into my artwork. That was just an experiment that kind of died.

[They laugh.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: And I had, yeah. For a while I would buy, like, J. Crew clothing in white and dye it. So everything was monochrome. And that was, like, a brief thing that kind of died and went away. We never talk about it now.

[They laugh.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I think the whole thing is fascinating. So, here we are. So, you're in this A-to-Z East, and you're having people who are coming to the—who's coming to the cocktail parties?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was good. I mean, so some—like, there were a few artists living in Williamsburg, but not a ton. Like, they were pretty happy because that was in their neighborhood. So they would come.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And who are your friends at that period?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Like, Mike Ballou, who did the *Four Walls* in Brooklyn.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: B-A-L—

ANDREA ZITTEL: B-A-L-L-O-U. And David Shaw. And, you know, Daniel Wineman and then my upstairs tenant, Maria Demarse Like, they were the core. Like, the three of us, we would kind of do it all together, which was really nice. And then my friend John Carlson.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: With a C?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And then I dated Craig Kalpakjian for a while. He's an artist, lives in New York.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Can you spell the last name?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. K-A-P-A-J-I-A-N, I think. Kalpakjian. And like, oh, Rachel, you know, Rachel, why am I—Harrison.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Sculptor. And Wade Guyton, and Ricci Albenda.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Ricci who?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Albenda.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Albenda.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And then my friend, Judith Eisler, who was, like, probably my closest friend at the time. And my friend, Jim Kanter. So, you know, like, a lot of artists.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: C-A-N-T-O-R?

ANDREA ZITTEL: K-A-N-T-E-R. You know, he ended up buying a house out here. So, we're still friends. [00:56:00] Yeah. So those were all artists, and then, you know, like, Roberta Smith and Jerry Saltz came over once. Or maybe more—you know, like, different—so then people from the art world started coming over, and it felt like they were regulars. But, you know, every time there would be like maybe two or three surprising people, like curators, or writers, or something like that. It's like, oh, wow. Like, yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And, now—I mean, there seems to be, like, right now there are—like, this like huge efflorescence of people doing little galleries, and then you—in their homes, at least in Los Angeles right now especially. Do you think of yourself as, like, the starter of this, or the—

ANDREA ZITTEL: My project was so different because it was, like, all made. So, it was really—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Right. Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —like me showing—it was—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You showing—

ANDREA ZITTEL: —I think that through my whole career it's been—I've had these two parallel practices. And one is a gallery practice and one is this very independent, like, creating my own context for my work. So, you know, maybe more like David Wilson at the Museum of Jurassic Technology, or like Matt Coolidge at CLUI, who I really deeply admire. And the only—Mike Ballou, who I mentioned early on, like, he did a project called *Four Walls*, where they did show other

people's work. So, I would say that *Four Walls* and what I was doing, we were like kind of the two main things going on in Brooklyn. And then later, there was Pierogi 2000. That was a small gallery that opened up. But, yeah. I think that, like, my project was more—it was like an art—or, you know, more akin to, like, the [*New York*] *Earth Room*, or something, like, in my mind. It was like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That makes sense.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And when people came, what did you want out of the—as you were creating a context for your work and spreading awareness of your work, I suppose, and was that your purpose? Or was it also just fun?

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:58:01] You know, like, work for me is fun.

[They laugh.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know this is like a—I don't know if this is a Virgo thing, but, like, I have a hard time having fun outside of work.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I understand.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I think it was fun—it was fun, but it was fun because I felt like it was doing something that felt important to me with my practice. So, I really deeply—okay. So, with my work, my work I think fails on some level when you put it into a gallery or a museum. You know, unless you're actually using it, it doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense. It's like an object to look at. Maybe the recent work is a little bit better because it does exist as formal sculpture. For better or for worse. And so, to me, like, that's how you were meant to experience it. So I was, you know, getting people to experience the work the way I wanted them to. And to sit on it. And, you know, see what it—to be intimate with it. Bodies in space.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yes. Exactly. In the '90s. But now as your work sort of goes up in value after those shows, after the Aperto, after people are collecting it, then we have another issue that comes up for your work, or anyone's work, which is—you took up with this a little bit. What happens if it gets damaged?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I mean, now the work has gone up. It's going up in value at this point. You know, collectors want to make sure they can give it to a museum or sell it to somebody else. So, then no one can sit on it, or brew a cup of coffee.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. Getting damaged in a gallery is one thing, because I probably spent a lot of money making it, and I would love for it to get sold before it gets damaged. Getting damaged later is fine. Like I—as you live with my work, and I have a lot of animals, and a kid who stands in my artwork. So, most of this stuff I make can be repaired pretty easily. I just don't want to have to reupholster the cushions before it's even sold the first time. So, I don't know. There's these two tiers. So, like, the piece that I'm living with in my living room right now, the—it's all powder coated steel or aluminum. [01:00:02] So I can just send it back to the powder coater to get it recoated. And the upholstery is all Sunbrella, which is like an outdoor fabric that my cat sharpens her claws on it and it's okay.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But what about the market value for your collectors?

ANDREA ZITTEL: What do you mean? Like, if it gets damaged with them?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yes. If it goes off, do they—do your collectors—not your museum collectors, but do private collectors actually use the work, or are they afraid of damaging it?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know. I mean, I hope they use it, because they should—like, the thing is, is that I've really thought about making everything extremely repairable when I make it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But if they use it, if it gets damaged, do they call you up and say, come out and—send me ten more yards of Sunbrella fabric, or something?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay. So, in all honesty, the reality of this moment in my life, what's happening

is that I don't think that people are using my work. I think it gets sold to institutions. And that's more of a price point thing, you know. Like, it's just not at a price point—so this is something I've been thinking about a lot. And so, I'm still making that work because I live with it. So, I'm interested in making it. But I'm also starting to spin off and do, like, the *Planar Pavilions*, which people can experience without buying them.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And the *Planar Pavilions* are the new outdoor sculptures in front of your Joshua Tree property, which are these—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —for the record, black.

[They laugh.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Black, solid black, rectangular objects, with open—they're open on one side, I think. Is that a correct way to describe them?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. They're a configuration of walls. And they make—they kind of end up being in a room-like space. Like, there's no roof, but you can enter them, and there's two doors in a way. Yeah. So those spaces. So, I'm trying—and now I'm doing those, that people can interact with freely without making an appointment. They can just—and then the cabins in Wonder Valley, where instead of selling these two sculptures, I've installed them in cabins. [01:02:02] And people can go and, like, stay in them with the sculptures.

So, I think that, you know, it's nice. I envision maybe institutions continuing to buy this work. But I think if I want people to engage with it, I have to make these other ways for them to experience it besides buying it. And I also have been wanting to talk to Shaun at Regen Projects this week, because I have, you know, some ideas about some more modest furniture type work that I would like to just do at a regular furniture price. You know, kind of using the Judd furniture as a model. So, I think that we need to kind of break away from this one model of how artwork is produced and experienced in the case of my work.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mmm-hmm. [Affirmative.] In fact, I just—the last show you had was just so spectacularly successful in terms of the way they looked as sculpture. It did seem to me, looking at them, they had more of a sculptural reference than a—they had living element relationships, but they seemed much more like independent sculptures when I was looking at them. It did look like that's where the work was going.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, that's what—I kind of wanted them to be like formal abstract sculpture. So, not to reference yet another artist, but I think about Scott Burton's work a lot.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So I felt like, because my work is always at a disadvantage in a gallery space, I thought I would just make sculptures. But the way that it would be really great is that if somebody were to live with that work—like, I don't know if you saw the work in my living room, but I pile a lot of crap on it. And blankets, and pillows, and so then if somebody were to purchase that and live with it, it would just be completely different. And the same as these—the *Aggregated Stacks* pieces, when they show them they're really clean. But then, when you live with them, they just get all this stuff piled on them.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And the *Aggregated Stacks* are your bookcases.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. They're these—yeah. Plaster boxes that are open, sort of cobbled together. [00:01:56] And we show them now—mostly I show them, like, more like a Donald Judd again, like, pretty empty. So, I just like that discrepancy. I like that between, you know, the gallery being, like, really clean and hard, and minimalist, and then once they're in a new life they just become really tactile and covered in stuff. I don't know how to show that, but that's why I kind of need to do these installations out here so people can see the other side of it. But I think they would benefit from understanding that it can go both ways.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Excellent. I'm just going to pause here for a second.

[Audio break.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I wanted to go back to some of what we were talking about in

the '90s. You start getting—you start getting grants.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Kind of. Yeah. What did I get?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, yeah. The Coutts award.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: According to this, in '86 you got—well, going into the—at RISD you got two Awards of Excellence. But you got a DAAD Grant in 1995, and a Coutts Contemporary Art award in '96, an Oribe Award in '97, a Crook— [I'm not sure what Hunter meant. I did also get a Guggenheim, VIA grant, and Lucillia Award -AZ]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. The ones that—the DAAD, that was intense. So that was actually where I went and lived in Berlin for a year.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And this was in 1995.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, this is right after your, sort of your—this is before or after you bought your place in Brooklyn.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, it was right after. So, I bought my house in Brooklyn. I was super excited. I did have to go into therapy because I would have dreams it was falling down. So I think I was terrified at what I had done. But I was also really excited by it and I was working on it, and fixing it up, and that's all I wanted to do. And then I was financially really strapped. And I got offered this grant. And what it is, is you go and you live in Germany for a year, and they give you a stipend that I think was equivalent to about a thousand dollars a month.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It's a DAAD grant. It's—not speaking German myself—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, it is—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Deutscher Akademischen Austauschdienst.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And usually, like, other artists who had gotten it had been further along in their careers. [00:04:00] Like, I was kind of young to get it. So, I did it because I knew I needed that money to make my house payments So, it was really hard because I didn't want to be there. I have a hard time—I already told you—traveling, being away from home.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do you speak German?

ANDREA ZITTEL: A little bit. Yeah. But I just got really, really lonely, really homesick, really depressed. I'm like a hardcore introvert. I have a hard time socializing. And so, the main, like, social scene in Berlin then was usually, like, mostly male dominated, and people were, like, hanging out and smoking in bars, and going to do techno clubs late at night, which is so not my thing. I had a boyfriend at the time who went with me and then decided it wasn't for him, and he left. So, then I was kind of on my own alone the rest of the year.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do we know who that boyfriend is?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. It was Charlie White. We're still friends. He was my boss for a while at USC.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: He's great. So, yeah. But he decided to go—he was younger than me. He decided to go back to school, so he left and moved back to California after, like, two months. Klaus Biesenbach and I became friends, dated briefly. Even though—I know. Anyway. He saved my life. Like, Klaus was, like, so kind and, like, so generous, and, like, would take me out to things, but not super late at night. And we ended up—we spent a lot of time together, and he was really great. I did a terrible thing. Klaus took me to dinner for Allan McCollum. Allan flirted with me and I ended up breaking up with Klaus to date Allan, which was, like, super shitty, even though Allan's also amazing. But I've always regretted that deeply. Yeah. But, I know Klaus has problems, and—right? I know. But he was really good to me. I know. Okay.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: All I can say is you're probably not the first person who ran off with Allan. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:05:59] Right. Yeah. Well, and then—yeah. And Allan is great, too, but we were two kind of imbalanced people being imbalanced together. [Laughs.] So, anyway.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And he was having a big time—he was very big in the '90s.

ANDREA ZITTEL: He was big before—more before we dated. And then when we dated was when he was having all those problems with his gallery. And so, I kind of got to witness that end of things.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Which gallery?

ANDREA ZITTEL: What's that gallery that closed and they owed him, like, 500,000 dollars or something?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Here or there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: In New York.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Robert Miller? Someone who he showed with. It was really gnarly. And he couldn't get his money, and so he had this big loft in Tribeca that he sold. But, you know, and—you know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you were a couple for a while then.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Not too long. Being imbalanced. [Laughs.] Individually imbalanced. But then we became really good friends afterward.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And, it's interesting. I think of your work as being sympathetic, as well.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. No. I know. Like, I think there's—we share core values, I think, that we're both from, like, lower—like, middle class to lower-middle class families, and we didn't know about art growing up. He didn't even go to art school. And I think that we both have this deep affinity for, like, wanting our work to work for, like, regular people, for the general population.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Interested in domestic space.

ANDREA ZITTEL: True.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Being from the West Coast.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And so, yeah. A lot—I can see commonality there.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, and I'm glad to hear Klaus got over it, but you got through your year in Berlin and—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Survived.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —survived.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Squeaked by.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And did you do a show at all when you were there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was so funny. I was such a bad communicator. So, I know I was supposed to do a show while I was there, but I didn't say anything to anyone because I didn't have—I didn't want to spend money producing it. [00:07:59] So at the very end, he's like, "Well, what about your show?" And I said, "Do I have to do it? I don't have any money to make a show." And he said, "Well, we have, like, this, I don't know, a couple of thousand dollars stipend for your

budget." And I was, like—because, like, I didn't spend it, because I never did the show. If I had known, I could have been producing work.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you were going to pay your—for your new—weren't you using it to pay for your new building?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. But I could have—there was a separate budget for the show that I never spent.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And I also upset them, because they basically—I wanted a space that was like a storefront. And so, they rented—they found a gallery that was willing to close for a year. So, I could use that space and they rented it for me. But I didn't want to use it, because it had already been an art gallery. And so, I felt like they—that identity tainted it somehow. Like, it would seem like I was an artist doing a show in their art gallery. And I was just really bad at communicating that to them. And so, they got upset at me because I never, ever went to the space once, I think. And I was just bad at saying, like, I need a real storefront space. I don't want a gallery space because that will change everything.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's so funny.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I've gotten better.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs]

ANDREA ZITTEL: But it was also pre-internet. So, there was, like, no email, no texting, you know. It was all just like, I got typewritten faxes at best. Like, it was just so lonely because there was no way to communicate with people when you're poor and you can't afford long-distance phone calls.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what—and so, you were there. And did you produce any art while you were there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. Oh, yeah. Okay. So, I started getting really homesick for California. And that's—during that year is when I got a show with the San Francisco Museum of [Modern] Art. And I came back and produced the *Travel Trailers* that went to that show.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Produced the—what did you call them?

ANDREA ZITTEL: They were called *Travel Trailers*.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, the *Travel Trailers*.

ANDREA ZITTEL: *Travel Trailers*. Yeah. [00:09:58] Which is an artwork I'm not crazy about any more, but I did it. So—but it was nice, because I flew to California a couple of times from Berlin to work on that project, and that was good.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And then you—when you came back to California to do that, at what point did you decide you needed to start spending more time here in California? I think in my notes it says you started coming back with Allan McCollum in 1986, but that doesn't make any sense.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, '96 probably.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: '96.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, yeah. Allan and I would come—I just, any time I could, I would come back to California. So, the longer I was in New York and in Europe, the more I knew that I was basically—I was super Californian. And I had gone from hating California to realizing that that's what I was. Like, hate it or love it, I'm a product of that culture. And my work is definitely a response to that culture more than anywhere else. And so, like, it wasn't making as much sense for me to, like, live or practice, you know, in these other places. I really wanted to be here processing this culture.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, your DAAD grant is over in '95. So, it says in '96 you came back—you came to this area with Allan McCollum. How did that trip come about?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think it was just vacation. Like, we just decided to come here, and we did a drive through Death Valley, and it was nice. Yeah. And we used to talk. We had this joint idea that we would buy, like, a big building and—because Allan, well, he has way more work in storage than I do. But it would be, like, storage where people could also pay, like, you know, like a roadside attraction. So, they could pay money to see our work in storage, or something, like, we would install all the pieces. So, yeah. We used to have fantasies about stuff like that. And I could see Allan doing that, because that's so up his alley. But then he never really did. But I ended up doing kind of a different version of it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I was going to say, it actually sounds like a perfectly good idea.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know. And it, like, I—[00:12:01]—so he has, still has this building in New York where he stores all of his work. It's probably worth a small fortune now. So, I'm always trying to convince him to sell it and move here, and, like, do that idea. Because then it would be like a museum, and then if he dies he could just leave it. You know, and it would be like, yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: He could even do it without selling the one in New York. He could just put it down in Joshua Tree.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Although things are getting more expensive here.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you came here, and it says you moved back to the west in 1998. Was the trip through here with Allan any kind of impetus to deciding to make a move back here?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Probably. It just—yeah. I mean, so I came through with Allan. Then that, and then the other thing that—I continued to work in Europe to do—because that's where all the money and the shows were. I was in *documenta* and in Münster, *Skulptur Projekte Münster*, in '97, I think. And so I was getting so much attention in Europe. And so I, every—all the doors kept opening over there and I was spending more and more time there. I did this project in Scandinavia where I built the *Pocket Property*, the big island that I was living on. And I think that was kind of the breaking point for me, where the—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Let's talk about that, because —where was that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Actually, that might have been—I think I had already come to California before I did that. This is so sad. As I'm telling you this whole thing, it's so sad. I came to California because I met a guy. So, I was unaware of, like, how many decisions—so, in '96, '97, I met Sebastian Clough and moved to LA to live with him. But I was still kind of part in New York, part in LA. And then in '98, I think, I did a *Pocket Property* piece in Europe. So, *Pocket Property* is what actually got me out here to A-to-Z West, not to LA I had already made it to LA

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:14:01] But *Pocket Property* was in—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Scandinavia.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —was in—not Stockholm.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. It was in a bunch of places, but it was outside of—in Denmark. Oh, man. Malmo. It was outside of Malmo, and it was outside of Stockholm, and somewhere else. It was kind of floating around in that body of water in between Sweden and Denmark for two summers.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And you were in it.

ANDREA ZITTEL: For one summer. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you have visitors?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean, people could come and stay on it, too, but it was kind of rough. It wasn't what I thought it would be. So, I thought I would be on it the whole summer, and I wasn't.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, tell me about the conception for that before we get back to A-to-Z West. So '96, '97 you've met Sebastian Clough and you're spending time in LA And then in between spending time in LA, you're also floating around in an iceberg.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. They asked me to propose a project for this body of water that would—and they were building a bridge between Sweden and Denmark. So, that was kind of their

funding, was government money, to kind of promote that relationship. So, I wanted to do the inhabitable island from *Münster Projekte*. I had already done deserted islands and I was just thinking a lot about the need—like, the difference, basically, between the sort of Californian notion of space, like private space, and Europe, or everywhere else, where people are, like, willing to share a space that in California, you really—there's this desire to have your territory, your space, so strong.

So, the deserted island piece, I did a series of maybe 10 of them for *Skulptur Projekte Münster*. And then I kind of built upon that by making this giant habitable island for Scandinavia.

[00:16:01] And the idea—I wanted to do a bunch of them. So, in my mind, having grown up in southern California where everything was getting developed so quickly, I thought that this would be like the ultimate product, was that you could make this island—so when everything had been developed, you could have these islands that you would develop, and people could go live in the islands. And then, you know, like, kind of get out and float around and do their own thing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And from the photographs, it almost looks like an inflatable iceberg. [Hunter is probably thinking of a later island that I did in Cincinnati that did actually look a bit like an igloo. The island in Scandinavia was larger and more rough, sculpted concrete, and an outdoor growing area. -AZ]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. It's concrete.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It's concrete.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And it's big. It's really big. It was really hard to build.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how does it float?

ANDREA ZITTEL: There are big steel tanks underneath. And then divers go under and open them up until it's balanced, until everything balanced. It was a real nightmare to build.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: It was super stressful.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And when you stayed in it, would you stay overnight?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. But I thought I would spend the whole summer, but I spent a good part of the summer in the curator's apartment. And then I would go stay on it sometimes when I felt really brave. And it was way colder than I thought it would be, too. And it was very stormy. Yeah. So, the thing about that project, too, is that I would think I was feeling really overexposed. Just, I had been around—you know, I had been dealing with people so much in these really stressful situations. And I was really starting to like getting out into the—you know, just being alone that summer on the island. And it was the total opposite of that, because it ended up being this weird freak show thing where everyone wanted to come out. People would come out in boats and kind of circle the island. So, I felt like we were always being gawked at, or I was being gawked at.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Like a penguin.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And I really, deeply, wanted to be alone. And it was while I was doing that project that I was so sure that I needed to move out here. You know, it was the only place I could imagine getting the kind of privacy that I needed.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:17:58] So, after that project, how did the coming to this part of the country and establishing yourself, how did that come about?

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I had already been living with Sebastian in LA a little bit. And from Scandinavia I started emailing a realtor out here. And so, we had already identified some properties. So, I drove out and met with her when I got back. And the ones that I was looking at initially didn't pan out, but then I just started this really intensive search of looking at everything between Johnson Valley and the end of Wonder Valley, like, just driving around and mostly looking at every single listing until I found this place.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Even though you grew up not that far from here in the—you know, not that far from here, did you know about the history of, sort of, the so-called Homestead Act properties?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. Not so much when I first started coming out. And it clarified for me why there were all these—because this place is really unique the way that there are all these very small structures in the middle of nowhere. Usually you have a town or open space. And so that's one of the reasons that it's actually possible to get a house here with no neighbors, is because of the Homestead Act. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I want to go into that in depth, but tell me, specifically, you emailed the realtor. You found this place. And what year did you buy your first, the first property?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm not sure. I think it might have been '99. I think I moved out here in 2000. It took a few months after I bought it to move. It might have been later than that. I need to—I have a hard time pinpointing that. And I remember when I found this place I had been looking for so long. And this place wasn't exactly ideal. I didn't like how close it was to the highway, and to town. And I didn't like the fact that I had a neighbor. So since then, I've been able to buy out the neighbor. So that's better. [00:20:00] And I still don't like how close I am to the highway, which is—I guess it's funny talking to you about this, because I've been thinking a lot about the future and this place recently. And I had kind of forgotten—I mean, I think that proximity makes it great to turn into a public space someday. Not so great as a place I want to live and be alone the rest of my life. So, I thought this would be, like, a starter space and I would move somewhere else later on that would be the real thing. But I've just invested so much time and energy in this, and I don't think I'm going to find anything better than this in this area, so now I've decided this is it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, you've been able to—well, while we're here, let's just talk about the development of this property and then we'll see where we are. But you and Sebastian Clough come out together. Did you initially decide to live together?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. So, I told him—well, when I moved to LA I told him I wanted to live out here. And we drove out here together. And before we even hit where the post office is, he's like, "I'm not living here." So, we turned around and went back to LA

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, it wasn't until our relationship was getting a little rocky—oh, wow. Okay. So, I know, it's like coming back more. So, we were living together and we actually—we broke up. How did that work? So, we broke up. Hmm. I'm trying to remember if we broke up before or after I got this, but I think we broke up before, because he stayed in the house, but I paid for the house. And I couldn't stand the idea of renting some really shitty apartment when I owned a house. So, this was, like, 40,000 dollars for this house. And it was the only thing I could afford. So, I think that really kind of forced my hand, too, was realizing that I couldn't get the money out of the other house because he wouldn't move once I bought this, and moved out here.

[00:22:01] The thing that's confusing me is I do remember him driving out here with me once or twice. Most of the time I was searching alone. So, I'm trying to remember. Maybe if I'm trying to remember—I think maybe we also kind of tried to get back together briefly, and then it didn't work. So, there were these moments where we were like hanging out.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you got this property. How much property originally was involved here?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Just five acres.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Five acres with one of those little structures.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. With the Homestead cabin on it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And the original Homestead cabin was how big?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Maybe 600 square feet.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And now, for the record here, would you describe to the Archives here, would you please describe the Homestead Act and how this area was developed, and how that affected the way your property has been developed by you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay. So the original Homestead Act, the way that the rest of the country was developed gave people 160 acres for free if they would improve it. Usually improvement consisted of farming it, digging a well, farming for five years, and filling out paperwork and sort of meeting some criteria. And so, when people got out to this part of the desert and they tried to homestead it, they realized, because they couldn't farm the desert—there was kind of a joke when they were trying to do that, but you could get it for free if you didn't starve to death first. So, it was a combination of realizing that they couldn't farm this land, and also, I think they had a bunch of veterans returning from World War I with lung damage from the nerve gas. And so, for some reason that I don't fully understand, the dry air here was much better for somebody with lung damage. So, they had a lot of returning vets who needed housing and wanted to be in the desert. So, they created the "baby" Homestead Act, which gave people five acres for free. And the thing that they had to do to improve it was build a very minimal structure. [00:24:00] And originally, the structure was 200 square feet, and then they later raised that minimum to 400 square feet, which is why, when you look at—and so, a lot of times people would do that, get the land, but then never really come move in. So, there's just—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I had always heard these were like little hunting cabins. They're called shotgun shacks, and hunting cabins, but that turns out to not be true?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. I don't know why they call them that. I mean, shotgun cabin, usually that's, you know, where everything's in a row. And that's a term I hear more in the South. And I've heard people call them jackrabbit cabins, too, and Homestead cabins. But I think they're mostly people from urban areas who felt a need to own land in the desert. Or a few people who did move here. But it's just, like—it struck me, because it's just that desire to own territory, to own space, which is still why people are coming out here now from LA

You know, people who can't afford houses in LA are buying houses here because they want to own something. But so, the whole area is dotted with all of these tiny cabins. And when I came here, most of them were falling down. They were super cheap. There was—a woman started this movement called "Shack Attack," where if somebody hadn't maintained their cabin, the county would come in and bulldoze it. And then—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Hmm.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know. And then later they realized that the cabins do have historical value, so they stopped "Shack Attack."

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I was interested in the whole concept you had about piecing together. Let's talk about the grid. I found that to be so interesting, that you realized that these plots of land were grids, lined up as a grid, and you systematically filled in the grid around your own property.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is that correct?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, I mean, we—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Describe that in detail for me.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —okay. So, I mean, the Homestead Act also is tied to the Jeffersonian Grid, which was created by Thomas Jefferson across the entire country, dividing it into one-square-mile sections. [00:26:01] So, it's a grid that goes across the whole country. And then that's used to subdivide into smaller grids, which is how you—like, land sold, or—and originally, I think it was done so that they could sell land from one centralized office back east. So, the land that I live on is mostly five-acre parcels, but it's interesting when you look at a parcel map, because it's a mix. There's some 10-acre parcels, and the orientation of the land changes, and you can't really figure out why. Like, I've wondered if somebody was looking at a map when they made these divisions, or if they were actually out here on the land making some of them. But my house is on five acres. And then I've been slowly trying to buy all of the parcels around me. When you look at it, it looks like one continuous piece of land, but in reality, it's lots of little private parcels that have been slowly accumulated over time.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it interested me because of your interest in boundaries and order, that you've managed to sort of create an orderly little—you've ordered all the land around you as far as you can see.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Kind of. Yeah. And there's things that frustrate me, like, the roads are in the places they are because of the property lines. But that's not really the nicest place to put a road. So, there's certain things that the grid has done to this land that's less than optimal. But it does, yeah, adhere to that grid, which I am very compelled by.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] I was fascinated by that. So, you get out here and you buy this. And now, just to talk briefly about not just Sebastian, but other boyfriends—this is a part of life for people. They have boyfriends. They have husbands. They have partners and relationships sustain, or they don't sustain. Has that been meaningful to you in some way? Have these partners brought something to your practice, into your life?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think I've learned a lot from dating so many different people. [00:28:00] I think it's also been challenging and disruptive. I think it's been particularly—I think it's been hard—I don't know if this is across the board, it could just have to do with—it's been hard being a woman and, like, wanting to do certain things with my life, and then still managing to have relationships through that. Like, I feel a direct conflict between what I want to do with my life and my ability to be with people, which has, like, eased up more in my more recent past because of some changes in my personal life—yeah. I don't know. I think that that whole part's very complicated, and something I'm still trying to figure out.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah. You didn't ever get—did you ever married?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But ultimately you did have—how old—you did have a child.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I have a son.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what year was your child born?

ANDREA ZITTEL: In 2004.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And his name is Emmett.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: E-M-M-E-T-T?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is his last name Zittel?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Dodge.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Dodge.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Middle name is Zittel. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And it's Zittel Dodge.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And who is his father?

ANDREA ZITTEL: David Dodge.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And where does he live?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He lives here and in LA

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And let's just, while we're here, let's talk about him and that relationship.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. So, we were introduced by a friend of mine, who—yeah. And so, we dated. We were just kind of casually dating, like, just getting to know each other, and the pregnancy was an accident. And we thought that we would—I realized that if I didn't have Emmett I wouldn't be able to have kids, which—I never really wanted to have them. But when I found out, because I had some other problems, I was just like, oh, do I really want to write that

off entirely? [00:30:01] So, you know, I just thought, oh, I'll have it. What's the worst that could happen? [Laughs.] And Emmett's amazing, but it's definitely, like, you know—like, everything people say about how hard it is, it's like so true.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how involved is David Dodge?

ANDREA ZITTEL: David's really involved, which is good. And so, we didn't stay—I mean, we were together for a while and it didn't work out, but so, we, you know—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, for the record, how many years were you together?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Four years, I think. Mostly because of Emmett. And so, like, we did sort of 50-50 parenting in the beginning. But now, David's like—education's, like, really important to him. It's kind of important to me. So, he really wants Emmett to go to a good school, so Emmett's going to school in LA now. And David has an apartment in Pasadena. So, Emmett's with him five days a week, which may—you know, if it's all processed, that hopefully will change next year. But that's where things are at right now.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what does David do?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He's a graphic designer.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And where is Emmett going to school?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Waverly. It's a private school in Pasadena. Yeah. But it's expensive and it's, like, really—I think David didn't realize how challenging it would be to try and solo parent and do the commute and everything. So, I think it's really hard for him. And so, we don't know what's going to—like, maybe Emmett will go to school in Palm Springs next year. We'll see.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, what did you learn from having an additional person to cope with this perfectly curated life-space performance art product that you do?

ANDREA ZITTEL: You're saying perfectly curated, but as we're sitting in a house where there was dog pee on the living room floor when you walked in, and then, like, fur everywhere. [00:32:02] It's actually pretty messy right now. It's not necessarily clean.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But everything is really beautifully placed, and everything in it is really beautiful in its own way.

ANDREA ZITTEL: My theory, you can have, like, nice things and nice surfaces, but it can be a mess, and it's still okay. So, that's the disclaimer.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But did having an additional—did having a child change your thought, or change anything about the way you then chose to live?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It changed a lot.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And so, here's the thing, is that before I had Emmett, I was really free, and I could do anything I wanted. I could experiment on myself. I could do these pretty radical lifestyle experiments. After I had a kid, added another person, I just didn't feel right superimposing all that stuff on him. And he, like, has his own opinions and stuff. And so, I think that it's really changed—yeah. I mean, that's really changed the way I live and my ability to experiment, within my day-to-day life. For a long time, I had been wanting to live without artificial light. But Emmett's like dead set against that. And so, we would have, you know, these discussions about how things should be, or even, like, you know, if I want to sleep outside, he doesn't like me sleeping outside, because he wants me close. You know, it's like—it's been a lot of negotiating stuff that I didn't have to do before.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And did you get a nanny or someone to take care of him?

ANDREA ZITTEL: In the beginning we had help because I was teaching. So, when Emmett—it's so comp—so, when I got pregnant, originally, I thought we would do everything out here. But I was dating David who didn't have work, and he felt like he needed to be in LA to get work. So, I ended up buying a house in LA again—

[They laugh.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: —that we lived in. And I was nervous about my ability to support us on my gallery sales. So, I took a teaching job. [00:34:01] And so, I had help with him while I was teaching. And then I realized I was paying as much for the house and the nanny, or the pre-schools, I was making at my teaching job, so I quit and moved back out here again, which was really—like, there's moments, you know, of, like, finding myself and losing myself, and finding myself and losing myself. So those first few years when he was a baby, and we were living in LA and I was teaching at USC, I was kind of like—I had lost myself. And then moving back here felt really, really good.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What message do you have from your experience of being a successful woman artist that you would—what have you learned as a woman in terms of the unique challenges that you might face that men don't face?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. I just think I spent way too much time trying to chase down relationships. And I get kind of sad for myself when I think about, like, how much of my own power I gave away. You know, and you want companionship—one wants companionship and one doesn't want to be lonely, but in all honesty, like, I think that just the freedom to do your own thing is such a luxury. And I don't think I really valued that. I think that there's these societal expectations that you'll end up being a certain way, and it was silly to get so caught up in that. I mean—the disclaimer. So, like, the other last part of this, in my mind, I can think, oh, am I going to talk about this or not? Was that, probably about five years ago I switched to—I've been dating women since then. And that's been, like—not that it's been always easy, but it's just made that one thing like way easier.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Like, I just feel much more understood, like, more deeply understood. And the person I'm dating now also has a career and is also busy, and is just, like—[00:36:01]—it's just so nice being with somebody where there isn't that kind of power struggle, where you don't feel like you're emasculating somebody by, you know, like, having a busy career and needing to do things. So, it took a long time to find balance.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And I think it's a hard balance for most women in the art world, or maybe in any part of the world. It just seems like it's always a bit of a tussle.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I see it—like, I mostly show with women gallerists. And a lot of my friends are sort of powerful women. And I just see everyone struggle with this. And, yeah. And I see other people, too, give their power away too easily. And I don't—I think it's generational, as well. I think that—I'm a generation where my Mom would always talk to me, like, "Who are you going to marry?" Instead of, "What are you going to do?" You could be a pilot, and then you could travel all over the world or something, you know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] And what about—are you in a relationship now? Do you want to talk about it?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And do I know—who is this person you're in a relationship with now?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Katy Davidson. We've been together six months. They just moved here—they use gender-neutral pronouns, which is why I say they. Moved here a couple—like, two weeks ago to try living here.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [. . . —HD] So, Katy Davidson. D-A-V-I—how do you spell the last name?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, yeah. It is K-A-T-Y and then David, D-A—like Davidson.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: S-E-N or S-O-N?

ANDREA ZITTEL: S-O-N.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And do you live to—you don't live together?

ANDREA ZITTEL: We don't. We're still figuring everything out. So, Katy was living in Portland when we met, but we've known each other a while.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: We've known each other while we've been with other people. And it's so funny, because I had never—they were never somebody I actually considered dating, but I really liked them, and then I got asked—yeah. So, this all just kind of happened, but it's—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —been good. [00:38:02] And it's nice because I feel like we have this history of friendship to build on. And so, they were living in Portland for six months. And now they just moved down here to see what this is like, so we can see what it's like to be in the same place. And right now they're living in a cabin that I own. They're renting it from me. And I think we're kind of deciding, like, will Katy stay in that cabin? I have two cabins here that I haven't fixed up. Will Katy—I don't think—might move into one of the cabins at A-to-Z West, which would be more like living together. Will they, like, buy a place of their own? You know, so it's like, all—we don't know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is Katy Davidson an artist?

ANDREA ZITTEL: A musician.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: A musician.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: This is the memoir writer.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Exactly.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, Katy's a musician, and they're also a music producer for their career. So, it's nice because I feel like it's similar, where—like, they have a job—so they're working remotely. But it's a pretty high—you know, it's like a fast-paced job. So, they have their thing that they have to do all day, the same way I have my thing I have to do all day, which is nice. And then, you know, they also have this sort of side, like, another music career where they are working on an album, and tour, and do that.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Nice.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I'll put this on pause again. You know, Andrea, we've been talking a long time. I think this would be a good place to take a break. This is Hunter Drohojowska-Philp closing off disk one with Andrea Zittel on the eighth of January. We'll pick it up again in a little bit.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Cool.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Thank you.

[END OF CARD ONE.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: This is Hunter Drohojowska-Philp interviewing Andrea Zittel at the artist's home and studio in Joshua Tree, California on January 8th, 2018, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, card number two.

Andrea, we were just talking a little bit about some of these issues of domesticity versus the kind of structures of making sculpture or art that's more recognized in a Modernist sense. We talked about—a little bit about the word feminine, the word masculine. And you briefly mentioned that the latest show at Regen Projects, which are these structures of, you know, steel. They seem quite a bit more in line with what we would think of as, like, modern-infused sculpture, although they still have their living—the components about them—they're, like, for sitting or reading the paper—that you consciously sort of try to make work a little tougher and more masculine. Would

you elaborate a little bit on that? You know, if you would like to.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay. So, I'm just going to say some stuff that—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Off the top of your head. That's the way it goes.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —so I guess the thing that for—I'm trying to think how—so, a lot of my work in the recent past has consisted of textiles and weaving. And, which I really love, and there's a lot of sort of problem-solving aspects of weaving that's been really fun to get into. And I originally started making those works because I was making what's—the planar, or panels. And I like the fact that textiles are both two-dimensional and three-dimensional at the same time, because they move in space in different ways. But I had kind of gone down this weaving wormhole and started to notice how there's this different reception between work that's soft and hard.

[00:02:03] So, I don't really think of it overtly—like, in my head, I don't think masculine-feminine, but I do think soft and hard. And I think that, as much as I like textiles, there's also a part of me that's just, like, so deeply interested in architecture, and spaces, and in the hard. And it's like part of my sort of DNA of art-making since the very beginning. And I just wanted to pull some of that back in, and have those two play against each other. So, yeah. The last show was welded steel. There were some really specific decisions of—it was welded steel, and then there were aluminum plates, and it's all powder coated. So, it's sort of this ambiguous, shiny-colored, hard surface. And we thought about making them out of wood, but wood would feel too much like furniture. So, I wanted them to feel like this kind of well-balanced hybrid between minimal or Modernist sculpture, and furniture, and architecture. And so, metal ended up being like the best material for that.

And then also I just wanted them to be really durable, because I have been using them myself, and when things are wood they tend not to last as long, just based to like the ruggedness of [laughs] my life with the animals and a kid, and the way things have been being outside or moving through spaces. So, yeah. It felt satisfying though to balance those two out, and I'm more comfortable working with soft materials when there's, like, an equal balance of hard materials.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And you had some weaving in the show. You had some banners, but they were suspended vertically if I remember correctly. And some of them are on the floor like the *Fleds* used to be.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And the vertical ones were kind of space dividers, you know. I like thinking of the—yeah. [00:03:59] Rather than just something to look at, it's something that creates a space, so when I was—so there's like a flat steel plate, or aluminum plate, that's shiny black. It goes against the wall. And that creates an armature, like an arm sticks out from that that holds the weaving, which is, I think they were seven or eight feet tall and about five feet wide. So, when you do that, I sort of imagined if you were going to live with something like this, that you might have some cushions, or create a space, you know, where you could sit and read a book. Or there would be four cushions where you would sit. Or a visual partition rather than just being, like, a decorative object that goes on the wall. But having said that, the gallery did make a decision to take one of them off the armature, and it was installed flat—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Ah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —on the wall. Even though it has an armature.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] Well, it felt like a different kind of work from you. And we talked about the influence of the Bauhaus, and how that's always been something for you, but I think we talked about how you've gone back to looking at that.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. And I mean, I think that the—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And De Stijl.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —when I discovered those movements, the early sort of Modernist movements in the early 1990s when my practice was just in its very formative years, I just remember being really, really excited by that work. And for whatever reason, I'm always excited by things that don't fit categories perfectly, and also things that feel a little underdoggy, underdoggyish. I don't know. And so, that merge of, like, functionalism and fine art always seemed like it was—I really liked how it was kind of high and low at the same time. So that's been part of—so, the funny

thing is, is like doing the show at Regen Projects actually felt like it was going back to my roots, because just the way that those shapes were constructed was very similar to how I constructed my early work, where I would start with a steel frame and just put panels on them, but the panels were metal. [00:05:59] And the more recent work, where they were wood in the past ones.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But the colors of the new work, I mean, I was really struck by how refined everything seemed to me. Like, every color choice, like, every little inch of textile pattern or whatever, it seemed so completely—I'm not surprised about the order or the control, but it seemed like there was a tremendous amount of visual refinement.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Is it the Rietveld house? I feel like there was a house that I spent a lot of time looking at trying to figure out why it felt so good. And, like, their formula was always, you know, white, gray, black, and then the three primaries, like, red, blue, and yellow. And so, based on that, I was working—all of the—each piece had black, white, gray in it somewhere. And then I would take one of the primaries, but then they were morphed a little bit. So, like, red became this coral color, and yellow became a sort of weird sharp gold color, and blue begins really beautiful, kind of rich blue. Wasn't like a normal blue. It was, like, kind of like an indigo blue. Yeah. So, I think I just spent a lot of time looking at things that I felt worked with multiple colors, that worked so well, trying to understand why. And even just like a simple gesture, like, throw in gray into, like, a bunch of other colors will just somehow catalyze those colors and then they all play off of each other so much better.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you also did these very, I thought, beautiful watercolors—gouaches, I suppose—of your color arrangements that were—like, the squares of color and the way they were divided and so forth—as separate entities to be shown. I guess, would you call them working studies for what you had made in three dimensions?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Pretty much. [00:08:00] Usually I start with a line drawing. Well, like, some of those were for weavings and then some of the watercolors started out as studies for weavings, and then I would paint them as a way of figuring out the actual final color sequence. So, I painted multiple ones for each shape to figure out what the colors would be in the weavings. And then, simultaneous to that body of work, I was also drawing all these really pared-down spaces that were made out of planes that resulted in the works down the hill, the *Planar Pavilions*. And then I just started working those into these more abstract—like, the small model-like sculptures that hung on the wall and other drawings. So, yeah. It's like—it's, yeah. Kind of this weird intense 2D practice, where things kind of keep rolling over and over into other things.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it had a sort of shocking kind of—I guess, let's see. It's just called *Andrea Zittel* at Regen Projects, but what did you call the new sculptures, the ones that we're talking about?

ANDREA ZITTEL: They're called *Planar Configurations*.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: *Planar Configurations*. That's what I was trying to remember. *Planar Configurations* at the gallery, and then *Planar Pavilions* out in the front of your house.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And the planar direction of this work, how recent is that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's actually from the early '90s. So, it's one of the first—one of the first things I started working with was this really simple plane, and then I'm interested in boundaries and divisions, and how a plane separates one side from the other. Or I talk about it as a reality field sometimes. And so, I started working with these and made some work that I was really happy with. And then, can—like, proceeded to spend, what? Like, the next 15 years, like, trying all these other things that—you know, how you—sometimes the thing you do first is like the thing that's most true. But I kept second-guessing it, and then I decided I just wanted to come back and start with that work and just use that as a springboard and continue on that path, because I had done so many experimentations that were so far from that. [00:10:06] It's been really nice to go back to that early thing, and—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it seems like a very concrete thing. And in a way, it's—[laughs]—I'm looking at Andrea's black cat Raven chewing on the microphone cord. No. Bad cat. So, in a way it's a good way for us to talk about something, about where we were before, which is, it's the mid-'90s. You've come out to the desert. You've bought your first project. Tell me

about the evolution from 1990, like—no. From 2000 to now, of A-to-Z West, because that's the 15—those are the years away from the planar, in a way. I mean, all the experimentation has gone into developing what A-to-Z West is. And, for the record, tell me what your vision for it was and what it's become.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay. And just, like, also to talk about leaving the planar shapes. I think that even started earlier in New York, because I did the *Raugh*. Well, actually, when I moved to Altadena I did a series of work called *Raugh*.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And it's R-A-U-G-H.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And we could come back to that later if we want, or we can—and, you know, even with the *Escape Vehicles* and the *Trailers*, and all these works that were kind of more about cultural phenomena.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I had sort of left the very simple formal shapes behind, maybe in 1995. But when I came to A-to-Z West, I knew that I definitely wanted to get more engaged in a local community. But I wanted it to be a community that I felt like I had something in common with culturally. So, I knew that wouldn't work in New York, because I was living in a neighborhood that was kind of in between a Polish neighborhood and a Latino neighborhood. And we were like the artists there. And I just—[00:11:59]—you know, it's like being a cultural tourist, or something. I knew, at best, I would be addressing somebody else's culture. And this is a culture where I feel very much at home, with my family coming from a region really close to here. So I moved back here because I wanted to be more involved in the community, not just in my practice. I wanted to see what it was like to be outside of the art world, and to see if contemporary art actually had a role when you removed it from the art world. And I wanted to make a site of experimentation for my work that I was completely in control of. And I could make pieces and just continue to evolve them as long as I needed to, rather than, you know, making them with a deadline of an exhibition and then just walking away from them, and, you know, whether they felt complete or not.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: And so, I think that the first challenge moving here was just living here. You know, so—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And for the record, describe what Joshua Tree was like when you first moved here, because it's become a bit more of a hipper and cooler place now.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. It was much smaller when I moved here, to Joshua Tree. So, the area is this long valley. And Joshua Tree is a very, very small kind of village that's sited between two larger towns. Yucca Valley's on the west, and that town tends to be—you know, like, they have large, big-box retail stores, and the main economy is probably construction, and, I don't know. And to the east is the Twentynine Palms military base. So, there's a larger town in Twentynine Palms, and it's primarily based around the Marine base. And Joshua Tree is small, and it's—at the time this wasn't so much the case, but now it's known as being a place where rock climbers and new age people come out. And it's become very trendy.

[00:14:00] Initially I rented a studio in Yucca Valley, and I made friends with people there. And they would always kind of tease me because I was working on my house in Joshua Tree. You know, and I put birch paneling on my walls. And they said, "Why are you spending all that money putting, like, birch on your walls? Your house is just in Joshua Tree." You know, like, they would say that really disparagingly because, yeah. Joshua Tree was considered like, sort of very, like, nothing. And part of the appeal, though, is because of that. It was incredibly affordable. So, yeah. And it was very quiet. And there weren't that many other contemporary artists. Jack Pierson moved out to Wonder Valley the same time I moved here, but we didn't realize that for a few years. And he was mostly in New York. He would come out here sometimes.

And there was a growing local art scene. Like, maybe the most interesting thing that was going on locally, was a mural painter named Chuck Caplinger had started a mural program in Twentynine Palms, which is really nice. But, you know, it wasn't the same kind of art that I do. And a kind of side effect of that was that I spent a lot of time thinking about this term that we call art, and how different it is, like, how many different art worlds there are. When you live in New York you think there's one art world, maybe two. And when you come out here and you

meet other people who are artists, like, what we're doing is completely different. It's hard to even call it the same name. And thinking about—you know, I think that for most people outside of, like, our sort of very insular contemporary art scene, like, for most people art is a form of self-expression. And it's so funny, because that's the last thing any of us would claim to be doing, you know. We would consider our work to be critical, or discursive, or—so—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But having been out here for a while, do you now not think of your work as self-expression?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't really think of my work as self-expression. [00:16:01] Although—yeah, it's funny. I don't necessarily—it's more like problem solving. But I don't know that I'm expressing some deep inner part of me. It's more—if I am, it's more like I'm expressing the part of myself that is a specimen of our culture that I'm trying to talk about. And I would be pretty sure in saying that, like, a lot of my friends who are local artists would definitely not say that. They are expressing some deeper inner part of themselves.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: As in the kind of art where it's, like, this feels like the right thing to do, but there isn't really a critical background for it? Is that what you mean?

ANDREA ZITTEL: You mean, the way they—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Other people. Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —yeah. I mean, in this community, the word creativity is like a really important word, and it gets sort of thrown around a lot. And I don't know why, but I really cringe when I hear the word creative, because I don't know what that means. But, yeah. But that's something that stands to be, like, teased apart some more at some point in the future.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, and while we're in this discussion, are you interested in the boundaries between what is considered, like, tasteful and untasteful? What is craft and what is art? What is handmade and what is machine-produced? What do you think of those, you know, descriptions and those boundaries?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I've said I'm interested in any kind of division or boundary. Like, you know, back to the order thing. I'm always interested in that. And, yeah. Like, how do you make those boundaries? What do they mean? But with art, it's the most baffling one, because, you know, everybody thinks that they know what art is, but the minute you look at it, it just falls apart. And so, trying to explain to somebody who's an artist here, in this community, like, what I do and how it's different from what they do, is so hard in a way that doesn't—[00:18:06]—I don't want to create hierarchies, or sort of value judgments. I think that these are all equally valid. They're just different things. It's how do you explain that? And I think that a lot of times it's just a problem of linguistics. I think we don't have enough words to explain what we do. And you can say Conceptual art to somebody. I mean, in my mind, I hesitate to use Conceptual art, because I think that has a definition that's more narrow than the way one would use it, simply to get off the hook. But also, the minute you say Conceptual art, you create a division between, you know—all of a sudden Conceptual art to somebody who isn't trained in contemporary art, I mean, this is something you're not going to understand, because it's conceptual. So, yeah. I think language is something that stands to be examined when we talk about art.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And when you're working in something that's craft-based, like weaving, crochet, ceramics, even clothing I suppose, those—are those decisions—I mean, I know they're about controlling your life, or way of living, but aren't those decisions even more challenging, in a way, because those are areas of operation that are just kind of not accepted for the most part in a contemporary fine art hierarchy?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think it's changing a little bit. I think that when I made my work it seemed more challenging. I was interested in creating design as art, simply because I knew people didn't think that design could be art. But when I looked at contemporary design in the early 1990s, I felt like it was as conceptual as a lot of things that contemporary artists were doing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Can you give me an example?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay, so, off the top of my head, I would just come up with Martin Margiela, who's a fashion designer. [00:20:04] But, you know, working directly within mainstream sort of high fashion. But he did this line of clothing—well, instead of—he sort of basically questioned the way that fashion is like a new—like, fashion every year—by repeating certain years, but then

doing them all in gray, I believe. And then he would print the—you know, so—or he would take second-hand garments and cut them up, and then sew them back together again, like, two different garments together.

So, you know, and I even like the deconstructivists, the Belgian—like, they were all—I felt like there was some really interesting stuff going on. And so, I guess I—that was exciting to me. It was like claiming that art—that design could be as conceptual as contemporary art, maybe seen in a similar line. What's happened since then, is that now I feel like people do, they've kind of accepted my proposal, and they're like, "Okay. Design and art are almost the same thing."

But if anything, I see design [now, as -AZ] being way less conceptual and more, you know, about good taste. And I think that art also is. So, in a way it's kind of dumbing both down. Although I don't know why that's happened. So that's super annoying. Oh, there's a coyote right behind you. That's so funny. It's behind the rocks.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I'm surprised your dogs—

ANDREA ZITTEL: If they see it they'll start barking. Hopefully they won't see it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, within that context, your jumping off point of applying almost all of those ideas here to what you've developed at A-to-Z West—so you've built the house. You've built the studio. First of all, we can go into this in some detail, but it's been covered a lot. But you came out, and you started with the house, and then you moved into the storage—they're not called storage, but the shipping containers as your studio.

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:22:02] Right. Well, the first studio is the back patio behind the house. So, I had studios at a few points, but not for very long. And I always liked this idea that you could be an international contemporary artist and not have a big studio, which—since is impossible now that all the galleries have gotten big. But I wanted to show that I could do that. So, I liked the idea that I was, like, having a pretty decent career while working on my back patio under a shade structure. Then eventually I upgraded and made a studio out of these three shipping containers that are kind of a horseshoe configuration. And that worked. It was hard, because it gets very hot and very cold here. So, it's like completely impossible to work an eight-hour day in this climate under those circumstances, being outside all day. So, it really shortened our number of working hours.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But they're electrified, aren't they? Don't they have lighting?

ANDREA ZITTEL: They do, but in terms of heat or cooling, like, you know, it can be 116 here in the summer, and you're outside working. It's just really unbearable. And in the winter there's no way to stay warm, and it gets really cold. And it snows here sometimes. So, you know, the way they're set up is that my tools and the storage is inside, but you're working outside all day.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And, you know, you're trying to do finish work where you're sanding and polyurethaning, and then there's these little leaves from the mesquite trees falling in the—you know, it's just like—it's really annoying and it was also hard for my employees, like, the people who helped me. Because we could never work an eight-hour day, financially they could just never get ahead. So, it was just—it worked, but it really wasn't great at all. And then, like, the galleries slowly started showing when they all started getting bigger and bigger. And I remember I did a show for Sprueth Magers outside in that. [00:24:01] And it was so hard. And it was snowing that year. And we were trying to finish. You know, and we were using the plaster gauze. So, our hands were in water and it's freezing cold, and it sucked. And then it—yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So after that experiment, you decided to build a big studio. Tell me the story about the permitting for that studio because I thought it was very interesting out here about how you can make that work.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. So, yeah. Permitting's really tough out here. And the way I got that studio permitted was, it's literally permitted as a storage structure for a 600-square-foot cabin that's on the same parcel. And this is a 4,000-square-foot studio.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And that's still fine. That never got contested.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. Yeah. It's completely fine.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And so, anyone out here who wants to build anything, they have to build a storage facility to go with their shack. They can't get permitted to build a new house as easily.

ANDREA ZITTEL: If I wanted to build a studio on raw land I would have to build a house first. So, you know, with all of the, yeah, requirements of building a house. Or I could build a house that was also a studio, but it would have been much more expensive with all the requirements.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you've gotten your house, your studio, you've expanded. How does that correspond to the development of *High Desert Test Sites*?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. *High Desert Test Sites* happened pretty early on, like in the beginning. And it was just kind of this organic thing. I don't think we really knew what we were doing when we started it, but I had a show with Regen Projects that I was working on. And I kept just seeing there was so much land out here that was for sale, that was really affordable. And I felt like I was starting this kind of investigation, of what it would be like to insert contemporary art directly into a community. [00:26:00] And it just seemed like it would be fun to include other artists in that, and to see what they could do.

So, initially, I was just looking for one piece of land. My friend, John Connelly, who used to have a gallery in New York, he came out. And our friend, Andy Stillpass, who's a collector in Cincinnati, came out. And Andy was thinking about loaning me the money to buy a piece of land that we could do *High Desert Test Sites* on.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And had Andy already bought your living—one of your—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —your living, your containers, your *Living Unit*?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He had commissioned some furniture pieces and a uniform. So, I had done some work with Andy already, and he was buying my work, and a supporter.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And didn't he wear your uniform everywhere for a while?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Andy's great. He used to be a car salesman. His family had a dealership. I mean, he studied art history and he's very knowledgeable about art, but what he did for a living was sell cars. And so, he commissioned a personal uniform that he would wear every day when he went to the dealership to work.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] And he was very active in the beginning of *High Desert Test Sites*, was he not?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, what happened was that we found two pieces of land we wanted. And my piece that I wanted was, like, way in Wonder Valley, in the east end of it. And it was super cheap. It was, I don't know, like, 13,000 [dollars] or something.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: For how many acres?

ANDREA ZITTEL: For 40 acres.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: And Andy, the pieces of land that he thought we should get was a hundred acres for a hundred thousand dollars, way up in Pioneertown. So, I told him that I could afford that other piece of land. So I was just going to buy that. And then he said, well, he was going to buy the other piece of land and we could use it, but he would still own it. So then we ended up with two pieces of land. And then I ended up buying more later on. So, we had a bunch of pieces of land that we would let artists use. And because I had this show coming up at Regen Projects, Regen was really helpful. And so—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I think this is around 2004?

ANDREA ZITTEL: [00:28:00] Yeah. It might have been 2002.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: 2002. I'm sorry. 2002.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm not sure of that, though. [It was 2002 -AZ]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And so, now we have Andy Stillpass, and we have John Connelly involved. And Shaun Regen.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Shaun Regen steps in. Right. And so, we kind of did our first event in connection with my show at her space. And I had a project, *The Regenerating Field*, which is a piece here at A-to-Z West. That was, like, part of *HDTS*, and part of her show. And then—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And then how does—Lisa Anne Auerbach?

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, Lisa had been a good friend of mine. We met when I was doing the residency in Berlin. And we bonded and stayed in touch. And so, she was doing a lot of zines as her own practice. So, she came and did the zine for *HDTS*. And then, she just became such a strong voice that we realized that she really was the fifth organizer. So, in the future, when we made decisions she was always a part of that.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how did *HDT*—I can never say—*HDTS*, *High Desert Test Sites*—how did it end up evolving after 2002? Because it seems like it's gotten more active every year.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Maybe. That might be—well, okay. So—originally I—wanted to do it every, God, every six months, so it would never become too precious. And in the beginning, I wanted it just to be like open, like, anyone could do it. So—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, when you say do it, what do you have in mind?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Any artist could participate.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And all the other organizers fought me on that, but I usually get my way. So, I got my way. And it was kind of really open and we had a lot of artworks that were maybe a little sub-par. So, then I agreed that they were right, and I was wrong. So—[laughs]—after that, we met as a committee and chose artworks. We decided that every six months was insane. Slowly, we—like, it wasn't like we decided to do it every other year. It just gravitated into that model. [00:30:01] And, at first, everyone was pretty involved. Then slowly the other organizers got busy and kind of stepped out. I stayed the primary person running it. I funded it personally for a long time. Shaun would do things like pay for our mail announcements, before email existed. Andy would sometimes sponsor another—like, if we had sort of a special artist coming out, he would kind of bring them out and pay their flight and stuff. Or he, like, paid all the expenses when we showed Piotr Urlanski's *Summer of Love* film, which was really expensive, because it was a 35-millimeter film, and he had to rent a projector and a projectionist and everything.

So, and then, but slowly, like, as they stepped out, then I hired Aurora Tang to come in and help us. And Aurora was also working for the Center for Land Use Interpretation. And we had done a project of hers where she was working with these, like, air balloon photography. And so, Aurora actually did all the paperwork herself. And it took us several years, but we finally got non-profit status, which we thought would make it easier to fund raise, but maybe not necessarily so. We're still questioning that. It's just like a different can of worms.

And we're continually re-evaluating it because, yeah. I think the whole point of *High Desert Test Sites* was to show that you can do a lot with very little money. There was one year that we tried to hire people and, like, raise more money, and get bigger, and it was a disaster. So we found this model, right? Like, we actually didn't—we applied—we got a Warhol grant, which was amazing, but we didn't get our Warhol this year. So, I always said I would end it if we didn't get our Warhol.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh. Did you get one every year? [00:32:00] Or, how many—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, we got one that covered two years.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And then, you know, so, every so often I would re-evaluate. Is it worth it to keep doing it?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Are you continuing to self-fund, even though it's now non-profit?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. But, like, generating the money's really hard because, you know, by selling artwork, it's not so painful. But we're raising money in little bits and pieces, which is really time consuming. So, we have three major ways we earn money, by doing tours at A-to-Z West. We do, like, an artist edition once a year, and then we do these gem mineral, painted rock auctions, or sales. But they're all a lot of work for what they generate. They're fun, but it can be really overwhelming, and it does take away time and energy from my own practice.

But we've decided that we won't stop now, because we just got invited by the Hammer to do a pop-up, that I'm very excited about because I think it's going to be fun.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, tell me about the pop-up, and then I'm going to backtrack and talk about the tour. Actually, tell me about the Hammer, and then I want to talk about the tours.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I mean, the Hammer hasn't happened yet, so it's still all just like in the planning stages. But they have been doing pop-up shops in their gift shop. And I think this will be their fourth one. And so, one way that we generate income is that I go to Quartzsite, which is a big gem mineral show. And I go once a year and buy a ton of gems and minerals, and then we sell them. But that model's been hard. And so, the opportunity to sell those, and to sell our books, and to sell all of our stuff at the Hammer shop is just so great, because we don't need to man it. They'll man it. You know, everything's consigned, but we can still hopefully generate—I think we'll be able to generate what we need to make this year through their pop-up. I mean, it's just really nice. And I think it will bring more visibility to what we're doing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: The quartz and mineral. Do you alter the quartz and mineral rocks that you bring in?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Different ones?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, do you do something to them, or you just transport them?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, right. So, we do two things. [00:34:00] One is that I just buy straight-up gems and minerals. And then we also do a painted rock auction, where artists—we invite artists to alter them and then we sell those, as well. So, it's kind of like a two-part thing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, will they do the auction at the pop-up for you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: We're not sure. We might also turn it into, like, editions, because it's a little tricky doing an auction in a shop. So we're still talking about that, but it's going to be—like, HDTs will just be one small part of it. And then we'll have—I mean, a whole other conversation is I'm trying to make A-to-Z West financially self-sufficient. So, we're going to have A-to-Z West products there, and I'll be able to do a lot of stuff with friends and other people who I'm interested in.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: When you talk about your being very private, very introverted, and not thinking of your work as audience-oriented, but that is also—but you're here. And the tours that run through A-to-Z West are—like, people come and they wander through your—they come and look at your lifestyle. They look at you. How do you work out the balance between those two things?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. Well, the tours replaced another model that was less functional. So, okay. So, I basically decided I wanted to live my life as my art practice. So, like, make my art within the context of everyday life. So, I'm doing that. That's great. But the minute people found out about it, they wanted to see it, which is part of the whole idea, like, allowing people to see things in its original context. The problem is when you're private, like, how do you actually do that? And it became really invasive and problematic, because we would get more and more people emailing, asking to see A-to-Z West. And it's really hard if you're trying to work, or work in the studio, to have to stop every time a person wants to see it. So, the tours have been a really good compromise where we do a two-hour guided tour, and it's scripted, and I've written most of the script. Except for when they go off-script and, like, tell something that's overly personal. [Laughs.] [00:36:00] I don't know. I think there's sometimes funny stuff that people get

to add in.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, so you don't do the tours. Your people who work for you do the tours.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I clean.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Like, that's the worst part. I clean for, like, two days before the tours. And then I just go—I cram everything that won't—like, everything that doesn't have a place in my house is crammed in my car, in my truck. And then I just drive away while everyone drives up. And I go hide for two hours.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] That's hilarious.

ANDREA ZITTEL: You know, Vanessa or Elena, or—like Nora, yeah. But somebody will lead the tour. But I think it's the right balance, you know, because we do—I don't know. We do, like, six or seven of them a year right now. We might add more, just because it is a good income generator. So, it's a good way for people to actually see this. When they see it, they get the whole story. Like, the whole context is explained to them. And it's, you know, like, then we can kind of—don't have to field every single request to see things. Like, when we're trying to work we don't have to feel like we have to let everyone come in.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do you sell A-to-Z West souvenirs?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, okay. So, the other thing is, and we were talking about the market earlier. So, there's things been happening, and I'm realizing that it's kind of happening for other artists, too, but my sales really slowed down about four years ago. I don't know if it's that they're kind of getting more expensive, or like there's a glut in the art market, but for whatever reason my sales are slowing down a lot. And this place is really expensive to run.

So, we're trying to figure out other ways to make A-to-Z West more self-sufficient. And also, with the idea that if something happens to me some day, it would be really nice if this could all continue. And in order to do so it has to be supporting itself. So, and also what I was saying before about figuring out ways to experience the artworks without necessarily having to buy them. So, the two experiments were the Wonder Valley cabins, where people can book time to go stay in them, and they pay to go stay in them, but it's not a lot. [00:38:01] Or we started making these ceramic bowls, which I had been already making for myself anyway. And the ceramic bowls were kind of a surprise because we're selling them really well. Like, they're doing great, and—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what's the price range of ceramic bowls?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Out of the studio they're a little less expensive. So, when we do tours people can buy—I think out of the studio the cheapest one is—it might be 30 to 80 [dollars]. But if you buy them in a store it's going to be like anywhere between 40 and 110. There's, like, four sizes. So that's a little incentive for people to buy them from us. We get to keep 100 percent. But they're fun to make. I like them. So, the thing about the bowls—I don't know if I already—probably already said this—is that we eat—all eating and drinking functions at A-to-Z West happen in bowls. You know, I might give you a jar if you want.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] But now, who makes the bowls?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I started out making them, but now we've figured out a system. And so, we have—another way that we're kind of cutting expenses is we have work-trade residency programs. So, we have two work-trade residents at a time, and they stay here for about a month. And so, one of the things that they do is they make bowls.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And are their living expenses paid for while they're here?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. They just get free lodging. And in terms of food and stuff, they're kind of on their own. And they work 15 hours a week, in exchange for a week of being here.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And so, they're making—I presume they have to be trained as potters to throw ceramics on a wheel.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. Here's the thing is, I tried to learn how to throw ceramics, and it's—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: There's the coyote. They've all found the coyote. Just for the record, both dogs and the cats are very interested in the coyote out the back window.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Hopefully they'll settle down. I tried to learn to throw and it's really hard. Like, it's super fun, but, like, I could never make anything bigger than a four-inch dish. [00:40:00] And so, my friend who was teaching me, he said, "Well, you know, it's like, well, you're smart. You should just figure out some other way to make a bowl so you don't have to throw them." So that was—it was pretty straightforward once I got over wanting to throw. So, we have molds.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And we have a slab roller, so we make slabs and then we shape them over the mold. And, like, the ones that we've been making primarily, they're black clay, and they have like a burlap imprint on the outside, like a fabric pattern. And then the inside has this really like shiny, white, bubbly glaze. And now we're experimenting. Because of the Hammer shop, we're experimenting with a lot of other clays and glazes and stuff, too, which has been fun.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, this will be your E-ticket, I think. So, the tours happen and you're nowhere around to be—you're hiding away. And that is a question about how it's evolved. So, in the coming year, without the Warhol grant, do you think you'll be offering performances, or what do you think you'll be offering?

ANDREA ZITTEL: You mean to compensate for the lack of funds?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think we're just going to dial it down a little bit, frankly. I—between my own career and *High Desert Test Sites*, I've been pushing so hard for the last few years that I'm super burned out right now. So I think that we're going to just, like, dial it down and just kind of run it at a slightly slower pace, and just try and, yeah, just—I don't know. Try and recuperate a little bit. And then I can always grow again in the future. But I think it's unnecessary to try and do everything. Like, I wanted—you know, I don't need to do every idea that comes up.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, you talked about the teacher who told you that it was okay to be bored, that being bored was a good thing, back when you were in graduate—in school, in college. That you could take time to just sort of be—just have downtime. And it's regenerative.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. I don't even know if I get downtime in this situation. [00:42:00] It's just the pace isn't quite as frenetic. And the thing that's nice, too, is that there's more artists moving out here. So, we do have some really—some great programming that's just consistent, that doesn't cost a ton of money. Like, we have Sarah Witt, does a test kitchen, like an experimental potluck cooking group, where people cook with native ingredients that she organizes. We do that once a month. We have—Kip leads once a month, Desert Book Club.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Sarah Witt?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] W-I-T-T.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And the book club?

ANDREA ZITTEL: K-I-P F-J-E-L-D. And then, Linda Sibio is a really interesting artist who's lived out here for quite a while, who deals with mentally handicapped people. And she started performance workshops for artists that deal with a lot of the principles that she's developed. So we do have this—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: S-I-V-I-O?

ANDREA ZITTEL: —S-I-B-I-O. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: How does something like the development of *Desert X*, the new Palm Springs biennial, how does that—because you were kind of part of it, whether you wanted to be or not, somehow.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. So, I was really against *Desert X* when I first found out about it, because I just felt like the last thing we need is another biennial. And it kind of seemed like a desperate

stab for attention and legitimacy, and I was worried that they would not be able to do it well. And there's nothing worse than not doing something well. It's like, it's better to not do it at all. So, I was really annoyed. And they reached out to me to be in it, or to be involved in some way. And I didn't want to be involved. And then David Knauss, who is on our board for *High Desert Test Sites* and is a very trusted friend, and also on a lot—he's involved with the Palm Springs Museum and *Desert X*, I think, in some way. He kind of negotiated this nice idea where we would just open. We would do tours at A-to-Z West in connection with *Desert X*, because it makes no sense for me to go to Palm Springs and, like, do an artwork, because this is my artwork. [00:44:03] So it's like—and that felt good.

And I will say that the upside of it was that we got a lot of people who are real art people here, during *Desert X*. And that was really pleasurable. Like, it was really nice having an audience who knew a little bit more about art and, you know, kind of had an understanding coming through here. So, I'm not as anti-*Desert X* as I was before. I still think we don't really need another biennial, but, you know, I'm probably in the minority in thinking that.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it turned out to be quite successful. I don't know how they can—but we'll see what happens. It's hard to—and again, the funding—I mean, there are only so many funding sources. It just seems like there are so many demands. We'll see what happens.

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's true. And they have tons of money. And none of those people have ever given *High Desert Test Sites* any money.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I just feel also like they should support the home team. But I guess they're the new home team. But, anyway.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: A lot of artists are moving out here. There's no doubt about that. I mean, it seems like I'm always running into people in LA who are moving out here and getting second homes out here. It seems like it's a new—you may end up having to move out after all. You said you wanted to find some—go move some place that's even more remote than this.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. Well, so, like I said, I did a lot of shows. I was really tired. I did a road trip with my son last summer. And I've been really stressed about Andrea Rosen Gallery closing, because they were—they did sell my work much better than any other gallery that I worked with. And I don't—like financially, I'm worried about what that means. And it's just hard always worrying about how to keep this going financially because costs get higher and higher. Miraculously it keeps working, but I don't know how.

So, I guess last summer, I got—and also, I think a lot about legacy. [00:46:00] And I've always planned on this place being kind of like a foundation someday, and like really being something and running itself. I was very caught up in that. And I remember hitting this point where I realized that I could—I always as I call it, "cash out"—I could sell this and I could live the rest of my life off of that money. And I could make—I wouldn't have to show in galleries if I didn't want to. And I could make whatever I wanted. Like, I could really just live my art, if that's what I wanted. And that was very reassuring.

So, I came back and thought about it really seriously for a few months. I don't think it's what I want, but I like—I had never considered walking away before. Now I have. So now, the new plan is that possibly—sorry, this plan could change every year—but before, I wanted *High Desert Test Sites* to take over and run this, but I think it might be more realistic to partner with an institution someday. Like, to try and find a museum who would be interested in having this as an extension of their campus. And there's enough room here that they could do programming and leave my artwork intact, instead of roll it over in, yeah, to a museum someday. And that would free me up to be able to go live somewhere else more privately and do, you know, like, maybe a more experimental practice with less public.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You'll have to make a call in to the Palm Springs Art Museum—

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —while it's on its upswing. I mean, it seems like it's really stepped up. Well, they did a show of your—you donated that big piece to the—I guess it's to the museum. I'm not sure if it's to the Architecture and Design Museum, or the entire museum.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's the museum. Yeah. They just showed it there because it was a good, big space.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. Like, the Palm Springs Museum would probably be the most ideal, but I don't know if they do have the funds, because it is expensive. And then there's—yeah. Like, there's—maybe a museum in LA, or a really weird long-shot. [00:48:00] And I haven't broached this because I think I would have to—would be something like the curatorial program at Bard, or the [inaudible. Not sure? UCLA or Dia? We threw a lot of names around back then -AZ] Yeah. Because I know they do have other sites, I believe. And it would be really interesting for school because we have the facilities to have students. And there's enough room for them to do some programming. So, this is like my five-year plan, is to just sort of field those options and see if there's somebody I could start a small partnership with, that would grow in the future.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And you work with all these people around you. You work with your two assistants. You work with all the people who come in and do work-trade and stay here. If you didn't have any of those people, have you thought about how your art would change if you were just making your art just alone?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I'm not sure. I mean, I've made art alone.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I know.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And so, like, I even—I was working alone here probably 10 years ago, or maybe 11, you know, but I didn't have it—so I've gone through periods of being completely alone. In all honesty, I'm not sure what it would be like. I even thought maybe I would just, like, write. I don't know. Not like write a book, but I was thinking of writing as performance, like doing something as performance and then instead of documenting it, writing about it, the experience of it. I don't know.

I think bigger than being alone—so I've always had this kind of love-hate relationship with the gallery system. I mean, I love the galleries I show with, but I don't necessarily like doing gallery shows. So, I think a bigger change would be like, what if I didn't have to do gallery shows to survive? Like, I don't know. [Laughs.] Would I stay in my pajamas all day? I don't know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, we'll find out.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Maybe. Yeah. [00:50:00] I mean, you know, I guess the whole thing is a process of identifying possibilities, feeling them out to see if they're realistic. If they aren't, then, like, identifying new possibilities. So, you know, I've identified this possible future, but I haven't moved forward enough to see if it's realistic.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Speaking of museum support, do you feel like you've been supported enough by the museums in Los Angeles?

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's a—it's funny. I've never thought about that. I mean, I haven't ever thought about it in a negative way. I mean, I did—my survey show was at MOCA. Granted, they did charge my gallery a ton of money to do the show, which the gallery then took out of my sales.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: But I guess that happened to a lot of artists who showed there. So—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Your MOCA show was when?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It—oh, God. I don't even know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: A long time ago.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. It was a long time ago. It was that traveling survey show. Yeah. I don't know. I don't know that I feel like they have to, I don't know, support—yeah. I mean, I don't know that I feel that they owe me anything. And nobody's been against me, so that's nice.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I think there's just this sort of perception in the art world that what's happened is that, now that LA is so developed as a cultural center, that instead of doing what they used to do, which is to support their own artists, because they didn't have enough support, now they're not supporting the artists who live here very much. But maybe, I think your show preceded that.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And, I don't know. I mean, when you look at different cities that are interesting to live in, like, I would never pick a city that only showed itself, because you want to see what's going on in the outside world. So as an artist, I think I'm more excited by the idea of seeing work in LA that I wouldn't be able to see normally than I feel the need to have my work represented in a gallery—in a museum. If that makes sense.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I [00:52:03] It does make sense.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It does make sense.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Because I'm, like, always really excited when I get to see something that, you know, an artist who, I don't know, hasn't been shown in LA before.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, and LA has become such—as we said—an international hub of contemporary art compared to when you started, certainly.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: How much time do you spend back in New York at A-to-Z East?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. So, I have this teaching thing. I'm a visiting critic at Columbia and I go—I do four visits there a year, which is kind of—the pay's, like, so shitty. But the good thing about it is that it makes me go there four times a year. It kind of just forces that relationship. And I still have my place there, which I love. So ironically, when I need downtime or to be alone, I actually go to New York. And I have a week alone in my apartment, which is, like, really glorious.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's really funny.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I'm getting ready to go in February. And I know it's probably going to be super cold, but just, like, being in that apartment and just getting to relax a little is very exciting.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] Let me pause here for a second.

[END OF CARD TWO.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: This is Hunter Drohojowska-Philp interviewing Andrea Zittel at the artist's home and studio in Joshua Tree, California, on the 9th of January 2018, for the Archives of American Art Smithsonian Institution, card number three. And today, we're braving the elements, because it's pouring down rain, or it was this morning. It's taken a small break, and I noticed driving in here—I wanted to say that to get to—I was staying in Palm Springs, and you drive up Twentynine Palms Highway, Route 62. And as you come along the corner, you enter—go through Yucca Valley to get to Joshua Tree. Suddenly, you see Joshua trees. Like, you don't really see them elsewhere. I just really almost thought—it's right at the border of the Joshua tree area.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, I think it's the altitude.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Ah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, Palm Springs is a whole different ecosystem than Joshua Tree. It's the Colorado ecosystem, and then this is the Mojave ecosystem. So, when you come up the grade, you're going into, yeah, a different desert, literally.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And—but they're literally only 20 miles apart, if that.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, and even—so here, then when you go to Twentynine Palms, it's dropping down into the Colorado ecosystem again. So, Mojave has Mojave—sorry—has yucca

plants and Joshua trees, and the Colorado ecosystem has the ocotillos and the smoke trees but no yuccas, no Joshua trees.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And have you gotten more knowledgeable about this since you've been here?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean, where I grew up it was a little bit like this, too. We were—it was kind of like Joshua Tree. It was not quite as high but a similar topography, chaparral, not the same plants exactly, but I think I grew up always being aware of what was around. [00:02:06] And then, you know, I was spending time at my grandmother's ranch, too, that was on the same altitude as Palm Springs, not so far away from where—you know, Palm Springs, so I knew a lot about the plants that grow in the desert out there.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And when you were growing up at your grandparents' place, was the vista around you horizontal? Did you have that kind of horizontality that—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, so, it's a big agricultural valley, so, you know, basically you would just—it was fields, but you would see the mountains in the distance. And my grandmother was a painter, and out her studio window you—the mountains that you saw were in Mexico. One of them was Mount Signal, which she painted her whole life, and that's how I learned to paint, what she taught me, you know, in that studio, looking at that view, but we would—they had horses, so we would trailer the horses out to the desert a lot and go on these long desert rides, you know, into these really remote areas.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Would you be camping at all?

ANDREA ZITTEL: [Laughs.] We didn't sleep overnight, but she had saddlebags, and she would pack food, and we would have what she called weenie roasts. So, you know, it was, like, hot dogs and a can of beans, so she would just dig a hole, start a fire, and just had a little tiny grill that would fit in the saddlebag, and put the can of beans on that, and the hot dogs, and marshmallows. So, it was like a whole kit, and so we would eat lunch somewhere and then come back. And there was a tea that also grows here. It's Mormon Tea, and so we would pick that plant and bring it back, and make tea with it. And they would always give it to the kids, because they thought it didn't have caffeine in it. It was an alternative to black tea, but since moving here I've actually found out that it's ephedra, so—

[They laugh.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, so you actually sort of got very animated when you were out there.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, that explains a few things.

[They laugh.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Early—addicting your kids to speed very early in life. [00:04:00]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do you—this is the grandmother who was also German.

ANDREA ZITTEL: That was the other grandmother, so I had two. They were kind of the polar opposites.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I had the ranch grandmother whose family, parents, had come across the country. I think some of our relatives were in the Oklahoma land rush, but they were early, early pioneers, ranchers. My grandmother's parents lived in a tent in the Imperial Valley and ranched and settled, and then, so over at the western side, and they were farmers, and they had horses. And then, my dad's side, they were the German side, and they were chefs and—my grandmother could sew and, you know, do all the handwork. So really, completely opposite, but I spent time with both of them, and my grandfathers both died earlier on. So, it was really like these two sort of very strong women who had completely different skill sets, and I kind of got passed back and forth between them while I was growing up.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you wound up with both skill sets. You wound up—

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know. [Laughs.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —with the ranching skill set and the domestic ability to do—work with your hands.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah—the only thing I didn't end up with was the ability to cook well, but everything else, yes. [Laughs.] My German grandma was a really good cook.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you're—but you've been cooking more, as I understand it.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm working on it. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it's—the only reason I would be—I was surprised yesterday, because I don't know where you would get takeout from around here.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, you know, there's Castañeda's. There's a Mexican drive-thru in town, and Natural Sisters. There's some takeout. It's just, like—now that Joshua Tree is getting more populated, the healthy takeout, the line is just so long. It's not even worth it, so it's forcing me to cook more.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, going back to your fantastic ranching and horseback riding childhood, I mean, how old—how long were you able to do that in your youth, and how old were you when you stopped doing it? [00:06:08]

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think, I mean, my whole time growing up, because when I was really young my mom and my grandma—my mom was—she was a really good rider, and she did gymkhana, so they would go riding, and I would be behind somebody. And then, I learned to ride by myself, and my grandmother told me that one of her horses was my horse. And, of course, it was the horse that always bucked me off. [Laughs.] Dusty was my horse. And then, after that, Tanglefoot was my horse. So, you know, I would—I just—I rode the whole time, and then, I guess when I went to college—and then, you know, I was so troubled in high school, and my parents were just really fed up with me. And I felt like my grandmothers didn't get as sick of me. They were still pretty nurturing, so I think that strengthened my relationships with both of them. And then, in college, I went to San Diego State, which wasn't so far from my grandma, although that was the time when she started to decline, in college, but, you know, kind of up until then.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So that was—that's obviously—they're both really strong relationships with you. And are both of your parents still alive?

ANDREA ZITTEL: They are, and they live here now.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: In Joshua Tree?

ANDREA ZITTEL: In Joshua Tree, yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And you said your mother is getting some memory—

ANDREA ZITTEL: She has Alzheimer's, yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —for sure she has Alzheimer's?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, it's—her memory is pretty far gone.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how about your father? Is he taking care of her?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He is. Yeah, it's an interesting time right now because he's sort of the sole caretaker, but it's right at the edge of his ability. And he's fit and in good health, but, you know, I think the next few years will be interesting.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And how old are they approximately?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think my dad is 80, and my mom is probably a year or two younger. [00:08:00]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And then, as you've gone through your life together, do you feel closer to them now than you did when you were growing up?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, because—well, I mean, you know, so much of this is about the generation that I was. Yeah, I mean, first of all, I don't think my mom wanted to have kids. You know, she had to because she was that generation, and that was the expectation, and I think I knew that growing up. And they both worked. I think working for women at that time was kind of new, and I think it was a challenge. My dad was—you know, he—they split the housework and everything, but they just never paid that much attention to us, you know. I look at myself or my peers when we have kids. It's so different now. And then, you know, so I rebelled and really dropped out of contact with them completely for quite a while, and then the funny—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Would that be when you were in San Diego or when you were at Rhode Island?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, it started in high school.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: When you moved away in high school?

ANDREA ZITTEL: My last year of high school and then sort of continued where I had a little bit of a relationship with them, but not much, and then I went back east. And it just—you know, we became more and more distant. Yeah, I mean, I have a lot of anger, but I have no idea why, or I did, which got resolved later on. And then, the really—my parents both decided to retire early at 55, and they decided to cruise around the world on a 31-foot sailboat. So, they took off in their boat, which was—secretly, I was really upset about it because I felt like I was supposed to leave them. They weren't supposed to leave me. I don't think I ever told them that. So, they were cruising on their boat for a really long time.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: How long were you—how old were you when this happened?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I was living in New York when they took off, so, I don't know. [00:10:03] I was somewhere between 20 and 30. I can't even remember exactly. And then, after I had my son, they finally decided to come back. They were getting older. They had had a couple of things happen when they were out there, and they just—you know what I mean? They felt like—I think they just felt like maybe it was time to be closer to home because of my son, and because they were getting a little bit older, so then they moved here to Joshua Tree when they came back.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And then, are they involved in caring for Emmett?

ANDREA ZITTEL: They helped a little bit. Yeah, you know, like—yeah, not—there was a moderate amount of help. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And they—and I wanted to backtrack a little bit to the ranching background, because I thought—did you know about Ed Ruscha's work and his relationship to the West when you first started coming out here?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. Well, I always—I knew about his work, and I've always loved his work. I didn't know right away that he had this large holding up in Pioneertown and learned that later on. So, he was always a—someone I knew about, and a presence, but I never got to know him directly.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: At first.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. Yeah, I mean, I've been introduced to him. I've met him, but I don't really know him still.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I think he's very private up here, and he's—if I understand correctly, he's also sort of pieced together his holdings over the years.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, and I think he's still—from what I understand through the grapevine and the community, he's still buying parcels. I mean, I think he has a lot of land up in Pioneertown, and somebody said that he even has some land down in the town of Joshua Tree, which is interesting.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I don't—I know he's very private about it, but it certainly has been a way of preserving—

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —the last little vestige of the kind of landscape he really adores.

[00:12:03]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, it's huge. I mean, it's amazing that he's doing that. Up in the community in Pioneertown where he is, there's Jerry Sohn, him, and the Radziners—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yes.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —who are all buying a lot of land, but I think Ed probably is buying the most.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I was going to ask you if you knew the Radziners as well.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean, I know them a—I've met them. I know them a little bit, and I—it was so funny, because it's—sorry.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: No, you—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Just push her off the chair. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: She's an—

ANDREA ZITTEL: She's got claws.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: This little black cat is attacking me from the rear now. She's up my leg, over the back—

ANDREA ZITTEL: [Inaudible.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —in the handbag. [Laughs.] I'm sorry.

ANDREA ZITTEL: [Inaudible]—the dog.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It's fine. So, Ron and Robin Radziner, yeah, it's interesting how—on the way up here, I was—drove by a sign that said "Homestead Modern."

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, right. [Laughs.] We were all talking about that when that went in.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You were? I thought, "This sounds like something that you invented."

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. Well, that sign went up, and we're all like, "What is it?" Because even the typeface, you know, is, like—yeah, it's—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Very modern?

ANDREA ZITTEL: —yeah, it was indicative of the—I might—she's really—if she does this one more time, I'm going to go stick her in the kennel. Yeah, we were trying—we were speculating about what it was, you know, because it's—the typeface and everything is—it's not—you know, Yucca Valley is kind of funky still, and—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Right.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —yeah, it's definitely kind of incongruous in that spot.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, we don't know what it is yet.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know exactly. I feel like somebody mentioned it, and I can't remember. It came up in conversation where maybe it was explained, but I can't remember now. But there are four of these, you know, kind of lifestyle shops now. There's High Desert Home, and Shop on the Mesa, and another one I can't remember, and All Roads, that are all kind of LA-style. Okay, I'm going to—that's the dog. [00:14:02]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] They're all following you out here.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But there's something to be said about—I wanted to talk about this, in a way, because I think all of these people really have an appreciation of the West, and even the West as an idea. Certainly, Ruscha does, so let's just stay with that for a moment,

because—you know, Doug Aitken does. I mean, there are artists who really—Walter Cotten, the man you started with—this idea of really making art about the idea of the West as much as the actual West—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —does that factor in for you? Is that something that—

ANDREA ZITTEL: The West.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —for you, yeah, the idea of being—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —making art that's specifically of the West?

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's a good—that's a really good question, because I think about that a lot. I might speak around that question.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: One of the things that I try not to do is—there's—actually, what I see with this wave, the wave of things that we were talking about before you mentioned these artists, is I think that there's a lot of people who move here with this romanticized notion of the West, and a lot of people who try and kind of take ownership over this. And I'm sure I was like that when I first moved here as well, and seeing other people do it gives me a funny feeling in the pit of my stomach, and it's sort of kind of helped me not do it, where there's a kind of romanticization of the West that's in denial of, like—it's a very—it's a place of a lot of light and a lot of darkness. And there's—I think there's kind of a blind eye toward the darkness, you know, the fact that there are these massive military complexes here. It's a place of great, like, economic and social inequality. It's very conservative. There's—the main economy here when I moved here was crystal meth. [00:16:02] You know, there's all this stuff here, and it's also where people come to do things where they won't be seen doing them, you know? So, it's—anyway, when I think about the—I guess what I would like to do, I think that my work is very American, very Californian. I think a lot about the idea of the frontier, but what I don't want to do is say that this is the frontier, because I actually don't think it is.

You know, I think that frontiers now exist, and they're more conditional. They're not geographical. So possibly this was a frontier when I moved here, just simply because it was cheap. You know, I think there are all these conditions that create a kind of frontier situation, but it's not geographical, and it's not the West, per se. And just to continue that a little bit, too, so, living here—maybe this was something I've become overly sensitized to, but I see a lot of institutions and people who are in these parts of the Southwest kind of glomming onto the identity, the desert identity. And I was just thinking about *Desert X* the other day. Oh, when we were talking about it, I was thinking afterward, "You know, maybe it could be something good, but I wish the name 'desert' wasn't in—or the word 'desert' wasn't in the name." I think it's really shortsighted to glom onto this identity of desert rather than thinking about the larger—the conditions that are here, you know. What are the conditions of being in this region? Rapid growth, you know, you have a lot of space, but you also have, like, quick growth. I thought—I don't even know if Elmgreen and Dragset knew how brilliant *Prada Marfa* was. I don't—I think it was more of an art world joke, but seeing all of the outlet, the retail and the outlet and the way that the desert becomes this kind of almost pedestal for these really bizarre retail experiences, you know, when I saw that piece for the first time, I just thought it was so brilliant in a way that maybe they hadn't fully intended. [00:18:09] Anyway—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: No, you're—and I want to take that and continue to ask how much of your own work here addresses environmental concerns.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, there's—environment could mean, like, landscape or—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Ecological.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —ecological. As an artist, I'm really reluctant to make value statements. So, in terms—I live in a way that is—that feels environmentally sound to the greatest extent that I can, you know, but it's not part of my artwork, and I would probably not make it part of my artwork.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, when you think of yourself as having a sustainable life, quote-unquote, that's like the—that's code these days for what every sort of upwardly-mobile family seems to be—wants to aspire to, to save the world, you know, on the Western—in the Western world.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, there are two really separate parts. So, when you say sustainable life, like, the first part—so when we're talking about sustainable in environmental terms, I am highly aware that living in a rural place like this, not being a farmer, not doing agriculture other than my small garden, is a highly unsustainable lifestyle. It's far more sustainable to live in an urban environment like New York where there's public transportation, where you have a small footprint, you know, where everything—and I think that's the thing that makes me a little crazy living out here, is that this gets thrown around by all these people who move to the desert. And, you know—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oops.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —I drive a truck because I need it for work, and it has terrible gas mileage. And I drive really long distances in it. It's not—so I think that we at least have to be aware of the hypocrisy of what we're doing. [00:20:04] I think I'm aware of it, but I do talk about sustainability a lot in terms of economic sustainability. So, it's a luxury to live here. I'm very grateful for it. It's an awareness of the toll, you know, so I try and sort of counteract that in some ways by not needing a lot of things, and not building too—you know. The two cabins I'm working on now are both 200 square feet, but—so, economic sustainability is a whole different animal, and it's not environmental. You know, so I use that word a lot when I talk about making A-to-Z West self-sustaining, and it has more to do with sustainable in terms of, "This is an organism that can self-perpetuate without needing a lot from the outside," you know, without needing gallery sales, potentially, in a perfect world, without needing funding, grant funding or, you know, donations. So that's, you know, two really different animals.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it's a very sophisticated answer, really, because I do think these words and these ideas get pushed around. And I always think of Santa Fe as a model of a community where people have just completely adopted this idea of what an Old West town might—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —have been at some point, which is—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Styrofoam houses.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —which is just, you know, completely—and it's very much what you were discussing in the not-so-positive way. But while we're on sustainability, could we talk a little bit about Arcosanti, and how Paolo Soleri's work may or may not have had an impact on you?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Sure. I mean, I looked—especially because I'm in the Southwest, I looked a lot at Taliesin West and at Arcosanti, and they're so close to each other that, you know, I've made repeat visits to both of them and spent a lot of time kind of examining them and learning what I could from them, and to some extent Marfa as well. [00:22:10] So, I mean, Paolo Soleri, I always imagine him more as an artist than an architect. He had this grand vision for this—and it's also interesting that he was reacting against the Frank Lloyd Wright, what was it, the Broadacre City, right, where—Frank Lloyd Wright's vision of where—how much land would you—anyway, what equated to suburban sprawl. So, there would be all these parcels spread out, and everybody would have their piece of land. So, Paolo Soleri wanted everyone to live in this very condensed city organism in the middle of the open desert, started building it. It didn't work. It failed, and yet he kept doing it, and I think it's maxed out at, like, 60 residents, right? And when—I think one of the problems they've run into is difficulty processing the human waste.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, I'm sure.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, there are all these technical—these very logistical, practical problems they've had in making it work, so it works on a very, very small scale of what he wanted. I think it's amazing. I bring my students there, and sometimes the students get really upset because it doesn't do what it's supposed to do. But I think—maybe because I grew up reading science fiction, I think it's great that it doesn't do what it's meant to do.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What do you mean by that?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, like, it will never house 4,000, 5,000—it will never house the number—it will never be finished. It'll never house the number of people he wants it to house. Even if it did, I don't think it would be a psychologically healthy environment for people to live in, so they get really upset because they feel like it's a fraud.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh. It's also sort of perpetually falling apart. I mean, it doesn't look—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —it doesn't look like the city of the—it looks like the city of the future that's already completely fallen apart.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I got a little depressed the last time I went, because it looks like it's falling apart even more, but I know that they're—with his passing, I know that they're sort of ramping it—now, they actually have free rein to do what they want with it, which is—and so they're doing large—more programming and things that, I assume, are bringing in more money. [00:24:17] So I'm going to back up just a little bit, though, because—so when I look at these models, I was trying to figure out—I was trying to figure out how A-to-Z West should function. So, you look at Taliesin West, and my criticism of how it's wound up now is that I don't think that Paolo Soleri had a strong enough hand in it as he became older. And when you go there, it kind of feels like a weird dorm. It feels very slapdash with weird, random bits of furniture, and nothing is taken care of that well. And it's nice that when people live in these spaces they can make them their own, but even—I feel like the café is a good example, when you go in a café, and there's just a lot of crap kind of piled everywhere that's not—it's just not organized that well. I feel like it's lacking love, and maybe people love it, but you don't feel that love when you go into it. You feel like it's just a place where people are, and they use it, but they don't give back to it completely. So, that's one thing. So maybe not enough—I always attributed that to not strong enough leadership.

Then, you go to Taliesin West, which you can kind of divide into two parts. There's the sort of fossilized remains of Frank Lloyd Wright's living—you know, the structures that he built and that they used. And to do that, you do a tour with somebody who was a fellow under Frank Lloyd Wright, but then it's—there's—the lack of criticality in talking—because, I mean, his practice was also problematic, but in a way that's interesting. But the lack of criticality in these tours, the kind of reverence, was—I found that difficult. [00:26:00] But the part I really, really liked was the school, the school of architecture. And I did a talk there several years ago, so I got to come back several times. So, they have that program where the students will build the shelters in the desert. To me, that part is the most alive and felt really active, and it felt like people were invested in it. I know it also had some problems, but to me that was the most exciting thing. So, in looking at that, and thinking about A-to-Z West, it's one of the impetuses to start *High Desert Test Sites* and, I think, a long-term vision for this place not just as a museum for what I've done but as this organism that people could build on and use, you know, to kind of develop other artists' practices as well. That's a really long answer.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I think that's really, really an incredible answer, and my understanding of both Taliesin West and Arcosanti is that they—I mean, Soleri followed Wright's example by using interns who would pay to study as a way of supporting—financially supporting the operation.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you don't have interns who pay, do you, or do they?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. And if you read a little bit about how that worked under Frank Lloyd Wright, it was highly problematic. He never—he did not nurture his students. If anything, he oppressed them and kept them down, so they would continue to pay and continue to work for him, so that's definitely not the energy that I want for this place. So, I think that our work-trade arrangement is a really fair one where, you know, we have people who help us, but they have four days a week that are completely their own time. Yeah, and so it's interesting, because when we did the *Wagon Station* encampment originally, it was free, and there was a point where I felt like it was too far in the opposite direction, where I kind of secretly felt angry all the time, because I felt like I was slaving, literally, working so hard to pay for this thing so that these other people could have this wonderful experience here that I never got to have. [00:28:13] And I felt really—it was

really difficult, and then we started to charge them a little bit of money so at least I wasn't paying for everything myself. Now, that's been closed down. I don't know if—the county closed that down.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I don't think we talked about that. Tell me about that.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. So, somebody turned me in last spring. We never pulled permits to do it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Sorry.

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's fine. I kind of hoped that I was okay, exempt from needing permits, because according to my understanding of building and safety code the *Wagon Stations* are small enough to kind of fit through those cracks. They don't really—you don't need a permit to do them.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And are they—they're not—are they built into the ground, or can they be moved?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No, they can pick them up and carry them.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: They're portable. They're mobile. Right.

ANDREA ZITTEL: They're portable.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It's more like an RV situation.

ANDREA ZITTEL: They're temporary. They're five feet by seven feet.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, they're more like an RV than a house.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Even tinier than—they're like a hard tent. But, you know, I knew that it was questionable, you know, and the way—to do anything here, if I had asked for permits it would have been impossible, so you just do things here. And I've been here for 18 years now, and that's the way it's been, but somebody turned me in. And then, it turns out that it's not an issue with building and safety, it's an issue with planning, which I didn't even know about, the planning department in the county. It's a very big county, so they're in San Bernardino, which is a ways from here. So, I went to a planning meeting, and they decided that I needed a permit to do a campground, basically a commercial campground. And the requirements to do that are, I mean, financially unattainable. It would be, like, 500,000 to a million dollars to do what they want, and it would alter the landscape of this place completely. [00:30:01] I mean, it would be like paved roads and big areas for fire trucks to turn around, so I just walked away from it and decided to shut it down for now. And we're just fielding our options to see—I'm okay leaving it shut down for now, and we're trying to get permits to keep it as a sculpture installation. I think that's going to work out, but for the long-term vision, if I ever were to hand this over to an institution, I think it would be really nice for them to be able to offer residencies to students, or to, you know—to pick that up again. So that's what we're working on right now, is seeing if we can somehow work out an agreement with them, with the county.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, all the *Wagons* are still there?

ANDREA ZITTEL: They're there. Everything is still the way it was. It's a little—getting a little run down, because when people stayed there, you know, that was the impetus to get down, and we would do, like, heavy cleaning twice a week. So that bothers me a little bit that things aren't as well taken care of as they were before.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Now, when you did the *Lay of the Land* exhibition at—in Stockholm, I read the catalogue before the show had actually happened. But didn't a lot of your *Living Units* from here go there, or have I misunderstood?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, so there were two generations of *Wagon Stations*.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Right.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And the first ones, when I first started doing A-to-Z West, it was a very intimate community that would come out here, and just friends, people I knew. So, I ended up giving each person who would come here their own *Wagon Station*, so they would stay in the same one each time. And then, I gave them permission to alter them or customize them, so people customized

them, pretty extreme customizations. And that was great, and it was really fun, and we would sometimes open them to the public through *High Desert Test Sites*. But then, after about five years, they started to deteriorate. A lot of the things that people did to them didn't hold up that well in the elements, and I knew I needed to get them out of the desert. [00:32:03] So when I did the exhibition at Magasin III, we removed them all from the desert, shipped them to Sweden, and installed them. When they came back, they all went into storage. I believe that they bought two of the units, and I used the money from that sale to remake a new set of *Wagon Stations* that were just stock, and then those are the ones that we've done the residencies in.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, there are five there now?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Now 12.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Twelve? Wow, so it's a lot.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Yeah, we built maybe seven, I think, with the money from Magasin III. And then, whenever I had a little more money, I would build a few more, so 12 was my end goal, and we've met that now.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Are you—just out of curiosity, are you allowed to have people stay there if you don't charge them?

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's what we're looking into. So, we—fortunately, I'm really lucky that I have Vanessa working in the studio because I get—bureaucracy really freaks me out, and I can't deal with it. And my thing is—impulse is just to run and hide and to not talk to people. And she's really good at it, so she's gotten involved in the Cultural Arts Commission with the county. It's an organization that's talking about arts, and how to nurture arts out here. And after getting involved with them, she started saying, "Well, you know, the person I work for has this issue," and they didn't know. They were actually really surprised, and so now they're helping us. It's one of the things that's come up in discussions with them, is that maybe if we don't charge we could change the zoning. But the County Planning I would never talk to. Planning had no interest in helping me do it, so it's only because I have this other group now.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what is Vanessa's last name?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Zendajas, Z-E-N-D-A-J-A-S.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Because I've emailed her many times, but it's always just Vanessa. [00:34:00]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] Now, science fiction, you talked about reading a lot of science fiction, which I wanted to explore further with you because I was going to ask you that. What do you read, because you're quite articulate, and I thought—did you when you were growing up read science fiction, or do you still?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I went through a huge—do you remember in the '80s how everyone was into cyberpunk?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: That was, like—I was so into it then and William Gibson and Neal Stephenson. So, I read a lot of science fiction in the '80s and '90s, I guess '90s mostly. Every so often now I'll read sci-fi, but I read less fiction, but Kip's Desert Book Club for *High Desert Test Site* kind of got me going on fiction again. That was really great. I'll go through a few years of really good fiction, like, you know, where you just get caught in a chain of books, and they're so amazing, and it's great. So, two years ago it was kind of like that, and then, I mean, like, this is my two—you know, we're sitting in my kitchen, and on my right, I have a shelf of all the books I'm trying to get to right now.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's not very many.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, that's the—yeah, and then I keep changing, so these are the ones up next.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I was going to say, I feel like my whole office is like that. I feel

like I have a whole room just stacked with books I'm meant to be reading.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But I would think if you were out here you would just sit down at night and read, read, but you probably have a lot to do.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I have a lot to do. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is it—is this kind of sustainable life—is it relaxing, ever?

ANDREA ZITTEL: The thing is, I've taken on so much, so—I have my own art practice. I have A-to-Z West, which is this whole compound, which has all of its own stuff going on. I have *High Desert Test Sites*. I have my son, you know, and then all the animals and my personal—you know, all the stuff I get caught up in when I'm—so, it's like I think I've stacked everything so high, and my mind is always racing with, "What do I need to be doing now?" [00:36:08] So it's not relaxing, but this is—at this point in my life, it's a real theme to learn how to slow down, and I think it's working a little bit. It feels like it is. So, I don't have that much time to read. I read mostly early in the morning. If I wake up early enough, I can make some tea and read for 30 or 40 minutes, and I read weird New Age books when I go to bed because I'm more tired then, and I'm not going to retain as much. So, I've been reading *Seth Speaks* a bunch for the last few months.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What is it called?

ANDREA ZITTEL: *Seth Speaks*. It's—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, *Seth Speaks*. Yes.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Do you remember when Jane Roberts was channeling in the '60s? She channeled this entity named Seth, and it's—people kept mentioning it to me, and I never read it, and I'm finally reading it. It's mind-blowing. It's amazing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is it?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's super fun. Yeah, it's really interesting, and basically this entity Seth just lays it all out, like, "This is how it is," in terms of why we're here and past lives. And it's pretty cool. So, I read that at night because it's really—it's easy to read if you're tired, and kind of fun.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And they also have—I mean, there's a long mystic tradition in the West, and I wanted to ask you about that, too, because a lot of people come to the Joshua Tree area and its environs, including some of the people who live in little shacks or trailers or whatever, out of kind of like a—almost a mystical belief that there's a spiritual power, a healing power to the land here.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know. A lot of people say that, and I don't know. You know, I don't know. I mean, I feel good here, but I don't know if that's—I mean, I wonder about that. You know, some people talk about there being vortexes, because the ley lines—supposedly, those 14 vortexes at the Institute of Mentalphysics. [00:38:05] The Integratron was supposedly built where three underground rivers cross, and supposedly the energy there is comparable to the Great Pyramid in Egypt.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: How far are you from the Integratron?

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's, like, a 30-minute drive, so I'm not super close, but—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You're pretty close.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, we're in the same neighborhood, you know, same general area. And then, there's somebody else who talks about—so, the rocks behind my house that go back toward the park, these are really, really ancient rocks, and everything to the north of us is much newer. So geologically, these are really, really old, and the decomposed granite, there's a person who lives here who talks about it as being some sort of—oh, man, I can't remember—a kind of crystalline structure, and he thinks that's why this place is special. So, I love listening to all of this stuff, but I don't—you know, I don't know what I think of it. I just like thinking about it.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You're not—do you consider yourself a true believer in the mystical—do you have a mystical streak yourself?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm interested in it. What do I believe? I don't know. I think I kind of believe that everything can be attributed to human consciousness. I think everything around us is an invention of our consciousness. I don't know if any of this is real, so if that's true, why not? You know? I mean, I think all—I think that mysticism is just a way of channeling consciousness, so I think that any of those modalities can be true and are true, but I think for me the healthiest thing is—lies more along—because I read about magic and witchcraft—I read about all that stuff. I'm not really interested in practicing it. I just like thinking about it. [00:40:00] But I am personally more interested in something more akin to, like, Buddhist principles of just, you know—I don't know—non-duality, and just learning to let go of everything.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, they have—this whole area, you know, one thing that's interesting about this area that we talked about briefly is also that, unlike—well, I guess it's not unlike. I was going to say it's also kind of like the funky West. I mean, as you said, it's, like, all around here, are—it's all—it's a bit of an outsider culture.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It is.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: This part of the—this particular part of the Southwest has a—and you're right, trailer parks, meth addicts, lots of crystal meth addicts that we—I mean, that's just become a thing in this Desert Hot Springs area, and for whatever reason. And does that sort of outsider-ness—is that something you ever think about?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I love that. And, you know, going back to that frontier thing, I mean, where else—a two-hour drive from LA, you can buy a house from \$35,000, a house-house. It's—you know, I think that's why all these people come here, because you can live here. You have a lot of privacy. You can kind of do what you want. It's a pretty diverse community, not diverse racially, unfortunately, but diverse in other ways. Yeah, so I think that that funkiness of the desert is the one thing that truly, deeply appeals to me.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you like the fact that driving up, instead of pristine open highway with nothing on it, you go by the bail bond shop and the car repair shop and the donut shop—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —and the—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Let's just say it's a love-hate relationship. [Laughs.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —and the guns and ammo shop.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I love the perversity of the guns and ammo shop, you know, right next to the place where I buy tiles. [00:42:05] [Laughs.] Yeah, I like the fact that—I mean, I would—I get really upset every time somebody builds something new. I would love it to all be pristine desert, of course. But if there is going to be anything, I would way rather it be all this weird shit than, like, the sort of Styrofoam adobe houses that are all the same color in Santa Fe. I love the fact that we still do have a culture that's a really weird, deeply weird culture, the one that's here. And I'm sure that it's going to go away to some extent in the next 20 years.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It'll all be Homestead Modern. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: There will be—it will, exactly. I mean, especially with Los Angeles pushing out this way, I mean, again, you know, LA is so expensive. It's kind of the only way it can be, so there are pros and cons. I mean, you know, we also—everything used to get broken into all the time. I mean, I've been extremely lucky, but, you know, it was never easy living here, and it is getting a little easier. But then, there's a tradeoff for that.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you not—I've noticed—do you have gates?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No, I just have those scary signs that say, "Turn around." [Laughs.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah, you've never had to put a big fence around your property then?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No, I'm at the end of the road on a hill, so we can see anyone who comes up here, and there's always enough people around. So, in the very, very early days, my guest cabin got—I never locked the doors up there, so somebody went in once and just took everything. So

now I lock the doors, but I don't lock the doors in my house ever. I lock the studio religiously, because—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You'll probably, like, cross this out in the interview. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't think anyone reading this interview is going to break into my house.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Going to break into your house?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well—because everything around here is—most of the houses, not—a lot of it is fenced. [00:44:03] A lot of people do put big fences around their properties here.

ANDREA ZITTEL: They do.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You must have faith in human nature that's greater than that of your neighbors.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And my geographical location. You know, I think that where I'm positioned is really great for, you know, not getting broken into. If I—my Wonder Valley cabins are really vulnerable, because they're alone. They're isolated, and there are some dirt roads that go by them, so I thought about putting fences around them. And then, I just opted to not put anything of value in them. You know, there's, what, a \$200,000 sculpture in each one that no one would ever want to steal and then nothing else of any value, so—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I still think it takes—it has a lot to do with faith, some kind of faith in human nature that you seem to have. I think you do seem to have a lot of faith in human nature. You seem to be a more or less—more optimistic than not.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, and, I mean, I think that, like I said, consciousness, again, you know, I think that—I visualize white light over my house. I guess maybe that is a little mystical, you know, but I think that if you're not dwelling on things like that happening, it puts you in a better spot. I think you can kind of will things into being good.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it certainly develops your practice of nonattachment.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, and that also, because, yeah, there is that feeling if something happens, you know—even with my house, the reason I don't lock it is because, with the exception of my computer, which I have backed up, there's nothing else—and my animals—that I would feel that precious about anyone taking.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You're not worried about people coming in and stealing your extensive wardrobe?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, right. [They laugh.] My Smartwool shirts, my wool socks.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yes, your—your fashion line.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's—yeah, and it's funny, because, actually, I used to do my laundry in the laundromat once, and they did steal all my clothes. [00:46:00] And that was—I mean, that's kind of interesting, when—yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Did you—you never spotted them on anybody walking around Joshua Tree?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. [Laughs.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: They're very distinctive.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. No, they took—yeah, they took everything, so I went to Walmart and bought a black dress and wore that until I got some clothes again.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] I was going to talk about that. We didn't really talk about *Smockshop*. We talked about the production—I wanted to go back to talking about production, because you start by doing *The Regenerating Field*, which—I guess you were trying

to make paper that you were going to use.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, I wanted—I mean, that was based on the Arcosanti bell model, where I wanted—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, tell the recorder what *The Regenerating Field* was—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —because it didn't—and I love that you have all these failed experiments. So, this is, I think, one of the first ones, right?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Right. And if I stuck with it, I could probably make it work. I just don't have time to stick with it. So, it's not 100 percent failed. It's like in a holding bay right now. But when I moved here, my initial plan was that I would come up with a product that was produced here easily that I would sell that would sustain my life here, so I guess I've been thinking about that idea from the very beginning. And so, I was trying to think of something that would be made out of whatever the natural resource was, and one thing that—when you live out here, you basically—you have to take everything to the dump, which is a long drive. It's about a 40-minute drive, and it takes up a lot of the day. And it was also mostly pre-internet, so I got a lot—well, it wasn't pre-internet, but before everything was on Amazon, so I got tons and tons of mail order catalogues. So, I decided to turn all of my paper waste into paper pulp and to make these sort of beautiful decorative wall panels that you could hang on the wall that I would sell.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Would they be sort of tile, like, we would use multiple—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —multiple versions—multiple panels, or just a single panel that would be like a work of art? [00:48:02]

ANDREA ZITTEL: There would be multiple ones. I was thinking of how, you know, you'll see these sort of relief panels, decorative sculptural relief panels in banks from the '60s. That was my reference, and we ended up—when I did make a set, we welded a steel frame that they all fit into that kind of held them in this undulating grid that's not so different from the shelves, the *Stacks* that are at my house right now. So, they're beautiful as an end product. I was happy with how they turned out, and—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And they're made of compressed paper.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, so—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay. And explain to the recorder how they were made. Even I don't know how they were made.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, yeah, they're—well, okay. So, the paper was pulped, so we shredded it in a paper shredder, and then originally, I mixed it with wheat paste. And then, the molds were these vacuum-formed molds that had sort of different relief patterns on the fronts of them. And the molds, these vacuum-formed trays, would fit into these sort of steel racks that were out in the landscape. So, the steel racks were kind of an artwork, too, and they—according to your frame of reference, they would either look like solar panels or like a minimalist Walter De Maria sculpture. And so, the idea was that I would pulp the paper, put it in these trays, carry them out, drop them in these racks, let them cook in the sun, and then harvest them. So, I was also thinking of my grandparents who were farmers, and thinking this could be a little bit like farming my art, too. The original title for the piece was *Something from Nothing with Very Little Effort Involved*, so it was an acronym, "SFNWVLEI"—something, which changed because it was really, really hard to pulp the paper. It was a lot more work than I thought it would be, anyway—so we originally pulped it with wheat paste. The problem with the wheat paste is it took so long to dry that it would rot, and it would smell really bad.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Ew.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And it would just get weird. [00:50:00] So then, I started mixing a small amount of concrete in, because I was reading about papercrete, and that got better. But sometimes, they would warp, not always, but there was no way to tell. And they would take at least a month to dry, so it was a big time-and-labor investment making them and letting them dry. And if you

did a bunch of them and they all curled, it was just really depressing, and we tried everything to stop them from curling. We braced them, clamped wood over them. We put plastic over them to slow it down. We drilled holes in the bottom, so the water would drain from the bottom, and nothing worked perfectly. And then, if we put more concrete in it, it would set up more quickly, which did help, but then it would get brittle, and it would crack. So, it was just a technical problem that I think that if I kept working on it, I could probably resolve it, but I was just struggling with it for so long that I think I got really exhausted, and it was more exciting to move on to new things. But it's on my list to go back to.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah, your grid is still out there, right?

ANDREA ZITTEL: The grid is out there. You know, it's funny, because a year and a half ago we started it up again, and we started working with it and did more tests. But it's just oddly time-consuming to pack the paper into the mold. It would take almost a day, and when you think about what you could do with a day, you know—[laughs]—there are so many other things.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You may have to make paper cups or something, or paper bowls.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Bowls.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, now we're doing the ceramic bowls, which are way more—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I know.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —straightforward, yeah, or the weaving.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And I was interested in the—but I have interest in the—the fact that, from the beginning, you've had these schemes, really—I guess it's kind of like a scheme to make—do some kind of production here that will make money, that is both your art and also, both, a production line.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And you're very straightforward about it. [00:52:00] I mean, tell me more about the *Smockshop*.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. Well, the *Smockshop* was an attempt to make a market for art outside of the art market, and the *Smockshop* happened when I was in Los Angeles teaching at USC. And I was teaching New Genres, and I realized that all of the work that I was encouraging my students to do, that I love the most, was completely ephemeral and noncommercial. So, I would think about these young artists who were developing these really amazing practices, but literally had nothing that would sell, you know, in a gallery or otherwise.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What, performance and installation?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Exactly. Yeah, mostly—I love performance, even though I don't do it myself. I just, you know, love that feeling of watching really powerful performance. So, I was trying to think of something, and so, you know, what are your options? Your options are teaching. You could work as an artist's assistant, I guess, but, you know, I was trying to think of some sort of an economy where an artist could make money when they want to, like a cottage industry. So, when you're working on a show, you don't have to work, but if you're not working on a show you can produce these objects in your home, something that you don't have to be an expert to make, and you get paid for your time. So, we did the *Smockshop* where I made the design, and it's this kind of double-wraparound dress, but the whole point of the design was that it required very, very little sewing. So, if somebody wasn't a good sewer, they could still make good smocks, but, you know, some of the people were really skilled at sewing, and they made really exquisite ones. But it could go either way.

So, they made them. We sold them. I think the model that we did was that we—basically, the sewer would get a third of the money. The shop would get a third of the money, which was supposed to pay for our space and our overhead, and the person who sold it got a third of the money. [00:54:02] But the problem was that it never—and it worked to an extent, and my galleries were actually really supportive. Regen Projects let us do a sale in their parking lot,

which did really well once, and Sprueth Magers let us—helped—let us do—they had their upstairs room in Berlin at their gallery. They let us do a sale there, and we did one—oh, also in the London Sprueth Magers space, and where else? We did a bunch of pop-up *Smockshops*. We rented a space in Chinatown for a summer. We had a space in Highland Park that I had rented, and it—oh, we did a really nice one in New York, at Susan Inglett's space. But the problem was that we—I think at the time, an emerging designer's garment might sell for, like, \$240. That was, I think, the high point for an average person buying a nice garment, and it raised—we had to sell them—\$350 was the minimum, and even then, I felt like people weren't really getting paid appropriately for their time. And they were all unique, so it was just like—it didn't work. The price point never really worked right to make them accessible for normal people to buy and wear, and to get—everybody to get paid well enough for their time and labor that went into them. So, that was—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: What years did you do it? What year did you start it?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, man. I don't know. My son, Emmett, was probably between one and two, so he was born in 2004, so maybe 2005, 2006. And I'm guessing we did—I mean, we did it for a few years. And then, yeah, we tried to switch into panels, because I thought that panels—oh, so the other thing is that they're gender-specific [smocks -AZ], which limited our—you know, who could buy them our demographic. [00:56:06] And the size was an issue, you know, because you kind of want to try it on. You can't just buy it online. So, we tried some other products after that, but it never really went as well, and I was starting to have problems, too, just with the gendered nature of them. I don't know. I think I've sort of struggled with aspects of femininity my whole life, you know, and just because I like clothes doesn't mean I want to make things that are, like, gendered. You know what I mean? I don't know. So, it was, like, close to the right idea, but not the right idea. So, we eventually wound it down.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So that was the end of the *Smockshop*. So, we've gone through paper panels, decorative wall panels—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —and is there another? I mean, what most—what many artists do, of course, is prints.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And have you done that? I mean, that seems to be sort of the go-to for artists who want to be rather—do inexpensive things they can give to auctions, and—

ANDREA ZITTEL: I never really knew about prints. [They laugh.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Here's an idea for you.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No, like, I've met a printmaker out here that's trying to—and I did one print edition with Jacob Samuel, but I did it just because I liked him, and he talked me into it. But I met a printmaker out here who has suggested that he could help me do an edition, and I'm actually thinking about doing it. But I guess I liked the idea that we would kind of move slightly outside of that art market. If I do prints, which I might do in the near future, it's more of a way of skirting—trying to make something that's not drawing, and not photography, but image-based, because that's—I don't know—anyway, and then it was, "Oh, it could be a print," you know, because not being a photographer—anyway, I wanted to do a photographic image. [00:58:03] But not being a photographer, I don't know—anyway, I'm like—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But you were a photographer.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I was a photo—I don't know. Yeah, I'm having weird genre issues in my head, but I have an idea for an image-based work, and I'm trying to figure out how to do it. It might be a print.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I was going to say a lot of your work is not, quote, image-based. A lot of your work seems to be sort of process-based, and I think of the billboards. I think of the—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —the drawings of the works on wood, the representations on wood of your own activities, which are drawn.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, I know. The billboards have been my go-to. I always thought of those as illustrations more than paintings, and I liked that. The same way that my work dealt with design as fine art. And then, when I did do sort of paintings and drawings, they were, like, illustrations. And some critic criticized them for being illustrative, and I thought, "No, that's the whole point. I want them to be illustrative." Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But the one thing that is—not illustrative, but it is image-based, and I love it, is the wallpaper, which is one of my favorite things that you do—although I like everything that you do, but this is one thing I always think has such a whopping impact, and it works so well in your—with it—when you do it, as you said, in an installation, is the wallpaper based on the satellite photographs of the topography.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, the *Wall Sprawl*.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, tell me—*Wall Sprawls*.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Tell me about *Wall Sprawls*, how they evolved, and what their—I think they represent different things at different times, so—

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's funny that we were just talking about prints, because they actually did evolve from prints. So, I forgot—there's another time I did prints, and Judith Solodkyne does SOLO Press in New York, and she's very sweet. And she—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Solodkyne?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, and she wanted me to do a litho edition with her. And that was the first time I considered printmaking. It was—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Tell me the name of the print shop again. [01:00:01]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Oh, it's SOLO.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: SOLO.

ANDREA ZITTEL: S-O-L-O, and they're specifically lithography, but I never studied printmaking, and I didn't—couldn't quite figure out why you would want to make a print. Now I know. Now I'm like, "Oh, if you have a really good image, you can only paint it once. But if you make a print, you can make 20 of them." But, anyway, at the time I couldn't figure out why anyone would want to make a print, and so I thought, "What's the whole point of repeating something endlessly?" And then, I started thinking of the wall, like, making tiles and tiling them. And I thought, "Oh, that's cool. You can take something small and make something big." And I like the idea that it can be infinite.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And when—what year did you start working with Judith Solodkyne?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't even know. I'd have to look at my thing. It was a while ago. It was probably in the '90s or something.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay. So, anyway, back to the tile metaphor. Yes.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, so I get excited about that, so I've been—when I was thinking of something that would be kind of never-ending, and I think I had been thinking a lot about topography because I was doing the *Raugh* pieces—and this was before Google Earth, but I discovered TerraServer, and you could see these satellite images. So, I spent—so I started working with those, and I made two series of lithography editions using that. And then, to make the lithos, I would kind of tile—I would take the image, the photographic image, and tile it to see if it was going to be interesting before I would invest in drawing it. And then, I realized that the actual photographic ones were really nice, so that's when I started just working directly with the photographic images instead of translating them into drawings.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But the *Wall Sprawl*, for example, the one I'm thinking of right

now is the one that you had at the Palm Springs Architecture and Design Museum—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —that's the surround for your sculpture. That's a contemporary *Wall Sprawl*, or is that something from an earlier era?

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's newer. It's not brand-new, but it's—so then, once I started working directly with the images—[01:02:06]—then I became more calculated about the kinds of images, and I realized that I'm specifically interested in these areas that are on the edge of suburban sprawl, like, where you can see that—it's a natural terrain, and you can just see bits of manmade stuff starting to bleed into it or feather into it. Like, if you do a tract house complex, they grade all the roads first. So, you'll find images sometimes where they've done all the roads, but the rest is just still natural. But then, partway through the image, you can see the houses, so it almost looks like—in my mind, I think it looks like a virus taking over these natural landscapes. So then, I started becoming interested in a very specific kind of landscape, and also specific kinds of shapes, so the image that was in Palm Springs, from what I can tell, I think it's set on the edge of Nellis Air Force Base, and there are these—kind of an industrial complex that makes this really beautiful—it's kind of geometric, but it also has these sort of swoop—anyway, it's just, like—it's really beautiful lines that I think are the result of how people are storing these sort of industrialized things, and then these kind of—I don't know if it's a racetrack or something, but there's this certain quality of line because of—oh, you know what is? I think it's a runway.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, that would make sense.

ANDREA ZITTEL: But, you know, how the run—it's a certain line quality that's a little different than the way roads—I mean, you know, even in different decades the shapes of roads change. So, you know, in the '50s everything is on a grid, and then getting closer into the '70s and the '80s you have these more organic-shaped suburban neighborhoods.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah, well, you talk about how the more upscale neighborhoods topographically are sort of organically shaped and have cul-de-sacs and winding roads, whereas the lower-income areas always are just sort of blocks on grids. [00:02:00]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Which are cheaper.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Which are older. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Cheaper and easier.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Cheaper to build and to structure. But back to Nellis Air Force Base, when I saw that I thought it had some sort of political dimension, because you were representing a military complex from the air. Was that not the case?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Not really. Yeah, it was more—yeah, it had more to do just with the way it was dovetailing into the landscape.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And the museum in Palm Springs, you were actually—it was as though your installation, which was kind of canted at an angle upward against the wall—it was interesting how it was sort of—the aerial view of the landscape was literally surrounding your model of the landscape.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, I liked the way that that worked out, and I had done a previous iteration of that at Regen Projects a couple years before. But I think it was much better in Palm Springs, just the space. I like that beautiful—that bank building, and how everything is already on a grid.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: The Williams—yeah, the modern Williams bank building they saved. Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Stewart Williams. Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah, that's—no, that's—and I saw the Regen Projects one, too, but I think it was—wasn't it maybe easier to—like, better or worse, but it's just that it really embodied—the piece at the Palm Springs Architecture and Design Museum really seemed to embody what you do out here. Maybe it's because it's so close to what you're doing out here that it just seemed to make complete sense as something, like almost a satellite of your own work.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I agree, and—but I think that it was like—yeah, you're getting almost these other layers. So, you have, like, the huge perspective of the landscape. Then, you have close, you know, dialing in with the model, but then the way that that Stewart Williams building—even the floor was the same grid, and the ceiling was the same grid, and the way that modern architecture becomes emblematic of that part of the desert. [00:04:04] So I just thought that the architecture of that building really completed the piece, and even the way that the windows were gridded and those sort of steel grates in a very similar way, and your view outside. And at Regen Projects, I had included some billboard pieces, which shouldn't have been in that space. I kind of threw it all off, my self-critique, in retrospect. They shouldn't have been installed— [inaudible.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, also, keeping it all of a piece, the Stewart Williams building was done—restored by Ron Radziner.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: In Joshua Tree, so it's like—it's almost like a little microcosm of your world, the Joshua Tree world.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I was really happy when they acquired that piece. From the very beginning that's where I wanted it to go, and I think we had—I had mentioned that very early on, and I think the previous iteration of the Palm Springs Museum, it just was way too big for them to consider. So, I was really, really happy when it went there because, I mean, that's one of my hopes, is to build a stronger relationship with that museum, since they are the closest museum, and to have them be kind of, yeah, a place where people can see work that I can't really show here.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, and it has come along so—in such a dramatic way in recent—with the new director, and it just seems—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, and Brooke Hodge, too. She's so smart. We had some really great conversations. She curated the *On the Grid* part of the show, and I feel like she completely gets this area in a really good way.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it makes complete sense, because she's so strong in design, in mid-century California design. She's, like, a really perfect fit.

ANDREA ZITTEL: She is.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And, now, I wanted to also ask about—okay, so that's all the production. So, production just is a continuing theme—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —[laughs]—except that each, like—each little production business has—takes you—do you see the production businesses, all of them, the *Smockshop*, the tiles, anything like that, the ceramics—do you see that whole inquiry as part of your art practice? [00:06:15]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Absolutely. Yeah, in a big way. I mean, I used to tell my students that, you know, the big steps forward in art historically—you know, there have been these movements that are either material-based, or—I think that the next thing that really will change art is going to be an economic shift. You know, I think that this is the thing that we're all really stuck with right now, and I think that's part of the art, you know, creating a new model for art and artists.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And what would that be?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know. This is why I keep trying things. You know, I don't know if I'll be

the one to figure it out and to really shift things, but I feel compelled to use my practice to see—to try to experiment with these other things.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You were very interested in the Russian Constructivists, and the model of—and that seems to me, like, early modern practice was very cognizant of the impact of making works of art that could be economically affordable. And, you know—well, for that matter, mid-century design was all about making—bringing, you know, sophisticated design to the masses, which hasn't quite worked out the way they intended it to, but—

ANDREA ZITTEL: [They laugh.] Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —certainly the early—you know, the Eames and so forth.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: There are a lot of precedents for you, but maybe you're trying to take it in—I mean, there is a historical precedent for what you're talking about. But how do you think, or do you think, it could happen now in a way that it hasn't been happening in the last 20 years?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, the one thing I know is that you can't deny the art world. You can't walk away from it completely. Everything is related, so I think it has more to do with doing some sort of twist within the system. [00:08:03] And because I've intentionally marginalized myself, that's why I think I may not be the one who does that twist, but I'm still playing with ideas and talking about it. I do not live in the art world. I live on the fringe of it, and I can peer into a part of it. So, I suspect that deeper changes will happen more in the heart of it, and then, you know—I mean, what you see happening in larger society, more and more commerce is happening online, sort of. And I see this—I think this might be related to sort of the middle range of galleries that are struggling. And then, I kept thinking that art fairs wouldn't last, but it seems that, if anything, they are lasting. The galleries aren't lasting. So, you know, I think the deeper change will happen in the core of the art world, but I'm still interested—I think most artists live the way I do. I live this way intentionally on the margin, but a lot of artists just were forced on the margin. So, I guess I'm trying to make a model for, like, artists rather than the art world, per se, but hoping that it will affect everything.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, the difference is that a lot of the artists who live on the outside are—some of them are outside the system but not participating in the system, and you're—the difference is that you live on the fringes of it, and you see it from the outside, but you're very much in the system as well.

ANDREA ZITTEL: By sheer luck and privilege. You know, I think a lot of this is just luck. My career started in the '90s when the art world was so small. It was going through a recession. People opened doors for me. I still think it's amazing, because I'm not a naturally assertive or ambitious person, and all—when you think about the odds of all those doors opening and things winding up the way they did, it's so miraculous. But I think because of that I feel a debt to the artist I probably would have been otherwise, and to other artists who are like that. [00:10:02] You know, there has to be a model for people who don't immediately get a gallery or, you know—like, good artists who don't ever have any support for their career. There has to be a model. And I know that teaching is one, but when you look at institutions, I mean, the pay for teaching is less and less every year, even though they're charging the students more, and there are fewer jobs. And I don't think that that's—that's the only model, really, that exists, I think, or working for other artists, or being a fabricator, which is so hard, which I know, having done it, you know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: No, you're right, and—but you're a model of this, which is—before I forget to mention this, one artist who lived out here who is very much an outsider artist was Noah Purifoy—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —whose work I find to be fantastic, but is a good example of someone who's completely ignored in his lifetime, and then kind of—I mean, in effect, his only support was Ed Ruscha.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I know, and that's—yeah, that's a really amazing thing that Ed supported him so strongly.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And for so long.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And—but he got—but the way in which he was—I feel like that's a model of what you were saying, where you have an artist who is talented but simply can't afford to live anywhere, really, at the end. He ends up living in a trailer.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, Noah Purifoy, his quote was that no museum was going to give him a show, so he was going to make his own museum. I mean, when I moved out here and I discovered his work—and I found it by chance. I drove by his parcel and became so excited by it, and kept asking until I found out who he was. And he so directly embodies all of that. I mean, I think he's hugely inspirational.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you were just driving by, and you saw his structures on the side of the road—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —and wondered, "What are those?"

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, and then I kept wondering, "Is it okay to look at them?" [00:12:00] And then, this was, you know, probably, what, 2000? It was very early on, and then I'm trying to remember. I think Sue Welsh maybe—I don't know if she was running the Foundation in 2000, but there was some point where I figured out who he was. I figured out that it was a Foundation. I spoke to her. I was too intimidated to speak to him. He was quite old even then, but—and then, finally, she set up a meeting with him, but it was painful because I was really shy, and he was really quiet. And we asked him if we could put him—we put him on our driving map for *High Desert Test Sites* at the beginning. But, yeah, so once I found out it was okay to go visit, then I started taking people there, and going and spending more time there. But, you know, in the beginning if you see a compound like that, you would never think to just walk into it because it's somebody's place.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, it's extensive, and the fact that he was—had had this long history as an African American artist working with the Watts Towers Art Center, and he had been so—he was so known within an African American art community that just didn't get any—I guess it just—there isn't enough crossover to the larger community for people to know about him.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It must have been really hard for him, too, being black and being out here, because this is such a white community and very conservative, and probably more so when he came out here. I often wonder about that decision. He had the space and the privacy to do what he needed to do, but I'm sure it must have been quite difficult for him.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, I'm sure. Well, also, he was just—he had so many problems, but we were talking about outsider, and we were also talking about the model—the other model that you're not embracing, and maybe you have an opinion about this, is sort of the post-Warholian model, where you just decide you're going to be a part of a commercial empire and you're going to be—and I won't go into names. We could name many younger artists who have just decided to make art along—trying to make art within a—being a capitalist within capitalism, you know. [00:14:00] The Warhol—Warhol's line is that the best art is—"Business is the best art. Business is the most exciting art." And you don't seem to be—is that something that you—

ANDREA ZITTEL: But do—I'm just going to name names, so I understand more clearly what you're talking about.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: But do you mean, like, the Damien Hirst style, or—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That, or, you know, at its most rigorous, probably, the Jeff Koons model, at the least rigorous, not—or less rigorous, perhaps, Alex Israel, who's a young artist who's very much trying to do that now.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I actually love Alex. [Laughs.] You know, the thing is I have no problem with that. It's just not who I am. So, it's funny. Alex was my student at USC. He's, like—he's working it, and that's—you know, it's funny. I've had conversations about his work with people, and it's

so fine with me, and I'm so fine with Jeff or Damien doing all that stuff as long as I don't have to do it. Do you know what I mean? The only time that I have a problem with it is that I compare myself to them, and I think that I come up short somehow because I can't do that. But as long as I let go of my own expectations of having that kind of success, then I'm totally fine if they want to work the system, you know?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, that's interesting, because, yeah, certainly—I can't believe that all artists on some level don't constantly carry the burden of, like, "Oh, they got this, and I didn't," or, "They got the cover of *Artforum*, and they're just so—"

ANDREA ZITTEL: But, I mean, look at what they have to do. Who would want—you know, who would want to try—do you know what I mean, to, like—I mean, maybe—I think some people are more social, and they really love doing that. But I wouldn't. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But, I mean, what you just—I'm just saying that the artists themselves are often competitive with other artists, wildly so.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm competitive with people who are like me, you know, and I think I'm doing—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Okay.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —we're doing something that's similar, and I think that my work is better. Like, "Why are they getting attention? [00:16:00] Oh, I'm sure it's because they're a guy." I don't know. You know, I'll have that dialogue going in my head. But if somebody is not like me at all, then I kind of don't care.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, that's interesting.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. And I'm trying more and more just to let go of it, though. This is—a thing about being 52 is that I'm not going to spend the rest of my life creating goals and chasing them down. I have to figure out what my personal goals are and meet those, and I just have to—you know, I have to make sure they're what I want, not what I think I should be doing. So, I can feel, in the last year or two—I can feel myself just letting go of certain things and deciding they're not important and focusing on what is important.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, that's—I think that's probably where artists become mature artists and start working in different ways.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I was thinking the other day—I was trying to—one of the artists who I really admired in the early '90s was Paul Thek. And remember how he—there were some shows of his work that went around in the early '90s—yeah, I think the early-, mid-, late-, and, you know, I never—it's just from what I could see from afar. It just seems like he figured out what he wanted to do, and he did it. You know, and it's great, and he didn't have some sort of superhero status, but in a way what he had was even better. Or like Franz Erhard Walther. I'm really, deeply into his work, and everyone, every artist—they're all, like, artists' artists, you know. You see Franz Erhard Walther, and people just gush over him, but he's not some huge known art star. And, you know, so—and there's somebody else I was thinking of recently, too, who I think is like that. So, all the people that I wanted to be like, they weren't huge. They were just people who were so solid. [00:18:00] And I think some of that, too, comes from coming from kind of a punk rock background when I was younger where you never—you wanted to be like the really cool band. You know, you didn't want to like something that was really mainstream that everyone liked. It's, you know, figuring out who's the coolest, but if it's slightly obscure that's fine, better. So, it's been useful now to kind of think back about who my early role models were. Oh, like, architecture, Albert Frey, you know—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Perfect.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —I was thinking about Albert Frey a lot and trying to—I was describing him to someone the other day, because I feel like he was on par with all of his contemporaries, but he chose to do Palm Springs, and he made Palm Springs this amazing city for it. And I think that, likewise, I could be really content to pick my turf and just really expand within that fully.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And I—let me put this on pause.

[Audio break.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And you said Frey—say it again.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Well, I mean, from what I know he seemed happy.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Albert Frey seemed happy.

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I'm interested in people who are happy.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I think Albert Frey was happy, and he was, as you know, an extremely complex personality. But I look at some of the design ideas he had, and they're just so nuts in many ways. I mean, I was looking at one recently where he had a suspended—you know the picture—it's on the cover of the Shulman book, I think—where the circular dining table is suspended from the ceiling with cords.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And it's the kind of thing you could really only do for yourself, right? [Laughs.] Not that many people want their dining room table suspended from the ceiling with cords that way.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, and that—the first house he did, how—there was a lot of plastic and a lot of weird surfaces in it, and it kept changing. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And his bedroom with the huge boulder as part of the wall. [00:20:00] The actual wall of the bedroom is just the boulder that he built the house on, correct?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Yeah. The only thing that's heartbreaking about Frey are the number of buildings that were torn down before people realized, you know, that they were a thing.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's sad.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yes, and that's—but that's just—I'm just always grateful that they've—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Figured it out?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, sort of, you know—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —that there's—that's—

ANDREA ZITTEL: But Frank Lloyd Wright wasn't happy. He was miserable. I mean, he might have been the most important architect of his era, but I don't think he was happy.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, I think—I don't think he was unhappy. I just think he was completely obsessed with what he—especially at the end, where he needed to do so much before the end, you know.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Well, his career started when he was 40, right? He wasn't young when his real career started. That must have been so stressful.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: It's also true to say that he was doing something almost throughout his career that was just unfathomable, really. And I talked to Frank Gehry about this recently—not to hear me talk about this, but just as an aside. He said that when he was coming up as an architect, all his life as an architect, he just thought that, you know, Frank Lloyd Wright was a crank and a nut—

ANDREA ZITTEL: [Laughs.] Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —and that recently he's come to believe that Frank Lloyd Wright was correct in many of his ideas, because the core of all Wright buildings is that they're built for people, and that now buildings are not built for people. They're built for all sorts of ideas. They have—I mean, they may have a window and a door and a ceiling height, but the proportions are not welcoming for people.

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's partially true, but I don't feel like he necessarily made them for his clients.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Probably not.

ANDREA ZITTEL: When you read about the battles that he had with people, and even the fact that Fallingwater is not sound, he, yeah—I mean, so, yes and no. HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But the idea, the humane idea, the idea of architecture being a humanistic experience, that's something you must be able to relate to. [00:22:04]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Being—even though you're very isolated, I think you are—you seem to have a humanist streak.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, true. It's like—as you said humanism, I'm thinking of—I just finished reading the *Homo Deus*, or—have you read these books? I can't even pronounce his name. He's an Israeli author, but he talks about humanism as being bad for the planet, because it said that, basically, we've sacrificed animals and all the other life on the planet for humanism.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, the Anthropocene.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, but anyway—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I think there—

ANDREA ZITTEL: —so I'm like—yes—[inaudible.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: That's probably true, but, I mean, humanism—I really mean more that, you know, we're talking about a scale of operation that is not dedicated to—that's welcoming for people to be in.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's environments that people can control themselves.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Or feel comfortable in. I mean, a lot of what you walk into now, as you know, is—hotels are unlivable, and they're new. They're fancy. They're new, but they're just horrible.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And you think, "Well, if you were ever to make a welcoming environment, wouldn't it be a hotel?" But, no, you wouldn't, apparently.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But that's me talking, not you.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm doing a quick mental survey of all the hotels, and I can agree with you on a couple of them. Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You know, sort of how—but back to—but because your work is so much a part of—I mean, even the production idea, there is some part of this work of yours that seems to be involved in—helping others might be not the correct word, but, yeah, do you feel like you're helping others?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I try to. [Laughs.] Did you ever see *Clueless*?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, God, yeah, ages ago.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right, where Cher, like—she's trying to help people, but she keeps screwing things up. [00:24:00]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Sometimes I feel like that.

[They laugh.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: But I—anyway, but, yeah, I mean—anyway, when I saw that film I felt such a strong sense of identification with that character, because she's trying to help everyone, but makes some huge mistakes along the way.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But it speaks to a generous nature.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean, in a perfect world I would hope that the work does good and helps people, but I recognize the fact that we can do—sometimes do great harm in our attempts to do good. So, it's important to kind of step back a little bit and try and, you know, have a more objective eye on what's going on too.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do you think—but your work doesn't do that.

ANDREA ZITTEL: What, do—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Do harm in the process of making it.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm always stepping back and trying to question if it does, but I think it's okay. I mean, I feel like it's probably okay, but it's—you know, I'm so deep in it. I don't know. If you look at the history of—I mean, with "art-art," maybe not so much harm, but the art I'm interested in, which is more sort of crossed with design, or that does engage people's lives, yeah, you can see there are some pretty big screw-ups, so—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, absolutely.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: You know, and—so pause here for just a moment. One question I haven't really delved into, which is sort of so basic, is how do you envision—how do you generate—how do you activate ideas that you have? Do you make sketches? Do you work on the computer? Do you write diaries?

ANDREA ZITTEL: You mean to actually get the ideas, or to figure them out?

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Both. If you wake up in the middle of the night and you think, "Oh, this is a good idea," and you go into the studio the next day, do you draw it out, or do you write about it?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Kind of all of it. I think there's a running—so, it starts with certain goals in my head. So right now, I'm pretty happy with my work, which I haven't felt like—for a long time, I kind of felt like I was adrift. [00:26:00] And then, about four years ago, I felt like I kind of started to get back on track. And right now, I'm feeling really content about the path I'm on, but my self-criticism of my work is that I think that it should engage life more directly, and I think it could stand to be a little more subversive or critical, you know. It's—so I have this idea in the back of my head, so I'm thinking all the time, "How could that happen?" And I'll look at a lot of other artists that I like, or examples, and think, "How have they done it?"

And then, I guess it's a combination of writing. I write ideas first, and then really shitty sketches that no one would understand but me, and then I get on the computer, and then I'll draw something on the computer. And the nice thing about these new—like, I use SketchUp, which is a free, you know, 3D drawing program that students use. Fabricators kind of laugh at it because it's very primitive, but you can literally build something in SketchUp. So, I can draw it the way it's going to be fabricated, which is really helpful. When I draw, I know that it can be made as opposed to if you just draw something on paper. You're not actually figuring out how it's going to be made, if that makes sense. I know, you know, when it's steel tubing, or one-by-two, or—I kind of build it in the computer, at which point I've built it, and I can see it, which is, you know, 50 percent as good as actually building it, and then set it aside for a while, and then look at it again. And if it's okay, it gets the green light.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, you came of age in a pre-computer era.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: So, did your work change as you became more and more comfortable with working on a computer?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I was resistant for a long time, but I'm not very good at drafting. I've learned

how to draft, and I took furniture-making classes, but I'm not great at it, and it's slow. You know, and if you want to change anything, you have to almost redraw it. [00:28:00] You know, so I remember there being several years where I was resistant to the computer, and then, finally, a friend of my assistant came out and just showed me how to do it, which was great. But it's—it's just so much more efficient now. You know, being able to literally build something on the computer—well, not literally, but being able to build something in a sense, and look at it and—you know, SketchUp drawings look terrible. They look like little cartoons, so I never want anyone to see them, because I can look at it and I can know what the finished product is going to look like, but if anybody else looks at it they're just like—you know, they can never kind of get beyond the cartoon character—cartoon-ness of the image. So, I don't show them to the galleries before I do shows or anything, because I think it will freak them out.

[They laugh.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And do you—is there any kind of part of you that just sort of noodles around on a sketch pad?

ANDREA ZITTEL: More like I noodle around in SketchUp. So, I'll open a file, and, like, I did a show at Andrea Rosen Gallery a couple of years ago where I literally drew the work. I kept crashing the program, because I'll draw the work, and then cut and paste, and then change it and change it, so I'll end up with 40 drawings of this piece, and 40 permutations. And then, I'll shut it down and look at it a few days later to see which one I like the most, so I'll keep drawing and changing and changing it, but I won't get rid of any of the old ones in case an early one is good. But it really stretches the program to its capacity, and the files get really big, and they keep crashing. So that's where I noodle around mostly, because on paper I'm just not skilled enough to draw well. At most, I'll just do a rough sketch to kind of earmark an idea to be finessed later on the computer. [00:30:07]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, and now that you're so happy with your life and the way things are going, happy with your work, how do you spend your downtime if you're here?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. I mean, okay, to just—I'm happy. Yeah, things are getting way better, but it's not like I've got—it's not like—I'm working toward carving out downtime. It's not like it's actually happening yet, but I just feel optimistic that it's getting closer to that. So, I mean, there's always something to do every single minute of the day that's work-related, so the challenge is to sometimes not do that and to read. The thing I'm trying really hard to do that I can't quite do yet, is to just—I've made all these lovely spaces around my home to be. Out—there is a door on every side of the house, and a patio with chairs, and I think I've spent maybe 10 minutes this year sitting on each of these patios. So, my goal is to just eventually sit someplace and experience what's around me for a few minutes every day, to [inaudible] just sit still and not be doing something. I have a meditation practice, and I exercise. I meditate. I hike. I do yoga. You know, and it's like—but the time you—that fills all your space, so—but hiking, too, I love just being outside and moving around.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, the first time I came out here was when we went—were going to one of your first *High Desert Test Site* hikes. It might have been the second or the third one, and we hiked for a long time. You took us—I don't know where we were. We were just going —

ANDREA ZITTEL: Was it back behind here? Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Hiking over boulders and around—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Did we do the whole loop? Probably. It was, like, an hour and 15 minutes.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: We did. It was a long one. It was not that—it was—people were trudging along. [00:32:02] You were, like, leading the way with your big straw hat. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Driving around, too, I mean, my favorite thing I think is just driving. So, I'm getting ready to do—I haven't had that many breaks in the last few years, and at the end of this month Katy and I are taking a break for a week, and we're going to drive to Santa Fe and back just because, so I'm really excited about that, because that's really good head space time.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is she somebody who will sit quietly in a car and enjoy it for long periods of time?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, I think so.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, I guess we'll find out. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I mean, not everybody can do it, but I know that people—I know a lot of artists do find it really meditative.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's just nice being in the car because you see things, and you think, but it's not as stressful as traveling when you fly and you have to interact with people all the time. I think, just—yeah, the interaction is the thing that just wears me down the most when I travel.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And there's—you're not willing to sit out here and smoke pot all day.

ANDREA ZITTEL: No. I'm trying to learn to do that. I got my CBD and THC tincture as soon as it was legal, and I'm, like, trying to learn to do that.

[They laugh.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Just in the spirit of being part of the movement.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I think it's probably good for you, and I've just never been a big pot smoker, but I feel like it's probably a good thing. And I got—I've been trying to micro-dose some mushrooms, because I read about that, and I think it opens up neural synapses and is really good for your brain. But the problem is that I never really have time or the privacy to do it. Even micro-dosing, it's a small amount, but I want to make sure that I'm not going to have to do anything critical that involves other people. A couple of months ago I thought I had three or four hours alone. It was on a weekend. So, I took two little capsules of mushrooms, thinking, "Oh, I can do two," and then somebody staying in a guest cabin called me because a runaway kid, teenager, had showed up there who had, like, mental problems, and we had to call the police—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [00:34:10] Oh, my God.

ANDREA ZITTEL: —and deal with the whole thing while I was high on mushrooms.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh, my God. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: So, I mean, that's the kind of thing that happens around here kind of regularly. So, it's funny, because I live in the desert and I want to do drugs, but it's, like, hard figuring out how to make it happen.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I was going to say this is a classic ayahuasca ceremony territory.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It should be. I know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But if you're going to have people knocking on the door, you don't really want that to happen.

ANDREA ZITTEL: It's just, like, you never know what's going to happen around here. So, yeah, I can—I always have to be marginally in control at all times.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And the night, you're here alone.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I mean, and my dogs.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah. That's big. I mean, it is vulnerable, and I would think you would feel more vulnerable than apparently you do.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I'm not afraid in my house because I have one, two, three, four, five, six, seven doors in this house, so I've always thought if anybody came in I could slip out any of these doors so quickly. And I know the hills behind me, so I feel pretty safe. And at nighttime, I know this territory, and a stranger wouldn't, but I'm eventually thinking about moving into the furthest—I just bought the two cabins up the hill. And one of them is about 200 square feet, and I'm thinking that I might eventually move up there. And that only has one door, so that cabin worries me. The fact that it has one door makes me nervous.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Are you going to renovate that cabin as well?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I am, but I'm just going to do it very minimally. It doesn't have a roof right now, so I have to put a roof on it. [Laughs.] But, yeah, I've been really curious about just living in a smaller space again. It's the size of a motel room, and I've spent a lot of time up there figuring out how I'm going to set it up. So, you know, while my son is here, this is our home, but that might end up being my retirement home. [00:36:00]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Or a little meditation room or something.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. I think it would—it's just over the hill, so it just has visual privacy where all the other structures on this hill don't. So, I feel like when there's a lot of people in the compound, or if I ever partnered and this became more public, you know, it's just enough privacy where I could go back there and feel really alone.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, you know, it can be your hermitage, the place where—you remember how the royal families used to have a hermitage, a little faux hermit's hut on their estate—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —where they could go and pretend they were being hermits and get away—

ANDREA ZITTEL: Now I know why they did that. Yeah.

[They laugh.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: —and get away from the drudgery of court life.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: But, there's one in Potsdam. There's one—I think there's one at Versailles, and they're just these places where people can just—I mean, even kings need to get away.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. That's funny.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: [Laughs.] It'll be Andrea's hermitage.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. That makes sense.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Indeed. Is there anything else you would like to add to this?

ANDREA ZITTEL: I don't know. I feel like we've spoken about so much.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: We have spoken about a lot. We'll put it on pause for a second and see if anything comes to you.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Okay.

[Audio break.]

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: I know. I wanted to ask you a little bit more about Emmett, your son, and how—about what kind of young man has he turned out to be, and how much have you been involved in that process.

ANDREA ZITTEL: I mean, having a kid, I truly believe that they're born with their own personality.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Oh.

ANDREA ZITTEL: And it's funny, because I know my mom really felt like she was shaping me. At best, I feel like I'm his host, you know. But, anyway, he's—Emmett is great, and complicated, and super interesting. He has a lot of anxiety, which makes me feel bad for him, but he's really compassionate, and he loves animals, and he's very sweet. [00:38:08] He's in full teenage mode right now, which I was—I find babies really boring, so I actually really prefer teenagers, and all the angst and all the weird stuff that goes along with it. So, I always said I was looking forward to this time, and I think it's fine. I'm into it even though it's horrible, and he's started lying to me.

And then, we read in the *New York Times* this weekend—there was an article saying that kids who lie are actually smarter. [Laughs.] So, I've decided I'm going to not stress about that one as much as I have been.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: How old is he now?

ANDREA ZITTEL: He's 13.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Thirteen, right at the beginning.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Yeah, so he's really into video games. Okay, when I had—when I found out I was pregnant and I found out it was a boy, I thought, "Oh, that's so great, because some of the stuff I want to do—I want to hike to the top of the hill behind my house, and I want to sleep overnight in a sleeping bag on this sandy thing—plateau at the top of the hill. A boy will do that with me." But, no, he's completely into video games. He doesn't like going outside, because he says it's too sunny, so he's his own person. But, yeah, it's cool.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Does he have artistic leanings?

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, kind of. He draws. He's really—I mean, I feel like I've been really careful, because I don't really want to superimpose any of my own stuff onto him. And he says that he'll never be an artist because he thinks it's too financially tenuous, but he might be a designer someday. And I think he would be a really great designer because he's super picky about everything. He gives me fashion—he gives fashion advice, and he always tell his dad how to do his—he's always telling us how things should be. He does these really meticulous geometric drawings, which are kind of interesting. I always imagined a kid as trying to do photorealist drawings, but Emmett does these—they're, like, webs or something. They're really beautiful. They're kind of more like designs. [00:40:01] And he's really good at writing. He's really creative at telling stories and stuff, so, yeah—so if he ever gets over his obsession with first-person shooter video games, it will be really interesting to see. [Laughs.] But he's into them.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, he's—I was just going to say something—but he's certainly had an impact on your life.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah, he's had a huge impact on my life, I mean, both being a parent but also just being intimate with this other being, you know, who kind of just landed in my life, and all of a sudden, we're roommates. And it's like—

[They laugh.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: —or it's like—don't take this the wrong way, but it's like the houseguest who never left. [Laughs.] So, it's like—I don't know. He's great. The funny thing about him—and it's a little hard to talk about this, but I think about it a lot—is that because I'm not married, and I don't have other kids, a lot of this, what I'm doing, is so kind of legacy-driven. You know, this is something—I own A-to-Z West. It's not an artwork that I sell, unless I do partner with a museum, but if not, this is going to land in his lap, and so I think a lot about what kind of person is he. Is this a curse to hand this to him? Is he going to do right by it? Since he was little, you know, I always would kind of tell him, "All of this is not yours, but you're going to be the steward of it someday." So, I just think about that, you know, and I'll probably leave—I have my building in New York. I'll probably make sure he has something, but he won't kind of get a lot of what he's growing up with, or he will, but with the understanding that it's not—that it's meant, you know, for more people than just him. So, it's very interesting to think about how much power, potentially, he's going to have to shape things in the future. [00:42:08] And I, you know, don't want to saddle him with something, but I also hope that he'll do right by it, you know, that it won't ruin his life, but that he'll make some good decisions that will protect him but also protect this thing that I've built.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, he'll find—you'll find some good advisors for him.

ANDREA ZITTEL: That's the thing, is like—when I was working on my trust, I was trying to identify people, and it's really hard. Now, at this moment in my life, Vanessa, who's amazing, who works in my office, I know that eventually she has long-term plans to move back to Chicago. Andrea Rosen has closed. I mean, Shaun Regen, you know, hopefully, but Shaun is my age, so—I mean, at best, hopefully, he'll be able to identify good people to hand responsibility to and be able to take a step back, but I—

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Yeah, you need a Sandy Rower in your life. You need, like, Alexander Calder's grandson, who's the one who has really just been able to preserve and pursue so much scholarship and support for the Calder reputation.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Right. And you see—and when people take on that responsibility, you hope that it's not a burden, or it doesn't obscure their—you know, their uniqueness or individualism.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, probably—for some people, of course, it certainly does, but for him it sounds like—if you're entering your relaxing years because he's 13, he's on his way, so you'll be able to relax more. You'll be able to have your downtime.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Yeah. Yeah, well, and I'm really—yeah, maybe I mentioned this already, but the next four years I'm really committed to being present for him, you know, focusing on A-to-Z West, being present for my son, being there for my parents who kind of need me right now, and then after that, who knows. [00:44:15] Either I'll go be a hermit somewhere else, or maybe my career will ramp up again. I don't know.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: And being a Virgo, of course, you have a four-year plan. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: Four-and-a-half-year.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Four-and-a-half-year plan. [Laughs.]

ANDREA ZITTEL: I do.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Is there anything else you would like to add before we close today?

ANDREA ZITTEL: No, I think that's great.

HUNTER DROHOJOWSKA-PHILP: Well, thank you so much, Andrea Zittel, for the wonderful time you spent with me and the pleasure it's been to be in your living environment here.

ANDREA ZITTEL: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]