



Smithsonian
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Oral history interview with Kathan Brown,
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Contact Information

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

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Kathan Brown on December 15 and 18, 2017. The interview took place at the office of Kathan Brown at Crown Point Press in San Francisco, CA, and was conducted by Mija Riedel for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Kathan Brown and Mija Riedel have reviewed the transcript. Selected corrections and emendations appear below in brackets with initials. This transcript has been edited for readability by Kathan Brown and the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

MIJA RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Archives of American Art [Smithsonian Institution] with Kathan Brown at Crown Point Press [San Francisco, CA] on December 15, 2017. This is card number one.

Thank you for making time today. I thought we'd just start with some early biographical material and move on from there. You were born in '35 in New York—1935—but you grew up in—

KATHAN BROWN: That's right.

MIJA RIEDEL: —Daytona Beach. Your father was a photographer.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Did he make a living that way?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, he had a darkroom in our house in the basement and had a studio-storefront in town where people would come and sit for poses. Mostly he did weddings.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right, right.

KATHAN BROWN: But he did some portraits and things. But he brought everything home, and developed it and printed it at home.

MIJA RIEDEL: I know that you spent time helping him develop film and make prints and frame photos. Do you think your understanding at all of the process of art dates back to those experiences in any way?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, probably. My mother was an artist, too, you know, and my grandmother and my Aunt Virginia, my father's sister—we have a family of artists [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. I know your mother went to the Art Institute of Chicago, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Art Institute of Chicago, yes. You really did your homework, didn't you? [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: That's my job. [They laugh.]

KATHAN BROWN: Nobody knows that. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: What did she study?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, I don't know. Painting, I suppose.

MIJA RIEDEL: That was my guess, but I thought—

KATHAN BROWN: She mostly did watercolors.

MIJA RIEDEL: And you have an Aunt Virginia that was your father's sister.

KATHAN BROWN: Father's sister.

MIJA RIEDEL: Who was also an artist.

KATHAN BROWN: She was an artist. She lived in New York and painted and had a couple of shows.

MIJA RIEDEL: And what were your parents' names?

KATHAN BROWN: My mother's name was—her first name, real name, was Clarissa, but everyone called her Clare.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And your father?

KATHAN BROWN: Stanley. He was Elwood Stanley but the name everyone used was Stanley. [00:02:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: Elwood Stanley was his father's name.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: And what was your mother's maiden name?

KATHAN BROWN: Bradford.

MIJA RIEDEL: Bradford. Okay. Your parents' artwork hung in the house, so you had this very tangible sense of it being created and then framed and installed.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: I just am struck by—that is such a process-complete experience for someone from a young age. Do you have a younger brother as well?

KATHAN BROWN: I did have a younger brother. He died in the last—I don't know, maybe it was 10 years ago now.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did he go into the arts at all as well?

KATHAN BROWN: No.

MIJA RIEDEL: No.

KATHAN BROWN: He was an engineer [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting. Creative in a different way.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Your father's mother was an extremely successful businesswoman—extremely successful—which gave you an early example of entrepreneurship and a woman succeeding in business. She had a silk lingerie business in the Philippines?

KATHAN BROWN: She did, early on. And they designed and made really beautiful, real underwear. Like underpants and little camisoles and slips with lace, lots of lace, because they made beautiful lace there. That was the whole idea of hers, to use the lace.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And had she come across that in her travels in the Philippines?

KATHAN BROWN: She lived there.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, she lived there. Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. Her husband, her first husband, was the head of the YMCA in the Philippines.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, my goodness.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: Wow [laughs]. Are there aspects of her at Crown Point that carry her imprint or her legacy beyond the silk clothing venture that [she] had for a while?

KATHAN BROWN: She was a creative person.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:04:00]

KATHAN BROWN: And also no-nonsense, you know.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. That stratum of creativity and business.

KATHAN BROWN: I knew she had a business and that she was doing things.

MIJA RIEDEL: Was she an inspiration to you when you were young?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, yeah, I think so. I'm sure. Very confident.

MIJA RIEDEL: I love that story of something that—I think you talked about your mother saying to you when you were young about, "Go as far as you can [see]"—

KATHAN BROWN: —"when you get there, you can see further." That was one of my mother's maxims. She had maxims [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: [Laughs.] She had maxims.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.] She would say things like that. Now I can't remember what else, but "Know that you are lucky" might be one of them, too. I wouldn't be surprised if I got that from her. But she grew up in an old-fashioned family. You know, they were the Bradford family. They were from all the way back to Governor Bradford, one of the founders of this country. She was very happy—her parents were very happy about it—

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: —and told us that we should be really proud of this, my brother and me.

MIJA RIEDEL: But she also had such a creative and innovative side to her, too.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, yes, she was.

MIJA RIEDEL: So that's the foundational—mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: She studied at the Art Institute, and she was a serious artist. She always was doing lots of painting and watercolors and all, so it was just a normal thing.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Did she exhibit at all?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, probably—but you know, I don't think so, not really, since she had the children [laughs]. That I can remember. I don't remember—I just remember she always did them, and they were hanging on the walls in the house.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Was it figurative? Landscape? That sort of thing?

KATHAN BROWN: A lot of drawings of us as kids.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Right.

KATHAN BROWN: Things like that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. [00:06:00] You have a granddaughter as well.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Is she interested in the arts or in starting her own business?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, she's just about to go to Stanford [or maybe Brown]. She got accepted [to both] [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Congratulations, yes.

KATHAN BROWN: And I really don't know what she'll do. But she is interested in art. She comes and takes our workshops. She has since she was 16. Well, maybe 15.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: A little bit young for the people in the workshop, but she loves to do that, and I think she does

some drawing by herself, too, but I don't know. I haven't heard any serious desires to be an artist. But I haven't pushed it. I don't want to [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: I mean, she's only just starting.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Tala is her name. Is that right?

KATHAN BROWN: Tala. T-A-L-A.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: My son's daughter.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Then your son grew up in Crown Point. I mean, he became a bookbinder based on his experience with you.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. Uh-huh [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: So there's a family tradition.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Who knows where that will go?

KATHAN BROWN: Right.

MIJA RIEDEL: And he still does that to this day, yeah?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, he does. It's a different kind of bookbinding [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Right [laughs]. But he started [hand bookbinding] when he was a teenager, if not younger, yes?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. I guess he was probably 14 or 15 when he first started working, seriously binding books for us.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: Hand-bound books. And he was given some tutorial lessons by the Schuberth people—the bookbinding professionals at Schuberth Bookbindery. One really old German guy that spoke mostly German—the father—and then the son, who was a grown man.

MIJA RIEDEL: Was that here?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, in San Francisco.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: [. . . -KB] I was so interested in handmade books with prints in them. And my *Ocean's Warning* [*The Ocean's Warning to the Skin Diver, 1964, a livre d'artiste with etchings by Kathan Brown and poetry by Judson Jerome*] and all those early ones, like Thiebaud and Diebenkorn—they bound those.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. [00:08:00]

KATHAN BROWN: And at that time, we would be going over there and talking to them, and Kevin always wanted to go and pay attention to that.

MIJA RIEDEL: It's extraordinary.

KATHAN BROWN: And he had a set-up in our basement with his own little press, you know, a little hand-bookbinding press. He was making books—sketchbooks, notebooks—that he gave away to people for Christmas.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: He wasn't trying to bind up stories or anything. He didn't ever seem to be interested in writing anything to put in the books—[they laugh]—or drawing anything to put in the books, to be honest. He just—

MIJA RIEDEL: He just liked the books as objects.

KATHAN BROWN: —liked to make the books.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, you loved books, too, from the start. I mean, that was one of your first things that you were interested in as well, so it makes a lot of sense.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Did you go to public school in Daytona Beach?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. And you travelled.

KATHAN BROWN: My parents sent me to Catholic school for just a year when I was in first grade. I started out, but it wasn't for very long. We aren't Catholic—the family—and I think I was getting a little too religious for them. [They laugh.] So they pulled me out of it. I went to public school ever since then. Easily influenced [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, well, especially at that age.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: Your interest in travel has been so pervasive, I think, throughout your life. Does that date back in any way to your childhood and your grandmother's experiences overseas?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, I don't know, maybe. It was a natural thing, it seems like, although I didn't actually do that much traveling myself as a child. We went across the country a couple of times on a train with a little—you know, not a compartment, but a little berth. We had curtains, you know [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. I remember those.

[They laugh.]

KATHAN BROWN: Because my mother would take us back to see her family in Oregon from Florida.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, my gosh. Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: That was very memorable as a—

MIJA RIEDEL: I would imagine.

KATHAN BROWN: Very, as a little child, not a teen. We used to go do that in the summer every two or three years. [00:10:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: So that would have been in the '40s.

KATHAN BROWN: That was a wonderful travel.

MIJA RIEDEL: Would have taken days.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. You started at Antioch in 1954, yeah?

KATHAN BROWN: Okay. Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: And you describe the spirit of openness and curiosity there, some diverse and influential programs. I think your interest in Zen also dates back to Antioch? Is that right?

KATHAN BROWN: Probably. Yeah. It was one of those campus interests, activities. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Do you see parallels between the concept of practice in Zen and the process of etching?

KATHAN BROWN: There's probably a parallel in anything that you do seriously, don't you think?

MIJA RIEDEL: I do. Well, I guess because you're going to be practicing anything you do seriously. That makes sense.

KATHAN BROWN: It's just about practicing, keeping it going. But, of course, it could be considered a meditative process, the idea of printing. Because you're repeating the same gestures over and over again, but you still have to pay attention. Which—it's not the same kind of attention that you're paying, like, when your children are playing on the playground and you're keeping an eye on them, you know. It's a different kind of attention.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly. Exactly. And there's something about the repetition—

KATHAN BROWN: Right. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: —and the skill that comes from that. It just seems like those really dovetailed in a way. As I've been reading about your life and your work in Crown Point, it just came up as a through-line that just seemed, sort of, to surface as a way you've documented things and the artists you've invited, the depth and range of artists that you've worked with. I just wondered if you'd given it any thought.

KATHAN BROWN: Having that related to Zen in some way? I don't know. I never became a serious, serious Zen person. [00:12:00] I did a little bit of meditating when I—during one period of my life, I would go to a hall where other people would be sitting and sit, but I never was very—I didn't get fully engaged in it. I think I was not able to sustain—I didn't quite get to that nirvana stage [laughs]—

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: —where you can really go somewhere else in your mind, but I was trying to do it for a while.

MIJA RIEDEL: I was thinking of it maybe more almost as a psychological disposition than a parallel, maybe, with John Cage or something. Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. It's just an attitude or something.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: But it was interesting to fall into that for a little while in my youth.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Okay. What do you recall as that most influential of experiences at Antioch? Was there anything in particular you left with from there that was—

KATHAN BROWN: Well, one of the reasons I chose Antioch was that they had this big Glen Helen [Nature Preserve]. You know, they had a big nature preserve, really. It isn't just a little park. It's a real wild area. And I really liked going out there and walking, and being engaged with that. And, in fact, one of the co-op jobs I had at the end—the last co-op job I had—I ran the little nature center that's connected to that.

MIJA RIEDEL: That's right.

KATHAN BROWN: So Glen Helen, I think that may have been one of the main reasons I went there. I used to go to Girl Scout camp, all right, when I was young. And that was always one of the high—a great, you know, thing in my life was to go to camp [laughs]. So, I figured well, there's a camp. They've got a camp, kind of.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. And you ran it.

KATHAN BROWN: For a little while at the end there.

MIJA RIEDEL: And what did that entail doing? [00:14:00]

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, there's a little nature center there, and they did programs, and, you know, asked different people to talk. And people would come, or we'd lead nature walks and learn to identify a lot of trees and bushes and things, and take people around. And make displays.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. So, a little education center.

KATHAN BROWN: It was a little museum, and I really liked making the displays and running the museum. And I had done a co-op job, too, at a museum in [Worcester, MA].

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Which museum?

KATHAN BROWN: I think it was the Fine Arts Museum—

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: —but I now can't remember exactly. But it was, you know, just a couple of months. Actually, I

think they changed to the quarter system late, maybe while I was there, maybe after. I think it was a longer thing. I think we did do a half a year.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, okay.

KATHAN BROWN: [. . . -KB] You could get really engaged with the job.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely. You spent junior year in London—

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. Uh-huh [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: —at the Central School of Arts and Crafts. And you've talked about a class with William Turnbull that was really significant for you. I think you talked about him, talked about art as a way of figuring out how to approach the world.

KATHAN BROWN: Right. [Laughs.] That's what he would say.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. What in particular about that resonated with you?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I think it just probably put words to something I actually knew because of my whole family being kind of engaged with art in various ways. And I didn't understand it very well until it was put into words and talked about.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. That makes a lot of sense. [. . .] Because you would have grown up with it, so it would seem such a natural part of life that—to even label it would have been—

KATHAN BROWN: [00:16:00] It isn't some special thing that you go off and do sideways, you know?

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: And I never thought of it that way.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: And so I think it was probably that attitude that made what I ended up doing with Crown Point possible. I didn't have so much investment in having shows of my own or doing my own art, although I did do it. That was where it started, where it came from. I haven't thought about this particularly, but I must have taken the concept of developing the press as kind of an artwork in itself.

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting. Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Because of the attitude of art and life as being joined.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely. That makes sense. I actually had a thought along those lines but phrased it differently. I'll get to that later.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, okay. I hadn't thought about it particularly until you just brought it up, but it seems to make sense.

MIJA RIEDEL: Good. I always like when that happens. [They laugh.] When there's a new thought.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Then you graduated from Antioch in '58 and returned to London again for another year. And I know that you studied with a few people back at the Central School—Merlyn Evans, Tony Harrison—did the interest in multiple preparatory methods on a plate date to this experience in London?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: And then also this idea of printing consistently?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Did that come from the experience at the London school? Or you were also at the Print Workshop, yes? With Birgit Skiöld?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, Print Workshop was a little print workshop. Birgit Skiöld started it. She was a friend, and it was just really a—she had a press, and people could go there and use it.

MIJA RIEDEL: [00:18:00] Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: And we paid something. I think that her idea of having a press and having people come in and pay by the hour to use the studio and the set-up was important to me. It worked perfectly well for her, and I did that, and other people did that. My former—first husband did that. That's basically where we met.

That workshop was probably more influential, even, than the school, but being in the school did give me a really pretty good idea about what real art is, because the teachers there, especially Tony Harrison, actually were very smart and knew things, you know, about the New York art world and other places. We always went to galleries in London and paid attention, and he had artists come and talk to us. And this was early on, before people did that all the time.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. I read a quote of Birgit saying that her workshop wasn't—it's not a business, not a college, not a gallery, simply an idea which has worked.

KATHAN BROWN: I don't remember that, but that sounds right.

MIJA RIEDEL: So was that the model for Crown Point originally?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: What did you do there, at the Print Workshop, different than what was going on at the school?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, the school was a school [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. And so, you could only take classes—

KATHAN BROWN: You took a class—

MIJA RIEDEL: —and time to work. Did you have time?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, yes, they had studios. You could go and work in the studio. But you went to class and you learned things, and the studio time was limited to certain times

and it was—I don't remember exactly. [00:20:00] I honestly don't remember how I treated the studio, but I know that you could go in and work in the studios. But going to Birgit's was a lot more intimate and connected to others, you know. It was what I liked better.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Was there a community of artists that worked together, or was there a sense of camaraderie there?

KATHAN BROWN: We knew each other. We must not have really been that friendly because I can't remember any names that I can think of right now. But I haven't had to remember for a while.

MIJA RIEDEL: [Laughs.] Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: Tony Harrison, mainly. He was the one that had some influence, because he was such a good technician.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. And was he the one that gave you the idea of printing consistently and the way—

KATHAN BROWN: It was the way they did it there.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, and Evans was in there. There was another teacher also. It was something about hand-wiping [in a] certain way.

MIJA RIEDEL: There's somebody I read about named Jack—Jack—

KATHAN BROWN: Jack—oh, yeah, Jack—

MIJA RIEDEL: Coutu?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, yes. I'd written that down and now I forgot it. But he was basically the studio assistant, more like an advanced student. Jack Coutu. C-O-U-T-U. I remember him. I can sort of visualize him now. But he was good.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: And helped a lot in the classes. But, you know, it's been a long time since I was in school.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. [00:22:00]

KATHAN BROWN: But certainly, I did learn—I learned everything that I used later.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. So, all those seeds were planted.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. So, in 1950—

KATHAN BROWN: So when I came back here, nobody knew it. I knew things nobody else knew. That's what happened.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly. When you saw that press in Edinburgh in '59 and turned in the plane ticket and bought the freighter passage—

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: —was it a spontaneous decision? I mean, this press—it was sort of old and rusting and not in great shape, right?

KATHAN BROWN: It was a press. It worked. I mean, I knew it would work. They don't not work. You saw it in there.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, was it actually in there?

KATHAN BROWN: It's the same one.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, okay.

KATHAN BROWN: I got it back. I had it—

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, you—yeah, because it was gone to somebody else for a while, right?

KATHAN BROWN: I sold it to one of the people that worked in the studio with me, John Ihle.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: And then, when he got old and stopped using it, he gave it back to me.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, how great.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Do you remember what press it was, what kind of press? Who made it?

KATHAN BROWN: A Kimber.

MIJA RIEDEL: A Kimber. Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: It's in there. We can go look.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes, Sasha gave me a great tour, but I didn't—I knew that you had sold it, but I didn't know it was back.

KATHAN BROWN: [It's the press with the] wooden arms.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, yes. Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: That's it.

MIJA RIEDEL: How fantastic. So it's actually here.

KATHAN BROWN: [. . . -KB] [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Did you have any grand sense as you were sailing that you were bringing this piece of history and this tradition of atelier with you from Europe to the States?

KATHAN BROWN: No, not particularly.

MIJA RIEDEL: No?

KATHAN BROWN: I just thought I'd like to keep on doing etching, and it was available.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. So just totally practical.

KATHAN BROWN: It was free.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: All you had to do was get it here.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. [They laugh.] Exactly.

MIJA RIEDEL: That seems like a simple choice.

KATHAN BROWN: You'd be crazy not to figure that out [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Okay. Why San Francisco? Why come here rather than New York or LA?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, well, Jeryl Parker, my first husband, was—lived here.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: I had met him in England. [00:24:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: And he came back here first, so he was already here.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: And we basically started Crown Point together.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Right.

KATHAN BROWN: But he didn't last very long. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: So I do just want to start our conversation about Crown Point by acknowledging the excellent and extensive documentation that does exist.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, well, I don't know.

MIJA RIEDEL: Much of which has been done by Crown Point, I mean, through the books that you've published, the videos, the online resources, and then also those two beautiful NGA—National Gallery of Art—catalogues. [The second catalogue was published by University of California Press. -KB]

KATHAN BROWN: I think it's so great that they did that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: That was so great.

MIJA RIEDEL: Beautiful catalogues.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: Wonderful essays.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: I mean, so there's great material, and one could spend weeks online on your website.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, that's nice.

MIJA RIEDEL: So my hope is that we're going to try not to replicate what's already been done so much, but hopefully uncover some new insights and details.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I've always been a teacher, I guess, or a kind of proselytizer anyway, so I always wanted to get the word out. And then I discovered, when I came back here, that nobody that I could find really knew very much about this process.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Some of them over at San Francisco State were doing etching. John Ihle was one of them. And he lived across the street from where Jeryl and I lived.

MIJA RIEDEL: This was in Richmond?

KATHAN BROWN: No, this was in Mill Valley.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, okay.

KATHAN BROWN: John Ihle lived there. I think maybe the reason Jeryl got that place was it came up for rent, and it was across from John Ihle's house, and we had put our press in John's studio because he had room.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: So it seemed very convenient to get that little house across the street [from] our studio.
[00:26:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: So the two of us, and John and Dennis Beall, who was a friend of John's and ours, used that press at his studio for years and years.

MIJA RIEDEL: Where were you in Mill Valley? Were you right downtown or in the hills?

KATHAN BROWN: No, in the [area] called Alto. It's not really high, but it's called Alto. It's right by the freeway. If you're driving along and you look over there, just before you get to the main Mill Valley [exit], you see a little cluster of houses, a cheap area.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. Sort of towards the south end?

KATHAN BROWN: It's—

MIJA RIEDEL: Or the north? Toward the north?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, it's the first [part] of Mill Valley you see when you're going—

MIJA RIEDEL: Driving there.

KATHAN BROWN: —there from here [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. Maybe around Tam Valley, sort of. The Tamalpais Valley.

KATHAN BROWN: It is flat.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: And the rest of Mill Valley goes up the hill.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: This flat part is called the Alto for some reason.

[. . . -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: So I always ask about major shifts in an artist's work, you know, content or materials or technique. And it was interesting when I was thinking about Crown Point Press, because I think what you've been doing is constantly shifting. That's something you've always been interested in, doing something that wasn't done

before, or expanding the bigger picture of art. I know that's been an important criteria for you. So it's interesting to think about how you're constantly evolving, based on the artists you invite. And I know that that's something you've given a lot of thought to.

I read that you'd evolved four criteria that sort of come up as ways you look for artists: artists who would be doing work that has potential to be important a hundred years from now, artists with established reputations, people you would enjoy spending time with, and then also artists that aren't limited to your personal tastes. [00:28:00] I love this quote: "Because it's human nature to like what we already know and not to like what is new to us."

KATHAN BROWN: Well, yes, okay [laughs]. That was pretty smart of me. I don't remember it, but I agree with it. [They laugh.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Is that accurate?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't remember that I had phrased it so clearly, actually. Where did you find that? In one of those things you read?

MIJA RIEDEL: It was either in your book or in one of those NGA [or UC Press] catalogues or online or—[they laugh].

KATHAN BROWN: Okay. Pretty good.

[. . . -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: Actually, it might have been the interview that you did for SFMOMA.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, okay.

MIJA RIEDEL: So I thought it would be an interesting thing to think about the defining moments that have been at Crown Point Press over the years, sort of starting with the '60s. And I love the way that you settled on the name for Crown Point Press, and I wondered if you would just tell that story about the trestle and the gold mine?

KATHAN BROWN: It was a picture. I think it's reproduced in the book.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes, it is.

KATHAN BROWN: We have it hanging up in the studio over the printer's desk. It's little.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay, yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: I think maybe it was Lawton Kennedy who printed it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: That picture, and it just captured my [imagination]. I liked the photo. I liked the idea that these guys were so proud of themselves, and there was no real reason, you know [laughs]. [They were] just standing there, but they did something that they thought was good.

MIJA RIEDEL: It seems so extraordinary to name your business based on—

KATHAN BROWN: —this little photograph.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, you know, when you're looking around for a name, you use anything that comes up.

MIJA RIEDEL: [Laughs.]

KATHAN BROWN: First thing I saw that sounded, well, you know, kind of snappy—nice sound—and I didn't want it to be so fancy, have a fancy name.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Well, it certainly has a sense of humor inherent in the story and also the spirit of place with California, because it was a trestle for a gold mine, wasn't it?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And the fact that it was a gold mine is sort of a secret [laughs], you know, a stupid desire—but knew that that would never occur.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. [They laugh.]

KATHAN BROWN: It was almost like a double, you know—

MIJA RIEDEL: And as I recall, the trestle was quite tall and very lacy and kind of rickety-looking.

KATHAN BROWN: It's hanging up in there in the studio, the same photograph, over the printer's desk. I would have called your attention—well, we could look at it if you want.

MIJA RIEDEL: I did see it in the book.

KATHAN BROWN: It's reproduced. Yeah, same one.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. So, Richard Diebenkorn came very early on.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: In '62, and he actually called you—

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. [June Felter, a mutual friend, told him about our live model workshop. -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: —to see about coming to etch, and he was one of the, maybe, two or three most influential artists here for you and for the Press.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, yes!

MIJA RIEDEL: I think of him and Cage in particular.

KATHAN BROWN: For sure, but I didn't know that when he showed up. I knew who he was, though. He was certainly somebody in the area here that was known and was good. I liked his work. But I didn't have any particular connection. You know, it wasn't that I sought him out because I loved his work, which happened many times with the Press later.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: But it was June Felter who introduced me. [00:32:00] June Felter was an old friend—she still is an old friend. She's an artist from here, a good artist. I don't know how come she showed up for the workshops, but she was in the workshops. And that's how I met her, because I [was] just, like, copying, you know, what John Ihle was doing. It just seemed like if I had a workshop, people could sign up and come in and use the studio.

MIJA RIEDEL: So you would offer workshops and teach people how to use [the process -KB]? Could people also just rent space and come work there?

KATHAN BROWN: They could do either one. If they already knew something, they could just come in and just use the studio. If I thought they weren't going to break anything.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.] And sometimes they did [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, I bet. Because, as you say, not many people were familiar with the process.

KATHAN BROWN: I tried to be careful and help them if they didn't know how to use something.

MIJA RIEDEL: So education was an inherent part of what you were doing. It had to be.

KATHAN BROWN: If you were going to keep it from getting all messed up, and to keep it tidy, clean. If they leave their stuff everywhere and dump their rags on the floor, then it messes other people's work up.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely.

KATHAN BROWN: Once or twice I had somebody who would join the evening classes [who] was so untidy I finally —[laughs]—but not often. Usually everybody that wants to do this is pretty disciplined, or they couldn't stand it. [They laugh.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly. [00:34:00]

I think of Diebenkorn introducing you to this idea of "doing something, not making something."

KATHAN BROWN: He said that once to me. He said it almost at the very beginning when he first showed up. He wanted to be sure that I didn't think that he was trying to make prints that he would be able to sell or, you know, multiply his art. That was a common idea about printmaking.

MIJA RIEDEL: I see. Yeah. And so how did that maxim shape Crown Point, this idea of doing and not making?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I'm sure I always had that idea, because it never occurred to me—actually, I wasn't trying to sell anything, any[thing] we made, or I made, at the time, I don't think. It was more about, when I came back from England, I had some skills and that little press. I haven't really written this because it's not very important; it's just another little detour. But life's full of detours.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: But I was married to Jeryl Parker, and he got drafted. So they sent him off to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and I didn't think that I could bring the press. So I sold it to John Ihle because it was in his studio anyway [laughs]. We were all using it in his studio. And he wanted to buy it always. And we got enough money to get a little press that we could carry that was just, like, that [gestures].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: Took it to Oklahoma with us. [00:36:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: And how long were you in Oklahoma?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, it wasn't very long. Less than a year.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: But then we came back here.

MIJA RIEDEL: I was thinking about Diebenkorn and his influence over the years, and, of course, you think of *Green*, which many describe as his premier print. [Kathan points to it hanging in her office.] Exactly. It's exquisite. Are there others that you are particularly proud of?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, sure.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. Anything you want to mention?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, you know, *The Large Light Blue* and *The Large Bright Blue* were the—

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: When he did those, everybody loved them, and I did, too. *Touched Red* is something—I have that hanging up at home. And we have a very small apartment. We haven't got room—hardly room for four or five things in it, you know. *Touched Red* has always been there.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. That's beautiful.

KATHAN BROWN: It's just so delicate and lovely, and changes all the time. Different lights and—

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: That's my absolute favorite.

MIJA RIEDEL: *Touched Red*.

KATHAN BROWN: More than the blue ones.

MIJA RIEDEL: More than *Green* or *Bright Blue*, *Light Blue*.

KATHAN BROWN: *Green* is nice, but—

MIJA RIEDEL: *Green* is beautiful.

KATHAN BROWN: —it's not so personal. Somehow, I always thought that *Touched Red*—well, maybe because it was the first one, too, that he did that was a real color print that was—

MIJA RIEDEL: It was the first one he did that was a real—

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I don't know if it was the very first one, but it was just like, when he was working on it, I was looking at it and thinking, Wow, you know, I've never seen anything like this before.

MIJA RIEDEL: And what was it that you hadn't seen before?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, it's complex and [has] so many different layers and tones, delicate tones.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. [00:38:00]

KATHAN BROWN: Aquatint and everything. You'd have a hard time finding anybody who ever used an aquatint like that, especially from that time. And after that, other people started to pick it up. But I think Diebenkorn was really a pioneer in spit-bite aquatint, where it was just like watercolor, you know? And he used it so sensitively.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And do you think that was something that he was experimenting with when he came here, or was it a practice that he was bringing from his painting practice and trying to apply then to the etching?

KATHAN BROWN: I think so, probably. As far as I know, he never did a lot of watercolors. I think he had gouaches he did. I could be wrong, but I don't think he ever really did watercolors. But this is a watercolor medium. And for some reason he just got to like it. Not that he did even that much, but *Touched Red* particularly said something, I don't know. I really loved that. Still love that print. It's the one I have hanging up at home.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And as you say, to have that many layers over something that is that delicate must have been really insightful. Because when you first see it, you wouldn't necessarily imagine it has that many layers.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: You would think to get a saturation of color it might require that, but something that delicate, it is surprising.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, one of the things about etching is you don't have to have layers to get it saturated. [. . . -KB] [00:40:00] That's probably just one bite.

MIJA RIEDEL: The blue.

KATHAN BROWN: [It's] heaviest in the red, you know. You can say, "Well, this one, I want it to be really rich and velvety." You can bite it like that.

MIJA RIEDEL: The green and the yellow.

KATHAN BROWN: You've got to paint that. The solid tones you just put in the tray. Bites itself. So using it like a watercolor was very surprising to me. He was able to do that. He just did it.

MIJA RIEDEL: And that was quite a bit later, in 1991.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. He did a lot of prints before that, but—it's true. I don't see [inaudible] here that's earlier. We probably had other Diebenkorn—yes. These are the woodcuts, '84. I guess I didn't put in the earliest ones, but we have them.

MIJA RIEDEL: And this is in your book, *Know That You Are Lucky*, the memoir.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. I always use *Touched Red*. Yeah. That's fine. But they're somewhere. I mean, I'm sure we've shown the earlier ones, too.

It was June Felter that suggested to him, because she was a friend of his, and she started to come to take the live drawing workshop, and she thought he might enjoy it. She told him about it. And he said he was looking for another way to draw. [00:42:00] One of the reasons he was doing the live workshops for drawing directly from the model—he had a group of people that did it. June was going to that. And they'd started it—[they had] had Elmer in it and—

MIJA RIEDEL: Bischoff.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. Elmer Bischoff and—I forget his name. The other guy that they hung out with all the time [laughs]. And they were the three mainstays, and then some other people joined them, too, like, I think, off and on. June was a really good friend of Adelle Bischoff, and so June and Adelle went—that's how June got in there.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: So, it was a real little community—

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: —from the start.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And then, I kind of got most of those people trundled into Crown Point once Dick did. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: Not Elmer. Could never get Elmer. But Adelle did some.

MIJA RIEDEL: And Wayne Thiebaud came early on.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. Thiebaud came along, too, but that was different entirely. He didn't know them.

MIJA RIEDEL: You introduced the two, as I recall.

KATHAN BROWN: I introduced them. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: But Thiebaud also came in the '60s as well, yes?

KATHAN BROWN: I invited him when I decided to invite people. I invited Diebenkorn and I invited Thiebaud. I saw a show of Wayne's—he was showing at the same [gallery] I was, Hansen Fuller Gallery.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, right.

KATHAN BROWN: Drana Fuller is still a good friend, and so that's, you know, how I met Wayne.

MIJA RIEDEL: You talked about Thiebaud and Diebenkorn as, early on, really helping to set the framework for how Crown Point grew. What did Thiebaud bring to the picture?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, in both cases, it was really about how you work with—how you have an artist's studio and how to be, you know, what to offer.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. [00:44:00]

KATHAN BROWN: And how to handle that whole situation. I just took the key from what they would want. And Thiebaud is a much more organized sort of person than Diebenkorn.

MIJA RIEDEL: He was better at giving direction?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, no. Dick just would come in and mess around, and mostly didn't want to be bothered with anything—anybody doing anything, even for him, if he could help it. He just wanted to have some plates there, and sometimes he took them back to his studio.

And then he'd call and say, "Well, I have some that I'd like to see. Is it possible if I could bring it over and you could print it?" And I'd say, "Yes," if I was in the studio, and if not, I'd say, "Well, maybe in an hour or two." I'd print it and he'd say, "Okay," and take it away and put it up in his studio and use it for whatever he was using it for, you know [laughs]. I mean, if you see pictures of his studio from that time, you [might] see some prints hanging on the wall.

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting. So he was really going back and forth between what he was doing with you as prints and what he was painting.

KATHAN BROWN: Same subjects very often. That's why he wanted to do it. He wanted to see it in a different way, a different form, a different way of making it. A different response from the material.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, he said that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, I do remember reading that.

KATHAN BROWN: I think I wrote it.

MIJA RIEDEL: But it's interesting to hear that this was an ongoing process that really happened for years.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: That's great. You were also teaching at the [San Francisco] Art Institute at this time, from '66, I think, to '74.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: How did what you were teaching at the Art Institute influence Crown Point and vice versa? Did they?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know, honestly.

MIJA RIEDEL: You were teaching workshops at Crown Point, right?

KATHAN BROWN: [The workshops at] Crown Point were mostly really just workshops. [00:46:00] I didn't need the artists to already know anything about etching in order to take them, but I needed them to know about art. And so they were mostly people, actually, that were in this circle from Adelle and June and Dick. And there were some other people who came from the University of California [Berkeley] program, where they asked if I would teach a workshop in my studio. Somebody from one of them suggested it to somebody over there [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: At the Art Institute. Right. Exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: It was actually sponsored by the University of California Extension program, where they did hold classes in artists' studios. They had a program like that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, how great.

KATHAN BROWN: And artists could give the classes. Somebody in his own studio would teach them.

MIJA RIEDEL: So, that was through the UC Extension.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. But that's separate, still, from the Art Institute.

KATHAN BROWN: [Absolutely.] I already [had] the job at the Art Institute. Nothing took place in my studio that was regarding the Art Institute. I got that job through Dick Diebenkorn's recommendation. They were looking for somebody in printmaking.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. Did they have an etching press?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, yeah. They had a press and they had a printmaker, an etcher, Gordon Cook, who was very distinctive in his approach, as far as I was concerned. He had been there a long time, and he always taught everything the same way, and taught it very beautifully—line etching. No aquatint, no tones of any kind. Etching was supposed to be lines. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Which is about as opposite from your approach as it can be.

KATHAN BROWN: So Dick Diebenkorn had a lot of friends over at the school. [00:48:00] I think he was even teaching a class there, in painting, at that time. I'm not sure. But he did teach briefly. He didn't really teach there very long, but all his friends were there.

For some reason or other they decided—somebody decided—there should be another approach in the etching department [laughs], and they offered me a job. It was just a Saturday class. That was what they had. They thought they'd test it out, see if they could get into Gordon Cook's territory, because the studio was arranged exactly how he wanted it, which was not at all what I needed. I wanted an aquatint box and a place to do sugar aquatint and things like that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Were they able to supply that?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I did.

MIJA RIEDEL: You did.

KATHAN BROWN: Little by little, we got it equipped. And he was okay. He was a little bit of a grumpy guy, but it turned out he didn't object that much to having somebody do something different. It's just, what he did, he wanted to do.

MIJA RIEDEL: So you really introduced aquatint to the Art Institute.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: And that's something that, certainly, Crown Point is well known for.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: And one of your signature techniques. Was he also working with that multiple preparatory technique on plates, or were you bringing that concept?

KATHAN BROWN: Multiple? Using—

MIJA RIEDEL: Bringing, you know—

KATHAN BROWN: We could combine line work and aquatint and everything. Yeah, no. He pretty much just liked working with lines.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. So you really brought this diversity—

KATHAN BROWN: And, really, they were only hard-ground lines [laughs], actually.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. So, sort of one—

KATHAN BROWN: I think so. I don't know if you should quote me as saying that, because I'm not sure.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: I can't remember. If you read it, somebody from the school there has probably come up and said, "Well, Gordon Cook taught me some other kind of line," or some other thing. [00:50:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: I remember him saying—I always thought it would stick in my head and never come out—"Aquatint destroys line and drives out light."

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.] So, no aquatints. But of course, what do you think is in the middle of that green [aquatint], in the middle there? That's light, isn't it?

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Driving out light didn't seem anything like what I thought aquatint was [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Not at all.

KATHAN BROWN: But that's what he'd say. He really felt that. So he wouldn't—if I wanted to go ahead and figure out how to let my students do it, it's okay. Just try not to take up too much room with all your stuff. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: And aquatint was really important to you from the start, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: What about that was really intriguing?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know. It worked out. He wasn't a nasty guy; he just had his opinions. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: And why were you so drawn to aquatint as a process, or as a finished product?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, etching is pretty boring if you only do lines with it. It really is.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: It's like the old etchings, you know, when people say "etching," they [often] think of these little scratchy lines, and usually say, Well, I don't know, not too interesting. But with aquatint, you can do anything, and it's such a beautiful medium. It's solid and more present than watercolor, but it has the characteristics of watercolor. It certainly can be combined with slightly more solid areas, and it can be also like velvet, rich, deep. So it has a tremendous range of possibilities for marks and, you know, images, and it's just a wonderful process. [00:52:00] I mean, everything that's not line is really aquatint. Even the photo process essentially has an aquatint in it. If it's not aquatint with rosin, it's aquatint with [. . . some other texture you're substituting for rosin -KB], you know. But it's the concept of that.

MIJA RIEDEL: And where were you first exposed to it?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, at the Central School.

MIJA RIEDEL: At the Central School.

KATHAN BROWN: I studied with very good people, and I learned some of that stuff. I found out how good it was, and I started using it myself. I was mostly working with aquatint myself.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Color, then, was really important to your work?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, not always. I did quite a lot of black-and-white work, at the beginning especially. But color is very good with aquatint. That's what it's [especially] great for. You can get colors and tones that are not available other ways at all. It looks a little bit like watercolor, but it's much more substantial.

MIJA RIEDEL: It's true. It's striking.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: I mean, I've spent a lot of time looking at the different prints.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, you can even see here.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, in *Green*.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: The saturation and the layers, the depth of color, is exquisite.

KATHAN BROWN: The range and how it [moves] from one [density] to another. And it embeds in the paper, so it's not like a watercolor, but it has the character of a watercolor. It can have a washiness and a range of very, very pale tones [to velvety tones], but you can get very flat tones that are pale—that are of any amount of density—which you can't get in watercolor.

MIJA RIEDEL: It's true. And something about the edges are so distinct, but I don't think of really as watercolor, either.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. No. But because it's embedded in the paper, you do get a very subtle edge—

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. [00:54:00]

KATHAN BROWN: —on everything. But even where it's so soft—see the gray up there?

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: There doesn't seem to be an edge there. [But it has more of one than if it had been just drawn on paper. -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. We're talking about the print *Green* now. Diebenkorn's print.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And there's a little triangle of pencil-colored gray up there, which I always thought was so interesting that he stuck that in there. It's like pencil work in the middle of a big watercolor. He's got some at the top, too.

MIJA RIEDEL: The color is—you can absolutely get lost in the color of the print.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: I thought about that with some of the Pat Steirs, too.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: There are some of those that are just—

KATHAN BROWN: She is very good with aquatint. She has a sensibility, and I think certain artists have perhaps more, but I don't know. You know, somebody like Richard Tuttle—he doesn't use it that much, but it's very subtly used. So, artists who are good, you know, who really seem to like to paint with watercolors or have some sense of paint density—like, some artists that do paintings, the paint density is a little bit the same all the way through. Sometimes they do that on purpose. They try to keep the paint density about the same over the whole thing. But most of the time there's a range. And that's, of course, what makes a difference [in Steir's work].

MIJA RIEDEL: I want to think about artists whose work has changed as a result of, or been deeply influenced by, what's happened at Crown Point, and one that comes immediately to mind here and now, of course, is Al Held. Didn't his work in printing lead to his doing watercolor?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. He hadn't done any watercolors, but he got interested in it because of the spit bite.
[00:56:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. That's extraordinary.

KATHAN BROWN: You know a lot about what we've done. That's amazing.

MIJA RIEDEL: It's been fascinating.

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know where you got that idea [about Al], but that's true [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. I've been thinking about it quite a lot.

KATHAN BROWN: I live in a condominium down here, and we had a committee that—I said I would loan them some prints for the hallways. Al Held was the number-one best favorite, you know, and we have his things hanging down there, and I see them every day. And they just hold up great.

MIJA RIEDEL: They're so alive.

KATHAN BROWN: They're really great. Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: Vibrant. There's so much movement going on. They're so complex.

KATHAN BROWN: And the color is so great. He really was able to use the aquatint for all it was worth.

MIJA RIEDEL: But technically, he was outrageous. Didn't he have, like, 30 different runs of color on a plate?

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, oh, yeah. He—well, I don't know about 30.

MIJA RIEDEL: Something.

KATHAN BROWN: But he did use it to the hilt. You could see it. And there's reason. It wasn't just trying to make people work. [They laugh.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, and it was one of the most technically challenging prints ever produced here. Yes?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah. Maybe ever produced anywhere. I don't know that anybody ever used aquatint the way he—not that I'm aware of. I haven't seen any others coming from anywhere. Even old ones. Yeah, the complexity and layers and [tonal] differentials, and the range of differentials.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Anything else about the Art Institute before we move on to the next decade? You stopped there in '74.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. [00:58:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, the '70s got busy.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Things were really picking up here.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: And was there a reason—were you interested in continuing at the Art Institute, or it was time to move on?

KATHAN BROWN: No, I quit. They wanted me to stay, but I—it was too hard. I had to go over the bridge and give up the time, and you know, it was several times a week. And I was running active stuff.

MIJA RIEDEL: Because the Press was still in Berkeley at the time.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. We were doing projects with artists. We'd invite them, and I wanted to be here all the time and not run off to teach a class. And they come here for a week [or two]. We put them up in a hotel, and they come [to the Press] every day, and it builds. And so I think that was the main reason. It just was getting in the way of the activities that I was doing with the Press.

And it didn't seem like I'd make that much money on it. I mean, [teaching] was steady money, where income from the Press wasn't. But at that point I'd pretty much built it up to where you could get enough sales that it was going to be okay, probably, I guess. You know, the main reason for teaching so long was to have some kind of steady income [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Which was better than typing.

KATHAN BROWN: Which is better than typing. [That's what I was doing at first. -KB] A lot better, yeah. [They laugh.]

MIJA RIEDEL: So the '70s were a big change from what had happened to you. It brought the first of the Parasol [Press, NY] contracts, invitations to international artists. You said it wasn't a great time for sales, but it was a great time to experiment.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: And the Conceptual artists began to arrive.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: During the '70s you were committed to expanding your role in publishing, so that was a big, dynamic period of time here.

KATHAN BROWN: Uh-huh [affirmative]. Deciding to do that. Well, I was lucky because I had both Diebenkorn and Thiebaud that were pretty—you know, you could pretty well count on selling something. [01:00:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: We certainly never sold everything. But there was an audience.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. Absolutely.

I wanted to talk first about Sol LeWitt coming in '71.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: You talked about how working with him was a turning point, and you broke your idea of doing stuff by your own taste. What transpired to make that so? Did you observe him—was there something about his working process that changed your mind, that caught your interest or surprised you?

KATHAN BROWN: [Sol LeWitt was the first artist, actually, sent to me by Parasol. I had worked for [Parasol Press owner] Bob Feldman before that on a project of Wayne's, but I had found Wayne by myself and published the book *Delights*. And after that, he agreed to a project with Parasol and asked me to print it. -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, right. Exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: And Bob Feldman saw that. Bob Feldman was a very close friend of the guy that ran the gallery Wayne was in. I can't remember what his name is now [Allan Stone -MR]. But through that connection of Wayne's New York painting dealer with Bob, Bob decided he wanted to ask Wayne to make prints. And I guess Wayne said he would if he could do them with me. I think that's probably where that started.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. And when Feldman saw what came out of here, he got really interested.

KATHAN BROWN: And he started sending [laughs]—wanted to do [lots of projects]. I said, "Well, you're using up all my time." [01:02:00] I wasn't selling much of anything that I was doing on my own, so it was okay. I really enjoyed the artists he sent.

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MIJA RIEDEL: Yes, a lot of Minimalists?

KATHAN BROWN: Learned a lot, yeah. I made some good friends.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes, it sounds like it. And LeWitt continued on working with you for years, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, he was a friend. I wasn't going to steal any artists of Bob's and try to publish them myself. And I never did publish [Sol] until Bob didn't want to anymore. He was just getting out of the whole thing pretty much, and he thought he had plenty of Sol's prints or something. He had made it clear he wasn't going to do anymore. And we even talked about it, so. And then, Sol was really the [first New York artist] that did a project for me that I published.

MIJA RIEDEL: But you weren't particularly enamored of his work at first, is that right?

KATHAN BROWN: No, because I was coming up out of Diebenkorn and Thiebaud, and you know, I didn't know New York art at all. But he was—you can tell how good an artist is when you work [laughs] with him. He was completely a great artist.

MIJA RIEDEL: How would you define that when you say that? What is it in particular that you look for, or saw?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, it's just a confidence, but not cockiness. You just know they know what they're doing [laughs]. And it's going to come out. In life you see—you know people in any walk of life, when they know what they're doing, they inspire a kind of confidence [without being obnoxious]. And you see what they're doing; you meet them; you talk to them. There's no phoniness or anything. There's no show. It's just a real love of what they're doing and a real commitment to it and a real energy there that you know it's going to work out. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. [00:02:06] Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: Even if you hadn't ever seen any of the work, you'd know it was going to work out.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: But that's interesting for you to say that, too, because a lot of these artists were coming to etching not having done etching before.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, right.

MIJA RIEDEL: So they were—

KATHAN BROWN: They just all had whatever that was.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. And LeWitt was one of them.

KATHAN BROWN: Absolutely. He was the first one I met that really—of course, I knew Diebenkorn and Thiebaud were both very much like that, so I had a model [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: I'm just curious about that idea of stretching your parameters beyond your own taste. And how LeWitt, the LeWitt experience, moved that idea forward.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, well, it did. It was very clear that he was the real thing.

MIJA RIEDEL: It is extraordinary when somebody you're not necessarily drawn to in the first place, or does work that you're not particularly drawn to originally, [but] the more you spend time with it, the more you see it, the more you understand the process, the ideas behind it.

KATHAN BROWN: That's absolutely right, yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: How that changes to the point that you can then end up being completely enamored of it.

KATHAN BROWN: It can even be done if you don't actually even know [it's happening]. You just start getting involved with that, the life work of some particular artist. Even one that's dead, you can discover that and you get into—I mean, that's how art works. When people make those kinds of discoveries, they start to see something. And it's very hard for anybody to explain it, but if you ever had any kind of real art experience, you know what it is.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. But I think that goes even a step further when you're watching the work be made. You're seeing the process of how it's done.

KATHAN BROWN: That's true. It's lucky. That's [laughs] why I'm so lucky—

MIJA RIEDEL: You are. [They laugh.]

KATHAN BROWN: —because I know how to do that.

MIJA RIEDEL: That is an extraordinary—well, because it's such an insight to how that creative mind is working. [00:04:01]

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: And how each one is different and then also similar.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That's surprising. So, yeah, it's great. It's great. Couldn't be better [laughs] for something to do with your life, I think.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely. It's constantly surprising.

KATHAN BROWN: I was really lucky to get an engagement at the beginning with the pros, you know, and got sent them. I didn't even know or do anything. I just was lucky.

MIJA RIEDEL: And so interesting to have those avant-garde contemporary artists sent to you when you have this very old technique for printing.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes [laughs]. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Chuck Close came in '72 and did *Keith*, and he talks about how that was really the starting point that allowed the grid, or what he called the "incremental unit," to be visible in his future work.

We just talked about Al Held. Were there other artists that you saw experience that kind of profound or lasting change through printmaking?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, that came into their other work?

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, it's pretty clear with those two, because it's so visible.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: But I think pretty much everybody has felt that it changed—if they got into it seriously, they felt that there'd been some change.

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting.

KATHAN BROWN: Because it calls your attention to different things than you've thought about before. And then, that kind of thought comes back into the other work. I mean, it's not a major—obviously it's, you know, not earthshaking for them necessarily.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. [00:06:00]

KATHAN BROWN: But I think that most everybody that we have worked with here in any seriousness, like for more than one project, has at some point or other said something like, "You know, I really think this has influenced my other work."

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And when you say that it catches their attention, or they see something differently, have they elaborated on that to you?

KATHAN BROWN: No, it's impossible. They don't talk. Nobody wants to spew out stuff about that like that.

They'd rather have you just look at it. Every once in a while, somebody will say something like, "Well, this is something different for me," or "This is interesting, and I think I can use this idea later." Or something like that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. And does it surface more or less with a particular process? Like does aquatint offer a big opportunity for change or insight, or is it something about one of the different grounds? Was it maybe the steel facing on the—the steel facing that went on the copper? Or does it really vary by artist?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, there isn't—you probably named all the possibilities [laughs]. There aren't that many. But aquatint certainly has a lot of range. And the grounds can be used in different ways.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: I'm looking at this Diebenkorn with all his fingerprints in it here [and also the impression of the cloth of his jacket. You can see it there; he leaned on the plate -KB].

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, yes, of course.

KATHAN BROWN: It just looked like this [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: This is [inaudible].

KATHAN BROWN: I mean, you have to be careful not to do that when you—[they laugh]. So I say, Don't, you know, lean on it. Oh, okay. See what that comes out like. [They laugh.] Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: That's great. I wouldn't have known what that was—

KATHAN BROWN: Yes [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: —unless you had said that.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: Do you recall what the title of this piece is?

KATHAN BROWN: They're just called *Soft Grounds*, *Six Soft Grounds*, I think, or however many there were in the set. Because that is the whole point of it, is the ground is very soft. And you can do that. [00:08:02] You can press stuff in or make different kinds of lines and marks [that are soft -KB]. His fingerprints in there, a lot of fingerprints too; they're deliberate.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: And this is all black and white. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I think of Pat Steir, and her waterfall pieces really came out of a printing project, right?

KATHAN BROWN: [She was] pouring the ground on. And then she started doing the paintings a little bit later.

MIJA RIEDEL: Pretty momentous.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, that's true. I'm not sure that she wouldn't have done that anyway. I mean, she got the idea for it with this, but she probably poured some watercolors in her studio too.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: I'm not going to take very much credit [laughs]. Artists, they—it comes out of them, you know, whatever it is. And they're using it here and then they're using it there. But I don't say, "Oh, you can do this," and then they do that, and then they run off and do it in their studio. It's not as simple as that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, Chuck Close, though—I mean, some have come straight out and said that [his letting the grid show] directly was a result of something that happened here.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh.

MIJA RIEDEL: I mean, something—

KATHAN BROWN: Well, that's nice. I don't recall that but—

MIJA RIEDEL: I think that was in one of the NGA catalogues. He was quoted as saying that.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, he did want to try a lot, but, of course, once he got started with something, it took him so long to do it that—

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, that was a two-month process, at least, wasn't it?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. There's not a whole lot of range of different kinds of things he can do [laughs], because he gets going with it and he does that, I mean, because he's—uses this idea of repetition. Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: The '70s really brought the Conceptual artists into the gallery. [00:10:04]

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Ruth Fine described it as using "one of the oldest and most traditional printmaking processes in radically nontraditional ways," which I thought was a great description of that. Do you think that the process of bringing Conceptual artists into Crown Point really started with *The Sun's Reception*? Tom Marioni in '74?

KATHAN BROWN: Maybe to some degree. But, you know, there were different kinds of Conceptual art coming out of New York and coming out of California at that time. Tom certainly started the kind of gestural Conceptual art. The out-of-body work things. We [also] had Mel Bochner who was [very different but] always called a Conceptual artist. Bob Feldman sent [him to] me before that. So you can't really say that there wasn't Conceptual work being done at all. Because he was called that. That was his, you know, his mathematic things and things like that and probably others too.

What about Barry Le Va? And even Dorothea Rockburne was pretty Conceptual. She was called Conceptual. So there was a whole Conceptual gaggle of people that Bob Feldman was sending before. But the kind of Conceptual art that Tom represented was more western art, more something from here. A very different concept from the East Coast; nobody even thought of that. I don't know of any East Coast artists that were—Vito?

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Tom recommended some for me to publish once I got to know him. And Vito Acconci was one of them, but that was not—that's Conceptual art, too, but it's borderline photographic base, so that's a different attitude to the Mel Bochner kind of thing.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Well, I was just thinking of *The Sun's Reception* as being such a different process, too, of having that copper plate, outside, almost as performance art at the same time, yes. [17:51:46]

KATHAN BROWN: Well, it was a performance, yeah. It was mixed with a performance. And the later prints that he did, even if we didn't have an audience, it was still essentially a performance, because it was the kind of action—it was an "action," as he called it. Not necessarily a performance. He called these things "performance action."

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: "Action" was his favorite word. But other people liked to say "performance." Some people called it "performance action" [laughs] or "action performance" or something like that, because he, you know, he could get in on the wave of whatever they thought they were talking about. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Because it was the same thing [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: What they were talking about is what he was talking about [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: It was just the West Coast translation.

KATHAN BROWN: The name, yeah [laughs]. [No, not a translation. The West Coast Conceptual art of that time was very different from East Coast Conceptual art. -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: It was a very different process than anything that happened before it, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, you know, I don't think that different, in a way, because everything that anybody [can draw, can be drawn] if they have a plate, is direct on the plate. And if, when you make your drawings, you do drum brushing or—to make them, you could do it on a plate. Or you could do it on paper. So in this way, it's the similar thing to somebody who makes drawings by drawing, you know, with a pencil on paper. And then they decide to use the wax ground, and put the paper on top of the wax ground, and draw with something, and then you get that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: And it looks different. But it's essentially drawing. It's just that you can make these different kinds of marks that are so different with this process because of being cut, you know, etched into the plate.

MIJA RIEDEL: And because the ground is so soft.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, the soft ground has all that different range, picks up every kind of texture, whatever you use. [00:14:00] So—but the hard ground is deliberately made not to do that. So you have to cut into it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And to your mind, that was just expanding the range of Conceptual work that you were looking at?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, it didn't feel like it was a great deviation from what you were already doing. And it didn't matter that it was outside in Sausalito, and that it was partly a performance and there wasn't—

KATHAN BROWN: No, it was nice. I thought that was a good—interesting idea. It was fun and great, yeah. That was good. In some funny way a lot of the—because the artists are working on the plate, the connection of the artist to the plate is a [through] drawing. Anyway, it's just a drawing on the plate, but it was with an audience, and it was a little bit different in that regard. But not that different.

MIJA RIEDEL: Wasn't the sun also partially exposed in there?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, he was drawing around the reflection of the sun.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. That's what it was.

KATHAN BROWN: That's what he was doing. He deliberately set it up so the sun would be shining on the plate. It actually made a circle. So when he was drawing, he was tracing that so the sun circled—

MIJA RIEDEL: And the sound was recorded, too, wasn't it?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. Because he did it with an audience. He asked—we invited people, and then the Robinsons wanted to do it in their garden, and they were friends.

MIJA RIEDEL: Collectors, too, the Robinsons?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, David and Mary Robinson. And they had asked Tom to do a performance for them. He was doing these kind of public performances that would result in a drawing. And they were somebody we knew; we'd been to parties in their house. I mean, we weren't friends in the sense that we hang out all the time. [00:16:03]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: But they had artist parties, parties that they invited artists, and Tom was always one that they liked and invited, and we both got to know them. And they asked him if he would do something at their house.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: So he came up with that idea. It was his idea to do it as a print, because I had asked him to do a print, and he said, "Well, maybe we can do this together."

MIJA RIEDEL: And it was the first print he did with you.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: That was a very auspicious beginning.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: On many levels [laughs].

KATHAN BROWN: But a beautiful print.

MIJA RIEDEL: So, still in the '70s, you really decided to publish more seriously.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: What motivated the shift? I know financial solvency had something to do with it too. You were going to be able to stay in business a lot longer if you were publishing and—rather than just printing. But what motivated the—

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I don't know. You can't make money from publishing. [You just try to make ends meet. -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, that's—yeah [laughs]. That's true.

KATHAN BROWN: The trouble with publishing is you've got to sell. When I would print for Bob, he did the selling. He is a master salesperson. He's fantastic. He's such a—yeah, really neat guy, actually. I like him very much. It's a great relationship.

MIJA RIEDEL: What did you want to do that wasn't happening that you thought publishing more would enable you to do?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, I think it was just that I wanted to do some artists that he wasn't interested in. I would suggest Conceptual artists and then—I mean, Sol was a Conceptual artist, [but in] a different way, the New York [way]. [Except for Thiebaud, Bob didn't care anything about any of the artists I liked. -KB] I wanted to publish Diebenkorn, and he said, "Oh, no. I can't sell that."

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Isn't that extraordinary?

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: I mean, that's '77, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, I suggested it to him. I said, "You know, he's a really good artist from here." [00:18:05]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: "And I think he'd do it for you if it was"—I'd suggest it, and he said, "No, I could never sell it." [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Amazing.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.] Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: So you decided to launch more of a publishing venture. I read that Robert Mangold and Brice Marden each published one piece under your imprint to help launch the printing business. Is that true?

KATHAN BROWN: They were both there [at different times] working with Bob, you know, for a project at the time that I was trying to think of doing it [on my own], and I was talking about how to get going. So I asked Bob if it would be okay [to publish one extra-small print myself -KB]. Because they had both expressed an interest in helping me out that way, you know. So it was just one print [each].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. It seems that there has just been a particularly strong commitment to Crown Point on the part of the artists, especially from the early days.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [And generosity from Bob. -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: What do you attribute that to? Do you think it has anything to do with your own background as an artist?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, I don't know. I think the [artists] loved the process, and nobody had ever shown it to them before. That certainly was a big part of it. But they probably liked me. I mean, we worked together well, and I was an artist myself, so it wasn't like working in a shop of a professional printer without [the printer] necessarily being an artist. Although most of the professional printers are artists, as a matter of fact [. . .]. But I think I may have been one of the first that actually did it, because Bob encouraged me, you know, and I have to give Bob credit for the publishing part, because he sold those [prints], and no one was thinking to try to sell etchings at that point.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. [00:20:00]

KATHAN BROWN: He really liked the process. And he really was a wonderful promoter. Bob Feldman is the best salesman in the world. He is so eager and interested, and he just draws you in and shows you everything you need to know without too much [fuss], and he's just great.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: So he was able to sell those things, even by Minimalist artists, you know.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: Not that easy. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. And so he just got really excited by what you were able to do.

KATHAN BROWN: He loved the process. He got very keen on it [after Wayne suggested me for that early Parasol Press project -KB]. Then he wanted to publish Sol [who I didn't know, but really appreciated -KB]. And so he said he wanted to do it. And Bob really liked the things, and came out and saw what was going on, and said, "This is so interesting. It's something I want to get involved with." So then he got Brice Marden.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. And he sent you quite a few people.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: All through the '70s.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Really exposed a whole new group of New York artists [to etching].

KATHAN BROWN: And I got to make some good, nice friends in that way too.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. And a lot of them became long-term, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I never published any of his artists without his specifically telling me that [it was okay with him -KB] [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: No, and I wasn't about to steal anybody.

MIJA RIEDEL: You did your first art fair, I think, in the '70s, too, right? Art Basel in '77.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. Margarete Roeder had something to do with that. She suggested it and went with me, and we pulled it off somehow.

MIJA RIEDEL: And she also introduced you to John Cage that year, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Met him then, and she recommended me to him. Yeah, she's an old friend.

MIJA RIEDEL: I know you took a break from the fairs for a while. [00:22:02] You went back in the early—the Art Basel, anyway—you went back in the '80s, and now you're back. Are you still at the fairs?

KATHAN BROWN: We've always done the fairs. We haven't gone overseas for a while. It's just more expensive and not really that productive in terms of sales for us.

MIJA RIEDEL: I was going to ask how significant the fairs have been over the years.

KATHAN BROWN: It's important—it was important to get exposure at the beginning, but that's not so important anymore.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right, now that you've had your 50th anniversary.

[They laugh.]

KATHAN BROWN: Well, people know who we are. And they come to us if they want a particular thing. But we certainly want to have a presence [outside San Francisco]. And Valerie goes; I don't like the fairs. I don't go to them at all anymore, but I used to with her. But she's the one that sells things. And Karen McCready [started] the gallery in New York because Karen didn't want [laughs] to leave New York. But that [was] good because we got exposure in New York. But then when Karen died, Valerie was running the gallery here. So we pretty much had, obviously, closed up everything in New York, because Karen died an untimely death, which was really [terrible].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. So you opened the gallery in New York because Karen was there and didn't want to move.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: I didn't know that.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: That's fascinating.

KATHAN BROWN: One foot in front of the other.

MIJA RIEDEL: I thought you wanted to open—

KATHAN BROWN: I don't usually strategize. I just do what's in front of me [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: I thought you sought her out to open a gallery in New York.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I sought her out to sell things for us.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: I really liked Karen. I'd met her at several of the fairs, and we got along, and I wanted her to move out here and run the gallery here and be our salesperson. But she didn't want to leave New York. So she said she'd love to try and develop something for us there, and she'd still be the sales director. And she'd have somebody that she'd talk to, and she'd come out and train [so we could also] run something here. [00:24:01] But she wasn't going to move. And so if I wanted to hire her on that basis, that she'd like to do. She thought she could be successful. So I said, "Sure, let's try it."

MIJA RIEDEL: Extraordinary. That lasted about 10 years.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: So it wasn't that you felt, I need to have a New York presence. It was that Karen wanted to stay there. Oh, that's fascinating. I didn't know that.

KATHAN BROWN: I just wanted a good sales person.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: I wanted her [laughs], yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: What about her was so compelling that you were willing to open a New York gallery? That's quite an extreme to go to.

KATHAN BROWN: I had seen her at fairs and things, and I just got to know her a little bit. I didn't know her really very well. But she was great. She was a very warm person and real, and she could sell. She could sell. That's something that I never—it's a mystery to me how people do that.

MIJA RIEDEL: It's so interesting to me to hear you say that. And I know that's true because I've read that you really have always been much more interested in working with the artists—

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: —and the education aspect of it. But here, the business has thrived for

50 years, certainly with its ups and downs, I know. And the earthquake part of relocation read like a thriller.
[They laugh.]

KATHAN BROWN: I know [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: So I know there's been plenty of challenges.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: So you've always teamed up with someone who was great at sales. It started out being Feldman who was someone who sells.

KATHAN BROWN: Feldman, I could recognize it by the time [laughs] I worked with Feldman for a while. And when somebody could sell, they can sell. And I knew I couldn't. I tried but—

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting because I think of good sales so much as being education and you're so much about education.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I can do education, but I can't do sales.

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting.

KATHAN BROWN: And I still can't.

MIJA RIEDEL: But that didn't hold you back.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.] No, right. Well, I did have—when we had a gallery here and Fredrica Drotos stayed here and [was running it].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. [00:26:01]

KATHAN BROWN: And Karen [was in] New York. I had to have two salespersons [laughs]. Then [after Fredrica left], I had Thomas Way for a little while, but he turned out to be a crook. But he was a good salesman. [. . . -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [What about] the crook part?

KATHAN BROWN: [He stole some prints. -KB] It didn't end up being the end of the world or anything, but it was a shock.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, when I read that, it was quite a shock. [. . . -KB]

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, because I always trusted people. I've never tried to keep track of what they are doing. Once they have a job [here], they do their job and I wasn't watching him really, you know. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. In the '70s—I want to just talk a little bit about John Cage and how that all began. He came here, I think, between '78 and '92, when he passed away.

KATHAN BROWN: Practically every year.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, 15 times or something like that.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Twenty-seven groups of prints, over 600 [different images]. That invitation seems so unusual, and his acceptance as well; I wonder what inspired that.

KATHAN BROWN: Did I say [laughs] anywhere?

MIJA RIEDEL: I don't think so.

KATHAN BROWN: I'm trying to think what it was like back then. I was really casting around for, you know, some artists that nobody else had. [00:28:00] But I—he'd done some visual art. He did some illustrations for those *Thoreau* things. And he did some other thing I'd seen. They were really nice. They were beautiful. I'd seen a little something. But mostly I had read something, you know, that was talking about his thinking, his approach. It just seemed like—I think Tom encouraged me in that too.

MIJA RIEDEL: That sounds reasonable.

KATHAN BROWN: Margarete Roeder was very close to [Cage]. And she has always remained a very close friend [of mine] to this day. And she thought he would be good and he could do something.

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting.

KATHAN BROWN: Because she really knew him. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So I think that had a lot to do with it, taking that risk.

MIJA RIEDEL: I mean, that seems the most far-out of your castings.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. That was a risk, definitely. Because it costs a lot of money to bring people here and have them stay for two weeks at a hotel [laughs]. And come to work every day [with several printers working with them], monopolize all these people. You have to figure you're going to spend at least \$20,000 just off the top for a project when you ask a new artist.

MIJA RIEDEL: Wow.

KATHAN BROWN: Even back then, probably more now. But that's always the figure I had in my head. If you don't think you can sell \$20,000 worth, maybe you shouldn't do it [laughs], you know. And [Cage] had no reputation, so much, for visual art. He'd done a little bit. He did something or other so—

MIJA RIEDEL: Not what you think of when you think of John Cage.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. But I think Tom had an influence on me there. [00:30:00] He had a pretty good sense that somehow that would work. And I don't know, [it] just seemed like it was worth a try.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Did you get at all nervous when the flames started up [laughs]?

KATHAN BROWN: No, no. That part was great. I always encourage [laughs] new, different thinking.

MIJA RIEDEL: So, that was—

KATHAN BROWN: So, yeah, "This is going to be great. This will work." [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Once you saw the flames, it was good news.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. [But that wasn't John's first project. The first one, *Seven Day Diary*, is very beautiful. That was 1978. *Changes and Disappearances* began in 1979 and was completed in 1982. He worked with us almost every year until he died in 1992. -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: I know a lot of the Crown Point artists have remarked on his influence. Did you observe anything happening between Cage and any of the other artists in particular? Or then when they saw his work and what he was doing?

KATHAN BROWN: Not—can't think especially of what that might be. But everybody seemed to be interested. Even Diebenkorn was kind of surprised and interested in what he did. But then he was a very open person, you know.

MIJA RIEDEL: Cage or—

KATHAN BROWN: Diebenkorn.

MIJA RIEDEL: Diebenkorn, mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: I mean, his work is kind of this narrow thing for his role. And I think some people have been surprised when I've said, Oh, he liked so-and-so. Or he liked [laughs]—you know, he liked to look at things. Like, I wouldn't have thought that he would particularly have thought Wayne Thiebaud would have been of any interest. I had the idea to do it, but I think I asked him what he thought. "Yeah, that might be good."

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So he also had that maxim of not being limited by his own particular taste or his own particular style.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: Would you say that Cage was the most significant artist to work at the press for you personally? Or one of them?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, one of them. [00:32:00] Diebenkorn, probably because he was the first one. And that was significant for sure. Because of him, I got the whole pattern exactly how I would treat the artists, and the way of approaching [the project], which I think was really quite different from what anybody else was doing. Not that there were that many people actually publishing at that time. But there were some. And mostly they were printers, you know.

There was a guy in Chicago—I forget his name—but he had a very clear idea of what—it was litho, what he was doing. Nobody was doing etching back then. There wasn't much knowledge of etching at that point. But mostly, a lot of the publishers, particularly publishers who hired printers, you know, like Bob Feldman did with me, would have an idea what they thought that the artist should do. Like, "How about doing some of your clouds?" or whatever it is [laughs]. They would try to give them some tips on what they wanted, because they would have to sell them. You know, "I want this kind of a thing." But Bob was very good. He said, "They can do what they want."

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh.

KATHAN BROWN: So, that—

MIJA RIEDEL: That was different.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: So that's extraordinary confidence in his artists and also in what you were doing with them.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, I think so. It took him a minute or two at the beginning. Sol, I think, straightened him out at the start [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: But he went along. So, he was good. But I had a feeling that other people—I can't say for sure because I don't really know what their relationships were with their artists—but I had heard people say, you know, rumblings or whatever that, Well, they want a set of whatever [laughs], you know, sailboats or something. [00:34:02]

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly [laughs]. Did anybody come with absolutely—oh, I imagine there must have, over the years, come with absolutely no idea of what they wanted to do.

KATHAN BROWN: Most of them. And we usually encouraged that, actually. But, you know, back in those days, too, at the beginning, when materials were kind of king in painting.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: There was a lot of emphasis on materials.

[Audio break.]

MIJA RIEDEL: And you also started working with Hans Haacke, I think in '78. His piece, *Tiffany Cares*, was one of the two, I think, that he did.

KATHAN BROWN: That was one of the first things we published. That was Tom's suggestion.

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting. Did you choose at some point to include artists making more political work as part of the bigger picture of art that you wanted to address?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, it was a Conceptual art idea. It was Tom's notion that,

you know, the range of—he was an influence on me at that time about that. I didn't know if it would sell, but at that point, I was more interested in making a statement.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: To try carving out some little area or something. And I didn't want to steal any artists from Bob.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. So, you did—

KATHAN BROWN: Or anybody else that had—Brooke Alexander had sent me a couple of artists in the meantime.

MIJA RIEDEL: Sorry, who had sent them?

KATHAN BROWN: Brooke Alexander.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: But just one or—I can't remember. I could look back over the list and find out who that was. But anyway, I know I had some dealings with him—nice man, very generous and good, and not any problems. [00:36:02] But I wouldn't have wanted to—

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: It was getting kind of crowded. [I] had to find some category for me [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: It was a perfect time to go more into the international.

KATHAN BROWN: I just tried to do the Conceptual people, because they were hard to sell, and if anybody could sell them, Karen could. Karen could really sell.

MIJA RIEDEL: Really?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Especially in New York. Was there more of a market for that there, do you think?

KATHAN BROWN: A little bit more.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. I would think.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: I want to talk about your books, but maybe we'll leave that till Monday.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, that's another whole subject.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. Well, we can stop here for the day. We'll pick up with the '80s and your work on Monday.

KATHAN BROWN: Okay.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay, great. Thank you.

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MIJA RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel with Kathan Brown for the Archives of American Art [Smithsonian Institution], on Monday, December 18, 2017. This is card number two, and we're at Crown Point Press [San Francisco, CA].

So, thank you so much for showing me your own etching books; we just had a chance to take a look at those.

KATHAN BROWN: Okay.

MIJA RIEDEL: That was a pleasure to see. So many of them have to do with a sense of place. And I've thought about that, well, the North Pole [was part of the series but] was not in the etching [category]. But Sardinia, Pompeii; I know you've been to the Mongolian Desert, I think.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: How do you decide on where you're going to go?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, [laughs] I don't know. It's usually just something comes up that allows it, you know. I haven't really planned anything about travels, but I always like traveling a lot.

MIJA RIEDEL: You seem to often choose remote places.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. Well, that's really more fun, if you have an opportunity.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. Do you have any plans for another book?

KATHAN BROWN: No [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: No book?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't think my brain would do it now. It's getting a little foggy [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, *Know That You Are Lucky* is 2012, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, that would be the last one. I think that was just the effort to finish, kind of frame it and kind of set it up, kind of tell the story. Several times people would ask me to do that, and I thought, Well, I'd better do it before I can't remember it anymore. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: And we were just talking about how your major at Antioch was English. I thought it was art, but you had a minor in art.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Your major was English, and that's what you thought you would do originally.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, it makes sense how you've dovetailed the writing and the visuals so well as a career.

I wanted to talk about the '80s. We covered the '70s pretty well on Friday. That was a real era of expansion here. You had the projects in Japan and China from '82 to '94. You opened the gallery in New York in '83. [00:02:02] You moved to San Francisco [from Oakland] in '86.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: And worked with more international artists.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Would you describe the program in Japan, what inspired it, and how it affected Crown Point?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, usually everything that I've done has been, as I've often written, [laughs] one foot in front of the other. So it's kind of, when there's an opportunity, it's a matter of grabbing it. I had a Japanese employee, Takada, Hidekatsu Takada. And he was a student of mine at the Art Institute, actually. And then later came to work at Crown Point. He was working for me. And he grew up in Kyoto. And so, I don't know, somehow through that, I had a contact there, and he knew a really good printer.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: Who was actually—in a way, it was a kind of gesture of thinking it would be nice to use this skill before it's not available anymore, because there's so few. Even Takada said, you know, nobody's doing it in Japan anymore. He told us about the last one that really has the skill.

MIJA RIEDEL: That was Tadashi Toda? And that was a process that dated back to the 1700[s] and 1800s, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. Very old process, and he did it the same way, just by himself.

MIJA RIEDEL: His family had actually gone way back.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, his father had been a printer. And his father before him and so on. And then he was the last of the line. [00:04:01]

MIJA RIEDEL: And hadn't they printed—his family printed—like, Hiroshige and Utamaro?

KATHAN BROWN: I think so, Hiroshige. Right. Yeah, Utamaro. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. That was what I heard. So I guess when I learned that, Takada told me that he had met him and that there was a possibility that he'd do something. And Ida, Shoichi Ida, was a Japanese artist that we were working with at the time. He was actually still living in Kyoto, but Takada had [been] here for some time. But Ida was very instrumental in making that connection for us. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: So I didn't really decide to do anything except it was offered to me. It's like Ida says, "Well, you know, you could have him print some things for you. He's still printing, and he'd probably do it, so why not ask him?" [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: And that seems to dovetail beautifully with a long-term desire or commitment, passion, you have for preserving antique forms of printing.

KATHAN BROWN: I guess so, yeah. That's what the etching thing was about, too, [at first] because hardly anybody was doing it. And certainly no one was doing it to the kind of depths that we were exploring.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: If they did it, it was just a few little scratchy lines. Nobody even thought tones, or I shouldn't say nobody, but it was not very—if you said the word etching, people immediately imagined [laughs], well, scratchy Rembrandt print is what that would be.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: But the idea of something like the Diebenkorns, even when we started doing them, they said, "Oh, they can't be etchings. They're not etchings." [00:06:04]

MIJA RIEDEL: So it was this opportunity to preserve this old printing technique. How was the process different than anything you'd done before—the process in Japan.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, in Japan. That was a woodcut, not an etching, of course.

MIJA RIEDEL: And what about that was interesting to you? You'd spent all this time working on etchings. Maybe that was why it was interesting?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, as the other side of the coin, not so much even because of the technique, but because our artists didn't cut the blocks or do any printing or anything. It was pretty much the way it always had been done, with their craftsmen-technicians [but different from our approach in the etching studio, where our artists are completely hands-on -KB]. That's how they did it. I just went the opposite way that I always [had done].

I was always very curious about the artist doing all their own work on the plates. Our printers handled the really technical stuff like putting the grounds on so they would work well, because if we asked an artist who had never done it before to roll out a ground, it's not going to be a very good ground. And that's going to be a handicap for them in their drawing. But [the artists] certainly understood the process, and knew what a ground was doing, and what was the point of it, and how it worked and everything. So it wasn't like we just gave them something, and said "Draw on this, and we'll take it and make it into an [laughs] etching," you know. I was always very keen on everybody understanding about the process.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly. But in Japan they didn't work on the materials at all.

KATHAN BROWN: The artists didn't do anything except direct.

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting.

KATHAN BROWN: It was all about the skill that was in the hands of the [printer and carver].

MIJA RIEDEL: So, completely different.

KATHAN BROWN: Completely different.

MIJA RIEDEL: And very watercolor, as I understand.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], yes. [00:08:03] But it was a skill that was really in danger of being lost, and, in fact, I think it has been lost now. I don't know who's doing it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, that's too bad.

KATHAN BROWN: But maybe somebody is. Somewhere. But this notion of the watercolor woodcut is a very highly, highly skilled thing.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely.

KATHAN BROWN: Especially the way they did it, yeah. People cut woodcuts—we're doing that here—and they're usually so crude by comparison.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. What was the difference? Can you describe that technique, what they were doing? Especially if it's lost, it might be nice to have that written down. Or have you documented it in one of your books?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, I'm sure it's documented.

[Audio break.]

So it was really about the technique, right, you asked me. It was to use the technique of somebody else who was very skilled. I mean, in the case of the etching, it was also something that I was very interested in. It's a very refined process, which can be used—there is so much subtlety in it if you can use it. But you wouldn't see it unless you had a really good printer.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: Even if the artist employed subtlety of drawing, it wouldn't show. In all cases of this hand kind of printing, both the woodcuts and the etchings, that would be the case. But with the etchings, the artist did the plates, and we had very skilled printers [to print them].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. [00:10:01]

KATHAN BROWN: We had taught ourselves here and had handed [it] down from one to another through Crown Point. It was probably, you know, maybe more intense than anyone else was doing. Although certainly in the past that kind of range was available. But I didn't think anyone around—it was really in danger of being lost, because nobody was working at that level, looking at the old prints and seeing how much range there was, and then saying, We could do that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Now, this sounds so different. Would this have been something that you would have considered a collaboration, or the artist would have considered a collaboration? Would the printer have considered this more of a collaboration?

KATHAN BROWN: What?

MIJA RIEDEL: The printing in Japan, the woodcuts, because you were very specific that they are not collaborations happening at Crown Point. [That it's the artists' work. -KB]

KATHAN BROWN: That's the etchings. See, I didn't think the etchings were collaborations because [the artist draws on the plates, and the printer supplies the printing technique only -KB].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. The woodcuts, though, perhaps?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [Maybe. -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: They were more collaboration?

KATHAN BROWN: Right.

MIJA RIEDEL: That's an interesting distinction.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: The program also really brought significant new artists to Crown Point that might not have come to San Francisco but that were really interested in going to Japan.

KATHAN BROWN: Right.

MIJA RIEDEL: I'm thinking of Al Held or David Salle. Alex Katz. And that was wonderful, new. And this was also your 20th anniversary, right? '82?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: So this was a great new beginning in a lot of ways.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, it was a way of doing something else.

MIJA RIEDEL: I think 17 [artists went to Japan], right? Maybe about two a year?

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, I don't know.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. Francesco—

KATHAN BROWN: —Clemente.

MIJA RIEDEL: Francesco Clemente, I think, and Pat Steir were a couple of early ones.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, I had already worked with them, so I knew them. But then we branched out, and there's some that we didn't know and couldn't get otherwise, you're right. [00:12:02]

MIJA RIEDEL: In '87 you stopped printing in Japan and moved to China.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, we didn't stop in Japan, really; we just—I think it tapered off a little bit.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. It got very expensive, too, I think; the economy changed.

KATHAN BROWN: It just became pretty difficult. Toda was getting older, and we didn't have a backup, you know, because he was so—he was the one.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, he was it.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: There was no apprentice or anything.

KATHAN BROWN: No.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, my goodness. Wow.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, he did everything. And he was less interested in doing it as he got older and just—it just sort of played itself out.

MIJA RIEDEL: So what inspired China then? Some door must have opened there. You went to Beijing and Shanghai, I think, for a few years.

KATHAN BROWN: That was Sören Edgren. He was someone—I didn't know him, but he saw the woodcuts that we'd done in Japan. And he came up to me at an opening where some of them were on display and asked me if I'd be interested in doing this similar thing in China. And I said, "Well, it sounds interesting," because nobody was going to China then.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: It was hard to go to China. You had to get special visas, and I had no contacts or anything there, but he did. And he set that all up for me.

MIJA RIEDEL: And was that completely different than what had happened in Japan? They were state-run studios, for one, right?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know. [00:14:01] Yeah, I guess you'd call them that. They were still a—it was just a printer and just his attic, you know. It wasn't anything like a factory or anything. It was still a printer. But nothing was done without the knowledge and consent of the state in China [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: You were there at a very interesting time.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes [laughs]. But I don't think you could really call it "state run." I mean, I didn't see anybody overseeing anything. The printers were still just doing it.

MIJA RIEDEL: And this was woodcut again?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, it was woodcut.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: That was the woodcut. The woodcuts, I had done them in Japan, but this was completely different.

MIJA RIEDEL: How so?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, for one thing, they don't carve a block for each color. They just make a bunch of [little blocks]. In Japan, if they did woodcuts, it would be, like, all of them would be the same size, and you'd print different areas of them, and stack them up. We have some blocks [from China] around here somewhere you can see, and they're wonderful little things. They're just little chunks. They don't [laughs] waste any of that wood, you know? The cherrywood or whatever.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: They don't waste anything. Just cut the little shape of a little tree out of it and carve that thing out, and, yeah, it's very interesting. Very tactile. And they make this little jigsaw puzzle [laughs] of all these little images out of the wood, and then they print it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Fantastic. In China?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, that is fantastic. It's very different.

KATHAN BROWN: So it isn't like our printing at all.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: The Japan printing was more like our printing.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. [00:16:02] And China, that lasted for about three years. How and why did that come to an end?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, I don't know. It just got too hard. I think I wrote about it somewhere in some detail. I don't know, maybe in the memoir, but somewhere.

MIJA RIEDEL: I don't remember it in there, but I'm certain you've talked about it.

KATHAN BROWN: It sort of wound itself down. It was never as connected. There were a couple of different printers in different places. And it was always a little bit iffy whether you could do it again [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Well, it wasn't the same person, the same relationship—

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: —the same place over and over again.

KATHAN BROWN: It was, but we had one in Shanghai; we added [another in Beijing] because Sören found him. And it was Sören Edgren, really, [who] set up everything.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. I do remember reading about that.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: In '86, you moved from Oakland to San Francisco; you moved Crown Point Press from Oakland to San Francisco. And you started sort of an extraordinary few years of production. You were doing, I think, 12 projects a year, as opposed to three or five. And what was the inspiration, or the motivation, and how were you able to just, you know, triple or quadruple what you'd been doing before?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know; I haven't thought about it. But when we moved into this building, we [had] [laughs]—"delusions of grandeur," I think I called it in the book.

MIJA RIEDEL: [Laughs.] But you lived up to it, I mean, 12 projects—

KATHAN BROWN: Just for a little while.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, three years or so.

KATHAN BROWN: It wasn't sustainable. The building just appeared, you know. It was one of those things that landed in my lap by accident. [00:18:01] And I somehow figured out some way, with help from other people, how to get a hold of it. And nobody wanted it anyway—anything in this neighborhood back then. And, of course, that's changed entirely.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. It's extraordinary where you landed. [They laugh.]

KATHAN BROWN: Right.

MIJA RIEDEL: And then, what's grown up around—

KATHAN BROWN: Right. And even the museum wasn't here [SFMOMA]. There was a little bit of a murmur about

maybe they'd be moving in, that they were looking at some buildings, something around the neighborhood. But we thought they might, but they weren't there.

MIJA RIEDEL: You weren't counting on that.

KATHAN BROWN: But Moscone was there. [Moscone Center, 747 Howard Street -MR]

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: Moscone was pretty new.

MIJA RIEDEL: Now, I remember this part of the city back when this part of the city was nothing.

KATHAN BROWN: All of a sudden it did look more inviting.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: But not so inviting that they thought they could charge a whole lot for a building like this. And the owner really wanted to get rid of it and, I don't know, [Robert] Feher, who was the landlord in [our earlier space], knew the person here. And he had some instrumental [part] in getting it for me, even though I didn't have much credit to recommend me.

MIJA RIEDEL: That was an extraordinary story.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, it was all about luck.

MIJA RIEDEL: And you had put that together in about nine weeks, as I recall.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, it was really about luck and the earthquake and—

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: —panic after the earthquake and the—just sinking—seeing it. And the fact [although] that this building was [not] damaged, they thought, it's brick; nobody's going to want it. They're going to tear it down. And the owner of it didn't want them to tear it down. He was trying to find somebody who would promise not to tear it down [laughs]. And there was some sentimentality involved and everything, you know. I mean, it was just one of those lucky moments that [laughs] you know that you're lucky.

MIJA RIEDEL: And it is an exquisite old building. [00:20:03]

KATHAN BROWN: It's a wonderful building.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely exquisite.

KATHAN BROWN: It's so accommodating. The whole, the volumes of it the—

MIJA RIEDEL: It's so spacious.

KATHAN BROWN: —style, the feeling of it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: It was a newspaper to begin with. It was built for a newspaper.

MIJA RIEDEL: It's absolutely enormous.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: I mean, Sasha [Baguskas, Editor and Publications Manager, Crown Point Press -MR] took me through a tour.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, the downstairs?

MIJA RIEDEL: No, she just took me through the upstairs. You've got two other floors [laughs].

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: It's absolutely huge.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, it's very big.

MIJA RIEDEL: But it has the feeling also of being spacious and absolutely beautiful. I mean, architecturally it's just a gorgeous piece.

KATHAN BROWN: It's really an example of that moment, you know, that architecture. We haven't changed anything really.

MIJA RIEDEL: Did you get here and just think, We've got all this space. I know at the beginning you had all three floors.

KATHAN BROWN: Right, I just filled them up. I always like to fill things up. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: I mean, 12 projects—

KATHAN BROWN: I've been accused of that, of overdoing that. [Laughs.] Yes, that was a mistake, though. That was impossible to sustain. Yeah. I found it out fairly fast.

MIJA RIEDEL: Did you?

KATHAN BROWN: And gave up the ground floor.

MIJA RIEDEL: But the projects were just—had there been artists that you wanted to work with for a while, and here suddenly was an opportunity and space?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yeah, I don't know, we just barreled along.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, that was an extraordinary period here, it seems.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, it was really about the earthquake and everything.

MIJA RIEDEL: In '89.

KATHAN BROWN: So if that hadn't happened, I don't think the whole thing would have happened at all. I wouldn't have moved. I didn't even particularly want to move from Oakland. I came to San Francisco because we basically had to move out of the Oakland building because they were going to tear it down. [00:22:01] And we were renting. And I'm sort of a homebody. I don't like to move. [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, that was a big move from Oakland across the Bay to Folsom.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, if we were going to move, it was silly not to move to San Francisco. That's where everything was. If you have to move, that's where you should move.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. The '90s really were sort of the end of an era, I think, in some ways. John Cage passed away in '92, and Richard Diebenkorn in '93. The New York gallery closed in '94. Did those events impact your thinking at all about Crown Point Press?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, sure [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Or did they leave any significant differences?

KATHAN BROWN: Of course.

MIJA RIEDEL: I mean, there's a lot all at once, '92, '93, '94. And Diebenkorn and Cage both had been so instrumental.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: You did start to, I think in the '90s, really expand also internationally. Christian Boltanski came in. And that's when you started the darkroom for photogravure, yes?

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, we were doing photo-etching first, and then we learned gravure later. I can't remember exactly [when we started to use] the real gravure process—the old gravure process came along later. [. . . -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: I think that was '91, you said you set that up, the darkroom for photogravure. [00:24:01]

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. And I wanted to do it for myself, you know, because I was always basically a photographer, from my background and everything. And even though I did study a lot of drawing in art school,

my preferred way of working was with photography.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, that makes sense. You took all those videos from the start in the '70s.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: A lot of your books have your own photographs in them. What we were just looking at, *Sardinia* [1975], was, I'm sure, developed—

KATHAN BROWN: —[with] photography. My personal work was pretty much oriented that way. Although the very first album was drawings. But anyway, I think I grew up with photography, and I understand it, and liked it.

MIJA RIEDEL: What did it make possible here that you couldn't do before? Because you said the photo-etchings you had were actually pretty good. What did photogravure bring to Crown Point that—

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, photogravure is better. It's just better. Photo-etching is only one depth. Then you have to get the differences in tones from dots, or it's something aquatint could be, the dots. Because those are little grains, so it's a little bit more, you know, subtle than the dot screen, but it's still essentially a dot screen—the aquatint itself is. And although you can bite an aquatint deeper, with a dot screen, you can't. It's all [essentially] going to be all the same bite, but, yeah, then you have real embeds in the paper.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: And that's the whole thing about etching that's different from any other kind of printing. There's no other kind of printing of any type, anywhere, that embeds in the paper. That's the definition of "intaglio," what we use. And that means it embeds in the paper. And this is the art aspect of that. [00:26:01]

And really, they don't use [intaglio] commercially at all anymore. Once upon a time they did, when they didn't know how to do [laughs] lithography, which is cheaper and faster. But nobody does it commercially. So if [etching] is going to stay alive, it's going to have to be somebody using it for art. And it is the most beautiful way of printing, and it's the only one where, since it embeds in the paper, you see [tones] that are very delicate washes. And you see [tones that are] like velvet. You can even see them in that [pointing to Diebenkorn on wall]; see the difference?

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. This is the Diebenkorn we talked about on Friday.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, it's just line work, but you can still see the difference in the part that's embedded more. Or the part that has—[those] really, really dark things that you are seeing there are actually a burr that's thrown up above the surface of the bite. It's a drypoint.

MIJA RIEDEL: So it protrudes, mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And then you can capture the ink clinging to that. For that little—above the ridge that's above this plate. There's no other way of printing it, that you can have anything like that. And that's a good example of seeing a range of different kinds of bitten marks and the drypoint marks on it that are above the surface. And then some of them are very granular.

MIJA RIEDEL: And so the photogravure gives you that same layer, that same amount of layering.

KATHAN BROWN: It has that same quality. This is, of course, done all by hand. But you can use a photograph and get a lot of the same character, because it physically is bitten into the plate at different levels. There's no other process—there's no photographic process that can do that. [00:28:03]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. I read this quote by Darren Almond that I would just—what you're saying made me think of it: "There's a different energy breathing through the images that you get than you get in ordinary photographic printing. These have a different depth to them."

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. He's right.

MIJA RIEDEL: "They feel more sculptural, more like objects."

KATHAN BROWN: That's right. They are.

MIJA RIEDEL: Which is exactly what you're saying.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, mm-hmm [affirmative]. Well, that's good.

MIJA RIEDEL: I think it's interesting that he even talked about that as being more of an object. It becomes more three-dimensional the way you're describing it.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: In '97 you produced a 10-foot etching with Robert Colescott. I think it was the same year he'd gone to the Venice Biennale.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, Mm-hmm [affirmative]. It was in pieces. Yes, it's—we can't print that [all at once].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, I was wondering. No way to do that.

KATHAN BROWN: But they're all sequential, so you can—

MIJA RIEDEL: That must have been a feat in its own right then.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, that was a major thing for him to do. And 10 feet, did I say that? I can't imagine it was really that big. I think it's still hanging up somewhere in the back.

MIJA RIEDEL: It says online.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, you saw it online?

MIJA RIEDEL: I did.

KATHAN BROWN: Hmm. Okay.

MIJA RIEDEL: In the 2000s, the balance of the artists grew, it seems, even more international, or still more international. You had Peter Doig coming, Chris Ofili, Tomma Abts.

KATHAN BROWN: Abts.

MIJA RIEDEL: Abts, okay. Jockum Nordstrom, Mamma Andersson, Wilson Shieh, Dorothy Napangardi.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, Napangardi. She came from Australia.

MIJA RIEDEL: Australia, right. Did that have anything to do with returning to Art Basel, and increasing international exposure?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, probably.

MIJA RIEDEL: Because you went back to—started back there in 2000 after a while of not attending. [00:30:00] Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And would you think—

KATHAN BROWN: Maybe, I don't know. Valerie came on board. Valerie has a big influence on everything, you know? She's been very instrumental in the whole—

MIJA RIEDEL: In finding new artists?

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. Well, yes that's part of it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. She came on board in '88 I think, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. But then she—yeah, as she got more acquainted. And Karen McCready, of course, the people who were out in the world selling did suggest artists and so on. And by making our presence out there in the fairs and whatever, the artists could see what kind of work we were doing. Really, nobody was doing much of anything with etching. And etching has such a bigger presence on the paper than any other kind of printing. Artists can see that right away. They come by the booth at the fairs and say, "Wow, those are really interesting, and it looks great." So it was easier to get bigger-name artists, as soon as we became more visible.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly. And by 2000 you were more than visible.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: I wanted to talk briefly about Brad Brown and something he said that I thought was interesting. You mentioned it in your book: he did two projects here, in '99 and 2001.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: And you had a conversation with him about John Cage and de Kooning. And you'd said that you thought Cage and de Kooning were essentially incompatible. And he said he hoped "to adapt them both to his own ends." And you talked about that signaling a kind of generational shift in how we're pursuing knowledge. You talked about "ideas now coming in bits and pieces, not in a continuum where one idea leads to another or is compatible with another." I was just wondering, are there other generational shifts that you've noticed in how the artists are working?

KATHAN BROWN: I think that was smarter than I really am. [00:32:01] [They laugh.] I probably was, back in those days, more interested in making all those generalizations. But I haven't been generalizing lately.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, but that was just—

KATHAN BROWN: Getting too old and wise for that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, his work, too, is so fragmented and assembled, and I mean, many people are, but I really think of his work especially as embodying that so successfully. So he would be a great—

KATHAN BROWN: He is a younger guy.

MIJA RIEDEL: But I mean, you've had the press now 50 years. You've seen generation shifts.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, that's true. I always wanted to learn something from the artists, of course. We all do.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely. I would imagine that would be a big draw to inviting someone, is people you could learn something new from.

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, generally I think that's how we always would invite people, was somebody we could learn from and we were interested in doing it. And some of them, we really didn't have any idea we'd be able to [laughs] sell them, but they seemed like somebody we could learn from and somebody we'd be interested in.

Sometimes you have to just juggle things a little bit. If you've got some project that you know you're going to be able to bring in some money from, then [that can help]. But [a project] doesn't have to be commercial for that. It just has to be the one you—and then you can add one that [laughs] you might not ever make any—and it may not even make your expenses back but—

MIJA RIEDEL: It buys you the leeway.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, because then you can learn things and maybe have an investment for somebody who's going to get better known later. But it's pretty tricky to try to bank on that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: You have to take what you get.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, you said, too, I mean, one of those first criteria that we talked about was always starting with artists that already had a reputation. [00:34:00]

KATHAN BROWN: Well, some.

MIJA RIEDEL: Some of them, yes.

KATHAN BROWN: Some reputation.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes, exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: I mean, they have some. They'd have to have some experience and some time under the belt because, well, it isn't really—as I said, it's too expensive for the children to play with.

MIJA RIEDEL: That's true.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: We talked about the extensive and the consistent documentation that's been part of Crown Point, really from the start. Was that part of a commitment to education and to preserving etching?

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, right.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You published *Vision* first, with Tom Marioni as editor, from '75 to '81. Then *View* was '78 to '84. And *Overview* came after that. What prompted the shifts? And how does *Vision* differ from *View*, and *View* from *Overview*?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, look at them.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: You can see pretty well the—

MIJA RIEDEL: I understand that. I have looked at them. But when you were thinking about them, were you setting different intent when you stopped doing *Vision* and moved to *View*? [. . . -MR]

KATHAN BROWN: Well, you know, most of what I do comes from just something that presents itself. And *Vision*, Tom wanted to do *Vision*. That was really his baby, and his concept, and his artists that he wanted to invite, and that was, I think, really great. They were very whole, you know; they're an artist's thing. You know, like they have a kind of wholeness, each one. But that doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to be very available because, you know, first of all they cost more—a lot—to do, because they're so nice.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. Absolutely.

KATHAN BROWN: As long as you're doing well making money with other things, you can afford to do that. But at a certain point, maybe your things get a little trickier to—

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. [00:36:01]

KATHAN BROWN: —keep everything in balance. And something has to go, and *View* was simple and quick and cheap. [. . . -KB]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: By comparison, the finish is very simple. And it's also pretty much straight interviews. And so if you have somebody who can really talk and ask good questions and get an artist to open up a little bit, which Robin White was.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: She was just a really good talker, [laughs] you know, or an interviewer. And I met her, and I thought she could do it. I hired her on specifically for that. I thought that that was something she could do. And, of course, that kind of running, running, running, talking, talking, talking requires a really good editor [laughs]. Otherwise, it's useless.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. And you edited all those didn't you? Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: That's one thing I always have been good at. I was an English major in school, and I had a very good teacher. I'm not such a creative writer, but I am a really good editor. And even when I write things myself, things I know about, like, you know, the story of the Press and all, it wouldn't be that good if my editor self didn't go in there afterwards.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly. I understand that well. And so Robin White did [the interviews] for quite some time, and then Constance Lewallen did them as well, right? Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Robin left us for reasons of her own, to get married and whatever. And I hired Connie on purpose for this because I thought she could do it. [00:38:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: Is there any place people can hear *Word of Mouth*, that fourth issue of *Vision*? Those photograph records, are they available online?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know. I don't think so.

MIJA RIEDEL: It would be kind of interesting to hear those.

KATHAN BROWN: We could put it on there, I suppose.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. Well, it would be interesting to hear those lectures.

KATHAN BROWN: I wonder if it's worth the effort. People can get them still [on the records]. They're around.

MIJA RIEDEL: You have such an incredible resource online, but I didn't find those. And that would have been interesting.

KATHAN BROWN: No, I guess it's something that's long gone.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: I generally put focus on the present [laughs]. But it's not out of the question. But they're not that expensive to buy if somebody wanted to hear it, I suppose.

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay. They're all still on LPs, right? They're on vinyl. I mean, finding a record player can become an issue.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, that's true. I forgot about that [laughs]. You can't play them anymore. Okay, well, I think we should [laughs] transfer them over to something else. That way they could go online.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, I think it was an interesting collection of people that were speaking. I think there were 12 lectures, right? From the trip to Ponape.

KATHAN BROWN: I wonder if they're still—I haven't listened to it myself for a long time. But I wonder if it's still something people want.

MIJA RIEDEL: You can still find the review. I think it was in the *New York Times*. I think that's accessible online. I can't remember who wrote that right now [John Perreault -MR]. Somebody who went with you, a critic on the trip. And that was kind of interesting to read. You can still find different fragments about it.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: But the lectures themselves, or even the transcripts of them, might be interesting.

Anyway, just continuing on with the publication and documentation, you then did the *Ink, Paper, Metal, Wood* book. [00:40:01] Two books actually, '92 and '96. And then the *Magical Secrets About Thinking Creatively*, that series started. And then, the *Three Minute Egg* videos are really delightful. Etching just seems really ideally suited to sort of slowing down—

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: —and looking at the creative process as it happens. There's almost the sense of you can see the decisions being made, the neurological layers that the generation—

KATHAN BROWN: It's a slow process, yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: —the generation of ideas and then the choice about what to accept or not. Have you observed patterns about different ways that the artists work?

KATHAN BROWN: I haven't thought of it, but you certainly can observe it. I'm thinking it's rare that people don't really want to go back in and do a lot of changes. But occasionally you find somebody that works fast.

MIJA RIEDEL: Would Cage go back in and make changes? Or Brad Brown? They both seemed to be involved with chance.

KATHAN BROWN: That's true.

MIJA RIEDEL: And a set decision.

KATHAN BROWN: You're pretty good; you picked out a—you've thoroughly looked at stuff, yeah. Because you're right, those were two people that would be less—and Cage, he was, on principle, pretty much going to accept—accepting. "I'm in an accepting frame of mind," he'd say.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. [They laugh.] But other than that, most people—

KATHAN BROWN: But mostly—but I don't know. It's actually—with Diebenkorn, he didn't do a lot of scraping out, but he did scrape out, perhaps, more than most. You could see those two lines at the bottom were scraped out, yeah?

MIJA RIEDEL: Okay.

KATHAN BROWN: But he also would keep adding. [00:42:06]

And then the thing I think that people are interested in, artists are most interested in, in working with this, is that [laughs] you can't see what you're doing. You can kind of have a sense of what you're doing when you're drawing it, but it's backwards, and you can't see the weight of the line or the actual density or anything. Really, you get a sort of a sense of what—you can see something, but it's unlike the things you normally do with painting, or drawing, where you add another little bit here, because you want it to be darker here or another little tiny bit of a line here. It just needs a little more tail here, and you can't really see that very well when you're doing etching, so you have to wait until you get a print. And then you're surprised. It all sits backwards from what you drew.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: So then some artists like that a lot, the surprise of it, once they get used to it. But sometimes it's kind of unnerving [laughs], and they have to get used to it, for sure. So it takes a little while to get into any—if somebody hasn't used this before. Of course, all printmaking, it goes backwards, so some of them are printmakers who have done a lot of litho or something, and they understand that, or woodcut. But if they haven't done etching, [they learn that] etching's so much more sensitive than any of those other processes. The slightest little line or touch or fingerprint or anything is—

MIJA RIEDEL: —recorded.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: So did they break down at all into people who were really comfortable and intrigued and energized by the surprise, and people that were off-put by it? [00:44:04] Or once you understood the process, it wasn't as off-putting, and most people rolled with that pretty well? I mean, sometimes that surprise and that unexpectedness is a great thing.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. And, well, most of the time artists really like it.

MIJA RIEDEL: I would think so.

KATHAN BROWN: Because they do one thing, then do the next thing, and then do the next thing. That's always what John Cage said was his philosophy of life. And there it was [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes. Exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: And whatever you do, then there's the next thing that appears that is clearly the next thing.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: I've actually kind of tried to do, you know, life that way, too, I think, rather than plan too much.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: Because you can make all the plans you want, but they don't necessarily come out. And then you might be very disappointed if you put too much into this big plan. It's maybe better to keep assessing the situation and see what you should be doing next.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. That is interesting, especially as a businesswoman, and a very successful businesswoman for 50 years, that you took it more on a step-by-step basis rather than a big master plan.

KATHAN BROWN: I often have been encouraged to make master plans, but I've never [laughs] wanted to. I mean, I couldn't quite see how. It wasn't that I didn't want to; I couldn't see how.

MIJA RIEDEL: That's interesting. That's much more of an artist's perspective, I think.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. I don't see how they do it when they make a plan and then try and mold the business to follow the plan. I wouldn't think it would be very interesting, for one thing. But I suppose businesses do it all the time. But I don't know. I don't understand that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, that's perfect for my next question, which is, you've said that you don't let the marketplace limit your selection of artists. [00:46:04] Instead you regulate prices and the sizes of the editions. So for

etchings, you do something smaller, say, 10 to 35. Woodcuts are larger, up to 200, because they're less expensive. So what changes have you seen in the market? And do you see cycles, or do you see unprecedented changes?

KATHAN BROWN: You mean from the beginning?

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Gosh, I haven't any idea.

MIJA RIEDEL: No sense of cycles?

KATHAN BROWN: No. I mean, it's the same as you'd expect. When people have [less] money, art is something they don't have to have in order to stay alive. It's not a necessity. So, of course, in better times, when there's not a recession going on, we can do more. And we just have to try to keep on top of it. I have to just try to figure out what's coming. I do read business pages and so on, and try and figure out how much money is circulating around. You won't get very much of it if there isn't very much out there that's, you know, not spent on necessities.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You've talked about the good will of community being essential to Crown Point's success. You talked about the support of the artists and the clients being essential to getting this space in the first place.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: Is that something that you set out to cultivate? Or is it just a by-product of the way you work?

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I don't think I cultivated—my nature isn't very cultivating, [laughs] I don't think. I mean, it is for art.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely.

KATHAN BROWN: Artists can see that I care to do it the way they want to do it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. [00:48:01]

KATHAN BROWN: And not to try and tell them how I think I want it so I can sell it. I've never done that. And I think they know it right away. So with the artists it isn't a problem. But I've never had very much dealing with the clients myself.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: From almost early on, I've had someone who could take over that aspect, who was really good at it. Because I'm not good at it.

MIJA RIEDEL: I have read you say that. That you are much more interested in the education aspect of it, and also working with the artists, but not so much in the sales. And that's why Karen McCready came along and—or you sought out Karen McCready, and Valerie as well.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. And then, we've had others, too, whether—they're assistants basically. But those are the two people that have actually really made this place. We would never have been able to continue if we hadn't had Karen and then Valerie. Both of them are really terrific people and very caring about this, and share my excitement about the process but also have this ability to communicate that—in terms of having people want it [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: I mean, I can communicate it. I can write things about it, but it's hard. I don't know how to close that sale, you know?

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. So, again, it's a community that you've put together that made it work.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: That made this possible.

KATHAN BROWN: I was lucky to have both of them.

MIJA RIEDEL: Have you seen the Crown Point community affect each other and evolve? I'm thinking particularly of the artists now. Is there much interaction at all between the artists?

KATHAN BROWN: Not really. Because they don't come here at the same time.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. They come at separate times.

KATHAN BROWN: We only have one at a time. [00:50:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: I read a few artists talking about how they were influenced by Cage, and maybe it was just by seeing the work and art.

KATHAN BROWN: Seeing the work. Mm-hmm [affirmative]. Yes, I think that his work surprised some of them.

MIJA RIEDEL: I would think. That's part of the point, right?

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And it was interesting to find out more about him and whatever. But every artist that we've ever worked with has been very eager to spend time in the back room, you know, where the prints are. They always go. They might be working in the studio; they might go back there and start looking at things and pulling them out. I think Mari [our registrar -KB] helps them with that. Yeah, they really like to see how other people used the process.

MIJA RIEDEL: I would imagine.

KATHAN BROWN: And that's why it kind of snowballs up, and more and more inventive things are done, because you get so—"Oh yeah, I see you could do that, and I'll take it one step further." [Laughs.]

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, that's interesting. So, there is a lot of going through the flat files and taking a look.

KATHAN BROWN: Everybody does that. I don't tell them to, but they all want to. I mean, the reason they accept my invitation is because they like what this looks like.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: They like what we've done.

MIJA RIEDEL: And there's no place else they can really find it.

KATHAN BROWN: No, I think not. Not at this range. And when we first started to do it, came on the scene, nobody was really doing etching; I don't think hardly anybody. And if they were, it was pretty much just lines.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. Yes. And I think the foreword from the director at the National Gallery to the *Yes, No, Maybe* book really cites Crown Point, and you in particular, for putting etching on the map. [00:52:09]

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, really? I forgot that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes, making it something that artists were interested in seeking out and developing into a dynamic form that's alive today.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, of course, there were, in the old days, you know, there were great artists that did it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Oh, yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: But then it kind of drifted off, I think. And it's true that no one was really working with it. They added etching, all of them. ULAE [Universal Limited Art Editions] and Tamarind and all the other big print shops that started out with lithography added etching after a few years.

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting.

KATHAN BROWN: After we had made a success of it [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Interesting.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. But when we started to do it, there wasn't anybody really, I don't think. There may have been a—well, I'm sure there were smaller shops. Because there have always been etchers around.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right, but nobody has evolved it the way you have here.

KATHAN BROWN: —built up the kind of workshop and clients. I mean, people were doing it in schools, which is how I learned it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, I just have a few closing questions and—

KATHAN BROWN: Okay, good.

MIJA RIEDEL: You said that through Crown Point you've tried to see a big picture, how people fit, who's out there making a difference, but that you can only pick one or two; you can't handle everything. Who would you have liked to have worked with who didn't come?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, [laughs] I don't know actually. I know I keep it in my head. I'm always moving forward, I think, on principle. And I can't actually think who—if there was somebody I invited who didn't come, actually. If they didn't, I just let it go. [00:54:04]

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: They wouldn't do a good job anyway if they didn't want to do it. I mean, they'd have to see something in it that would be interesting to them, or it wouldn't work. But I figure, okay [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: But most of the artists that I have asked have wanted [to come], and liked it, and have wanted to do it. And I haven't looked at every one in the world to decide who to ask though. So, you know, a lot of it has been somebody recommending somebody.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: Say, well, so and so would be really a—Peter Doig told me about Laura Owens, and that was a great find, because I had never heard of her at that time. But nobody had. [Laughs.] Hardly anybody. But Peter Doig knew she was really good. And it turns out now she's the biggest star we have [laughs], and we keep trying to get her back. You know, [laughs] she's so busy. She wants to; she will eventually.

MIJA RIEDEL: It's fantastic. It goes back to that thinking about community. I think you used the word "networks."

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative], yeah.

MIJA RIEDEL: And I think you have a very extensive network.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, mm-hmm [affirmative]. The artists, because they have a good experience, they keep, you know, there is that—

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: If it were just so-so, or if it weren't, you know, so good or whatever, it wouldn't have the same —

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. And I would imagine that there's somebody here whose work has gone well, it's been a positive experience, and they're going to recommend somebody who is going to have a similar sensibility even if their work is totally different. But they have a sense that this would fit.

KATHAN BROWN: They know that, Oh, I know this artist would like that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right. We talked yesterday, or Friday, about, at home you have just room for four or five pieces. So I wondered, do you rotate what you have at home? Are there a few that [are] always constant?

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah, I don't know.

MIJA RIEDEL: What's there now?

KATHAN BROWN: Once in a while we do take something down. But most of the time it—you get used to it. Just like anybody else's house, it gets to be part of your furniture [laughs] or something. [00:56:07] It's just like you wouldn't want to take away that old table that you like so much, that has all the spots [laughs] and stains in it, you know.

MIJA RIEDEL: So I'm guessing *Touched Red* is there.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.] Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: What else is hanging there?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, well, I just wrote this thing and said Mary Heilmann was in there, in the bedroom. And what else is there? We've got a Pat Steir up, for a long time.

MIJA RIEDEL: Which one? Do you remember? An older one or a newer one?

KATHAN BROWN: An older one.

MIJA RIEDEL: So, Heilmann, Steir, Diebenkorn—

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know, yeah. Diebenkorn *Touched Red*, and maybe there's something [else too]. I don't know. We have a very small apartment. It's just a—it's an apartment. We moved out of the big house. So, and it's funny, I see these things every day, and all of a sudden, I can't—I've got something of Tom's up, a couple of things of his, a drawing, and favorite things. And Cage.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Got *Changes and Disappearances* there. There's a little Thiebaud somewhere, I think. But the Diebenkorns are more prominent. The *Touched Red* is the main thing that—there is one wall that—and it's perfect there. It's not so much that it's necessarily the favorite thing of all time, but it's just right in that spot [laughs]. [00:58:02]

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: You know, that's how it is with everything that people hang up in their houses.

MIJA RIEDEL: Do you have favorite things of all time?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, I don't know. I never thought about it that way, actually.

MIJA RIEDEL: I didn't think you would.

KATHAN BROWN: But I probably would always show a Cage and a Diebenkorn around. Those are my two artists that I've been most influenced by.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah, I would think so.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

MIJA RIEDEL: It's interesting, I think about Cage and Diebenkorn and where you've gone with those two. And I think about Brad Brown talking about—who was it?—de Kooning and Cage, was it? That I—yeah, I think that's it. It's interesting to see how those two might balance out. What happens from that juxtaposition.

KATHAN BROWN: Yeah. Right. Well, I don't know [laughs]. But sometimes we have new people that I like a lot that I just don't have any—I just am lazy. I don't take them home because they're newer.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: You know, some of these have been just around. The things we've had in the house have been sitting in the house for 20 years [laughs] or something. So it's really not a good test.

MIJA RIEDEL: There's some beautiful new work, yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Some of the newer work is really great, and I like very much. And I see it here every day.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. We have one hanging up at home that would be maybe a little surprising, Robert Barry. We do have one of his there that we like a lot.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: Every once in a while, one of those words pops up at you. And you think about it. It's interesting. It's a whole different experience, because it looks like there's nothing in those pictures. They are gray words around the edge of the plate mark [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly. You have to look really closely and spend some time with it. [01:00:02]

KATHAN BROWN: But it's a framed thing and it's sitting there. And it's always there. And then every once in a while you're standing around or you're just thinking, and you see this—one of those words pops up in your consciousness. They're very beautiful, and they just—it's quite an experience. They're a whole different thing from the visual stuff that the rest of them have, the rest of the things in the house have.

MIJA RIEDEL: Final question. You said you wished the Press would go on forever. Are there any plans for it to continue into the next generation?

KATHAN BROWN: No, I don't have any plans. I've never really been very good at long-term

planning, I'm afraid. Maybe I'll regret that. [Laughs.] I really haven't got any idea right now. I really don't. I wish I did. Because I'm getting older now. But you know, it runs by itself right now pretty well. I mean, not by itself, but Valerie, and by Sasha and by Stacie.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: And the printers and the—

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: —everybody's—they've all been with me for a long time, and they all know exactly what they're doing. We could have another big recession when we can't sell anything, and we've been through a couple of those. But usually, we manage to pull it off somehow by digging into the old stuff that I haven't wanted to sell, and then pulling things out and selling things I hadn't wanted to sell—or something like that. But those things are few and far between now anymore, because we've used that strategy over the years.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, you sold the archive to the National Gallery, and then one to the Fine Arts Museum, right? At the Legion of Honor.

KATHAN BROWN: Right, those were both big stashes of the things that I'd saved. [01:02:04]

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

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KATHAN BROWN: So there's not a whole lot around right now that we could rely on if things go bad. And I don't know, I'm sure everybody here could keep it going without me without any problem, because they're all, well, they're good. I don't do much of anything anymore [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: I don't know about that.

KATHAN BROWN: [Laughs.] I don't. I mean, I don't do any real stuff, you know. I write things once in a while.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. So what keeps it interesting for you now when you come in? I mean, your schedule seems nonstop. You said you're not working on any new writing projects.

KATHAN BROWN: No.

MIJA RIEDEL: What is compelling for you today?

KATHAN BROWN: Oh, I don't come in until 12:00 p.m. for one thing.

MIJA RIEDEL: That's a good start.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, I used to come in every day from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m, pretty much. And then I do have more time at home running around and doing whatever I want to do. I don't have to come in until 12:00 p.m. And they don't expect me so, you know, they get along perfectly well without me until 12:00 p.m. [laughs].

And I don't go to any fairs. I haven't been to fairs for a long time, though, because I've never been good at fairs. Never liked them very much. But I have people that can do it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Any artists coming in next year that you're excited about?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know. It's a little bit—I mean, I haven't got any new ones right now.

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. You added a lot of new ones, it seemed, in the 2000s. Laura Owens came in around then and Tomma Abts.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, I'm hoping Laura is going to come back. That's one thing we're planning.

MIJA RIEDEL: Anne Appleby, I think.

KATHAN BROWN: Maybe Jacqueline [Humphries] again. But, yeah, I don't know. We can only do about, you know, three a [year]. I only really want to sign up three a year. [00:02:00]

MIJA RIEDEL: And then you're still doing workshops as well.

KATHAN BROWN: And then we may do another one if we can find—if we can leave a little bit of elbow room there, probably we could handle four. And the workshops. The workshops do occupy a lot of time. It's a couple months out of the summer. That's a big fraction of the year, really.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely.

KATHAN BROWN: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And that's very satisfactory because it does continue teaching people the process and sending them out there to teach others.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely.

KATHAN BROWN: And that's really part of the whole thing, has been from the beginning, is the proselytizing [laughs] for this.

MIJA RIEDEL: Exactly.

KATHAN BROWN: For this whole process. It's so kind of tricky and hard and expensive to do. It's much, much more tricky, and hard and expensive than any of the other print processes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yes.

KATHAN BROWN: And that's why nobody was doing it because, you know, you could do something with lithography and sell it just as well. The public doesn't know the difference really. But maybe they can see it once they get to see it.

MIJA RIEDEL: Right.

KATHAN BROWN: But if nobody tells them, they're just as happy with a lithograph by some artist as an etching and—unless they see them side by side. Then they might say, "Gee, this one has so much depth, so much personality" [laughs]. The process does, in a way, have a personality that the artist has to get to know. But I suppose that's true with any process.

MIJA RIEDEL: Well, I think some more so than others. I mean, some have real processes. And this sounds like there's a lot involved here as opposed to other things, which are one, two, three, and then taken care of.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, if you get to know them, they are not just the pictures on the paper. One reason, mainly being because they actually are embedded in it and they dent into the paper. So there is a different look than anything else that's printed.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. Well, that goes back to that Darren Almond comment about almost being an object rather than a print. That three dimensionality. [00:04:01]

KATHAN BROWN: Right. So, I don't know. I think we do keep having people back. Darren is coming back next year. That will be the second project with him. And we'll, you know, probably keep working with the ones that we're engaged with right now for a bit.

MIJA RIEDEL: Great. Any final thoughts?

KATHAN BROWN: I don't know. We'll just see what happens. I think, like John says, I welcome whatever happens next [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: I think I've heard two people say that you really like to live on the edge.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: And that seems like maybe that's the way we go forward.

KATHAN BROWN: That is. A lot of people have told me that because I don't usually—I mean, I stick my neck out, and we never have had much money in the bank. Ever. So it could collapse any minute. Now having the building

and having some rents is certainly stabilizing.

MIJA RIEDEL: Makes a big difference. Absolutely.

KATHAN BROWN: And that was such a great step to be able to do at that particular moment.

MIJA RIEDEL: Absolutely.

KATHAN BROWN: And we have a couple [of tenants], you know, the Gagosian Gallery down there. And then, there's a restaurant and—

MIJA RIEDEL: Benu, right. Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: —there's a little, you know—

MIJA RIEDEL: There's a little Berggruen Gallery, yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Well, Berggruen isn't renting from us. It's a completely separate building. He's not here. But there's a couple people in the basement that pay rent [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: It goes back to what your mother said about "go as far as you can and then from there you can see further."

KATHAN BROWN: "Go as far as you can see, and when you get there you can see further." When you can't see any further, then I guess it's over. But I think we're still all right for a while. I can see a little further right now. But not super further [laughs].

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. [00:06:01]

KATHAN BROWN: It depends on how much of a recession comes up and when, and things like that, because a lot of it has to do with just whatever money people have available. And I did give up a lot of the really expensive good prints that I was sort of keeping when I did the archive. And then I did another archive for the National Gallery, so that gets sent off, the rest of them that I was sort of keeping for myself. So I don't have very much left that I could pull out and sell.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: Because I used to always try and keep some of the really good sellers behind a little bit, as much as I could; just keep a couple of them in case there's a moment when we really need to sell something and we know we can sell easily because somebody is looking for that.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah.

KATHAN BROWN: But there isn't that kind of backup right now as much, because we whittled it away over all the years. So it's not easy to keep it just running. It's not like it's a cash cow or anything. It's tricky.

MIJA RIEDEL: So it's really been a labor of love.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes. But because I've had very good people I'm working with on the front [end of] the business, you know, being the salespeople, being out there in the world, it's been working.

MIJA RIEDEL: And because you have extraordinary artists.

KATHAN BROWN: I mean, Valerie is certainly indispensable, you know?

MIJA RIEDEL: Mm-hmm [affirmative].

KATHAN BROWN: She's the one that really keeps it rolling. And not only for her selling, but her ideas and presence and, you know, encouragement in keeping—you know, I almost made her a partner. She said she wanted to be a partner, and I would have been happy to have her as a partner, but then she decided not to.

MIJA RIEDEL: [. . . -KB] But you two have worked together, for 30 years next year.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes, right.

MIJA RIEDEL: That's an extraordinary partnership.

KATHAN BROWN: I couldn't do it without her. That's for sure. If she weren't here, I wouldn't keep it going.

MIJA RIEDEL: That says a lot right there.

KATHAN BROWN: I couldn't get anybody to replace her at this point.

MIJA RIEDEL: Yeah. No, that's 30 years.

KATHAN BROWN: Yes.

MIJA RIEDEL: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

KATHAN BROWN: Okay [laughs], sure.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]