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# Oral history interview with Giuseppe Panza, 1985 Apr. 2-4

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## Transcript

### Interview

[Begin Tape 1, side A.]

CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT: This is Christopher Knight. I'm speaking with Dr. Panza in Los Angeles on April 2. We might as well start at the beginning with your being born. [Laughs.]

GIUSEPPE PANZA DI BIUMO: I was born in Milan in 1923, March 1923.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh, so you just had a birthday.

DR. PANZA: Yes. March 1923.

MR. KNIGHT: March of 1923. Could you tell me a little about your parents?

DR. PANZA: Well, my parents was-my father was from the Piemonte [Italian for Piedmont, a region in Italy] area, from Monferrato, which is a part of Piemonte. He came very young to work in Milan, and he was in the wine business.

MR. KNIGHT: What aspect of the wine business?

DR. PANZA: Was a business on the distribution of a commodity from one area of Italy to another; from the south to the north, from the area of production to the area of consumption. To be able to buy when the market was low, to sell when it was high. It was the capacity of a good dealer. My mother was from Varese. Also the family of my mother was in the wine business. My parents had four sons; I am the third. My father since he came to work in Milan when he was very young, always lived in Milan. Was a life of good bourgeois. My father was able to increase his wealth substantially in his life, was successful in his business, but was also a man with a great respect for people, and of the work. He had consideration for the people able and willing to do something good. He was a man which always worked hard in his life, because he had a very strong will, was willing to achieve something, not to leave things going how they are going, and also a feeling for opportunities of life. He was able to take wise decision at the right moment. In his business, when he was realizing that he had to lose money, he was ready to lose money, because to lose soon was better than to lose more later. [Laughs.]

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: He had a feeling for the real situation, to pick it off at the right moment, to leave when was not the right one. He was very flexible in his decision.

MR. KNIGHT: So you'd say he's very down to earth and practical and with good sense.

DR. PANZA: Yes, he was devoted to reality, to make in his life something useful, and for this reason he was able to increase his wealth. He was coming from a family, which was living in a small town in Piemonte, near by Alessandria. My grandfather was not a wealthy man; he was a dealer, too, had a small business in his town.

MR. KNIGHT: Was your mother the same way, or was she different?

DR. PANZA: No, my mother was completely different, was a woman devoted to her family, was her main interest, but she had also a sensibility for fine things. She, before to marry, liked to paint, made several paintings. Some are still at home. Are good, because we feel how she liked to look to nature. Was always interested in paintings, and when I was a boy she brought me, especially on Sunday, to see museums and exhibitions.

Also the sister of my mother had the same interest for art. Even when she was very old, she liked to paint. My aunt was different in temperament from my mother, was a very active woman. She married an industrialist. When my uncle died, she run his business, which was a middle-size industry; she was able to go through difficult times and run this business well. When she retired, she spent all weekends driving to see museums and old cities. She had this love for art; sometimes she liked to stop in a beautiful place, to have the pleasure to paint it.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs] Did you go with her on these trips? I mean to museums?

DR. PANZA: No, she liked to go by herself. But when I was a young boy, I was going often with my mother, because my mother and my aunt went together to see museums and exhibitions.

MR. KNIGHT: Would you then describe your family as being intellectually inclined?

DR. PANZA: Well, my father was a man which don't read too much, made very few studies, because when he was very young, he had no will to study more, and he came to Milan to do business. He start his business very young. Another uncle, which was a brother of my mother, had a lot of interest for art. He made, for instance, before the last war, the restoration of a castle he bought in the thirties, built in the Middle Age, near by Varese. He made the restoration of many frescoes, which was in this building. There was several rooms with paintings of the thirteen, fourteen, and the fifteenth century, not made by great artists, but interesting, because is difficult to have so many in a single building of this period, still almost intact. He liked very much to work on these frescoes, which was all under a coat of paint made centuries before. I remember when I was boy that I liked very much to help my uncle. There was a restorer, however, making the main job, but was easy with a small blade to remove the coat of paint. And I spent hours removing this coat of paint, in order to see the painting coming out.

MR. KNIGHT: You grew up in a city that houses one of the most important and most well-known paintings in the world, Leonardo's *Last Supper*, and the Brera Museum, which is quite extraordinary.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: What is your very earliest recollection of art?

DR. PANZA: Well, there was paintings around in the house, but it was not important because my parents was not collectors. My father in the thirties bought an old farm, and there was many paintings which was left in this old house. And there was some good paintings. He realized that some was good.

MR. KNIGHT: Is this the house in Varese?

DR. PANZA: No, some are in Varese, but few. These paintings are in the house of my sister. And in this way, it was my early interest for art. I remember when I was fourteen years old, I get a disease which is a common one among boys, which in Italian we call scarlettina, scarlet fever, because there are some red spots around the body, which is contagious. And at this time it was necessary to be out of the school, to be segregated for forty days in a room, don't have any relation to other people in order to avoid the spread of the disease. I was forced to stay in my room, even if I was sick only for only a few days, because I had to stay alone. The most important thing which I made was to keep in my room the Italian encyclopedia, a very large one, made by about thirty books, with a lot of space and a lot of pictures devoted to art history. I spent this forty days studying art. I was making the gymnasium, but I was not willing to study Latin or mathematics and it was a good excuse for not making these, because I was sick. [Laughs.]

MR. KNIGHT: Right. [They laugh.]

DR. PANZA: At the end the 40 days, I was able, hiding the label which was below each picture, to tell the painter, the school, the approximate time when it was made. I learn a lot looking at the pictures and reading the biography of each artist.

MR. KNIGHT: Was it primarily Italian art?

DR. PANZA: No, all sort of art. Mostly Italian, but also art of every time. Not modern art, because the encyclopedia was arriving until the 19th century, not in the 20th. This happen in 1937, I believe.

MR. KNIGHT: You were 14?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Then in your schooling before that time, you had no study of art?

DR. PANZA: No, in the school there was not. In the gymnasium, which is a medium school in Italy, there was no art teaching. Only in the high school in the last three years. But only one hour a week. In this way, when I enter the high school, I was the best in the class.

But I had a lot of interest for every kind of cultural activity. I liked very much to read poetry. I liked philosophy, history, and literature. I was interested when I was sixteen and eighteen to read the most famous Russian writer, like Dostoevsky, Tolstoy. I was very fascinated by Dostoevsky, was one of my favorite reading. I felt deeply close to his world, all these problems which he explore in his novels was very close to my problems. When I was 14 years old, I began to have psychological problems, as all young people have. I was very pessimistic in my attitude. One way to be happy was the possibility to read, to have culture, which was something against the main trend of my family. I was educated in the older time in Italy, when the authority of the father was important. Everybody had to follow the will of the father, and he was a very active man, was always willing to do something real, was working hard; he had some kind of religious respect for work. He respected all the people which was working. The people that was just thinking, not making something, do not have his consideration. And

I was a son which liked to think. [They laugh.] He was really worried of this trend I had; he believed I was a lost son, unable to run the family business. It happen, happily, I had an older brother, which perhaps was better than me. [They laugh.]

MR. KNIGHT: Right, an older brother, yeah. Right.

DR. PANZA: Running business, but he was very worried because he saw me interested in reading poetry and studying philosophy which he judged things absolutely not necessary.

MR. KNIGHT: Did you fight about these things with your father?

DR. PANZA: No, was impossible to fight with my father.

MR. KNIGHT: Ah hah.

DR. PANZA: He was a man with a strong will, was successful in his life, he was a man of great capacity, but applied to reality, to the business, and not to culture.

MR. KNIGHT: This then would be in the late thirties, 1937, '38, '39.

DR. PANZA: Yes, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: What about the political situation in Italy at that time?

DR. PANZA: Well, at this time there was the Fascism.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: Almost everybody was Fascist in Italy. There was a few people which was against the Fascism; the younger people was educated in the Fascist way, but I had a chance. I was not willing to study Latin and mathematic. For this reason I was not able to go to the public schools. [Laughs.] I had to go to study in private one. And in Milan there was a very good one, which was made by teachers which was sent out of public schools for political reasons, was not willing to teach in the Fascist way. They formed this school which was excellent, because was made [laughs] of the best men in public school, which left for political reason.

MR. KNIGHT: What was the school called?

DR. PANZA: It was called Malagugini because was the name of the head of the school. After the war he left teaching and became as a deputy in Milan, of a left-wing of the socialist party.

MR. KNIGHT: The people who had left the public school, the faculty had left the public school to work in this academy.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: It was primarily a Socialist orientation?

DR. PANZA: Yes, socialist, liberal orientation. There was a trend, mostly socialist.

MR. KNIGHT: And they didn't care if you studied mathematics?

DR. PANZA: Well, I had to study it anyway, but I was helped to pass the examination. When I made maturity at the end of high school, I was very good in philosophy, in art history, in history, in literature; weak in Latin and in mathematics. But because I was good in the other matters, I passed the examination anyway.

MR. KNIGHT: Well, Milan had been the center of the Futurist movement in the teens.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And it's generally felt that Futurism played a significant role in the development of Fascism. And since you were in Milan in the '30s, were you aware of Futurist art and the Futurist developments?

DR. PANZA: Yes, but in the '30s there was no more interest for Futurism; it was popular in the teens and still in the early '20s, but no more in the '30s. Most people judged Futurism a strange idea, but not really serious any more. The good art was the well-painted one and not this strange alteration of shape. We was going on a conservative situation and there was not too much attention for contemporary art. I remember that in 1931 there was one of the first exhibitions of Modigliani in Milan, which made a lot of rumors. My mother and my aunt brought me too, but I don't remember too much because I was very young. But they was not too much

interested in Modigliani. They liked Italian Renaissance masters like Titian or Michelangelo.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah, well. There's quite a bit of it in-

DR. PANZA: Yes. At this moment, the Futurism was not too much influential in Italy, was a development which happen almost twenty years before.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah. Could Futurist work still be seen in Milan?

DR. PANZA: Unfortunately, we have very few good paintings left in Italy. We have two good collection in Brera because there was two donations made by two good collectors. Well, one is a donation, the one made by Mr. Jesi. The other by Mr. Yucker is on loan, but can become a donation. There are another very good collection which belonged to Mr. Mattioli; he died some years ago. The daughter inherited this collection, very beautiful with many Futurists and metaphysical art. But in the other museum we have almost nothing about Futurists.

MR. KNIGHT: When you were growing up during this time, did you travel much in Europe?

DR. PANZA: When I was young?

MR. KNIGHT: Yes.

DR. PANZA: No, I don't travel too much. We made some travel in Rome, in Florence, in Turin, in Italy mostly, but very few outside Italy. We made a long trip by boat to Spain and Portugal when I was very young. It was in 1932, I believe, and another one in 1933 in Istanbul, always by boat. But I don't made travel outside Italy.

MR. KNIGHT: Can you tell me a bit about the war years?

DR. PANZA: The war?

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: Well, during the war, I was in Milan since the beginning, since the 1940s. I stay in Milan until '42. I was not drafted because I was still a student.

[Begin Tape 1, side B.]

MR. KNIGHT: Okay.

DR. PANZA: But when there was the armistice in 1943, the eighth of September of 1943, I was on the list to be drafted by the Germans, because the north of Italy was under the control of the German army. And in order to avoid this risk, I left Italy. I went as a political refugee in Switzerland. I was living in Varese, and Varese is a few miles from the Switzerland border. I spent one year and a half until the end of the war.

MR. KNIGHT: Did your whole family go?

DR. PANZA: No, only I and my brother, because my brother was under the army. When the armistice came, he was not willing to fight for Germany. I went with him to Switzerland.

MR. KNIGHT: You said that at that time you were living in Varese.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: How had you gotten from Milan to Varese?

DR. PANZA: By train.

MR. KNIGHT: No, no. I mean had you always had the, had your family had the villa in Varese for a long time?

DR. PANZA: This house was bought by my father in 1931, was built in 1751 by the Marquis Menafoglio, which was a banker, was a man with a political relationship with local power, was the financial advisor of Duke of Modena which during the time of Empress Maria Theresa, was also governor of Milan, and the Marquis Menafoglio was the minister of finance. All important people in Italy, which had some political function, needs to have a large house, because the large house was the symbol of power.

In 1780 the Marquis Menafoglio died, and the son sold the property. There was some other owners for a short period of time, but at the beginning of the 19th century it was bought by the Litta Family, which was an important family in Milan, which had political difficulties during the war for the unity of Italy, against the Austrian. The Litta Family was involved with Napolean, when the French came to Italy. They were liberal. When

in 1848, there was the revolution against the Austrian; they paid for equipping a regiment of soldier against the Austrian. When Radestki, which was the general in command of the north of Italy for Austria, came back, he seized the property of the family, and they lost a lot of money because of this political activity they made against Austria.

MR. KNIGHT: So at this time you were living both in Milan and Varese?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And the villa that you're speaking of is the house that you still live in?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And there is, very close to the house, another house that was in your family? Is that right?

DR. PANZA: No. We live always in this house, very large, because was built in the 18th century.

MR. KNIGHT: Because I have been under the impression that there's a large villa right near where yours is that you had given to the city of Varese.

DR. PANZA: No. I trying to give to the city of Varese the villa in which I live, where I always lived.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh, I see.

DR. PANZA: But they never became interested to have the museum; I was willing to give, if the city will make the engagement to keep the museum. But I was never successful in this program.

MR. KNIGHT: I see. Okay, so then you went to Switzerland and were there for about two years?

DR. PANZA: One year and a half.

MR. KNIGHT: A year and a half.

DR. PANZA: I went at the end of '43 and I came back the May of '45.

MR. KNIGHT: What kind of impact did the war have on you?

DR. PANZA: The war was a devastating impact, because we realized that everything was wrong. At the beginning of the war, the Fascist regime was popular, because he was successful in almost everything he made. He was able to overcome the economic recession of the thirties. He made this stupid war in Ethiopia, because the Italian after the First World War felt to be deprived of something. We had a complex of inferiority with France and England. This two countries had a great power because of many colonies. Italy and Germany had nothing. We believed to have no free access to raw material, because it was under control of England and France, and for this reason to be in a situation of inferiority, a thing which was completely wrong, but there was this attitude. There was a great expectation after the end of the First World War to have more, but we had just what it was right to have. But the ambition to be so powerful as France and England was strong, and Fascism used this situation to win popularity. There was fear of a communist upswelling. Unions was becoming stronger, and for the people of the middle class, there was the feeling that a left-wing revolution was possible and could win. The Fascism was able to use this situation in order to gain power.

MR. KNIGHT: So you then were born at a time when the First World War was over and Italy was in a very difficult and-what's the word I want?-let's just say a difficult position, and you matured at a time when once again it was in chaos and turmoil and so forth.

DR. PANZA: Well, we cannot say that. Before the war the situation was good economically; there was a lot of improvement. People was living better, workers had guarantee about pension, and so on. I remember it was in the early '30s, we started not to work in the afternoon of the Saturday. [Laughs.] My father was a man which had the habit to work all the Saturday, and also on Sunday morning. This was the way of life of good bourgeois people, which was devoting all this time to the work.

MR. KNIGHT: How did the family title come about? I believe that was given your father-

DR. PANZA: It was given in 1940 by the King of Italy, Vittorio Emanuele III.

MR. KNIGHT: What were the circumstances surrounding-

DR. PANZA: My father was active in business, was a wealthy man, was a correct man in his activities. He was

mayor of his town, Varese, for many years. He was the head of several public associations related to his activity in wines and the cultural production of wines and so on. He spent time working in this institution. For these reason he gained this title.

MR. KNIGHT: So in 1945, then, you returned to Varese from Switzerland.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And did you go back to school at that point?

DR. PANZA: Well, I was already reach maturity in 1940. I was a student of a faculty of law in Milan. I was graduated in law in 1948, because I lose two years during the war.

MR. KNIGHT: And you continued in school, as I recall? You got, because I know you got an additional degree.

DR. PANZA: Well, no, I just get a degree in law.

MR. KNIGHT: Just in law.

DR. PANZA: I don't know if degree is the right definition. I became a doctor in law. I don't know what it means in America.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah, it's the same, yes.

DR. PANZA: The same.

MR. KNIGHT: It is. And when you completed your law degree, what about the family business? Did you go into the family business?

DR. PANZA: Well, I started to work in the family business. Indeed, I had my degree in '48, but my father died in '49.

MR. KNIGHT: '49.

DR. PANZA: And for this reason I began soon to work.

MR. KNIGHT: Was your father pleased that you had gotten a law degree-

DR. PANZA: Oh yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -after all those years of reading Dostoevsky? [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Oh yes, he was pleased. He realized that I was willing to work for family business; I was not willing to be a philosopher. When I was younger, I had this idea to have a doctorate in philosophy and in art history, because they was the things I was willing to do. For me, to work in business was a very painful decision, to work in the company of my father, which was devoted to trade, was completely not interesting to me. I felt this kind of job not adapted to my temperament, because I realized that I don't have the capacity to make quick decisions, and when we work in trade, you have to make quick decisions-to sell when you realize that the market is going down, to buy when you realize when the market is going up. But are the decision which are to be made very fast. But I was very slow in thinking. I was always depressed because I was so slow in learning things. I believe to be now less intelligent than other people, because I spent so much time trying to understand things. [They laugh.]

MR. KNIGHT: So that made you less-

DR. PANZA: So just the trade was something completely alien to me, to be forced to do a work in which decision have to be made fast, for me was something impossible. And for this reason, I felt very uncomfortable. But my father had other kind of activities. He had also real estate. I was thinking that perhaps it was better to develop this activity, which was one of the family business.

MR. KNIGHT: Well, was he also in alcohol business?

DR. PANZA: Yes, because after this corporation making trade in wine was closed-after the war the system of production and distribution of wines, and in general of agriculture products, was changed. There was a lot of state control and the price was no more allowed to fluctuate following the free market, which was controlled by the State. For this reason was closed this operation, and was started another one, making industrial alcohol.

MR. KNIGHT: And your brother was in the business as well?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: During this time, then, in the early '50s-the interest in art that you had developed in your childhood and as a young man-were you continuing to pursue this interest?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. When I was in Switzerland, I don't have the possibility to study very much. I spent many months in a concentration camp in Switzerland, I bought books, I read a lot about philosophy, art history, literature, poetry and was possible in this way to devote my attention to the problems more interesting to me. Was a good period for me, this time in Switzerland, because my vision of life changed. I felt very deeply the changes happening because of the war. The rationalistic vision of life, coming out of the idealist philosophy of culture, which was very popular in Italy in this time, coming from the Hegel philosophy, trusting in history and the idea that history was the single reality of life. I was very involved before the war in this philosophy. It was very interesting for studying history. But I felt this philosophy was not a good answer to the real problems, because the war was a so tragic event. Was so deeply shocking to the belief in the rational capacity of men to do right things, what was happening was so terrible, this faith in the reason was failing, was broken. Was the great crisis of the European culture, coming out of the Renaissance belief that reason was able to solve all the problems of life. If we only follow the reason, everything will became good and the men will happy, because reason, with science, had the possibility to make everything better. Science was discovering every secret of nature. [Man] was able to use nature for improving the life of people, and science became the religion of Europe. The old belief of the Middle Age, based on the faith of God, was no more actual. Science was able to do the beautiful thing which was impossible before. And for this reason, the belief in reason was the main support of life. And to see how reason was failing totally, this was the great crisis of European culture during the last war.

MR. KNIGHT: Were there particular areas of art history that you were especially interested in, some more than others?

DR. PANZA: Well, I was very interested in, especially in the Renaissance history. This was a period which interested me more because was the time when so many great artists was living, and I was very interested in artists-like Titian, Michelangelo, Piero della Francesca, but also Rembrandt, Vermeer, the Flemish artists of the 15th century. Also the French Impressionists. I started soon after the war, and even before, to be interested to Cubism, [Pablo] Picasso, [Henri] Matisse, but the artist which I liked most was Michelangelo, Titian, Tintoretto, Giorgione, Raphael less. I believed Raphael was superficial, which was a mistake, however, which I understood only a lot later. Leonardo da Vinci also was extremely interesting to me. The Venetian School and the Florentine one-Botticelli, for instance, and Piero della Francesca was perhaps was the one I liked most.

MR. KNIGHT: It's interesting because the Venetians-and Piero, as well, I would say, and Michelangelo-are very mysterious artists, in a way.

DR. PANZA: Yes, the artists which are expressionist in some way.

MR. KNIGHT: Yes.

DR. PANZA: The rational and the expressionism are the main aspect of art in Italy. There was the opposition of facts of life which are difficult to put together. The death, the life, the suffering, and the reason why we have to suffer, why we have to die, was very impressing to me. These artists which were living with this problems was very interesting to me.

MR. KNIGHT: It's interesting, Piero especially, because in certain respects-speaking of mathematics, which apparently you didn't like as a child [Laughs]-it's completely rational and completely organized and completely clear, but it's taken to such a state of abstraction-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -that it becomes expressionist.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: It becomes-

DR. PANZA: Yes, and it became abstract, in some way.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: Because he realized that art is a vision of something ideal. It was the projection of a perfect world which the artist has seen, but which is not real; it's an attempt to make it real. But this ideal images are so strong that they became real, because they speak about something which is behind everything, and give the belief that the real world is not the one we see. And our reality is a poor imitation, a poor attempt to realize what

is in our mind. When we look at nature, we find that this ideal beauty could exist, because nature have this quality. This was another thing always very attracting to me, when I was young. I liked very much to be in the country, to be alone in the mountains, to walk in the garden at night when there was a full moon, because this contact with nature was very beautiful, and I felt happy just when I was among nature.

MR. KNIGHT: 1956 is when you bought your first art.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Most of the artists that you mentioned having interest in were not contemporary. How did the two come together? How did your interest in art, historically, come together with the decision to begin collecting?
DR. PANZA: Well, because I was willing to make a collection of high quality, and to buy paintings of high quality of the past was economically and financially impossible. I was not willing to have second-rate paintings. This was just the first requirement of the collection. And also I was always very curious about the new.

[Begin Tape 2, side A.]

DR. PANZA: When I was in Switzerland, I read many books about science, biology, natural history, physics, astronomy. Astronomy was a matter extremely fascinating to me, because the attempt to discover the secrets of nature was something very beautiful. The attempt of physical theories to understand the mystery of matter was very attracting. It's very interesting, because there was always this fight between what is known, what it is unknown. And when we discover something, we realize that there are more things to be understood, because the thing which is understood came out of other things which we don't know. We have to try to understand. The interest for the thing which we don't know, but would be possible to know, was very important to me. And I was interested to new art because the new art was something to be understood. It is an activity of selection and to try to learn something different, because through art history I realize also many artists was not understood in his own time. For instance, an artist which I like very much was van Gogh. I was fascinated and very interested to learn why van Gogh, during his life, never sold a painting. It was something very strange to me. For this reason, I believe, my task was to try to find the best new artists. It was the only possibility, with the limited means I had available, to make a collection of masterpieces, because I was willing to make a collection of masterpieces, not of a medium quality paintings. When I realized that something was of second rate, it was impossible for me to keep it in front of my eyes. I had to push it away, because it was something was alien to me.

MR. KNIGHT: You took it personally? [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes. It was something no more possible to accept, to look to. And I had always a rigid requirement for quality. A painting has to be very beautiful always or cannot be with me, because I have a kind of personal relationship with the work. If I like it, I like to see it, I like to stay with the work, because a beautiful work is something which speak to me in endless way, because each time it looks different. And when I am sad, and I look at beautiful painting, my mind change. I found that I don't have to be sad. And is something which really help me.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm.

DR. PANZA: But a bad one, I have to throw it away. [Laughs.]

MR. KNIGHT: How much time elapsed between your decision to go ahead and collect and the first purchase you made?

DR. PANZA: Well, a very short time. I began after I married in 1955. I had a house without paintings, with empty walls. At the beginning, because I had the furniture of the early 19th century, I bought some painting of this period, just to fill the house. But I had also some money to spend, and the first thing which I wanted to do with this money was to try to find good paintings. And in this way, I began an investigation. More systematical as possible, I tried to look around with the Italian art in Milan. After, I went to Paris to look to art made in France. At the beginning I bought several paintings of several young artists. I bought some Italian, but mostly French. I realized one year later that this paintings was no good. This happened in January of '56, this systematical search for art. But the first important purchase was made in the spring of '56 in Paris, when I bought several paintings by [Antonio] Tapies. I was very impressed by the exhibition made by Stadler, which was the second exhibition he made in Paris. In September or October, I don't remember, September perhaps, I read an article in the magazine, *Civilta delle Macchine*, which means The Civilization of Machinery, which was a good magazine, made by the state-owned steel industry, dealing just with steel and art. There also some pictures with paintings having some relationship to industry. There was, I believe, a Charles Sheeler-I don't remember exactly, perhaps a Sheeler.

MR. KNIGHT: Hmm.

DR. PANZA: There was also a [Franz] Kline, because it was looking like a steel structure, but broken.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm. *

DR. PANZA: And I was very impressed by this image. I read that the photographs was from the Sidney Janis Gallery. I wrote to Sidney Janis to send me photographs of Franz Kline, and through them I selected the first painting, which is a *Buttress*, which is the first on the left in the room of Kline at MOCA [the Museum of Contemporary Art]. The price was about $550. I ask Sidney Janis to reduce to $500. He agreed. [They laugh.]

MR. KNIGHT: Your first deal, your first bargain.

DR. PANZA: And I bought the painting.

MR. KNIGHT: Were you surprised at all when the painting arrived?

DR. PANZA: Oh no. I was very pleased! It was better than I was expecting. I was very impressed. I was really loving Franz Kline, because it was reflecting my state of mind. I had always this kind of desire to reach something which we cannot reach. Man is born in order to be happy, but he cannot be happy. We want to reach perfection, but never we reach perfection. We are deeply deprived of the perfection, and deeply deprived of happiness. And the world has limits. Everything in which we live is not perfect, cannot give all us happiness, but we need this. The opposition of reality and the desire of something more beautiful was always very strong in my mind. The images made by Kline was giving me the same feeling. This man was looking strongly for something which is impossible to have but desperately needed. This kind of stress for having this thing was my condition, and I felt very close to his art for this reason.

MR. KNIGHT: Scale seems to be so important with Franz Kline.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Had you visualized in your mind what sort of scale this picture would be? Because it's a fairly small painting by Kline's standards.

DR. PANZA: Well, yes. This one was small, for the Kline scale, but was already bigger than the European scale.

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh, that's true.

DR. PANZA: The paintings by Tapies was bigger, bigger than a smaller Kline. But I was coming out of a culture in which the painting by Morandi was the usual size.

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: Three feet was already big, but two feet, two feet and a half-

MR. KNIGHT: In a briefcase.

DR. PANZA: Yes. The normal size. Before the war there was the belief that the smaller painting was better than a larger one. The paintings by [Paul] Klee, for instance, was the perfection, because they was very small. The capacity to realize something small was the possibility to do something more perfect, more beautiful, because it was smaller.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm.

DR. PANZA: Perhaps there was the confrontation with a lot of Baroque paintings, which was around in the churches in Italy, where there was big paintings, but with little meaning because they was big but not fine. Perhaps this was the reason.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs] Had you at that point-

DR. PANZA: And perhaps because in the late 19th century, it was very fashionable, this kind of historical art dealing with events of [daily] life, which was bad, there was larger paintings but without quality, depicting social fact but not situations of the mind. And what I was looking for was something which was expressing the inner world of the man, not his actions.

MR. KNIGHT: When you bought the Kline painting, had you at that point ever been to the United States?

DR. PANZA: I made a long trip between 1953 and '54. After the death of my father, I was willing to do something else. I was working with my brother. I was paying attention to the real estate left, inherited by my father, but I

had the first sister which was working in the administration of the real estate, because she was not married. She, during the war, helped my father on this administration. She was going on in this activity. My sister had some qualities of my father, but not the best ones. [Laughs.] She was very authoritative. But she had also a kind of idolatry for my father, and what was making my father was the only right thing, what was saying my father was a thing which had to be followed but not to be discussed. She had always no consideration for the fact I was interested in art and philosophy, in the things which was not giving income. I was not making something useful in economical term. And there was always a potential fighting between this elder sister and me. I was willing to look for something else to do, and for this reason I made this trip, first in South America, and after in North America, to look around, to learn business. And for this reason, I spent for several months in Brazil and Argentina, and I spent seven months in America. I was not speaking English. I had to spend three months in New York for learning English, and after, I made a large trip in Canada and California. I went to Los Angeles, Texas and Louisiana, and so on.

MR. KNIGHT: When you were in New York, did you look at art at all?

DR. PANZA: Yes, but not too much. I went to the Metropolitan, to the Museum of Modern Art, but I didn't go around to see galleries, because at this moment I don't have yet the idea to became a collector. I was always interested in culture, but I was very involved in finding a solution for my life as businessman, to find which kind of business to develop. Because the task of a man of my family was one to be a good businessman, not to be an intellectual making nothing, just thinking. And for this reason, I paid a visit many kind of industries. I was indeed fascinated by the life of America, and by the landscape, by a kind of life which was more free. In Italy there was a lot of social convention in this time. The relationship with people was based on the individual capacity, not on the social ranking of an individual. Excuse me. [Doorbell rings] All these thing was very different.

[Audio break.]

DR. PANZA: I was very fascinated by American life. This energy which was in this country, this will to build a better life. Crossing the continent, the fascination of a nature which was still untouched, still as it was before the emigration of white man. This was very beautiful. The light which is so different from the light of the north of Italy, which is always gray, foggy, because of the humidity. Here, especially in the Midwest and in the west, the light is pure, and this is a very strong attraction, give the idea of a world which is more ideal, because light is something which make beautiful the reality. When I went back, I believed that probably America was starting a new kind of civilization. It was possible to develop a different culture, because the social situation was so different from the European one, from the Italian one. We have the weight of the past, of what was inherited from the centuries; the respect of the rules made in the past was too strong-things was no good for developing something different, but in America perhaps it was possible. I had this intuition. And when I began to buy Franz Kline, I began to be interested also to other artists.

MR. KNIGHT: A year or two later, after you had returned from the United States-when the Franz Kline painting arrived at your door-did you sense in this painting any of these things that you've been telling me about what you felt in America?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. I felt strongly the life of New York. I was very impressed when for the first time I arrived in New York. For me it was really a New World. Not something related to production or to the goal to make money. But it looked to me a romantic city, a city which was struggling for things which it is impossible to have, but it was trying to have. This was very impressive to me, this eruption of energy, which was going up but without a goal. The only goal was the infinite, the desire of something which is too great in order to be reached. This was a strong feeling I had, coming to New York.

MR. KNIGHT: Your mother had passed away shortly before you began collecting.

DR. PANZA: Yes, she died just in November of '56, when I was just began to collect.

MR. KNIGHT: I just want to get the chronology right. In '56 and '57, you began with [Antonio] Tapies and then [Franz] Kline.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And then the following year in '58 [Jean] Fautrier.

DR. PANZA: Yes, Fautrier, and in '59 [Robert] Rauschenberg.

MR. KNIGHT: Rauschenberg and [Mark] Rothko.

DR. PANZA: And Rothko.

MR. KNIGHT: Okay. In your collection, which is now at MOCA, Museum of Contemporary Art, there are six Fautriers, 14 Tapies; I don't recall how many Klines.

DR. PANZA: Twelve.

MR. KNIGHT: Twelve. Each from very concentrated periods of their work.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: What led you to the decision to concentrate on particular periods and to buy several works from those concentrated periods?

DR. PANZA: Because I was looking for the best period of each artist. Is a fact that the artists of the 20th century have, more than the artists of other time, a shorter period of strong creativity. And when this period finished, the work made later not so good as the work made before. There are exception, however, to this rule, but there are few exception. Picasso made beautiful works in all his life, but even in Picasso there are period which are better than others. Braque is an example because the works of the Cubist period are very much better than all the others made after.

MR. KNIGHT: Why do you think that is? That it's particular to the 20th century that artists have more concentrated-

DR. PANZA: Because I believe information run faster and the social context change very much faster than before. I believe this is the main reason. Each artist develop his work in a context, which is related to many things, to what happen before, to what is happening in the present time, what it is the dominant trend in politics, what is the dominant mood of a people. And if this situation change, art change, and when there several positive situations are present, the artist is creative, when situations began to change, there are no more the same inducement for making good works. For instance, [Giorgio] de Chirico is a clear example. He made masterpieces between 1912 till 1918, but after, the quality of his work was going down, became worse. For perhaps other artists, like Morandi, was not the same, but mostly for the artist of the beginning of the century, the historical avant-garde, stopped to do important work in 1930. Miro made the best work before. [Salvador] Dali also. And [Rene] Magritte too.

MR. KNIGHT: So you-

DR. PANZA: Max Ernst too. He made also some good works later, but less. The best work was made before.

MR. KNIGHT: So you aren't interested in the late de Chirico and late Picasso and-

DR. PANZA: No, no.

MR. KNIGHT: -that everyone seems to be interested in these days.

DR. PANZA: But the market is buying anyway the works of the late period of an artist, because many people don't understand art, but like to have modern art, and because of this they buy the signature; they don't buy the painting. They pay for the reputation of the artist, not for the work in itself.

MR. KNIGHT: So during this time when you then began to collect, were you reading about contemporary art at that point? Were you beginning to acquaint yourself?

DR. PANZA: Well-when I began to collect?

MR. KNIGHT: Yes.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. When I began to collect, I began to read about contemporary art. I tried to have magazines about art. I began to travel a lot in order to see exhibitions. I was going to see all the more interesting exhibition in galleries. I went often to Paris, to Germany, where there [were] interesting exhibition. I began to travel often just in order to see art.

MR. KNIGHT: And it was in Paris that you saw Fautrier and Tapies?

DR. PANZA: Yes, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -who are still not well-known, in this country.

DR. PANZA: No, yes, unfortunately, yes. Because Tapies made the best works in this period, between 1955 and 1959. The work he made after was good but not so strong, not so poetically motivated like the ones of this

period. I believe Tapies, like other European artist-

[Begin Tape 2, side B.]

DR. PANZA: -lived the crisis of the last war. If you look at his paintings, you see always the earth, the matter of the earth, forms looks like dead bodies. And you will see near the edge the horizon; you never see the sky, but you have the impression from all paintings that man have to be different. And you feel a mood; the colors are all dark, and you have a pessimistic vision of life through this painting. But this was because it was the attitude of the Europeans after the tragedy of the last war. We needed to start to find new motivations, valid motivations. Start from the suffering of the crisis which all near-European was going through.

MR. KNIGHT: Okay. Let's see. Did you make it a practice at this time to meet the artist?

DR. PANZA: In some case it was necessary to meet the artist, but it was not a necessary goal for me. What was important was to see as more works as possible. And to have documentation, to have many photographs. I spent time at home just to look at photographs, because looking at photographs we can have a knowledge of the works, which is useful-if you have already seen the original. The photograph help you very much to have an image of a work. From this image are the motivations of the image, the world of the artist, the state of mind he live in, his goal, what he want to express, which is his own personality. And this is very important, is a works which have to be made with time. We can have intuition about what the artist want to express, but in order to be sure if this intuition is the right one, you have to live in, to live with the work. And this is possible only if we spend a lot of time with it. I spent all my evening at home to look at paintings or to look at the photographs, or the documentation-because it is useful. Only this way, we know the artist, we absorb the personality of the artist. We rebuild inside our head his mind. This kind of partnership with the work is very beautiful.

MR. KNIGHT: In 1959 you began buying Rauschenberg and Rothko, and it was shortly thereafter that you stopped buying Tapies.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -Fautrier. And you subsequently bought primarily the work of Americans and very few Europeans.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Why is that?

DR. PANZA: Well, because it was a very simple reason. In America there was very much more important artists rather in Europe. Soon after the war, the best artist was Fautrier and [Jean] Dubuffet. Here in America only Dubuffet is well noted. In the '50s, became important in Europe Tapies, and probably was the best of this period. Was important [Francis] Bacon, but was in some way far away from my vision of art. Even if I respected him very much. But I never was too much interested to his art. Also I was shocked by the Bacon world, too much expressionist, but a kind of expressionism with something ambiguous, as we say, a relationship to a kind of a wrong erotic attitude, which I don't like, a kind of a surrealism alien to me. And for this reason, I was more interested to American art. The work by Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns had a different vision. Also the relationship to [Marcel] Duchamp was very interesting. I discovered Duchamp through Rauschenberg.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh really?

DR. PANZA: Yes. And I realized how Duchamp was important through Rauschenberg. Till before, I don't pay too much attention to Duchamp's work. It looks to me something too eccentric. And after, I realized how powerful is the work for Duchamp.

MR. KNIGHT: It is eccentric *and* interesting. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes, but what was looking to me eccentric, was not at all. I realized how his readymade are not objects picked up for showing his own choice, but are a choice made in order to give to the viewer the opportunity to think about something, to establish an analogical connection to other facts, to facts which are related to life, to the person of the viewer. And this fact I discovered through Rauschenberg. Because of Duchamp I started to look to art of the Italian Renaissance in a different way. I looked to Leonardo da Vinci with very much more attention. And I discovered another Leonardo da Vinci which was more rich and original in his images as I was thinking before. And I discover the field of Italian Renaissance, which I have judged of no so good quality, like the mannerism of painter. I discover how great are these artists. I understood why Raphael is great, because what was important in Raphael is not the first look, but what you see looking slowly and paying attention to the details. The detail became a painting, in Raphael. If you look at the finger of the virgin, you see a landscape, because of this finger became an element of nature; this steady transition from the past to the whole is extremely interesting. How this art was developed and I understood through Duchamp.

MR. KNIGHT: So-

DR. PANZA: Before I had always a very emotional relationship to art, not enough an intellectual relationship. And through Duchamp I realized how this intellectual relationship open up new emotional field, which cannot be perceived if we see only from the image, we stop at the image.

MR. KNIGHT: So Duchamp became the source of more conceptual interest?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Were you at this time spending more time in New York?

DR. PANZA: Well, I was going once or twice a year, but each time I was spending two weeks.

MR. KNIGHT: And how did you find artists that you wanted to see? I mean, you were coming from Italy once or twice a year.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Who were you listening to? Were there dealers or critics, or museums?

DR. PANZA: Well, to dealers, to critics, to collectors, to artists, because I was always asking to people which young artists was interesting to see. Through this information I had a long list of name, and through the list of name I was going to the galleries which had the paintings. When I was in New York, I was going around in galleries and studios all the day. And I collected always documentation, and when I was back to Milan, I was looking to the documentation. After a long study, I decided to buy, when I was sure. Not buying one example or two, but all the paintings it was possible to buy. Because when I decide to buy, I was so sure that the work had to be purchased, and in the largest extent possible. Because the work was important.

MR. KNIGHT: The Rauschenberg portion of your collection was really astonishing. I'd be curious to know how you came upon Rauschenberg.

DR. PANZA: Well, I know Rauschenberg through John Cage, because John Cage came into Milan in '58. He was working at the National Italian Radio in the studio of electronic music with Berio, I believe. And he knew that I was buying American art, because I have Franz Kline and Rothko. And for this reason, was willing to meet me. And he came to at lunch in my home and he spoke to me about Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns. And this way I bought the first Rauschenberg which was not from Leo [Castelli] but from [Larry] Rubin, because Rubin was willing to sell a painting. I don't remember which way I meet Rubin-the title of this painting is *Kick Back*, which is the vertical painting, the second one on the larger wall, at the show at MOCA.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: It was shown at Documenta in Kassel in '59 where I have seen the painting. I believe from the catalogue was belonging to Rubin, and in this way I bought it from him and I paid $750 for this painting. In the same time, I wrote to Leo to send me photographs, but he don't send me them soon, because he told me some time later, he don't believe that an Italian was really willing to buy Rauschenberg. [They laugh.] But anyway, he send me some photographs and I began in this way buying some painting. And, in 1960, I was in New York and we went with Leo to the warehouse: a room, full of beautiful Rauschenberg, of the fifties. And in this way I bought several works.

MR. KNIGHT: John Cage, you said, spoke to you of Rauschenberg and Johns?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: You bought Rauschenberg but not Johns.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Why?

DR. PANZA: Because Johns was making few paintings and the few collectors living in New York was buying his work. They could come in his studio and buy the paintings soon when they was finished. I was not interested in commissioning work, to ask an artist to keep a work for me, because I was willing to select. I never was buying without having seen the work before. And for this reason, I lost the opportunity to buy Jasper Johns.

MR. KNIGHT: I've also been wondering where *Factum Two* is. The Rauschenberg *Factum One* is in your collection. Do you know where *Factum Two* is?

DR. PANZA: Yes, yes. Because I don't understood the relationship between the two paintings, I choose *Factum First*, because it looks to me more beautiful than *Factum Second*. But I don't understand that it would be better to keep the two together, because it was this kind of relationship very important. Because I believe that Rauschenberg made the same operation made by Leonardo da Vinci with the *Virgin of the Rocks*. He made itself the first version of the *Virgin of the Rocks*, which is at the Louvre. And he made with the collaboration of his best pupil, Ambrogio De Predis, the one which is in London. They are very similar. It is very difficult to find a difference, only some details are different. Also the quality of the two paintings is excellent. Both are very beautiful. And this introduced the problem of duplication: What it is the original, why the copy cannot be like the original? How is important the hand of the artist? The artist have to do himself the work, or could be made by somebody else which follow closely his own mind. But it is more important the work of the hand or the mind of the man which make the hand working? The problem is this one. And for this reason, it would be very important to keep the two painting together. But at this time, I had not yet enough understood Duchamp and Leonardo.

MR. KNIGHT: And so where is *Factum Two* today?

DR. PANZA: It belongs, I believe, to Mr. Newman in Chicago.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh really!?

DR. PANZA: He is a famous collector.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh really. I didn't know that. Son of a gun! Maybe we can get it from him. [They laugh.]

DR. PANZA: Yes, we can go and ask.

MR. KNIGHT: Let's call him up. Most of these artists-Rauschenberg, Rothko, Fautrier, Tapies-had been working in what we would consider their mature styles for at least a few years.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Whether or not they had reputations that were established. But in 1962, you began to buy Oldenburg, Lichtenstein, Rosenquist-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -who were very, very new at that time.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: They had really just begun making their best work.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Were you feeling-after, what, six years of collecting-more confident in your own taste, in this way?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes, sure. I believe these artists are very important. They made many masterpieces of the Pop Art. Look to the Oldenburg, which are beautiful works-

MR. KNIGHT: I'll say.

DR. PANZA: -and always very impressive, when I look to them. They have a great attraction to me. Even the Lichtenstein of the early sixties are very beautiful. Even the Rosenquist. I believe the work he made in these years are very good. He seldom made so beautiful works after, I believe. Oldenburg is the one which kept steady quality in his work. Lichtenstein too, but less.

MR. KNIGHT: The Lichtenstein-the group of three small Lichtensteins, not the portrait of Cezanne-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -is a kind of wonderful capsule response, I think, to Abstract Expressionism. There's the diary, which is "autobiography."

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: There's the slab of meat which is, you know, "beef."

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And there's the "muscle" of the-all of which are clichés of Abstract Expressionism.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: It's a kind of very neat little critical commentary.

DR. PANZA: Well, the connection between Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art was made through Rauschenberg, because if you look at Rauschenberg, you see also the sign of the painting. We don't see only the collage, also the object, the real object. And for this reason, it was natural for me to arrive at the Pop Art. However, when the Rauschenbergs came into my house there was some people which was very interested, but very few, but some was very fascinated by the work by Rothko and Kline, and Tapies, and to see this kind of art so different, so vulgar, made with the objects which are really found by upsetting the container of the trash, was a scandal for these people. [Laughs.] But I felt a great interest in the work by Rauschenberg because I see from the nature of this details, a relationship to something which happened in his past. It's an inducement to memory, the work of Rauschenberg. Are all the ties made with the connection to something real, which is fading away, because it's a fact which happened in the distant past when perhaps the artist was young. The quality of this material, which became old because are perishable materials. The paper, the wood, the objects add this kind of distance to the memory, making the object stronger because is alive in the memory. Because it's a matter of fact, but something which we have strong experience in the distant past, is by the memory in some way changed, became more beautiful, because lose reality and get more ideal reality. This process is very strong in the work of Rauschenberg, especially in the ones made in the fifties.

MR. KNIGHT: It would seem a very long way from Fautrier and Tapies to Lichtenstein and Oldenburg, but you just used the word perishable in talking about Rauschenberg.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And that's something that I had speculated on in my review of the MOCA exhibition of your collection. Do you think there's any legitimacy to that speculation on my part, this notion of a kind of death and rebirth, or a perishable quality to the work that you first began to collect from 1956 through the early sixties?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes, sure. Because I believe this opposition of death and life, and the search of endless life, is a constant problem of every human. If we don't have this notion that life, in some way, have to go on, will be impossible to live. If when we think what we have to disappear, when we realize that this is real too, is something really shocking. It's a deeper wound which we feel in our being. To have this hope is essential to live. Perhaps we can forget this problem, but at some time became real. When you are not ready to think about, you are crushed by this fact: you cannot live forever; you have to disappear.

MR. KNIGHT: [Pauses, then laughs.] Well, basically, what you are saying is a very philosophical thread-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -that runs through your collecting. Are there other sorts of threads that you see in your collection?

DR. PANZA: I've not well understood your question. A philosophical work by-

MR. KNIGHT: There's a philosophical thread which basically has to do with mortality.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Are there other philosophical questions other than mortality that are of interest to you, that you feel is reflected in your collection?

DR. PANZA: Yes, is the problem of a truth. We can know something which is really true, which is valid for everybody-

[Begin Tape 3, side A.]

DR. PANZA: Is the basic problem of philosophy, the problem of knowledge, if our knowledge is something relative or absolute. [If it] is something which can give knowledge of something which is true, is valid forever, and in any situation. The history of philosophy is the study of this problem. I was always extremely interested to this problem because it's the basic problem of philosophy. If we don't solve this one, we cannot solve any other problem.

MR. KNIGHT: Is it a problem that can be solved?

DR. PANZA: No.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs] Then what are we doing?

DR. PANZA: But we have to try to solve it. And we cannot be quiet if we don't try to solve it. We are men because we are trying to solve this problem which we cannot solve, but we can prove that wrong solutions are wrong.

MR. KNIGHT: On a rather lower level, why did you stop with Lichtenstein? You have four pictures.

DR. PANZA: Yes. Because I made a big mistake. It was one of the biggest mistake of my life as collector. Because in '62 I bought seven Lichtenstein. I pay $600 each. My wife do not like Lichtenstein. She is always with me in the judgment of art, and is my main support for my collection-without my wife, it would be impossible to have the collection I have, because she was always very interested in art and we had always the same judgment. She is more smarter than me. She understand immediately if an artist is good or not. She tell me, "Don't buy; is no good," or, "Buy; is good." But I don't trust her because I want to study, to work, to think, and so on. But we arrive at the same conclusion. She is more smarter, and she understand soon.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: But on the Lichtenstein, we had different judgment. I liked very much, but she don't like. And this way I decided to trade in three Lichtenstein for three Rosenquist, which was not a mistake. But it was a mistake to lose the Lichtenstein, which was beautiful!

MR. KNIGHT: What were they?

DR. PANZA: It was in 1963. I trade in with a dealer in Turin, with Sperone. Perhaps you know?

MR. KNIGHT: Do you recall the images?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. One was a ring; it was called *The Engagement Ring*.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: On a cushion, the ring on the cushion. Another one was the hand of a woman with a sponge cleaning a glass window.

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh, right.

DR. PANZA: Another was just called *Engagement*, which a very beautiful painting with the boy and the girl exchanging this engagement statement. Every time I think to this mistakes, I feel bad.

MR. KNIGHT: When did you do that? When did you make this mistake?

DR. PANZA: I made it in '63.

MR. KNIGHT: In '63, the next year? Well, as long as we're on the topic of mistakes, I was talking yesterday with Andy Warhol.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And he had just come from seeing the collection-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -and was extremely complimentary and very sorry that he wasn't in the collection. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes. That was another mistake.

MR. KNIGHT: So you went to his-

DR. PANZA: That was another mistake. Because when I-

MR. KNIGHT: You went to his studio.

DR. PANZA: When I was in his studio, it was full of beautiful paintings. There was one on top of the other, and was about 50 painting in this studio. Was the fall of 1962.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: And there was all the most famous paintings, which I saw, many in the Saatchi collection in London two weeks ago. Several was in this collection. They was for sale at $600 and I don't bought. Because I believed that Lichtenstein was better, and in 1962 Warhol looks to me close to Lichtenstein but not so good as Lichtenstein. But it was a mistake, because it was not true; it was very different.

MR. KNIGHT: In what ways would you say that they're completely different? At that particular period.

DR. PANZA: Because they have different background. The goal of Lichtenstein is to make beautiful what is not beautiful, but is common, to make archetypal images of images which are nothing, which don't have any aesthetic quality, give cultural dignity to what don't have any. This way of making art is very close to the way of making a good paintings in the past, when the image became the opportunity to make something beautiful, but the image lose completely its usual communication capacity. It's not anymore an information, because it's not the common image which have a function; became something else. Became fine for the good harmonic combinations of shapes, light, and colors, which have no more relation to the meaning of the image in itself. Warhol is different because his art is a criticism of American society, and his goal is to show how this society is wrong. And he's very harsh, very aggressive in this attitude. This is fine for this reason, because it's without compromise, and is direct. To use photographs is the best way to realize this.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm. 1962 must have been a busy year for you, because you also went to [Claes] Oldenburg's *Store* [laughs] downtown in New York.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Could you tell me about going to the *Store*, and what sort of an experience it was?

DR. PANZA: It was a beautiful experience, because in order to reach the *Store*, we had to go through the Jewish section in downtown New York, which was full of shops selling used dresses. And you had the very strange feeling to see this dresses, which was used, as a good and beautiful things. The opposition of a used, old dress and the image you see in the shops of Fifth Avenue. Was a very strong difference.

And the Oldenburg *Store* was in small street, after the Jewish section. It was completely different because it was glowing of beautiful colors. This poor objects which lived so much with somebody, which don't use them anymore and perhaps disappeared, this object so connected to our individual life, in some way a part of our body, was changed into something brilliant, because of the strong, pure, beautiful colors used by Oldenburg. This opposition was very strange, very moving.

MR. KNIGHT: Had you been familiar with Oldenburg before this time?

DR. PANZA: Well, I went to his *Store* because some day before I have seen exhibition at the Green Gallery, which impressed me very much. But at first I was shocked, because it was the attempt to make beautiful what was ugly, and this was something apparently impossible. And I was shocked. But this artist was trying to make this ugly things to look better. I realized that this ugly things had a strong attraction; in reality they was beautiful. In this way, I ask to Dick Bellamy to show me more, and we went together to the *Store*.

MR. KNIGHT: And did you meet Oldenburg at that time?

DR. PANZA: Yes, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: So. You had said earlier that it was John Cage who first told you about Rauschenberg.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: At this time, were there artists who were telling you about other artists that you should look at? DR. PANZA: Well, most of the Pop artists I met through Leo Castelli, because he was selling to me Rauschenberg. In his gallery in 1960, I saw a painting by Lichtenstein, which was not so good, but very interesting. In '61 I saw an exhibition made at the Martha Jackson Gallery in New York of young artists, with some work by Oldenburg, the early work, before the works made in the *Store*, which was made in '59, which was good, but looking too close to Dubuffet in some way. And it was interesting, but I was not sure if it was good. I had already some information about, when, in June 1962, I met Ileana Sonnabend in Venice, because of the Venice Biennale. We had an appointment with Leo; they show me photographs of Lichtenstein and Rosenquist. And they ask me to came to New York to see them. And so I made it in October. I bought many works just at this time.

MR. KNIGHT: In the interview that you did with Bruce Kurts in 1972, you said, almost in passing, that when you met Oldenburg and saw his work, you felt a relation with European experience, especially German expressionists. DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And that's a very intriguing notion, and I wonder if you could discuss that?

DR. PANZA: Yes, I felt this relationship because of this opposition of so different colors. And also, the German expressionists used the same technique to put very strong colors one aside of the other. They don't use difference of tone of colors, just pure color against another one, but without a transition. And this was a technique used by the German expressionists in order to give more violent force to the expression. And I found the same thing in Oldenburg.

MR. KNIGHT: It's interesting, because Pop is usually thought of as such an American sensibility.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: But in a case such as this, you seem to connect it with the European tradition.

DR. PANZA: Yes. In some ways, yes. Perhaps I am wrong; perhaps is not real. But I had this feeling, and it was interesting for me to make this confrontation; because it was helpful for understanding the work of Oldenburg.

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh. Finally, the last point I want to talk about today has to do with the installation of the exhibition at MOCA, which is very precise. Great attention to the lighting of the exhibition, an attempt to remove distractions as much as possible.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: There are no labels.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And so forth. It's, it is in many respects almost chapel-like in the way it's put together.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: It's very like your home-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -like the stables at your home: very quiet and contemplative.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Why is that?

DR. PANZA: Well, because I believe-

MR. KNIGHT: The *Store*, for instance, was not that way.

DR. PANZA: Well, but in some way it was. Because when I was in *Store*, all this space was filled with works, and we was seeing only this objects, so brilliant in color. This accumulation was extremely strong. But when you are in a museum, you cannot do the same thing, because in order to repeat the experience of the *Store* it would be necessary to have not 16 Oldenburg, but 40 Oldenburg. This way it was possible to fill all the walls till the ceiling to have this strong accumulation of objects, which was its own way oppressive, but in the same time was something very strong. Because you felt this quality of beautiful works above you, and this was very exciting, yes. But this is not possible to do because we don't have enough works.

MR. KNIGHT: You'd also have to have the Jewish neighborhood outside to walk through to get to it. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes, also the context was very important, yes, was extremely influential. You saw a reversed situation around in the street. When you was inside the *Store*, you was seeing the same objects in a different dimension. Like to see a person which come back to life, something so different.

MR. KNIGHT: So what sorts of considerations did you have in your mind in doing the installation for MOCA?

DR. PANZA: Well, to have a kind of a situation in which the viewer is inside. Not to see only each one work, but the feeling to be in front of totality. And this is possible to have when in a room there are only one artist. When you are inside the room, even you had a different perception of the works, because you see many around. And you perceive the meaning of the totality. In some way, you breathe the soul of the artist. This is the quality we can achieve when there are several works of the same artist together in a private space, without any kind of interference. You live with the person, no more with the paintings. You are inside his mind, the mind of the artist. This is a different dimension, which is difficult to realize in museums.

MR. KNIGHT: Absolutely true. I ask this because tomorrow we'll be talking about artists who use installation,

conceptual works.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And I'm curious about how their art has perhaps informed your thinking about these things. But I think we'll close for today.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

[Audio break.]

MR. KNIGHT: Okay, this is Christopher Knight, and I'm speaking with Dr. Panza in Los Angeles on Wednesday, April 3. Okay, I want to go back to just a few things from yesterday.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And then we'll continue on. First of all, I'm curious as to the reactions of your family, when you began to collect art-your brother and your sisters, and your friends.

DR. PANZA: Well, the reaction of my family was negative, especially from the side of my elder sister, because she was educated under the concept of my father: money spent for art was really risky. Investment in art is a volatile investment. And when we have to sell the artworks, if the market is not strong, we lose money. This was very counter to my father.

Indeed, he never bought artwork. He had an example during the '30s, when there was crisis in Italy. There was a rich industrialist that in the twenties built up a large collection of contemporary art, but however was a collection made with the fashion artists of the time. It was not made with the French Impressionists but with the Italian followers. When there was the crisis, they was forced to sell the paintings acquired at a high price 10 years before, [but] was not sold, because the market was not paying this high price again, because of the crisis. And this idea was a concept which was so dominant in the family: not to spend money for art because it was a risky investment.

But I was so much attracted [Laughs.] by the wish to have a good art that I don't pay attention to this advice and I started collecting. At the beginning I was not spending the capital of our family, which I had inherited from my parents, but just the income I had. And I was spending all the income I could spend. I avoid leisure travel or a bigger car, but spend everything it was possible for buying good art. And with time, I realized that this idea was wrong, because when we buy art which are from artists which are successful, the risk of losing money is very strong, because successful art is not the good art, and after, when the success finish, also the value go down, because however is art which don't have real qualities. The best artists are not the successful one; are the artist having real qualities related to the art history, not to the fashion or to the taste of the moment. This was my concept, and I believe that this concept is right, because the fact are showing that it is right. But I had always to fight against my family, against this idea that money spent for art was wrong. Except with my wife, however, always helping me.

And with time, I was willing to spend more, even part of my capital. I had an inheritance from the family of mother. I sold out all the estate I inherited in order to buy art. [Laughs.] And this was judged as a crime by my brother and my sister.

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh.

DR. PANZA: Because it was an attempt to destroy the family wealth, the wealth which was accumulated by a life of work by the grandparents, by my father. I was destroying it. This was the concept.

MR. KNIGHT: So you had no investment considerations whatsoever?

DR. PANZA: No, no. Indeed, it was impossible to have investment consideration when you buy something which everybody refused. For instance, when I bought [Franz] Kline in 1956, everybody was saying to me that I was crazy, that a child was able to do this kind of paintings, just throwing some black paint on a white canvas. Everybody was able to do it. And also the opinion of a competent people-the so-called competent people-was similar. A few was saying that Kline was very good. Many was saying that was nothing, just bad. And the competent, the majority of the competent people, as a whole, was against the positive judgment for Kline, Franz Kline. In this situation, to buy as investment would be something impossible to think.

MR. KNIGHT: So your sister's attitude was that the primary reason one should buy art would be for investment purposes?

DR. PANZA: Well, she was against any kind of investment in art, because following the concept of my father,

investment in art had to be avoided. Is fine to buy something in order to have some good paintings in the house, but not as investment-in order to have a better house, not in order to have an investment.

MR. KNIGHT: You said a few moments ago that collecting the work of the successful artist is not always the wisest idea. To what degree do you think your having collected certain artists has made them successful, or has contributed to their success?

DR. PANZA: Well, I never bought art with the idea that I would give a contribution to the success of the artist. I always bought the work because I was interested from an idea point of view. Because I felt that his work I had to have because it was sympathetic to my way of life. Because the ideas, the vision of the artist, was also my vision. Because this work was giving me new experience and new possibility to understand better things, situations of life, of which I had a confusing idea. This experience of art was giving me the possibility to live better, to understand important things which I was not able to learn otherwise.

[Begin Tape 3, side B.]

DR. PANZA: I never thought to give a contribution to the success of the artist. I was giving a moral and a psychological help to the artist, because I was somebody which was sympathetic to his work, which was understanding his work, was loving it. But this was, in my opinion my contribution, which I believe was important, because for a new artist which usually see his work refused, to find somebody which like it, could be psychologically helpful. And I give also to him some money, which could be good for solving his practical problems. But no more than that. I never thought to have any influence on the market. [Laughs.]

MR. KNIGHT: To make stars.

DR. PANZA: Absolutely never! [They laugh.]

MR. KNIGHT: I understand that you were once offered a Jackson Pollock painting for $4,000. This must have been in the fifties.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And you turned it down.

DR. PANZA: Yes. It happen that in '56, when I was buying Franz Kline. I was interested in having also other painters. And Sidney Janis offered me a painting by [Jackson] Pollock which was less expensive than the others dripping because it was made in an unusual way. It was not made on canvas but on glass. It was made on a large glass plate. It was about two meter wide and one meter, fifty high. And the price was lower because of this reason. It was $4,000. But it was too high a price for me. I was buying Franz Kline at $500, and to pay a single painting at $4,000 looks to me too much. I would prefer to buy with the same sum eight Kline rather than a single Pollock, even if I realize that the Pollock was very beautiful. Indeed I believe it must be now in a museum. I don't remember where, but in some university museum.

MR. KNIGHT: Was this the painting that's in the Hans Namuth film of Pollock working, painting on a piece of glass? Have you ever seen that film?

DR. PANZA: No, I have not seen it.

MR. KNIGHT: There's a film in which Pollock is at work and Namuth photographed from underneath the sheet of glass, while Pollock paints, so you see him from the point of view as if you were the canvas.

DR. PANZA: Yes. I have not seen it.

MR. KNIGHT: Do you regret not having the Pollock?

DR. PANZA: Oh surely, oh yes. But unfortunately I have lost many other opportunities. In 1960 I met Barnett Newman. I was in his studio and in his home. And he offer me to buy several works for $6,000-very large works, very beautiful works of the fifties, the best work of Barnett Newman. I was in his studio, and he was finishing *Vir Heroicus Sublimis* which now is in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. And he was working at this painting. But there was others which he was willing to give me, but it was too much for me in 1960. And in this way, I lost this wonderful opportunity.

MR. KNIGHT: It's been said that you've never spent more than $10,000 on a single work of art.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Is that true?

DR. PANZA: Yes, surely, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Was that a conscious decision on your part?

DR. PANZA: No, it was just dictated by the fact that I have not too much money to spend. And I had to wisely organize my expenditure in order to have the maximum results with the minimum of money. Otherwise it would have been impossible to make a large collection. And for this reason, I had to concentrate in artists which don't have a reputation already established. Because the time in order to have the opportunity to buy at the low price is very short. It last one, two, three years. If you lose this short period for buying, the price goes up, became twice as costly, and we lose the opportunity to do the purchase.

MR. KNIGHT: Given, during this time, your developing interests in the art that you were collecting, which I think one could say is a kind of philosophically inflected attitude toward collecting, I've often wondered why an artist such as Yves Klein was not part of your collection.

DR. PANZA: Because this is another mistake I made. I met several times with Klein. I was often in his studio. He was a very close friend of Pierre Restany. Restany was my friend, and he spoke a lot to me about. I saw the first exhibition he made in Italy, in the Galleria Apollinaire in Milan in '58, made by paintings, each one costing $20,000 lire, which means $120 dollars.

MR. KNIGHT: $120 dollars! [They laugh.]

[Audio break.]

DR. PANZA: Yes, Yves Klein was one of the biggest mistake of my life, because having so many opportunities, I don't understood his work. But in this time, in '58, I don't yet learn well the importance of a Duchamp, and Yves Klein looks to me too much radical. They had not enough visual qualities. It was too much intellectual, too much conceptual. Only after, I realize the importance of the conceptual art. And for this reason, I lost completely this opportunity.

MR. KNIGHT: That's interesting. So that was 1958.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And you had said yesterday that it was through Rauschenberg that you came to understand Duchamp-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -and you began collecting Rauschenberg in '59.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: So it's too bad the show wasn't a year or two later. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes, because just in two years the value of Klein changed rapidly. Because when he began to do exhibition in the States, the work became expensive.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm.

DR. PANZA: It was no more so easy to buy local, in Paris or Milan.

MR. KNIGHT: In addition to your friendship with Pierre Restany, you've had a long friendship with the critic Germano Celant.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: How did you meet and- DR. PANZA: Well, I believe in 1970, when he made the exhibition of Arte Povera in Turin. But perhaps even before; I don't remember exactly. I was going very often to Turin to see the exhibition at the Galleria Sperone, which was the first gallery to show American art in Italy. He began with the Pop Art in '63 to show American art. Because of this gallery, I was going often to Turin. And I believe to have met Germano Celant even before, but I don't remember exactly. Surely, a turning point was the 1970. In this period, I was seeing very often the works of the artists of Arte Povera, which was interesting to me, but less than the American artists. And for this reason I don't bought them which indeed was very good, because they was the best Italian artists of this period, with an international value, not only an Italian phenomenon.

MR. KNIGHT: Why was it not of interest to you to collect?

DR. PANZA: Well, because I was buying art that was made around '68, '70. Just the beginning. It was also the best period. And I was buying in this time Richard Serra and Bruce Nauman-especially Richard Serra-both closely related to the concept of the Arte Povera. But in my opinion, the two artists was stronger. For this reason I decided to keep my attention concentrated on the Americans, not the Italians.

MR. KNIGHT: The reason I ask is that your friendships with Restany and Celant have been, apparently have been important to you, but you also seemed to have a very independent mind in choosing the work that you choose.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes, surely. These people was friends, was very useful to me, because I had exchanges of ideas. But I was very independent in my judgment. I was having with them a confrontation in which way to judge works of the artists. But this kind of confrontation was very useful to me and I made it always with everybody having other opinions, which I respected as competent people. But at the same time, I was judging from my feeling, from my opinion, from my ideas. I was willing to keep my independent judgment out of other people's influence, because I believe the only way to do less mistakes is to do his own mistakes, not to do also mistakes of the others.

MR. KNIGHT: Right. [They laugh.] We'll back up then a little. In 1966 is when you began to collect minimalist art, and I believe you began with Robert Morris and then [Dan] Flavin and [Larry] Bell, [Donald] Judd, [Carl] Andre.

DR. PANZA: Yes. Well, I began first with Morris and Flavin. And soon after with Judd and the others. But Carl Andre and Serra and Bruce Nauman in '69.

MR. KNIGHT: Sixty-nine.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: How did you first encounter their work? Morris and Flavin.

DR. PANZA: Well, I saw some photographs, some reproduction on magazine. And in this time I was not going to New York, because since '63 my business was depressed. I was going through a difficult time. And from '63 till '69, I had few cash available, and I can do few purchase. Indeed, from '63 to '67, I never traveled to New York for this reason. But in '66, through photographs which I get from Leo, I became interested in the work of Robert Morris, and I bought several works by him which was still very cheap at this time. In '66, there was an exhibition made by Flavin first in Dusseldorf, and then in Milan, at the Sperone Gallery. In these years, Sperone opened for a short period of time also a gallery in Milan. And I bought several Flavins in this exhibition where they was sold for $220,000 liras, which was about $400.

MR. KNIGHT: What was it that you responded to, in particular, about Morris and Flavin?

DR. PANZA: Well, it was very interesting to me this attempt to look for something essential in shapes, to avoid what is not necessary and to look only for just what it is permanent. And rational forms are related to something which is permanent, because the way of thinking cannot change with the time. Pure shapes are image of the capacity of men to think. In the same time, this kind of art has the capacity to find a great variety of solution, even using very simple shapes. Simplicity is not one way, is an endless possibility to make different forms always being simple, because the capacity of minds to think is an endless capacity. And these shapes was a clear relationship to this mind capacity. For this reason, I was so interested to this art.

Also, these shapes looks to me cool, but in the same time warm, because they was the result of a struggle to reach simplicity. It was the end of a long process, in order to have the balance of so many elements necessary to make the shapes. And there was behind, a research about the value, the essential value of life which was developed with a very deep engagement. These shapes which are apparently so intellectual was really hiding something extremely emotional. I believe that the greatest emotion of life is knowledge, is the discovery of truth. The research of truth is the main goal of man. This art was revealing this research of truth through these simple forms.

MR. KNIGHT: In what way is it emotional?

DR. PANZA: Is emotional because is the image of this process, the process of thinking, of learning, for understanding life, understanding main goals of life. And the main goal of life is the research of truth, and this research of truth is carried on in different fields, in expanding our intuitional capacity, our rational capacity, trying to understand the law of nature, the real law, deep hidden law of nature.

MR. KNIGHT: That's interesting, because one thing I wanted to also ask you was that around this time you were also buying, you bought the two George Segal sculptures.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: They seem so very different from-

DR. PANZA: Yes, I bought later this Segal. I don't bought the Segal on the time I was buying the Pop Art. I bought some years later, I believe in '71 or '72.

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh.

DR. PANZA: Because I was interested in Segal. I missed the opportunity to buy them in the sixties. In the early seventies I was willing to complete this area with works of Segal, and it was still reasonable in price in this time, and for this reason I bought these two works. I went to the Kitchen Factory in New Jersey to see Segal and I found these two works in the Kitchen Factory.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Which was a beautiful place. I like very much.

MR. KNIGHT: Well, tell me about that. Tell me about going there.

DR. PANZA: Well, I take a bus on the freeway to New Jersey, is about a hundred miles south, from New York. The freeway run along the coast, which is very heavy industrialized, and is very interesting landscape made by huge steel constructions. There are many chemical plants and many docks and shipyards, and there are many beautiful, minimal structures. I like very much this kind of industrial landscape. And then I was to the Kitchen Factory of Segal, which is a wooden building very large, made by several rooms. In each room there was some sculptures. To see this, people, white people in this empty space, was very strong emotion, because these people was like ghost but at same time was in some way alive. This opposition of these two so different aspects of real and unreal qualities was very strong.

MR. KNIGHT: Given these interests around this time, you also did not collect work by Robert Smithson.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Why is that?

DR. PANZA: Well, because I don't understood the quality of the Robert Smithson works. I met him several time, and I read his articles, which was beautiful.

MR. KNIGHT: Yes.

DR. PANZA: He was a good writer, a very intelligent man. I had the great respect for his personality. But I had less consideration for his work as artist, and for this reason I don't bought it. And it was a mistake because the works is very good. Because also, perhaps, I never had the opportunity to see a good full-scale exhibition of his work. I saw only a few at John Weber Gallery, or reproduced on photographs. They looks to me too much intellectual, too much an attempt to make visual concepts, but without having the right relationship between the concept and the shape, which is essential to make good art. But I was wrong, sure.

Also, I don't like too much the earthworks he made. The *Spiral Jetty* and the other works seem to me not really connected to the environment. Are something fighting against the natural situation around. This looks to me something wrong.

MR. KNIGHT: Still? I mean, still at this point?

DR. PANZA: Still, yes. But the sculpture are different. The small sculpture, and also the large one, are very beautiful. Because they have not this kind of relationship to environment, are objects which have its own qualities.

MR. KNIGHT: Hmm. When you began buying minimalist work in 1966, it was I believe two years before the "Primary Structures" exhibition at the Jewish Museum?

DR. PANZA: Yes, it was just in '66. I believe the "Primary Structure" exhibition was in '68.

MR. KNIGHT: Sixty-eight. Did you see that exhibition?

DR. PANZA: No, unfortunately not.

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh. You also-oh no, I'm skipping ahead. Flavin, Dan Flavin, was the first artist who worked with light that you bought. DR. PANZA: Yes. MR. KNIGHT: Could you tell me a little about that? DR. PANZA: Yes. When I saw this exhibition made in Milan in '66, I was impressed by the capacity of light to fill the space in which the

work was exhibited to have this color which was making the work. And the work was no more only the material with which it was made. It was not only the shapes of a fluorescent tube. In Flavin there are two qualities. The composition made with the fluorescent tubes are like the lines in Mondrian painting; the way these are combined together makes the work. But in Flavin this quality is less important; is very much more important the fact that the work is not confined into the shape of the material but expanded into the volume of the room, and fill the room. For the first time I realized how light could have a very strong emotional effect, and a very strong capacity to make a new relationship to something of which we have a common experience. Light is something which is physical and not physical, because it's a radiation, made by photons. The photons don't have mass, which is in some way not logical, but they are real, have color, make warm surface where they arrive. Don't have mass, but everything real have mass and weight, have extension, but the photon don't have this quality. Is only radiation. For the first time I realized that light is something extremely beautiful, because the colors of this artificial light was very moving.

For instance, one of the first work, which was in this room in the gallery in Milan, was a square made by blue fluorescent lamps. This blue color was filling this empty room. And this was something very impressive. The blue is the color of the sky. Everything [that-Ed.] is perfect, everything is ideal, we believe is coming from the sky, because instinctively we think that the sky is the perfection of nature.

[Tape 4, side A]

MR. KNIGHT: If we could take what you were just saying about Flavin and double back to the very beginning of your collecting activities: Tapies, Fautrier. What connections do you or don't you see between where you started and where you were at this point with Flavin?

DR. PANZA: I believe there are always a link between this different situation. Flavin is an artist which deal with some kind of metaphysical entity. He's a man which looks for something which is not tangible, and he feel strongly the need for something is absolute. And in this work, I believe this research became very clear, very strong. And the same kind of attitude I felt in Tapies. The painting I bought by Tapies was interesting to me because there was this struggle of the man, involved in a pessimistic view of life, for something great, something beautiful, which was not possible to achieve, because man was involved with matter and with the physical limit of everything. But in the same time, was looking for this infinite freedom of mind. And these two facts are present in both artists, which looks so extreme. Tapies deal with an earthly material. His colors are without light. But in the same time, is a matter of suffering the situation of being matter. And in Flavin there are the capacity to overcome the limit of matter, using light.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm. So you could take Flavin and go all the way back to the Venetians and Raphael, as we were talking about yesterday-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -and along those lines.

DR. PANZA: Oh, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Was Larry Bell the first Southern California artist whose work you acquired?

DR. PANZA: Yes. I bought one cube by Bell and a disk by Robert Irwin in '68. Yes. I saw the '68, the exhibition by Larry Bell at the Ileana Sonnabend Gallery in Paris, and I saw at the Dokumenta the two disk which was exhibited. I was very much attracted by this works, which was dealing with light, with illusion, with perception. They was a step further after the experience I had with Flavin. Flavin were using the light. Also Larry Bell was using light, because glass is a transparent material, light goes through glass. This material is partly reflecting, partly transparent. It make this interchange between reflection and transparency. Sometime in these surfaces, you see reflection; sometime we see what is behind-we go through the material. And this kind of relationship is very interesting. In the work by Robert Irwin, I found another field of research, the attempt to establish the limit of perception, to understand what it is perception. To see how perception is related to our memory, to our personality, to our participation in making judgment. We believe to see reality as it is, but we see what we believe it is. And all the work by Irwin reveal this fact, that our knowledge is something related mostly to our memory, to our already made judgment. We judge, we recognize, and we experience what we already know. Seldom we have new information from experience. We can have experience of something new on life only if our judgment is able to think something new. Otherwise our experience of reality is always a repetition of something which already we know.

MR. KNIGHT: So you first saw Bell's work and Irwin's work in Europe?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And at that point, you had never been to Southern California?

DR. PANZA: No, perhaps. I am not sure, but I was in New York 1967, when I saw the works at the Pace Gallery by Irwin.

MR. KNIGHT: By Irwin.

DR. PANZA: Yes, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: But at-

DR. PANZA: But not the show. They show me the disk, but it was not installed.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh, so it must have looked very strange, if it was not installed. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Well, somebody spoke to me about him. I believe Ileana Sonnabend and Leo Castelli, but perhaps mostly Larry Bell. But I am not sure about the date.

MR. KNIGHT: Whatever it was, at that point, you had not been to Southern California except for that brief pass-through in the early fifties?

DR. PANZA: No, no, because I was in Los Angeles in '54, but for a few days, just passing through.

MR. KNIGHT: So when did you first come to Los Angeles?

DR. PANZA: It was in '73, the fall of '73.

MR. KNIGHT: And what brought you here then?

DR. PANZA: Oh, excuse me.

MR. KNIGHT: Why did you come here then? What were the circumstances?

DR. PANZA: Well, because I was willing to buy more work by Irwin. I had news about [Doug] Wheeler, [Jim] Turrell, Eric Orr, Larry Bell, and I was willing to [know] more about. In New York, was impossible to see art of Los Angeles artists, because it was not shown. I have seen a room installed by Irwin at the Museum of Modern Art. I saw before a beautiful show at the Stedelijk Museum in 1970 in Amsterdam, with work by Wheeler and Irwin. There was the square by Wheeler with the neon light on the edge of the plastic square. And there was the disk of Irwin, and the large environment by Wheeler made with the light coming out of the edge of the wall, which was a very beautiful work. And I saw, I believe it was in '69 or '70, this room at MOMA by Irwin, which was great. There was a screen on the ceiling which was taking half of the room. There was a string of steel, very small, crossing nearby the end wall of the room, and this was very impressive to me. So absolute, so simple, and so strong. Dealing only with light and space. And for this reason, I was willing to have more.

Before, I was very involved between '69 and '73 in buying minimal art and minimal paintings. In '70, I bought many painting by [Robert] Ryman. I saw Ryman in '67 in New York, and also Brice Marden. But at this time, I was in the studio of both Ryman and Marden, but I don't realize the quality of the works. When Ryman made a show at the Lambert Gallery in Milan in '69, suddenly I realize how beautiful was this so radical way of painting, how strong was this way of conceiving art, and how attracting was this kind of art. In this way I decided to buy all of the Ryman which was available in Europe and America. Ryman in this time made several shows in several cities in Europe. But he sold almost nothing. And there was many painting available. This way it was possible to buy just in few months about 20paintings by Ryman, which was his production of some years.

MR. KNIGHT: You ended up with, I think, 43? Was it 43 paintings?

DR. PANZA: Well, are about 30 paintings. But some are a series of paintings.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah, I see.

DR. PANZA: For instance, *Standard* has 12 panels; some other, made on cardboard, are made by five or four or three panels.

MR. KNIGHT: And you also once said that he, that Ryman was one of the most important artists of this century.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Could you elaborate? That's a fairly grand statement! [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes. I believe Ryman have the same quality of Rothko. He's a man which is able to develop a strong exploration of his own mind. And the greatest thing existing in nature is surely the human mind. Is prevailing in our attitude the wrong side of our mind. Because we are always acting, we are always willing to do things, but we are less able to think, to look inside ourself. The world which exists inside ourselves is a universe, because is the moment in which a life became life, because the universe is made by matter, which don't have life, or don't have self-consciousness. But men have self-consciousness. And the highest achievement of life is self-

consciousness, the capacity to be able to understand that we are alive. This is possible only in man-or in the more complete way, men. Also some animals have some kind of consciousness, but in man this capacity reaches the most complete possibility. But this possibility is not completed, and we are not able to see it in a full way, this top fact of being alive. I believe that our life would be different if we will use this possibility inside our mind. But it is extremely difficult to use. It's very much easy to act, rather to make this kind of exploration which demand a great deal of energy. Very much more than to bring around some heavy weight. [Laughs.] We are lazy in using our brain, and we have the habit to do things which are repetition of what we usually make, and are seldom new. But this self-exploration is always the discovering of the flux of life which is alive inside us, and is the most creative act. Life in each instant is a creative act, because there's a potential for something which does not exist but could exist in the future, in a different way. And this is the great possibility of life. Ryman was revealing this capacity. He was able to establish a direct relationship between what is inside our mind and what could become visible. This connection between the hand, the finger, the nervous system, which connect the material we use for making visible what we are and our mind is the great achievement of Ryman. And through this fact, I realized how art is different if seen in the way of Ryman. Because the Ryman work is the direct expression of the artist's personality. Because of this experience, I realized how great is Raphael. If you look to Raphael with the loop, with the lens, you see the quality of a Raphael painting in the details, and you see a world in a small part of his painting. How the pigment is laid on the canvas show the personality of the artist. Is beautiful, this act which is very simple. Just the moment in which the pigment is laid all down on the surface. And this act, which we cannot define, is beautiful because it reveal directly the personality of the artist. When the artist is able to achieve this full control between his nervous system and this mind, it's great, because this total relationship is complete. At this moment he's able to make masterpieces. Because the masterpieces came out looking with the lens for the details, which reveal the whole personality of the artist. It's no more necessary to see all the paintings, is enough to see a square centimeter of the details.

MR. KNIGHT: So then, obviously you would see a very direct connection between Ryman and Robert Irwin and Doug Wheeler?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes, sure. MR. KNIGHT: Why do you suppose it is then that it was easier for you to see Irwin and Wheeler's work in Europe rather than in New York, and that you had to come to Southern California to see more of it?

DR. PANZA: Because-

MR. KNIGHT: Why not in New York? DR. PANZA: Because this attitude is against the attitude of New York. New York is a city where people work. People work making art. People are competing for something to be made. Because of this, there are also some people which are able to have a different attitude, the opposite of this prevailing attitude-like Rothko, Ryman, Flavin. But the dominant taste of dealer and collector was against the attitude of the artists from Los Angeles. They was making something not easy to sell. We can sell painted canvases, white canvases by Ryman, if a person is able to understand the quality of this work. But it's more difficult to sell a room by Irwin or by Wheeler, because the space is always something difficult to have. And these galleries in New York was not willing to engage money and time in something difficult to sell, because it was difficult to install as well. I believe this was the two reason why in New York was not possible to see this art from Los Angeles.

MR. KNIGHT: So it was primarily a market reason? DR. PANZA: A market, and also a different cultural attitude. New York is a city more related to the will to act, rather than to the will to think. MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs.] When you came to Los Angeles in 1973-aside from the artists that you mentioned earlier-who did you meet here? DR. PANZA: Before I came to Los Angeles, I stop in Nevada to see the landwork by [Michael] Heizer, and Walter De Maria. I met Walter De Maria some years before in New York. And I was very interested to his work. I was willing to buy works, but few was available, was already costing more than the $10,000 I was paying for, and it was difficult to have. But I was interested in looking to the work he made in Nevada. And I came with Helen Winkler and Heiner Friedrich.

MR. KNIGHT: Heiner Friedrich?

DR. PANZA: Heiner Friedrich, yes. I bought several work by Flavin and Ryman from Frederick. He had a gallery in Cologne and in New York. He was also the dealer of De Maria. I was willing to have work by Turrell, and for this reason we came with Helen Winkler, which was also very close to Walter De Maria. She was several times in the

West with him to look for the site of the *Lightning Field* of Walter De Maria. He made a test field nearby Flagstaff. I was very interested in going to see this work. He made a work also in Nevada, not far from Las Vegas. There was the *Double Negative* by Heizer to see, which was on Mormon Mesa nearby the Lake Mead, and nearby Overton.

But I'm making some confusion. No, it was later. We came first to Los Angeles and after we went to see the land art, because we was flying with the plane by Turrell, and first we met Turrell here in Los Angeles in his studio. But first we met Irwin, because I knew Irwin sometime before in New York. And through Irwin we met also Wheeler. Irwin and Turrell was friends because they worked together at the art and science project promoted by the County Museum with Maurice Tuchman. In this way I met Turrell. We went to see his studio in Santa Monica, and we had a very impressive visit to his house.

MR. KNIGHT: To Turrell's house?

DR. PANZA: Turrell house, yes. And after the visit to the Turrell house, we made the decision-I and my wife-to make some rooms with work by Turrell in my house in Varese. The work which was in his house was an empty room with some light coming from nearby the floor, giving light to the inside, and on the top part of the front wall there was an opening looking at the sky, on the side of the ocean, to the west. We went in the late afternoon. We sat down in this room, and we saw the sunset through this hole. And at the beginning it was dark blue, after became clear blue. When it was dark blue, this space was looking empty, but on the same surface of the wall, because there was a sharp edge around the opening where was not visible the thickness of the wall. In this way, the wall and the opening seem to belong to the same plane, to the same surface. From below there was a light which was balancing the light coming from outside. For this reason, the opening was looking more as a surface, not as a void. But when the light of the sunset was changing, this feeling was shifting, from the feeling of empty space to the feeling of a surface, of a solid colored material. Was very strange to see something which don't exist, and the same time to see something which is real. Colors was always changing, and changing in a way which we don't realize when we look at sunset in the open space. The sunset have a great deal of colors, and start with the dark blue, became pale blue, and began to be red, and light red, dark red, gold, and green, dark blue, violet; it's a steady variation of colors.

[Begin Tape 4, side B.]

DR. PANZA: And we was impressed by this experience, because-

MR. KNIGHT: Through this hole you could see only the sky?

DR. PANZA: Yes, only the sky.

MR. KNIGHT: It was facing the ocean; there was no buildings around.

DR. PANZA: There was nothing around. The opening was nearby the ceiling.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: For this reason we was seeing only the sky.

MR. KNIGHT: Was it a fairly large hole, small hole?

DR. PANZA: No, it was a small opening, about three feet wide, and the room was about 20 feet by 10 feet. The ceiling was a little higher, but not too much, than this one, and all was white. There was nothing except the light coming from below the walls. It was a very strong experience. Also to meet Turrell, to meet his wife, was very beautiful, because this house was white, was made only with empty walls, white and even. There was almost nothing around. There was no doorway, just the doorway but not any door. And it looks strange but beautiful because it was pure, clean-how shall we say-clear. There was nothing but there was this pure white all around, yes.

And the conversation with Turrell was very interesting. He's a man like Irwin with a broad knowledge about science and philosophy, a cultivated man, with a strong cultural background. And what is different about Turrell perhaps from the other artists is the capacity to do everything that's related to technique. He's a pilot, he fly, he restore old planes in order to resell to collectors. He live in this way because his work is not an income-

making kind of art. He's a fascinating man, because he's devoted to something which is difficult to sell, but he do because it has to be made, because it's beautiful.

His vision of the universe is great, his interest for nature, the importance of our life, to realize that we are part of nature, and nature belong to the universe; the universe is what makes us alive. Life came from inside the universe. We don't know how universe was made. These theories about the big bang are very interesting. But

how the big bang happen? What was the beginning of the big bang? Was an infinite density of energy, which is something which no scientific theories can explain. The beginning was an undifferentiated situation. How the world became so different. The wonderful logical architecture of nature, where every phenomenon is connected to other phenomenon, when we look around, we realize how rational is, how beautiful is this construction.

Our Western civilization lost this interest-because we work for other goals, we spent of our energy, and our time, in order to have a better life, using resources coming from nature, but we don't pay attention to the fact that we are alive because the universe was born someday, and everything we have is a gift we received. We are intelligent not because we make man intelligent, but because nature make man intelligent. Our culture has lost this essential fact, this relationship. Turrell was making again this relationship evident; for this reason I believe his work is so important. And another work, very beautiful, which we saw in the Turrell house after the dinner, was the room with holes which he was opening.

MR. KNIGHT: Which?

DR. PANZA: In Santa Monica, in his house, there was another room which was completely dark. This room was nearby a street corner, with lights in the middle of the street. One side of the room was overlooking a small road with a little track. The other side was looking at the main street with many cars passing through. And there was a lamps of public light nearby; there was some small houses nearby. And Turrell, at the end wall of this room, made holes which was possible to open and to close in different positions of the wall. Opening the hole was facing the streetlight, it was possible to have inside the room only the light coming from the red, the green and the yellow light, leaving [off] the light of the street.

MR. KNIGHT: Of the streetlight?

DR. PANZA: Yes, the streetlight. And the room was filled of, for some minutes, of a beautiful red light. And after, the yellow one. And after, the green one.

MR. KNIGHT: And it would change.

DR. PANZA: And closing this wall but opening another one, it was possible to see only the light projections of the cars which was passing fast in the main street. And this light was coming inside the room like a lightning, filling the room with very strong light, but for a very short time. And afterward disappear; the room became again dark. Opening another hole, it was possible to see only the car coming from the *small* street, and for some minutes the room was completely dark, but after, some small dim light was coming into the room stronger and stronger. This light had shape, and this shape was going around the room when the car was turning in the main street. And there was a completely different feeling of the light. And opening another one, it was possible to have only the light coming from the far away public light from the street, not the one nearby the house, but one very far. And this light was very dim, but was filling, in a very peaceful way, the room. It looks like the moonlight. It was giving the same kind of emotion, because was visible only the shadow of the objects inside. There was a confused notion of the volume of the space. The room was looking very much larger, almost endless, because there was almost no shadow, a very faint shadow. Everything inside the room was looking like having lost material quality, gaining some kind of ideal entity, which was no more earthly, but heavenly. Something very strange, very metaphysical. And there was a series of this experiences which was very beautiful, made in a very simple way, showing the quality of many kind of light. MR. KNIGHT: It's wonderful that it's at night too, in the absence of natural light. DR. PANZA: Yes, only using the lamplight. MR. KNIGHT: Yes. DR. PANZA: Light which was already existing outside. MR. KNIGHT: Yeah. DR. PANZA: It was not manipulated.

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: Only the hole in the wall was the work of the artist.

MR. KNIGHT: So there were four windows in this room?

DR. PANZA: No, there was just two windows.

MR. KNIGHT: Two windows.

DR. PANZA: Yes, because it was on the corner of the street.

MR. KNIGHT: I see. Okay. [Pauses.] I'm lost now. [They laugh.] After I look out the window for a while.

DR. PANZA: After this meeting with Turrell, we decide to go to the desert. We had already the program to go to Nevada to see it. Because Turrell, too, had to go to Nevada, we used his plane for going here.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: And this way, we paid a visit for the first time to this beautiful space which is the desert. We flew from Los Angeles to Las Vegas. We had to stop at the airport of Las Vegas for refueling, but we landed in Overton, which is a small town nearby the Lake Mead. It's close to the Mormon Mesa, which is the site where the *Double Negative* by Heizer was made.

MR. KNIGHT: How long were you in Los Angeles, then, on this first trip?

DR. PANZA: This first trip we spent about ten days in Los Angeles.

MR. KNIGHT: About ten days.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And did you, while you were here, go to what few galleries there were?

DR. PANZA: Yes, we saw some galleries, the galleries which was here. We saw also some collection. We met Mrs. Asher.

MR. KNIGHT: Betty Asher?

DR. PANZA: Yes. The collection of Mrs. Asher which at this time, she don't have the gallery.

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: But she was working at the County Museum, and she had a beautiful collection.

MR. KNIGHT: Yes.

DR. PANZA: Especially in the Pop Art. We met also her son [Michael Asher] the artist, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: And we met Bruce Nauman, Bell, Wheeler-

MR. KNIGHT: Did you see Bruce Nauman's work, here?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. But Bruce Nauman work I saw several times before in New York, because I started to buy work by Bruce Nauman in '69, from Leo Castelli, the early works, before the environments.

MR. KNIGHT: So you had been collecting him for about four years, before you came here?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Did it then, when you came to Los Angeles and saw Turrell and so on, did that change the way you thought about Nauman's work?

DR. PANZA: No, because Nauman work was developing a different research. He was more concerned with the relationship to the space, to the perception of the viewer, of his physical presence as a person. And this relationship between the space and our body is the main research of Bruce Nauman. We call it also the environment-are works dealing with the relationship to something which is opposing ourself. The work he made with the television is also a way to have a duplication of ourself, of the perception we have of our own being through our senses. And this was very interesting exploration, but different from the one made by the other Los Angeles artists. Because it was more physical, because it was dealing with this constraint [to] which our way of life, always, every day, is submitted. It's the life of a man which have to live in an artificial condition, which is not human, because man was made by nature to be inside the nature, not in urban landscape. But we live in urban landscape, and because of this, we lose the connection to nature and we lose also the connection to our body, and when we discover our body in this way, we realize how is strange our life, because it's so much not natural. When we split our senses from our perception, in a powerful way, we realize this opposition. We believe [ourselves] to be the center of everything, but in fact we are not the center of everything; we are a temporary living object in a situation which is fast changing. And this is the main lesson which I received looking to the work by Bruce Nauman.

MR. KNIGHT: So would you then say that Nauman's work, that the primary aspect of his work is to take those artificial constructed elements of an urban world and to manipulate them in such a way that one rediscovers one's body? Rediscovers the-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: So it's a kind of healing, in a sense?

DR. PANZA: Yes, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: What was the first installation or environmental work that you purchased, by any artist?

DR. PANZA: Well, the first was the disk by Irwin.

MR. KNIGHT: The Irwin disk.

DR. PANZA: The Irwin disk, yes. And after, was the work by Turrell and Wheeler, which I bought in the same time.

MR. KNIGHT: And that was sixty-

DR. PANZA: That was '73.

MR. KNIGHT: '73, yes.

DR. PANZA: But it was all a project, because when I bought them, it was not existing. I know the works by Wheeler, for instance, because I have seen some in Amsterdam. But when I was in his studio, but there was nothing made; he was making experience with room with the rounded corner in order to have the illusion of a disappearing limitless space. He was just thinking about the work.

MR. KNIGHT: You had a reputation as the collector who collected uncollectable art!

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: When you bought those works, basically you bought plans.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And at this time, had you yet converted the stables at the Villa Litta into a gallery?

DR. PANZA: No, I was beginning to make them, because in '73 I commissioned to Irwin to came to Varese to realize three works using three rooms. And at the same time, I and my wife, we decide to ask Turrell to do the same with other five rooms, which was available in Varese. We met also Maria Nordman because we went to Irvine to see the room she made at the Irvine University [California State University], and we was very impressed.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh, Irvine.

DR. PANZA: Irvine University. We was very impressed by this room. We asked Maria Nordman to do one also in Varese, which was made sometime later, because she cannot came sooner; it was made in '75, '76. But I bought many projects. For instance, by Wheeler I bought fourteen projects. But no one was possible to realize in Varese. I bought many in '75, some in '73. In '75, I ran out of money and it was not possible to do many other installations. Indeed, all the space was taken in Varese. There was no possibility to realize at least one work by Wheeler, which I like very much.

MR. KNIGHT: So before 1973, you were not using the stables as gallery?

DR. PANZA: I started to use the stables in '68, '69, showing large works by Morris which I was buying. I bought, in this period, about thirty works by Morris, and about 34 by Donald Judd, 40 by Bruce Nauman. There was a lot of things to put inside.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: Many works by Flavin, many by Carl Andre, by Richard Serra, and by Ryman, by Marden. [Laughs.] Only part of this work was possible to show. Even in storing, I was using all the space available.

MR. KNIGHT: You had no help in doing that? [Laughs.] Just the paperwork alone for a collection of that size is fairly staggering. I mean, museums have staffs. Were you working with people?

DR. PANZA: I was making everything by myself. I never had a secretary helping me. My wife was busy with the family, with its own charitable activity, and she don't have time to help me. In the office, I had people working for the office, and this is a work which I like to do myself. However, it was a very time-absorbing work. I was using all my free time for the collection. In the evening, usually I go to sleep around one o'clock, and from nine o'clock, after our dinner, till one o'clock, I work to do this activity. [Laughs.]

MR. KNIGHT: Do your paperwork.

DR. PANZA: On Sunday, I don't go around by car. I go to Varese, but for seeing the collection or for working to the collection, for writing, or for looking to photographs [on the wall]. In the holidays, often I do work related to the collection. In '75 I made the catalog of the collection. I spent just the holidays in the mountains to make this job. I made at the same time, some walk in the mountains, but every hour available I use for making this job about the collection. And I never watch the television, very seldom I go to see a movie, to theater. I like very much music, but I like to listen to records when I relax for one hour after dinner. I like to listen [to] opera by Wagner, or Bach, because is the music which I like most. To think during time devoted to relaxing. I like to read article on science magazine because I am very interested in this field. Science is something which is very fascinating to me. And I read magazine about art, or book about art. In this way, I am informed about new art.

MR. KNIGHT: Not much time to go to La Scala? [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: No, I never go to La Scala. I go once every three years. [They laugh.]

MR. KNIGHT: When I was in Milan two years ago, we went to La Scala to see what was playing, and it was the Los Angeles Philharmonic. So we didn't go. [Laughs.] It was sold out anyhow. So then you, in purchasing plans, there must be a number of these plans that have never been realized.

DR. PANZA: No, especially by-

MR. KNIGHT: Doug Wheeler?

DR. PANZA: Doug Wheeler. Unfortunately, I am sad with Wheeler's situation, because I ran out of space in Varese, and in Varese we have nothing to see by him. Some work was realized in museums, like this beautiful one at Temporary Contemporary, but unfortunately was a temporary installation. I hope that this problem could be solved, because he's a very good artist.

MR. KNIGHT: Are these plans things that can be executed by someone other than the artist, let's say fifty years from now?

DR. PANZA: Yes, I believe all the work by Wheeler could be executed by somebody else, because they have not a specific relationship to the environment. If there are the right space, they could be made everywhere. For the work by Irwin is different, because Irwin is very concerned about the relationship to the environment.

[Begin Tape 5, Side A.]

DR. PANZA: For Turrell, the participation of the artist is necessary, because the relationship to the outside is very important. There are other works by Turrell made by the projector, for instance, where this need is less important because are objects which need an empty space and nothing else. But there are some adjustments of the projector which is better if made by the artist.

MR. KNIGHT: I'm a little confused about distinctions here. You said that you've never commissioned a work of art.

DR. PANZA: Yes, but in this case I commissioned works of art, because the three works made by Irwin and the others made by Turrell, the one made Maria Nordman in Varese, were commissioned-

MR. KNIGHT: They are?

DR. PANZA: -because are strictly related to the existing space. They could be also remade elsewhere, but always with the participation of the artist, because we have to find a similar situation, and ask the artist if he agree to these possibilities.

MR. KNIGHT: The works by Irwin-the window, for instance, the framed window-are works that must remain at the Villa?

DR. PANZA: Well, could be moved if the artist agree to move in another place in which could work in a similar way. They cannot be moved, only following my judgment; we have also to listen the artist.

MR. KNIGHT: Can you give me an example of a-since we're talking along these lines-of unique problems that there are as a collector in dealing with environmental or installation works?

DR. PANZA: Well, the problem is to find the right space, and it's not only important, the space in itself, but also the relationship of a space to what is around the space. With the window by Irwin in Varese, the fact that it's facing a garden with, in the background, many trees with dark green light, and in the foreground branches of a

large one is important. Because from the empty rooms, which is all white and neutral, you see a nature full of life. The opposition of an empty space, inside, to the outside, which is seen through an opening, looking as a painting, because the window became like the frame of a painting-of a strange painting which is real and not an illusion. This kind of shifting image is very interesting, because of this alive nature outside, nearby the window. It's beautiful to see this wall of green living trees. If there are not the trees, if the trees is different, for instance, is a street behind the wall of the house, everything is lost. [Laughs.]

MR. KNIGHT: Different picture?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: You don't have any of Irwin's paintings, the striped paintings?

DR. PANZA: No, I have not the stripe, but I have a beautiful dot painting.

MR. KNIGHT: A dot painting.

DR. PANZA: Which was made in '64, I believe. Unfortunately, it is in storage, like the two disk I have by Irwin, and the plastic column, also by Irwin. Several projects which was made at the Pace Gallery, and at the Ace Gallery in Santa Monica, but now exist only as a project. And my problem is to find the space to install in a permanent way these works. It's my great concern, because I believe these works are important, are a great achievement of our culture. But till now, don't exist. It's important to find the way to give access to the public to this work. And for this reason, I am so active in trying to find space in museums interested in keeping this work in a permanent way.

MR. KNIGHT: In the late sixties and early seventies, you also began collecting work by Joseph Kosuth-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -and Lawrence Weiner-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -and on conceptually oriented artists, such as the Kosuth *Definition of Nothing*-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -in four different languages, I believe it is.

DR. PANZA: Yes. Six different.

MR. KNIGHT: Six different languages. At the same time as you were doing that, you were collecting Richard Serra.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Those sculptures are *so* physical, so much about gravity and weight and tensions.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: How do you reconcile this purely conceptual Kosuth, Weiner, with your simultaneous interest in Serra?

DR. PANZA: Because conceptual art is dealing with ideas, with philosophical problems, but also have the quality to have a strong visual impact, if it's shown in the right way. Because these artists are artists; are not philosophers, but are able to make synthetic definitions of our thinking, and this synthetical definitions became art. Is knowledge, and intuition-just the way art became art. Intuition is made out of a synthesis of concepts immediately understood by the mind. If we make an analysis of intuition, we realize that it is not a simple thing, but is a very complex one. And we can go on and on, making analysis intuition and find how many things are inside. It looks like something very simple, but it's not. And for this reason, this art is so interesting and so important, because it keep all the quality of art, the possibility to understand looking in a second, and in the same time, has all the quality of a complex intellectual development of ideas. This fact is extremely new in the history of art, is new because never it was possible before. Leonardo da Vinci or Piero della Francesca was artists which had very strong philosophical background, and the works they made are related to this philosophical idea. When we look to the work, we can build, we can understand the background, but the relationship is very indirect, and we can realize the relationship because we know the philosophy which is behind, which we know by other sources, because we know what was the prevailing ideas in this period of the Renaissance. We know that

in this time the Platonism was influential in the development of philosophical activity in the Renaissance and so on. But, looking at work by Kosuth or Weiner or [Robert] Barry or Sol LeWitt, you have a more complex reference to the philosophical research-which are related mostly to research about knowledge, about language, about relationship between meaning and expression, and how something could be valid as a tool in order to translate thinking into images. How these images are related to the mind. It's a very interesting field which are investigated by linguistic philosophies. For instance, the work by Lawrence Weiner, which is made by words, is something absolutely new in art history. In the past, in early Renaissance and especially the Medieval time, we see words related to paintings, and they are many. But the word belong to the speech, is an explanation of the image. It's strictly related to the image, is an integration of the meaning of an image. But in the work by Lawrence Weiner the word became something completely independent from speech and became art because it's independent from speech, from the development of logical reference to situations. Both words and images have an essential quality: to have the possibility to express different contents. To have a relationship to different things. To be symbols used for saying different things, to have different meanings. Usually we don't pay attention to this fact. But when we open the dictionary and we look at the words, we realize how many different meanings they could have. If the position into the speech change, it change its meaning. And sometime the meaning is completely different from one to another.

MR. KNIGHT: And from language to language.

DR. PANZA: From language to language, yes. Words could be art because of this ambiguity, because they are able to make a relationship to different things. Images and words are useful because of this capacity to have different meanings. The fact that the meaning is not exact but could be shifting, give to the viewer the possibility to have a stimulation to think about different things. And art is art because of this. A work of art is beautiful when [it] also [has] the possibility to give different ideas and different information to the viewer.

MR. KNIGHT: And how does this mesh with your simultaneous interest in Serra?

DR. PANZA: Also Serra, as every great artist, the meaning of his art could be read in different ways. It's in the same time physical, because of the weight of the heavy masses deal with the gravity, a force acting always in every existing things, but is in the same time something we don't see, because is a force: we feel it, but we don't see as an entity. It's always related to masses. [The] more an object have mass, [the] more we feel like it's heavy. But if an object is large but light, these perceptions of mass change. And Serra is the same thing. It's energy, this force acting in his works. Also intelligence is energy. We cannot see the process of intelligence-how move, how work, but not what it is. There are two aspect of intelligence: the logic, which is a process dealing with quantities and definition of facts, and intuition, which is something completely different. But it's at the same time logical. Because from intuition we can rebuild a continuity in development.

MR. KNIGHT: Okay. I want to ask you about, about something that you had once written about. You said that art was essentially a vehicle for social integration. And in speaking of Renaissance frescoes, you said that those artists-and I'll quote-"interpreted the feelings that were shared by a community, since they were works executed in buildings destined for public use. The individualistic conception of art which Romanticism introduced into our culture shattered this relationship." That's the end of the quote. What you seem to be saying there is that in the intellectual and moral crisis of the 18th century, which is what gave birth to modern culture, we made a wrong turn somewhere.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Could you elaborate on that?

DR. PANZA: Well, it's a matter of fact that the artists in the Renaissance time, in the Baroque time, in the medieval time, was not working for the private collector. He was working on commission for the church, for the king, for the duke, for the prince, but always for a building which had a social and a political function-the church or the palace. Because the palace, where policy was made, had to be decorated with works dealing with the social achievement of the man which was in power, or through symbol, to show the goal that the prince was willing to reach for the good of people towards which he had responsibility. Only with the development of a bourgeoisie, this function diminished because of the need to have art in private houses. This development started in Holland, in the 17th century, when bourgeoisie became rich because of the trade with foreign countries. In Italy, for instance, paintings made for private use was mostly made for a religious goal, to have image with religious meaning at home. In the early 16th century, became widespread the use to make portrait of people in order to keep a memory of a person of a family in the house. But the painting made for the private use of the owner started because the Medicis commission two artists to make some painting for the houses. But was related to the need to put in the past where these important people have a political relationship to the community-a painting which was related to some event of the family was not in a direct way, but through mythological stories, which had analogy with what was happening in the family.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm.

DR. PANZA: The work of the artist was mostly made in connection with social events or political events. It was the man interpreting the moral and ethical situation of the life of the community. This was the goal of the work of the artist. And was used in this way by people which wanted to have the work made.

MR. KNIGHT: For, however, a particular social class.

DR. PANZA: Yes, also was very important one consideration. But the people giving the commission to the artists was people which belonging to the dominant class. Because the most important families have sons which became cardinal or bishops of the church; have sons which became people of the army, and had the political power-and sometime even the economic power. In this way, the leadership was concentrated in a few people in a class that had the highest level of education. Because in this time, the education was made in a very different way from now. There was not public education where each teacher have 25 pupil to teach to. Each son of these powerful people had his own teacher, which was a man of high reputation for his culture. Was the best writer, the best poet, the best painter, living in the palace for teaching to the son.

MR. KNIGHT: So wasn't the individualist breakup-I guess you could call it-essential to changing that?

DR. PANZA: This happen because of the French Revolution. This system ended when all the great monarchy, and at the end of the 18th century collapsed, because there was the bourgeoisie, which was becoming economically important; the system don't work anymore. The power shift to the hand of people which had the power in economy, and this old family don't had any more all the power. The education was changing, because it was spreading. Social living was also very different. And the quality of education of the new rich people was lower, because these people don't have the best humanist reading the texts in Latin and Greek. This close relationship between the intellectual world and the power was lost. It's very interesting, for instance, when you go-it's just an example, but there are many others-in Rimini, there is a beautiful church made by Alberti, a great architect of the 15th century, of the early Renaissance, which was made for the prince which had the power in Rimini, was a Malatesta. And outside the church there are the grave of the prince and all the people which was with him. The first is the grave of the prince. The second is the grave of the poet, which was the poet of the prince. The third is the grave of the painter, which was the painter of the prince. The fourth is the grave of a man of the law. And the fifth is grave of the general, which was a man of the army. And so on. But the first is the poet. [They laugh.]

MR. KNIGHT: First things first!

DR. PANZA: The second, the philosopher. Here now, the second will be the minister of finance.

MR. KNIGHT: Yes. [They laugh.]

DR. PANZA: And most important in the order is the man who pay for the elections.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah, right. And the maitre d', so you can get a good table at the restaurant, yes.

[Begin Tape 5, side B.]

DR. PANZA: We can see how power and culture was together, could not be split, because the prince, the man of power, realize that his power don't have a reason to be if there was not a cultural motivation. The identity of good government and cultural appreciation of the value of life was the same. This, of course, was extremely important. It's no more the same now.

MR. KNIGHT: So the artist that was interpreting the feelings of the community- It was a smaller community.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And do you find then that the artists that you have collected are in some way attempting to do a similar thing?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes, surely. The artist being the interpreter of itself, being a man like the other man, is also an interpreter of a social situation, and is the best interpreter of a social condition because he's a man of higher sensibility, living in a more deep way the life which is common to everyone, and in the historical situation in which he live, also other people live. Because every one of us live in the same way. And here in America, or in Europe, or in Japan.

MR. KNIGHT: This is something I'm going to want to talk about tomorrow a bit more.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: But essentially one of the things that you are dealing with now is that you have built a collection which for all intents and purposes has been for private use, and the dilemma that you're now facing is making it, is transforming it into one of public use.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Which is what-before this, before the 18th century Romantic dissolution-art did. So if we can talk about that tomorrow, I'd really-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Okay. In 1976 is when you stopped collecting? Or '75?

DR. PANZA: Seventy-five. Yes, I stopped collecting in '75. There are some works which came into the collection in '76, but it was work which was already engaged in '75, practically, and was very few the work which I got in '76.

MR. KNIGHT: And how many pieces were there in the collection when you stopped?

DR. PANZA: Well, there was six hundred having the qualities to be shown in museums, and a hundred more which was good but being of small dimension was not so interesting for a museum installation.

MR. KNIGHT: Do you mean like drawings or-

DR. PANZA: No, small objects. I have, for instance, by [Robert] Mangold, by Ryman, also some small paintings.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: I don't believe it would be right to put them in a museum aside of the larger Ryman paintings.

MR. KNIGHT: So there were about 600 major works, and then another hundred.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: After having collected for almost exactly 20 years, why did you stop?

DR. PANZA: Well, I stopped for economical reason. I run out of cash!

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs] That'll do it!

DR. PANZA: No more money available. I always spent all the money it was possible to spend. Unfortunately after 1976, '75, my business was not so good as before. I already made something dangerous, from a financial point of view, to have spent so much money between 1969 and 1975.

MR. KNIGHT: Your sister warned you. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes. I was just undermining the financial situation of the family. And for this reason I had to stop. It was, however, a very difficult decision, but it was dictated by the situation. Indeed, I was very busy looking for the way to show the collection which was almost completely hidden in crates, not visible. This became a full-time job just trying to find a way to show the collection.

MR. KNIGHT: If you had about 600 major works that you've collected over almost a 20-year period, statistically that works out to a new work about every 10 days. [Laughs.] Right? Was it difficult to stop, after 20 years of-

DR. PANZA: Oh yes, it was a terrible decision. When I see an artist which I like, which I realize is very good; I feel a tremendous need to buy.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs.] Yes.

DR. PANZA: And I cannot. Isn't easy for me. What do we call when we try to have something which we cannot have? No, I don't know the-something which make me very unhappy. Anyway.

MR. KNIGHT: [So] you were-

DR. PANZA: But if it's something which I cannot do now, I hope, if the situation improves and if I will be able to sell out my business in Italy, to resume buying-

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh.

DR. PANZA: -but I don't when it will be possible; I hope in the future.

MR. KNIGHT: And just one more question for the moment. Are there other collectors whose collecting activity you greatly admire?

DR. PANZA: Now?

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: Yes, I believe the best collection which was made recently was the collection made in Switzerland, in Zurich, which is shown now in Schaffhausen, in an old factory made available by the city of Schaffhausen. This collection was made by Raus Muller, an artist but also a collector, which run for some years the Ink Institution, a space for showing art in Zurich. He made beautiful exhibition of American artists from the sixties. And this man don't have enough money, but he was able to find a group of friends which give him the means to buy the collection. It really is the most beautiful collection existing in world of American art in the sixties. There are also European artists of the same period, but mostly are Americans.

MR. KNIGHT: The name is Rassmussen?

DR. PANZA: Raus Muller. Live in Zurich. And the collection is called Crex. I don't know what it means, but there are several person which are the owner of the collection.

MR. KNIGHT: And any others? Any other collectors?

DR. PANZA: Well, the Saatchi collection in London is very good.

MR. KNIGHT: Saatchi.

DR. PANZA: The Ludwig collection in Germany is a very large one. But it's made with a different goal. It's a very broad, having documentation of every event in art, and it's not so selective like the Crex collection which is made like my collection; it's a carefully made selection of the best work of the best artists.

MR. KNIGHT: Do you think the Saatchi collection is that way too?

DR. PANZA: Yes, the Saatchi collection is different because it has a different orientation. There are the minimal art, which is excellent. There are also many work of German figurative Expressionists, of Italian, Trans-Avant Garde, which interests me less. Instead of in the Crex collection, there are not these artists of the eighties. The Saatchi collection is very developed in the art of the eighties. I believe that the good artists of the eighties are not the Trans-Avant Garde artists and the German figurative Expressionists. I believe that the best artists of these years are here in Los Angeles. Some in New York, not in Europe.

MR. KNIGHT: Well, if you had been collecting during the past ten years, whose work would you have acquired?

DR. PANZA: I will have expanded my collection of environmental art. I will made it more complete. There are some artists which are not known but which made beautiful works. I will expand my collection with work by Gene Highstein, for instance, which I have works, but not many. I will expand the collection of all the young artists which are working here, like Bob Therrien, Mark Lere, Peter Shelton, Joann Callis, Michael Davis, Susan Kaiser Vogel, Michael Brewster. All these artists I will collect actively. Martin Puryear, which is a very good artist in my opinion.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm.

DR. PANZA: Very important because it's a new direction in art.

MR. KNIGHT: And why are you not interested in the Italian and German painters?

DR. PANZA: Because these artists are expressing the instincts coming out of the lower part of the body. They are uninteresting to me. I like the artists expressing the instinct coming out of the higher part of the body.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: This is the main reason.

MR. KNIGHT: That's great. We'll end on that note.

[Audio break.]

MR. KNIGHT: This is Christopher Knight. I'm speaking with Dr. Giuseppe Panza in Los Angeles, Thursday, April 4.

Yesterday when you were talking about Robert Ryman's work, you were talking about your interest in it being that it essentially gave evidence of the moment of consciousness of the self.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And I think that for the viewer this is also very much the kind of experience offered by Maria Nordman's installation-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -in Varese, which is really one of the most remarkable light and space pieces I've ever seen.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: So together from the work of a painter to an installation artist, this seems to be an extension of a central idea that goes all the way back to your beginnings as a collector in the 1950s. And in this regard, I understand that you also have a collection of 17th century death masks.

DR. PANZA: Yes. I was interested in this collection of skulls, because I believe the problem of death is the main problem of life. We cannot understand life if we cannot have a clear awareness of death. And life and death are two aspect which cannot be split. It's wrong to think that our life is endless. We have to be ready to leave life. We have not too much time in order to use well the time which is available to us. If we see life in this perspective, it became different. And many things which looks important, in reality are very much less important than others. The life is good if we leave behind something useful to the others, after us. This, I believe, is the main goal of our life. For reason, I was interested in keeping these objects which give evidence to this idea.

MR. KNIGHT: Can you tell me a little about the masks? How they were made, why they were made?

DR. PANZA: Well, mostly are skull, carved in ivory, and are Japanese or Italian or German, made in the 15th, 16th century. Some are African. But it's a small collection. It's not very important as a collection, but it's important for me because it remind me of this fact that life and death are always two things which go together.

MR. KNIGHT: And what were they, what were the originally used for?

DR. PANZA: Well, they was a *memento mori*.

MR. KNIGHT: A *memento mori*, all right.

DR. PANZA: They was used in a far away time, in the 16th, 17th century, because the attitude of people with life was different than today. Now we try to avoid in any way the image of death, because people don't like to think to death. They like to think that death don't exist. And we pay the maximum of attention to avoid everything which recall this fact.

MR. KNIGHT: Andy Warhol, though, seems to be an artist who is, who has had death as a central image in his work.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes.

MR. KNIGHT: How did you come upon these masks in the first place?

DR. PANZA: Well, I found in antiques in Milan, mostly.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh really?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. Because antique dealers which deal with object of the 17th, 15th century can have. It was a common object, the *memento mori*, in the past. No more now.

MR. KNIGHT: Right, right. [Laughs.] Yesterday, very briefly, we began to talk about your general disinterest in much of the art that is being made now and that is receiving a great deal of attention.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: German neo-Expressionism, the Italian Trans-Avant Garde.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: American painters: Julian Schnabel, David Salle.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Is your disinterest in this kind of work because to your way of thinking it doesn't extend the kind of notions we've just been talking about?

DR. PANZA: Yes. I believe that my lack of interest came out of the fact that this kind of art is far away from my vision of life. It's not concerned with the problems which are essential for me. For me, art is something which is important in order to improve the quality of life. The quality of our thinking, the quality of your inner level of intellectual activity. This art give no improvement, because it's an art which look to the past; it's not an art which look to the future, which take the risk to make something new and try to expand the experience of existence. It's just an art which make an historical review of the past fifty or sixty years of art experience. If you look at many of these artists, you find elements coming from the German Expressionism of the early twenty years of this century. You can find idea coming out of Surrealism, of Cubism, of metaphysical art, of Abstract Expressionism, or all this experience brought together. This experience was very important because it was a new experience. And all of these former researches was motivated by an idealistic view of the situation. Because it was a test made to prove a new exploration of the human mind. It was a new answer to a social situation which was changing. It was a projection, or a forecast, of how the life of a modern world was changing. But all this relationship to art of the past is completely deprived of the motivation. There are only the formal body, the shell of this art but not the meaning, not the content. In this way, it's useless, because art is art when shapes are the direct relationship to a given experience, to a given relationship to life, to a motivation in order to realize something. But if this relationship don't exist, it's an intellectual exercise about shapes, but the shapes without what it is behind are nothing, just void.

MR. KNIGHT: So you are an idealist?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes, surely.

MR. KNIGHT: No doubt. Along these lines, of German Expressionism, one of the-one of the interesting things about German Expressionism is that it seems to attempt a re-connection between contemporary culture and its source in nature.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: With- I mean, name the artists. From [Emil] Nolde to [Ernst Ludwig] Kirchner.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: A number of them. The neo-Expressionist work today, with its interest in history, would seem to me to be a reflection on the fact that, at this point in time, nature is less the source from which culture derives, that culture itself is now the source from which culture derives.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And so that its interest in going back historically and turning to the art of earlier periods is in a sense a reflection of this. In which case, culture has, or nature has, become kind of indistinguishable from culture.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Could it perhaps be the absence of a reference in nature that may have something to do with your not having an interest?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. I believe is a quality, a negative quality of this art is the lack of reference to nature. Because it's an exercise about past experience, past cultural experience. There are not any kind of engagement with anything. This lack of engagement is the main reason of this art to be. This is the main fact on which I disagree very deeply. Because we cannot exist art without engagement. Art is not just a pleasure, is not relaxing activity, is not an amusement, is not entertainment. Art is an engagement with life. And art reflect this engagement with life. If there are not, art don't exist. This lack of relationship to nature is the lack of relationship to a real motivation in order to be alive. Because if we don't feel this relationship to nature, we are cut out of the reality. We are real, because we are born from nature. This is a matter of fact. And this art is for me useless for this reason, because it's an intellectual experiment, but nothing else. I believe the main reason of this art to be as it is came out of a generation of people which lived the French revolution of 1968 in Europe. This revolution was giving hope of a total freedom, but a freedom without a goal, the possibility to do everything we was willing to do. But this kind of freedom is not freedom, because this kind of freedom kill the real freedom. The real freedom is the obligation of making what it is the best for the evolution of man. This is goal which nature give to the man: to go on with the evolution. We are thinking animals because we came out of animal which was not thinking,

which was moving and living on instinct. And man have this privilege, to have a reason to use, and-

[Begin tape 6, side A.]

DR. PANZA: -to go on on this task, to be a tool of nature in developing evolution, because the history of nature is the evolution. From the big bang, from the undifferentiated energy, to the physical differentiation, organism of life, and after vegetation, animals without intelligence, just moving by instinct, and after some intelligent animals, at the end the man. And man is the very last event in this long history of evolution; he's the last part, and perhaps he is the beginning of something else, which we don't know where nature lead us. But it's clear that we are the instrument of something else; this something else is the evolution. Inside our mind, we feel the desire of things always above what we have reached, is the main voice of nature speaking inside our mind, this endless desire for the best.

MR. KNIGHT: If the student riots and so forth in Paris in 1968 in your view had a great deal to do with this, it's curious that the artists who have come to the fore subsequently are German, Italian, and American, and not French. Why do you suppose that is?

DR. PANZA: No, well, also the French. Because Figuration Libre is a version of this situation in France. But-

MR. KNIGHT: But it's much less-has less notoriety, shall we say.

DR. PANZA: Yes, came after, I believe.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: But belong to the same psychological situation.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm.

DR. PANZA: These people which lived in the hope, the wrong hope of the 1968, was disillusioned very fast. It's clear that total freedom lead to self-killing, because it lead to nothing. And these people was disillusioned of what happened after, because not one of these great hope of total freedom was realized. Life experience show that all this hope was not possible to make real. This generation coming out of 1968 have no kind of strong moral readiness to face disillusionment. And for this reason, they make this kind of art, an art which show a great disillusionment with life. They lack engagement, because they don't have hope. When we don't have hope for something, we cannot be engaged in something. Because life is to have goal and we work in order to reach goals. If we do not have goals, we cannot be alive. But if we have a goal, we have hope to reach something which is better than what we have today.

MR. KNIGHT: Desire for total freedom meant that there was no standard, no touchstone. And nature is the primary standard?

DR. PANZA: Yes, oh sure.

MR. KNIGHT: You do, in your collection, have I believe two works by Joseph Beuys?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Who many would regard as the father of many of these developments. How does Beuys-the works you have by Beuys-fit into your collection, and why did you stop collecting his work?

DR. PANZA: I saw for the first time the works by Beuys in 1968. In 1968 there was an exhibition in the Eindhoven Museum by Robert Morris and Joseph Beuys. The museum was used only by these two artists. I went to see the exhibition by Morris because I was collecting his work. Indeed, was a beautiful exhibition of early Robert Morris works. In this way, I saw also the Beuys exhibition. Was the first time I was seeing his work and listening to the name of Beuys. I was extremely impressed by him, because it was a revelation for me. I was very moved by his work. But his work has nothing to do with the post-Expressionist art of Germany. It's related to the experience of a German real Expressionism; it's related to the experience of the whole culture of central Europe. And it's related to Surrealism very much. He's the parallel of Rauschenberg in some way. And the art of Beuys is extremely important. I believe he's the greatest artist in Europe after the war. His art is related to the Middle Age life of Europe; is not related to the Renaissance, but to the hidden world which is deeply inside our mind; is the exploration of the instincts which lay down every act we make, of which we don't have a notion, but which are basic in our life. This exploration is made in a powerful way. I believe no artist was so strong in making this exploration, which is made through analogy, opposing objects which have some kind of relationship to our memory, to our experience, like Rauschenberg. But Rauschenberg is more romantic in his own way. Beuys is going down more in the roots of the central Europe culture, which is a culture coming out of the Middle Age. The Renaissance in Germany had not so strong roots as in Italy. The Italian Renaissance was closely related to the

Roman and Greek culture; it was the rediscovery of the harmony of the classical world. But the German culture is related to the Middle Age, to the Gods, to this world which we believe [to] be existing, but we don't see, but we have intuition of it. It's the relationship to the Medieval belief that hell and devil are true. This is very strong in the Beuys experience. He also has a strong mystical experience. There are both of these, strong erotic and mystical experience together. There are the opposition of forces of good and bad. Really, it is like to read the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, and to look at the Beuys works. The best work was made in the fifties and early sixties. And when I saw this work, I was very impressed. I tried hard to buy works, but in this time, a German collector was buying all the work by Beuys. In this way there was no good ones available. And soon his work became expensive, and in this way I had the possibility to have only two small objects.

MR. KNIGHT: Was it Peter Ludwig who was primarily buying?

DR. PANZA: No, it was Stroher, the German collector who made the best German collection. He bought a collection of Pop Art from New York. But his main engagement was with Beuys, which he started to collect very early. In the Darmstadt Museum, there are four rooms devoted only to the early works by Beuys. Really are a powerful experience, because are the core works by Beuys. The works he made in the seventies and the eighties are fine, but not so strong.

MR. KNIGHT: You just said that you were interested in buying his work. Most of it was unavailable and by the time some perhaps became available it was too expensive.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: New York has changed quite a bit since the 1950s when you began to buy art there-in terms of the market especially. What sort of effect does the market have on art, market pressure?

DR. PANZA: Today the market pressures is very negative. It's costly to live in New York; artists have to do something which could be sold. And the prevailing taste by people for art today is for this kind of art, the figurative neo-Expressionist art, which is an art which could be sold easily because people believe to buy avant-garde art. But it's figurative art. There are strong colors, large canvases, we see something, we understand what the painting is saying. For this reason, people are happy to buy because it looks something which we can understand. Collectors with a low cultural background in modern art buy, because, at least, they found some avant-garde art which [they] understand. For this reason the price are so high. I believe it's a successful art. I never liked a successful art. Usually successful art is no good, because it's easy art. People like it for some apparent but not substantial reason, but after some years this art disappear. I have seen many times in my experience so-called famous artists to be forgotten.

MR. KNIGHT: As long as we're on this topic of figurative, you've never collected figurative work, and the only figures that appear in anything you own are photographic sources.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Nor have you ever collected photography. Although [Douglas] Huebler and Jan Dibbits and so on use photographs, they aren't really photographers.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Where does this-maybe aversion is too strong a word-[laughs]-aversion for the figure come from? Why are you hesitant about, or why do you favor abstraction, shall we say?

DR. PANZA: I believe it's a distinct quality of the 20th century art to explore new dimension and vision of reality, and I don't believe that abstract art is better than figurative art. Abstract art could be better or worse than figurative art; there are no difference. Because we can do abstract art with figurative art too. For instance, some artists of Italian Renaissance, the so-called Mannerist painters, was in reality abstract painters, because for them it was not important the meaning of the image but the quality of the image. What was important [was] the relationship of the colors, the harmony of the shapes, not the fact that the image was related to something real. The image was only a way to build forms which was intellectual creations. For this reason they are no different. But I believe that the modern science reveal to our knowledge a world which is far above the possibility of our eyes to see. Our eyes have limit in having perception of reality. But knowledge is going well above this limit. For this reason we don't need anymore to use images which our eyes can perceive. Because the world which we can know through our intellect, through our knowledge, is wider than the image coming through our eyes. If you look at the microscope, anything which is around us, you see an abstract image. If you look to photographs of stars, they are abstract images. For this reason, abstraction is a closer image of the real which is above around us. It's a tool more efficient to inform us about reality.

MR. KNIGHT: How then do you reconcile being a realist and an idealist?

DR. PANZA: Well, we cannot be really idealist if the idealism is only an intention. [They laugh.] Life is not made by good intentions. If the intentions are not related to facts, are just words. Words are no fine, no good, if not related to something real. Idealism and realism have to be together. The quality of our idealism is in relation of attempts we make to make the ideal real. We can fail, however, in making this attempt. But what is important is the engagement we have in order to make this attempt real. It's not important if we fail, but is important to try. The engagement we have in carrying on through the time this attempt is the only thing which is important in life. It's not so much important if the ideal became real. But it's extremely important if all our time and all our energy are devoted to the goal which we have in mind.

MR. KNIGHT: Would you describe that as a political dimension for art?

DR. PANZA: Well, it's also a political dimension for art, because I believe it's an obligation which every man must have.

MR. KNIGHT: I see. To go back for a moment to market pressures and its relationship to art-and we were talking a little bit earlier about Robert Ryman-when you began collecting his work-I believe in the early seventies-his paintings at the time were very inexpensive. Shortly after you began collecting his work, his prices increased significantly. And although investment has never been a consideration for you, your stature as a collector would seem to have an effect on the market. Would you agree with that?

DR. PANZA: Perhaps. I don't know. But it could be completely wrong, because there are some artists which I bought early which became famous artists. There are others which I believe are very important artists which don't became famous at all. I can give some example: one of the few Italian artists I have is Maurizio Mochetti; Mochetti make kinetic art, moving object. I believe he's the best artist making this kind of art. Kinetic object have a relationship to the time. Nobody express the value, the meaning of the time as this artist. But nobody know him. You never, perhaps, you never listened his name.

MR. KNIGHT: Never heard of him, yeah.

DR. PANZA: Yes. But in my opinion he's a very important artist. I collected work by Bob Lowe, Peter Joseph.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: Which are very good artist in my opinion but not famous at all.

MR. KNIGHT: So what you're saying is that you're only one factor in a whole lot of factors.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. However, if I collect some good artist, people around are not stupid [Laughs.] and realize that this art is good and they collect too. [They laugh.] But this is the only reason. There are situations in which the artist is not able to find the good dealer, or is not able to have a relationship with dealers. Or he make something which is too difficult, which don't react to the other people in the same way as react to me. The work is left out of the market.

MR. KNIGHT: I must say one thing that impressed me greatly in Varese: in the sitting room, there were several paintings by Bob Lowe.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Black paintings by Bob Lowe, who I was completely unfamiliar with.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And it-I think it's a rare collector who would not years ago have "weeded out"-quote, unquote-those paintings. And I just wanted to tell you that. [Laughs.] I thought that was swell. In 1980 there had been planned a comprehensive exhibition of your collection in Dusseldorf.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And I believe in three museums?

DR. PANZA: Well, in two museums.

MR. KNIGHT: Two museums.

DR. PANZA: Yes, because it was made in the Kunsthalle and in the City Museum.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: But the City Museum was closed for restoration; we used a large room in the Fair which is nearby the City Museum. And the Kunsthalle we made two exhibitions. The first one, for a given kind of art. And the second one for other artists. There was in this time also the program to make with the works, which are now at MOCA, to make a long-term loan to the Dusseldorf Museum, of North Rhine-Westphalia; the director was Mr. Schmalenbach, which made a beautiful collection of modern art. But this program unfortunately could not carried on because of the Italian law forbidding long-term loan abroad of the work of art.

MR. KNIGHT: This is the exhibition that this catalogue came from?

DR. PANZA: Yes, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And the exhibition itself was never completely realized.

DR. PANZA: No.

MR. KNIGHT: Could you go into some of the details of the circumstances surrounding why the show did not-

DR. PANZA: Well, in the early seventies, I had already bought many works of art. And the problem of finding space was becaming pressing, because only a small number of them was possible to show in my house in Varese. For this reason, I began to start an investigation in museums in order to find institutions willing to have the first part of my collection. I believe this was the one more interesting for museums to have, because it was already made up of well-established artists. I asked many museums, but the first answer came from Germany, for the Monchengladbach Museum and after, from the Dusseldorf Museum having Schmalenbach as director. I had a relationship to the Monchengladbach Museum because the director, Cladders, was an excellent, competent man. He made early beautiful exhibitions of American and European artists, and I went several time to see his exhibitions, interesting because it was artists which I was just beginning to collect. The museum was made in a small old house, but there was the program with the city to build a new museum. The task of making the project was given to Hollein-which I read this morning that he win a prize of architecture, a very famous prize, which last year was given to Richard Meier.

MR. KNIGHT: Oh, the Pritzger Prize.

DR. PANZA: Pritzger Prize, yes. I am very happy because I like very much the work by him. But this museum had to be made. But I was very interested in making a long-term loan to the museum. The city don't have the money to buy the collection, but was very interested in having for fifteen years' term the collection on loan. And also I was very interested in making this loan, because it was the possibility to show this beautiful works to the public. The negotiation started in 1973. In '74 we reach an agreement and because of this agreement I crated all the works. I sent in storage in Switzerland, awaiting the construction of the museum which had to built the following year, in '74, and to be ready no later than '78. But unfortunately, '73, '74, there was an economic depression in Germany, and the beginning was postponed. And in this way the museum was ready only in 1982, instead of in 1978. In the meantime, even in '74 and '75, the possibility to make the museums in Monchengladbach, because of the economic depression, looks almost vanishing. For this reason, I was approached by Mr. Schmalenbach, asking me to have the works in Dusseldorf. The offer was interesting, always on long-term loan. Schmalenbach built up a beautiful collection of modern art, starting with Cubism, Surrealism, metaphysical art, abstract art, until the American Pop Art. Just a few painting for each artist, but all masterpieces. I believe it's the most beautiful collection made in Europe in the postwar time. Really top quality. There are no mistake in this collection-all great paintings. This collection was made-

[Begin Tape 6, side B.]

DR. PANZA: -with money coming from the North Rhine-Westphalia State, and there was about three million marks a year-with this three million marks a year. It's interesting to make a remark about this three million marks. This amount of money Schmalenbach had each year is not too much less than all the money I spent in my life for art. [They laugh.]

MR. KNIGHT: So you better not try and buy Cubism. [They laugh.]

DR. PANZA: Right.

MR. KNIGHT: What is the equivalent of three million marks?

DR. PANZA: Well, it's difficult-I am not strong in money conversion. But I believe-when the dollar was very low in value, two marks was buying a dollar. So in this way, at this time, it was one million dollar and half a year.

MR. KNIGHT: And so you've spent a little more than that on your entire collection?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: So you have proved your sister wrong.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: I keep thinking of her telling you to be careful. Anyhow, so-

DR. PANZA: Also Schmalenbach had the program to build soon a large museum; there was an international contest for the project. The project was ready for starting, but for economic reason the program was delayed. Indeed, this museum would be ready only at the end of this year, or at the beginning of the next, 1986. For this reason I exported this part of my collection to Switzerland. I stored it in Switzerland as permanent export from Italy, in order to avoid complex regulations in force in Italy. When you have to export something, you cannot have a long-term loan; you have to do only for one year or two years. It's very complex. In this way I made a Lichtenstein Trust, which became the permanent owner of the collection, and this trust was the property of me and my wife, and in this way, we was free of all of this complex formal obligations with the Italian administration.

MR. KNIGHT: And this trust only included the eighty works which are now in the Temporary Contemporary building.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: So that they would be the only ones that would be shown at the museum?

DR. PANZA: At the museum in Dusseldorf, yes. This operation was possible to make in Italy in this time, because it was not forbidden. It was not allowed by the law, but if somebody made it, don't have any kind of consequence. We had only to pay a fine, but it was a small fine. [Laughs.]

MR. KNIGHT: It's a good thing you were a lawyer. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: But in '76, the Italian government passed a new law, which required that every Italian resident having something in a foreign country had to bring back to Italy or sell what was abroad and send back the money. And I asked the government not to have this obligation, because I was making a cultural activity. It was not an investment abroad. It was not capital kept abroad.

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: The law was asking to dissolve the trust, which I made. The trust was dissolved and the works became mine. But the Italian administration rejected my request. In this way, because the new law was very strong in forbidding to keep the money or estate abroad, there was the risk to go to jail. Because there was the obligation to bring back the works or to bring back the money in a very short term of time. We ask for a delay but was also rejected. In this way we was denounced to the court, the criminal court in Rome, because we was not sending back or selling the paintings. We were guilty. We was running the risk-I and my wife-to go to jail. [Laughs.] Because we was keeping abroad works of art in order to be shown in museums.

MR. KNIGHT: What reason did they give for refusing your request-

DR. PANZA: Just because there was the law! The law was saying that everything had to come back.

MR. KNIGHT: It didn't matter that it was-

DR. PANZA: There was no distinctions if there was some valid reason to keep something abroad. It was very simple, the law: Everything had to come back: the estate or the money, if it was sold.

MR. KNIGHT: So this was in 1976?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And you sold the collection in 1984?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: So for eight years you were avoiding the police? [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes, because we was guilty and we had to await the trial by the criminal court in Rome, which had to establish if we was guilty or not. And we had to wait six years [They laugh.] in order to know it, because the Italian law is very slow. [They laugh.] The Italian courts was not pressed to judge me and my wife because they realized that our crime was not so dangerous to the Italian interest. We had to wait the trial, and to sit with my wife on the bench of a guilty people and to wait, to have a discussion with the three judges. The judge was the

three, in the court in Rome. In the empty room very large. [They laugh.]

MR. KNIGHT: So they didn't put you in handcuffs or anything?

DR. PANZA: No. We had a discussion. I show the catalogue, I explained why I was keeping this works abroad, because there was this cultural interest, which was real, not just my idea. The court, after having seen the material and a short discussion with my lawyer, they retired, they spent half an hour inside the room where they had to make the sentence. And we had to spent one of the worst half an hour of our life! Just waiting if we was guilty or not. But at last, they came out, they read the decision in which we was declared not guilty at all, because the interpretation that the court was giving to the law was this: when something was kept abroad for cultural reason, it was in the intention of the law. The law was made only for people which had estate abroad as investment, not when was a cultural activity. In this way, we was completely free, and we believed to have solved every problem and to have the possibility to make the long-lasting loan to the Dusseldorf museum, but-

MR. KNIGHT: When the court looked at the catalogue, what did they think of Hannah Darboven and Jan Dibbets?

DR. PANZA: Well, there was also many articles published in the Italian newspapers which was speaking about the collection. They realized that even if they was not able to understand was judged by competent people, something good.

MR. KNIGHT: I see, yes.

DR. PANZA: But the problem was not solved, because the Italian administration in charge of the foreign exchange was still giving an interpretation to the law which was not the one given by the court. And we was still running the risk to be caught again, to be declared again guilty, and to go again to another criminal trial, which was not a nice thing to repeat a second experience, even if eventually would be still positive, because the first one was positive.

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: For this reason, I decide to look for the second solution, which was the one to sell, the second option given by the law, to sell the work and bring back the money. I tried to sell the works to Schmalenbach, but unfortunately in this period, he had funds cuts by the state of Westphalia because there was an economic depression in 1982; for this reason was not possible to sell the collection in Germany. I wrote, in June '83, to Koshaleck, the director of MOCA, asking if the museum was interested; he answered me yes. In this way, we make the deal.

MR. KNIGHT: When you sold the collection, you said you had to return the money to Italy?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Are portions of that then paid to the Italian government as tax?

DR. PANZA: No.

MR. KNIGHT: Or is it invested in-

DR. PANZA: Well, I have obligation to bring back all the money I get from Los Angeles to Italy. The dollars goes to the Bank of Italy and the Bank of Italy give me liras at the rate of exchange of the day.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: I get liras instead of dollars.

MR. KNIGHT: That's very clever of them. [They laugh.]

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: How did you-

DR. PANZA: Because if I brought back the paintings, which was another possibility, I will had to pay added value tax of twenty percent, which means to pay millions of dollar of taxes, which was impossible. I would have to sell one third of the collection in order to pay the tax, and this way, breaks the collection, which was just the thing which I was not at all willing to do. Because I was not-

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah, because you could have very easily sold-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -two or three works.

DR. PANZA: When I saw that the only solution was to sell, I asked an estimate to Christie's and Sotheby's. They ran to Milan, just the day after, to make the estimate. [Laughs.] They made an estimate ranging between eleven and fifteen million dollars, if sold at auction in '83, but was a prudential estimate. They told me that this sale would have been the greatest sale of modern art ever made in the history of modern art.

MR. KNIGHT: Sure.

DR. PANZA: It would draw museum directors and collectors from every nation of the world, to try to have the paintings. But money was not my goal. My goal was just the one to keep intact the collection, to have housed in a beautiful museum, and MOCA was the best, the ideal solution for me.

MR. KNIGHT: I had understood that Christie's estimate was almost twice what MOCA paid.

DR. PANZA: The Christie's was a little higher; the Sotheby was a little more prudential, but there was no big difference.

MR. KNIGHT: But it was clear that they were very conservative estimates.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. Leo Castelli told me recently that he had several offers when people realized that I was willing to sell. There was institutions and collectors willing to give me twelve million in cash, immediately.

MR. KNIGHT: Sure.

DR. PANZA: Just in cash.

MR. KNIGHT: Sure. Well, they could, you know, then turn around the next day and double their money.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. Castelli told me that if I was free to sell now this paintings, I will get easily 20 million dollars.

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh. So then the 11 million dollar figure that MOCA purchased the collection for was basically the lowest estimate that Sotheby's had given?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And that's how you arrived at that figure?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: I see. I've always been curious how eleven million became the figure. In considering the disposition of your collection, you yourself had benefited from the inheritance from your family, from your father.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Do you feel a similar obligation, since you have four children, to consider-

DR. PANZA: Yes. If I don't have children, I would give out my collection in gift, because I don't feel the need to be rich. I feel the need to reach my goal [Laughs.], which is the one to have the collection installed in the best way possible in good museums. This is my goal. Because I believe is the best thing which I can do in my life. I am not a good businessman, but as art connoisseur of contemporary art, I believe to be good. And if I have inherited from nature this talent, I have to use in the best way. It's my duty.

MR. KNIGHT: While all of this was going on with the portion of the collection which is now at MOCA, you had begun negotiations for the minimal, conceptual, and environmental portion of the collection to be housed in two palaces in Turin.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Could you recount how that began and evolved and eventually fell through?

DR. PANZA: When Italian newspaper know, in the middle '70s, that the first part of the collection was going out of Italy, they complain the fact that it was not being kept in Italy. And indeed some people was asking me why not to keep other parts of the collection in Italy? Why not to use historical buildings which was empty in order to fill this spaces, which was under restoration and which there was no program how to use, putting inside works of my collection on long-term loan lasting fifteen years, or eventually make a donation? The first suggestion came

out from a friend, Giuliano Gori, a collector living in Prato, to use the stable of a famous building nearby Florence: the Medici Villa in Poggio A Caiano, which was built by Juliano da Sangallo for Lorenzo Magnifico. It's a beautiful masterpiece of Italian Renaissance. It was made in between 1490, 1498. The construction began when the Lorenzo Magnifico was alive, but was completed some years after his death, because he died in 1494. And this proposal was beautiful, because nearby the villa there was a big stable. A beautiful space. On the ground floor, there was three naves with columns in the middle, which was looking like a big church. More than three hundred feet long and about eighty feet wide, really a very big space. And above, a similar space, with a huge corridor in the middle, rooms on the sides. The rooms on the sides of the second floor was not large, but was still very good. This building was under restoration because there was a fire. Part of the roof fell down. The Department of Fine Art was starting restoration. The Medici Villa is state-owned property.

MR. KNIGHT: And it was not being used. It was-

DR. PANZA: No, it was under restoration. Also in the villa the restoration was almost finished, but was not yet in use; it was kept empty.

And for reason, this friend asked me to make a proposal, and I suggested to use the ground floor with a huge work by Dan Flavin taking the left side of the wall, a series of fluorescent lamps, filling the wall, and on the right side to use with a work made with fluorescent lamp by Bruce Nauman. In this way, the space would be lighted by these two works, and the vision of the architectural space would be not altered in any way. Because it would be completely visible, would be empty of shapes but filled by light. It would have been a beautiful vision, really something great. The second floor would have works by Los Angeles artists using light: Doug Wheeler, Robert Irwin, Turrell, Maria Nordman, Bruce Nauman, really a good complex of works. If made, this museum have to be kept by the State Administration of Tuscany. I had several contacts with the politicians in charge. This administration was communist and socialist. They was in favor of these ideas. I had many meeting with these people. I met also the Minister of Italian Culture, in this building, and we spoke about the possibility. They said always yes, yes, yes, but the museum was never made. In this way this possibility fell down. It was a great pity, because this building was beautiful, the group of works, wonderful works, and this association with the villa built for a great collector, a great intellectual and politician, like Lorenzo Magnifico, one of the most famous figure of the Italian Renaissance, nearby a beautiful masterpieces of Italian Renaissance made by an architect like Juliano da Sangallo was something great. Have inside the American art made in Los Angeles in a so important monument with so great history. Behind of the Medici family was just something unbelievable, unbelievably fine, unbelievably beautiful. I was very willing to use this possibility; ideally it was the best thing to do, to join history, art made in the past, and the best art made today in the new work.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah.

DR. PANZA: Nothing similar is possible elsewhere. Only in Italy there are this opportunities. Two years after, in '78, I was making a trip in Turin during the summer. I was interested in Baroque architecture, because previously I made two long trips in south Germany in order to see the Baroque architecture in Germany. It's one of the main achievements of European culture. For this reason I was also interested in studying Baroque architecture in Italy. And Turin was one of the main center of Baroque art in Italy, because of the Savoy Dynasty which became important in the 17th and 18th century. The Savoy Dynasty was until the 1563 a French dynasty, because they had power on the French side of the Alps, and on the French-speaking part of Switzerland. But when the king of France was able to win English and to throw them out of France-

[Begin Tape 7, side A.]

DR. PANZA: The French kings needed to regain control of the natural border of France, which was the Alps and the Rhine, in order to have a better protection against the pressure of the German Empire. The French king was allied with the Canton of Bern, which also was willing to have this part of Switzerland, under his control. And the Savoy Duke was allied with the Duke of Bourgogne, which lost the war, and this way the Savoy Dynasty lost control of all of the French-

speaking side of Switzerland. They lost control also of land on the French side of the Alps. Because of this they tried to expand in Italy, on the Piemonte, which they already had some parts. The first Duke starting this policy was Emanuele Filiberto, which moved the capital of the state from Chambery in France to Turin, in Italy, in 1562.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: Turin until this time was a small town. He made here the capital of the State, and made plans for a beautiful city. With the help of the best Baroque architects, a large number of palaces was built. There are two of these palaces going in ruins, because they are empty. One is the Rivoli Castle, overlooking the city of Turin, in the north suburbs. The second is the Venaria Castle, the hunting lodge of the most powerful king of the dynasty, Vittorio Amedeo II, built between the end of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century. It was a huge building, with huge stables; it was made by Filippo Juvara, one of the best architect of the Baroque time in Italy.

This building became an army barracks, and was left in ruins. The Rivoli Castle have a surface of 50,000 square feet, and the Venaria Castle a surface of about 300,000 square feet.

MR. KNIGHT: About 300,000?

DR. PANZA: 300,000 square feet. It was one-

MR. KNIGHT: That's enough to accommodate the entire collection.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. It was one of the biggest royal palaces built in Europe in the Baroque time. It was smaller than Versailles. It was also smaller than Caserta, which is another royal Baroque palace made nearby Naples, but it was bigger than all the other royal palaces existing in Europe. For this reason, it was possible in both buildings to house all the collection, all the work of the collection.

MR. KNIGHT: So did you find these two castles and then propose to whoever, or how did that come about?

DR. PANZA: Well, because-

MR. KNIGHT: So you were their finder-

DR. PANZA: I found two castles, I was-

MR. KNIGHT: -and a light went on in your head? [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: -in touch with a man, which was Mr. Gabetti, which is a trustee of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Mr. Gabetti is also the head of the business of the Agnelli family, of the Fiat Corporation. I spoke to him about this possibility. He give me the opportunity to be in touch with people of the administration of the estate of Piemonte, which was in charge of the restoration of the Rivoli Castle. This happen in '78, these people was very interested in the possibility to use the Rivoli Castle as a museum and we signed an agreement for a long-term loan, lasting 15 years, with the plan to house in this building works of minimal art by Morris, by Carl Andre, by Flavin, by Bruce Nauman. All minimal art, the best works of minimal art. Richard Serra, too; we made this agreement. Everything was going on well. The restoration work was going-

MR. KNIGHT: So the Italian government would provide for the restoration of the building and you would provide the collection?

DR. PANZA: Yes. That's right.

MR. KNIGHT: And what sort of cost was there to the Italian government? DR. PANZA: Well, for the Italian government, the cost of the Rivoli restoration was about $4 million dollar. The value of the eighty works, which was possible to install in the Rivoli Castle, all very large, because the room are large, the value was about $8 million dollars at this time. This was going on well. I made a proposal in order to have all the collection in both museums. For the Venaria Castle, there was a plan by the Administration of Fine Art to have an allocation of funds for restoration of all of these royal residences around Turin, including the Venaria Palace. The money necessary for the restoration was five time bigger than the one for Rivoli, because it was five time bigger. We was awaiting this allocation of funds in order to make an agreement. Two years before, in 1982, there was another possibility coming up. Nearby Milan, there is the castle of Vigevano, built by the Visconti and the Sforza's in the 14th and the 15th century. It is a beautiful castle, very large, a Medieval and Renaissance one. Part of the building was made by Bramante, and Leonardo lived and work here, when he was making hydraulic works for the irrigation of the land around the castle, belonging to the Duke, Ludovico [Sforza] il Moro.

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: Bramante and Leonardo spent a lot of time in this building, because Leonardo spent mostly of his life in Milan, from 1483 till 1499, when Ludovico il Moro was seized by the King of France because the duke lost the war. And he was in Milan again from 1506 till 1516, when was King of France, Francois Premier, which liked very much the work of Leonardo, and bought many works by him.

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: And this connection to Leonardo and Bramante, in this building, very large, on the top of a small hill in this old town, with a beautiful piazza made in same time nearby, with a wonderful space for art, was, too, an exciting opportunity. The castle have a hundred rooms available and empty, slowly under restoration. This building had to be used for the Brera Museum, in order to install the paintings which was not possible, for lack of space, to exhibit in Milan. But Mr. Bertelli, which was at this time the Director of Brera, realized that the works cannot be installed in these rooms because there was too many openings, large ones between rooms, large windows. Sometime the walls was not vertical because it was an old fortress, which became in the Renaissance

time a residence of the Duke, but was originally a fortress, and for this reason the walls was not straight. He asked me to make a suggestion in order to house my collection. I made this suggestion, before to make a program for the Venaria Palace, just one year before. I made the program to show conceptual art, part of the minimal art which was not possible to install in the Rivoli Castle, several rooms by Los Angeles artists, and so on. It was really a great opportunity. I made this program, but after, was necessary to have the final approval by all the authorities interested to the program, and-

MR. KNIGHT: Local authorities?

DR. PANZA: Local authorities and also the state authority. The Minister of Culture.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: From Rome, he appointed a committee in order to make the decision. This committee headed by the head of the regional cultural administration of Lombardy because the castle is in Lombardy. The head of this committee was the cultural head of Lombardy, but this committee discarded the offer of Mr. Bertelli, the director of Brera, for using the castle for the collection. Before, the director of the Brera Museum asked me not to make a long-term loan, but to make a donation, and I agree to make the donation of the hundred work for this space. This committee refused the donation. In this way this museum was not made.

MR. KNIGHT: What reason did they have?

DR. PANZA: I don't know.

MR. KNIGHT: They gave no reason?

DR. PANZA: No, they decided to use the space for making a center about art for Lombardy, which means nothing, because they have nothing to put inside, the Lombardy art. It is still empty, still not used.

MR. KNIGHT: And this included the project in Turin as well?

DR. PANZA: Yes, part of the project in Turin, because this happen in '82 before the proposition for Venaria. But was not included the work for Rivoli Castle, because they was already engaged. In this way, also this beautiful program was not possible to realize. In meantime, there was many other negotiations. I was to Venice because there was people interested, asking me to use the Arsenale in Venice, which is a huge building. It was the shipyard of the navy of the Venetian Republic. There are building made in the 13th century, 14th century, 15th century, beautiful buildings which was used till a few years ago by the Italian navy, but now are empty. I had also a suggestion to use in Rome, the Villa Doria Pamphili, in the middle of a huge park overlooking Rome. There was a small house, but fine, for showing art. There was also a suggestion to use a villa in suburb of Milan, but it was a small space, only 10,000 square feet, too little for the collection. There was also a program to use an abbey in nearby Parma, because the University of Parma was developing a collection of art. They was willing to use this abbey under restoration as an art museum. I contacted the director, but when I ask him that I was willing to make the gift, under the condition that for a given period of time the works would be exhibited in permanence- when I made this condition, he refused the donation.

In Varese, since 1978, I started negotiation with the city, in order to make a museum in my house. I was willing to give in gift all the collection in the house, and also one-third of the property, because the villa belong for one-third to me, but the other two-thirds belong to my brother and two sisters. We had to buy the part which belong to my brother and sisters, which they was willing to sell at a very reasonable price. But never this negotiation went through. They, as all the Italian politician, always say yes, but never make something.

MR. KNIGHT: So you have been through a lot of negotiations.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: All over Italy.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. And just last year, I made-before to make the sale to MOCA of my collection of the '50s, I asked to MOCA to give an option to the Turin administration, in order to see if they was willing to buy at a very reduced price, at seven million dollar instead of 11 million dollar, in order to give Turin the possibility to have in the Castle of Rivoli also this part of the collection. In this way, the entire collection would be kept in Italy. I made a negotiation with the regional administration. I asked help through Mr. Gabetti to the President of the Fiat Corporation, to the Olivetti Company, which also is an important business in Italy, to the San Paola Bank, but all refused to give money. The regional administration in Piemonte don't find the money, and in this way I was free to sign the agreement with MOCA.

MR. KNIGHT: I had understood that there were protests by artists in Italy against the proposal?

DR. PANZA: Yes, a few months after the signature of the agreement with MOCA, I made the statement that I was willing to change my long-term loan for the work to be shown in the Rivoli Castle, the minimal sculptures, into a gift. These 80 work would be given in gift to the regional administration. The restoration of the castle was almost finished. Indeed, in December of '84, the museum had to be open. This was happening in the spring of '84. I made this statement just in March of '84. But the 26th of April of '84, the man in charge of the cultural affair of the regional administration called me in Turin and told me that the regional administration had changed mind, was no more willing to make a museum with only my collection, was willing to have a different kind of museum, and they had appointed Rudi Fuchs, the director of Eindhoven Museum, to prepare a program for the exhibition of an international collection made in a different way. The main reason was to give space to the artists of Arte de Povera from Turin, which was complaining that they was not in my collection. If the museum would be made with my collection, would became a beautiful museum of American art, the first museum in Europe devoted only to American art; this would be made by the leftist administration, the communist and socialist, without any Italian artists inside. For this reason, the program was changed, the gift was refused, the eight million dollar works of art lost.

MR. KNIGHT: So in a nutshell, this whole thing got started because of complaints that the collection was going to leave the country.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And it all fell apart because of complaints that the collection was going to stay in the country.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: This is insanity! [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: It is a contradiction.

MR. KNIGHT: Yes!

DR. PANZA: But the interest of politicians is stronger than anything else.

MR. KNIGHT: Yes.

DR. PANZA: It's a matter of the risk of losing of some hundred votes from Italian artists. Because the fear to lose the help of these people, of few hundred people, they lose the eight-million-dollar gift and the opportunity to have a beautiful museum in Italy. Because Rudi Fuchs made an exhibition which is a reduced scale of the last Kassel Documenta. There are some good works, but the others are not of good quality at all. And he don't pay attention to the relationship between the works and the space; the works was just installed without any consideration for the architecture, for the still-existing decoration in some rooms. And in this way, we lose the perception of the quality of the architectural space, and many works are installed in the wrong place. The quality is very uneven. And this is a temporary installation, because all works are on loan. The regional administration states that they will spend half a million dollars a year for acquisition, but I don't believe it's true, because it's all the budget they have for all the cultural activities, and don't believe it will be used for acquisitions. They ask to have help from the big corporations and banks from Turin, but I am very doubtful that this help will be given to them.

MR. KNIGHT: I'm sure you were extremely disappointed when this didn't work out. Do you have any bitterness about the difficulties you've encountered?

DR. PANZA: Oh yes. For me this experience in Turin was a wound, a deep wound, because I trusted this administration. There was people which was really knowledgeable about the quality of the collection and the importance of art. But the political interest was stronger than interest for art. For me was a very bitter fact to realize that interest of parties and politicians are so strong in front of the public interest. To lose this possibility really was a break for me, because I had always the idea to put together the culture of the past with the culture of our time. To join these two facts, which for me is the evolution of the same kind of research. There is no difference from artists of the Italian Renaissance, or of the Baroque time, and the artists from America. Because they belong to the same cultural roots, are in the same development, are branches of the same tree. The opportunity to show this unity of every kind of culture-the past and the present-was unique. Possible only to be realized in Italy. I made the researches in France, but there are no so large buildings. There are large buildings but with very few rooms of large size. I made a research in Germany, but there are no old buildings available. I made a research in England, but the same; there are many large ones, but already have a use as museums or there are still people living inside, and so on. I made the research in Scotland and the situation is the same.

[Begin Tape 7, side B.]

DR. PANZA: Another experience which was not positive was also the one in Basel, Switzerland.

MR. KNIGHT: So you had a problem in Basel?

DR. PANZA: Yes. I had many relationships to Switzerland; I was going very often to see exhibitions in Basel, to the Kunsthalle, to the Kunstmuseum. I had friendly relationship to Franz Meyer, which was the director of the Kunstmuseum, and with all directors of the Kunsthalle. I spoke about my intention to find space for my collection in a new museum, if eventually some new extension would built. In '76 a new opportunity came, because Mrs. Maia Sacher, former wife of Mr. Hofman, which was one of the owner of the Hofman La Roche Corporation, which make chemical products-

MR. KNIGHT: Valium, I think it is. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes-was willing to make a gift to the museum in order to make an extension to house the collection of contemporary art. The Hofman Foundation was buying works of contemporary artists for the Kunstmuseum. They bought in the past several beautiful works. And Mrs. Sacher came to Varese to see the collection. She was a very bright lady. She have in her personal collection very beautiful works by Max Ernst, Picasso, Klee. She was one of the best collectors in Europe. Mrs. Sacher already was an old woman at this time; she was 76 years old. But she was still interested in contemporary art and was buying works by Barry, by Weiner, Ryman, Morris, Carl Andre, Richard Serra, all these artists. She came in Varese because she know that I was willing to make this long-term loan. The Hofman Foundation don't have more works available for a new extension. If there was another collector willing to give works, will be very useful. She was very impressed by the collection in Varese. In '76, all the stable was finished and there was the works by the Los Angeles artists and the minimal art, and she was enthusiastic about it. She told me that she was absolutely convinced to find the way to make something similar to Varese in Basel; she will be engaged in looking for space, a building, in order to make something similar to my collection. In this way, things developed in a very beautiful way. There was appointed a local architect, Mr. and Mrs. Steib, very good indeed, with the task to have a collaboration with me for making together with my advice a project. The building was found not far from the Kunstmuseum, was in the old part of a city, nearby the river, the Rhine. The building belongs to another foundation in Basel, which owns many buildings in the city. The director of this foundation, Mr. Hans Meier, was very interested in art, and willing to make a museum of art. This building was an old factory, which was empty. A part was possible to keep and to restore. Another part was not worth to keep, but was possible to make new. I give to the architect my advice how to make space inside, how to make artificial light, how to use natural light. We made a new system in the top floor to have natural light reflected from the sky in order to avoid, to have too much light and ultraviolet radiation inside the rooms. We made this without using film stopping the ultraviolet light, which have always a color, changing too much the daylight. This daylight will came inside the rooms without changes, will be kept all the qualities, beautiful quality of the daylight, because the reflector stop only the ultraviolet light which are not reflected-

MR. KNIGHT: Right.

DR. PANZA: -instead of all the other radiation are reflected but are not harmful to the paintings. The size of this window was made in a way to have no more than 600 lux on the paintings at noon, the ideal amount of light not affecting the colors, and integrated by electrical light when the sunset was coming. We made a plan how to use the building, with the agreement to select works from my collection, from the Hofman Foundation, and from the Kunstmuseum, but all works of the sixties, minimal and conceptual art, in order to specialize the museum in this art. But after, the family of Mrs. Sacher and other people which are not competent in art, but believe to be competent, began to say that she was spending five million Swiss francs for making a museum to the Panza collection, but not for making a museum of the Hofman Foundation, which was paying for it. In this way, the program was changed, but they give me one beautiful thing anyway: the opportunity to use all the building only with work of my collection for 11 months. The last floor, with light from the top, was used for many painting by Ryman, was something magical to see this twenty Rymans together in this beautiful space with this beautiful light.

MR. KNIGHT: Was this the first time you had seen this much of your collection together in one place?

DR. PANZA: Yes, yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And about how many works were there?

DR. PANZA: There was 75 works.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: There was works by Larry Bell, Carl Andre, Donald Judd. Each artist had a room. Works by Sol LeWitt, Kosuth, Weiner, Mangold, Serra, Nauman. Really an ideal installation for me. The rooms of this museum

was something perfect in my vision. And I was very happy to have this opportunity. Unfortunately, this opportunity last only 11 months, after-

MR. KNIGHT: [They laugh.] There are problems of being an idealist, you know.

DR. PANZA: -these people from the foundation-Mrs. Sacher retired as the president because she was 80 years old, was not any more in good health, was no more able to pay attention to art. The foundation started to buy successful artists: Schnabel, many Kiefer, Clemente, Cucchi, Paladino, and so on.

MR. KNIGHT: That must have driven you crazy. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: But not the best work of these artists, unfortunately. Not the best work. (both laugh) In this way, only 11 work of the 45 which I had given for a long-term loan are still exhibited in this museum, yes. Also, this one was a bitter experience for me, because with Mrs. Sacher, we started a beautiful program. But after, everything fail, and now it's a museum which is without identity. With the original project it would have been the first museum entirely devoted to art of the '60s, to minimal and conceptual art. It will be an example for this kind of art. In this way it's a mixed up, of many things. Now with the Crex collection displayed in Shaffhausen-which is only one devoted to art of the sixties, to minimal, conceptual, environmental art-we see well how this art is better than the works bought by the Hofman Foundation.

MR. KNIGHT: Now that these projects have fallen through, and once it became known that you were looking for a new home for the collection, museums all over the country-and Europe, I imagine-have been knocking on your door.

DR. PANZA: Oh yes.

MR. KNIGHT: What are your primary criteria for selecting a home or multiple homes for the collection?

DR. PANZA: Well, my criteria is to keep a coherent group of works together, as I made in Varese, as I made here with my first part of the collection at MOCA. I will like to follow the same idea and the same concept, to specialize each museum in a given period of a given group of artists, and not to make a mix-up of different artists, which I don't like.

MR. KNIGHT: If the collection went to multiple homes, it would be divided by period, as opposed to-

DR. PANZA: A period of a group of artists. I like specialized museums. However, it's not possible to have 40 Naumans all together. It would be too much. Or 30 Ryman all in a single place. It's better for artists with many works to be split in two or three places.

MR. KNIGHT: I see.

DR. PANZA: But anyway, to split with an idea, for instance: the early period of the Ryman in one, the Ryman of the early seventies in another place. The same for Nauman. For Morris, the work in steel in one place, the ones in fiberglass in another one. Make a coherent plan.

MR. KNIGHT: Would you ever isolate a certain artist? For instance, Jim Turrell currently working on the *Roden Crater* project, which I know you're very interested in, say taking the five Turrell works that you own and putting those-I don't know-nearby the *Roden Crater*, for instance.

DR. PANZA: Well, could be a possibility. But I have still some hope to keep the work which I have in Varese in Varese. I have to see what will happen in the next future, if in next two or three years this possibility to keep the work in Varese will become possible, I will keep them in Varese. If not, I will look for another place to install them. There are possibilities here in Los Angeles in or south California, where this works could be installed here, choosing a similar situation to the one in Varese.

MR. KNIGHT: How do you assess the quality of the potential museum as a caretaker for your collection?

DR. PANZA: Well, depend on the size of the space and the quality of the space. And the location. There are several considerations which are important. Often factories are very beautiful. Because minimal art goes very well with simple engineering structures, which are beautiful if are only engineering structures. This art, which deal with concepts, with intellectual capacity of man as a thinker, find its natural home in this simple spaces. For this reason, I like so much to see them. Several possibilities could be found here in south California of this kind. The quality and size of the space is very important. When we have space like the Temporary Contemporary, we can do beautiful things; is sufficient to do the right partition inside; with a few walls we can have the right space. With an intelligent use of the light, the quality of the space could be increased. The works would became very more powerful if the light is good. Lighting is extremely important in museums. Have not to be used only for seeing better details, but in order to make an environment. Light has a key function in giving the feeling of a

totality. My idea is basically one: The museum is not an accumulation of more or less good work of art; it's not a fine warehouse for art. It's a place where, when we are inside, we live in a different condition. We have to feel that we are in another place, where something ideal is present in the space. This is the goal which the museum has to reach. If fail, it's not a museum. Very often, unfortunately, museums are just accumulation of works of art. Often the perception of the quality of environment is lost, because of a lack of attention by curator in displaying and selecting the work. I had this bitter experience, for instance, recently at the Tate Gallery in London. I was in London to see the Saatchi collection. The Saatchi collection is installed in a beautiful old factory, was cleaned and restored. The space is very simple. There are large white wall. There are few works inside, but beautiful, by Judd, Brice Marden, [Andy] Warhol, [Cy] Twombly, Serra; the space increase the quality. It is strongly emotional to see this beautiful works so well displayed with so much empty space around each work, which increase perfection. After, I went to the Tate Gallery to see fine works mixed to bad ones, just put on the wall like stamps, in a collection of stamps. It was terrible. Really very sad. To see the Rothko cramped in a small room with the wrong light above, without space around each painting, was just sad.

MR. KNIGHT: So would you then, in selecting places for your collection, consider those kinds of conditions for a museum? Let's say Museum X-you have been to Museum X, and you don't get the feeling of an understanding, would that play a part in your decision as to where your collection would go?

DR. PANZA: Oh surely. It's essential. I was so happy when I had the opportunity to use the full space of the new museum in Basel because the conception of the museum was correct. It was made with a helpful collaboration with the architects, was very open people not willing to prevail, was very respectful of the need of art. In this way, it was possible to see how the environment was powerful in giving the right perception of the works. The same I feel now here at MOCA. My great pleasure is to go to MOCA, stay some hours looking into the rooms. To stay in the middle of the room. To feel the works living with me. This is a great thing, this experience, after so many years away from these paintings. And to feel how they are still alive with my mind. This is something beautiful, something great. I will like to stay forever in this space. [They laugh.] Don't move out. To sleep inside.

MR. KNIGHT: Yeah, maybe you could get a room there and-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Basically then your task is to find museums that have the same conception of what a museum is as yours?

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: That you have to mesh with.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: In the collection at MOCA, with the sale of the collection, were there any restrictions placed on-

DR. PANZA: No, there is no restriction because what I ask and the museum agree, is that the installation has to be, to be made following my advice.

MR. KNIGHT: Yes.

DR. PANZA: This is very important for me. We need people which are very knowledgeable about these things.

MR. KNIGHT: I see. You mentioned earlier Johannes Cladders, and I read where he said that your approach towards installing the collection for a museum was admirable but impractical.

DR. PANZA: Well, I believe it's not true, because of the experience I had in Basel was positive; was not lasting because the people which had the power had different interests, which was not my interest. But the experience we have now at MOCA prove that this is possible.

MR. KNIGHT: Since so many museums would just love to have the collection, you're quite sought-after these days. Is that difficult? Is it difficult for you to deal with the numbers of inquiries and requests and so on, for people who would very much like to have portions of the collection?

DR. PANZA: No, I don't find special problems, because the main problem for every museum is the size of the space, and to find space is always difficult, because the museum have to be in large cities. To find large space available in large cities is difficult, because in the center of the city the space is very valuable and other use can be easily found. To find city willing to give away an income in order to have art is not so easy. And if we are to build a new museum, the building is very costly. If we can use existing old factory, is the more economical solution. In all the cities, there are these possibilities. Because often, public administration own buildings which are in depressed area of the center, old factory no more in use or warehouse nearby a port. Now the way of

handling material which have to be shipped is different, because with the containers we don't need any more to have warehouse in ports. In this way are very large buildings available. Long Beach, for instance. Or in San Francisco, or in San Diego. This could be very good opportunities, because this areas are nearby the center with easy access.

MR. KNIGHT: You were speaking earlier about the possibilities in Turin and Milan. One of the things that pleased you was the nature of the locale itself.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: It would create this link from the Old World to the New, and so forth and so on. What is there about Los Angeles or southern California that interests you in terms of a place for your collection-

DR. PANZA: Well-

MR. KNIGHT: -that's unique?

DR. PANZA: What interests me is the link my collection have to California. A large number of the artists I have live in California, and worked in California. And the large part of the most beautiful have a relationship to the California culture, and have a relationship to the fact that Los Angeles midway between Europe and Asia, to the Far Eastern countries, the culture of Japan and China. It's a city which is nearby the ocean, is at the end of the desert which are behind Los Angeles in the western states, is a city which usually has a beautiful light-not today [laughs], but usually.

MR. KNIGHT: Before you asked it was wonderful, right?

DR. PANZA: And this is a strong fact. There are few cities in the world which usually have so beautiful light. This city is in an area of California with a strong and fast development. Cultural change-

[Begin Tape 8, side A.]

DR. PANZA: The investment that the State of California made in the past, and private institutions made good education, was very important. Now this country is shaping the future of the world-because of the science, because of the development of an economy which is based on the application of science research, of higher technology. And I believe the world can solve the problem of the future only if it's able to use for the good scientific research. Science is the religion of the 20th century, the religion the 19th century, but is a religion which could be used also for destroying human being. If it is used for saving the human being it's important, because otherwise the world face the risk of starvation, because the population is growing too fast and the resources available for a fast-increasing population don't exist without an improving in technology. A balance in the growth of population would be found only with a better education and using science. Because of this, California has a great function in the future, because here there are this great concentration of science research. Science will be essential for improving life. If joined to humanities research. The research of the capacity of man to improve his inner world could be made mostly through art-not only through art, mostly through art. Art is the documentation of this accomplishment made for improving the human mind. If science is not able to have this joint goal with human value, instead of being useful, it will be dangerous. For this reason, it's important to develop cultural activity and art, in California.

MR. KNIGHT: Does the presence of the J. Paul Getty Trust in Los Angeles interest you in that regard?

DR. PANZA: Well, the Getty Trust made a very important gesture to MOCA. He made a gift of three million dollar, and this is important because show that the Getty Trust have a very high consideration of the goal of the MOCA. I believe MOCA can play a very important function in developing culture and art in Los Angeles.

MR. KNIGHT: If in New York, the marketplace has damaged the possibilities for art, in Los Angeles the marketplace for art is not strong.

DR. PANZA: No.

MR. KNIGHT: But it is increasing. It's going in that direction.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: What does one do about that?

DR. PANZA: Well, I believe that the fact that art market in Los Angeles not too strong is a positive thing for artists. It's positive for art, not for artists! [Laughs.]

MR. KNIGHT: Not for artists! [Laughs.] It's positive for art.

DR. PANZA: For art, it's positive, because many artists in Los Angeles in order to live must have a part-time job. And in this way they can make enough money to live. In this way they are free to make what they want. They have not all the restraint made by the market. If in New York, they have to follow the demand of the market. Here not. This is very important because it help very much the artists to be free. And freedom is essential for good art. If we don't have freedom, you cannot have the good art.

MR. KNIGHT: You have been involved in the art world now for 30 years-

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: -and obviously have come in contact with a number of the most important artists and dealers and curators and critics and collectors of that 30-year period.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Who among them, among those people, do you think has formed your thinking about art the most?

DR. PANZA: Well, many, many people. Cladders, for instance, is one which was influential. But many others. Pontus Hulten was one of them.

MR. KNIGHT: In what way in particular with Pontus?

DR. PANZA: Well, Pontus was the first European museum director to become interested to Pop Art. We met in 1963 because he willing to make an exhibition of Pop Art in Stockholm, and he came to Varese to see the works I had. But many other directors, [Edy] de Wilde, for instance, was also a close friend, and we had many similar interests for new artists. Very often, when in New York, I was buying works of art, shortly before de Wilde was coming.

MR. KNIGHT: [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: He was disappointed to find that I was buying something interesting for him just shortly before. [Laughs.] Or sometime the opposite happen, a work was not available because it was bought just two days before by de Wilde.

MR. KNIGHT: And who do you think are the most important and interesting new artists working now?

DR. PANZA: Here in Los Angeles?

MR. KNIGHT: Anywhere.

DR. PANZA: Anywhere. What I believe-

MR. KNIGHT: Or are they in Los Angeles?

DR. PANZA: But I believe the most interesting young artists are here in Los Angeles now; perhaps I am not well informed about what is happening in Europe or in New York. But here in Los Angeles there are many new artists which I like very much. For instance, Bob Therrien is an artist which I believe is very good. Peter Shelton is another one. Mark Lere too. Michael Davis, I like very much. Michael Brewster is extremely good. Susan Kaiser Vogel is very good. These are a good group. I believe that these artists will become important in the future. I trust very much the work they are making.

MR. KNIGHT: Let's take one of those: Bob Therrien.

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: And if you could talk about his work in relation to the other work that you've collected over the years.

DR. PANZA: Yes. Well, Therrien interest me because it's a very simple way of making shape, and he's able to join sculpture with painting, because of colors his sculptures have. But what is most interesting to me is the sensibility which is behind the work: it's some kind of art which is dealing with death and life. I believe this is the main quality of this art. And he's dealing also with organic shapes. These shapes are not geometrical, like minimal art, are simple but are close to the shape of living bodies.

MR. KNIGHT: Hmm.

DR. PANZA: This is a specific quality of this works. The same for several other artists, like, for instance, Peter Shelton. Perhaps is more closer to Bruce Nauman, but he came from this kind of experience.

MR. KNIGHT: Mm-hmm.

DR. PANZA: Another artist which is very good is a photographer, Joann Callis.

MR. KNIGHT: Ah hah.

DR. PANZA: Yeah, very good one.

MR. KNIGHT: I really like the photographs of hers in the show at MOCA [Summer 1985. "Nine Artists," June-September].

DR. PANZA: Yes, is a very good artist.

MR. KNIGHT: Yesterday when we were talking about the wrong turn that art made-these many years ago-towards individualism-a museum is a public place. [Laughs.]

DR. PANZA: Yes.

MR. KNIGHT: Your collection was privately developed and I think could reasonably be said to be a highly individualistic collection. How does one then make the transition from this private collection to a public museum for social integration?

DR. PANZA: My collection surely is an individualistic collection, because are my personal choice. But I am a man. I am a man like the others. I am not a different man. I believe that my goals are the goal of a very large portion of the population-not different from the others. And because of this, my personal choices are the potential choices of millions of people.

MR. KNIGHT: Uh huh. [Laughs.] So you're an informed spokesman for millions of people?

DR. PANZA: I don't feel to be different from the others. What I like could be liked by many others. Indeed, what is happening at the exhibition of the collection, now, is a clear proof. I was very pleased to see at MOCA how many people loved this art. This is my greatest pleasure. Don't exist something more beautiful rather the possibility to share this love with other people. I believe the greatest gift which art is giving to me, is this pleasure, to see how many people love what I love. This is the most beautiful things.

END OF INTERVIEW

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