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Oral history interview with José de
Crefft, 1968 October 1 and 8

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with José de Creeft on 1968 October 1 and 8. The interview took place at de Creeft's home in New York, NY, and was conducted by Forrest Selvig for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The sound quality for this interview is poor throughout, leading to an abnormally high number of inaudible sections. Readers should also note De Creeft's speech pattern using English, Spanish, and French together in the interview. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

FORREST SELVIG: This is a recording—the first side of a recording of an interview with José de Creeft in his apartment in New York City. The date is October 1, 1968, and the interviewer is Forrest Selvig. [Side conversation.] Mr. de Creeft, I'd like to ask you first of all, about your stay at the Académie Julian in Paris.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, this is in 1906?

FORREST SELVIG: Yes, and you were advised to go there, I understand, by Rodin.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, this time, no. This time it was Jean-Paul Laurens and Landowski.

FORREST SELVIG: Excuse me. [Audio break.] Well, now, after that problem, getting the spindle to go, we'll try again, Mr. de Creeft. We're talking about the Académie Julian in Paris.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, the Académie Julian, I was—I tell you, in 1906, 1905–1906. It was very interesting. It's like an artists' studio league. They're a little more serious there, because the French, they take everything very straight, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And this was the first year I studied at the Académie, you know, the period, about this time. And—*mais* I was tired [ph], this [inaudible] figure [ph]. The second year, I make a change myself. And the boss he tell, "Well, I think it's very good, because everybody do the same type—you know? And most of the people stay in the Académie five, six years. It's too much. With one year or two years, it's sufficient *si* you have *qualité en français*. And this why it was very nice. After second year, I quit, you know?"

FORREST SELVIG: I see. Tell me about the kind of instruction at the Académie Julian. It's quite a free place, isn't it? Or wasn't it?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's free, it's free, but the teachers is very serious, you know? It was very serious. And the students, the French take it very serious, too, but you have some Americans that come from New York, from Boston. And it was very—these people, it was very strange there, because the French all sing, the French whistle when you work. The French do many things *que* here you can't do it. But there, with this kind of things is more serious *que* here, *que* stay like that.

FORREST SELVIG: I see.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Because you have some experience, some *esprit*, you know? Most of the people *que* was there after you go the bar, take coffee with *croissant*, you know, and you come again, you work. But the criticism was very serious.

FORREST SELVIG: Now, I did some research on some artists who had worked at the Académie Julian. That was back in 1888 or 1890 when they were there. And at that time apparently, they had great freedom, the students who were at the Académie, but they were—once a week someone would come in and criticize their work, and that would be essentially what the instruction would be.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Exactly, exactly.

FORREST SELVIG: Yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Exactly.

FORREST SELVIG: Is it still like that now?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, now it's still more—but today it's more business, more—it's not like before, no. It's changed. In my times, yes, 1905, just que 19—*jusqu'à* the war. After the war, everything changed. Because in times of war, the Académie Julian stopped, you know? Because every—and I returned after. I see my friends. Many was in the war, and was killed, and things like that. And the Académie, it was—I can't tell you, really, mais it was some change. And today is more change, too. I think today is, like, too many artists, too many amateur artists.

FORREST SELVIG: Well, of course, when I said "today" I was really referring to the time you were there, Mr. de Creeft.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, referred the times que I was there, it's two wars. After two wars, you change, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Yes, indeed. But when you were there it was quite free, in other words?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Free, yes. Mais free with—it's not the same freedom that people think, you know? It's not—it's freedom, but meantimes, the artists—the students—was serious in the work, you know? It's free to go there and do what you want, and the style. But when the boss come, the correction, it was very serious, because he tell, "Well, this is not—" the Académie was maintained in the sense de Académie, not like in the School des Beaux-Arts, but it was preparation for the School des Beaux-Arts. And that's why the ones that was there need to be serious because if you go to School des Beaux-Arts, it was out, you know? And that's why the preparation, it was there. But the freedom, the personal, you know? You see, you do what you want, you play. But when the boss come, everybody stop. Very—respect, lot of respect for the boss.

FORREST SELVIG: But the style—in other words, you were free to evolve your own style? Is this it?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, not complete. You do follow the rules, the school, Académie, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Yes, yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: The *unique* free que I had, you know, is when you have a group que every times que come in the model, well, the model is blond, or the model is brunette, or the model is—mais the guys who was there, he do always the same, the type, you know? *Habituel*. It was—mais when you—when I was there, I was trying to do things like that y I tell, "I'm going to make a torso? I make a big torso. And the boss, when he comes [inaudible], he tell, "This is—you have spirit, fine." Because I take the *liberté*. But most the people don't take the *liberté*.

FORREST SELVIG: I see.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And this is why Mr. Verlet [ph]—he was the teacher there—he tell, "Well, very nice. I think it's very good. One fellow que have spirit." It changed, you know? Mais it was academic, you know, I have the photograph, you know? And this—he give me the prize. I have the prize for this torso the second year, you know? The prize it was—in these times, it was 50 prize, mais give you a medal, you know, I still have. And this was very nice. I accepted. y after this, I give some hope to another ones que take permission de *continuer* more free.

FORREST SELVIG: I see.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: But this is always [laughs] I interfere and things like that. And then—after this I tell, well, you know, I *no* have money in these times. It was very difficult to pay my tuition. y I play with paintings, you know? And with this—the money [inaudible]—que was a *negro* [ph] and myself [laughs] we know the times, [inaudible] make with this I pay my class." This is—I pay my class the second year with what I win in this—because the

Americans come there. They have plenty of money, you know, and they take paintings like that *pour* war in the line, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Yeah.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And he no care that take it to 20, you know? Like that. But who would you take all these things? [Laughs.] And this—their faces [ph], you know, it was for [inaudible]. And the Americans, they go away, no make attention, you know, because the dollar it was very good in these times, but for us it was terrible because most of the artists who go to the Académie Julian now was—the *cotis*—you know—now it was very expensive—mais for the poor people, yes, you know? We have about 10 Americans there. The Americans *fumer* the cigarettes, *fumer*—[laughs] because always like that, always too much money. I understand, you know? But the Americans take this—a *paquet de cigarettes*, you know, y everybody is there, they take the cigarette. The French take the pack of the cigarette, they take one, you put it in your mouth, you know? You no—you no leave. And that's why so many French who was there for the cigarettes. And this—I had very good times. I do go in the Imperial [ph], in the—because in these times you have horses [inaudible] and the—but sometimes I frozen because it's snowing, things like that. y I go in this thing. Very, very hard, you know? I crossed Paris with this Imperial. And another thing, the new students, they do pay the entrance—they do pay coffee for all the students, you know? And some ones no like to pay, you know, *dices*, you have troubles because—you know—and the—mais *si* you pay, very nice. It cost about 40 francs, you know, because you have a lot of students, the coffee cost 10 cents, and croissants. But some ones que no have left full and this day take four or five croissants, you know? [Laughs.] Everybody profit. All the students, it's always the same.

FORREST SELVIG: Yeah. Tell me, Mr. de Creeft, when do you first begin to feel that you wanted to become an artist? How—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It was an accident.

FORREST SELVIG: It was an accident?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. It was an accident. Because I no go to school because my mother—my father, when he died, I was six years old. I was very poor. My mother do support us with broidery [ph]. She make 40 cents a day, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: With embroidery, I understand.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Broidery [ph].

LORRIE GOULET: Embroidery.

FORREST SELVIG: Embroidery.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Embroidery. And she makes 40 cents a day. It's nothing. We have a very tough life, you know, and that's when the school—my mother was very sensitive to it, you know, want to put the children in the better school because she's always tell, "Oh, my sons—bad boys," and things like that. And little by little, you know, pass times and finally, my sister marries and my brother-in-law, he tell, "What am I going to do with you?", you know, and, "You'll like to have a profession or something?" I tell, "Yes." But he have a friend who was sculptor, he made saints for the church, you know? He tell, "Possibly like to do this?" You know? He take me with this man and they have a factory where they make all kinds of saints and [inaudible] and things like that. Yeah, I liked this the first times. Very nice. Everything it was fine. Mais—but you work so hard, they make you—the carriage, plaster, sacks, clay things like that. Weight, y I have 12 years old. Twelve, 13. Mais before, when was a little boy, very little, I play a lot with the things—constructive things. I always liked—I entertain with the ants, make little—we have a terrace in my house there and they have a group *de* ants que pass there [inaudible] pass all day and make things, make mountains *pour* que [ph] the ants pass, things like that. [Laughs.] Always, I was very entertained. And the—I have a parrot [inaudible], it was very nice. He talk; I sing. In my poor life I have good life, anyway. And then little by little, this man—I no was very interested in the [inaudible] because no teach me—he made me do the things, all the job, like the old times, you know? I quit. Y I quit and I go to play marbles que was more interesting [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: This is about the age of 12 then?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, 12.

FORREST SELVIG: And was this in Guadalajara?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, this is in Barcelona.

FORREST SELVIG: In Barcelona.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Guadalajara I take—I go to Guadalajara at six years old.

FORREST SELVIG: I see.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And at six years old I entertained in the—because my father was *official* [ph]. He was in the Guadalajara destination, you know? And that's why he had me, you know? I have two sisters before. Seven years difference each one.

FORREST SELVIG: I see. Your father was an officer.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. He was—

FORREST SELVIG: He was in the army, I think.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He was the *escorte* [ph] *royal*—the king. Mais after he goes the Republic, you know? Y this is why was the history because when you go with the Republic, it was confiscate everything, was—made him prisoner, things like that. Because he had miners, the silver miners in Despeñaperros y he was *commandant de escorte royal* with the best [inaudible] he had, but in these times, the Republic it was very important, you know? [Inaudible] and him, he go with the republicans. The Republic—he stayed just 48 hours, you know? Y after they pick everyone, you know? And my father was in prison. He was in Montjuic. He stayed two years there and after—when you go there—and my mother visited him and—with the father—and that's why he marries my mother at the age of 18 years old. After this, my father can't recuperate all the things he was confiscated. He tried—he expected que going—the Republic going to come again. They never come. My father died. It's very old story, it's sad stories, you know? [Laughs.] After this, I tell you, I was in Barcelone, jusq'à I was 15. The age of 15, I go to Madrid. There I met Don Agustin Querol, recommended by the Count of Romanones de Guadalajara. He put me there. There it was sculptors like Paul Manship, things like that, you know? And this I worked very well. Y I stayed about one year. I never liked to stay tied to any place, you know? I liked to be free in my sculpture, in the study, but meantimes, you know, is this—have friends [ph]. I always—I stop for six months, one year, mais I always make progress, you know? When I return I make progress all the time because I'm interested in the museum more que anything. I go the Prado, que is a beautiful museum, you know? You been there in Barcelona?

FORREST SELVIG: No.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's one of the best museums in the painting.

FORREST SELVIG: Sure, I know about it.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Not much sculpture. The sculptures—in Spain, no sculptures, except the sculptures—the church and things like that. And the primitive, you know? The 900 jusqu'à 1800. We have a museum in Valladolid, the best museum de polychrome *donde* you have all the masterpieces. The 10th century, 11th century, 14th, 16th century, wood carve, you know? Mais this is—we can't see this because what you see is the antiques reproduction in the museum, all Greek and Roman, but the sculptors modern, they have very few. They have Marinas, they have Querol and [inaudible]. Three Prix de Rome who come there, who have all the jobs por Centro America, por Sudamerica, you know? All the—this is the unique source he had. Most the sculpture go to the—we no see the sculptures, just the antiques, you know? And when you were with Querol, there you see all the jobs he did por—like a—Christopher Columbus, Legazpi—all the things he made por Ecuador, por Chile, Argentine. It was marvelous for these three mans, you know? In the city very few—one figure, Quevedo, one the poet 17th century. *En réalité*, we the artists, the young artists, we go the Beaux-Arts, you know, and make exhibitions. I make my first exhibition in the Beaux-Arts 1903. All portraits *de* children, because I love make portraits *de* children, and then—and this is my first experience. After this, you have the studio with some friend. We share studio, you know? I will make—take the model—it depend on the schools, you know? Trying to be

yourself. This why most *de* my compatriots they do the same, mais the point of view for us it was Paris.

FORREST SELVIG: Yes, indeed.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Everybody like go to Paris. And this is what—very difficult because transport, money, and everything. Finally, I have Martínex, Pinazo Martínez. He tell, "Well, I think we're going to go to Paris, take the studio y share." And we go, with lot of difficulties, my family gives me \$15—I mean, 15 francs, you know, pesetas and I change in francs. The peseta was a little more high. Y I have, what—15. I pay with this. I pay the studio with him. The studio costs five dollars a month and it was the Bateau-Lavoir, where Picasso he lived there. And Picasso was friendly with us, you know? But he was already category—because we was conservative in comparison, you know? And Picasso never interfered with what you're doing. It was—well, contrary, we liked—I understand very much because I like Rodin, I like the classics, and meantimes the moderns who was in Paris, you know, in France. In Spain you see the photograph. You never see the masters. And Rodin—I beg your pardon.

FORREST SELVIG: I could ask you, had Gaudí started his Sagrada Familia, the cathedral?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, yes. When I was a little boy, you know? Sometimes we go there to—just to [inaudible], you know? Twelve years old. Thirteen years old, just a little dog, you know? [Laughs.] The dogs entered in every place, you know? Mais the man he tell, "Why you—no do this," you know? We was like children, you know? Children, but interested in the fashion, the way, the freedom, the mechanic things, you know? Because the mechanic things were very interesting. Because [inaudible] he take all kind of things. He make casting, he make forms, you know? It was very industrial, very industrial. Very creative, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: And yet, they say that he was quite influenced by Art Nouveau.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, it was Art Nouveau. Mais I think, for my idea, what I see aspect [ph]. I go to Mallorca y en Mallorca I see the rocks, you know? And these rocks is marvelous. It's like *La Sagrada Familia*. Because the rain uses the rocks and make an effect marvelous, y all is pointed and things like that. Mais I think, for me, it's a fairy tale, you know? It's a big fairy tale, you know? Because recently, I see things like the *LIFE* magazine—you seen the *LIFE* magazine the last two week?

FORREST SELVIG: No, I haven't.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It have a man in America who do all kind of things donde—in these times you never see Gaudí. You never see anything. This is—this was a little—he was an architect que 18 years old he make a fountain *por* the park and this fountain is another fairy tale, you know, with all the figures, all the things— It was the Art Nouveau this period, you know? Mais after, when he coming a master, he continued this dream. And this dream is the mosaic the things, freedom, really freedom, you know? Mais it was—in these times for us, he no give this big thing que after, in the times, he take it, because in these times, we go there y you look this you love, is—we tell, "Well, it's like a laundry [ph] stand in the rock, you know? Because all the things is—it's original, it's wonderful, it take him many years to do it, cause Lada Marie [ph] is not finished, you know? It's more appreciated today, in this period and the last the 19th century and it was—all the artists what they admire in this is the freedom, you know, the *opportunité* to do what you want, it's opened the door to many people, you know? And this is what's interesting.

FORREST SELVIG: Did it impress you then?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, yes, impressed. It's very impressed, very much. Mais more afterwards, you know? More que when you are young. When you are young, you don't understand the things like that. You—it's like a play, you know? You are Don Quixote when you are young, you don't understand. Mais after you understand the philosophy. [Laughs.] That's why in these times everyone play, you know, like a boy who go in the street, he play marbles, he make all kind of things. Like the boys there, the same thing. The boys don't change, it's always the same. Boys break windows, do all kind of things, the same thing. [Laughs.] In Barcelona, it was always revolution, so always things, you know? In Paris, it was in Montmartre. The same que you have there, in the Village, you know? But the Village is more—you have more money there, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: More money in the Village, yeah.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: There in Montmartre the people they don't have money in this period. It was very different. The bohemian was real bohemian, no? The guys lived there. They take hashish, take morphine, ether, all the things. They have about 2,000 people there in Montmartre que live this life—the artist's life, but very few people stayed, possibly 10 stay up to the thing, you know? Because most of the times they die, change the profession and things like that. Mais you like—cooperate with the artist. It was—you think it's what—we have one man there. He have a big sombrero—big tie, you know? And he sells beans [ph]. You think it was marvelous when Picasso [inaudible] everyone and [inaudible] considered a wonder. No, this is—Paris was very interesting and the—because lot of exhibitions, lot of things, lot of hope for the young people and then—and Picasso—Picasso, the Pope, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: He was the Pope?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, yes, the Pope, yes.

FORREST SELVIG: Even at that time?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: In these times, you know? Because everybody go to Picasso, "What do you think?" You know? And Picasso tell, "Well, no good," you know? And the guys—I had one fellow, a German, Picasso he tell in the morning, "No good." He come in my studio and I tell, "What has happened to you?" He tell, "Well, I'm very sad. Picasso tell me que I'm not good painter." I tell—he's young. He was 23 or 24, I don't know. "It's not necessary que you take it so serious." He tell, "Oh, *sí*. Oh, yes." He suicide.

FORREST SELVIG: Wow.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He suicided in my studio, suicided. All day he was with the scissors, with the rope, with all kind of things. I go the—it was 9:00, I have a letter *por* my mother, I let him [ph] in the studio. When I come, everything was closed y I look *por* the windows, y I look a little more y I see like that. I think he drunk, you know? Mais after I look more, I see a big tongue [ph] [laughs], a big tongue. He's hanged [ph] to this high, you know? The open—the window, and then it was terrific. The *commissaire* come there and everything. And many people was very, very—they take it very serious the advice *de* Picasso. There you have a lot of people que—in the little bars, you know, all kind of things. Like in Macdougal Street, but not so much, you know? There is terrible, there is like Coney Island, it's terrific. There it was two or three restaurants there, you know? Lapangeels [ph], and things like that, and it was very sad, you know? Very sad. It no was—sometimes the people make parties and—but I never see this—I think except the—I see drunk people, more by the narcotics, you know? And these people it was 10, 15 people in one little room, really. En réalité, this is a—the [inaudible], you know? The students—medicine students—this was more wild, it was different, but in Montmartre, les cabarets, the cabarets in Montmartre it was like a hill for the people que—*demi-mondaines* and things like that. They take it—a business, you know? Cabaret—the cabaret scene—cabarets, you know? Like Rosalie [ph], things like that. But no was—it was in comparison, here, it's like yesterday night I go with [inaudible] there. It's really a business, a big business, you know? It's not like that. That it not was a big business, like that. There it was misery, you know? [Laughs.] And the guys, you don't have for—

LORRIE GOULET: You mean the Village?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Huh?

LORRIE GOULET: The way the Village is now. It's a big business.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: The Village—the Village is a paradise.

LORRIE GOULET: It's a tourist's attraction, yeah.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's a paradise for the artists there. It's—you have police, cops, the people dress well; the girls, beautiful. There we see que the bordel [ph] girls, it's all—very different, you know? Very different.

FORREST SELVIG: Are there any artists in the Village anymore?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Here?

FORREST SELVIG: Yes. Are they all high school students or—?

LORRIE GOULET: Yes. [Laughs.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, my students go the Village and things like that. But this [laughs]. The hairs and the things—this is a romantic with money. Romantic with money. It's very nice. I think some results—this is going to give some results. Always. Always something comes after. These people are going to change. In 10 years everything's going to be different, you know? Like before it was [inaudible], after it was Montmartre, and after it was Montparnasse. And Montparnasse, another place. Montparnasse it was the same. The artists go there, they sit down in the café, they talk, they take a cup of coffee, they stay all night, you know? You talk *de art*, you talk *de* what you do, why it is interesting. Some Americans come there, some English, some foreigner people, very [inaudible], you know, like not much interest. We now was strange people, you know? We was *très*—

LORRIE GOULET: You were like the hippies in the Village?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Huh?

LORRIE GOULET: You weren't like those hippies in the Village?

FORREST SELVIG: She's saying you were not like the hippies in the Village?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No! No, no, no. I dress—it's possibly like a sombrero, you know? Flat sombrero, you know? In these times, [inaudible] the *pantalons*, the pants, the worker pants, the special pants que was like that, you know? Very large in the knees and very tight the patron [ph], and it was the pants—the *terracier*. The terracier is the people who make ditches, you know? And these ditches—they make corduroy pants very big, very tall, and sometimes we do this—you make a sombrero, like a Spanish sombrero—

LORRIE GOULET: Not very tailored [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, no. Oh, no. This was complete—it's like the moon and the sun, you know? It's not—it was very—it was poor. You buy a pair de pants it cost 12 francs, you know, or 13 francs. Sometimes you don't have—that's why some friends they give you a pair *de* pants, you know? You fix it yourself, you know? I have a suit que I sewed myself, que I [inaudible] 15 years old. Fifteen years this suit que I—it cost me in Barcelona—in Madrid it cost me 5[0]—75 francs, you know, 35 francs and this is what I have in Montmartre, you know? But little by little [laughs] I think que it's good to buy corduroy pants because corduroy pants it was more warm. But the studio—the studio now was more [inaudible] room and there we cook, we eat, we sleep, you know? And Picasso do the same. Picasso have a studio donde ashes it was *jusq'à* the top because never take it the ashes, and Fernando [ph] never do it because the [inaudible] work, Fernando come, we talk sometimes, and Fernando tell, "Go, go to work, what you do is like a girl's [inaudible]." Picasso tell, "Go to work." I go to work. I go to work. [Laughs.] Y I do a lot of jobs, you know? And he—the period it was the African period, when he make the things African. He one day tell me, "Show me the drawings," you know? And things like that, but I don't understand because I see—the house *de* Picasso, the studio, it was like a bungalow African. Very impressive everything, you know, very artistic, mais very exotic, very exotic. And this chimney with these ashes like that. And him, it was blue jeans all the times, you know? He now dress blue jeans. He have lot of hairs, never put—he have a [inaudible] like that, mais he never was very friendly. Never very friendly, because he's busy. All the time he's busy. He's the man que work more in this world.

LORRIE GOULET: Worker.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's terrific. And André Salmon and Max Jacob, who was there, sometimes he worked there. We go in the studio, play guitar—you know, like you do—and they sing, coming some girls there, but not much interest in girls either, you know? Because girls like money, you know? [Laughs.] We don't have money and the girls que come in with us—come in just *por* love, nothing—nothing else because we can't give anything. And Picasso and Fernando, who take it there, but another ones—what has happened is some ones they have one girl, one [inaudible] this one, who make money with something else. He entertain these boys, you know? He give money to these boys, you know? And these boys, they sculpt the [inaudible], the girl, you know? And when they have troubles, the boy go in there *por* something. It was—it was very rambling [ph] things—you know? All the kind of things. All

romantic and all the things. But in meantime, very realistic because it was—you can't—in these times the food—it was one franc pint de beer, you know?

LORRIE GOULET: You didn't have food? You couldn't get sardines? Sardines?

FORREST SELVIG: You—she's asking about the food you had.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, food! Food. Food in these times—bread costs 10 cents. Bread like—you know? Ten cents *de peseta—de franc*, you know? The franc it was gold, because in these times it was gold. Un—un *Louis d'Or* it was 25 francs. Twenty-five francs it was some money. You eat—for 25 francs, you eat all month. A shop [ph] it cost—two shops cost 15 cents *de peseta—15 cents de franc*, you know? Division, you know? Like 15 pennies, you know? A dozen eggs, 50 pennies, you know? It's—the life it was—mais we don't have money, but we make the *queue a le boulangerie*, à the bakery, we entered there, "What a beautiful you are, and the bakery very nice," you know? [Laughs.] We make the—the *courtiser* [ph] all the [laughs] the butcher, the thing, and they give you a little more, you know? [Laughs.] It was always the trick, the *conquête*, you know? *Por* have the benefits. And the boulan—the laundry girl come to find the laundry. The laundry is always nice, you know? You make the *cour* to the laundry girl, you kiss sometimes, she give you—she give you more chips *de* laundry because this is—it's always—the laundry girl is just of the times of Napoleon. All the times very clean, very nice, and very—very—

LORRIE GOULET: Appetizing.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Very nice. It was the best. The bakery, the boulangerie, and the laundry girl. This is—it was the dream *por*—[laughs]

LORRIE GOULET: The bread, laundry—[laughs]. You rats. [Laughs.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: All day we make the—and like that you pass your life, you know? Sometimes you have a mistress, you know, *que es* more—but the mistress—if you have money because *si* no have money, you know, [laughs] you can't have a mistress, you can't entertain.

FORREST SELVIG: There weren't any rich patronesses of the arts. Women who wanted to support artists.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I don't believe—we have to tell you the truth. *Si* I was millionaire in this time, I'd never make art. I'd buy art. I'd be collector, but I'd never make art. Why make art? You make art because you are training with this, your eyes, your *désirs*, finally is coming a profession, it's coming something *que* you—it's a medium to live, *mais* you finish *por* love what you are doing. In the museum you can buy you do make, you know? If you buy a Velázquez or buy a Goya or buy another thing, why you are going to paint with a Goya? You—but most the people, all the artists, you go the museum y see the big painters, what stimulates you, and that's why you begin to be a painter, you know? Try to make better *que* you see, you know? [Inaudible], you know? *Mais* if you have money, why you are going to—you go the museum, you go the galleries, you see the things you like, you take it home, you know? Buy, you know? That's what—all the Renaissance it was like that. All these people buy to the artist, you know? This is—amateur possibly someone who like to try *por* enjoy, *por* see like a habit, like a [inaudible], like all things like that. But *en réalité*, the artist do suffer, he do pass *désirs*, you know? *Conquête*, you know? And this is what the artist—he want competition, but the competition there in Paris, it was very honest competition because everybody inspired each other. You go to the studio and the one that is really artist, you know, is jealous, but meantime, he tells you the truth. He tells you, "What beautiful!" but he's jealous, you know? The artist make the artist, but the public don't make the artist. The public accepted anything. *Mais* the artist always is this *désir de* surpass the profession and the creative, and when you are hungry, it's like a cat. When you are hungry is nice, you do everything, but *si* have—it's fat y have everything, he no pick the rats, you know? And that's why artist do have—and Picasso was—when he was younger, he was with the father, who was director *del—de un* museum—he born with this kind of thing. This ambiance, you know? And this is why Picasso is grow more quickly *que* the another ones because the medium *donde* he live, the environment. He have this museum—it's the 17th century, 10th century museum *donde* he have all these things. Well, this is—Picasso he absorbed this, and after you give, you know? The same you go the museum, you see the big paintings and then certainly you give, you know? You give because you're *saturé* [ph] you study. Like Dalí, for

example. Dalí was another guy who was at the museum all the time, you know? He was a great craftsman, you know? Mais he is a *fantaisiste*, you know? [Laughs.] But it's all right. Everyone has something wrong and everyone has something good. I think nobody's perfect. Mais some ones they take it one direction; some ones take it another. All the boys que I have in my times que study art y que have father, que have money, and things like that, well, most is becoming interior decorator, is coming *marchand*—theater director, musical, things like that. Mais art—you do buy the painting—no—my *désirs* it was more be a painter, but no—I can't buy color, I can't buy brushes, I can't buy canvas, you know? Sculpture is easy. You take clay in the streets and the trees [ph]—you have the trees in Barcelona—you put water. And when the clay go down, we do there y pick up the cream, que es on the top, and with this you model things, you know? No cost anything. The stones you find in the street, you know? And that's why painting—painting is a profession more for the people who have *possibilités*, like Matisse, like people like that. *Bourgeois* life, you know? The father have a—director or is a banker or is—and the children—Van Gogh is the unique—well, he have [inaudible], mais the brother, he give [inaudible]—you know? All the thing you do is—the painters do have subvention [ph], you know?

FORREST SELVIG: The painters need—you say painting is—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: They need more help.

FORREST SELVIG: That's right.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: They need more help. That's why the sculpture, in my profession, I fight with this because we have many big shots who make sculpture, but they have money, you know? But we work for these big shots, you know? And you make the things y after exhibit in the show, he give to the marble factory y everything total disdain o do que [ph] little things like that. And somebody que have very good names there—but I don't tell—and the—I go to Gréber to work because in 1920, 1926, '27, '28 I met a lot of people because the ambassador was friend y I met a lot of aristocratic people y I make portraits, you know? And then I make portraits. Mais each time que I make a portrait, I charge \$600, \$400, 1,000 francs, you know? And the—but the lady or the man, he tell me, "Well, I'd like to have a marble." A marble. I go the man *por* ask him the marble, he tell me, "2,000 francs." I tell, "My friend, I no have 2,000 francs. He give me 800 francs, what they—" "That, you solve." He tell, "That, you solve." y I go the [inaudible], *mon patron* de Académie Julian y I tell, "Look, I'll do carved stone because you can—but I don't know where." He tell, "Oh, fine!" He sends me to Gréber. Gréber he was a big shop donde they make all the sculptures for all the sculptors. America, Spain, France, et cetera.

FORREST SELVIG: You mean they are—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Translations.

FORREST SELVIG: I see. In other words, they cast, is that it?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No. No, no. It—pointed machine. This is marble. And the—and bronze and things like that. Y I go there after que I have—I make portraits, que I have with the studio y I have—I make money, mais I do—I was against this kind of thing because somebody que no have any talent, he do something, he take the thing to Gréber. Gréber takes the model, he refix it, he make a masterpiece. And the guy after put it in the show, he have a price, and the poor guy que work like a devil, he no have anything, he has second medal [laughs], [inaudible] first medal. I tell, "This needs to be changed. [Inaudible] the best thing is carve direct, you know? If you have talent, it's yours; if you're wrong, it's yours, too. And that's why I, beginning with Mateo Hernández. Mateo Hernández, Bernard, and myself carve direct, you know? Go against all this commercial things, you know? We will earn lot of enemies because the people—the ones who do the other art don't like it, you know? We do fight very strong, but anyway, we push, push, push and this way I win with this, you know? And when I come in this country, I make the first exhibition *de* carve direct, you know? And the—but this is, you know, I'm making a—que was the same. I make it like I make a sculpture in the old fashion. You do have money, too, because you do casting, except the carvers, mais the ones that make all these [inaudible], all the things, you know? We have one period, the 18th century, 17th century, when Houdon, Falconet all these people make terra-cottas. They make beautiful terra-cottas, this is—it was lost. Beautiful things. Carpeaux—other things. But this was a serious artist, very strong, like rude people. Mais after is coming the degeneration and the artist becoming lazy. They have more money, they make a *maquette*, he gives to the—

that's why no—it's always the fashion is coming to the people that have money, and the poor Mateo Hernández, when he begins in the carve direct, he come in my studio and he makes things for the bishop in the country donde he live. Y I tell—[inaudible]—I tell, "This is terrific." And my studio it was for rent, y I tell, "But you don't have money." I tell, "Well, I lend you everything there and you pay me when you want," and then—and he [inaudible] five or six years after, I find the sculpture direct in one little exhibition y I see this y I tell, "Boy, this guy is something. He have talent." And I talk with him and I tell, "I see—mais it was—the sculpture it was so much love and so much *gracieux*, something pure. A man que suffered, you know, and who do this. And then, I was very tortured with this kind of thing, and I introduce and things like this what they—a many people. I introduce writers and people, and they make nice things, you know? Y after, he tell me, "Oh, de Creeft, why you—why you continue with these things like that?" I tell, "Well, this is very difficult because sometimes you do stay, mais I'm capable to do anything because I worked for five years with Gréber, and I want to prove you that I make a granite direct, you know? [Inaudible] very enthusiastic. "Very good. No tell anybody." [Laughs.] Because he—he [inaudible]—he was a small [inaudible] meantimes. He want conserve *por* himself the secret. I tell, "It's no secret. This is done in prehistory. It's done all the times. It's not a secret. Just it's your courage, it's all." It's more direct art, you know? More—sculpture is tools and work and things like that. Modeling is a project today. In the times de Houdon, it no was a project. It was real, but now the things is coming a project because the commissions and things like that. You can't carve a monumental carve direct, you know? You have a project, and the project [inaudible] pass *por* the city, the city accept it or not accept it. This is what. That's why Carpeaux—all these people work in Opera in Paris, he had *The Danse* in marble. Well, mais Carpeaux worked in marble too, like Houdon. Houdon he made—he had a figure there—in the Metropolitan Museum—a figure que is sit down [ph], you know?—it's carved [inaudible]. Houdon was a carved stone, too. He was one the best sculptors. And the—mais after this, it's coming forgery [ph], it's coming all this—the imitations, imitations, imitations. It all come in the United States. All the imitations come in here. Most the artists de here, it was a parody. Second plan. Mais these people they have so much money, they send it to Paris, to Gréber, to Balsoine [ph], to the people who make the marble [inaudible] and that's why the national sculptors they see the sculpture—I make you a record [ph]—I [laughs] all the things is *destino* [ph]. This is why—it was necessary make renovation here, but nobody come and the—I have a studio in Paris, donde I have students, American students. Y I fall in love with one of the students y I marriage [ph] her y come in this country because I no have anything there, no parents, no anything. She tell me, "Well, would you like to come to America?" I no speak English. I no have a—[laughs] I don't know—I'd like to go to maybe the south, because I have a lot of friends in Chile, Argentina, and things like that. Here I no have anybody, except Calder, except Calder who was 18 [ph]. He was English. And he was the cause que I come here because he present my students—because he tell me, "Oh, I bring your students to America. You want—" and this—I make money with this y I—it permit me to work. After I have the commission in The Fortaleza. I have big commission *por*—donde I make 200 sculptures there—200 pieces *de* sculpture in 18 months, you know? Carve direct. And this is why I was enjoying to be free, to do it like that. Mais here [laughs] the first exhibition—I come in when the crash. They sell nothing, no response, but the people was very interested in my exhibitions. It was in Ferargil Gallery in the '29—1930.

FORREST SELVIG: You also make an exhibition in Seattle, didn't you?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, before I was in Seattle.

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, before? You have—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Before. Before. Because my wife she have family in Seattle. It was Alice Carr, you know? And she—one relative was *de* Virginia and the father he was a lawyer. He have a thing there—he have a memorial, you know? And she tell me, "Come to see my family," and I go to see her family. [Laughs.] I see the family. But the things, what [inaudible] and the trouble when I go there, I see so many cars, [inaudible], and things, and the people they put this—so much junk que put—[inaudible], you know, the west. I was astonished because in France a nail, a glass you take, well, it's not the same system, you know? [Laughs.] After I understand que more you break, more you—more *prospérité*, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Although don't you think it's changed also in France?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Huh?

FORREST SELVIG: Don't you think it's changed in France, too?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, it's changed now.

FORREST SELVIG: How?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: The influence *de* money. This is always question *de* money. Spain, too. In Spain you can't find—you can't find a case. Here you find cases like this thing for—you need a piece the wood, you know, you do go the lumber mill. Here you find in the street all kind *de* woods, all kind of—if you find a piano. You find—when I come here, bread, chickens, you know, and the [inaudible] of these people is terrific. "Look at this chicken. A bread. A chair, a piano," things like that. With what it was here you furnish all the Europe [laughs]. And this why it was my—now, it took me long time to understand, you know? Now, I understand. But I have the vice *de* conserve everything. I'm going to show my studio. I still European, you know, in this kind of thing. *Si* I take the case, I take the nails y I conserve the nails, you know? Well, for an artist que es pure or que—who like [inaudible] is good to do this, because you can't buy every time. That's why you need to be *industrieux* and use your imagination *por* everything, you know? This is building your—it's like—when I make *The Picador*—

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: When I make *The Picador*, it was very funny because Escudero, the dancer, is coming—I have nephritic [ph] y I was in the bed, I was terrific—Escudero come, he tell me, "Pepe, I have my recital, you do make something for my recital." I tell, "Mais I'm sick." "*Anda ya*," and everything. You know, he's a gypsy, he's very tough. He tell me, "*Anda, anda, qué coño* [inaudible]" [Laughs.] "Alright, alright. I'm going to make [laughs] I'm going to make a picador. I show that." He tell, "Fine! No, fine, *muy bien, hombre, ¡bravo!*" and he's gone. But after que he's gone, I see the—I have a *poêle*—poêle—for make heat, you know?

LORRIE GOULET: Stove

FORREST SELVIG: Stove, yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Stove. Mais I have so many pipes que the smoke no pass through and no warm. Y I tell, "Hmm, the people make stuff [inaudible] in marble. Well, I'm going to make stuff [inaudible] [laughs]. Y I make a sketch like that, *The Picador*. It was 12—no, it was 10:00 because I leave the bed, you know, *enthousiasmé*. I dismantled everything because it was frozen, you know? I dismantled—I take warm like that. Y I begin to mount it, taking all these pipes, all the things, kerosene cans [ph]. I have a big [inaudible]—I have all kind of things, you know? The things *por* take the dust, you know, pour put the coal in the *cheminée*. Y I mount it. [Inaudible.] I mounted *The Picador*. At twelve o'clock of the night was finished. Y I [laughs] take it by the street with will y I pass in the front the prison—La Sante, Rue La Sante—and the cops coming there, they think que I'm going [laughs] to jump [ph] [inaudible]. "What—?" "*Qu'est-ce* [inaudible] with this *ferraille*? [Laughs.] And they [grumbles]. Well, finally, the cops coming with us, just because he likes to see *si* real [inaudible]. In the [inaudible] entered everybody, keeps in everybody free because everybody go with *The Picador*, and *The Picador* entered in the bar [ph] y everybody—y two figures: one dancer and one *danseuse*, in iron, too. This is I lost. And then—and Picasso was in the [inaudible]. No, in one [inaudible]—

FORREST SELVIG: And this is for a recital you say?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I beg your pardon.

LORRIE GOULET: Yes.

FORREST SELVIG: This is for a recital?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Recital!

LORRIE GOULET: Escudero.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It was a recital. It was Escudero—

LORRIE GOULET: Dancer.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Escudero make a dance recital.

FORREST SELVIG: I see.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Y I see—Y I go talking to Picasso. "Allo, allo." Picasso was so mad. He no tell me anything. He sees *The Picador*. He no like it. Because he think it was a critic, you know, to the scene because in this moment, he make—with González he makes things like that, you know? Y I think it's for the business, you know? And then [laughs] I tell, "Well, jealous or—?" He never—never talked about this. But González, yes. González was very enthusiastic. "Oh, marvelous," and that's why he no like it [laughs]. And then the *fiesta* it was finished, "Marvelous," and things like that, y I take it home. And the students and the people and the other artists, they tell, "You make a masterpiece! This is wonderful." I tell, "Look at this. This is—" you know? It's all right. I hate *The Picador*. And that's why I do this. I do satiric *por* him. Because he was "*Los toros*," "*Los toros*," always y I no like this picador que martyrizes [ph] the horse and things like that. It was a satire. And then they tell me [laughs], "Why you no making a show?" I tell, "No, I can't make the show," and things like that. "Yes, it's marvelous. Everybody—" and finally, encourages me. Y I talk with the man de Indépendants y I tell, "I have a picador [inaudible]" He tell, "Well, everybody have a picador [inaudible]." [Laughs.] He tell, "Okay, I'm not interested. It's closed. It's closed. Why you come—all the artists is the same. You come in the last moment, 'I have a picador.'" [Laughs.] I tell, "Well, my picador is very interesting." "Oh, yes, I know." Y fortunately, I have a photograph of the knight, you know, and I show this. "Oh, this is wonderful! This is—yes, yes," [inaudible]. "Go to find *The Picador*," and then—y I finally go to the Champs-Élysées, "Bring *The Picador*." [Laughs.] [Inaudible.] In the show, the other artists [inaudible] [laughs] everybody see this *ferraille*. Y I have a big horse in plaster, you know, with the—I think it was [inaudible] and my picador entered there [laughs]. And the people—the guy que ve this horse. "I wonder how you bring me this junk there. You spoiled my—" [Laughs.] I tell, "Well," and everybody come [claps], everybody celebrates, and nobody make attention to another thing. He put in the pedestal and the—it was a *succès*, though I never expected it. A *succès formidable*. France, England, aall the papers. I have all the reports y I have—and the letters [inaudible] and the sculptors. When Paco Durrio—who was a friend que he was always like that granites, granites. This day he's a visitor. "Why you do this?" You make so beautiful granites and things, why you made—?" I tell, "It's the first time que you tell me que I make beautiful granites. Before you say 'Meh,' 'Meh,' 'Meh,' and now you tell me because I made this." "[Inaudible] serious—this is not serious, this is a [inaudible]," but after, the press come. And the letters in the press, everything, oh! It was the most big *succès* que I have in my life. After this—because before I make an ostrich, before—oh, no, after I make the ostrich—no, I make before an ostrich in iron like that. Y after I make *The Maternité*, after *The Picador*, I continue, I tell, "Well, now, I'll make *The Maternité*." Scrap iron, in the Surrealist, you know? Y I now put an end. I put scrap iron—in *The Maternité* it was like that. Y [laughs] in the center it was all the organs, you know, with a little fetus in the interior, you know, and wax, you know, oh, very, very Surrealist. In meantime, *Sardine a l'Huile*. *Sardine a l'Huile* it was a critic for Mateo Hernández because he used too much oil *por* finish, y I tell, "Well, this is—this is a trick because oil y finish everybody think que es wonderful, but the people put the hands in the floor, they have oil, it was terrific [laughs]. Y I tell, "This guy—I do kill this kind of thing. What I going to do for this?" Y I have a friend of mine that I tell, "I'm going to make something." I tell, "I'm going to make *Sardine a l'Huile taille directe* [inaudible]." He tell, "Fine!" y I make *Sardine a l'Huile taille directe* [inaudible]. Y I make a pedestal—beautiful pedestal—[inaudible], a tip [ph] with a plate, a tip *de* lamp [ph], plant the oil *jusqu'à* the top, you know? Y I make a sardine in granite y I put in the interior caviar, you know, *era muy cabrón*—and the sardine do like that and then when the people were [inaudible] the column see [laughs] everybody laughed, everybody was terrific. And Mateo Hernández was angry, "Be careful." Always [inaudible] [laughs] something. And the—and the *succès* with *The Maternité*—well, *The Maternité*—on the day I bring *The Maternité*, a doctor was there. [Inaudible] this *Maternité*, I put *ferraille*. And the doctor is—he don't know que was—he tell, "Oh, nice thing. It's a *maternité*. It's marvelous. Who do this?" Y I—[inaudible]—I no have courage, you know? And finally he make so much compliments, so much [inaudible] explain me the uterus, the—where is the baby—the [inaudible] [laughs], [inaudible] all the story *de maternité*. I tell, "Well, it's me." "Oh, bravo! You were—you wonderful. You have a—" I tell [laughs], "No, I'm just a carver stone [ph]." "Nonsense, this is a masterpiece." Tomorrow I'm going to talk the president—the president he going to the inauguration—it was Fallières—and then [laughs]—then I don't go there because I no want to stand in front of the president with my *Maternité* because—[laughs.] It was so fun. All these things it was *inespéré*, you know? And that's why I tell, "Well, now I have plenty. Y I come in this country [laughs] I left

you there all this junk." But this is very funny. Sweeney see all these things. Sweeney was very enthusiastic. And Calder. I met González, I met Calder with this kind of things because I give—I open the door, you know? And that's why I was so satisfied. In '32, I return to Paris. I go this independents [ph] and what I see? An exhibition *de* González. And I tell, "Oh, good. You continued the things. Wonderful." But he is blushing, he tell, "Well, are you not—you was in New York, *¿no?*" [Laughs.] He never expected que I'm going to go. I tell, "Yes, mais New York, well." "You are going to return to New York?" "Yes, yes, I'm going to return." And this was very funny because, "You was in New York, *¿no?*" I tell, "Mais is marvelous," because it was marvelous. I tell, "You do something que I never do," you know? I do the key, you know? *Porque*—but Picasso he [inaudible] very much to him. That's why Picasso was angry when he sees *The Picador* because in these times—and then, because González he worked for Picasso, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Tell me, where's *The Picador* now? Here, you own it now?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Finally, this *Picador* it travelled all the world [laughs] y I come here—I come here in '29 and *The Picador*—in the customs they tell, "What the hell is this?" But this is "What is this? An old stove? *Qu'est-ce que c'est?* Why you come in New York with this?" I tell, "You no like it? This is a piece of art." "Oh, get out of here. Five hundred dollars." I tell, "Five hundred dollars? I no have \$500. [Inaudible.]" Y I entered by Baltimore. And Baltimore—the director de—

FORREST SELVIG: Baltimore Museum?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, the customs. The customs.

FORREST SELVIG: The customs director.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He tell—in these times I bring with the [inaudible]—a big—no [inaudible], a [inaudible], I imitate a [inaudible], you know? Mais big. Y I dismantled everything [inaudible] the photograph and—*j'arrive* in Baltimore and they opened it. "Oh, what is this? Is this *ferraille?*" He was suspicious, you know, because I tell, "Mais this is what it is. This is this. It's an *œuvre d'art.*" "An *œuvre d'art?* You do this?" I tell, "Yes." "Well, mount it!" [Laughs.] He give me a room. He give me a lot of junk because I have forget many things, you know? But finally, I mounted the horse. I went the director de customs. He tell, "Well, it's okay. It's okay." He give me free. No cost me any penny. But [laughs] this *Picador*—the second time que I mount it, it take me three days for building, when I build it in 12 hours. Mais after, por remember all the pipes, you know, the pipes [inaudible]—terrific. The same—everywhere—Brâncuși was the same when he come here, the same. He bring *The Princess*, you know? [Laughs.] No, it was very strange in this moment. Now the customs is different. Now the—now it's more habituated to the junk [laughs], but this junk, boy, it's—*mais* I pass good times, you know, with this. I pass bad times, mais the bad times [inaudible] quickly, because you can't have good times all the times, you know? Good weather, bad weather. But when the storm come, it's very bad. [Laughs.] Everybody. In Mallorca I have good times, too, because I work there and the—I was so free there because they give me *carte blanche* to do what I want.

FORREST SELVIG: When did you go to Mallorca in this time?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: In '28.

FORREST SELVIG: In '28. In '28?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: In meantimes que I do this, this Surrealist. In the meantime. This thing in one way it give me a lot of troubles because some people don't take me serious after, you know? And they tell, "De Creeft he do this, he do this—what he do? What is de Creeft?" you know? This is not the thing. [Inaudible] understand, you know? If you—if you free—mais with times, you know, you build it with times. Take times to prove, you know? But before you prove—because the people like always—"This is a de Creeft. Sí, sí, this, this," not de Creeft, you know? That's why you know you do—

FORREST SELVIG: Possibly they feel comfortable being able to recognize you.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. They feel more—they put the money, you know, they like to have security, you know? [Laughs.] The education—after I teach in the New School from '32—I make the first exhibition and after, in the '32, and I come after [inaudible] in Paris. I make

the exhibition with *The Picador* again. The New School.

FORREST SELVIG: You have the exhibition in the New School.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. In '32. Because I have no money in '29 y I was very sick. I was 18 months—eight months in the hospital. Because in these times no penicillin. They have [inaudible]. Terrible. And then I was very *nerveux*. But my mother-in-law was very—my mother-in-law was already very happy—

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible] in her house?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: [Inaudible] singing, I tell—

FORREST SELVIG: Your mother was already [inaudible]?

LORRIE GOULET: Not my mother, his second mother-in-law.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No. My wife was prepared por my mother-in-law.

LORRIE GOULET: They were already counting the money, right?

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, I see.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Y I tell—I [inaudible], you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, yes.

LORRIE GOULET: Yes.

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Y I see this. Y I see—why, it was very strange. I see, "Ay, ay, ay, I don't know."

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible] going to go [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I no die. I'm not going to die. Por give you a pleasure. I make a good reaction and the next day coming the doctor [inaudible], he was the director of the hospital. He tell me, "Oh, fine, fine! You're saved." I tell, "Well, I'm going to tell you the truth [laughs]." "What has happened to you?" I tell, "Well, last night, [laughs] [inaudible]—

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible] [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: —my mother-in-law come in here [laughs] [inaudible] y I see so prepared pour my tomb [ph] [laughs] que I tell, "No, impossible. This is impossible." He tell, "She solved you! You [inaudible]? [Laughs.] She solved you."

FORREST SELVIG: She saved you.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: She saved you. I tell—

LORRIE GOULET: Unbelievable.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: —well, en réalité—

LORRIE GOULET: The reaction was so big, she saved you.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: —I was so upset [ph]. The reaction, you know? My breath [ph] has returned, and things like that [laughs].

LORRIE GOULET: He so marveled [inaudible] [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I'm going to live por just—I tell [inaudible]

LORRIE GOULET: That was the first—the second wife, not me. My mother [inaudible] got along with him very well.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And she—my mother-in-law was very religious.

FORREST SELVIG: Your mother. You mean that—that mother.

LORRIE GOULET: The second wife.

FORREST SELVIG: That's Mrs. Carr.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Mrs. Carr, yes. She was marvelous *éduqué*, very good, but she was from Virginia, you know? The old—the old families, you know? [Sudden noise.] This is the spirit de my mother-in-law [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: I see. Returning [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: You see, I talk de my mother-in-law [ph]. In the meantime, "Click," the spirit of my mother. Well, and this is all my story, you know? Mais I have a lot of [inaudible], a lot of things, but you can't tell everything.

FORREST SELVIG: But—you met Ms. Carr then when she was a student of yours.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Being my student, yes.

FORREST SELVIG: Here in New York?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: In Paris. In Paris. In Paris.

FORREST SELVIG: In Paris. She was a student of yours in Paris.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: She was in Paris because she had this memorial for the boy scouts. She had a prize. And this prize, it give the money for go to study in Paris.

FORREST SELVIG: They had girls into—to—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Huh?

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible], yes. They must have, yes.

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible] girls? The boy scouts in Paris [inaudible] girls? That's amazing.

LORRIE GOULET: [Laughs.] Yes, right.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: She made the memorial for the boy scouts is in Seattle.

FORREST SELVIG: I see. [Inaudible], she was an artist.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, she was a sculptor.

FORREST SELVIG: She's a sculptor.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Mais a sculptor very conventional, you know? And that's why she going to study with me because she like my way de work with this—she was there, she was [inaudible]. She was another girl de Chicago. There was four. I had four students American. And this is—it paid me my—it paid me 1,000 francs each one and with this it was perfect for me—you know? —because I change my—it permit me to make sculpture. Mais I was very sincere with them. Mais she was—meantimes, she study horses—donde she continue to make horses now with a man sculptor who make animal—*animalier*. Very good. And she make beautiful horses. But never do what I do, because the mother she was very old-fashioned. She no like these *libertés* and she stopped, you know, to do many things que I want to do. Like Lorrie [ph], you know, things like that. Be free, you know? Y all these ladies que—all the Seattle old ladies and the Pasadena and all things—these people they no have really—

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible] really very impressive, right?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Very difficult people, you know? *Pompier*, *cómo*—you know. And the—I can't help, you know? And she, the mother, was very positive—always she had the daughter—always, I think—and finally I stay in New York and she stay in California, y I tell, "Well, si you no come, you can't stand alone like that." She lived there. Well, she gave me the divorce very easy, but still friends for my son, my daughter. Very nice. But just the—si my mother-in-law was there, she give me so much troubles when I marriage in England, you know, por

Episcopal Church. The day I go to marriage, I tell, "No." And the boyfriend, a friend de [inaudible], he tell, "You can't do this now." I tell, "She's impossible! She's going to interfere in everything." He tell, "Do it. Do it." And I do it. And she stay in New York y I go to Spain with my wife. It was very nice. But the—she was very nice—right. The mother was [inaudible], she was very nice, but the daughters always like that, y interfere my children, too. And my children was more with the mother que with me, you know, the grandmother. I tell, "No."

FORREST SELVIG: Your children grew up in Seattle or in California, did they?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah, my son—my son Larry is in Alaska. He's a pilot, you know? He was in the war—in the last war—the Korean war. He was three years in Korea.

FORREST SELVIG: He's an airline pilot then.

DE CREEFT: Airline, yeah. He's very nice. And the—

LORRIE GOULET: He's the [inaudible] in Alaska.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He's—he's wonderful.

FORREST SELVIG: This one?

LORRIE GOULET: He's terrific. He's really good.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And my daughter is—she married—is a sculptor, too. Painter y sculptor. Very talented. And the—the sister. And the—now I have another problem.

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: My daughter is now—she like to be artist now—[inaudible] painting.

LORRIE GOULET: She's 20 now. This is the daughter of our marriage. She's 20.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: She's 18 years old.

FORREST SELVIG: Is she also going to be an artist? Is she an artist, too?

LORRIE GOULET: Yes. Yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah. Yeah.

FORREST SELVIG: Painter or sculptor?

LORRIE GOULET: Painter.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: She's—everyone has qualités, you know? I never pushed anything, you know? I let—mais they see, you know? It's very hard for the childrens when the father—

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible] very difficult.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: —and the mother is sculptor—[laughs.] Anyway, I tell, "It's not hard. The best thing you do be better que your father and better que your mother. Like that is fine."

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible] from the start.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: You are going to tell, "My mother was—my father was—"

FORREST SELVIG: Did you let your children work along with you at all?

LORRIE GOULET: When [inaudible], yes. We never tried to [inaudible], but—

FORREST SELVIG: So if they wanted to work with you, you'd let them.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, she—

FORREST SELVIG: They were [inaudible] right away or—?

LORRIE GOULET: [inaudible] when she was eight years old. [Inaudible.] "I want to do what—"

Mommy and Daddy, I can't be a sculptor. You work too hard."

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible] too big for me, in other words.

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible] figured we worked too hard, that's why she put it—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: You see, my children is more my students que my students—que my children because with your children you can do anything. You can do anything. You tell things, but si you—after, when you grow—when he's a man, you know? After you understand, but at this age you can't do anything. All the parents is the same story.

LORRIE GOULET: That's right. It's true.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Today I have in the school very good students—very nice, everybody respect, everybody love me, everybody do what I tell and everything's wonderful, you know? And the—I never teach—I teach [inaudible] or [inaudible] and things like that because with a few [inaudible]—you make an [inaudible], you take the [inaudible], you [inaudible] and the things. Making sculpture is not difficult. What is difficult is be artist. This is difficult. The craftsman, with time y discipline—

FORREST SELVIG: In other words, you are making a distinction between being a craftsman and being an artist. Certainly, I would say that one can be a craftsman without being an artist, but can you be an artist without being a craftsman, would you say?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, I tell you one thing. The artist is too loose.

FORREST SELVIG: Too loose?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Too loose, the artist. It's too much imagination. Too much—what you call? The artist is creative and no have times to put the things in order, you know? Because too much imagination. Too much creative, too much—that's why he needs discipline. With discipline, he arrive [ph], you know? But si the artist no have discipline, that's what craftsman is the discipline, you know? You do force it in this case. You do teach, write, arrive [ph] y criticize in the sense the craftsman way. They no push too hard, you know, these libértés, and meantimes, help in the way that it needs to be done. That's why you have examples, you go the museums, you show. You tell, "This is what it is." "This is Egyptian craftsman." Very perfect, but the man who make the models, he was an artist. After, the craftsman come and finish. It's the slaves, you know? But this is why too much—too much finish it no lets anything to the people to *imaginer*. That's why you do let's [ph] some door [ph], porque the people. That's why Michelangelo with the unfinished sculpture he give more que with the sculpture que do finish because then it help to understand, you know? And the libértés. Like Rodin with the *Balzac*. Rodin he was very tight in what he do, very good, very academic and meantimes, some Michelangelo influence, some things, some—mais when he make the *Balzac*, when he have this libérté, he makes *Balz*—he grow, you know? And he open the doors a many things, you know? That's what the art is most free, you know? Because—like a Matisse, like all these people when—all these people they begin—like Velázquez. Velázquez the beginning it was tight, dry, terrible. But after he's becoming more loose, more loose, more loose, and finally make *The Fileuses*, *The Hilanders*, you know? You see the hands, it's abstract, you know? And that's why—Goya the same thing, you know? Goya—mais Goya is a genius. When he liked to make a good portrait, he make good portrait. Goya is the most *tempérament*, you know? Velázquez is more craftsman, he's more study, more discipline, mais Goya, when he want discipline, he want—mais this is a genius, you know? Well, I think—El Greco is very interesting, you know? More imaginative, more— But in the sculptors in Spain—most the sculptors is the sculptors who go away, you know? Just—now it's the same. The sculptors come here because there is too *constipé*, too much old fashion.

FORREST SELVIG: Too old fashion?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. Academic. Academic, you know? They come in here or in Paris. They open the doors, you know? That's why Paris is—it was marvelous for us because if you never go to Paris, you stay—you stay very nice, mais indifferent. It's not like the primitive sculptors, the polychrome sculptors that it was imaginative, that it was religious, mais religious with *grandeur*—you know? With something—the polychrome beautiful, naïve, mais truth, you know? No sophistications, you know? After is coming the sophistication because becoming commercial. Finished, you know? And finished—that's why [laughs] students they tell me,

"Oh, Mr. de Creeft, when you're going to show me finish?" I tell, "Look, before I show you finish, you understand to do it. And after que you do it, you finish. Not difficult." Finish is a consequence, the *trajet*—the work that you do, you know? I can't show finish because many [inaudible] because it's clear que it's finished. Y still the people look it, better sculpture and good sculpture. Good sculpture not clean. The better sculpture clean. It have more chance por the public que the good sculpture que is not clean. It's not question de ignorance. It's question de que no—still—the sweet things always like it, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: The sweet things?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Nobody like the bitter things, you know? It's always—but today it's too exaggerations, you know, because with the history, the sweet it make bitter, but when it make bitter, it makes too ugly, because everything have beauty. In everything. A man que die, it have beauty, a bum que is in the street, he have beauty, too. It's the way that you take it, you know? And that's why the artist—[inaudible] que is an artist—he do take the best—not the less, the best. It's not easy to do it, my friend. That's why you have Murillo—a painter, a Spanish painter who made all the madonnas and things like that. Mais in meantime, Murillo when he put the hard, when he put really, he make this portrait que is in Washington, *The Women in the Balcony*, [inaudible]. He make after the stories de little boys and things like that. Mais the artist makes concessions sometimes, you know, because you do make concessions. But the masterpiece, the artist, is always when he's free, when he's not—when he's out the old compromise—compromise the old thing. And this is what—after, you take the vice [ph], the compromise, because you adore the money y it's coming all the times and [clicks tongue] it changes, you know? That's why the gold is very beautiful, but you be careful. It's better make pipes with the gold por water [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: In other words, when you say a change, you mean a change for the worse, is that it?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, for the worse. Yes, yes.

FORREST SELVIG: Always?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, because temptation—the devil temptation, you know? Like *Faust*, you know? This is—you have—fine, you have everything, with the gold you have everything, mais you'll give the life to the devil. This is the difficult. This is the limit donde you this way or this way. Many artists, you know, go this way. It's very hard to live modest, you know? Very hard. Mais when you have the habit. For me, I'm millionaire, you know, because I was so poor y so bad, I just—I'm a rich man. A rich man, you know? It's not—I have everything que—what I have more? I have a house for sleep. I have a studio. This is—it's not question—but some people they like to have what others have, you know? They look too high, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Would you say that this—what comment would you make on the artists today?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: The artists today?

FORREST SELVIG: The young artists today.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's very difficult. The artists—I think—for my idea and my observation—the artist is always a dope, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: A dope?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: A dope, yes. He's always a sucker, you know? Because he give. *Subconscient*, he give always. He help the industry, he help all the things, all the beauty things que you see, all the fashion, all the things—all *provenier* the artist. You know, when Picasso made cubistic, he make understand the pens [ph], because after the pens—"Oh, you see this?" The pipes, the things like that. The artist he give always a life for things, you know? Si the artist no exis—that's why I'm astonished in this country, one the most rich country in the world, you know, que no help more the artist. The government, the city. It do have facilities not in money, mais in materials, in gifts. Si an artist he needs this. I exhibited the—in the show there, in [inaudible] building and the man he tell me, "Very nice, man." I tell, "Well, we pay four dollars de entrance, you know? And we do bring the things the outside—the studio. Well, si you bring it, it costs \$150. We never make money, just \$30 or

\$35 or \$50, you know? We pay the taxes, we pay everything [inaudible] the artist to be [inaudible] out of this, because you suffer por give culture, you know, por help the people, por give the good things, you know? Not everybody is a genius, mais we try, you know? And then—after, it consider you like a man who make shoes factory or Coca-Cola or things like that. No. I—you help Coca-Cola. The artist help Coca-Cola. The artist help the making of brassieres, they help—the artist help everybody, you know? Because he's a creative. And the man que is industrial, he go on the outside, he see the things, advertising, things, you know? It's influenced by you, like the architects today. With this thing que you see—junk—it's not junk because all these people who make this composition, these constructions, they give ideas to the architect. The architect [inaudible], the artist give ideas, he's rich all the times, you know? That's why the artist to be respect and to be treated really like the point more important de culture. Writers, painters, theater, everything. Everything. Everything is the composition the *société*. And the *société* si no have this, it's like a crocodiles, you know? It have a tear. It [inaudible] like that [laughs]. Yes. That's why the *société* is maintained by the beauty, you know, by this thing. Some ones they make ugly, but the ugly is not important. It's fine, it's nature, you know? All is nature. Today is there, tomorrow is there, you know? Mais this is what—nature is the most important thing because nature have the balance, you know? You can't go out the balance, you know? And that's why sometimes it's too ugly there, something happens, por put—this what this—this thing que do these boys now, it's not lost.

FORREST SELVIG: It's not lost?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Not lost. No. After this, there's going to be a reaction, like a opposite, donde they are going to put in level. All the times you have in history, you have this kind of thing. All the history is the same, you know? High then low, a circle. Big circle, more circle, but zero to zero, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: In other words, you consider this is zero, though.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's fine. Something come this. Lets the people sometime relax.

FORREST SELVIG: But it's very different from your work, from—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, this is a—I understand.

FORREST SELVIG: I know you understand, but—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I'm too old, you know, por take my libertés, you know? It's—I do the best, you know? Mais I'm capable to do anything, you know, mais this is—I let the young people to do it. Why am I going to imitate the young people? You know? It's like—like si I was a Matisse and make the birds and make the fish, cotton, things like that, you know? *Bueno*, very fine, at 80 years old. I make drawings very free, you know, like that. I'm amused, you know, because it's nothing, you know? Mais you can't make competition with these boys, you know? You can't go there y make—I do anything they do, mais lets do it y observe it—you know? And continue what you feel, with your tradition, your craftsman, the way you do it. Sometimes I bit my tongue, you know? Because I'd like to do it. Mais I tell, it's not—I give confidence, you know? Sometimes I exhibit something crazy—something like that because I like [inaudible] que no—que I'm not an enemy. I'm not an enemy. I'm a friend, mais I like it—let's await what it happens. I like to see what the results. And certainly, the results—I see observation many things in architecture, many things in advertising, many things in the television, many things que is because these boys que [inaudible] like that, you know? That's why it's not *inútil*. Nothing is lost. Everything is good. Today, tomorrow, the reflex—these boys now is 20, 25, you know? You have a fake, a fakes, lot of fakes there because always you have parasites, you know? Never, never you have everything clear and pure, but these parasites is the propaganda for another ones, you know? You need parasites, too. You need everything [laughs]. That's why it's not—nature prevent everything. Nature is a master y, I believe, complete, you know? When it—when the things go, somebody come, you know? A prophet, like a Christ, like a thing like that, you know? It changes everything, you know? And that's why when this man is coming there, they cross—the people after, the cross that killed him—this is—today you have a man who come and do the same, you know? Man is cruel, you know? And good, you know? [Inaudible.] *Humanité*, you know? The *humanité*. The *humanité*. I think the *humanité* is always the same, never changes. The progress for you is finished and for me is finished the progress. The another one they're born with your progress and my progress, you know? It finish the same, you know? No progress for

anybody. Except when you die. When you die, you tell, "Oh, I have light, *électricité*, I have the—all kinds of things, but you go." [Claps.] You let this for the children. The children work for—with this and continue, continue, continue, continue and when they die, they do the same que you and me [laughs]. That's why no progress. In your life there's progress, that's all. When I born I have oil lamp, you know? Now I have *électricité*, computer, everything, you know? But when I die, the other boys, they are going to come with everything and going to tell, "My grandfather, you know—" [laughs]. It's very interesting, very interesting. I live really for *curiosité*. I like it. I'm very curious. I just—I hate to die por this thing, you know, because I was interesting and my spirit is always in contact, you know? But, you know, when you have 84 years old, one year is five, it's not one year.

FORREST SELVIG: How do you mean one year is five? Do you mean it's richer?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, everything—everything is hard—is more hard.

FORREST SELVIG: Harder.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Harder. When you're young, one year is nothing, mais after, the accumulation of things, you know? In your mind, too many things in your mind, you know? No place—no place, and the—your body decay [ph], you know? Your spirit continue alert, you know? Mais the street, the things, you know? It's tough [laughs]. Your age is wonderful. Still wonderful.

FORREST SELVIG: Well, on the way downhill, don't you say? [Laughs.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: These people, these people [laughs]. This morning, I leave—this morning, I make—I clean my house and everything, and in one moment, "Oh, my knees!" It was terrific. I can't walk, or can't—I go to the street y I try to run, you know? Y I [inaudible] my pain, you know? I help [ph] very much, you know, with exercise, with things like that. You do take care of yourself too much. You can't—if you let you sleep, you sleep, you know? And finally, you die asleep. That's why the man when he's going to this, is wonderful is when they die—when he die in the middle, que it's hard, but when you die old, very old, the same que when you were born. Do you remember when you were born?

FORREST SELVIG: No.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No. When I'm dying, I'm not—si I continue, I'm not going to remember either [laughs]. I'm going to [inaudible]. Good-bye, you know? And this is the most beauty to die, you know? Lose completely your sense in sleep. This is the circle of finish [ph]. And the world? All the time the circle is the same. This atmosphere with another atmosphere, the cosmos, this world disappear one day, another world—one lady tell me last time [inaudible], "The Chinese come from another world. That's why in the history the mid—the philosophy, the Chinese is—they believe in this. For these people that's coming with another planet installed there [ph]." Well, possibly it's true. The Chinese—with the negros possibly is true, too. The whites possibly is true, too. Why do you think in this Earth there's races between negro, yellow, and white, something mix, you know? The intersection. Mais before, it was very definite, you know? And this—why in this world you have—why you have ants—red ants—black ants, you know? You have in animals the same story, you know? That's why possibly fragments de another planet. You end [ph] this planet in the times immemorial possibly give this—this separation climates, you know? North, South, and things like that. The people selected this because it was there. Bacteria. This bacteria, this bacteria, black bacteria, well. We grow there. Now [laughs], now it's the—now it's the five [ph]. Now it's the five [ph]. But now it's the intersection, is the *mariage*, the three or the four—mariage—like Hindus is derivative de—and the yellow race is influenced the—but one day, possibly, everything going to be some mixture, no race at all, you know? Mais take so much centuries that—so strong. The black is very strong, and the white very strong, you know? This conflict is very intellectual? Marvelous. One day when everybody is éduqué, perfect. Mais it takes time to educate the people que was martyized, and put down all the times, you know? That's why—it's very difficult to give free the people que no have education. You do educate before—Lincoln was marvelous, they give the free, but the poor guys after this day [ph], nobody won, no, and finally, slavery things like that, you know? The history of the world is wonderful, you know? It's always the same. Nothing is new [laughs]. When coming somebody and tell, "Oh, look, de Creeft, listen, this is—is do in China 5,000 years ago [laughs]." You repeat, repeat, repeat, repeat. The intelligence in all the world—you have—it's like a pyramid, you know? The people [inaudible] becoming more, more refined, more refined, more refined,

jusq'à arrive to the maximum. There you have five points the world donde the same man—the same man, this maximum, he think the same. It's not the same, it's the same intelligence, you know? It's when you grow, you know, it's when you grow que some places is more difficult like the Pampas, Argentine, the Afric—it's very difficult. Some ones [inaudible] more quickly, you know? They have more help, more—but it's always the Nirvana, it's the arrive on the top, and when you arrive on the top, you understand everything. It's easy, you know? Two people intelligent—two people who understand each other, mais one is not enough y make you fight, you do convince, and por convince, you put—you [inaudible]. And he may continue, but after long times, you'll be friends and you [inaudible], mais you do give your life for make this man and your even intelligent [ph]. That's why the nature do this.

FORREST SELVIG: I take it, Mr. de Creeft, that you are not a conventional believer. Is that so?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No conventional, no. Conventional believers—[laughs.] No. I like to see the things, you know? But the things out this world, you know? Because this is the limit. But for me, I no have this limit. I always pass through the limit because I was interested—I never go to school, you know? I go just to the school pour make the straight—I learn in the street. My street is the school. I learn the man understand, you know? I learn my language, but I learn in the street. I learn by—and this the unique language que I know more deep is the Spanish, you know? Mais the French—the French, talk; the English, talk, but I never—I no like to sacrifice my times in one thing que I'm not using, you know? Si I was a writer, I study. I'd be a writer, you know? But this is—the unique thing you need is read. Read. This is yes, but write it's not important because I write in the sculpture, you know? Y I—with one language que you know well, you know all the languages. You have translation and everything. A little English I am beginning to understand. Very difficult, you know? French, I read correctly. I lived 21 years in France and I have French woman, English woman, and Spanish woman. I know everything. In my career—

LORRIE GOULET: How about American women?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: —I like it better—I like it better—women que men, you know? Because for one reason women—I live with my mother and my sisters, you know? This was a good lecture for me, you know? Si I have a friend, I have a brother, certainly it was different—

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JOSÉ DE CREEFT: —mais I live with women all of my life. [Inaudible] six [inaudible] all of my life. I understand women better, you know? Men? Business, change conversations, you know? But men is always more difficult because a woman you love and she loves you. Accepted. Men is always your—your opposition, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Antagonist, yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Antagonist. And he take it—you talk—I have in Spain—I have two friends. One was Tito Cittadini. We talk all night, you know? And final, [inaudible] good-bye, we talked different, but we think the same, you know? But the competition, it want be the strong, you know? I always patience. For convince, I always patient. Never, never—I never fight, you know? The others fight? Fine, well, good-bye. Mais I always careful because with times, you obtain everything with times, and knowledge, too, you know? Understand. But the point—I never touch in the religion—I not touch the religion because when I talk with the priest, he give me—he tell me, "All right, you okay," you know? [Laughs.] He tried me to convince my mother-in-law—with the bishop, he put me there pour que convince me that—I born Catholic, you know? And the bishop he tell, "Look, this man he born Catholic. You can't change, you know? Let him alone, he's okay. Why you like to transform in Episcopal?" you know? "Let he like he is?"

FORREST SELVIG: Is this an Episcopal bishop?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: The bishop. The bishop tell, "It's all right." He talked with me like I talk with you. Y I make the same freedom, you know? I no—and then he tell me—after [inaudible], he tell, "What you think?" "Well, I think que es okay [laughs]. Leave him alone. Leave him alone." It was good point for my mother-in-law.

FORREST SELVIG: Your mother wanted you to be an Episcopalian then.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Huh? Yeah, [inaudible] Episcopal, but I'm—because I marriage for the Episcopal Church. The Catholic Church no like to marriage me si I not stay there in Spain. And that's why they tell the unique way go to England, stay three weeks, you marriage there. I was fine. Si I—anything, I marriage—I love my wife, I marriage with any religion. You don't care, you know? But the point is to have sense, human sense, you know, and to understand all the religions is the same. It try to give advice, give you good things, make the people good, things like that, but we have a lot of defects, but this is—we have defects in every place. Mais this—some [inaudible], some things, sometimes. You can't let the [inaudible] go like that. You do give some lectures—certainly the Bible is wonderful book, you know? It help many people, you know? But you no understand the Bible. If you no understand the Bible, you—but if you understand, it have pour everybody, you know? Pour good, pour bad, pour things. Some people come [inaudible] for sell me the Bible [laughs]. I tell, "Look, I read the Old Testament, the New Testament, I know everything," but I—no change me. I—my mother never be changed, you know? My father was aristocrat; my mother, plebeian, you know? And that's why between this thing, I liked the two things, you know, and I understand the two things, you know? And my mother helped me very much because she was very truth, very honest, you know? And this is—my father was *révolutionnaire*, was—made a lot of mistakes, you know? But it was good idea, too. It's progressive. Mais I escape all the time de things like that. I liked to be a soldier many times, but because I have the [inaudible], you know? The *tambour* y the *trompette*, but I never—I never take me [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: Good. In other words, when you were growing up, there was still—there was a revolutionary spirit then in Spain too, apparently.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, yes, yes. Always.

FORREST SELVIG: Although the Spanish Revolution—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Always.

FORREST SELVIG: —[inaudible] '13. [inaudible] was in the '30s, wasn't it? The '20s.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. I listen the two [inaudible], you know? It's very difficult for the Spanish to put in order, you know? Because the Spanish is very individual, you know? And the Spanish is so—so much weight in the top [ph] by the times, you know? And the Spanish, he have—he tell, "Well, okay, *alabado sea Dios*," you know? And this—"Well, well." Sometimes it's in very little things, you know, in Andalousie, in the place—the South, you know? Certainly, if you read the poet—the [inaudible] García Lorca, you see what is Spain, you know? And certainly the—too much *fanatisme*. In the meantimes, Spain is *féminin*, you know? The man is too much male, too much sex, you know, and the woman *dominer* the man by this, you know? It's not like England. England is different. And this way, when the man no go to church, the priest he tell, "Why your husband no go the church?" She tell, "Well, he no go the church because, you know, he don't like it. He's happy. He's a good man." "Yes, but he no go to the church." You know, when they come to kiss you, "*Putá* [ph]." And then—and when they ask you more, "Putá, go to church." And finally, men they like to have wives, you know? [Laughs.] [Inaudible.] "I go to church. Okay, I go to church. Fine." You go to church, but you don't care, you know? Because it's the priest que push to this, you know? And this way pues es Spain, you know? And many times, Spain has killed the priests. Many times. Coming jusq'à here and kill the priests, but the priests are still there. And this is why is not—you can't do anything about this because si you give *liberté* when the Royalists—when the Republic—to have the divorce, 20,000 a day—you know? Because the women it was just que here and the men it was just que here. They can't divorce because it was the religion. And they—and that's why—because it support, it support, it suffered, and the men and the women live all together. He hate all together. The man go to the café, he talk, he work, he go home, discuss. But when it give *liberté*, everybody divorce, you know? Do you remember this?

FORREST SELVIG: But you mean when the Revolution came along, with the Republicans?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. The revolution. The Revolution it was no long because nobody helped. England no helped and this country no helped, and things like that. But it was very—it had the idea de communism, [inaudible] de communism, it's a *minorité*, very *minorité*, the communism. Anyway, the Spanish it was—the worker que no understand—when I was in Mallorca one day when the Republic come, he tell me, "Don José, now que *ser la República*,

voy a coger la madera. I'm going to take the wood." I tell, "No. It's not yours. It's still ours. [Inaudible] Guardia Civil still—this is a respect the *proprieté*, private *proprieté*, it's not because—" "Ah, ¿no? Mais I think que when it was like that [laughs] is poss—" I, "No, you do ask for permission." "Oh, in this case, what they're all doing? What the—" You see? Completely ignorant. No understand. That's why si you tell all these people, "The communism," they don't understand what is the communism either, you know? No understand—the only they understand is when you give a work you give—these poor people—the peasants, you know, [inaudible]. It's poor people—it was really very difficult for them because no read, no write, no instruction. They don't know what it is. For them, it's wood—they go to your *proprieté* and take the wood, but you are there, you tell, "Ey, ey. Well, this man, que have wood, *exagérer* because is possible give wood, you know, mais he's an egoist, you know? He pay very little. He do—Mallorca in the past—the people no eat meat que one times a year. Eat beans, three beans—*algarrofas*—*algarrobas*—it was terrific many years ago, you know? When the people beginning to be more—but the people there, the rich people it was very—I tell all the times, mais si I tell something, they not like it.

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FORREST SELVIG: This is the second of two interviews with José de Creeft in his apartment in New York City. The date is October 8, 1968 and the interviewer is Forrest Selvig.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I tell you I was recommended by Zuloaga.

FORREST SELVIG: By whom?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: By Zuloaga, the painter Zuloaga.

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Mais Rodin, you know, when I visit there, he tell, "Your friend, my friends Zuloaga he tell you what—why you ask me?" I tell, "Well, you are a sculptor; Zuloaga is a painter," you know? He tell, "Well, but he's—anything is—he tell you is fine." I tell, "Well, I like your opinion." "No, this is I show you my—" he showed me the studio, you know? He showed me the things donde [inaudible], you know? He put me—sit down there [ph] and he may continue the work in the round. He worked in one marble. He have the [inaudible] I don't know que was. It was with the candle, you know, and then—and he may work in the marble. Y I tell, "Why you work with the candles?" you know? He tell, "Well, because the light need to be—not too much light because for the marble, when you make too much light, is confused. And then—because it's too white, it's too *brillant*. But with the candle it give you the [inaudible] light, you know? Like that you finish much better." I tell, "That's very interesting," you know? This—he tell, "Form—sculpture is form—you know? It's no important why, but sometimes you need the light to the top, light to horizontal or vertical, horizontal, you move your sculpture this—the way that is possible have more—more understand the things. You know, the Egyptians—[inaudible] the Egyptians, the finish, the polish, and [inaudible] do it, it's so sensitive que you—si you pass the hand, you see all forms, because this sculpture when it's shining, is no observation, it's not an sketch, it's a fact [ph], you know, it's like a watercolor, like a painting, but the form is not closed, you know? Now, the artisan is when he finish, and the—after is coming the sculptor like him, he retouch the rest, because the artisan, he take it and make a—before he make a pointed machine, after he shaving all the thing, y after is coming to the truth, you know, because their points stay very [ph], very little, you know? You can't—when—[inaudible], you know, very, very little. And these times when The Bosco [ph], you know, it's him who had this—mais all these kinds of things is not—is coming by the—more by the practice, you know? [Inaudible] you work that the things come in.

FORREST SELVIG: But you saw—you were introduced to Rodin by Zuloaga?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Zuloaga is a painter que make the things—he painted things very Spanish. Goyasque a little bit, you know, and the—you never seen a painting de Zuloaga?

FORREST SELVIG: I've seen a few things by Zuloaga, but I—the things I've seen strike me as being rather—from this point of view—rather academic.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, academic in one—not much—not much. He have fantasy. He had fantasy because he make one exhibition in New York—and make a lot of money. He make an exhibition very important—he make—he [inaudible] \$50,000 de advertising. Mais after he

récolter [ph] \$200,000, you know? [Laughs.]

FORREST SELVIG: It was worth it, I would say [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, it was very important exhibition. And after this, she [ph] make something I—you can't tell—you have two painters Spanish—Zuloaga y Anglada Camarasa. Anglada Camarasa is another painter about the same time, mais Anglada Camarasa is more like a jewels [ph], you know? He uses the painting—used the—and [inaudible] complete—no mixed. Used the [inaudible], the cobalt and one it cost 40—

FORREST SELVIG: You mean—you mean he painted directly out of the tube, he squeezed [inaudible].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Direct in the tube, yes, yeah. It's very effective, very *lumineux*, you know? And this—mais the paintings you can't roll [ph]. If you travel, you wait—sometimes £800 a painting, and then [laughs] because you can't roll it, he spends a fortune with this. He die—he die—

FORREST SELVIG: When was he working?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: In the '28. It was one thing, in France they loved very much Anglada Camarasa, but in the times de war, the '40s, he was—I think he go away—he go into Spain. And the French never *pardoner* this, because they expected que going to fight with—in the war, you know? It was stupid de part de Anglada because he put in the *camouflage*, and things like that, mais he was scared. He no like to be involved in the war. He liked painting and no like to be involved in the war. That's why he go away. And the—after make a mistake because the French never take it after. And the—he was always criticized the allies, "We do everything for him and everything. In the moment donde [inaudible] France, he wasn't. He go away."

FORREST SELVIG: He's not at all—at least, I have never heard of him. Is he at all known in America?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, natural—in Spanish—in Spanish Society—in Spanish Museum—in the —

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, here [inaudible]—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah.

FORREST SELVIG: —[inaudible].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He have someone. Yeah, something. Zuloaga, too. I think he have something, too. Sorolla is the one that he have more.

FORREST SELVIG: Sorolla.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Sorolla. He made a lot of things and then—because he was the Impressionist and the light, you know? The sun. He was very interesting—is one group—sculptors it was in the same period, like Querol, Benlliure, everyone it was the same modernistic thing, you know, like more [inaudible], more derivative de Catalanian—Catalonian [inaudible], you know? Very—very—[inaudible] tell? Si I had a book, there I show you. It's very interesting. I have—de Anglada Camarasa, I have the book, I'm going to show you—

FORREST SELVIG: I would like to see that, yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And de Zuloaga I no have anything, is—mais Anglada Camarasa, yes. A friend of mine, he buy several paintings. He buy lot of Modiglianis, too. He have a good collection. It was the—en Mallorca, Tito Cittadini and the Angla [ph]—and [inaudible] the museum—this—Adandio [ph]. Adandio, he have 10 Modiglianis. He have several Anglada Camarasa. He have one que is about this size, you know, donde—Valencian and the horse, with all the dress. Very flamboyant thing, you know? Very interesting. I think I have this picture. And the—

FORREST SELVIG: But it was—then it was true how Zuloaga. Zu—I'm mispronouncing it. Zuloaga.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Zuloaga.

FORREST SELVIG: Zuloaga. That you were recommended to Rodin—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah, yeah.

FORREST SELVIG: And then did you—then, Rodin, when you went to see him [inaudible]—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, Rodin—Rodin is [laughs] he no is very sympathetic, you know? Because he was very conceit. One the great sculptor de France, you know, in this moment. He was very busy, things like that. And the students—he give you, he show you the sculpture, he show you everything, you know? He make you sit down, mais never—after, he tell me—I tell you last time—he make 50 cents [ph] a day. I tell, "No think [ph] of the sculptor." I spent a lot of money because I have all the artisans in marble, in bronze, in [inaudible], you know, in all kind of things. That's why it's expensive. He have six or seven models always—and this way he makes these drawings so alive, you know? It's very interesting, but it's not—he no was a—he no permit to have people, students, just give advice, he lets you there, but the people que tell, "I studied with Rodin," very few people studied with Rodin. Just they visited, but many they tell, "I studied with Rodin," because he visited. But Rodin no want students, no want anybody. And—if you—si I no was a friend de Zuloaga, never make attention to me.

FORREST SELVIG: Would—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He like to make a sculpture direct, showed me three pieces, small pieces, and he tell me, "It's too bad que I no continued with this kind of thing because I do employer the [inaudible] stones, marble." He was—I tell you last time—he was very *dictateur* in the things. A second Michelangelo [laughs]. The cooperative in these people—the French—the master French is not like in America. There it was very different pour go to see a master French is like to go to see the Pope, you know? It's very, very *respectueux*, you know, the people go there. He ask—invite you and the—in Christmas, for example, you know, invite you for visit. The people go with dress, si es possible with the top hat [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, really? [Laughs.] Very formally.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Very formal. Very formal. And that's why he never—never take the people like that [inaudible] like—no, no—this—Bourdelle it was the same, you know? Despiou was the same. The democratic part is coming more late, is coming after the '20s, after '28—then is beginning to be more easy, mais in the—before the World War, before the '40s, this is—it was in fashion. [Inaudible] some ones who take the students, you know, but not many, not many. Bourdelle he had—he teach in the school. And the Salon de—National, Le Salon des Beaux-Arts, it have a place for each. Rodin, it was before. After Rodin it was Bourdelle. After Bourdelle, it was Despiou. He take at [ph] the center and nobody touch, you know? This is—it was *sacré*, you know? And just because everyone who die after take the place. The most ancient is the most strong [ph]. The three—the three sculptors important in this moment it was Rodin, Boudelle, Despiou, and another one—what is his—another one in this period—but the rest of national sculptors it was like—lot of sculptors, but no—oh, this—the one only is in Metropolitan Museum de [inaudible]—

FORREST SELVIG: Maillol?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Maillol! Maillol.

FORREST SELVIG: Maillol.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Maillol he was the most—after, I think he was the most modern, you know? He was more important. The other was more decorative. Bourdelle—but Maillol he was a wonderful man, very—very earthy, you know? He like the things, he like to touch, you know? He's—when—good life, you know? And the—very interesting exhibit in the [inaudible] Français and then National des Beaux-Arts always the things very strong, very powerful. The others don't like it very much, but the people—he had the people, the students—

FORREST SELVIG: But Bourdelle and Rodin did not, huh?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Rodin—Rodin he was the dead already, you know? And then—but this exhibition he do in the—he make an exhibition in the—very interesting, all the things.

Después we have one man que was very interesting que nobody talk about. It was Pompon. Pompon he was an alum [ph] de Rodin. He worked with Rodin for 35 years. And this—and one day, he make an exhibition that very, very sensitive, very interesting. He make a big, big polar bear—que I no si you know this polar bear. Enormous polar bear. The animals very good and the—and this exhibition, it was a great succès and he had so much interest in the public that after—he was 80 years old when he makes the exhibition—but everybody try to invited and things like that, and finally kill him [laughs] because he never had this succès and everything. Cocktail parties, the ladies, and everyone. And this poor fellow with the big beard—very, very old, you know, but very enthusiastic, he tell me, "I don't know what is happen to me. I never have this before—nobody make attention." We was [inaudible]. The thing is poor old man que was suffered all the life and then he have this great succès. But after I don't know what has happened. No talk about much. And the museum it no have anything de Pompon.

FORREST SELVIG: Which museum is that? You mean the Museum of Modern Art here or the —

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, in here. No have anything.

FORREST SELVIG: —or the Musée d'Art Modern.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: In the Musée d'Art Modern I think it have something there. I think it have something. He make lot of interesting—very realistic in one way—the animals—very realistic, but con some kind de—this polar bear it has a great stylization. And then it was—if you look for him, you're going to find something about him.

FORREST SELVIG: Pompon?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Huh? Pompon.

FORREST SELVIG: Pompon.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Pompon. At 82 years old when he make the first exhibition.

FORREST SELVIG: He was a student of Rodin for 35 years [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. He was with Rodin. Practicioned [ph] with Rodin. He worked for Rodin 35 years. Mais this—after this he have a—he was more in this period. Despiau is the one one who tell me he like real the clay. He was a master in clay, you know? One hit—sometimes [inaudible] two, three, four years before [inaudible] because he—I tell, "Why you no make marble?" Because he make so strong. I tell, "It's more easy de obtain what you look, you know, because *matière*—hard *matière* with the soft *matière*—because soft *matier*, you push and push and push, and try and push, and this—but he tell, "No, this is—" He like the clay because it's more mobile for him, more easy, but the—it was very interesting portraits. Here in New York he make an exhibition de about 15—15 portraits. The gallery this—the one that he—you have a gallery here very important before, que was like a Valentin before Valentin.

FORREST SELVIG: Before Curt Valentin.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It was Brummer. Brummer. Brummer was a very important gallery in this country. It bring all the people, it bring Brâncuși, it bring Despiau, it bring Lipchitz, it bring some painters, too. The same period, it bring Zadkine, too. Brummer was very funny man. [Laughs.] I know before—always he like make an exhibition, mais I make mistake because in the beginning, I have something—lose the telegram, things like that, and then—and finally I was tired de wait and things like that—the wait. It's not important. I make the first exhibition in Ferargil Gallery. Ferargil Gallery—Ferargil—he see the—by photograph and the—he tell me—when he see the photograph, no make much attention, but the day the open I go there, he tell me, "Oh, this is extraordinary. Si I know your sculpture before, I make a beautiful catalogue. Marvelous because [inaudible] give me the lousy photograph." I tell, "It's not my fault. You sent the—your secretary, but [inaudible]." He tell, "Yes, but this is what has happened. You—all the artists who have sometimes—the one who leaves beautiful photograph is better sculptor and the one who leaves [laughs] lousy photograph is good sculptor." He's very understanding. The photograph the sculpture in clay is very, very effective, mais in the stone is very difficult the photograph. That's why Rodin he had a photograph que he spends more than 50,000 francs, you know, in this time. And this photograph it was marvelous. This photograph he stay all day for make a—one photograph,

you know? Y no was the times de "Click", you know? It was the times de [inaudible], look, y [inaudible], y [inaudible] the camera slowly, you know? Sometimes 10 hours pour have the real three dimensions, you know? It no was flat. It was really wonderful photograph. And this is why Rodin he like—I met this photograph. He make the photograph of my *Picador* and the—he was very—I tell, "What do you think with the camera—the *instantánea* camera?" He tell, "The *instantánea* camera is deformation. Always you—sometimes you see a sculpture que es beautiful y after when you see the sculpture is nothing because the photograph it make distortions and make things that que no—but the photograph, oh, boy." Like this marvelous photograph American—

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible]?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. Long times he stay. And this is—most the times the artist today is more theatrical que before. Because today you put a figure in the middle of the street, you know, y after make the figure in the street look [laughs] 20 times more big and things like that for the *baranda* [ph]. Today the artist is more the photograph que the artist sometimes, you know? [Laughs.] The photograph si es clever he make you wonderful effect, you know? But after—this one I see for the Giacometti all the photographs de Giacometti in the middle of the street, in the middle de places, you know? These little things, you know? I [inaudible]. And this is sometimes I tell the photograph is marvelous, and the—one que have—and this is why in Paris, the artist is very against the tricks in this period, you know? Now everybody do the same, but in this period, the tricks it was no pass through, you know? Because immediately, "Oh, this guy—" fake. He make—this is no serious and things like that. You do really—the really work, you know? And the critic it was very strong, too.

FORREST SELVIG: Did—did you know Dalí at that time? Salvador Dalí at that time?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, Dalí, no. In these times I no meet Dalí, no.

FORREST SELVIG: I was wondering [inaudible] more serious then.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, because these times—these times he was in Barcelona. He was involved in many things politic, you know? And then—and nobody liked Dalí because he no look like a serious man in this—there—after is coming—when Dalí coming important is when he comes in this country. When he beginning to make all the things—[inaudible] crocodile [inaudible]—and all the things like that. But he no have reputation, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: No, I was wondering if he did then. I think now he's considered very—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: In Barcelona, it knows him. But he was in Beaux-Arts, you know? He was with another people. Picasso, I think que he no have much contact with him. After. After. Very—after the second war, you know, it's when he take more importance. The Spanish, en *réalité*, take it like a joke, you know? But when he meets with us, he never tell jokes, you know? He stay very serious with the stick, you know? And sometimes he tell something, but no—he was very—with another Catalonians, you know? He is—never [inaudible], you know? Just with the Americans, you know, pour the people strangers, and the French now. In France he make a succès [inaudible]. He's very clever man, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: He's a great showman, I think.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Beg your pardon?

FORREST SELVIG: He's good at show. He's a good showman, self-promoter.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, yes. He's a—he take it the way that—he *interpreter* this country like a place pour make money. He is no doing—but he's a wonderful craftsman. When he make some small dimensions, you know? When he make things like that, he's marvelous, you know? But when he pass—when he blow out, this—it's not the type, you know, because the last exhibition que he had in the museum, I was really impressed pour many things, the small things. I was admiration to see the—what he arrived to do, you know? But when he showed after the big things, I tell, "Well, it's too bad, you know, que no have examination himself," you know? [Laughs.] But this is—he no care, he no care, because he tell you this—here is not important.

FORREST SELVIG: It seems to me that he was more serious though at the beginning.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, yes, when he was Surrealist, when he make the watch que fall down, things like that. When he make the piece de bread, things—oh, yes. In these times is when Dalí—he was in this period *sincère*, you know? Mais the admiration the people, you know, for the craftsman. He push too much, you know? Sometimes is the fault the public, because the public when they take the man is beginning to admire, to love, they kill, you know? Most of times. That's why an artist que is serious, he do—be very careful with the public. Too much succès, too much succès is better change the disc, you know? Because this thing—many people, many people is the *vanité*, you know, the succès, the womens, you know, things like that. Everybody *celebrer*, you know, cocktail parties, [inaudible], things like that, and finally, he play like a mice—like a cat with the mice, you know? But when he have plenty, he put out, you know? Then he die like that—beginning very beautiful, you know, and the same people—another come—and this is more—more here que in Paris.

FORREST SELVIG: More in America?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. More in America because the Americans is—he like news, you know? He no like—he no have patience. He like a—things que—news. Because the newspapers, I remember here when I make—I was the director in the Independent Show—y I make the [inaudible] de things, you know? And the newspapers come, "Hallo! Hallo! How do you—well, what you have de sensational here?" I tell, "Sensational? No, I want to tell you one thing, I have a beautiful thing there, de somebody que es there, que I think que—" "No, this is no—I want something pour—you know—for the papers, for the papers, something—something que the public—" I tell, "Well, I'm sorry. I'm not the [inaudible] and the—I feel like that with me you respect another because I think there is—the Independent—is the show [ph] donde everybody exhibit what he want, but this is very important because some ones is very sincère and no have another place—and this is why is beautiful show. But she want sensational. I make a [laughs]—I was in Seattle and then he tell me, "Oh, do something like *The Picador*. Do something." I tell, "Well, you know, I'm very—all right, I'm going to make something else. Y I go the [inaudible]—

FORREST SELVIG: Five and 10 cent store.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: [Inaudible.] Y I buy some junk there, y I make a fox, you know? Y I—this size, you know? Oh, this is what—all the children come and play with this and things like that. I tell, "Well, this is what it is—it is for amuse the children, mais here—there are big children que amused—that's why Calder with *The Circus* he make more propaganda que with anything. *The Circus*, it was so important. You seen *The Circus*?

FORREST SELVIG: Yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Marvelous. And he [inaudible] there with Noguchi—Noguchi, he was assistant—and the—he was make the circus in my studio in—there in—because I like it very much. Because when Calder was in Paris he make lot of jokes to me, you know? And the—one the jokes—I go the fountain for open—y I see a dog que live [inaudible] time que I open the fountain. And this—sure—always things like that. And [inaudible] very want each other—we make stories one another [ph].

FORREST SELVIG: I see. You were talking—you said something about you were manager of an exhibition of the Independent. Was that here in New York?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, yes, in New York. We have many exhibitions Independent there before. You never seen these exhibitions because it fall down.

FORREST SELVIG: When was this?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, this is—I exhibit *The Picador* there one times—it was in the '40s. In the '40s, yes. We have six or seven exhibitions in the Independent here.

FORREST SELVIG: But where was it held?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: One it was in the Grand Central. Grand Central. And this is—I think it was there in Grand Central three or four times. You never seen this before?

FORREST SELVIG: The Grand Central [inaudible] is a gallery called the Grand Central?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, no, in Grand Central—

FORREST SELVIG: Grand Central Station?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: The—in the buildings—empty buildings there, no in the—

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, I never saw this.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, it have a empty loft, you know? And we fixed this loft, you know? I make the exhibition there.

FORREST SELVIG: This was in—in other words this was to be like the Salon des Artes Indépendants in Paris—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's empty. It's empty.

FORREST SELVIG: But then, what would they be independent of? I mean, what, with the annual [ph] or—I mean, the Indépendants in Paris, I understand, began as—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It was—

FORREST SELVIG: —a reaction to the École des Beaux-Arts' shows.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: What has happened with the Independent I think it's very good because sometimes is eliminate the juries, you know? Because the juries sometimes is not right. You can't—you no have a rights to judge, you know? I think that this is a mistake, you know? In the academic world is different because in the academic you have—is comparative with the Roman, with the Greeks, with things like that. Is possible make a jury because it's craftsman way, you know? Mais in the art pure, the Indépendants is much better because there anybody express what they want, you know? And the public—it have all kind, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: You mean this is open to anybody? Anyone?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Anybody.

FORREST SELVIG: Anyone?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Anyone. Anyone.

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible] if I never painted before in my life, I can still show—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: [Inaudible.] You—in the Indépendants show—you put this si you like it, you know? You—right here—you put in the vitrine—this way—no opposition. This way—my *Picador*, I put the—in the Indépendants show in Paris, you know? Because si I put in another show, no—is this. If do be [ph] everything que you want, that's why it's interesting. I tell you one times I was the jury in Paris and the—in my experience many times, you know? The people—we talk, you know? And the men que show the pictures—it pass one picture [ph] and all these people they tell, "Well, because you see, last night I was all 'This is terrific, this party it make me tired,'" and the paintings pass. And the janitor, he tell, "Mister! [inaudible]." I, "Okay. Fine," you know? And then some guys [laughs] y I tell, "Hey, what has happened?" I was very, very upset because I see this. Y, "Oh, de Creeft." "Oui. Fine, fine, fine, fine." And this is always the same in the juries, you know? Many times, I enter there y I see the sculpture. I see there. I tell, "Well, fine, the one, two, three, four, five, six—the rest is—I'm not interested in the rest. It's not—I think it's not *à-propos*," you know? "Oh! [inaudible] be judge. This is—" because everybody have protections, you know? I was in Chicago and never take me more [laughs] because in Chicago—the entrance—I entered, he give me the list. "I don't know, I don't want a list. I no want—no any name."

FORREST SELVIG: Exactly.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He tell, "Well, you see," he take me by the arm, he tell, "You know, this lady she make \$400,000 for the société." I tell, "Yes, beautiful money." [Laughs.] But this is—this is not my—

FORREST SELVIG: No, of course.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's not my thing. Si I come in here pour—I like to see before the rest, you know? Y I see the rest and things like that. And the—I see lot of—sí, I give the prize [inaudible]—the one that make the saints at church, you know? And then—after, somebody

is complaining because he tell me, "You, why you no give me the prize?" "I'm sorry. I no like it. It's not—I think que him is serious, is reputation and meantimes—" But sometimes—that's why I—the jury—three—three people, you know? One influence another. You do give [inaudible], "Well, fine," you know? You give me this one and you take this one, you know? But I like it que this one is—it's very, very difficult because you make—you make sometimes mistakes, too, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: Sure. Then are you saying you believe in having no jury at all?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: This—no jury at all. Independence.

FORREST SELVIG: Really?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. Jury—jury except [ph] for the things technical like for example si you have an architect, you know? An architect needs—serious y *responsabilité*. Si the house fall down, you know, it kill a lot of people. And this is why there is possible a technical, you know? Mais sculpture—sculpture is an expression today, you know? In the past it was another thing because it make part de architecture y entered—it have another function. But the function de today is free, you know? Why you going to make de jury? One he make iron, another make construction, another make Surrealist, another—and each one he have a master man—and each one—the derivatives is coming the *plagiat*, you know, the—he try to do the same, but it needs profession. That's why when you want to be a judge and [inaudible] donde you have all kinds of things. In the Cubist possibly you have a wonderful example, in the Surrealist, in the Constructivist. Sculpture [inaudible]. *En fin*. That's why you can't—you do have the jury de each—de each one. A jury de Cubist. A jury this thing. A jury de Surrealist, you know? Because many names go there y no understand anything y no like to see because when you tell, "Well, this is—I think is—que is a piece de art, que es very—" "Yes, it's a piece de junk. I'm no interested," you know? "Mais this is wonderful. Why you no like it?" "Because it's—is—" You have a big discussion, you know? And total nothing happen, you know? And [inaudible] to me somebody and show me a thing that—this—national—somebody que I know—que es so [inaudible] nothing—well, mais I no tell anything. I tell, "I'm not interested," you know? But some ones—I was one day with one jury—this one is very funny. I have a—I had an stone—and the—when I pass with one de my colleagues, I pass there y I show this head. And then, "Oh! This is a piece de junk." I continue—I continued to work y after, in the middle de trip, I tell, "You know who was this head? It was my head." "Oh, de Creeft! Oh! Oh! I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Now you are not going to like me more." "No, you are just de *passage* [ph] [laughs]." He tell, "I'm sorry," because you no make attention, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: In other words, are you saying, Mr. de Creeft, that there isn't such a thing as standards in art?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Standard?

FORREST SELVIG: Yeah.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well—

FORREST SELVIG: There are standards, aren't there?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. There's standards in art, but what you're going to—what standards you have today in art?

FORREST SELVIG: Well, you are asking me a question [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: [Laughs.] This is what today is—in the past it was another thing. But today what is the best, what is the worst, you know? You can't—the man que make a box, you know, and put in the shoe [ph]—he thinks it's a masterpiece, you know? O it's a joke, o it's serious, o is a masterpiece. Well, fine. If you ever—si this man he entered in the Nationale des Beaux-Arts, you know? He no accepted, you know? This is a [inaudible], they no accept it, but it's in the Museum of Modern Art, you know? It's in Brooklyn Museum, and something like—why are you going to exclude this man? For what—what reason? Because it's academic training? Because is something que *igual* no [inaudible] to be the same size que another [inaudible] Greek period, you know? O Renaissance period, you know? And this is why nobody make miles [ph] ni things like that, but they do the same, you know? You put in one show all—the jury—si the jury it was really pure, you know, and no politics, you know, no

politics, that's possible you have something. Possible. Mais the real people que have intégrité, que have really judgment, fine, you know? This case, possible to have a jury. But si you take the jury que have politics—because I'm a friend and so and so—you know some— one day coming a friend, he show me a picture, he tell, "You the jury?" I tell, "This is my friend." I tell, "Your friend is lousy. Why you going to—this my friend! I tell, "Yes, but you compromise me. I don't like it." He tell, "Well, you're not my friend in this case." I tell, "Well, *si es cuestión* de friends—" like at one times. Si you have 10 children or 20 children, they give you the prize. No, I [laughs] at one times if somebody make a big mistake to me after you have—I have a head in the show—the head que is in my book, on the front page—and the—and this man he was the jury. It was in the last—the last moment everybody was [inaudible] de him pour give me the prize. Mais one lady she have seven children, you know, one the sculptors—and [inaudible] tell, "Well, you see, I give to the seven children because —" And another guy sí give me [ph]. Five years after, I met this man. He tell, "Oh, you de Creeft?" I tell, "Yes." "Oh, I'm sorry, my friend." He kiss me, "I make big mistake. I do give you the prize but [laughs] one lady seven children. I give you the prize. I'll give you a painting." I tell, "No. I'm sorry. I *bénéficier* because the same piece it was \$3,000 y I sell for [\$]5[000] after, you know, [laughs] at another museum," you know? But this stupid thing, you know, because [inaudible] seven children. This why jury—this what is jury, you know? I pass [inaudible] time jury—with another jury with—Lorrie have a piece there. Everybody in this jury—after que pass the jury, I tell, "You no see this piece." He tell, "Oh, this is your wife. This is—" I tell, "Well, but it's good sculpture or bad sculpture?" "I no care. It's your wife." You see?

FORREST SELVIG: So he's there for [inaudible]?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: This—and this is good artist, you know? And another one is good artist, too. But these kinds of things happen. And Ms.—you have a prize in Paris, you have the first prize, you know, because it give 7,000 francs, you know, or something like that. And the poor fellow—one poor fellow que was really poor but marvelous, he make all the sacrifice, he live like a dog in one place or like that, he no have the prize, you know? He have the third class, something like that. I was indigné because I tell, "Yes, he give money for the société, mais es que the société live de money or it live de art, you know? Is art or is money? Si es money, okay, in this case, good, you know? But, no, is question de sincérité—you have responsabilité when you are the jury, really. You kill [ph] the man or you give the—a somebody que is not important, you know, but just because he have money. Money is not question in art. It's the intégrité, the way—the judge—is good sculptor or bad sculptor. And this is why I always disgusted de things like that. Because I never asked anything. I no asked *ni* recommendations, *ni* anything. I put my work there y I *confier* en que the judges, you know, it was sincère, mais after, when I see this. I tell, "My God. What a silly que I am [laughs]," because why I *exposer* my work—and the critics the same. Sometimes the critic is the same. I see critics go there—I work with the critic y—pass y see the—[inaudible] see the painting! You know? And this when finally you lose your—all the—this beautiful thing que you have when you are young, que you believe because you never entered in this—in this—in this junk, you know? And one day you *Pum!* is like the stone que fall in your head, when you see, "Oh, this is what it is," you know? "Well, I'm sorry. In this case, the best thing is to have a lot of friends, lot of—" go the politic, you know? But si you like it. I no like it go to people and this—you make the art because you feel because you—it force you to compromise, it force you to be bad fella, you know? That's why I always against. That's why the Independent show is the best, you know? There the public judge, the public is there, the artist judge, because art is judged by your fellows, by all artists. Always your—when you have one artist que is good, the other go there and they tell, "Yes." But the sincérité is spontaneous, you know? After you tell, "Yes, well, the head is too long and the head is too short," and the thing—you make the force [ph] is the shock, you know? And this is why there you prove really what you feel what you don't feel, you know? This what I think is— everybody is against the show—no give money pour the show, pour the Independent, the société fall down because it had a lot of good people in the société, you know, the Independent show—a lot of good people. If you see in the list—

FORREST SELVIG: Why did it end? Why did they stop? These exhibitions.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No money!

FORREST SELVIG: No money?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No money. No press for exhibit, you know? It cost a lot of money. We pay

each one three, four or five dollars, you know? And finally, the guy—he has lousy things—oh, lousy—

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible], the people exhibiting paid [inaudible]—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It do pay pour maintain the société and certainly is always you have the apple sack, you know? This is—some ones in the interior—always, you know? Because I always interest—I always—somebody que es interest is somebody que make money. Always, you know? Because pure, you no have anything pure. Because the—in France before it coming with the artiste français—the dissidence it make the Nationale de Beaux-Arts. The dissidence after it make the Salon des Tuileries, you know? But still Indépendants show. Mais always the dissidence is pure. The ones when it—it changes—it tell, "I can't live here. It's impossible because it's coming politic, it's coming like that, you can't do anything. Well, we're going to form a société." Mais we take it one—and with one que *contaminer*, you know? This is—it finish corrupt anyway, you know? This is why always the *principes* is perfect, but the corruption coming after.

FORREST SELVIG: Tell me this. You had to be a member of the society to show in the independent exhibition or could it be just anyone who came in from the street?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Anyone. You are a *sociétaire*. You are a *sociétaire*. You pay the dues—I think it was like that, I forget. You pay the dues you have right to exhibit, you know? You pay five dollars a year or \$10 a year, a thing like that, and you make the société. It have 400 members, you know? And anyone who come and tell me, "De Creeft, I'd like to be in the société." "Fine, you are in the société." And this is why I was the organization many times, you know? Mais there you have another thing que this is—you can't—the man in impossible, you know? Always he like to be "I, I." Always [laughs]. Because in this salon, we have—the center is always con—pour de—like the honor. The rest is in the—and this is why you do the [inaudible]. Si you like make good you do have a hat with papers, you know? And do like that, this is your place, this is your place, this is your place. Mais no one this is like that. The one who is smart he—that's why you always *préférence*. Always *préférence*. Pour—and the Independents prefers—the secretary coming there y I tell the secretary, "Well, why you put this guy there? Why this guy?" you know? "Oh, he was the first." I tell, "No, I see arriver." It's impossible! This was—is human. Human. Human. You can't change the *égotiste*, ni the *vanité*, ni the thing. You can't change.

FORREST SELVIG: Now, what difference would there be between that and, say, the outdoor art show in Washington Square?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. Y—

FORREST SELVIG: Is there any difference?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No. Art show in Washington Square, one time I was the jury with Newman. But Newman—you know Newman?

FORREST SELVIG: Barnett Newman?

LORRIE GOULET: J.P. Neuman

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: J.P., yeah. He have a gallery. And we go [inaudible], you know? You selected what I please, what you please, and things like that. Y after, with this we make an exhibition in Bohemian Museum, with the selections. I tell you, the exhibition it was marvelous. Wonderful selection. Y a lot of junk there. Oh! A lot of junk, you know? But this is it was—no was question de jury. It was question de what you like, what he liked, what I liked, you know? Three artists, you know? And one man, gallery patron.

FORREST SELVIG: Who was the owner of the gallery? Who's the gallery man?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Neuman.

LORRIE GOULET: J.P. Neuman

FORREST SELVIG: Oh.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And this was very intelligent fellow—very nice.

LORRIE GOULET: [Inaudible.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: *Very talentueux.*

FORREST SELVIG: Can you name the other artists?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: The artists—I think it was—[laughs.] Sometimes—

FORREST SELVIG: But in other words, if you went to the Washington Square exhibition and you picked, you [inaudible] pick up your own things—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah.

FORREST SELVIG: —and you didn't know how to match up—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, no.

FORREST SELVIG: —you had to be [inaudible]. Just three different shows [inaudible] essentially mixed up.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: That's why it's very interesting. In every show you have things de *valor*, you know? But the valor is not judgment. Valor is your—your *qualité*—your degree de education. This is different. By degree de education, you give the valor to the things and that's fine, but you can't tell a man, "Now, you are going to judge, you—" No, this is different. This you make an exhibition by the degrees, and this is fine, you know? You take a man—10 men—you tell, "Go now, go to some place—you're going to select what you like and do what you like. Y after we make an exhibition." What were the results? This is what the idea. And the idea was marvelous. After que the exhibition it was done in Whitney Museum, we was astonished. We— "Oh, this is fine." These people after—the other people que was in Washington they was angry because they tell, "Why do you take this man? Why do you not take me?" This is another thing. This is another thing. Always, always the same.

FORREST SELVIG: It's a great problem with juried shows.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: [Laughs.] This why you can't—is better leave the things like it is y que everybody do what they want, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: But I would like to ask you this though, Mr. de Creeft. I've noticed in juried shows that very often a painter or an artist—a sculptor, an artist—who has a very established reputation will not submit to a juried show because he's afraid of being turned down—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Sure.

FORREST SELVIG: —or not winning a prize when somebody that he considers as much less established would have.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Sure. You know? Si I exhibit—I am a *sociétaire* de every *société*. You know why? Because I'm *sociétaire* de anyone. Because si I'm *sociétaire* this one, the people tell, "Oh, it's *sociétaire*—" No, I tell, "*Sociét*—I pay the dues—every *société*." Like that you can't tell men anything [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: Thank you very much.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Do you understand?

FORREST SELVIG: Yes, thanks.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And this is—my wife tell me sometimes, "Why you in the National Sculptor?" I tell, "I'm in the National Sculptor because I have right to observe it, I have right to talk about, you know, si I want, y I—" And this is—*mais*—all *sociétés* in this case I no belong anyone, you know? [Laughs.] It's something very important, you know? But si I'm in this *société*, the people going to judge me, "Oh, he's the man, like—" No, you cannot ask me like that because I'm not going to be judge, you know? And the—and certainly, sometimes they asked me to be the jury, you know? Well, si I go there, I go pour make noises, you

know? I go there pour tell what I feel, you know? Like the last time pour the Prix de Rome. I go the jury. They have three people there donde es impossible, donde they tell, "Oh, this is one de my—an assistant de him—he want put in the jury, but it was the same—it want put in the Prix the Rome. I tell, "Well, in this case, I'm sorry, I quit. I'm not interested," you know? Because I like these people. I think that these people is the best in my opinion, you know? Mais I have a right to tell because is in *comparaison*, you know? Is in *comparaison*. I no tell this—mais, what do you think? I take this, this, this and this, this. No, selected this. What is the best in this? In the technical view, this one is the best. In the art, this one is the best, you know? "Well, you *d'accord* with me?" "Yes, but my friend—this is—yes, I know this." I tell, "Well, in this case, you—good-bye."

FORREST SELVIG: You—speaking of the Prix de Rome, last time we were talking, you mentioned Paul Manship?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, Paul Manship he no want anybody que es—I make big mistake one day, you know? [Laughs.] I was the jury y I put Manship out, you now? And because what he do, to me, it no was sculpture, it was a balloon, you know? It no was a sculpture. And the—and one man que was there, he tell me, "But de Creeft, this is the beginning. He's Paul Manship." I tell, "What is—what you care? Paul Manship—is que the sculpture is good or bad. It is the jury." And this is—sure I was sincere, you know? Because I—in my opinion—one sculpture is something three-dimensional, solid, *gravité*, and everything—all the *équilibre*, all the qualités de what I learnt when I was young, you know? And you give me something today—today is different, mais in these times, I come here y I see what is this [inaudible]. Si you tell me—si you tell me que this is a piece de sculpture, you know? Well, sure, is an *espace* [ph]—it's a formant *espace* [ph] is possible be a piece of sculpture today. But not before. Before it was a—the spider—you know? [Laughs.] Or a thing like that. Well, this thing it gave me so much troubles because after I have an enemy, you know? A big enemy, one the worst enemy.

FORREST SELVIG: May I ask you what exhibition it was that you threw Paul Manship out of, that you rejected him from?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It was one exhibition de—I don't know, I don't remember.

FORREST SELVIG: It must've been a big exhibition.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, it was a big exhibition. Y I think it was—it was something—possible I was too—I was stomached or something [laughs] sometimes you never now. But it was a like *The Atlas*—you know *The Atlas* in—

FORREST SELVIG: In Radio City.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: In Radio City. Well, the ball *The Atlas*, you know? But not the man, just the ball. The world.

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, is that all?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: That's all. [Laughs.] And the—

FORREST SELVIG: I've seen that, I think. It's just a great big globe.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, a globe. Well, and this is why—why when I see this, I'm a carver. I live with these people, you know? And when somebody show me a thing like that—and this is—I was in the house de Paul Manship, I was invited—he was friend of family, the family of my wife—and then he showed me the things there, you know? But in these times, it shocked me so much, you know? Because he has things like that there. I know que most the things que he may do is just the designers do the things and the sculptors do the things, and he just an entrepreneur, you know? He like the man who makes a house, you know? He take the lumber, he take the—he take everyone and he may make the plans, you know? Well, this is fine pour a house, you know? But an artist is not like that, you know? An artist need to be—when you make your plan, you make your work, you make everything, you finish, you know? But si you entrepreneur, si you make just the—a designer, fine, this is another thing, and that's why many things he have many people who work for him, que I know very well, all the things que is in—he's a good imaginer—he have imagination sometimes—you know? In the things he do for the bronze part, you know? The—all the bronze.

FORREST SELVIG: I've never seen that.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, he make all the figures. This is—all these figures is done by Hans Wanaki [ph]. All the things. Hans Wanaki.

FORREST SELVIG: Oh. You mean he didn't do them at all then. What did he do, draw them, design them, or what?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, he make the sculpture, all the sculpture. He make the design [inaudible] and the—it's like when I make the *Alice in Wonderland*, the same, somebody give me a plan, you know? He give me—because he have—is the entrepreneur. And this is what is called—

LORRIE GOULET: Designer.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Designer, you know? Mais he make a design—lousy design, you know—and this, I tell, "Well, it's fine, mais I'm going to change it my way because you can't do this." He tell, "Well," but this is the point, you know? This is the point. After, I make a maquette y I present it to the man que give the commission, que pay, and this man he tell, "Well, I like it very much. Fine." This is—I continue y I make the [inaudible] and things like that. And this—but him, he no do anything, you know? Mais is considered the creator [laughs] the thing—

LORRIE GOULET: Whose name's on the base, "Designer."

FORREST SELVIG: Designer.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: *Immotivé* [ph]. Well, this is fine, but this is no—I'm the artist myself, I'm the one that I do, you know? And he's just that the *motivant* [ph].

FORREST SELVIG: When you did the *Alice in Wonderland* memorial to Mrs. Delacorte, was it your idea to make—do *Alice in Wonderland* or was it—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, no, no. No, it's not mine—no.

FORREST SELVIG: It was Delacorte's idea.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Mr. Delacorte he make a memorial pour the wife and he tell, "I want a subject from the *Alice in Wonderland*."

FORREST SELVIG: I see.

LORRIE GOULET: Her name was Alice.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Huh?

LORRIE GOULET: Her name was Alice. But she—it was one of her names.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah. Yeah. And this [laughs]. And this why the things come, you know? And one day I find this man que have the—who was the secretary de—he tell me, "De Creeft, I like to give you a job. It's not your—a job que is not your type." I tell, "Why my type? Everything is my type." He tell—it's question de tell me what it is, you know?—he tell, "Well, I have this project," you know? He want que I make the thing *Alice in Wonderland*. I tell—I think que es very good pour the children—I tell, "Fine, for the children is marvelous." I entered in the competition. I entered. He tell, "You really do it? You'd like to do it?" I, "Clear, sure, it's nice," because it's something pour the public and pour the Central Park y pour the children. And I entered more in conversation, he made me the proposition and he showed me the project, you know? I tell, "Well, this is fine, but now I do put this in order because this is just an idea, but now I'm going to study this y I'm going to make a maquette in three dimensions pour—si the patron accept it." "It's okay." He tell, "I think it's good. Very good." And then, we was d'accord and he continue to go in my—interfering thing, I don't know [ph]. No, can't—because if you interfere, it's impossible. I no—I'm the sculptor. You just to make [inaudible] there something— I'm the sculptor. I'm going to make my way because if something que have responsabilités, the children possibly break the neck or things like that. I do make something my way. Finally, I was mad with him [laughs]. He interfere too much. En real—

FORREST SELVIG: But may I ask you one thing. Did you intend it to be climbed over by

children? Did you design it so they could climb over, as they do now?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah. Yeah.

FORREST SELVIG: You meant them to.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah, yeah.

FORREST SELVIG: My little boy loves to climb on it [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Because it's—the point es que one thing go to another thing, you know? Pour que the children no fall down and always pris [ph]—always in the bottle [ph], I put these animals in the bottle, too. And the children go there [laughs] enough high, pour que the children no—because the ones when you go downstairs is not the ones that the big ones, you know? It's the small ones. Everything is like a bouquet of flowers, you know? You try to make a bouquet, you know? One thing here, one thing there, you know? It's—I enjoyed it very much, but him—always interfere. Total. Everybody make money except me, you know? Because the architect make money, the foundry make money, the one that he make the design he make money. Everyone make \$50,000, you know, and me, I make [\$]20[,000]. Pour all job.

FORREST SELVIG: How's that possible?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It's possible [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: You mean—[inaudible]—?

LORRIE GOULET: It's a good question [laughs].

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I tell you the process. Si I make the *Alice in Wonderland* alone and no bother me the city and all these kinds of things because the city interfere, the—everything—Mr.—the big chief there—

LORRIE GOULET: Moses?

FORREST SELVIG: Moses.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Moses. Moses no understand in art anything, you know? Mais he's a good designer pour things, you know, urban—the *urbanité* of things.

FORREST SELVIG: Urbanism, yeah.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He's wonderful, mais pour the art, he no understand anything. Anyway, he was completely indifferent. Well, anyway, I make this maquette. The union no permit you to do the last [inaudible], you know? It do be pass pour the union [ph], you know? In this case, I decided [ph] that I do the second and then, after the maquette, I make the group quarter the size, you know? The quarter the size I do take to the man and the one that enlarges. There, it take it 40,000 francs, you know—\$40,000 pour enlarge.

LORRIE GOULET: Forty thousand dollars.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: These \$40,000, the man que make the design he take the 25 percent, you know? Well, after this, I retouch y I pass there—

LORRIE GOULET: Full size.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, four times.

LORRIE GOULET: Full size. You had to make it full size.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, full size. Y after this, you go to the casting man. Again. The casting man, he pay—I think it was another 25 percent. Then it go to the foundry. In the foundry, I go to retouch the wax, because it's coming. One piece it was melt, but I do repeat. It take it times, a lot of times, but anyway, my—I have my intégrité to do it because you can't let the thing fifty-fifty, you know? I read the letters de Michelangelo, study—que es the same thing with the Popes, you know? He had so much trouble. Oh! [Laughs.] Y these people que tell—que pay the money and the man who takes the money and put it in the pocket and

Michelangelo he go the Pope and tell, "Where's this money? I no see anything." He see que him stole the money, but Michelangelo write the letters—beautiful letters—I have them downstairs—beautiful letters. Well, the bronze \$60,000. Sixty thousand dollars, 25 percent. The my commission 25 percent, because it was 25,000, 5,000 for the commission. Result que de man he have \$100,000 [laughs] and me—and me, que I [inaudible] the job— This why I make taille directe [taps the table assertively]. This is the—it's coming de long times. Taille directe, nobody interfere. I do my job, si es lousy is mine. y si es good, is mine, too, you know? Si I make \$10 is—si I tell—it's cheaper, you know, because like that—when I make The Fortaleza—the—all the decoration, everything it was carve direct, you know? I make 20 capitals carve direct. Everything, you know? Well, this job it was the fifth the price que going to cost si I pass pour the union, si I pass pour the things like that. Total is—the people tell, "Oh, this man. The artist. The artist he make a lot of money. Look at this, \$300,000." Baloney. The \$300,000, you have \$50,000. The rest pass en *intermédiaires*. This is why carve direct you. Si you can do a money more in carve direct, well, do in wax que do in bronze, you know? Wax, the same. Direct wax, you know? Mais no pass pour all this kind of thing. This is why I think que the modern times, I'm very influenced with this because I always tell the material direct—work in material direct. Si you make bronze, make the wax y go the foundry, but si you make the clay, you have to cast it, you have to pass the test [ph] y after this— Total is 10 people que work one thing, que just slicks [ph]. No one. There was—mais the men—the entrepreneurs, like in France, they have one man who was chief the police, you know? And one day he had the idea to make a studio de sculpture, you know? A chief the police. He no understand anything in art, but he have some kind. What he do? He take the best sculptor, you know, he give—"You'd like to come to work with me?" "Yes, fine." Another one. Another one. He take 10 sculptors. He make the most important show for 18th century sculpture. He work for all the *château*, all the things, you know? But he no was anything. But he was a man millionaire, you know? He—and this is entrepreneur—mais this is the artist certainly is sacrificed because he no put the name y no put any—name out, you know? And these poor people like Pompon, who worked with Rodin, he never anything que 25 francs or 40 francs a day. Y one day die, he put the sculpture [inaudible], a man the most sincere, the most delicate and things like— 82 years old, he make the first exhibition. And this is what is. It's what art is all pour the public, the public no understand anything, and this is why I talk because I like que the public knows what is this, what the valor the thing, you know? An assistant is—I have an assistant. Sure. You need—you old, you need somebody who carries the stone, someone que help you, sure, mais que you take an assistant and you —make your finish job, you know? This is nonsense. Because him is not happy y I'm not happy, you know? Him, [inaudible]. I tell this like si he was—in this case, the only thing que es possible to do es que the assistant, little by little, he learn my technique, he learn my fashion, and one day, he's beginning to be himself. That's why the teach free, you know? Si no, I do go the school and pay the—that's why I go with an artist, their study, because there it make me tough life, I do take the sacks de plaster, do like that, but I learn all the cooking, all the things, you know? After you select it. And this is what is life.

FORREST SELVIG: And—apparently there still are many artists to do learn this way, who work with distinguished masters and work right long as their assistants, as their—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: If you have a good assistant—good people, like I know somebody que have good people in the [inaudible], like Paul Manship. Paul Manship have wonderful people, but Paul Manship he tell me one day—took me in the studio—he tell, "I admire you." I tell, "Why?" Because I make a [inaudible]. "Why you admire?" "Because you are happy there." You recognize this, you know? "Me, I do \$5,000 a week, I do pay pour the people—the people que I employ, mais you—" I have buen studio like that, all my sculptures was there. I tell, "You—it's easy for you. Why you not do it?" "Oh, my friend. I have a—I'm in the *engrenage*—engrenage, you know? You see? In the wheel.

LORRIE GOULET: He's caught in the wheel.

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, caught in the wheel. Yeah. I see.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah. You can't—I tell, "Well, you have the wife, you have children, you have the schools, you have everything." He tell, "Well, I no have anything [inaudible] [laughs]." This is why it's question—is question de sacrifice pour de art o be a business man. In this case you make brassieres or shoes or anything, you know? Like that you make money. Why you touch the art? Why these people touch the art pour make money? Like that—you can't be rich with the art—you can't be rich. Modigliani was poor. After—well, Picasso certainly is rich, mais is inconscient, is not the fault of him. The things come. Mais a painter

is more easy, you know? A painter is more easy. All the painters paint direct, you know? A painter no tell, "You come, you painting for me." Sometimes the assistants he tell, "Prepare this canvas," "Do this," that's why the painters is more—more honest in this case, you know? But the sculptors is all cooking [ph]. And all the sculptors they have—they give to pointed machine, they give to the marble, they give to the patin [ph], they give everything—total, what he do? I remember one day Gréber he was—Gréber he was marvelous. One man he bring a little figure like that. He tell, "Mr. Gréber, I'd like to make this ten feet or five feet in marble." And Gréber, he tell, "Okay. It's 10,000 francs, or—" fine. And when he finish the work, he coming the man. He tell, "Very good, Mr. Gréber. I like it. But this drapery—" "This drapery?" He take the little maquette, he tell, "I call this [laughs]—bad word, a French bad word—this is what I call." Because—

FORREST SELVIG: *Merde*, you mean?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: *Merde* [laughs]. I call la merde. And the guy was so— "But, Mr. Gréber—" "Why would you bring me a thing—I do take a model for you—I do build and everything. Why you told me that? You complained pour the drapery." And this why happen many things. Another guy bring one figure with a bird. And this is in the [inaudible] in Paris. Somebody very *proéminent* que do this thing. And the plaster it was like that. Gréber cut the body in two. He put two inches [ph]. The arm he take two inches and put three inches in the another one and then it fixes everything—and after he make it marble, it was beautiful, you know? And the—when it come the lady, she tell, "Oh, Mr. Gréber. I'm so wonderful artist." She tell. And Gréber he tell, "And me, too." [Laughs.]

FORREST SELVIG: [Laughs.] Marvelous.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: [Laughs.] "And me too." This—because he may do all these kinds of things for everyone. All the artists de New York—de France they go there. He have two houses, que make the marble pour the—and this why I was so *indigeste* de things like that que I feel the unique thing to do is carve yourself, you know? And this why I'm sure I put so many enemies. Mateo Hernández, Hervé [ph], another fellow. We was the [inaudible] people because the business people was against us, you know? "Taille directe," "Taille directe," "Taille directe." They put you down, you know? Because they tell, "You are limited. You are limited. With taille directe, you are limited." I'm not limited. [Inaudible.] It's possible do anything. A sculptor like that is possible be a [inaudible], you know? This one is limited is these guys who do this, but we are not limited. We—in one piece de stone, you find anything don't you want [ph]. Well, you have some things sometimes—you have always things, sometimes a piece of stone it have a form, you know, you follow the form, you are con pris [ph], this is economy, the times, you know, economy, many things. You have—but anyway, it's your imagination. In carve direct is your imagination, your observation and—in the old times, the people—all the Romanesque is carve direct—tout the capitals, [inaudible]—sometimes is the barbershop, sometimes is the butcher, you know, the people tell, "Eh, come there make me a [inaudible]," the butcher he was so happy, you know? [Laughs.] [Inaudible.] This is why the capitals sometimes is so genuine, so wonderful, sometimes is by the artist already, but this thing is folklore, you know? The people this—this is what is art, it's like a poetry, you know? Art is something, an expression, désirs, love, all kind of beautiful things, you know? But you can't mix this with the—I tell you, the man is like that. You can't do anything. Always you have a smart man, an innocent man, you know? The one who is pure, the one—you know? That's why these people que is in the East Side they try to return to this purity, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: You mean the East Village?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes, Village. All this [inaudible] these people pour—some ones, I'm sure que is wonderful.

FORREST SELVIG: Are they returning to the original purity, or—? I wasn't aware of that.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: [Laughs.] Well—this—I tell you last times. Nothing is lost. Everything's good pour something. We come here and the—I don't know why—sometimes I'm angry y I beat my son. I don't know why, pour what, you know? I don't like it. I love—you know? Mais you beat your son, you know, because he do something wrong, you know? And then—and sometimes you tell the people, "Why you eat this? It's bad." Why you do this? Why you interfere in the business de somebody else, you know? But this is something subconscient. It's preserve, you know? It's love, sometimes, you know? It's something que you do in

opposite sense that what the people take it. The people take it sometimes very cruel and things like that. There's one thing in Spanish que tell, "The one that he love you, it make you cry." The one that no love you, he no care, you know? And this true, you know? "*Quien bien te quiere te hará llorar*," you know?

UNKNOWN: The one who loves you best may—will make you cry.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And this why you no—used this word. Certainly, sometimes for *camoufler* the things, you know? [Laughs.] Because everything is like that, you know? Pure *encontre* [ph]. Pure *encontre*. This what is life, you know? Life is always pure *encontre*. Sometimes, you say the good things pour benefit personal and sometimes, you know? This way pour believe you do really understand why physical, why your moods, why your things, your insistence and the results. There you possible judge, you know? It's always very complicate [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: Do you think that when you talk about the difference between purity—by this I think you—an artist—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: *Pureté*—

FORREST SELVIG: —an artist who's an artist to create art—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah.

FORREST SELVIG: Which is different from somebody who's going to make money. Perhaps, do you think that the times have changed for the artist now, they're different? The relationship with the artist and society is different now from before the war?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, the art take many routes today, you know? The art before it was more—the people it was *analphabète* and the artist he do produce image pour the people, you know? It was really a function—cultural function because the people no read y no—all the Bible is *illuminer* [ph] for the same reason. The ones donde they have simple Bible, they no need—but the people que no have—that's why there it was another kind of thing. Little by little, the art is entered the business, you know, y entered the architectonic cheap things, you know? Is a [inaudible] forms—forms for *frigidaires*, forms for automobile, forms for everything, you know? *Es decir*, que the sculptor now is more a mechanic, you know? The sculptor who make clay is more a mechanic, you know? The sculptor que make a stone will stay already prehistoric, you know? It's something que the function is very difficult de put carve direct, you know? And the—and monumental things, you know? Because if you try to make *Alice in Wonderland* en stone I pass all my life, you know? It's difficult, you know? That's why the—today we have many mediums pour—architectonic mediums, you know? It's all—you see when you make a house and make a thing, you make a big high and the best he makes some sculptors que no—que is not sculpture more, que es just a piece de stone, you know, it's a form. In Sixth Avenue you have three things there, que I don't know was there [inaudible]. You don't know—you tell—well, the architect is a friend—he tell, "Do something —" "I think this is going to be very good. Make an stone, you put there," you know? That's why is nonsense. Mais the point to be creative it got more *constructeur*—constructivism—you go and then—and the—you see, in Mexico I see—yesterday—the day before—you have a square—you've been in Mexico?

FORREST SELVIG: No.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, they have a square where these people is supposed—in comparison with us—you know? And the—but they have the Indians sleep there in the square. Nobody touch anything. Everything is plenty all the square de sculpture. Beautiful things, you know? Respect, you know? You know? Si you put this in Central Park, it no stay one minute, you know, because it take the—this man que have there with the [inaudible] with this—

LORRIE GOULET: Hans Christian Andersen.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Anderson. They steal the dog ten times! The little dog.

FORREST SELVIG: Really?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: [Laughs.] The foundry do make all the times a little dog. Bronze, you know? Sell bronze. In Paris, they do the same, you know? But Mexico, I was astonished to

see this beautiful—all things *délicat*—things *délicat*—que anybody do like that, you take it down. Well. Well, this is there you have an assemblage that many [inaudible] many ways. You have stone, you have iron, you have thing. This why is very difficult to tell what people going to react. Today tell what it going to come the Realism, it going to come the Rococo—yes, you have a lot of intentions. In the *Times* de yesterday, or the day before, we had a picture de—a picture Romantic—you see this picture, he make a critic—this—the writer—well —

FORREST SELVIG: In the Sunday *Times*?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Sunday *Times*. He have a painting *complètement* romantic, you know, que look like a Picasso in the—

FORREST SELVIG: Oh, yes, yes, yes! [Inaudible.] He mentioned.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: He mentioned. Well, this thing is business because the unique way to make business es de remove, you know, de make what is in the—if you like a water very—like that you do like that all the same [inaudible] and certainly you have opaque water, but si you like it clear, leave the rest [ph], you know? And like that the *gradué*, the things come. Mais most the—most the things is, "*En tiempo revuelto ganancia de pescadores*," you know? Translate it. [Laughs.]

UNKNOWN: In the messed up time—messed time—weather is—

LORRIE GOULET: Good time to fish.

UNKNOWN: The fisherman profits from it.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: ProfitS.

FORREST SELVIG: So you mean when—the fisherman profits in stormy weather, is that right?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yes. Yes, because the fisherman, when he has a tempest, the water is like —and the fish eat, you know? But when the thing—nobody fish, you know? But the fish no see, mais—and the fisherman he profit this. That's why when this kind of thing, the man profit this, you know? This turbulence. That's why it is today more que anything [inaudible], one day que is in the bottom, you put on the top and things like that, but this is not indication pour the future. This is indication—commercial indication, mais the future—the future, I think que the art plastic—the art stay—what it stay, mais will pass this period and the future I now think que going to be sculptors—sculptors—they're going to need construction, architecture, very strange architecture because the artist he going to put—he going to be a period the architecture—more que the *ingénierie*—because this training—the all this constructivism—all this kind of things que they do today, this is an image pour the new future houses, pour make more the houses they're going to need—in my idea—the things are going to be more human, more interesting, more great, you know? Less—all these things que do now is just because circumstances—you do change everything and the money, the taxes, and everything is very—and the conditions de war, it needs money, money and no have times pour think in beautiful. You think more in *practique* things for—that's why a house is *practique*, you know? It's not a house que es any beauty, you know? But it's *practique*. The people live there like a bis [ph] [inaudible] and the—mais it's not a thing que going to stay there. In 50 years or 100 years all the things going the people—going to be so sterile, so dry, que you can't support. That's why the *aéroplane* going to influence very much. Everything going to—I think that the life is going to change man—art plastic sculptor, the bibelot [ph], the things like that, this is question the cemeteries, question the things like that. There are going to be *placé* more in great things, more like a—the Mayas [ph], you know, in the architecture. It going to return the great thing, no the small thing. After, the derivative is going to come again, the subject, the things like that—but before we're going to *reconstruire*, all the urbanism it going to be changed. That is what I think.

FORREST SELVIG: I take it you're very optimistic about the future.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Huh?

FORREST SELVIG: You are optimistic about the future.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Optimistic, yes. Possible. Possible. You no going to be there; I no going to be there, mais I feel the indications—I see the indications.

FORREST SELVIG: But now, in something like the minimal sculpture, the minimal art piece, you know? Like Snelson or some of the others, you wonder, what can happen after that? What—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, after this—you know in Egypt they make the pyramids, they make all the things, you know? This is before. And the—and then they make all the constructions, all the—after is coming the *nécessité*, you know? The *décor intérieur*. The *décor intérieur* is coming in the glass, the paint, the things, you know, the [inaudible], all the things. It's more *intime*, more fun, mais you do remember que the *aéroplane* and the things like that—it going to be the trips, the [inaudible] is going to be so enormous, so easy. Why you going to—the style is going to be general—no going to be an style American, a style French, things like that. It going to be a general style. This case, the artist he going to be international. All international, you know? It going to change completely the methods. It going to change all the constructions, too, because these kinds of constructions you no understand either, cause you going something possible *souterraine*, possible—we have a lot of things que you can't imagine, but the indications is the movies, the imaginations, all the things, the things que you do pour the war, the mechanic things que you do pour move the Earth, pour move all the stones, all the minerals, all the things—this is another indication. The machines, you—they're monstrous things. Why you going to make a piece de sculpture [inaudible], a thing pour—a bibelot [laughs]. This is—disappear complètement. In the big thing disappear. And the man he going to be so different, too, the education que no [inaudible] the appreciation—the appreciation I think que going to be more in the worlds, in the things, in the architecture, in the—more in the things enormous—the things que going to be formidable, you know? Possibly each nation it going to—the things impossible to craft [ph] today. It needs pour this big avions que going to make constructions, they're going to be so big, so enormous, you know, and the souterrain and the [inaudible] and the—oh, I see the future, but I see completely—no comparison with today. Impossible. Impossible. Pour [inaudible] communications, you know? No world—just one world, that's all. This one, after, the astrosphere is going to have—stops and different, you know? It going to form cities in the air, you know? This is what all the technology going to go with this. This why the artist—the artist is going to need—the industrial is going to be there, the architect is going to be there, engineer—this is yes. This is yes—but the artist que going to [inaudible] a do a thing like that. What—this is good for a little—pour a little anti [ph] thing, but this is not going to be anti. It going to be terrific. Terrific [laughs]. This is why I'm interested in this. When I see the movies, what invented, all these guys que did the television, who do all these kinds of things, these people work so hard pour try to explain what the go there, the submarine interior, the things like that, it's so childish, you know? Very childish, you know? They try to make fairy tales with a little things like that. But this is no—the man no going to [inaudible] like that. The man going to be so big and so strong. Y, too—because like—in the meantime—like ants [ph], de one place to another place, you know? The people possible to direct, it going to be some direction certainly, it going to be some master there. This democracy I think this is just for us, mais for these people, they not going to have democracy.

FORREST SELVIG: What do you think they'll have?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: It going to be totalitarian way, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: You think so?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Oh, sure. You can't—like a beast, you know? Somebody—because it's so big, you know? You can't leave a man—the responsabilité is going to be so big, at bottom everything fall down. You can't leave a man alone. You do take the man really like a part de conception, the concept. All concept, you know? And the concept every day grey [ph], every day go, every day grow. It's not finished—with this—is when arriver to—de *vaincre* the distance [ph] and the atmosphere—de things that arrive de one point to another point, you know, and this world is going to be one pivot [ph] by another worlds. I think everything, everything going to be more unified [inaudible], conquête [ph] de one world to another world and the other things que you see in the—this is possible—it's going to be possible. It's going to be possible.

FORREST SELVIG: It certainly seems to me that the world is getting more and more alive all the time. More and more alive.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: All the catastrophe, everything down, you know? It's two point. Si uno es the imagination go, you arriver to this, but si the imagination is closed para catastrophe, like a [inaudible], somebody who touch a button and this—all the atomic [laughs] energy que you have—

LORRIE GOULET: An accident.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Everything go out. All these dreams is finished. The man coming primitive again. They're going to be with [laughs] because it's possibly to inverse, you know? Si coming inverse, all the—in this world you have several catastrophes like that, donde the man lose all the power, all the thing, is beginning grow again, you know? Tired. Now everything is inspection [ph]. It's inexpect [ph], but you have indications, but you never know what is happening. Mais—I let [ph] the—I let the Earth [inaudible]. I don't know what is the [inaudible] the things like that [laughs]. Certainly, we no are anything, but something is in one thing donde is *impénétrable*. You can't. Possibly with times, you know? Mais what are you going to—what are you going to tell? You arriver there. You can't go more—your imagination stop.

FORREST SELVIG: Something that's beyond understanding, is that it?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Our understanding. It's something—that's what—the small religions—the small religions—sure, you—is part the conceptions, part the things to maintain, and grow, the people becoming today more *éduqué*. The people read, you have very—the analphabètes disappear, and more—everything, everything, everything grow. Mais it grow in your times and my times, but after the second generation is going to be in the same stage que we are before, they going to progress, just que there where you are now y after is going to be. This is why no—en réalité, the communication is—si you compare your times with the Egyptians or with the Mesopotamian, you can't—you can't imaginer the life these people, you can't—you think que exists, then you see the tales, you know? You see the sculptures, the temples, you think—mais you no—mais the things still—still they are easy to see, but you can't enter in the spirit of these people. That's why the progress is just a *momentané*, you know, it's something que you pass through the steps. Steps, steps, steps. Force steps against steps and then when you arriver there, die, another step. This why nobody going to—in future, a Montezuma if you tell que today Mexico they have in the square [laughs] big show de sculpture, you know, que have a radio y que have like that is for him—it's extraordinary. Si Napoleon he have this, boy. Si Napoleon have this, the world is to him. The world is to the war world [ph], out the world, anything. That's why many things these people—in 100 years, the man—you are going to tell the same. You are going to tell, "Si these people de New York who talk now they had this, oh, boy!" [Laughs.] Everybody dream, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: But do you think then that in the future the role of the artist will be more important?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: More important. Oh, sure. More important. More important, no—no in the *Terre*. Because today is—the *Terre* is what the poetry, this—poetry, you see, go the same, you know? Is the *plaisir* [ph], you know? It's another thing. The poets they dream and things like that, mais no [inaudible]. Write poetry de your times—it's very difficult to write the poetry of your times. Sure, the jazz, all these things, you know, que exist today, the noises, all the things, is one goal, you know, but a poet like all times. The noises is so different, the things que bother you are so different, the emotions is so different, you know? That's why you can't—more and more and more and more is going to be very interesting. I—like you interested today in this. I live for the curiosité. Si—that's why I no like to die because I have curiosité, you know? And this curiosité maintain me, you know? When I work, when I work, when I do like things—when I sleep, when I dream, when I think, it's always the curiosité, you know? It's something—I—mais when you arriver the point—like Michelangelo tell, "Si I live 600 years, you know, I'd be a master." [Laughs.] He'd be a master. But what the—you can't. It's transfusion—transfusion, you know, is when *hériter* the jewel [ph]. It's an heritage. I don't know why I involved in this, I'm sorry [laughs]. I met you [inaudible] times for tell you a lot of things possible completely. I like—it's a dream, you know? I like to dream this. I like to see this. I like to see this. Sometimes, I beautiful dreams. Beautiful dreams, and then I tell, "Boy, si was possible," you know? [Laughs.]

FORREST SELVIG: Have you gone back to Spain recently or would you go back?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I was in Spain several times final, you know, because before I—Franco, no you was everybody, certainly, and the—I was disgusted y I tell, "I no go to Spain jusqu'à I die," you know? [Laughs.] Mais, after I see more objectively y I tell, "Well, afterwards, this is not important." You can't let the plaisir—si my subconscious it like to come back to Spain, go. I'm not the boss [ph]. Il go. Spain is—it make a lot of progress in one things, lot of bad thing in other things. I was in my little town, Guadalajara, y I see the young people, but these young people they tell me, "Oh, I was 12 years old and things like that—when I—is the revolution, mais I was in Mallorca—cuando revolution, three days before I was in Mallorca. And the—I receive a check de New York y I have a studio in Paris and this check I like to *liquider* in Mallorca, but the banker he tell me, "Oh, you like to go to Paris—because I asked the money pour go to Paris—pour liquidate my studio—and the—he tell, "Well, in this case why you no change the check there—que is more easy—here possibly going to take it eight days before you have the money. Go there." I tell, "Well, it's very good idea," but I don't have money y I tell, "The best thing—oh, y one man que was there he tell—a friend of mine—he tell, "Don't worry, you have lot of watercolors. Make an exhibition de watercolors y I buy two watercolors, you know, and possibly somebody buy more and things like that. And with this you have already for the trip." I tell, "It's good idea," y I make this exhibition and he take two watercolors, another take—well, I make a little money pour pay my trip y I go tto take the ticket pour the night and then three days before the—I take the boat—no, is happen—and many things against, mais my *volonté* was strong, I don't know why. I was in—I see a cakes in one *pâtisserie*, beautiful cakes. Y I enter there y I eat three, four, and I walk in the street with a lady que was with me—que I do take her because the husband he tell me to take her to Paris—and then I have a pain, terrific pain, terrific pain. I begin to—I sit down in the café y I begin to perspire, to perspire, and chills, I was *empoisonner*.

FORREST SELVIG: Poisoning?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Poisoned, yeah.

UNKNOWN: Poisoned with something in the cake he ate.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: And then, I tell—she tell me, "I take you home again, you can't go any place like that." I tell, "Well, we go to dinner." She tell, "No, you can't go to dinner." I tell, "Okay." Y I—terrific pain—y I take a bottle de Marfil [ph]—the wine—like that, y I drink everything [laughs]. I make pump the stomach, you know

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JOSÉ DE CREEFT: I take it everything y I'm drunk after [laughs] y I—and this lady take me by the arm drunk and sing in the street, you know, things like that, mais I was cured. [Laughs.] She take me at 9:00, she take me the boat, because the boat going at 9:00 for Barcelona. In the boat—I entered drunk y [inaudible] I sleep in the air there [inaudible] the night. Next day arriver a Barcelona. I was cured, you know [laughs]—stay outside. In Barcelona, I'm beginning to see people with [inaudible], you know, and one lady que was there she tell, "Revolution," like that. Oh, yes, revolution. Here revolutions every three months, this is not—no going to stay, but I arrive—I take the train pour the frontier, in the frontier I have a passport, American passport, mais Spanish, make Spanish in—pour the consulate, pour go to Spain. Mais I no was American in these times. Y I arriver the frontier y I present my passport and, "Americano," I pass through. And the other ones stop. The lady que was with me—a French passport—passed through. We was another part the frontier already, but the customs in France—the people—the lady [inaudible]. She tell, "Well, *hasta* next year." "Yes, you think so." [Laughs.] "De que *te crees tú eso, ¿no?*" "You think so." Well, y I arrive, I take the train and I go to Paris. Y en Paris, three days que no I have news because it stay my wife y two children there, you know? In Mallorca. I know this, y bombard the place donde she was and I was very *inquiét*. Eighteen days pass y finally the American, English boat it take all the family with everything. That's why I lose everything in Mallorca what I have, you know? My wife come with just a little—because you can't take—

FORREST SELVIG: Baggage.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Right. But you imaginer si I stay there, si no let me pass. It was really a miracle because this passport it no was American at all. It was Spanish make in America, but the guy que was in the—"Americano." He no understand. And si no, I do take a part de one, or the another one, you can't stay there neutral, impossible. Spanish [ph]. And the—oh, you know, I have very good luck, many times. Things happened to me que—many—in France,

here, in every place. I always—some people que guard me here for bother the people [laughs] and this way you can't go away—this way you can't tell why you stay or why you go.

FORREST SELVIG: Now tell me this was the revolution against the king, against Alfonso.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, this is—it was against—Primo de Rivera. It was against the Republic.

FORREST SELVIG: This is the Civil War. Oh, yes.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: The Republic.

FORREST SELVIG: In '36.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah. In the times the Republic—the worker don't know, they think it was communism. [Inaudible] take everything. You tell, "No, no, no, this a Republic." The Guerra Civil. This is was the mistake. It do change the Guerra Civil. Because the Guerra Civil is [inaudible], it's a—is something pour the Spanish que hate the Guerra Civil, you know? The street [inaudible], the things like that, is something tragic, you know? Mais si—in this moment, when it change, you never put this, put another hat, you know? And the people is more happy. No. Still the same. And this why the people it was so angry, you know? They conserve the same—the same pictures, you know que the people hate, you know?

FORREST SELVIG: The same symbols?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Same symbols.

FORREST SELVIG: That were under the kingdom.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah, yeah. The same symbols the kingdom. Mais the Republic—well, it was too sweet, you know? It was too sweet. There's—

FORREST SELVIG: Too sweet?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Too sweet, yeah.

FORREST SELVIG: What do you mean by that?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Well, you know, when you make a change, unfortunately you do—

FORREST SELVIG: You just cut things up and kill people.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: You take the people there. Mais Sanjurjo, Franco y another one they put in the [inaudible], you know? It return, an armistice with promise que never going to do anything against the constitution. But the first thing he do is with the Germans by Portugal he entered everything pour Spain, you know? But si kill these three lives, everything it was finished. Mais you can't conserve—a revolution this kind—humanité revolution—the [inaudible]—indulgence is very difficult. The revolution is—the guys que stay before, you know, it's always the same. [Inaudible.]

FORREST SELVIG: In other words, you feel that if Franco had been killed—

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No revolution.

FORREST SELVIG: —the revolution would never had occurred, the Civil War.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Y Sanjurjo, and another one.

FORREST SELVIG: But you don't feel that it was a popular revolution then.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: No, it no was a popular revolution. It no was popular. It was—the Catholicism it was very—in this group—que was a big group, you know? It was very mixed because you had the anarchists, the [inaudible], all the kind of things, you know? Mais I think que si no have a—this man—and many people is the opinion, it was easy. But Germany it have a—Germany, a field there pour experiment, you know, and this what it use it. And these people was so stupid, you know? Because Germany it was no pour protect Spain ni anything, it was a place pour—

FORREST SELVIG: Proving Ground for the second World War.

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah. And Mussolini—I was in Mallorca when the [inaudible] que die. He's coming there with all the float, the avions, and [inaudible], you know?

FORREST SELVIG: [Inaudible.]

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Yeah. Pour see what the situation. Everybody was against that, you know? Because si see something, do this, and certainly, there the liberals—all the liberals—they see this guy, you know? But you can't do anything, you know? When I was in The Fortaleza, when I worked—y I see all these avions there. Beautiful, because they have this wonderful bay, special pour put the—la bella Pollensa. And come in the study, and the Fortaleza after was the headquarters de Franco. He killed 600 people in Mallorca [inaudible] the workers—these workers they were innocent—they no was—they don't know what is this ni—completely analphabète. He killed 600 people. Liberals. All liberals. A man que work like that, with no legs, in the army—you know these people who have a cast, no legs. It was my shoes maker was—the poor guy was liberal, you know, you can't—but he's right to be liberal with no legs and everything, you know? He was *fusillé*. Several painters que was there. Several people que no—justq'à—I'm sure que I'm fusillé, too [laughs].

FORREST SELVIG: Fusillé like that?

JOSÉ DE CREEFT: Si I was there, they fusillé me, too. Mais I have friends in two camps, you know? The aristocracy—que was conservative—and the workers. I know the caciques—los caciques—people terrific they want to exploit the poor workers and make work 12 hours a day—de *sol a sol*—three pesetas a day. Terrific, you know? And this people—Adán Diehl, que was a good man, when he make the Hotel Formentor, it change the system de hours. He tell, "There eight hours," and these people—he was a—[inaudible] kill him [laughs] because he tell, "You spoil everything because these people going to sleep." He changed the eight hours, he give eight pesetas a day, you know? It was the ruin de Adán Diehl, too. But, anyway, the Conde Peralada or Conde de *esto*—all these people there, you know, all these people they were against because—but one day I talk with them, like that. They no understand. They no understand real what is liberal, what is—and what is one thing and other thing.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]