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Oral history interview with Karl Drerup, 1974 November 15-1975 January 28

Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Karl Drerup on November 15, 1974 and January 28, 1975. The interview was conducted in Thornton, NH by Robert Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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

ROBERT BROWN: This is an interview in Thornton, New Hampshire in November 15, 1974 with Karl Drerup and I would like to begin by—if you will talk a bit about your childhood. I know your family was a very old one in Westphalia [Germany] and if you could give some feeling of your family as you knew them and some of the memories of your earlier childhood.

KARL DRERUP: All right. A very strictly orthodox Roman Catholic family to begin with. This is one of the main elements of my terribly religious middle-class shelter, if you wish. *Ja*, this would be a good description. Of course, First World War fell into my time, into my youth.

ROBERT BROWN: You were about 10 when it started; weren't you?

KARL DRERUP: Yeah, and we saw the army go out on horseback and come back on horseback you might say is what happened—during the war, my mother's and my stepfather's particular interests were to have one of their children become a clergyman. So I was marched off with my brother who passed on already to a monastery education—to an oblate education; part of my very humanistic education was received through Cistercians. This is a religious order that normally is not engaged in education.

ROBERT BROWN: But they were, this one.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, this was a very, very, very, very church oriented school, very small, 27 students, 2 students to a master.

ROBERT BROWN: Where was it?

KARL DRERUP: This would be in the Westerwald near Hachenburg which is quite close to Bonn. But my mother is of Rhinish [Rheinisch? –ed.] origin and my mother came out of this region. My mother's family in particular were associated with the church.

ROBERT BROWN: And it was a classical education?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. And taught all Greek and Latin, of course.

ROBERT BROWN: You went when you were about twelve and half?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, it was too early, you see. And I proved, in so many ways, to be unsuitable for a monastic education. See, I simply—my brother was optimus [ph]. So I was really pessimus [ph]. So in a sense, we were—we had great love for one another despite of the fact that I was always filled up with the devil and mischievous, if you wish. I had a sense of mocking. I do remember one wonderful little [inaudible].

I had a little calico book—a little tiny book or tiny like a little notebook only and I had made it full of caricatures. This was a way of releasing my vengeful feeling towards authority, you might say. And I—we had kerosene lamps by which we studied in study hall, standing, not sitting, mind you. And I do recall one event. I had it all very carefully hidden and not even my—ja, one friend of mine in school knew about it. But I saw quite all of the sudden the hand of the sub-prefect coming across my shoulder grabbing this little book during study hall. It was a wintery night. And it was hidden. I thought I nearly died. You see, that was hidden. I had to immediately go to chapel; nothing but praying.

Then I, for three days, no *ricreazione* [ph: perhaps "recreation" pronounced as if a German word –ed.] You see, that means no recreation of any kind and we were already limited in that, you might say. So I think it was the second night. Again, I was peeling away at the rosary. Terrible.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, did you feel very repentant?

KARL DRERUP: None at all. No, I was a mischievous—but I was afraid. I really was afraid. Because they were—I had my teachers in there; Pater Otto, Pater so-and-so. Everyone was in there. The abbot was walking with the devil behind him. Ja, and it was a little, tiny, tiny booklet, a square, you know, with these blue little lines into it.

So to make it short, the second night—I believe it was the second night in my punishment, I sneaked out of chapel. There were three chapels in the complex; a beautiful abbey. And I got into the cloisters—you know what the cloisters are. There are two cloisters; one is for the patris and one is for the fratris—the brethren and the lay brethren. They—I sneaked in there and this had a window that led into the recreation room of the monks—you see, of the patris. I could look through there.

And what do you think I saw? There was a big billiard table—a billiard, you understand, with a green light over it. And there they were standing. And the first one I saw was Pater Constantine. Pater Constantine having the little thing and these outlines on his nose and they were laughing and laughing and laughing. This is the [inaudible]. And I trembled. I was so afraid I would be caught. You see, I shudder.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, they were looking at your book.

KARL DRERUP: This ruined my character. You know, this was really bad for me. Because what it did, it showed that I was on top of it again. You see, this was—it wasn't too good for me. I was sassy, you might say, and I was not too obedient. But I knew that I had gone over a bit and I—the booklet was restored to me, when I left, by Pater Leo who had written into it a passage, [inaudible], you know, things like this, which means, "What I see here is a gift of God," you know, this sort of thing.

But they were fair-minded people. I would not say anything. But this is part of my education. And then I really, really wanted to be an artist. And I was—

ROBERT BROWN: But you couldn't do it there.

KARL DRERUP: No, oh, no, no.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

KARL DRERUP: My family was very opposed to it, really.

ROBERT BROWN: They were?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, not sternly—you know, it was disapproved of, because—

ROBERT BROWN: Why?

KARL DRERUP: An artist—to be an artist—they would have loved to see a professional man.

ROBERT BROWN: Your family were brewers; is that right?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, no, my father died when I was a year old. And my mother married again and my mother married an engineer who was a specialist in city planning. You might say economizations and often [inaudible], you know he had a fairly considerable firm with lots of designers and he was—his ideal of life was hunting big stuff.

And there was simply—my mother was a wonderful musician and more than way beyond the average—she really—we had a very musical house, you might say. We all played and a house of music; Schubert, *Forelle* [inaudible] and they practice—

ROBERT BROWN: But she had a very—they had a very limited outlook on creativity?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I would say it was limited also due to the fact that they were so strictly bound to religious precepts. You see, that they— that the very fact that to design a nude didn't occur to them, things like that. I remember when I finally was allowed to go to the Künstgewerbeschule which was a sort of step down for me in their eyes—

ROBERT BROWN: What did religion mean to them; do you think, particularly?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, it was completely—ruled their lives. They were utterly, utterly orthodox.

ROBERT BROWN: Rather puritanical?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, you might say that there was a puritanical streak in it. And it had, of course, a liturgical year

of the Roman church is, of course, is a marvelous work of art in the sense as to the ever-recurring feasts and so forth. And this in a town, Münster in Westphalen and not a shred of industry, almost 100,000 people. The university bishop was two regiments, you see, garrisons.—town with all the preferences of a very well-regulated society into which our grandfathers, the Drerups, in this instance, had broken into, because they had become well-off and very well-to-do, in fact very well-to-do in such matters as cement, spinning [inaudible] fiber, construction, et cetera. They had a lot of things and the generation of my father really didn't work, because their father did. And then when I finally was allowed to go to school, I was one of those who passed through freshman year in a matter of a few weeks. And senior year was even given to me.

ROBERT BROWN: Which school was it?

KARL DRERUP: That was the Künstgewerbeschule in Münster where this was the year '24 when I—see when we had a different system in Europe for schools; a looser arrangement. We didn't have this rigid—

ROBERT BROWN: How did you begin there—the curriculum—

KARL DRERUP: The curriculum was the painting, drawing—you might say, in fact, of drawing—the greatest emphasis was on drawing, of course. And I just passed through with flying colors. I was not very cautious—

ROBERT BROWN: About what year was that you began? About 1918 or—

KARL DRERUP: No, a little later. A little bit—'24—1920, 1921. Then I had 1924, the five of us and sometimes six of us made the first real great trip. I had been to Italy once before.

ROBERT BROWN: You had?

KARL DRERUP: Ja . A short visit.

ROBERT BROWN: With your family?

KARL DRERUP: No, no. A short visit also with friends. But then we were the whole year in Spain, all of 1924 when there weren't any tourists. It was a remarkable experience. I mean I can really tell stories of Spain.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, did you go there to study?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, and we were—we got very proficient in Spanish, you might say, and paint of course and travel. I have seen that Spain from top to bottom, this way and that way. And in fact, I had made a horseback trip from Córdoba to Badajoz on the Portuguese frontier all the way through Extremadura alone on a bit of a bet, you know, one of those daring things—a very foolish thing. I mean I was out of Córdoba all for me to prove, you might say. Nobody would accept a piece of paper money, a duro, silver piece—you carry a piece of silver for a couple of weeks. It was really a lot of fun, a remarkable experience of the care I received and nobody would have done any harm to me—or couldn't have done any harm to me because I was such an oddball that—you see, such a—they had never seen an Allemande. They asked me, "Why do you come here?" And they would say afterwards—unbelievable generosity, they would say, "What are you going to tell about Spain when you go home?" You know, things like that.

ROBERT BROWN: They were very sensitive about it?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. And I really got to love Spain and, of course, I wrote about it and, in fact, I wrote even about bull fighting, because there was such an enthusiasm that the League for the kindness to animals got under my neck.

ROBERT BROWN: In Germany?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja, when it was published, of course. And I illustrated this—

ROBERT BROWN: Why do you think you wanted so badly to travel out of Germany?

KARL DRERUP: To get away from it all and of course a restlessness, you might say, and the frame of my upbringing was exceedingly rigid, you might say. And this was the total release on the other side. Of course, it brought me down by '25, '26 and most of '27 I was sick. I got a bout of tuberculosis. And my—and then I returned to my family—the original family—the Drerup family—

ROBERT BROWN: During that time, what—did you paint at all while you were sick?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I tried all sorts of things. And I was down flat on my back for eight months, which was pretty hard to take. I was [inaudible] and I was in [inaudible] and I was in the Alps and there was this notion in those

days that you had to live high in order to—and live outside, mind you, in the winter time, things like that.

So then I overcame and I promised to my uncle—I had an uncle, a cousin of my father, with whom I was really—I owe him really a great deal more than I can even say here, because he was very generous to me. He was alone and he was a bit of a—he was a bit of an alcoholic, you might say. And the family—we all loved one another very dearly and the family was very tightly knit. But he was—we two didn't go to church. This is the first—we were not exactly in the frame of the Drerups—and—

ROBERT BROWN: You lived with him in Switzerland?

KARL DRERUP: No, no, no. He subsidized me. He—no, he stayed home. But I came home and he saw me every now and then. But I promised him to return to a sanitarium in 1927 in the fall and this is the first time I really was not honest and I lied to him. I—in the middle of it, I—instead of going to Switzerland, I went to Berlin and I changed the train. It was on the spur of the moment. I mean it was just destiny, you see.

ROBERT BROWN: You couldn't stand going back to the sanitarium?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I wanted to go to this one man. I wanted to be a student of this man Hans Meid, who was really—he was a romantic book illustrator, you might say, a wonderful graphic artist, but completely forgotten today.

ROBERT BROWN: Is that because you had had the—in Münster you had chiefly done drawing? Admired the—

KARL DRERUP: All painting—oh, I did lots of things. I even worked in the fresco in churches in summer times. You see, we had—in that respect I had very wonderful training. The training was really solid. And the masters we had, Mr. Brücker [ph], Professor Brücker. He was a good man—really good. He cared about the essentials—more and more. But it never dawned on me that I would ever have been interested in pottery or in ceramics.

All I wanted to make is graphic art and painting. So I came to Berlin and, believe it or not, which is still a bit of a miracle, I placed myself at the Academy—that's the [inaudible] Hochschule Bildenden Künste at that time called the Vereinigten Staatsschulen, because this was to offset the influence of the Bauhaus. This is the opposite schooling, in a sense, to counteract it. I wouldn't say to oppose it really.

ROBERT BROWN: They—so they renamed it partly—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, partly. It was an old academy. It was the old classical academy, you know, of Schinkel and the great names of Berlin. But it was at that time, just undoubtedly one of the great schools. And of course, the men today—we think of men like Karl Hofer almost forgotten again. I'm so mindful of how our teachers paled away. And at that time, they were such great men in our eyes, to see this retrospectively.

ROBERT BROWN: Would you say you had come out of quite a conservative art background at this point?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, very much. Not extremely, mind you. This is the difference between what I'm seeing today when I have—after having taught for so many years. After seeing what's going on, I'm partly aghast to see when they experiment for the sake of experimentation. And very often it's become so meaningless, in fact, you know, that it is either amusing or revolting or completely indifferent.

ROBERT BROWN: You were the—you would experiment only to work within—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, and dig down into—

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible] on something you had.

KARL DRERUP: And I've never got rid of it. I'd better say that. My experimentations are now fairly late in life as you can see the slides from which show that. I had tried to pay homage, or you might say, tribute to this—you have to experiment in order to get under the surfaces and whatnot.

I had—sometimes I cannot help saying what I feel, too, when I see not necessarily Jackson Pollock, but Jackson Pollock—basically he says this. "You see, I have nothing to say, but boy can I say it." This is—hangs over me. Finally, I have done it. I have rolled, and squeezed, and stippled, and brushed, and whatnot. And as a little show and I find it amusing, my wallpaper art period. And art without a subject is really not attractive to me. I must say [inaudible]. It puts me straight back into certain traditional concepts that I will accept this reproach.

ROBERT BROWN: But when you went to Berlin to the—what was then called the Vereinigte Staaten—

KARL DRERUP: The Vereinigte Staaten, the United States School. They tried to put the Künstgewerbeschule and the Academy both together.

ROBERT BROWN: Together.

KARL DRERUP: And say, "Look, after all, we are practicing. We are not just sitting in front of the nude all the time, you see, and try to become this history painting."

ROBERT BROWN: Were you aware if at this time—were you aware of the Bauhaus at that time?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. I had friends there.

ROBERT BROWN: You did?

KARL DRERUP: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: From Münster?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, from Münster. Levedag. Fritz Levedag [ph].

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible.]

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. And—

ROBERT BROWN: Were these—what sort of student would go to the Bauhaus rather than to Berlin?

KARL DRERUP: The ones—I don't know. I always had the feeling when you are really—when you haven't anything in your head, you go to the Bauhaus. [Laughter.]

ROBERT BROWN: Your friend was that sort? Fritz—

KARL DRERUP: Fritz Levedag—no, Fritz Levedag was a very sensitive man. I do recall one day I met him at home. It was one of those coincidences. Oh, someone slapped me—sort of so hard and made me cough and immediately I recall that. And there was Fritz Levedag and he was very mournful afterwards after realizing what he had done. I said, "I'm all right." But he told me about his experimentation there and I just couldn't take it. And I didn't understand it and I had no revulsion or anything like this, but it was—is that all you do? You see, I couldn't help saying that to myself.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you ever go look?

KARL DRERUP: No.

ROBERT BROWN: Because you went to Berlin. Were you—you were happy to go there then?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, Ja—yes. And I was accepted by Meid and I had my own studio in school for almost three years.

ROBERT BROWN: When you came you were—you came as an advanced pupil?

KARL DRERUP: No, not advanced enough for him. So—but he brushed it aside and he called in Karl Michel [ph] another one of his professors—co-professors, you see. And they said, "We'll take a chance on you," in a sense, and I liked him very much.

And out of this period—out of the lithographies and drawings that you had—that you are going to get can sort of testify to it. This is art and [inaudible]. And then I got a scholarship for which I hadn't asked. You see, it was one of those things that were given to you in the [inaudible] business. And it was—and I said, "All right, I'm going to,"—I was to go to Montana in Switzerland to make a *Restkur* because my uncle was still insisting that I was overdoing it.

ROBERT BROWN: He caught up with you? Had your uncle caught up with you in Berlin?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. He had also gone to the *Technich Hofschule* himself, you see.

ROBERT BROWN: In Berlin—

KARL DRERUP: In Berlin and he was almost an alumnus. It was the same—it's a bit akin to the MIT or earlier.

ROBERT BROWN: So he was pleased then?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja.

ROBERT BROWN: Finally, when he learned that you'd tricked him.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, yes, and he came immediately. I saw my landlady, and I remember I headed to the landing and she said, "Oh, your *Onkel* is here. Your *Onkel ist hier*." Und oh, yeah, he was in a hotel in a restaurant down at the hotel and I had to come and I sort of trembled a bit. It was very shortly after my escapade. And he—the first thing he said—my hands were black and I didn't have the ink off my fingers really. And he said—the waiter—he called the waiter and he said, "Show the young man the washroom." He put me down so that I would have to—but he was a wonderful old man. He was my second father, you might say. And all I have I owe to him. There's no doubt of that anymore. And he was generous with me.

ROBERT BROWN: But before long he was listening to what you'd been trying to do and—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, yes. I had a beautiful flat with a housekeeper. And oh yes, I can't really complain, I really can't. Quite close to the academy. So I wasn't supposed to go—I wasn't supposed to walk much and I had wonderful colleagues and well, I could have—at that time, I really, after two and a half years, I felt I had done my stint with Professor Meid.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were with him—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, for all that time.

ROBERT BROWN: Now, some of the work I've seen of that time is very strong and rather simplified, some of the landscapes.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, but even so if you see through them all a romantic streak in me. That was part of my teacher's influences you might say.

ROBERT BROWN: How would you describe that romantic streak in you—

KARL DRERUP: Well, it was—in the first place, Meid's work was—because he associated with literature. You see, he was an illustrator. Beautiful German literature, Spanish literature, and whatnot. You see, and I aimed at that and I illustrated the *Carmen*, the Prosper Mérimée edition [1931], which was printed by the German book club—you know, this book of the month club or something like that. And that was in the same line in which my teacher also published.

ROBERT BROWN: You did that while you were a student?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, and that was a little feather in my cap, you might say. But when I finally left, I came back—you want to say something.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, yes. You spent most of your time, then, with him?

KARL DRERUP: Entirely. And he—

ROBERT BROWN: Did you go around to the, then, rather *avant garde* galleries in Berlin—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja, and you have the classes. Oh, yes, and I was allowed, you see, as an advanced student. You were allowed to go into other classes. I did all sorts of other things to try to inform myself, but it never occurred to me that I would ever look into *basse-tailles* classes, for instance. I was a very good enameler. I find it a very attractive medium, but I never dreamt that I would ever do anything like that, you see.

ROBERT BROWN: But did you meet any of the—did you go to any of the galleries that—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja, [inaudible]. The more—this was Berlin at the—in the late '20s. It was an incredible place to live. It was very exciting, you might say, and we had such advantages as students. We got tickets to the opera. We got preferences everywhere. And I had seen, in those years probably all that the German theater could offer—the classics—the German classics. Reinhardt-Bühne. And happy years. You might say, happy years, because we were a little bit preferred students in that—so—

ROBERT BROWN: You had mentioned earlier you met, at this time—did she teach you or what, Käthe Kollwitz? Was she—

KARL DRERUP: Käthe Kollwitz was a teacher there, yes. She came in the workshop—in the print shop several times. And now I remember because I was allowed to go. Herr Glückselig was her printer that she had sometimes to have urgent prints drawn, and so on. I had Herr Glückselig and I recall Mrs. Kollwitz one day coming and looking at my efforts and she saw my social consciousness and Ms. Käthe, she said to me, "Oh, Drerup, stop it." [Laughter.] A wonderful lesson to me. She meant it. She was—

ROBERT BROWN: Were you puzzled, because—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, no, no—she was absolutely right, you see, absolutely right. I have always wanted to do well. I never wanted to do good. I state it frankly. Yes, because I can't imagine if somebody being able to do any good out of nothing. I wanted to do well first. And not well in terms of money. You understand? It was—I really admired skill, really. I wanted to be a skillful man. That was a dream of mine—

ROBERT BROWN: Well, in that respect, you were following your family; weren't you? The interested professional who lives in—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, but there weren't that many professionals. See I went with a brother of my father who became—he's actually the author of the genealogy, which is a very interesting genealogy for a family of peasant origin or farmer origin. He was a university professor in Munich for classical language and was—actually, he was the nemesis of my schooling years, because as a Drerup if I ever made a [inaudible] without the oblate . You see, they just—I got a dirty look and—ja, you see this is—I hated this man, but I admired him.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you work—did you have long discussions, when you were in Berlin with other students?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja.

ROBERT BROWN: And Käthe Kollwitz, did she talk shop with you?

KARL DRERUP: No, she didn't. She was a very—

ROBERT BROWN: Did Meid talk a great deal? Was he—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, when—yes, when—we had, of course, friends with—

ROBERT BROWN: If you were so interested in skill, did you mainly talk about technique?

KARL DRERUP: I almost think so, but we talked greatly of literature. Oh, no, it's not that. Of literature and music, of course, and I gave up playing the piano. In fact, I restarted it here, but then you can't serve two masters period, you see. It just isn't possible. And so the emphasis remained, but I wanted to paint, you know. I wanted to get away from the graphic media. I found it constricting. And then out of it grew this opportunity to go to Italy. So I promised my uncle to go to Montana first and take a *Liegekur* [rest cure] as it is called, you know. For to take a few months and—because my—I was very thin—blowing away [inaudible]. My blood count wasn't too good. So—

ROBERT BROWN: During—what did you—did you do much painting or drawing during those cures in Switzerland or maybe read or—

KARL DRERUP: Yes, and drew incessantly, of course.

ROBERT BROWN: And you had to lie—you were supposed to lie around.

KARL DRERUP: And I was allowed to wander late when I was allowed to wander again. I remember I wrote an article about the Baldanivier [ph] in those days. There was a little, tiny hotbed at the end of it. This is one of the exits from the Matterhorn turning down into Baldanivier towards Montana, towards going down out. And I almost had—would have liked to stay there and rent at one of those chalets and stay there. The sun disappeared at 4:00 in the afternoon, the mountains were so steep. And I decided to go to Italy. So I did and went to Florence. And then it was 1930 and—

ROBERT BROWN: You gave up your—you were through with your work at Berlin?

KARL DRERUP: No, my—Professor Meid kept my studio and he couldn't do that really. He shouldn't have done it. And when I came back to finally tell him, I went to him and said, "Now, I think I strike out and go and change." And he wordlessly, almost, he led me to the studio and said, "Look." And there were all my things. And he had thought that I would come back and I felt lousy—really lousy.

But we parted in good spirits, I would say. I had gotten all my colleagues and distributed all my—whatever I had and then I got as fast away from Berlin as I could. I've never seen it again.

Oh, yes, I saw it in '62. That's right. In '62 I went back to my old alma mater. And Hermann Taüber [ph] was there in the same—he was a fellow student. And I saw him standing there in the workshop and I mistakenly had thought that during the Nazi period he had been a sympathizer. Mistaken. I had to say I'm sorry. And I opened the door and I looked into it and I thought, "Oh, why should I start this over,"—and I left. But he was the only one I had known prior to—of those Berlin years whom I have seen and hadn't the courage to talk to him.

ROBERT BROWN: You only saw him from a distance?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, and I didn't have the courage to talk to him. What's your—

ROBERT BROWN: Now, you went to Florence with any plan in mind?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, of course. The old masters, that was my plan.

ROBERT BROWN: To look?

KARL DRERUP: Ja .

ROBERT BROWN: To look.

KARL DRERUP: To look and to—I immediately rented a studio in Via Panicale and it's a very populous quarter near the market and quite close to the—

ROBERT BROWN: Your uncle was still helping you out?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. I had means. I really was generously helped. I must say that. I didn't have to earn anything. And I found a studio and then, for the first time there, I—Mrs. Turner [ph] she came from Australia or New Zealand. It was the owner of this—it was an artist quarter. And I saw so very little of her, but later I met my wife in her house; my future wife. And then I painted and went back once more to home to present myself to the doctor. This was the main thing, because they had the last word on my continuing studies and my family approved and then I returned—

ROBERT BROWN: This was in 1930?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, 1930 and then I've never been back to Germany. And how else should I now explain this?

ROBERT BROWN: You had no reason to go back? You didn't want to go back? Or—

KARL DRERUP: No, there came the Nazi time in the first place and I was really absorbed in what I was doing.

ROBERT BROWN: In Florence. So—

KARL DRERUP: Painting—I was very happy at the Academy.

ROBERT BROWN: On your own?

KARL DRERUP: No, I was at the Academy.

ROBERT BROWN: You went to the Academy. Did you have to qualify to—

KARL DRERUP: Yes, and the idea was I didn't even have to repay the minimum. We paid such a small fee, it was really ridiculous. There were wonderful friendships. These were the great years and I had marvelous friends. In fact, I—a few years ago, there was still this remnant—this wonderful remnant of a German society—almost an international society of art historians; Gronau, Hardlan [ph]. There's the son of Böcklin, Carlo Böcklin I knew quite well and I know stories and stories about Arnold Böcklin, father. You know, the Swiss painter?

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

KARL DRERUP: *The Isle of the Dead* and the Weinsheimers—

ROBERT BROWN: Were the Weinsheimers artists or art historians—

KARL DRERUP: No—ja, he was a collector—Weinsheimer.

ROBERT BROWN: He was a collector—

KARL DRERUP: And Ludwig Heidenreich [ph] was there. In fact, we were house guests at the Weinsheimers for a whole summer once.

ROBERT BROWN: And what would you do there? Would you paint while you were there and—

KARL DRERUP: Yes, oh, yes. We were incessantly at work, you might say. Heidenreich was writing his doctoral and I know Leonardo—you know, the Leonardo man. I haven't seen him since either, but we had a wonderful time, you might say and—

ROBERT BROWN: Did you have a good deal in common with the art historians?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I did. You see, I owe a great deal to the Institute—the German Institute. Listen to me—he would read, of course, and this also led me to, later on when I taught here, led me to take art history classes. I had to brush up on a lot of things, you might say, but I—this is, today, my real interest in reading, for instance, this historic—almost—

ROBERT BROWN: What were you trying—what was your interest, then, in painting? What were you trying to do? The nude?

KARL DRERUP: The nude and composition. And of all kinds, as you see—out of that time I have—we went to the Isle of Elba in the summers. And fishermen—again, I'm an irrepressible romantic. I can't help saying it. I have no excuses to make for my flight backwards instead of looking forwards and taking all the cues[?][inaudible]. The artists—

ROBERT BROWN: That's a part of your being in Florence. Was it romantic?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, of course. And I am—I admired the old masters. In fact, I studied them most carefully and then I, for the first time—I made some pottery because Mrs. Turner my landlady had bought a place in Pericula [ph] outside an old, old villa—a beautiful villa and started to make pottery—and sometimes I went out and this is where I met Gertrude.

ROBERT BROWN: Your wife?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, she had been—

ROBERT BROWN: She was studying at the university?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, she was at the university and wanted to be an interpreter. She was studying languages and—of archeology and *Kunstgeschichte* but we had some simply beautiful years. These were the beautiful years and—but then came the Nazi members.

My wife's of Jewish extraction. This is very important. Because later on the law that marriages were forbidden between Aryans and non-Aryans. This was particularly horrible, you see. You can't imagine what it was. And so in our—in a sort of despair, and also having had my wonderful years at the Academy with Carena—Felice Carena and a host of friends. We were—

ROBERT BROWN: Was Carena an old man?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, he was an old man. And I remember Georgio Morandi, for instance, from—he was in Bologna in those days. Morandi came over. He was as poor as a church mouse at that time. Can you imagine? An unknown man. I do recall his printing this—we talked nothing but *incisione* which is etching. These little—we met in coffee houses. We met in what we called trattoria where we [inaudible] places.

ROBERT BROWN: And would you help someone like Morandi out?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. We had—it was—no, not necessarily like that, you know. We would say he's our guest tonight or something like that. We—but these were actually beautiful years and that we are—we lived untouched by fascism, because we were the last class in the Academy. We had one among us. Ugo Gallutsi [ph]. He was here in the United States later on a fascist fellowship. I understand he was on a scholarship in Miami. I've seen him here once.

ROBERT BROWN: Ugo Gallutsi.

KARL DRERUP: Ugo Gallutsi. He was the one we didn't know. We were—but all the others among us were definitely not fascist.

ROBERT BROWN: And you say you were the last class. You mean thereafter?

KARL DRERUP: That had this sort of touch. Later on came the youth already who had been more indoctrinated with the triorellis [ph] we called them—the triorellis, which is a nasty word to say to an Italian.

ROBERT BROWN: You mentioned earlier you—Pietro Annigoni, the successful portraitist. He was a fellow pupil.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. He seldom came to school, but we saw him regularly at night.

ROBERT BROWN: He was—what was he? Courting a future—

KARL DRERUP: No, strange—he had a retinue of acolytes about him whom he ill-treated. He was already very rough. He was violent sometimes. And I was the only one whom he respected. Because we two were the two portraitists in school. He had been—I mean this was sort of a little ranking.

ROBERT BROWN: You were a portraitist by this time?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, I would portrait a great deal, yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Is that who—not many people wanted to do that then; did they?

KARL DRERUP: No, I don't know why. You know, it's just the human face was interesting to me. But Annigoni, he came quite often. I used to play. I had this wonderful old studio in an old ward, a place to look over the roofs of Florence. And after we were through at 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, we would go home and we would make ourselves a huge pasta. And then, believe it or not, I would start playing—improvising and we all would sit and listen.

Bach is my great love. Improvising on passages and passage and we were going back to school the next morning after snoozing for an hour or two. And we had—these were marvelous years. I'll say that. And today I have not seen Annigoni. We exchanged a few letters. He came here and I said, "If you are here, you have to come. I'm not coming down." And he had—I think he was painting. Mrs.— one of the Greek shipping magnet lady either in California or in, I don't know where it was.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you at all aware of the political situation while you were in Florence of your family back home?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. And the idea of disapproval—you know, to incur disapproval of my family, because the Drerup family, itself, was certainly not pro-Semitic. But it has changed its views, I think. My uncle accepted it later on when I notified him and when I had told him. And so did my mother. But some of the letters attest to it. She said, "I will love her." She—they had never met. And we didn't dare to say anything for a long time, neither to her family. And her family has largely perished in gas chambers. And the older generation died out, luckily, before it really came to deportation. So—

ROBERT BROWN: In Florence, was there—you mentioned at one time a Nazi—a German institute that began—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, no the German Institute was free. I would say they were very lenient in Florence. What's his name? The fellow in Chicago—Middeldorf—Ulrich Middeldorf was there. He's back or he's now retired, I understand. But Middeldorf returned. Middeldorf was then helping me select cogent literature and things like this, whatever I was looking into. He was a librarian you might say at that time. But these are—this was under—what was his name? The director. He was a Swiss—you know, that great Swiss family of historians.

ROBERT BROWN: [Inaudible?]

KARL DRERUP: No, no, no. I can't recall his name. Anyway, I painted his wife and his children.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were married then in Florence?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, in Florence it was difficult for us, you see. We couldn't marry for a long time, you can imagine. The law interfered. This is something you have to bear in mind. We had to—we had really—we had a hell of a time if I might say that. But we—so going to Spain, I knew we could—we had no way of returning and we thought it would pass away, this Nazi syndrome, you might say. So we decided we're going to Spain. And I said, "I know a place where we can hide and it's the Canary Islands." And this is why we were there. First we stayed in Madrid a while. My wife interpreted for the International Chemistry Congress in '35. Wait a minute, '34.

ROBERT BROWN: You went in '34.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, in '34. And then—

ROBERT BROWN: And did you like it there in Madrid? Did you study or paint much then?

KARL DRERUP: No, you know what I did? I fell sick again. And this I must say, my wife took wonderful care of me. It was the last lapse I had. And in fact, it wedged us very much together, because I don't know what would have happened if I really had to go home again once more and to take the same—I wanted to break away from my family. It's—you must understand, I wanted to break also away financially from them in every respect.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you beginning to be able to do that?

KARL DRERUP: No, we were—we had some means left. Not much, but we said when we got there—my wife gave lessons in the Canary Islands. She gave lessons in Spanish to English and English to Spanish. She went to school in England for a while. She went to—they call it the School of Economics in London.

ROBERT BROWN: The London School of Economics?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, the London School of Economics and she was very fluent and she could handle foreign languages at the same time—bang, bang, bang—which I can't. And I didn't speak English at all. I didn't want to learn English, believe it or not. I had a feeling it wasn't my language. I was all romance languages. And now I have to talk to my own son. Isn't it strange? And I love it today.

ROBERT BROWN: When you were in Spain, were you in any contact with your family?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, of course, we tried to keep them abreast as much as we could. But the fact of our association—we kept—

ROBERT BROWN: What of your older teachers and colleagues? Did you keep in touch with those—those in Italy and Germany?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, our friends, of course. Then in Madrid—it was in Madrid, really. In Madrid, we went out. I did two things. I went to The Prado. I had been there in 1924, ten years earlier. Day and night you might say. And I copied—made two copies—Van Dyck's *Hendrik*—what is the engraver—Pontius—Paulus Pontius, I think it is. And the other one from *Man in the Golden Chamber*, Tintoretto. I sent them home and I wish I hadn't.

And then we packed up and we said—I said, "I know a place where nobody's going to care or look or bother." And we went to Tenerife and we rented a house. We found a little house and there we lived for three years in absolute peacefulness. And I really started to recover and came really back. From then on, I am really—I am what I am today. I gained weight. I became strong and I think I'm—for a person who was as low in spirit and health as I was in '25, I had really made a recovery. And I'm sorry that I—my dear, old uncle Bernard didn't see it. Because he is the one to whom I owe it—

ROBERT BROWN: Did he ever keep in touch with you after that?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, even up to our coming here. And then he died during the war. He was a jolly man who, how shall I say, he was—we all were around him, all his nieces and nephews, and he would have liked me to come into the family more. Because there was lack of management.

He always had the slight hope I would give it up and return to something more substantial than the arts. But then I came back from Florence once and I had brought out old paintings and restored them. He had toiled on the things like that for years and that's really—he helped me. He was so fascinated by it. But then when I had my first exhibitions and my first also scholarships in Germany and purchases by the government, it helped.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you had your first exhibition in Münster in '31. You were in Florence. You didn't return from Florence.

KARL DRERUP: I didn't. No, I didn't. You see, I wasn't—

ROBERT BROWN: Was that considered a very important event?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, they were all a bit baffled. They all said, "Why don't you come and,"—but they—my uncle said, "Don't take the travel, because it will get you feverish again," or something like this as I had a lot of fever, which, of course, I've overcome again—

ROBERT BROWN: Were you very pleased by being exhibited?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. I got—the first exhibition was—the '31 was with Hermann Taüber[ph] together and Fritz Rhein [ph] and this was on the occasion of the centenary of the Westphälischer Kunstverein which was very honorable. At the Landesmuseum, stuffy little place, you know, historical place and it gave us a certain aura of respectability you might say. And then I had all sorts of other exhibitions, smaller ones, but [inaudible] the Künstlerbund.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, well the—Christian Rohlfs, where had you met him? Now he recommended you for membership at the Deutscher Künstlerbund.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, [inaudible] Deutscher Künstlerbund. I remember that Rohlfs has one leg, a peg leg—

ROBERT BROWN: Had you met him in Berlin?

KARL DRERUP: No, in Soest. In Soest in Westphalen, you know, where he painted the *St. Patrick of Stone*, one of his better paintings. In fact, I was a bit puzzled by this sort of thing. I myself—I had not been a *Mitlaüfer*. I couldn't entirely share what I saw him do, but—and also I was puzzled by him personally. But we didn't get that close at all. He thought I was a very talented sort of man, that's all he said.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, '32 you had an exhibition and then another one in Westphalia, right?

KARL DRERUP: Ja .

ROBERT BROWN: And also then how did this come about, your—this exhibition with the International Arts Center in New York City?

KARL DRERUP: This was really a coincidence. A curator is—I think Mr. Adams was the curator at the Brooklyn Museum and I don't know whether he was a—he was an expert on these theatrical artists as I understand it. I'm not sure about it, but his doctor married a friend of ours—mine. And I had never heard of him or seen him. This friend had been in Florence to visit me. And he brought it about and he said—then all of the sudden I got a letter from them. And I said, "Why shouldn't I?" And I said, "No." If I were to do it alone which was make a solo single show, I wouldn't have enough and I was really a bit—my brother wanted me to come to America all the time. See this is the reason—

ROBERT BROWN: Your brother was in America?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. He had emigrated very early. He also left the monastic community in the sense in that after—before his first commitment, he changed his mind. And the family took it very, very badly. You see, he—to enter a novitiate and he didn't want to. And then he said, "If this is what I'm,"—what he had to live for, he wanted to leave. And a year later he emigrated. A very young man, he emigrated to the United States and became a builder and later on—later in his life in California he was associated with an advertisement—and advertising in a very, sort of, Madison Avenue thing. Horrible. And it really—we fell apart. We had nothing to say to each other anymore. We were very loving brothers. It's funny—he became completely immersed in the sloganeering and the jargon of—

ROBERT BROWN: But was it partly through your brother?

KARL DRERUP: No, he had nothing to do with it. They—and I got—gave it immediately. I gave this exhibition immediately to the Deutscher Künstlerbund. And then I had strangely enough the lion's share of it. And I don't know—I had no idea where it was. I had no idea about that museum. All I knew it was the first exhibition of Germans in the U.S. at that time. This is significant. And you see from the roster, you know, they were the expressionists—great names. Great names who were all in it. And [inaudible] reviewed it. I think on May 5th or May 2nd.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you hear from anybody over here then about that after that exhibition?

KARL DRERUP: No. I may have, but I really don't recall. And it wasn't that important to me, because I couldn't envision yet that I would ever come to the United States. Though my brother said, "I will drop everything." He said, "I'm going to," I'd always said I want to see the prairies. I want to see the bayous. I want to see [laughter]—[inaudible]. And I wanted to see the mountains, the Sierras. You see, these are the three things. Actually, there were four. But three I wanted to see and I thought then I would have enough and we would go back to Europe. I couldn't imagine my—tearing myself away from Florence or from a Latin country. I wouldn't have lived in Germany. I just—and then came the Canaries and there, again, we had loads of friends.

ROBERT BROWN: Who were some of the friends and were they in the arts mainly? The ones you met?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, they are. There was a new group. Eduardo Westerdahl, Domingo Pérez Minik, and quite a few. And they had a little group. They pretended loudly. I believe they still do. But in the meantime, they had built a museum and we had exhibitions together with Picasso, Miró, all the names we could dig up. Even Kahnweiler sent a picture down once and we put a nick into it and I was supposed to repair it. And I was scared to touch the canvas of Picasso. It was so poorly made. Ja, and it had a triangle cut into it in the corner over the [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: How did they manage to get all these things down there—

KARL DRERUP: Well, André Masson came. André Masson came one day with a whole bunch of—an exhibition of surrealists. And who was the other—André Masson and Paris—I can't recall. I didn't find them.

ROBERT BROWN: Who got them to come down?

KARL DRERUP: Eduardo Westerdahl, he paid their fare.

ROBERT BROWN: Eduardo Westerdahl?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, Westerdahl, Eduardo Westerdahl—he called and he published a little newspaper. He made a copy of these things, Gazeta de Arte. My goodness, [inaudible]. And—

ROBERT BROWN: But this is what made it enjoyable for you there.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja .

ROBERT BROWN: You had peacefulness and quiet, but you also had colleagues—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja, Basil Bunting, an English poet who was really an innovator. One of the innovative English poets. We—that is where I began to learn English. But we talked—when first we met we spoke a mixture of German, Spanish, Italian, and English in our conversations. He delighted in it because he is one of the great disciples of Ezra Pound and this multi-lingualism just appealed to him immensely and he was fluent in it, too. But my wife spoke English and we had lots of English friends, very few German friends, because the islands had fallen apart into pro-Hitler and anti-Hitler immediately. And then Franco took over the island. Franco, during the civil war, and this allowed us to—later on, then I knew the hour had come. We had to leave.

ROBERT BROWN: Because the German—the Nazis were beginning to—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, the Gestapo, really, could control the entry. There was no German leaving—no German-born leaving who could not be controlled or could be steered into proper channels for either [inaudible]. So I, we , I went to the American Consul and explained my story. And I had no passport anymore—valid passport. You see, I was a race violator in the first place—a race, *ein Rassenschänder*. And the man listened to me. There were two. And the last one was a remarkable man, Liefritz Gottschand [ph] [inaudible]. He sees that I have no papers in a sense. And they really—and they knew my situation. I needed—

ROBERT BROWN: Who is this you're talking about?

KARL DRERUP: The American Consul.

ROBERT BROWN: You went to the American Consul.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, yes. I—

ROBERT BROWN: And what was this man's name?

KARL DRERUP: Winifred Scott [ph]. That was the last American Consul and he was a remarkable man and I do recall he told me anecdote. He wanted to—he said, "Sit down. Sit down." And I didn't see a chair. And I could look and my English was stumbling. And he said, "Sit down. Sit down on the desk." So I did.

And he said, "I tell you. I was a consul once in Bucharest. And two men came to me and wanted to go the United States. One said I have friends and everyone takes care of me. And he described this man who had connections, et cetera. And the other one who said to me, 'Don't worry about me. I can take care of myself.'" He said, "That one got in."

And then he gave me a big cigar, this huge, black cigar. I don't smoke black cigars. I've tried not to. So I sat there puffing with him and he made it possible. I owe this man a great deal. He's probably long gone. This name, Winifred—interesting. And so this is, in short, I really got away—Gertrude got away a week later. Almost fortnight, but she was in charge of the secretary of the German consul who was not a Nazi. He was a gentleman. Conrad Jacob Arlist [ph] this wonderful old man who had known about my name, my family and therefore they—you know, it was all *sotto voce*. We all got to—

ROBERT BROWN: So your wife worked for him?

KARL DRERUP: No, she—the secretary was a [inaudible] dear friend of ours during those years. His father had been an agent of management and state manager and had dealings there with Gertrude's father. Can you imagine things like that? So—

ROBERT BROWN: Were you able—during these months or years of strain to do much work?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, I worked incessantly. I painted a great deal. And—

ROBERT BROWN: Do you think—was your subject matter and your way of painting changed?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I naturally I was sorry to [inaudible] my friends, my Spanish friends all thought I should finally

embark on something very, very abstract and nonrepresentative and modern and contemporary and whatnot. You see, they all had—but when it came to a good portrait, they came to me. I—we didn't earn any money at all. Gertrude—except Gertrude.

ROBERT BROWN: When you say—as you look back, do you think that you were painting the same way as you did when you were rather carefree in Berlin and in Florence before these pressures of—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I should say so. I—this is—we lived on—you wouldn't believe it—$30 a month. The equivalent at that time; a dollar a day—must have made. And of course, we had no refrigerators or anything like that. And the electricity came on at night at 6:00 and we had a little radio. So I listened to English speech in order to learn English, so as to be able to converse better with my friends and my acquaintances there.

And the English society, we had tea. We had a very open house and I had a beautiful terrace overlooking the ocean; 60 miles of it, it was beautiful. And every afternoon—most every afternoon people came. Cookies and tea were the usual, say, precisely one hour, mostly English among them—very interesting people. Alison Randall [ph], member of the labor party, who wanted to—I mean he—I remember, too, when we left, I wanted to go to Australia. And he said, "I go with you to the high commission of Australia. You should teach. You're a born teacher." And I would have. I said, "I want to go to Australia, slam the door behind me, and never hear the word 'Europe' again," I believed it at that point. But my wife didn't want to go. She was afraid.

And she—then finally we decided on the United States in 1937. We got really away. We got away safe and sound due to the fact that we had friends and I do recall we visited our doctor who had been a republican and was in jail. So we went to the jail.

ROBERT BROWN: Where was this?

KARL DRERUP: In Tenerife. In Santa Cruz—near Santa Cruz, La Matanza— and we went. And everybody said, "You can't do that." And I said, "He was our friend. He was immensely helpful to us. And we never leave friends. We say, 'Goodbye and thanks to them.'" And we did.

And see, and you could just mark for all of these anti-Franco steps. We were in Franco's territory. And it took courage to stand up to these things. But we did and they somehow let us go. So we went to London and stayed with Basil Bunting and his mother and Gertrude went to Holland to have her old cook come from home and her tailor. But I implored her not to go and enter Germany. She might be taken. Her brother was also in Holland. She has relatives in Holland, in Rotterdam, prominent businessmen and they all had disappeared. And she made it safely to the United States on the 7th of July with—who was this man? Who was the famous man who ran for governor of New York— or President Smith? What's his name?

ROBERT BROWN: Smith. Al Smith.

KARL DRERUP: Al Smith, she came on the Manhattan first class and she was with Al Smith and Judge McGoldrick and I met with Judge McGoldrick later on and so we—

ROBERT BROWN: You were already then—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, yes. I was here.

ROBERT BROWN: Where did you go when you came to New York?

KARL DRERUP: I stayed at a cousin. I had stayed at a cousin. I began immediately to work and became an ordinary laborer. And then I—oh, ja . I said for the first time I was on my own.

ROBERT BROWN: Were you able to bring anything with you?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I brought one box full of paintings with me. I have some of them still. Many I've painted over again, because I shouldn't have taken them with me anyway. They weren't good enough. But I hung onto them a bit. And I saw my brother, of course, and then I began to get—I thought, "Why shouldn't I go into the applied arts?"

Oh, I do remember I showed Rena Rosenthal, then a very elegant shop. I showed her some of the—I had some ceramics that I had saved. And I showed her some. And one day I was at the Architectural League, you know, on Park Avenue, number four, I think it was, or six right there. And I met Francis Von Tury and Von Tury was engineer at the Ford Porcelain Works in Perth-Amboy. And he had beautiful glaze samples with him [inaudible] and we talked while I—he had a satchel under his arm, *aktentasche*. And I said, "Only a European would carry a thing like that around."

So I sidled up to him and we talked and sure enough, he was a Hungarian. He had studied in Meissen and he

said, "Look what I have." And I can't do a thing with it. Less than two years—it was a year and a half later, we had the Dupont Award at the National Exhibition. And it put us up just like that as though it came from—

ROBERT BROWN: You mean, the works in—

KARL DRERUP: In *porcelanna*—the porcelains. I have the piece of the— actually one of the pieces in that is in the Syracuse Museum. They have it in the museum. And others—I don't know where they all—we did mountains of it.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, how did you begin, not knowing the medium very well?

KARL DRERUP: Well, I had—I learned fast, you see? I knew ceramics and he was a good, first-rate engineer. He wasn't an artist at all. And we worked for Rena Rosenthal and Rena Rosenthal went and even expanded into wholesaling with all the things we could deliver. The station ran for a week. And Van Tory wasn't too proper in money matters, I'm afraid to say. It brought us apart in a sense, but I think it—the usefulness was gone also. Because—

ROBERT BROWN: And you combined as a design team for the porcelain works?

KARL DRERUP: Ja. No, we marketed ourselves. We were allowed to put our ware between the sanitary ware, you know, toilettes and bottle tops. And so the kiln was a tunnel kiln—this huge tunnel kiln and ran three days—the firing process ran three days.

And so we had a—from then on—all of the sudden, then I also had courage. I went to dealers. I got acquainted with a lot of dealers. But then one day— this is the turning point, I believe. I woke up—the stairs that Rena Rosenthal in the back. I don't know. I had to go upstairs for some reason. There was Tommy Parzinger, the designer. He's a furniture designer and he has his own gallery in New York.

So Tommy Parzinger turned around to me and he said, "Drerup, you know, what you should do is to make enamels. Nobody makes good enamels here." And that's the way I started. And I went to find paint in downtown New York and looked into and saw how kilns operate and one of these commercial and novelty stuff. And I worked with him for a while and I read a great a deal on enamels. And then all of the sudden, I submit it to the national show and I got awards from the beginning on.

ROBERT BROWN: When was this that you began this?

KARL DRERUP: 1939.

ROBERT BROWN: '39.

KARL DRERUP: '39, then '40, '41 and it goes from then on and I had shows.

ROBERT BROWN: Were these shows in Syracuse?

KARL DRERUP: And everywhere. You can see it on the list as you go through them. I had then requests and then it was so easy. You see, it was so new a medium. And today I'm ashamed of lots of the things I have made I'm afraid. They were not—they didn't have enough depth of quality to justify the show. But apparently museums look for these small things occasionally to give a one man show that is not exactly painting.

ROBERT BROWN: Right.

KARL DRERUP: But sometimes I showed both together; paintings and enamels. And this brought me then into—then one day on—oh, your spool is running out. One day on occasion of the National Art Week, I was sitting next to a man. I was [inaudible] member and so was he—

[Interruption to tape.]

ROBERT BROWN: January 28, 1975 and—

KARL DRERUP: Do you—is this thing connected to electricity?

ROBERT BROWN: No, it's battery.

KARL DRERUP: It's—

[Interruption to tape.]

ROBERT BROWN: Well, you had discussed for a bit your association with Franz Von Tury on—doing porcelain.

Then in—shortly after you came over in 1937—in 1938, you're in the 7th Annual National Ceramics Exhibition in Syracuse. How did you so suddenly get into such a prominent exhibition?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, this is very interesting. Because I was working. I was an ordinary day laborer at that time in—

ROBERT BROWN: On Long Island?

KARL DRERUP: On Long Island. Still in 1937. And I took a day off. I went to this—he was a German and I said to him I wanted to take a day off. It was a Monday and I don't know why I chose the Monday and the Whitney Museum had the annual ceramics, where I wanted to see it. And on that day the Whitney was closed. So I lost two days. I went another extra day afterwards to go there. And I saw my first national ceramics show at the Whitney Museum where I saw every one of them. The—then Edward Winter had large pieces. Waylande Gregory was there. Helu Anampour [ph] had this beautiful little scene that—*Eight Days in a Bar Room* or whatever that poem is by.

ROBERT BROWN: And that he had done in—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, it was a beautiful exhibition. And I was deeply touched by it all and I remember that when I had met Von Tury, I had gone to the Architectural League in New York. At one meeting in my desperation, I read about a meeting of artists who wanted to discuss with architects—the problems of decorating buildings, whatever it was. It was—it's too vague in my memory, but I read that in the New York Times. So I went there and there stood this Von Tury. We started to talk after a while. It turns out that he was an engineer—a first-rate engineer trained in Meissen. We spoke German. He's a Hungarian—

ROBERT BROWN: He was trained in Meissen at this porcelain place.

KARL DRERUP: Yes, apparently. And he showed me his glazes and he said, "They are so heavy and so thick, they could be rhen [ph]. You could hardly do anything with them." I said give me a chance. So we started out and literally within half a year, this I submitted to the seventh annual national. And it was accepted. So then the eighth annual already the one piece that we entered was bought by the Syracuse Museum and it was—and shortly after I worked into 1939 and into 1940 with him, but—

ROBERT BROWN: With Von Tury.

KARL DRERUP: With Von Tury.

ROBERT BROWN: Now you—well, your contribution was what? Design? Did you have some particular knowledge of technique or he had that.

KARL DRERUP: I designed. He was primarily—he was really a glaze man. He was an engineer—ceramic engineer. And this was the first of a Porcelain Works where we did these things. And there was sanitary ware where we had toilet and wash bowls and things like that.

ROBERT BROWN: Why did they have you do this?

KARL DRERUP: No, the man who was in charge of this, Mr. Hunsen or Jensen or something was very annoyed at our trying to meddle around in his laboratory. And when he saw what we did, he all of the sudden became quite obsequious. Actually, it was amazing how he turned around and thought we were really wonderful and—

ROBERT BROWN: It was probably publicity for the—

KARL DRERUP: No, we never used it, but we produced a station wagon of porcelain every week literally, and delivered it to Rena Rosenthal whom I had brought to Von Tury. I was the one who brought Rena Rosenthal. And Rena Rosenthal was then the shop up in New York.

ROBERT BROWN: For fine ceramics?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, for fine ceramics, for fine furniture, and all. You see, in there—in her shop—actually had the following: In the back of her shop there was a little iron stairwell that goes up—everyone had these staircases, these round things that lead up to save space. And upstairs there was a little office and in it was Tommy Parzinger. Designer and furniture designer, a student of—he was also of German origin, a student of—I can't recall. What's his name? Riemerschmidt [ph] in Munich. Really first-rate.

Tommy Parzinger turned around. We met on the stairway. He turned around. He said, "Drerup, I'll tell you what you should do. Why don't you make enamels." Because nobody even—you should make enamels. He had seen my designs and so forth. And I said, "Where should I learn them?"—anything about it. So he—I said, "I know there is a German fellow downtown," and his name was William Stark. And he had a workshop. He made signs

and things like this and this is where I went and I learned something about—but mostly I learned from books.

ROBERT BROWN: What books would you have used at that time?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, they had to go to the public library. There weren't any books in the old textbooks written in England at the turn of the century and prior to that. And then some of the German books—the technical books about enameling were not translated, you see. Dealing largely with industrial enamels and they fascinated me. And I remember when I bought my first kiln, my wife was so upset, because that kiln cost $75. It's hard to believe today.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, but at this point she had—you had no idea this was—

KARL DRERUP: I still have the kiln. As a funny thing, I fire it still. And I use it ever since then. And it's hard to believe. Anyhow and I started out and then entered enamels in the 10th, I believe—in the 9th, I entered enamel. I got first honorable mention right off.

ROBERT BROWN: In 1940.

KARL DRERUP: In 1940. Then in 1941. Then I got a purchase by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. I wish I could retract that piece. I tried to.

ROBERT BROWN: But you were considered quite outstanding as an enamellist in the beginning?

KARL DRERUP: I don't know. I wonder. Yes, because the—yes, they were. It was a lucky medium, in a sense. Now, I have to explain this to you—

ROBERT BROWN: There weren't many people doing it then?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. Bates and there were the Cleveland groups, very active. And then on the West Coast, it was Arthur Ames and the Woolleys and a few others. And then came all sorts of amateurish people. But when we tried in 1939, we tried it—the designer craftsmen—it is now defunct little society which we had formed. But we tried to make an enamel show once. We wanted to really begin to ask around. I think we got just over 20 people—either 21 or 19 or 23. This I can't recall. But if you really think about enamellists—and then we gave up on it. So this is—the pioneering was really done in Cleveland. The Cleveland group was pioneering. And I—

ROBERT BROWN: Were they very good did you think?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, technically competent. Edward Winter, for instance, who sprays enamels who made rather a lot of [inaudible] by having a very industrial, massive mass production approach to his work. But nevertheless, he is very—in the engineering part, he's a competent man. We should watch that or we should recognize it.

ROBERT BROWN: Now, were most enamels for exhibition and for purchase of art object at that time?

KARL DRERUP: No, they were—people didn't know what it was. Really didn't know what it was.

ROBERT BROWN: They simply looked.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, they—enamels—

ROBERT BROWN: There wasn't much collecting of it at that time.

KARL DRERUP: No, they think it's lacquer. They thought it was lacquer and I do recall, I got a letter from George Jensen, Incorporated—Learning Incorporated in New York after a show at the Metropolitan. There was art and industry, I believe, and I had a piece in there. Would I come for a discussion? And so I went and I—they proposed that they should represent my work and then I paid horrible—I say this quite understatedly—I paid 125 percent commission they exacted from me, 125 percent commission. Mind you, this is really something that's outrageous. When other people took 33 and a third, but I was such a greenhorn, I didn't know. And I said all right. I'll give you enamels and they opened a little case or they prepared a little case and I had it all in there and those things began to sell so fast that I couldn't keep up with it.

ROBERT BROWN: But you had pay them if it was 125 percent on—

KARL DRERUP: No, they took on 125—they took percent commission on—without an outright sales for me. So after a short while, I insisted that they buy my things outright which they did and we went on normal proceedings—50 percent, as they say. And I did very well and there were people like Ms. Stamm [ph]. Ms. Stamm was one of their sales personnel or a buyer, I would say. And we clicked. We—she had a—we somehow worked very well together and she bought. I worked and put jewelry and we designed for all sorts of things. We

made compacts and dresser sets and things like this.

ROBERT BROWN: That was important to you because they had large sales as a—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, but I then also was seeing myself all of the sudden accepted. I was all of the sudden—I could sell to anybody, in fact. I have worked with everybody. So many people have bought my work. They came to me. The buyers came.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes.

KARL DRERUP: But with the exception of Tiffany's. This is the only—I—the others, dresser sets that were sold at Bergdorf Goodman and Bonwit Tellers, I could have continued, really, to make a comfortable living on 5th Avenue, you might say. But—

ROBERT BROWN: Now, what was the initial effect of your participation beginning in 1938 in the National Ceramics Exhibitions?

KARL DRERUP: Well, [inaudible] also had invited me and—as a prize winner, you know.

ROBERT BROWN: You went up to Syracuse?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, yes. I took a bus to Syracuse and I would row around the Erie Canal. You know, I—these were my first excursions in America. I had made one before in that we were asked to come to West Virginia where Henry Radnor [ph], he was now a publisher in Chicago. I was very interested in a project the Quakers had started and it was our first real trip through the United States.

ROBERT BROWN: To work with them?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, to become a settlement artist, you see. They had these—the settlement what was called, I think, Penn-Craft it was called or something like that. I had forgotten the—

ROBERT BROWN: But they decided not to go in—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, no. It was not the right thing for me, because it was somewhat a bit of charity and [inaudible]. I felt it wasn't right. So I made my own way really. But this does not detract—

ROBERT BROWN: What was Ms. Olmsted like in Syracuse?

KARL DRERUP: Ms. Olmsted was in her best years. She had headed this little museum there and in memory of her—Mrs. Robineau, the famed potter and friend—probably her first, I wouldn't know. She had started this annual exhibition which then later—in later years became a biannual and now it is defunct, I understand. But these—for the first time anyone took notice, really, that ceramics could be a medium in which to say it was more than just making pots or whatever it was. So unfortunately, enamels would really be part of—they're a sideshow among the ceramists. They had—certainly is a fieldof ceramics. But it belongs strictly among the metal workers. This is the way it really should be shown. But enamels today, sprayed in particularly large furnaces, now steel enamels made in—on steel blocks and so can successfully compete with majolicas and stonewares and so on.

ROBERT BROWN: Because the effect is—

KARL DRERUP: That's right. That's the reason.

ROBERT BROWN: But you say they should be with metalwork. For what reason?

KARL DRERUP: I personally feel it belongs to the metalwork world.

ROBERT BROWN: Because it has to do with the base is metal.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I am traditional in a sense that I feel that the character of enamels is as soon as it oversteps a certain size loses all equality of intimacy because this is what enamels really are to me. I am not speaking of those who can spray large areas and invite the eyes to enjoy them sort of in surfaces and textures. And so I have believed in the depth of color, you see. I'm still a traditionalist in that sense.

ROBERT BROWN: The first show in Syracuse, though, you didn't show enamel; did you? It was porcelain.

KARL DRERUP: No, I showed porcelains.

ROBERT BROWN: So by the next show in '39 or so, you were? When you—you were still doing porcelain.

KARL DRERUP: In '39, I still—porcelain, yes. I showed the first enamel in '40—

ROBERT BROWN: What were you trying to do in porcelain? Could you summarize a bit what you were trying to accomplish in that?

KARL DRERUP: The medium that Von Tury had developed—the glazing that Von Tury had developed were very beautiful. It was a very heavy glaze and it was all in one fire job. I should emphasize that. The pieces today, whatever pieces exist still, part of them had been auctioned off at Parke-Bernet. I read about that. Anonymous, I—our name was mentioned, but I had always been attracted to ceramics and basically as a supplement to painting. Better still, as it continues the painting.

ROBERT BROWN: How do you see it, the—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I just—

ROBERT BROWN: The continuance of painting.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, to me it's a continuance of painting, because I am not coming out of pottery to painting. I came from painting to pottery, from pottery to porcelains, from porcelains, high-fire and then low-fire, then enamels. Enamels are the lowest form of fire. The lower—

ROBERT BROWN: How do you see, say, porcelain as an extension of—from your—

KARL DRERUP: I love to decorate. This is very simple, really. I love to make the shapes—or designs of the shapes. We had quite a few, in fact. And the successful ones we sold I designed and we made a one-fire job with all cast porcelain. We used the industrial body that was used by forced porcelain work and Tury was—Von Tury was so skillful to employ these glazes the way we sprayed, the way I decorated, that we finally agreed upon such things as fixed payment.

I say, "All right." I made hundreds of lamp bases for him. Hundreds. Thousands, I must have made. They were so much a piece, 10 cents, 7 cents, 12 cents, 15 cents. The most expensive piece I made was—I got $2 for. $2 for these porcelains [inaudible] porcelains that you have seen. There's one in the collection, photo collection. $2 got the factory for firing and $2 Von Tury as the glaze engineer. And we sold them for $6 to Rena Rosenthal and she sold them for $60 a—until we finally got smart. And by the way, this ended, also, our relationship. Because I felt I was unduly taken advantage of and I found myself far more attracted to enamels. It is even more intimate art and I am—the intimacy of the medium is what attracted me also.

ROBERT BROWN: You did not know—well, partly you must have been bothered by, you did the design, Von Tury did the glaze. I mean—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, we were taken advantage of.

ROBERT BROWN: And then you worked on their Ford's Porcelain Works' base and then Rena Rosenthal got the difference. Now, what attracted them at the ceramics exhibition in '39—'38 and '39?

KARL DRERUP: I don't know. The piece in the—

ROBERT BROWN: Did they like them? Were they admired? Were they—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, they were. The piece in Syracuse Museum was a reduction piece. It's—it was the failing in the kiln, but so pink—it's a beautiful pink and gray. I hope they have it still, because somebody told me not long ago they had seen it, that they have it. So they must—it must—it's a man and an animal and I remember Rena Rosenthal had it. She had bought it already and when I told her I wanted to show it in the national show, she said, "Why do you want to do that?" And so—but she wanted to discourage me and I remember I had to go and buy it back from her. Buy it back, mind you. I did.

ROBERT BROWN: Why did she want to discourage you?

KARL DRERUP: She didn't want my name to get out. She—I was her little pet.

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, her artisan or something.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, you see, this is—she had an exclusive. This is—they all want an exclusive. Jensen wasn't any different and I bought it back, I remember. And then I took it and entered it. Then I said, "It is a good piece." And Von Tury said, "Oh, why do you bother with these people." And who do you think was at the opening in Syracuse? Mrs. Rosenthal and her husband. [Laughter.] And he had—at that time, I think he had written a book about porcelain or somebody else had—this was the first book about porcelain long before—who's the man who

made the encyclopedias? Cott [ph] or whatever his name—

ROBERT BROWN: Cox [ph].

KARL DRERUP: Cox, ja. And they had—there are two entries of mine in this and the title under the thing is *By a Recent Arrival in the United States*, instead of giving my name. That should have been my name. Mind you, this far they went—the whole thing was sort of embarrassing to me.

ROBERT BROWN: But to people in Syracuse, Ms. Olmsted and all, how did you feel about them?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. She thought it was very—she thought for one-fire piece and later on she invited Von Tury. And Von Tury kept up connections with the American Ceramics Society much more than I did, because I drifted out of it. Later on again, I submitted largely enamels. I didn't make any more porcelains. I didn't make any more pottery.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, during World War II, your main outlook was what?

KARL DRERUP: Jensen.

ROBERT BROWN: Jensen.

KARL DRERUP: From [inaudible] is the representative of—it's a Swedish glass—Orrefors.

ROBERT BROWN: Orrefors.

KARL DRERUP: And oh, I cannot complain, because I had enough work to do and then I met on occasion of a National Art Week on—where somebody had made me a final member. I met a man at a luncheon with whom I argued about education in a nice, gentle way, I must say. I didn't argue in an ugly way. But I—art education it was. And this man, I had no idea who he was. And when we were through, he turned around and said, "I'm sending my division chief to you tomorrow. You're starting for me." And he was the president for Adelphi College. So—Dr. Eddy and we enjoyed—I entered the school. I taught a few days a week. I was commuting to college then. And largely painting, drawing, and we even started to do ceramics and whatever one can do.

ROBERT BROWN: What had attracted you to him?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, he was a—I liked him for his—he was a type of a promoter, I would say. He wanted to make Adelphi College into really something, which it is today. It's a university, I understand. And he liked my—apparently liked my manner of being very uncompromising in a sense and, in fact, we got to know one another quite well. He liked me. When I asked him to release me because I wanted to move away from New York—I couldn't live there anymore—he was even upset. He said, "Why don't you come back." And a year later, he still came and said, "The job is still there for you"—

ROBERT BROWN: What was his name?

KARL DRERUP: Dr. Paul Dawson Eddy. And—

ROBERT BROWN: What was your approach to teaching?

KARL DRERUP: Well, I was a novice in the entire process—first of all.

ROBERT BROWN: But you hadn't taught before; had you?

KARL DRERUP: No. I would have in Germany from where I would have ended up teaching. But—and it was a woman's college. I was a bit embarrassed by the whole thing. And I must say that much, too. But I was just—he thought I was a natural. And we—as he jokingly, sometimes explained, I did terrible things unknowingly.

For instance, one evening it was a beautiful fall day. I went walking all over campus. And a man—a colleague of mine stepped over and said, "Oh, Drerup," he said, "Come and help us. We are playing the girls." And I said most obligingly—I wanted to oblige him I said[inaudible], of course, and I'm coming. And so I went to that place and they were playing basketball—baseball. The kind that you throw from—I don't know—

ROBERT BROWN: Softball, perhaps?

KARL DRERUP: Softball, they call—

ROBERT BROWN: Under—

KARL DRERUP: Underhand.

ROBERT BROWN: Right.

KARL DRERUP: So and he gave me the stick then. And he said, "Now, Drerup, this isn't,"—and I said, "Fine." The girl threw the ball and I hit it and I hit it out of the field and then I didn't know what to do. And you can imagine what happened. I ran to the pitcher thinking I had to tag her. And then they pushed me over the first base and then finally to the second base and by the time they had long recovered the ball, the president nearly died laughing. The tears were running down his face and I was so embarrassed, I could have crawled under a baseball bat. [Laughter.] And we had to—I remembered we had to come for supper that evening and the laughing that I—it was so funny. And I was—

ROBERT BROWN: You were completely embarrassed.

KARL DRERUP: Absolutely and the girls were so kind to me and nice to me, "Oh poor Mr. Drerup."

ROBERT BROWN: Your colleagues weren't sensitive to your embarrassment.

KARL DRERUP: Yes, of course. No, it was hilarious that they absolutely—you should have seen. These kids got completely wild. Because I was so stupid and—but later on, I liked it very much. There were some very lovely people. But my wish was to get away from New York. And I had all my iron in the fire, the sort of ceramist. Didn't want to make porcelain.

ROBERT BROWN: And while you were there, you did have a—you talk about Jensen. You also had Hudson Walker. Was he a dealer or a fairly—or was he a dealer here?

KARL DRERUP: Hudson Walker, it might—1940, I think. He saw my enamels and he immediately opened a little case in a corner in his gallery at 57th Street and he sold quite well. In fact, the first piece he sold, a large piece he sold to Duncan Phillips, from Phillips Memorial. And I was a bit baffled because he did quite well and he said—oh, yes, it lasted until '42, I believe. And then he was drafted into the army and he had to do some war reduction work.

ROBERT BROWN: So when do you—you were working—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, yes. And then also Karl Nierendorf whom I knew. Mr. Nierendorf and I had a sentimental attachment, because Mr. Nierendorf knew my grandfather's place on the Rhine. He was born on the other side of the Rhine in the middle of the Stephansbrauerei [ph] Brewery and knew my grandfather's quite well and so I don't know why we—I went quite often to the—met all sorts of people there.

ROBERT BROWN: So but with Walker and with Nierendorf you had—did you have a better arrangement than you had with Jensen?

KARL DRERUP: Well, no, they took, Nierendorf took occasionally a few things and Hudson Walker took a real straight line of mine—particularly larger pieces. And who else could then—

ROBERT BROWN: But you mentioned Lumming [ph] . That's—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, Lumming is Jensen. Lumming is Jensen.

ROBERT BROWN: You also in the—if you go back a moment, in '39 you had some involvement with the New York World's Fair; didn't you?

KARL DRERUP: Ja .

ROBERT BROWN: What did that consist of?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, there were quite a few pieces the—I was surprised to see myself; to walk through the World's Fair and all of the sudden I saw porcelains that I had made with Von Tury together. They were in the state of New York. And then the state of New Jersey had it, too. But the wholesaler for Mrs. Rosenthal—his name I can't recall. He was on 5th Avenue near the Rockefeller Center. He had a whole showroom of art pieces. In fact, a double showroom—double the size of these rooms.

ROBERT BROWN: And he had placed these in the—

KARL DRERUP: Yes, he had placed them apparently and he did the offices of the Mayor LaGuardia, the lamp bases or whatever. It was [inaudible]. And so—

ROBERT BROWN: Did you get a good deal of publicity out of that?

KARL DRERUP: No, I was just too stupid to take advantage.

ROBERT BROWN: You were still relatively—just basically arrived—

KARL DRERUP: Greenhorn, period.

ROBERT BROWN: Right.

KARL DRERUP: My fault. But—and coming back to myself later on by saying, "Right now, I'm going to run my own affairs." Because I was really intrigued by now. I liked the color forms of it and I didn't realize then that it is a very fascinating medium to begin with. Anyone can make an enamel, because there's no difficulty particularly today. You only do—you sift on a bit of enamel, you add these—thousand and one little kilns in which to get the firing done and so forth.

And at that time, I didn't see that or I didn't notice, because we there were so few enamellers. I do remember people came to me, Sweden House [ph]. I do recall [inaudible] for instance. They all approached me. They had seen my work and exhibitions and I need not to go out to sell. I could—I had a [inaudible]—

ROBERT BROWN: They would come to you and they would come to Long Island.

KARL DRERUP: Or recall me and as the saying goes—

ROBERT BROWN: What was your routine at that point. I mean how did you work at the—at that point do you think?

KARL DRERUP: Well, I made small things. I would go downtown New York and buy remnants, metal remnants, and I met—because downtown is full of old world craftsmen. I could speak Italian with them if I wanted. I could even speak Spanish with some of them and German, of course. And I worked with Peter Reimes. Peter Reimes was a silversmith who worked largely for Tommy Parzinger. He made very beautiful things. He also was a German, I think. He was also—ja, Munich Kunstgewerbeschule. He was a competent man. And we made dresser sets and oh, I made boxes and I—we made the models together, you see. And then they produced some of them. And then through [inaudible] another concern. They made pieces out of leather for Grosse [ph]—Marc Grosse. So I had my hands full. And then I asked—

ROBERT BROWN: You fired all this at home, though.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. Surely. And—

ROBERT BROWN: Were these mostly small pieces?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, mostly.

ROBERT BROWN: And what were they? Figural? Representational?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, as you see today, they were not as deep and as glowing in those days. I wasn't competent enough.

ROBERT BROWN: For experiments, you couldn't—you hadn't mastered as much.

KARL DRERUP: No, but I relied really in my—on my reading or on my love for traditional. Let me put it that way. I relied on my conviction that I could still use the methods of the old point of view of masters. Not to improve upon it. It's not so much the point as use them effectively. And I am averse to experiment for experimentation's sake. I see no point in it. Because there are people who will make hodgepodges of all sorts of—they—look, that looks interesting. So I don't have that trait. I am lacking. Because I am so full of new images for storytelling, I want to see the flowers or the beasts, whatever from butterflies to insect. And it just fills my imagination. And I don't need to experiment at all.

ROBERT BROWN: What do you think that stems from? Because some of your earliest student work you've shown me is illustration.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja.

ROBERT BROWN: You were under Hans Meid in Berlin. And this seems to continue—these [inaudible] of people, anecdotes, and genre.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, genre. [Inaudible.] It's—I can't help that it is part of my medium in a sense to tell a story, if necessary, where I was so impressed by the fact. I think Flinders Petrie said it somewhere. "The ornament is

dead." And he's right. We have no ornaments in a sense of our traditional constructs any longer. Ornament as it was born out by unskilled hands and unskilled minds out of the lives of plants, mollusks or whatever it was, you see. We don't have that anymore. And so the contrived ornament of our later periods, out of the playfulness of the Rococo, for instance, after them degenerates. I grant you, it degenerates all the time into a re-illustration. And I'm greatly mindful of it. It's a sort of trap for me, too. I have to watch and not fall into it. But I still believe in an ornament and in decoration somehow and to intrigue by it and seduce by it, you might say.

ROBERT BROWN: How do you save yourself from falling into this trap?

KARL DRERUP: I don't know. I have to watch myself not to become all sentimental or too storytelling. That the story becomes more important than the enamel. You see the idea is the healthy bounds. This is so hard to achieve that the subject matter should not out-drone what you're saying it with, or expressing it in—

ROBERT BROWN: What is there [inaudible] especially in enamel that you wish to express?

KARL DRERUP: I don't know. I wish I could lay a finger on it. I love color. I love even the intimacy of handling it. You see the small workshop space that I need. I don't need anything expansive to go and I'm not particularly kinetic about it. You know, there are people who have to swing their arms and elbows around. To me, it's mastering what other people mastered so beautifully, too. To—in that small space to get depth and get my story told, so to speak. Maybe that is what attracts me and I see it constantly as simply as an extension of painting itself.

For it's in the summertime I close shop here in my house by the end of April. Then I—after I had made my garden, of course. The garden is committing and it takes me more and more—and last year it took me a month to clean up around the house, to cut lumber, to cut wood, to get the garden going. And then I would settle to paint. And so all summer then I paint acrylics, temperas on it. Then when it would get cold I'd come in the house again.

ROBERT BROWN: Now, your painting continued right through the '40s; didn't it. I mean you were—

KARL DRERUP: All the time.

ROBERT BROWN: And what were you—were you trying to do anything different in your painting from what you were doing in these enamels?

KARL DRERUP: You know—

ROBERT BROWN: Was it always the same thing?

KARL DRERUP: The very thought—to think about it almost makes me self-conscious then. I am not rendering myself as conscious of my doing this. You might think—I had so little time—such little time left after I took on teaching obligations. For instance, here in Plymouth. I end up at Plymouth in '48. We arrived here in '45. I didn't even know there was a college and I could have gone to Durham. I could have gone to—even I was asked to come to Dartmouth for the veterans program to help out. I had offers from Scripps College from, from Pitt University, and Michigan State. And—but I got stuck here for some reason or other. I was finally approached by a local college and I—

ROBERT BROWN: But you didn't know—you didn't have much time then to paint—

KARL DRERUP: That's right and so it's whatever time I had left I so gladly embraced my tools again and sit down, particularly in the summer times when I didn't have summer school. And I still produced and worked for many hours. My hours—my day is not an eight hour day and then we raised a child. In '47 our son was born. And he demanded his time. And we—country living and—it gives us a lot of time. You see? We are not commuting anywhere and are always at home, you might say. We are always ready to do things: whether it's planting flowers or a vegetable garden or even cutting wood for the winter.

ROBERT BROWN: Before you left New York, though, you were—you had become a charter member of the New York Society of Craftsmen.

KARL DRERUP: No, Designer Craftsmen.

ROBERT BROWN: The Designer Craftsmen?

KARL DRERUP: So this was the—it was an offshoot of that old society. There were several societies in New York and—

ROBERT BROWN: How did you get involved with it?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, Peter Bitterman was the one. Peter Bitterman, Morris Heat [ph], and Andre Deparitan [ph]. This was the old crowd out of which was very much frequented by Mrs. Webb who asked us for advice. And Mrs. Webb then started the America House. The little America House on 53rd Street or 52nd Street. Somewhere it was first. And then she moved up to their present location. And I only met—at that time I didn't participate too much in it, because I was associated with Jensen's and George Jensen wanted me mostly exclusive. And I had to be very careful and watch for not to antagonize some of my customers, you might say. They got a line—this is—it is terrible to think of it today when you came in. It's like we have to have a new line, Mr. Drerup. Imagine.

ROBERT BROWN: And that took a good deal of time and compromise—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, yes—

ROBERT BROWN: You had to compromise yourself; didn't you?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, no, I didn't, because as I said, there was this one lady, Mrs.—

ROBERT BROWN: Ms. Stamm.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, Ms. Stamm. She was—well, she was great. We somehow— she had ideas and then it was really wonderful to do business with her, I might say.

ROBERT BROWN: What was Mrs. Webb like? Did you get involved fairly closely with her then?

KARL DRERUP: Ja—yes, I had many times—not many times. I had several times lunch with her. So we talked about all the directions she wanted the crafts movement to take. And she did such things as believing one can teach sales appeal. And the School for American Craftsmen, she tried to locate it at that time, I believe, in Dartmouth first before it went over to Rochester. But we couldn't see eye to eye in many ways because Mrs. Webb saw the organizational part of it so firmly and I saw the substance of it. I—the means to an end. While it is important to me, to me the end was important. But to her the means of an end—means to an end were everything.

ROBERT BROWN: Did she have much of a feel for enamel?

KARL DRERUP: No, not for enamels. No, I don't think even whether—I—really I shouldn't say, because—

ROBERT BROWN: Your feeling was that she was mainly able to organize and put those people together and—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, and I personally shied away also from any commitment there. She would have loved to have me get involved in many things and also in some of the others, but I returned always to my rather quiet table. I loved to work. I loved to make my things and let someone else do the organizing. And in fact I had not gone to most of my openings. I had all sorts of shows in New York and my wife goes to the opening. I don't.

ROBERT BROWN: Your wife's more gregarious than—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, no, it's not the gregariousness so much. I—when I'm done with a job I lose interest, believe it or not.

ROBERT BROWN: You're ready for your next—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, or just nothing, you see. Just having peace of mind. It's not peace of mind when you meet so many people and so many suggestions and so many ifs and whens and buts and so—

ROBERT BROWN: Well then, you probably weren't that involved with the Designer Craftsmen then; were you?

KARL DRERUP: No, we—Designer Craftsmen was really a feeble attempt to get away, but the notion that Peter Bitterman had was to say the designer and the craftsman are one. And he wanted to emphasize it and I recall we had a meeting with d'Harnoncourt at the Museum of the Modern Art at the time when they had the Art and Industry Exhibition. And we had argument and I became the spokesman for our group. And I do recall that we tried to press him for a stand in the Museum of Modern Art by saying, "All right. We are interested in you individual craftsmen and not in the designer whose work can be executed by unskilled hands or machines or whatever." And we couldn't pin him down.

We started at 2:30 in the afternoon. At 11:00 at night we were still at it in the Hotel Westin we were sitting in. I'll never forget it. We were sitting in the lobby there and fighting and arguing and I do recall in the course of this conversation, I turned to him and said—pointed to my heart and said, "You are only interested, not in what's here, you know, but in us as people." And he wouldn't admit it. But he—I thought afterwards, "What a stupid gesture on my part to even appeal to this sort of thing." that—one who ideates a work is also an executioner. It's

dual. It's make-up. And I wanted to bring this to his attention, but I got nowhere.

ROBERT BROWN: Why do you think you were stupid to do that? Because he wasn't listening?

KARL DRERUP: Well, he wasn't—no, he wasn't attuned to that. Really, the vibes were wrong or whatever they say—what they call it today. You see, it didn't work. It didn't operate that way. And I'm still the one who, from the beginning to end, I take a piece of metal in my hand and I shape and I bring it to its ultimate conclusion. And I am glad when it goes somewhere other people can enjoy it.

ROBERT BROWN: Have you found that d'Harnoncourt's attitude is—has continued among many—

KARL DRERUP: I wonder. You know, I wonder. I could not say. I—but I recall we were—we kept on going to argue about this time and again on and on. Inconclusively, let me say that. It was inconclusive.

ROBERT BROWN: But of course the great bait for craftsmen was the fact that if industry picked up your design, there was a good living out of that; right?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, Paul Lobel was very interesting. Paul Lobel in the beginning came and said, "Oh, all you should do—design something like a device that [inaudible] automobile, you know. Mounted on its"—

ROBERT BROWN: Oh, the radiator.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, radiator. Whatever it is. Or something like this. And then let's let copies be made. I remember Paul Lobel and a couple of years later I found him in downtown New York having a little silver shop doing precisely the opposite from what he once preached to us to do. And how shall I say that? We laughed a bit. He came around. And he said, "All right. The doer and ideator are the same really."

So, in fact, I was so obsessed by it, I didn't give it too much thought. The means to an end aren't that important and Mrs. Webb and all the organizations, even the League of New Hampshire Arts and Crafts through all this organization that later on was so instrumental in our coming out here. And it had this as its maxim, you might say. The means to an end are important. I realize organizational and Mrs. Webb was completely enmeshed in it. See I don't think she had time to look at—

ROBERT BROWN: But your feeling is that the designer often got lost.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, boy.

ROBERT BROWN: Now, was the fact that there was the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen—was that a principal reason you came up here in 1945?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, it happened that we were in Syracuse at Mrs.—Ms. Olmsted's and she had made some arrangements—some luncheon arrangements. And we were—and my wife was sitting with Ed and Mary Sheier and David Campbell. David Campbell is now already—

ROBERT BROWN: He was then director of the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen.

KARL DRERUP: The League—and they—it was—I think it was 1941. It's the year of the war or was it? I think so. 1940. 1941. I have not—no, I'm not sure. They persuaded her to say, "All right. Why don't you come with us and you drive over Vermont and New Hampshire and then you can take the bus down back to New York." So I was sitting—seated somewhere as I have forgotten. But anyhow I said, "All right. Let's do it then." So we did and we drove over Vermont and it was a beautiful, beautiful—oh, man it was so beautiful. We came out in a little—then we drove through Franconia Notch and the Sheiers had just bought a new farmhouse here. And when I saw that, it was it. I had no other thought, but this is the—where I would like to settle. And actually we waited. We had to wait until 1945. We became citizens during the war in 1944, which was something for enemy aliens. We were on the enemy alien list.

ROBERT BROWN: Despite the fact you were refugees?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I know, but it was—I had done something for the Red Cross. I had some remarkable recommendations also from Dr. Eddy who wanted us to become citizens. So we did and no sooner—in 1945, we packed up an old '34 Chevy and one moving van and it was very difficult to obtain a moving van even. And we made out for the hills. We had found this little house in '44—in the summer of '44. I had been up here once to see around. I was asked to go to the university and I had an exhibition there and I had asked one of the deans. I said, "Bring me in contact with a real Yankee family." I wanted to meet some Yankees. I had never met any. So he called in a girl, Ms. Poltser [ph] and he said, "Aren't your parents taking guests in their farm? Aren't your parents taking in summer guests in their place?" And she said, "Yes." It was right here.

ROBERT BROWN: It was down the road from where you are.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, it was just Campton Bog. So I spent there four weeks—I helped them hay and milk cows and my wife came up, too. We looked it over and we saw it was very beautiful and this is why we came to New Hampshire.

ROBERT BROWN: You were tired of New York? Or you—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I—no, I should put it differently. I felt I wasn't living in America. This is really—in very—in someone's house. That was about it. I felt I was living in the doorway only. And I put it very mildly, you see. I felt I was living in a backyard. And I wanted to live in a different atmosphere, where a sense—where I could take root [inaudible]. So and I haven't moved since then. We have had only two domiciles in the United States. One's in Rockwood Center and one's here.

ROBERT BROWN: In Thornton New Hampshire

KARL DRERUP: And that's all. And we have never moved—

ROBERT BROWN: Did you fairly quickly get involved with the shires and the—

KARL DRERUP: We—yes, oh quite a few. We met—of course, so many came off the [inaudible]. And I had, of course, a whole string of them came.

ROBERT BROWN: Who were here?

KARL DRERUP: No, they came from California, you know, ever so many. I hadn't met many of my fellow enamellers since I met Sir Bates in Syracuse and I met Winters, of course, and a few others, but I didn't meet Ames [ph] and next I met the Woolleys. And we are really utterly—it is—it was in those days just a handful of people who did all the enameling and I don't know, but somehow I have the feeling enamels have become so popularized—it has been done so much, harm has been done to it by, how shall I say, unknowingly, unwittingly or wittingly by all those who buy these little sets and they—

ROBERT BROWN: Do you feel that you have made a contribution?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. No, and I once, for example, did demonstrations time and again to craftsmen here who came and then I was through with them. And they would say, "Oh, yes. It should work like this." You see, where they end, I begin. This is really in firing and in all, I—their preparations—their finished work would be just my preparations.

ROBERT BROWN: They would shortcut.

KARL DRERUP: Too many. Too much sifting, too much dipping, too much really laying in an enamel, laying in glass for it takes a bit more than that.

ROBERT BROWN: You said that you were probably one of the few enamellists who can say that your enamels have depth.

KARL DRERUP: Yes.

ROBERT BROWN: Could you explain what you—

KARL DRERUP: Well, it's—I've told everyone that use your opaques. There are opaque and translucent enamels or transparent enamels, you see. And it's a single alone with me. The opaques come at the bottom. They go to the bottom. They form the basis of it. The design is established by—the design is shifted around or whatever it is. You almost finalize it, but then you use the transparent that go over it, maybe two—possibly two fires transparents that go over it. They are simply to bring intensity and glow to your color. And the idea is that I go even further on steel or copper, particularly on plaques. I polish them. I grind them down with Carborundum under water.

ROBERT BROWN: Each layer?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, not each—no, the final layer. And grind them down in order to level for the penetration of the lighting. If the surface is too bubbly, the light doesn't come straight at it. You see, it comes at all sorts of angles and it is reflected wrong.

ROBERT BROWN: At least in ways you can't control or see—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, and when I polish down, I get a fairly equal illumination. Wherever the light hits, it hits evenly. And so this is the whole secret. [Inaudible] too determining and I don't know why people don't do it.

ROBERT BROWN: But very few have.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, very few have. I'm amazed why so few. It's simply too cumbersome for most—

ROBERT BROWN: Is it also because, at least in this country, enamels have sold fairly well without going to that trouble?

KARL DRERUP: Everywhere the same—

ROBERT BROWN: Many people have found that they can have a career in it without bothering.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, for pennies. The extra quick buck or whatnot. That helps—but you see, on the other hand, enamels, the last enamellist, let's say, the enamellist like Faberge. The Victorians had really the last hold on enameling—on good and fine enameling and, of course, they abused it terribly. And we think that doorknobs and handles and so they finally became so absurd. Everything was colored and covered with decoration. That also did harm to it and now I wonder what will happen now with all our surface, with all our sifting, with all our making interesting surfaces. You see, textures—I don't see how one can texture glass and at the same time taint. You can't. I can't. They—

ROBERT BROWN: You've also said that many of them don't either draw well or paint well.

KARL DRERUP: Of course, not.

ROBERT BROWN: This is not evident in their work.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, the amount of drawing that I do, which you have seen in all this—

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, mainly preliminary studies.

KARL DRERUP: I don't sit just down and start on it. And those drawings—as I say, I don't—I wish there were a way of photographing some of the sequences as they have developed, you see, in black and white, because there would be—

ROBERT BROWN: Are you always thinking in terms of the application to enamel?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja. Well, yes. But it is just spontaneously. I—the more I put out, the more comes, apparently. And as I said, I am at heart a bit of an illustrator. Not the illustrator in the sense of the illustration of magazine illustration, but to describe, you see and descriptive. And I shouldn't be ashamed of it, because it's my nature.

ROBERT BROWN: Now, this was a—this is all very intensive commitment. Why, for example then, did you begin teaching in New Hampshire? You started when? Back in '48, I guess.

KARL DRERUP: '48. Ja, I was—

ROBERT BROWN: Or teaching here in the nearby teachers' college in Plymouth, New Hampshire.

KARL DRERUP: It's—teaching came in—first of all, I felt—now, we're going into the depth. The social—my—the social significance of my work is something that has bothered me. That is to say, the trinkets, the bijouterie, as the French would say; the little ornaments that I produce, these little very enjoyable pieces retain sort of a frivolity. I couldn't help—I can't help saying it. I saw them there displayed in Jensen's. I saw them displayed in the fine shops in New York and—there was—the very people who bought it, I very often was asked, for instance, to meet these people at Jensen's. I had nothing in common with them. In fact, I could never have afforded my own work. It was that expensive by the time the dealers were through with it. And I felt a sort of social frustration.

But I felt somewhere I was missing out on something. And in teaching, I like teaching. I loved it, in fact, sometimes. And I'm enough of an extrovert to say that. In teaching, I found another fulfillment—social fulfillment that in the loneliness of my work bench here I didn't get, neither did I—or nor did I get this— a sense of frustration and I think that—I do remember one day I was called in by Van Doktoren [ph]. He had sold a lady a piece. And there was a sign—

ROBERT BROWN: Where was this?

KARL DRERUP: In New York. Van Doktoren [ph], he was—he represented of Orrefors. And he had sold a lady a

piece and he said, "She doesn't see your signature. So you have to come and verify it. So I came and I came in and the lady came. She came—she was simply an amazing monstrosity. I hate to be so uncharitable in my talk. But—and she said—then finally she was of the Patino [ph] family and the Patin [ph] family in South America. But I think she was Russian, too. I don't know. It was such a funny thing. And she finally was satisfied that I had done it and so she left with a little dog on her arm and a chauffeur outside. Van Dorst turned around and says, "You know, if you hang this with an icon it becomes a Picasso." That did me in. [Laughter.] I felt "my god." This is the —

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, and it was absolutely uncontrollable; wasn't it?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, and I felt frustrated. I said, "Oh, my god, why do I do things like that?" And so in teaching I got —I didn't mind even in the discipline that I was subject to—and then—when they got appreciation of art, they got all of these cock-eyed courses that I turn plain into a history course—

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, it was built from nothing over here, too.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, I did. I really made—

ROBERT BROWN: And you always had some conflict with the president—

KARL DRERUP: President, ja. Dr. Hyde. Dr. Harold Hyde. I can say it now. He's—I mean he's still alive and I'm still alive. We fought for 20 years about professionalism. He was a professional educator, what I call a pedagogue and I was liberal arts. And we had bitter arguments. But we respected one another because I think he is a good politician—

ROBERT BROWN: He wished you to simply teach them how to do it—

KARL DRERUP: No, he thought my emphasis was too highly placed. He thought I should come down to earth, I should realize where I am, I should prepare people for a professionalism that in my—really, to my way of seeing it was very circumscribed by then. They—all these people had already a bit of John Dewey but that's all. And they got their minds so twisted by Dewey's formidable logic. I couldn't follow it at all.

ROBERT BROWN: But they were going to apply his logic to very parochial situations—

KARL DRERUP: Oh, it was awful. And we had bitter arguments and—but I—we came to enjoy the fact that it was always a perversity of mine to enjoy these arguments we had and we banged tables once to try to emphasize and it was—we had to laugh afterwards, ourselves, because we got carried away by our own convictions in this instance and none of us gave. Neither did I, nor did he. But and later on when we met, we would say to one another, "Now, should we have an argument or should we have a conversation?" And from then on we dealt with each other with a sense of humor without giving an inch on either side.

ROBERT BROWN: But by and large, you found that teaching helped you rather than—

KARL DRERUP: It humaned me.

ROBERT BROWN: In what way, humaned you?

KARL DRERUP: Well, I felt, you see—I—when I saw what took place on Madison—on 57th Street, I couldn't—I didn't fit there anymore. I felt socially, much of it was so meaningless. It was a public relations job that most artists so cultivated. The dealers, too. I saw it in immediate environment, particularly of Mr. Nierendorf who suffered from it very much. I can see it now. He was unhappy here. He should have stayed in Germany. He could have. He was not Jewish or anything like that.

But he left just as so many others had done. He left out of immeasurable disappointment. And he aggravated, I'm afraid. And I don't know whether he died happy. I remember when I said goodbye to him, I said, "I'm now going to move to the country and I won't come back." Everyone said—Mies van der Rohe was there too that night. He said, "Oh, you will be back next winter. One winter. I'll give you one winter." He didn't see me again.

ROBERT BROWN: You did see—Mies was from your area; wasn't he?

KARL DRERUP: Ja, from Aachen. You know Mies—you know what he said of my work? "Oh, Drerup," he said. He wanted to emphasize steel *Beton*, *Eisen Stahl* or something like this. This is it. He was a rather silent type. He didn't say much. He smoked stinky cigars.

But he said another thing. He said, "You know, when I go somewhere and want to bring something very nice. I'll take your things." He wanted to ingratiate himself to, you see, to put me in my place. [Inaudible] dreams he called them. But I saw in Nierendorf's in one and in Neumann's—J.B. Neumann's and Hudson Walker's list I saw a

mound of public relations that was put on to bring an artist over—to put an artist over and I was just cut up.

ROBERT BROWN: And you really didn't have to up here.

KARL DRERUP: No, and I find—I am not willing to pay that price. It's not selling myself, you understand. It is denying myself, in fact. This is what it could have been and here I don't have to.

ROBERT BROWN: Did you try to exhibit regularly? You did exhibit regularly.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, yes. I got everywhere—they came from all sorts of, as you can see—go through the lists you will see they came from everywhere.

ROBERT BROWN: And you were elected to the Master Craftsmen Boston Society of Arts and Crafts.

KARL DRERUP: Ja .

ROBERT BROWN: Was that quite an honor for you? Were you at all involved with them?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, and I admit it was a sort of a figuraturity—

ROBERT BROWN: What about the New Hampshire League? Were you ever involved in any organizational activity?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, I served on the council and then I found, to my surprise there also was a certain social tinge was attached to the good, well-to-do people and the kind of the right people trying to organize it. And there was too much charity in it and there was never enough craftsmanship in. But I must say or I should not fail to state that David Campbell, who was a remarkable fellow—David had this purpose of getting fine craftsmen into this region was just for one single purpose, he said, and that was to set standards. This is the way the Sheiers got here. This is the way that you can go. We can go through the whole list. Many of them are gone already.

ROBERT BROWN: But what was the—how would the other people—the average person, be aware of you—

KARL DRERUP: By association.

ROBERT BROWN: You exhibit together or you have pieces in the shop?

KARL DRERUP: Yes, and this then didn't turn out that way. It has proven itself—only in two fields it has proved itself valuable. And that I think was wheeling, then pottery, there it has left a mark. But I couldn't leave one. All my experimentation, all my demonstration, I couldn't leave a mark at all because people weren't willing to work as hard. See when I—I gave demonstrations that lasted two days on one piece. Now, here is your scene, working it from beginning to end. And the man who particularly wanted this wasn't there to work like this.

ROBERT BROWN: Who were the people they had in mind becoming craftsmen? Were these local people or—

KARL DRERUP: Ja, partly. Also—

ROBERT BROWN: They had expressed something of an interest?

KARL DRERUP: It's amazing how many people up here in these northern states, in particular in the state of New York, Vermont, and Maine—how many people have a genuine interest in the craft because it is like a small home industry. It can be easily employed—after all, think of it, a little electric kiln, the [inaudible] ground down. You have to grind them anymore. You can even buy pre-quartered metals, steels, and whatnot and there's a quick buck somewhere if they do it right. And this is the bad part—bad feature. And we are actually—and that's where we're suffering from. And I myself find, of course, the old form of apprenticeship, these years and years of slaving away for a master is most inappropriate and it has no place in American society.

ROBERT BROWN: Why is that?

KARL DRERUP: You couldn't do it. We aren't diversified. I couldn't take on an apprentice. Not physically. Where have I the space to do it? Look at my little work table. When people come here and see me working, they say, "What? Here you work?" This is the most common first exclamation.

ROBERT BROWN: You sound disappointed. Do you think in Europe you could have had a bit better—

KARL DRERUP: No.

ROBERT BROWN: No.

KARL DRERUP: No, in *Handelsfreiheit*, all the freedom to do a trade, for instance, in Germany—in the first place, I wouldn't want to live there anymore. I saw it in '62, well after 32 years and I was convinced and deeply convinced that to visit one's past in my case and to visit my past is wrong. I have a future here. I have a presence here and my child has a future here. And I am absolutely healthy. I love it. I just love it.

ROBERT BROWN: Well, by the mid-'50s enamels were getting their own exhibitions; weren't they?

KARL DRERUP: Oh, ja.

ROBERT BROWN: You mentioned the major ones were '50, '54, the exhibition at the Cooper Union.

KARL DRERUP: Oh, they had begun already at Scripps College, Cooper Union. They were at Pitt University.

ROBERT BROWN: Yes, so then in '58, you had your retrospective of 20 years here.

KARL DRERUP: Ja, [inaudible].

ROBERT BROWN: There was an earlier gallery in Manchester, Manhattan. Charles Buckley arranged it. So he was a man you worked with fairly closely then for some years.

KARL DRERUP: He was the one who suggested this in '58. He said you should make a little review of your work. And I said, "Will you do it?" So he did and we made a review of my work and we did it very tastefully arranged.

ROBERT BROWN: There was painting and pottery as well or—

KARL DRERUP: Enamels and just—and drawings and prints also.

ROBERT BROWN: Was there quite a lot of feedback from that?

KARL DRERUP: No, very little. But, of course, colleagues, yes. But no press reviews. Because there's no press, you know, that would even take notice of it. We had—and then came, of course, enamel Philadelphia art in lines. Boston—in Boston there were some enamels. Then came the historic review by the Craftsmen's Museum. You see the Museum of Contemporary Crafts. I think they had two. Then came the University of Indiana for crafts. They begin to focus on certain crafts, because the interest in it had risen to that extent and—well, that's about it, I think. Then all these other—

ROBERT BROWN: Then today, you are no longer affiliated with an institution, but you are still exhibiting as widely?

KARL DRERUP: No, I have no agent anymore. I am just retired and friends and collectors over the years come back again and again and purchase and after all look what do we need here. It's a life of—so many people would like to lead it, you see. I am willing to lead it, because it is, of course, it is so very self-contained in that sense. We miss our son. That's the main thing.

ROBERT BROWN: Sure.

KARL DRERUP: But he has gone, because if he were here, he would supplement this and complement it and he wants to be a craftsman—

[END OF INTERVIEW.]