Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Stanley Landsman, 1968 Jan. 19-22

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

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Stanley Landsman on January 19, 1968. The interview took place in New York, NY, and was conducted by Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

PAUL CUMMINGS: January 19, 1968. Paul Cummings talking to Stanley Landsman. Right. New York City. January 23.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Are you sure things are working?

PAUL CUMMINGS: You're an Aquarian - right?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. And this is the Aquarian age which is going to last for --

PAUL CUMMINGS: Two thousand years.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: One thousand years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Two thousand years!

PAUL CUMMINGS: Two thousand, yes.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Fabulous, man. That's terrific. I need it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You need two thousand years to really get there? So anyway you were born where in New York?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I was born on 92nd Street in Manhattan and spent my whole life on 92nd Street. "The house on 92nd Street" - well, 92nd Street was sort of a notorious street.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Whereabouts?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, this was between Central Park and Columbus. And the Rising Sun Club, which was the secret service club for the Japanese, you know, the spy center, was on 92nd Street. Which was very strange. And The House on 92nd Street, which was the great film that they made - remember The House on 92nd Street which was the German spy center of the United States - the Bund Headquarters was on 92nd Street. So we all grew up on 92nd Street playing stick ball and we were very happy in the 1930's.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you have brothers and sisters?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I have one brother. He's in the public relations business. And he reads the Sunday Times every day. I don't understand what he does. And he doesn't understand what I do either.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is he older or younger than you?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: He's a year older.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you grew up playing stick ball in the street and he learned something else.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I don't know where he went wrong. I, of course, wanted to be a doctor all my life. A Jewish boy has to be a doctor.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: But I used to lean out my window and draw Central Park. I must have done 87 million drawings of Central Park when I was a kid. My father was a watercolorist.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Not in the pure sense. But he loved to do watercolors. And so he was always dragging me

to some obscure point in the Park to do an English watercolor with washes. And I guess I just fooled around with it mostly through that. The school I went to was P.S. 166 which was on 86th Street. And then my father took very ill and I went to a school called Franklin which was right down the block from P.S. 166. While I was at 166 I won a New York City art competition.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Those were primary schools?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. All the primary schools get together and everybody submits work, you know. And I think they hold it at the Lever Brothers Building now, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I go over there every once in a while. And I think of this monster I made! I think I made a painting that was fourteen feet long and it had every animal in the whole world. And my mother was going crazy because I had like ruined the whole living room wall. Anyway I think that ruined my whole life anyway. I got this medal from Wanamaker. And I mean I never really did anything until after I left Franklin. Which is a very funny story. I subsequently found out that more than one person went to this sort of notorious little school.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What age group was that at Franklin?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Franklin was a school that went up through high school. I think Roy Lichtenstein went through high school there. He was four years ahead of me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have you known him a long time?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. Well, I've known Roy ten years but I never knew him then. But we were at a dinner party one night and the hostess of the dinner party said to the two of us, "Did you know the two of you went to school together?" I looked at Roy and here I've known him for ten years, but who ever talks about high school or grade school. Roy said, "What school did you go to?" I said, "Franklin." "Me, too." And Kenny Nostrum, you know, the guy who runs Fandango, he went there too. There were about twenty guys that went to that schlubby little annex.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, what kind of school was it then?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I had to go there because my father was taken ill I guess when I was about ten or eleven and they had to go to Mayo Clinic. And I lived with my aunt at that point. And it was just a school that instead of going at nine o'clock in the morning and coming home at one o'clock like public school, you sort of went at nine o'clock in the morning and you didn't get home till six o'clock at night because you went and played soccer in Central Park and you had all these other activities that they made you do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It was more liberal.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, it was a private sort of, you know, like a liberal private school or whatever they call them. My aunt wasn't at home, you know what I mean, so I had to like fill up the time. They didn't want me wandering the streets. So they gave me a school that kept me busy all day. And it was a tough school. I mean like in public school you know you goof off. Here you had to take four years of Latin, you had to take four years of French, you know, we had German; we had three languages we had to learn.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You had to work.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, it was a wild school. Then when I graduated I was dying to see my father. I hadn't seen him in years by now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where was he? At Mayo all this time?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: He was all screwed up. He had tuberculosis of the spine and all kinds of stuff that developed from who knows what. He had come back to the city and he had left again because the operation wasn't successful. And he had another operation in Mexico City by some obscure doctor that had a cure for this one - it was called osteomyelitis. But it was a long time ago and things weren't really perfected. So anyway I went to visit him. I graduated from school and I was enrolled to go to Rutgers. I went to see him in New Mexico because that's where he was recuperating in the 7,000 foot altitude with the heat and the sun and everything like that. I got out there. I got off the plane and I'll never forget that. And you've got to remember that I was really never out of New York City for those 17 years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This was your first time --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: This was my first shot outside of New York City.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There was a new world for you.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Just a cynic, you know. There's nothing outside of New York. It's the end of the world. Drop off into a pit. So I got off the plane. It was about five o'clock. There was this big red sun in the sky over purple mountains and the yellow desert at the airport. I couldn't believe it. I just looked at that and I said, "My God, those picture postcards were real!" And it took me four years to leave the town. My father left about two months after I got there. And I couldn't leave.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This was in what city?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Albuquerque, New Mexico. I stayed there for four years. I enrolled at the University that summer because I figured I'd have to have something to do while I was there. So I took some painting courses. And actually it's very funny how and what I took. I went up the University and, because I had always gone out with my father watercoloring I thought I was a pretty good watercolorist. I went to the catalogue in the art department and they told me, yes, they had a course in watercolor. You went out to the desert every day. So I found out who was teaching it. It was a young girl by the name of Agnes Martin who was teaching this course in watercolor.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really!

STANLEY LANDSMAN: So I thought I'll take this course, you know. So I meet this Agnes Martin, a big, terrific woman. And she sort of takes a liking to me. And she said, "I'm going watercoloring with you every day. We go together and the rest of the class follows us." So Agnes and I get in the car - of course what's happened to Agnes over the years is so beautiful. And we get out there. And I have this little pad of watercolor paper and my brushes. And Agnes would be out there with sheets like 36x50 and she had a brush that looked like a housepainter's brush; it was this big. And she had big buckets of water and she carried sacks full of paint. She'd spread it out on the desert. She was working in about three-quarters of a mile area. Everything was like blowing. It didn't matter. And I was working on this really fine delicate little English watercolor. Like a little 17-year old postage stamp. She'd say, "Stop with that already! Stop with that! Paint! Paint big. Get it all out." And of course the great thing is like 15 or 20 years later when I re-came back to New York after being in service and all that and I re-met Agnes Martin 15 years later. I was passing by Horn & Hardart's on 23rd Street and I looked in the window and there she was sitting! And of course now, you know, like she's notoriously famous, with these very fine lines, you know, on a white canvas. And I had just had that show at Leo Castelli's about a month before that. I knocked on the window at Horn & Hardart's and Agnes sort of waved me in. And I sat down and I said, "Agnes, you lied to me. You told me art was fun." And she said, "I know. I've been fooling myself too." So we had a great talk and talked about the old days. I had helped build a house and swimming pool out in the desert. She lived alone. She lived about 14 miles from anything right out in the middle of the desert. She liked that kind of isolation and quiet. She was a terrific teacher.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, she was your first real art teacher? Or had you had some in high school.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, not really art teachers - they had "art" teachers. She was my first art teacher. It was a good period because I was seventeen. But the war was just over and there was a tremendous number of GI's coming back from the Second World War and they had a lot of piss and vinegar to get out of their systems. And it just seemed that the school was composed of a lot of people that might not normally have ever come there. Everybody seemed to have arrived there because of some strange phenomenon. Their car broke down. They went to see their father. The GI Bill. Just some strange reason. You know what I mean? We had a lot of nice people. Adja Yunkers was there. Randall Davies was there. As I said, Agnes Martin was there. Diebenkorn was there. Bill McGee.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that school had a whole sort of four or five year period there of great activity with people going in and out of there.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And what we did was sort of shift between there and Black Mountain which was going on at the same time. People from there would come out to New Mexico. A lot of people like Chamberlain and a lot of these guys were returning to New Mexico for their sanity.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You didn't get involved with Black Mountain ever, did you?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I remember my idols in those years - this was 1949, let's say, - were Baziotes and Klee, I had pictures all over my portfolio and all my paintings, prints and everything. And I remember I was living in this hellhole out on South Arno with five guys. And they were good to me. They really were, these guys. They were all on the GI Bill. I wasn't old enough. They were four or five years older than I was. And at that time the GI Bill included all the materials you could use. You had to sign for them and then you got your $90 a month or

whatever, besides. When I went back to school after my four years it had all changed. It was like $90 a month or something like that and that included your materials. So I used all these guys' materials. When I needed stuff they would always go out and buy it for me. And I remember McGee coming back to the house one day and he said, "Pack your bags. We're going to Black Mountain." And I said, "What do you want to go to Black Mountain for?" He said, "There are two great teachers there we've got to study with. Franz Kline is teaching there" and I've forgotten who the other one was. I said, "Franz Kline? Who's Franz Kline?" I didn't want to move away from New Mexico. I had just fallen in love, for Christ's sake. So he went off.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who was that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Bill McGee. He was a good painter. He had terrific potential. A good person too. He's in the city now. He teaches at Hunter. He just never seemed to get himself out of the one bag he was always in. He was part of that whole Guston group, you know. I just never could see that group. Anyway, he just never pulled himself up. I don't know - he's very happy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Were there other students there that have gone on and developed into all kinds of things that were friends of yours?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, I'm trying to think. There was a Hawaiian girl who I ran into in Boston once who had a big show. Her name is McKenna, or something. She was very good. She was very talented. But I think she got married and drifted by the wayside again, you know one of those things. Diebenkorn of course was there. There were others. I just can't remember them. I mean a lot of guys who were there went into sort of allied fields. Like Bob Kline went into decorating and has become one of the best decorators in the country. He was one of the five guys in the house. He was very talented, really talented. Any one of them could have stayed in the arts and done it too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who else did you study there with besides Agnes Martin?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I studied with Yunkers. Of course Yunkers wasn't --

PAUL CUMMINGS: He was a different age group.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, yes. He was like the real liberal teacher out there. And this was before he was married to Dore Ashton. Well, he would bring beer to class, have everybody drink it. He was teaching graphics, wood cuts and stuff like that. But he was a terrific guy. And a lot of good words came out of his mouth. He was an interesting person.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you do printmaking too and all that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I mean you had to do it to take the thing. I was always torn in school really between my semi-desire to get into medicine and my desire to get into art. I still am fascinated with science. Science is just a fantastic field and it always will be to me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, before school, when you were in high school, did you read books on art or science?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, yes. I read on both of them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You went to the Natural History Museum?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh. God, yes. You wouldn't believe how many hours I spent. I was like a member of the thing so I could see all the movies. They had all those great free movies up there. Wow.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you go to the other museums too? Or not so much?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I went more to that one than to any of the others. I think maybe the Met and the American Indian Museum uptown.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Lots of people go to that museum.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, yes. It's a great museum. But nobody knows about that museum.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Except I bet I've talked to five painters out of twenty who, you know, all had periods when they'd go up there every month.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Sure. But the thing is you can't do that when you're young because it's a long schlep. It's on 105th Street or something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: They have an obscure Spanish-American Museum up there too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, they've got that whole --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, that complex.

PAUL CUMMINGS: -- Stanford White --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Is that a Stanford White?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No kidding?

PAUL CUMMINGS: That whole Audubon Terrace business.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: But I think of the Natural History Museum because I always like that statue of Roosevelt outside --

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was your idol. The man who had half a block of labels.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And the planetarium of course.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think there's a relationship?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. The only relationship is the great Charles Addams cartoon of the guy in the Planetarium, the beautiful one, the moon-shaped man sitting in the Planetarium and the moon starts, you know, and it goes from a little sliver all the way through its whole lunar cycle. He's sitting there, you know, and looking up there and as it gets closer to a full moon he becomes a werewolf. I had that on my studio wall for years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, I remember that. Well, did you read a lot? Or listen to music in your early school? Did you have those things at home?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: We had them. My brother was really the avid reader. I read a lot but not as much as he did. We had a lot of books in the house always. I was a builder. I couldn't keep my hands busy enough. I had to build things. I mean I had a real so-called boy's room.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you make?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It was just filled with craziness. Parts of motorcycles and I wasn't even old enough to have a motorcycle. You know, but I'd find it. I'd have to take it apart. I had a friend who lived on the eleventh floor and we lived on the fourth floor. We had rigged up motors between the two floors so we could send messages. And I built crazy model airplanes and boats and everything, anything that had to do with building and precision work and really craft ... I was always interested in craftsmanship in the so-called crafts, finished product, and building.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Carpentry and things like that.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I'm still good at it. But I still miss often. To build a piece of sculpture is a lot easier than building a bookshelf.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really? Why so?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I don't know. I'll build a bookshelf at somebody's house, you know. They con you into it and you order the wood and you do all this and you get it all over and then you're ready to put it up and you find that it's two inches too short. So then you have to figure out all sorts of craziness to figure out why is it two inches too short and what can you jam in there to make up for that two inches. You have to build this fake facade wall for two inches. Sculpture doesn't work that way. It's like you build it absolutely accurate because that's the way you do it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that's because that's what you do. You really don't build bookshelves.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. I'm not really interested in bookshelves.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you remember what you read in those days?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I do remember that I always used to read my father's scientific journals. And it didn't

make him really very happy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What profession was he in?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: He's a doctor. He worked for the City of New York in Harlem Hospital. He's a roentgenologist. So he used to get all these sort of scientific journals. And I used to read them. But, as I said, I was more interested in really building than I was in anything else. Or in painting. Anything with my hands. So I painted a lot. I copied tons and tons of stuff.

PAUL CUMMINGS: From what - books, magazines?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Magazines. Football players, the things that struck me. I think I went through a nudey stage too, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Still.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, still. Mel Ramos and I. I was an early teacher of Mel Ramos. It was just anything I could get may hands on. Like in school we had sort of art classes, you know, at Franklin. I can picture Roy in one of those classes doing all of those dot paintings. And the teacher pulling his hair out, "What are you trying to do here?"

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, he did cowboys and Indians and things before that.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Well, before he started with all that of course his paintings were always humorous. Sort of takeoffs of realistic Picasso's, you know, George Washington Crossing the Delaware, you know, that was one of them. It was a very humorous thing. But that's like 15 years ago when he did those paintings. They were really quite good.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Well, you didn't really have any art friends or associations except your father's watercolors?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What you did yourself until you got to --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: To New Mexico. I had no contact with it. Then of course I worked very hard out there because it was really the only thing that I wanted to do, besides taking all my science courses, you know, that I was still interested in. In fact I graduated with a Bachelor of science degree from there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: But it was one of those things that you can have 40 credits major in science and 190 credits for all your other subjects, you know, in art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: So it was a pretty one-sided thing and it all went towards art even though my major subject, let's say, was science. So they graduated you with a Bachelor of Science because that was your major. And I really wasn't that great a science --

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you specialize in?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I liked microscopes. And I liked drawing all that stuff and, you know, I liked seeing life.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Sitting there --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, gosh, turning your eyes around. They didn't have the big fancy microscopes then, did they?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Now they project them in front of the classroom, these photomicroscopes or whatever they call them. But I liked dissecting. But of course it was all part of the same thing, you know what I mean? The object was to keep my hands busy. I was a bust in mathematics. Even though I know mathematics is the poetry of the sciences. I know that now but I didn't know it then. You know, because now when I talk to mathematicians, sort of abstract mathematicians, not these hard core teachers, they're beautiful guys because their heads are really - they're poets.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They see everything ---

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And they're beautiful. They're sort of artists with numbers. And they're great guys. But I didn't understand it then because a lot of it had to do with teaching methods. And they were bad, honestly bad. They just didn't know how to teach math. I think probably this new math that they're teaching now makes it more interesting to the students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. I haven't looked into that, ever. Have you?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, I've never looked into it. I've sort of been frightened because I had a bad experience all the way through my life with mathematics. Although I use quite a bit of math in my work now. In the early works where I was really involved with the dodecahedrons and the isohedrons and things like that I would always have to get involved in some kind of mathematics, figuring out, you know. And especially in mechanical drawings of some of these where I have to really lay them out. Because when you cut the glass in a lot of these pieces it has to be exact. There's no - it can't even be off an eighth of an inch because when I bevel them and when I taper them it has to really fit.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just right in.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Perfectly. So I have to build templates a lot of times. And so these mechanical drawings that I have to do to get the templates drawing will like take me... Now I took mechanical drawing and was good at it. You know what I mean? But of course that was a long time ago and I'm into something that's a little bit different. What might take me five hours to do, a real good guy who knows what he's doing could do in fifteen or twenty minutes. I'm really doing it by a fantastically long method. That is the only way I know how to do it, and it's really a child's method. And that's why it takes so much time. It's almost like hit and miss. But I always get there. But for somebody who really knows where to go, you know, directly, this is the point and there's a tangent here, you draw a line, and that's it. So anyway, it takes me a little longer but I like to do it myself. I feel that about my art too. A lot of these guys really feel that it's legitimate to send the work out to the factory. And I feel it's absolutely legitimate too. I have no feeling for or against it. You know what I mean? It's just that I like to build them myself.

PAUL CUMMINGS: If a guy is a good craftsman and he --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And I enjoy it. And that's part of art. All right, so there are certain tedious parts of art. And, yes, you could send this out and it would not lose. But it would lose because I wouldn't be doing it. And I like to do it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You would lose rather than the object.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And it might lose too because there's no one who cares as much about it as I do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And I just like the idea of doing all the work, or as much as I can. Now of course this piece that I built in Texas last week is 26 feet long. It had to be constructed. It had to be engineered. I had to get an engineer who specializes in construction to make sure that it didn't rip out of the ceiling. It hung from the ceiling on wires, heavy chrome cables suspended up sixteen feet in the air and then it went 26 feet above that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh Wow!

STANLEY LANDSMAN: So there was a lot of technical engineering which I'm not prepared to, and wouldn't even venture to do. And then of course when you get into architectural work like this you have to deal with the unions. And the unions are a horrendous group. I was there and it was working so perfectly. I had hired a group of glaziers in Houston, Texas, who were beautiful people, really great; they really did a beautiful job. And we were all putting up this thing on a scaffolding and it's four stories up in the air. Now I don't like to be on a scaffolding up four stories in the air. It's not my cup of tea. But these guys are running around like monkeys. And this union guy comes over. And this building is being put up now. And there are carpenters and electricians and everything is going on. And here we are, six guys building this little thing. And this union guy comes over and starts screaming, "You've got to stop. This, that, and the other thing. Wait for the union people." I said, "But these are people that I hired. It's none of your business." And he said, "You're going to go to jail for saying that." So anyway the steward threatened to walk off the job because of what we were doing. And this is really so typical and it continues on into a social situation in the world. This is what the premise was: we had to stop putting up this piece of sculpture because it hung from the ceiling. Right?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It had a light in it. If it hangs from a ceiling and has a light in it it's a chandelier. And that's an electrician's work, not a glazier's work. I tried to explain to him that everything that hung from the ceiling and had electricity in it was not a chandelier. But he did not agree with me. So then I tried to explain to him that there were certain situations in life where if he went into a store and he bought wires and lights and plugs and all of this, because he thought of himself as an electrician, everything that came out in his package would be for an electrician. But if I came out with the same package because I don't think of myself as an electrician, I think of myself as an artist, that it would be art supplies even though it was the same materials. Well, he could not comprehend this. And he said I was threatening him, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's right. You were.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And so they demanded to have a labor mediator come or they were going to picket Neiman-Marcus's store. So we got those two labor guys down there, the glazier's and the electrician's unions. And they had a book of awards, which lists all cases that have come up before the joint ethics committee of the union that have been awarded to one or the other. And they found a case in Saskatchewan or Oklahoma or some place where a strange piece of electrical equipment had been put up but they had the glaziers do it because it was more glass than it was electricity. And the minute we found that as a precedent that we could state our case on, we had a case. Then we all went back to work. And we said we'll wait until the joint ethics committee meets to decide this case, but based on this one award we'll go back to work. And they threatened they were going to go on strike but they didn't. And we finished the piece. And I left town. I don't care if the whole Goddamed store falls apart now because I've gone. And I saw it up. And it was beautiful.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's fantastic. Absolutely incredible. Well, that's like when Lippold put his thing up in Lincoln Center. He had to join the union or they wouldn't let him up on the scaffolding to say, you know, "It's got to go six inches that way."

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Lippold had to join the union?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. So that's where art goes these days.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Well, I had this very funny Mexican foreman, one of the glaziers. He said to me, "Do you know what you ought to do? You ought to organize the artists into an artists' union." Then what you can do is, let's say, a building like the General Motors Building on fifth Avenue is going up. Well, you go over there and you say oh, now wait a second, this is an artistic area; you can't have non-artists working on it. then you could inject good art into architecture if you could organize this artists' union. Right? By demanding that there are certain areas known because of your artistic - you know, the union's artistic committee would decide which areas are pure art areas. And only art could go in those areas, and nothing else. So you could then cause a strike and the building wouldn't be built unless they had art there and not schmoka. Right? That would be a very interesting sort of scheme.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, boy! I can see those chapter meetings. Oh, wow, that's wild. Anyway let's get back to the chronology.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I stayed in New Mexico for, let's see, three and a half years. And at that point I was really torn between art and medicine. I knew that my year was running out and I was really going to have to make a decision. I wasn't really ready to make that decision. So I joined the Navy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But you'd gotten a B.F.A., too, didn't you, as well as a B.A.?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, you can get either one. I don't know - the whole thing is very strange anyway. I'll tell you the whole story. I came back East and joined the United States Navy down on Worth Street.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What made you want to join the Navy?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I was going to join the Marines actually but they were closed and so I went next door and joined the Navy. I had to get out, you know. I was just ready to get out. And so I spent four years in the Navy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you do in the Navy?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I was in the explosive division of the United States Navy. I wanted to be a diver. Diving is not a regular rank in the Navy. It's a subdivision. You have to be something else and then you can be a diver also. I came out very high on the tests that they take. If you get above a certain grade they want to sent you to Annapolis. So they said, "Would you be interested in going to Annapolis?" I said, "Certainly not! I just want to put in four years. I don't want any ninety-three years of reserve time. And I'm really here because I don't know where I am and I'd rather somebody told me what to do right now than for me to tell somebody what to do and I really don't want to tell anybody what to do." And I was on destroyers and tenders all over the Orient and the

Pacific and the Islands. And I painted. I had a tiny little room in the bottom of the ship. The captain used to come down once in a while to inspect my room. And he'd say, "So this is art? This is what art is coming to!"

PAUL CUMMINGS: What were you doing then?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, who knows? I had canvas and paint and I'd be down there. I had reverted back to certain nude girls.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Entertainment.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Sort of things that sailors will do at sea, you know, things like that. I had a following. My collectors were numerous really throughout the fleet. And then all that was over.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did all that go though? Were you just painting? Did you get involved in doing anything else?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: In the Navy?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, yes. I mean you have to do your work. But because I had picked such a specific sort of thing as explosives which had to do with underwater demolitions what I did was to install and prepare and test all underwater explosives, torpedoes, depth charges, mines, special bombs that were attached to the hulls of ships and things like that. We didn't plant them. But we made them. We were always in a very secluded area. No one wanted anything to do with us. And there were always big signs, "Unauthorized personnel stay away."

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you pick that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I liked it. I liked the idea.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You liked blowing up the works.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, it was just a matter that that happened to be one of the ratings that you could go from into diving.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. It was just part of your scheme really.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Needless to say, I never got to be a diver. Although I did make one dive in Tokyo Bay into this black hellhole of soot and mess. And it was the most disastrous experience of my life. I never made another dive until ten years later in the Aegean but that was just with a tank. We had dropped some explosives over the side in Tokyo Bay and we wanted to retrieve them. They had fallen off a palette of equipment. So I was always in these secluded areas and there were only like nine guys in our division who were in this group. And because it was so specific we sort of had it very easy-hard. We worked very hard for very short periods of time. And then we could just sort of coast along.

PAUL CUMMINGS: When they wanted it you had to have it ready and then they forgot about you.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Exactly. And they didn't come and bother us. They didn't really do anything. So I had time to do my thing. I read a fantastic amount during those four years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of things did you read?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Anything I could get my hands on.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Paperbacks and books, everything.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Anything and everything I could get my hands on. I'm sure a lot of it was out of boredom. But I just read and read and read and read. Some people were sending me decent stuff. Like a girl friend of mine sent me Andre Malraux's Museum Without Walls. Now that was really a remarkable book because it wasn't the type of book that you could put down. You had to really read it. But the Navy, like, is one where you have peace and quiet for two hours and then all of a sudden you have to do something. Like the loudspeaker announces. So I'd be reading it and all of a sudden I'd have to do something. Right? And I'd come back to it. But by the time you came back to it you'd have really lost everything that happened before. I threw the book over the side of the ship one day out of sheer desperation because it was so aggravating. But I had finished it 9 times, I mean compositely I had read the book 9 times by then. And it was still sort of a mystery to me because I never could just sit down and really enjoy it. It was always up and down, up and down. Finally I hurled it over the fantail one day. I figured that Davey would appreciate it down below. So any really hard reading was pretty impossible.

And the art of course was more or less light and frothy, silken.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you still have any of those things? Or have they all --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, I don't have any.

PAUL CUMMINGS: -- gone into some naval memorial galleries around the world.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I organized an art class too. I was in this naval hospital in Corona, California. I got hurt on board ship and I was in Corona. And this was the most expensive private club in the whole world. It had been a billionaire's club or something. It had indoor swimming pools. Outdoor swimming pools. The Navy had confiscated it. It had mosaic floors and fresco ceilings. It was just unbelievable. Typically the Navy had painted it all gray. So I started a restoration program with some guys there. Like removing some of the gray paint. Because these were really beautiful. These were done, oh, 60, 70, 80 years ago when they brought up great Mexican muralists to do it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where is it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Corona, California. In the mountains. A great place. And then I started an art class. So it was sort of - I never let it go.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like being a teacher?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: There it was always fun because occupational therapy ... I mean the reason it all came about is this lovely lady came in one day and said, "Would you like to do occupational therapy?" I said, "Groovy." And she brought out this thing, plastic flowers to make, cigarette boxes, bead work. I said, "Come on, lady." So I started this art class. Needless to say, the response was immediate. A nude girl. Paper and pencil. It cost the government nothing. And everybody in the hospital that could move was there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They got better quick.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. They got better and were at the art class. I really didn't have to teach anything. All I did was like organize the first one. And it was funny how occupational therapy then immediately accepted this under their auspices. That was sort of my whole Navy art career. I did buy a lot of nice art though. I got very interested in Oriental art. Got turned on to it very much. My art, by the way has - in a couple of articles that people have written - it's very funny that they should pick up on an Oriental quality in some of my work. Which I find is true. In fact, some of the names like that piece that I built, that double piece called Fuji Raku it's a very, very, beautiful raku bowl that was made in Japan in the 1800s. It's a tea bowl for the tea ceremony. It's a very quiet and simple sort of statement. And a lot of the pieces just have that quality to them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What got you into that - being in Japan?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Being in Japan and being exposed to it. You're exposed to a little bit of the arts of other countries mostly through magazines - looking at altar pieces, there's a Raphael, you know. But a lot of times you don't get exposed to some of the strange, small segments like enamel ware of the Italian Renaissance. Which I later became very aware of because I helped write a book with Melvin Gutman for Oberlin University. Which is now a classic.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. On excavated Etruscan gold. And Renaissance jewels. It was a job. I was a terrible carpenter. A terrible plumber. And I was developing a whole enemy world. I mean I'd get on a bus and somebody would point at me and say, "That's the guy that put up the bookshelves and they fell down!" And all these people complaining in the middle of the night that the tub I put in was leaking. And I didn't want this any more. I had had all of that. So I decided that there were other fields I could go into.

PAUL CUMMINGS: These were all after the Navy though.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, yes. This is like when I had already found a studio in New York and I was seriously working here but not supporting myself on my art. And like every other artist we all go through very, very funny scenes of how you finally get to the position. I did teach. I never really like teaching for the simple fact that kids that were really aware - and I like the kids that are aware and I like to sit and rap with them - I'm teaching a course now at Pratt. It's called Concepts. I teach it here in my studio. And I have to admit that every week I get thirty kids and I send twenty-five of them home because they're really not interested. They just want to be entertained. The other six kids are sculptors, painters, industrial designers. But they're really interested in talking and not being entertained. And we talk about new concepts, what can happen between - can the architect and the industrial designer work together to create a new thing; and what will it be; where will it go.

And it's fun. But so many of the questions that the kids in compulsory art courses ask are really basic life questions. I never found the answers. And I was really bored. And it was a big drain I found to do it every day. The School of Visual Arts of course where you run in for one day and run out is nice because you can stimulate the kids by your own stimulation.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long have you been there - at Visual Arts?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I don't teach there - I teach there as a substitute teacher. I teach for like Frank Roth, for whoever is - you know, all the guys that we know who are teaching there. You know what I mean? So far they really haven't had a kinetics program there that I could teach. I have a lot of their students who come over here and help me when I'm doing building projects because they all want to put their all into it. But they don't have a course in it. So they like to come over and help me, you know, and when I build this dome I know I'll have all of them here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. How about the Pratt thing? When did that start?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That started at the beginning of the year. It's faded out now because this guy Peters ? Peterson ? - he's the new head of the education department at Pratt - he went from N.Y.U. to Pratt. Anyway, there's some kind of shakeup. He's being ousted or something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is this your first teaching situation?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I taught at Adelphi College too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I didn't like that. I liked the people, the personnel that I met out there. But I didn't particularly care for that. It just didn't appeal to me. It was too every day, every day, every day. It was too much of a drain. So that's when I got involved with sort of these strange other jobs. And one of the jobs was being a shill in an auction house. I used to buy - well, it used to be bought the day before. Then I would go in and run the price up sky high and presumably purchase it and then it would be an authorized auction sale at $37,000. But we really bought it for like $2,200 the day before. And that based a price and a standard for certain merchandise.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. What kinds of things were sold?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Mostly Renaissance jewelry.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really? That's where you found out about ---

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Excavated Etruscan gold and stuff like that. That's where I became the expert on it when I was being a shill. It was kind of fun.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's terrific.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, I had a lot of fun. I learned a lot about excavated Etruscan gold and Renaissance jewelry.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Was that in New York?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, it was in New York.

PAUL CUMMINGS: University Place?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, it was more uptown. Well, we won't go into auction houses.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mysterious places.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It was very interesting. I had a lot of fun during that period. I mean if you had to work --

PAUL CUMMINGS: You may as well have fun at it.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. It was one of those jobs that I really enjoyed. Because again it was closer to my field but not interfering with it. I only worked half a day, I worked from twelve o'clock till five, or sometimes in the evening if there was a big auction or something - but it didn't interfere with my going back to my studio and working. And there are a lot of jobs that do interfere. They are heavy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, physically exhausting.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. But physically exhausting isn't as bad as mentally exhausting where you come back and you really can't clear your head of the craziness of one thing to do another. That's really what's exhausting about some jobs.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you got involved with some kind of photographic activity?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. I met a guy on 26th Street who asked me if he could come over - he was a photographer - he asked me if he could come over and shoot some pictures of me at work. And I had overalls full of paint, you know. But photographers are always looking for these things. And he lived right next door. I said, "Fine." I didn't know who he was. He didn't know who I was. He came over, shot some pictures. Of course I never saw the pictures. Then a year later he sent his secretary over here - I had a beard at the time - to ask me if I'd be interested in posing for a Salem ad or something with a beard. I said, "Sure." He said, "Come over to the studio." I went over to the studio. There were about six people there; there was a client, and the art director. I was feeling really on top of the world that day for some reason. On top of everything. No one could say something that I didn't have the funniest answer in the whole world for. Well, we just sat there and we roared. I mean I just laughed myself sick for four hours. I came back here, went back to work. Was painting away for about ten days. And this guy came over one day and said, "Look, what do you do for a living?" I was teaching at Adelphi at the time. I said, "Well, I'm teaching right now. I hate it." He said, "Would you be interested in working for me; for yourself but for me?" I said, "Sure. What kind of money? And what do I have to do?" And he explained the business to me - advertising. I knew nothing about advertising; it was just a word I had heard; and photography. And I kind of like that one experience up there that afternoon. So he said, "Well, why don't you try it out? We're going to Canada to shoot some ads for five days. Come along and just see how everything works." I went. And I had a great time. You know, there were five Ford models and three guys and expense accounts and all this. And we had such a good time I just couldn't believe it. This was 400 times better than teaching even if they don't pay me. So for ten years I worked - I represented photographers in the advertising agencies. I made a lot of money. I have no talent to do photography. I had a few drawbacks because what would happen would be - this is the procedure: the art director would call you up and say, "Landsman, come up to my office. I've got a great, great layout here I want So-and-So to shoot and I want you to see it and tell me how much it'll cost." So I'd get up there and stalk in and look at this thing and they were always terrible. I never saw that great ad once. A lot of the guys took offense when I used to say - well - because like I mean I've see great art - I mean Caravaggio is like great something --

PAUL CUMMINGS: A great ad.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Caravaggio is a great piece of art. But some schlubby guy sitting in J. Walter Thompson is not great art, you know, when he's doing it for Pepsodent because he's got a product, a client, an ad agency; he's got all of these things that have watered this down till it's nothing finally. I'd say, "Call me up but don't tell me it's great art. Because it stinks. I really know the difference between the two. And you should know also." And then finally years went by and I finally gave up teaching and tried to tell them the difference between great art and bad art. And finally I used to have this routine where I'd say, "No art that ever came out of any advertising agency will ever be put in a time capsule and shot to the middle of the earth as the art of the 20th century. Forget it. Jackson Pollock will be there. And Franz Kline will be there. But you'll never be there. But I worked very hard. And I really led a double life because I worked half the day ... I worked for about three years very hard. I worked all day and I painted all night. And it really was a chore. But I really seriously painted all night long. I'd come from work at five o'clock. I'd sleep for two hours, sleep till about seven. And then I'd get up and I'd paint till, oh, I don't know, one o'clock in the morning. Then I'd just sort of sit around and look ... But I did very little socializing because I just didn't have the time. So the people that I knew had to like to come over and talk. Or we'd be together while I was working or things like that. It was a drag. And I was making enough money. So I got an assistant. She would then work to compensate: so I could quit at two o'clock. And then I could work from two to ten. I just kept on going. It got better and better. And then finally at the end, of course more time is always consumed when you're the boss. So about four years ago, it was Christmas Day, I was in a delicatessen with my photographer. And I said to him, "Nick, I'm quitting the business. I really feel that now, at this point" - because I'd been working very, very hard on my art for about six months now - I said, "Nick, I've got to do it now. I've got to show myself that I can really do it, stop all the bull shitting to myself or I've got to really stop." So I quit. And I have just worked like a madman for the last four years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, how many photographers did you represent?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Two.

PAUL CUMMINGS: During this whole period there were just the two?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who were they? People we all know and love today?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: People we all know and hate. I just can't get away from photographers. I don't know why. I mean even my involvement with Bert Stern, you know, with his new store and all of that. It just seems to be part of my life. I like them. They're crazy. But I like them. But I don't really have anything to do with them anymore. Jay Maizell, you know. There are some guys that are really respected very much. The two guys that I had I respected very much for their ability to do work, but not for their creative ability, for great eyes, or things like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How much of that do you think there is in photography?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Very little. But there are some guys who at least don't make a pretense of being great eyes. Steichen shot some advertising stuff. It stinks, you know, because that's not his bag. Stieglitz shot some, too, I'm sure. It's not his bag either. But then you take a really great commercial artists, a good commercial artist who tries to shoot what they shot and it's a failure also. Because these guys do really studio oriented advertising. They can take Del Monte's peanut butter, or whatever it is, and make it look great. They hand paint the labels. It's a fantastic crazy business.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. It's full of tricks.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. All tricks.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I've always thought of photography really as just kind of a super craft.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Well, it really is a super duper craft. And the variations that people can put into it really just depend on what each person's private thing is - still life, fashion, things like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I'm always staggered by the amount of money that some of those guys can make. It's unbelievable.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: A fortune.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's absolutely incredible.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And I took twenty-five percent of it right off the top, you know, because that's what an agent gets. There's no business in the world like that one where you really know nothing and you can make a fortune.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's incredible.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Absolutely.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, what happens? I suppose the more famous your photographer becomes the higher the fees go and the more people want him? As everything else.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And the more stupid the work becomes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: After they've developed their little formulas and patterns and images, people say, "I've got to have him."

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Exactly.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. There are lots of sculptors and painters who have been involved or associated with photography in strange ways.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Well, I mean photography really hasn't even hatched from its amoebic stage. They scream about art and photography. And I just don't see it. I see photography as a big dollar sign, you know. That's all. I'm really not interested in dirty urchin kids, you know, scribbling fuck you on the walls. I mean it's not that there aren't great reportage stories written and I love to see pictures; it's like looking at Life magazine. It's photography. It's great. And it's certainly the greatest pictorial guide that we'll ever have from the time it started. But it's such a big difference between art and photography, my conception of art. I've argued it with so many people, I just don't ever want to argue it again. It's like arguing religion.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. It's good exercise that you don't get anywhere else.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, exactly. I was always involved with painting. I've always been a painter. I was never an action painter. Even though I was the so-called fourth generation of abstract expressionists. Which I was.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Fourth generation? Really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, I was. And that's why these guys - let's say, once in a while I go over to The Club on a bad Friday night I think, oh, for a laugh I'll go to The Club. Well, I'm not even a member. They won't let me be a member because I'm blackballed there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You were a member of the other one though, weren't you, the old Club?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. The old Club. Because you have de Kooning, and you have Kline, and you have that nucleus of the real abstract expressionists. That's the first generation. Then you have the second generation like Resnick, and Philip Pavia, and Herman Cherry. Right? Then you have the third generation which is Mike Goldberg, Alfred Leslie, Norman Blume. Now that's a big circle. Right? Now to make their stay in life valid they have to have another generation to lift them into their position. That was me. Mister Schmuck, wide-eyed, walked in. And they grabbed him. And I said, "But I'm not an abstract expressionist. I paint romantic landscapes." It doesn't matter, kid, you're in The Club and you're like the fourth generation. All right, so I was there with a lot of other guys and no one knew what the hell was going on. Everybody was an abstract expressionist in those days.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. No matter what you painted.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No matter what you did you were an abstract expressionist because that was the only thing that was going on in America. You were part of the New York School of painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And that was it.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And that was it. That's what makes what's happening today really beautiful. We have instead of one School of Paris, School of New York School of Spain, we have 300 separate art projects going on in New York today. And that's really great. And it's the first time it's been like that in the history of art, really. Especially in America. Because we've only had one sort of like thing, that was the abstract New York School of painting. Anyway, I was part of that. And I was very interested in it. I don't know how old I was. Maybe I was, let's see, 24 or 25 when I came to New York. And I met everybody. I played poker with everybody. Everybody was very friendly. And they knew so much more than I did, I thought for a while. So I listened and I went to all the meetings.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think you gained much from those lectures and discussions and things that went on?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: A lot of it I thought was horse shit. I mean it was really bull shit. I mean the thought of arguing is everything in art a product of nature? Or is it possible to actually conceive something from your subconscious that has no bearing whatsoever on nature? These fantastic nature discussions! Ah! Is easel painting dead? Ah!! They just got so tedious. I really didn't want to listen to like John Hultberg screaming from the bathrooms, "Resnick, you're a fucking idiot!" They were hilarious and they were like sad, all at the same time. Of course maybe it didn't have the same meaning for me because I was younger. I had my own vision I was looking for. And I kept on in the same fashion.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But being that age and in the milieu of all these people though must have been good?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, it was. Everybody was very, very together. It was a very together time in the art world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, the whole Tenth Street scene.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: The Cedar tavern; Tenth Street, Riker's. And it was a great time. We all had a good time. I'm not saying that Max's Kansas City today isn't the same thing but it's a little more sophisticated. If you were an abstract expressionist in those days and you were making money no one knew it, man. Because like you wore a costume. You had your corduroy suit that you got at Hudson's. Right? And, yes, you drank a lot and you didn't mind buying other people a drink. But you really never had sort of an image. And you lived in a cold dumpy loft. But that was part of the whole scene. You had to be that. Today, I mean, a guy says I bought a silk shirt, a new car, a brownstone. Look, half the artists you know today have got brownstones.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Sure. They're real estate investors.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. They're big mokkas now, you know. Well, they just don't want to hide anymore. It's a different attitude to art.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a different scene in the big society for the artist, too, than it was in those days.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Those guys were swinging. They were making a lot of bread.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes. But it still is more, broader.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, it's nicer now. But it was fun. And especially being at that age, 25. And it was sort of the first time intellectually when you sat up until five o'clock in the morning and just chewed the fat. Of course I regretted 87 million times that I never went to Black Mountain. Because I met Franz Kline when I came to New York. He was really a dear friend and did a lot for me personally, for my head and for my art. He was a car buff. A great car buff. And of course bought a Ferrari at the very end, which he should have bought years before. But I just like that whole period. Now, of course, with my contemporary image --

PAUL CUMMINGS: Let's just talk about the other group for a minute.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, but I run into these guys. I mean when I go up to The Club now, like I was at The Club maybe four weeks before I went to Houston, I was at Max's with Malcolm Morley and Frank Roth. We were sitting there and Roy and Dorothy Lichtenstein came in and they said they were going to The Club. We said, "We'll all go with you." So we went. And a guy saw us and came over and said, "Traitor." Of course those guys are still there. They're all still sitting there. The same old guys. And they're still talking about nature. And when I walked in - because I was their only means of support. I supported that whole third generation by being the fourth generation. But we quit. We let them down, because they didn't have anybody to back them. They were still backing the ones in front of them. So they still call us, or me, "Traitor." I walk in, they say "Traitor."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who in that group of the older people did you know besides Kline?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I knew practically everybody. There was de Kooning, when he was sober be was beautiful. Rothko. Everybody knew everybody.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, and they all sat at the Cedar.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: We all sat at the same place. We all went to the same schlubby parties. I think the group that's nice is the group that came out of Tenth Street, you see, rather than the group that was already uptown at Sidney Janis - which was God already - the young guys who were hanging around that all built Tenth Street.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Who would you say?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, Al Held and Nick Krushenick and I carried ice boxes once for Tom Doyle. It was nice to sit and talk with guys that were sort of your contemporaries and to come through a period like Tenth Street and then go uptown, you see one guy go. And you're jealous and envious. And then you go. And then somebody else is jealous. And then they come. And it's nice. It gives us all a lot of kidding room. We're not that precious.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you've got a sort of common background.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. You know, like Al Held and I were in Texas together. He was putting up a show at one place and I was building a piece in Neiman-Marcus. So every night we would go out and sort of play around. We went to the Space Center. We had a great time there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, that must be a great toy.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That's just what it is, a big toy. But Tenth Street was an important sort of time - the different galleries.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you showed in - where? - a couple of the group shows at the March Gallery?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did that serve? Because you didn't have any one-man shows through that whole period.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I never had a one-man show down there. I showed a lot of painting down there but I never had a one-man show there. Again a lot of these guys that were really actively involved had been in New York much longer than I had. I don't know how - well, they were involved with the New York School. They had been here. And somehow I just wasn't here.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They grew up with it.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I mean even though I grew up here I went away and I stayed away a long time, four years in Albuquerque and four years in the Navy and all of that. But really I wasn't even ready then. I mean it didn't matter. Because a lot of guys were claiming they were ready and they weren't. So if what you wanted was an ego trip you could say that you were ready. But I talked a lot and I looked a lot at art. And I think that was all-important for me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How about Kline? You were mentioning that he was a car buff. Which you were.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I'm a car buff because I really like classic things. He was a very big car buff. Although neither one of us really practiced our buffery. We made models and read great stories of old racing days and things like that. And finally in the end I remember he decided that he really wanted a Ferrari. And he should have had one all the time. But again it was that whole outlandish concept of conspicuous consumption. You couldn't let the world know that you had enough money to buy a Ferrari.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. The life style.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. The life style was lofts. And it was just so foolish. Finally he just said, "Screw it." And he traded a painting to this guy Bowles for a silver Ferrari. And it was a great car.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You've had some cars?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: The only car that I've really cherished all my life is my old 1947 MG. And it's a great car. It's more aggravation than it's worth, but I love it because it was one of the cars that was chosen by the Museum of Modern Art. I think in 1950 they had a classic great cars show and that was one of the winners. The 1941 Jeep was a winner. It's just one of the great classic cars of all time. I really like the stories and the drama. Of course there are a lot of other guys - Nick Krushenick is a big, big car buff, very big one. Oh, many, many guys.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But he owns all kinds of cars.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, yes. Citroens - the worst pigs they've put on earth. And now he's got two Japanese cars.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You were saying that Kline had a lot of good things to say to you.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, he talked to me about, you know, what life was all about. Like you think you know at 25 but you really don't when somebody that's 40 is talking to you. I can give a lot of good words to students.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you find a generation gap with your students?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, I really don't. Absolutely not. I don't feel those kids have anything on me. I'm not kidding. Yes, maybe they can have their orgiastic scenes that I can participate in but I can't participate to the same extent that they can. They've got really nothing going that I haven't got going.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. It's a lot of flash.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. It's all garbage. I was in Aspen, Colorado this summer at the Institute of Humanistic Studies. They invite four artists every year to come out there and do nothing. Just be there. And there was Donald Judd and Carl Andre and Bob Indiana and myself. And I liked it. But what I did learn and what I did come into contact with was a lot of young people that are in Aspen. And I was really amazed. The only thing that they have that I can honestly say I don't want is this drug scene. It's really oppressive. And with these kids that I run into that's the only level that they can discuss and that they're involved in that I don't know a thing about. And I don't want to know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And they blow their minds. And, boy, when it goes it's the end.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, blow their minds! They're crazy! They're killers!

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: If you want to sit around and smoke grass, groovy, you know. That's not going to hurt anybody in the world. But these kids go to speed for going out, mainline shooting for coming in, pop pills for going this way, this for going down, this for going up, and they get all the stuff in them. I mean it's heroin, it's morphine, it's cocaine, it's pot, it's LSD, it's opiates. There's no stopping. And then they sit around and groove on this explosion that's going on in their heads. And what that explosion is of course is deterioration of brain cells. And that's what they want.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And after they've been doing it for five years they wake up one day - -

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It's terrible.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's really a wicked scene. Well, do you have any ideas about your own activities as a teacher?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I really can't consider myself a teacher. I really don't want to be involved in that that much.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How about your instructors - the art teachers you had?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I like the idea of having an assistant, or two assistants. And those are the people that you can really sit and talk with. I wish now that I had had the opportunity of being somebody's assistant.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Like the old Renaissance studio tradition?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Rodin, Brancusi situation. Or the atelier, you know, the teacher and the student. That way I can really talk. You talk about a whole day. You talk about breakfast. You talk about art. You talk about what's happening: what did you see last night, you know, I mean at that show I saw you at with that great-looking chick. And then they tell you what they saw there. But I didn't see that, I saw something totally different. And that's the teaching that I like. Because I'm learning from them; they're learning from me. I may be a few years older and I'm paying them but I'm learning too. And that's a kind of rapport that I like to deal with in a sort of teaching environment. It's like group therapy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You haven't been in group therapy, have you?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Years ago.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Years ago you went through that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Now it's disturbed me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Let me get one point here. What do you think of your own art education?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It lacks.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I mean of your teachers which were the best ones, the ones that really did the most for you? Or wasn't it in school that it really happened?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, I don't really think that it's in school that it happens. I don't think any school it happens at, no matter how liberal, no matter how strict. I was married to a girl who graduated from the Royal Academy in Copenhagen. I remember her telling me about her schooling. And I couldn't believe it. It was just a remarkable thing. For one solid year, the first year of the Academy you draw with a pencil from plaster casts. No variation. One year drawing with a pencil from plaster casts! Every plaster cast in the world you draw with a pencil. No shading; no nothing; it's just plaster cast pencil drawing. The second whole year is charcoal and pencil plaster cast drawing. A whole year. So now you've spent two years drawing from plaster casts. You can draw a hand in any grotesque position in the world, you know, with shading. The third year you're allowed to use pastels and crayons. Now this is color but you're not allowed to use a mixable color.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I'm talking about oil paint and things like - you don't touch mixable colors until the fourth year at the Academy. Well, the third year you get into life - into actual figures. And in the fourth year. So you spend four years at this really, can you imagine? They turn out a product that's fantastic as draftsmanship, execution. But there's no life. Well, anyway, we do the opposite. The first day in class you get the nude, you get the big pieces of paper, you get out the oil paints and the inks and the gouaches and everything and you start schmeering right away. Who knows? It's when you get out of all of that and you go into the quietness of your own studio. Kids need the security of other kids when they're working in those early formidable years. They really need it. But when they come out and they go into the quiet of their own studio where they're not bull shitting, where if they don't do a thing it doesn't matter, that's when they have to produce. Because no one is going to tell them "produce."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. It's their decision.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That's it, it's up to them. And that's where they'll start to grow, from that point on. Now the teachers can be very helpful. I wish that I had had, as a young boy, the School of Visual Arts where the teacher ran in, did his work, ran back to his studio which is three blocks away. As his student I could call up, "Hey, Allan d'Arcangelo, can I come over and talk to you? I'm having a problem." 99.9 of the teachers will say, "Sure. Run over. Look, but only stay half an hour." You run over and you talk. I don't have any of that, because a university is a different kind of environment. If I had had that, it probably would have been very beneficial. Because these kids are very aware and they're very good. The only problem with them is that they become so sophisticated so fast that they burn themselves out. They're all painting for shows. I go in there and I see these kids and I walk around the class when I take over for one of the guys. And I see what they're doing. I painted on anything. I'd find cardboard in the hall, I'd drag it in, gesso it, and paint, you know, if there was a nude, if there was a still life, a landscape, anything; I would just paint on it. I didn't care if the edges were straight or if they

were rough because I was going to throw it out anyway. Or I was going to paint over it. Not these kids! Kulick stretchers, Belgian linen, sized, smoothed, everything is perfect. And I say, "Paint! Paint!" "No. No." But they're really painting for a show, you see. They're not painting to experience this one-to-one relationship of canvas to you.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Lots of people have said this about the new art students.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, it's unbelievable.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Not only at the Visual, but at Pratt and Cooper.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, I'm hep. I'm sure it's true all over. They drove me crazy. I screamed at them. And I used to go over and draw on their things. And that used to really aggravate them. But I said, "Man, you're no good. You stink. What are you trying to do here? Go ahead and paint!"

PAUL CUMMINGS: They seem to have these kids who come to school with a fortune. You know they just buy, buy, buy, buy, buy.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, Daddy likes to support them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Well, what other kinds of jobs did you have besides the auction one, the photography one?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, of course photography was ten long years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, that was the major source of money and work.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I was in the other for about three years. And I guess I didn't do anything for a couple of years. All in all it added up. As I say, there were the great plumbing and carpentry jobs that I did, you know, that people still ---

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was a big thing in the abstract expressionist scene. You had to be a plumber, you had to be a carpenter.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. It was an image you had to have. If you were an apprentice abstract expressionist you had to work as a carpenter or plumber or in the moving business. Right?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. That was the other one. Those were the three trades.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And they were boring. And I was terrible at it. And people still today are hacking me about things I installed years ago. I say, "What do you want me to do? I'll send a plumber over. I'll repair it for you. Fifteen years later what do I care about your lousy tub or your shower leaks."

PAUL CUMMINGS: One thing I'd like to go into now is the kind of thing that you painted and the styles and whatnot that you were interested in.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I was very interested in sort of the classic tradition of European painting both figurative and landscape. But I really wasn't interested in the same sense as they were in, you, in a broad sense. I used to take fragments of beautiful parts and fragment them and blow them up in big scale.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean something from a painting?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, not basically from a painting. But if I found something - instead of looking at nature like these other nuts we're talking about - I always used to say, "All right, but I look at nature second handedly. I don't look at nature. I look at paintings of nature, or photographs of nature. That's what I'm interested in."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you use photographs ever as a springboard for material?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, I really never did. I used photographs later on. But we can get into that. And I would enlarge these very beautiful, sensuous colored paintings. I still have a few of those around. This went on for years. I painted these paintings with variations, sometimes larger color field areas and less detail, and things like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: This would be landscape?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Landscape - more fantasy landscapes I guess they would be. Then one morning I went into my studio and decided that I just had learned all the tricks that there were to learn with color. And it was so

easy to paint. It was difficult but it was easy. And I decided that I really had to do something to get myself back where I didn't know whether I was kidding myself, whether I was really painting or whether I was tricking, playing. So I decided I would give up color and only paint in black and white until I really found out what I was doing again; and then I'd go back. And it didn't have anything to do with Kline or anything like that. Because I was really basically interested in much tighter imagery than that. So I started fooling around with black and white on big paper. I just wanted to do fast things. I had rolls of paper. All of a sudden I realized that I was going more and more into the figure with the black and white because the statements I was making in landscape were really now landscapes and so I was using no grays, no modulations between black and white. Just black and white. And so the statement of, let's say, a romantic sort of fragment of landscape was really becoming a landscape and I was really more interested in the figure as a landscape than landscape as a landscape. So I started working with figures. And I started getting very seriously into it. And then I started stretching canvas and priming it and doing some very meticulous black and white things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you use models?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Once in a while I used models. But mostly I used photographs and anything I really could get my hands on to use for this. And I became very, very involved with the so-called Mannerists. I started reading a lot about that whole group of Mannerists - El Greco, Tintoretto, that whole sort of scene. And the space that these guys were involved with. And I started trying to put that into my paintings, foreground window scenes with background, you know the scene, this fantastic, always in focus, space that went on forever. And I never could do better than the guys that were working in it a long time ago.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did that work in relationship to what you saw going on around you, you know, your friends, where everything was shallow space and flat. You know, "Stanley, you're slipping."

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, "Hey, your mind is slipping, Landsman." There were some people who weren't involved with that other stuff, let's put it that way. But at that moment of course Pop Art was in its beginnings. People took it as just a step in Pop Art. So you see it wasn't that freaky. But it was a totally different bag as far as I was concerned. It had nothing really to do with Pop Art. But Pop, of course, incorporated everything. Just like took it over, even if it didn't have anything to do with it. So I started thinking that with what's happening today in science - I'm always sort of going back to science and that type of thing - we've got a television camera really on the moon. I said it's pretty foolish that I'm still stuck at the same point that these guys were stuck at in 1640 and 1480. So I started re-examining my situation. And I decided that, yes, canvas and paint were terrific but that there must be something more that was happening in 1965 that I could get my hands on. And really never having thought about technology I naturally went into plastics. And I started painting on plastics. And they were kind of successful. And at first I really enjoyed working on plastics. Then I started adding mirrors to the surface so that it all looked one-dimensional, but then when you put them up on the wall - you know how Pistoletto --- ?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That was what was happening. I didn't know Pistoletto. Pistoletto wasn't even on the scene in those days. But what happened was you didn't know whether you were looking through the wall or whether you were looking this way because the continuation of all the lines went through the painting. And that was the space that I was talking about. This space that went on, broke through. Well, I worked in that for about six or seven months. And it still wasn't what I really wanted from art. So I decided that I'd have to go further. And I just started working and working and working and working in all different sorts of materials. And the one that struck me as the one that I really wanted to work in both from my own head and for its purity and everything was glass. I found that I really didn't like plastic, it's cheap sort of sleazy material. I like glass. Its purity. And you can do a lot with it. It's very fragile, yes, but so what? So I started working in glass. Now at this point I did sacrifice, I had to give up the figure. Because when I went into a three-dimensional object then I had to put something in the inside because that was the only way I could get my space to work the way I wanted it to, the way that we see it now when they talk about sort of infinite space. I'm really not very happy with my infinity chamber or boxes of any of those terms. I had to give up the figure because it was just impossible to put the figure in there and illuminate it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It didn't work?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, it didn't work. It didn't have any self-illumination. So I had to go into light.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was the thing about self-illumination?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, self-illumination is really - I was trying to create this space that I had always been looking for, a space that was bigger than the actual volume of the piece of sculpture that you were building or the painting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: So when I build a piece, it's not a fantasy that that piece is like 80 times bigger. Because it really is 80 times bigger from wherever you stand, it just goes 80 times more.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And in all directions.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. So that no longer does one have to be restricted to building a piece of sculpture that's 24 inches x 24 inches.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That looks 24 x 24.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. You can build a piece that's 24 but you can encompass a much wider area, a much larger area. Well, anyway, of course the figure left at that point. Some day we'll get it back in. I'm positive of that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But this was really then a change from painting into three dimensions, too, wasn't it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Nnh. It was all the same thing, Paul. The reason it was the same thing is because they were still concerned with that funky Mannerist space I wanted to create. Space and time have always been on artists' minds. You always read great manifestoes about space and time, you know, and all that. Well, a lot of it is really manifesto words. But I was really interested in space. And I wanted to create space and not a fake space. I wanted a real space.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The reality rather than the illusion.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Now it is an illusion but it's such an illusion that it's real. Because I've had women or men - who knows - go into the chamber I built for the Magic Theatre. They walked in there and fainted right on the spot.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Absolutely. They walked in there and fainted. It was just too real. And it's not an illusion, it's not like a fun house thing. It's just right there. They walked in and fainted. Whereas on the other hand people have walked in there and they wouldn't come out because they felt too great; they went on trips. I get thousands of letters every time that show opens. It opened yesterday in Toledo, Ohio at the Museum there. And now I'll get a whole deluge of letters from Toledo from kids wanting to know how many thousand trips I've been on, and all of this stuff.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Where's the source?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What do you say to those letters?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I very rarely answer them. Once in a while I answer one. It's just impossible to say. I mean what am I going to say? "I've never been on a trip in my life." I'd be ruined.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He sold out or something.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: What I have said to the kids who've asked me that same question in person is I really don't need it. I'm on one anyway. That they can fathom very easily. In fact I had some kids in Aspen who came to my studio. They had seen a lot of my work and they offered me some speed or whatever it was. And I said, "No, I don't use it." They said, "You don't need it. You're there already." But so I don't really see any break between my painting and my sculpture. In fact on a panel once I was quizzed by I've forgotten who - it had been a funny panel and we had been challenging each other. And somebody questioned my statement that I didn't consider myself a sculptor, I considered myself a painter still, that my mentality was that of a painter, not of a sculptor. And if you had to call me anything you could call me a fat painter that you walk around. I create fat paintings that you walk around. Because I really see them - although they're 360 degrees I conceive of them as that kind of a surface even if they're multi-faceted or twisted or bent or anything I can see them. My whole orientation is off the wall.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Let's see, the first light things you had at Leo's were columns and shapes, weren't they?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: They were dodecahedrons and isohedrons and things like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There was one little wall box.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. One little wall box.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What preceded those? Because I don't remember anything - -

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Those were the first visible ones to the art thing. But I had made a lot of models, and fake ones, and pieces that - I actually had made a very big piece that had gone into a show called Sound, Light and Silence.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where was that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I've forgotten where the show was. It was an interesting show. It started - I think I was the end of the show and the first guy in the show was Rothko.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, it was one of those art historical idea things going click, click, click, click, click.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And that was really the first finished piece. Then the stuff I had at Leo's. Of course the scale was the important thing. I mean I was thinking very preciously in those days because you're always a little scared of your materials. And then you get accustomed to them and you can get a little bigger and you can do more once you learn the materials.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But the show with Dick Feigen in California was a painting show, wasn't it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, it was a painting show of black and white paintings actually, those black and white paintings that we talked about. The early black and white paintings prior to getting into plastics, prior to getting into mirror.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They were flat, weren't they?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: They were all flat figurative paintings.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Liquidtex.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. I remember seeing a photograph of one of those.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: They were right after I turned off color and decided to really test myself, what I was doing. And that was the show that I had out there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like Liquidtex? Was that a new - - ?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, that was new also because I'd always worked in oils. I really never got that much into it because I only worked with the black and the white to find out what the color sort of thing was. But I mean I enjoyed it because it was fast drying. You could paint and change and do anything you wanted very fast with it. So it was great. Now I have some ideas - I want to do some paintings right now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Very related to the sculptures. But I just have a feeling I want to do some. So I'm preparing in my own head right now ideas of doing this.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You know, you mentioned before the Art and Technology bit, and reading the McLuhan books and what's this? - Mathematical Models and all of this kind of thing. When did you find that you had to start looking at math and - - ?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, it becomes necessary because like right now I have this project for the Whitney where I'm going to build an environment, which I'm very interested in doing. This will be my second environment. And I want to build a very unusual ... I could build a very easy one which would gas everybody; but it wouldn't gas me. I mean the Museum wants that one that I have in my head but I've decided that I don't want to do it because I'd rather do something that's like 400 times harder. And with 400 times harder it's 400 times education also that I don't have. So I have to go to books on specific technology on certain areas or to people that can help me. I've never dealt with E.A.T.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You haven't?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I've never dealt with E.A.T.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you have any interest in that whole business?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. The only interest that I have in it is that Marian Javits has tried to interest me in it. But

I've never really had any interest. Now I might have to go to them for this project. I don't know. I hope I don't. Because there are two kinds of individuals. There are artists that are interested in science, and the artist maybe should have been a scientist. And then there are scientists that are interested in art and they should have been artists rather than scientists. Each one is frustrated in their own way. When they get together very little is accomplished that's good. Okay, I'm not saying that nothing is accomplished but I'm saying that a lot more could be accomplished if the artist just went to some cat who said, "Well, I'm a scientist; I'm not an artist."

PAUL CUMMINGS: You want to make the lights do this or that? I know how to do that. I see.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: So I have to go to these books. And it's strange just trying to read some of this [reading] "Great stellated dodecahedron pyramid dual of great..." Who knows what that means? They don't even know what they're talking about.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, it's in another language.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: [reading] "A equals 22.14 degrees b plus y 120 degrees." I can't even read it for Christ's sakes! And they're just talking about simple angle. So I need somebody who knows what that means to just tell me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You need a good engineer really.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I need an engineer. For this project I'll need a lot, lot of help, really a lot of help. I'll need help from glass companies. I'll need help from ... And there's no reason why I really should know this anyway. I want to conceive, I want to help build, I want to supervise, I want to see that it goes together the way I want it to go together because I'm conceiving it in glass, wood, light, all of these things together. Whereas each one of the people that I may rely on can only really conceive of it in his own sort of little thing - the wood, the glass, the light, this that, and the other thing. And I really have to see it in its totality.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you think though that this is changing you from what you were as a painter to somebody who's developing ideas that are then executed?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. It's changing me a lot. It's driving me mad. You know, it's one thing to go into your studio and to say, "Oh, I need cadmium red." You run out to the store and you buy cadmium red. You're back and you start painting and you work in your studio and everything is there and the music is playing. But now I'm getting letters from Libbey-Owens-Ford in Toledo. And I get letters from Hudson Fixtures in the Bronx. And from Forum Plastics on Long Island and here. And from Steidl in Hoboken. And I need all of these people to help me produce one piece.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you become a company rather than a person.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Now once they all send me everything I want then it's like I have my canvas, my paint, my palette, my wall, all my utensils, knives, and everything. But it's in terms of plastics, it's glass, it's wood, it's chrome, it's this that and the other. Then in my studio I can like assemble and I can cut and scrape and sandblast, do what I want. But it's getting all of this technological material together --

PAUL CUMMINGS: The art store is not a hardware store.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: The art store is now the fucking factories of American and Europe. And it's just a big megilla now, to get all this done. And it's very expensive. You're not dealing with $2.80 which I used to think was extravagant for cadmium orange. It's like $2,000.80 for mercury-coated glass or whatever you're dealing with. It's ridiculous.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a whole new way of looking.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. It's a whole new thing. And you need grants and you need help. And if you can't get them you go out and you feel like a junkie, you go out and hustle somebody or steal it. Because you've got to do it. You've got to do it. So it's changed me a lot in that respect.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I just want to do a couple of quick things and then we're at the end of this tape. Did you have other galleries besides Castelli interested in your light?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I never showed it to anybody. I showed it to Leo. I went to Leo. I had been sick after I had my show in California. I had been painting for about a year and working on my plastic pieces. I got out of the plastic ones and went into the glass and light pieces. I constructed four pieces, finished four pieces, meticulously finished them. I set them up in my studio. I called Leo, invited him down. I know he doesn't come down, he sends Ivan. But he said he would come down. He came down, took a look, didn't say anything. I met Ivan on the street. Ivan said that Leo said I have to come down and see the thing. Ivan came down, took a look at it, said

"can you have ten pieces ready in two months?" And I said, "Absolutely." And so no one saw it. I never called anybody. It was just that one call. And that was it. Subsequently I've had an awful lot of people ask me if I would like to leave and join their little stable. And they've offered very handsome financial rewards. But maybe later. Who knows? Not now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Ivan really is sort of the walking eye there, isn't he?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Ivan is an important factor in viewing, yes. I don't say that much for his taste in restaurants because I'm still suffering from the one he dragged me to last night. But he has a good eye for art. And he never stops looking. Which is a very wonderful thing about the guy. You know, 99% of the schlop galleries you can walk into in New York City you present your work to them and they say we don't even look, we haven't got time, we can't come down to your studio, we can't do this, no. Ivan has never turned down anybody. If you were to come in and he'd never even heard of you and you brought in something and were to say I'd like you to see my work in the flesh in my studio; please come. He will be there within two weeks. Absolutely no question abut it. He devotes almost two days a week to that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, that's one of the reasons why that's a go go place, too, isn't it? How was the light show in Kansas City? That was the first big environment.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, the big environment - well, of course it was a monumental job to put together. There were 40 people working with me on it. 40 amateurs. I brought my assistant out from New York to help me. It was just - you could write a book about it - in fact they are writing a book about it, you know. Ted Coe is writing that Magic Theatre catalogue. Which is very funny. Because it really goes into all the mistakes. And this was the first time that something like that was ever tried. The union between artists and industry without the technology of E.A.T. sort of thing. But this was direct unison between artists and industry. And we knowing what we wanted but industry not having any slightest idea. And they sent everything wrong. Everything was wrong. So whatever came out of that show came out as a beautiful total experiment. And it's a wonder that it really ever did go up.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What is the problem with industry not knowing?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, there's always somebody in between that - you work in a lax sort of way and you expect certain things to be done and they don't do them. You know if they leave out one little thing you're wiped out. It's like making a meal. You're trying to get the meat finished just as the mashed potatoes are hot and the carrots are finished and the broccoli isn't in a pot, everything together at once. It's practically impossible. The only thing I would like to say about the work I've been doing with art in light is that I'm really not interested in light. And that's where I separate myself from most of these guys that are interested in this totally external sensory sort of bombardment of light. If I want that I'll go to 42nd Street and Broadway. It's the best thing in the whole world that was ever made in light. No question about it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You can't compete with it.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: There's no competition, nobody. Billy Apple. Stephan Antonakos. They couldn't even think about doing - first of all they don't have the money, the imagination or the time to do that kind of thing. So I'm really not interested in light. I use my light as subject matter, object matter, as just a source. I don't care about it. What I'm really interested in is what that does in the situation. You know what I mean.

END OF SIDE 1

SIDE 2 January 22, 1968

PAUL CUMMINGS: January 22. Reel 2. Stanley Landsman.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: The eve of my birthday.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The Aquarians strike again.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. 2000 years.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, let's go back to the Tenth Street situation and The Club and all of that for a little bit. As you said, everybody knew everybody and it was a very small melting pot. Were there any people who are still closer friends of yours than, you know, the general circle?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I think everybody was very tight in those days. I don't think there was the fierce jealousy and competition that we find today. Everybody was really in the same bag. Everybody had a job. Everybody wanted to be much more than they were. Everybody was sort of working to find their own bag, their own style. They were derivative. And then they'd explode away from the norm, the New York School. And it was just a very tight sort of little world. And the world continued from Tenth Street to the parties and from the parties

to The Club. And if one guy broke up with his girlfriend three weeks later she was going out with somebody else in it. It became a very incestuous, tight little world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's true.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. And very few people broke away. And even now if you go into that world you still see it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You mean the new Club still has the same -- ?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Exactly the same thing, the same girls, the same guys.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The same third generation.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. They're still there. In fact I ran into some of them last night at the Jewish Museum.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How did you like that show?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, to tell you the truth, I went up there to meet Lefevre and I didn't get a chance to really see the show because there were so many people there. But I want to go back and take a look at that show. A lot of it looked fantastically derivative of America. But I want to go back and take a look. But I think that's the sort of difference between what was happening on tenth Street, which there is no more of.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Now it doesn't --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That can never exist again.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Even the feeling, the gallery thing, the whole --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, it was an absolute breakaway from the uptown. You know, "if you people won't show us we'll find our own spot and show ourselves."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: So the cooperative element came in. Now in the art world the cooperative element is buying $200,000 buildings down on Broadway and Houston street.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And everybody has their 50 x 100 studio with 20 foot ceilings. So it's blossomed into a much more affluent society than sitting at Riker's at 4 o'clock in the morning humming over the evening's mishappenings.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But don't you think there's a change even with the younger artists you know? They're not grouped together.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, of course that all goes along with like the idea that there's not 15 or 20 different schools of art. And though they are very closely knit everybody sort of mingles within a certain thing. You can find them all at Max's Kansas City in any one night. You could be sitting in St. Adrian's ---

PAUL CUMMINGS: How about that place on Broadway? Does everybody go down there?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, a lot of people.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I haven't been there yet.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Artists have always had to have a place. I mean you found that in Paris certainly in the 30's where they sat and they argued and talked. Last night I was sitting in St. Adrian's with some people. And Marty Goldstein? Marty Bloom? Marty something or other - he's an old-time painter; he's married to a painter, was there. And Clement Greenberg came walking by. And Marty said, "You old Fascist son of a bitch, you make your living by scribbling nonsensical oblivious words!" And he started screaming at Larry Poons and somebody else. But he's like an absolute carryover from the old club and those old days.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, but Clem was a big hero in The Club, wasn't he?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, - well, I mean he was a hero only because he was sort of one of the founders of the group.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How about the feeling of the artist towards Greenberg and Harold?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, the critic, the so-called critic always has to make the words, you know that go with everything. Like I say that I'm really not that happy with words like "infinity" and "space" and things like that. In fact somebody called me up today and said that they had heard a lecture that the Director of the Whitney - what's his name? - gave.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Jack [John] Baur?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I guess it was Baur. Anyway, he gave a lecture at the Whitney the other day, you know, one of those lecture series. And this friend of mine went to the lecture. And after going through the whole contemporary modular thing and structure and form and all this, he ended the lecture by saying that the last person who had acceded beyond the sculpture thing and making environmental sculpture, even though they were semi-small pieces, was me. Which is kind of nice. Because that's accurate, you see. And he's not really involved with talking about semantic words, you know, I mean like "space" and "infinity" and all that. He really captured exactly what I'm involved with. You know what I mean? Like the idea of environments within themselves: that you can't just look at the - you have to participate in them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But you don't have any of the ideas about environments that Kaprow does, have you?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. Totally different. Kaprow's environments are really sensuous sort of --

PAUL CUMMINGS: Mucking around places.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. you have to sort of bang into things and have things tickle your nose and all that type of thing with sound and all of that. Mine are just sort of like a mental trip.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, but there's a sensuous atmosphere.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: There's a sensuous atmosphere but it's not the fun house kind where something pops out or you walk into something because it's a dark chamber. Everything is right there where you look at it. And then you have to put your own feelings into going exactly where you want to go. And every person will go some place different. I mean we've received letters from people saying that they thought looking into a piece of my - one particular piece that the Whitney owns, was the final battle of the world. Here's a totally romantic piece conceptually. And everybody saw it that way, I mean everybody that I would come in contact with. Celestial, godlike, this, that, and the other thing. One person actually thought that it was the end of the world, or everybody was lined up on opposite sides and the lights were all the repeats from guns that were firing at each other. And the guns killed everybody.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What did you think of that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I didn't like it very much. Because it's just not what I had in my mind. But that's all right, you know, it's what she thought. And so fine.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have any other critics or writers hit close to what you think you're doing, or feel you're doing, or trying to do?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I've really never discussed it with that many of them. And there isn't that big a school of exactly what I'm doing. So it's a hard area for critics to get their teeth into.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I mean in reviews of the Kansas City show? Or the first show at Castelli?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: The first review of this stuff that I received was when asked at Castelli for biographical information Ivan Karp or Leo said, "He's brand new." And they quoted this all in the reviews. They said "If Mr. Landsman is brand new then he has developed a fantastic perfection in --- " It was some hairy thing you couldn't believe. But I think most of them have skirted it. I think that most of these critics are really art-oriented and their training is in Fine Art "Fa" (quote capital F, small a). And I think this is just a different thing. They really don't know how to sink their teeth into it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you mean? You're differentiating between - what? -traditional painting and sculpture?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Traditional. I mean Morris Louis is somebody who you can really like get into with classic paintings. Roy Lichtenstein you can get into with classic painting. Oldenburg you certainly can.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No matter how eccentric each one could be - or Wesselmann - you can always make the

comparison. But here we go into a whole other field. And I think it's very difficult for them to make that distinction or that correlation between classic sculpture or painting or whatever it is to this kind of work. And they have really to start with all new words.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, do you think that much exists, I mean from your point of view?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I think certainly that some of it that's --

PAUL CUMMINGS: You had mentioned, you know, the Mannerist space.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I mean I think if they took the time and sat with everybody I think there's certainly a correlation because everybody sort of comes out of something. I can see a correlation between a lot of ... But I've seen a lot of the people mature and go into it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: In --- ?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: From painting to sculpture to light, if they happen to go into light, or if they go into kinetics. I mean Flavin is somebody that I like very much of the so-called light artists. I like him. I don't understand everything he's doing and of ten pieces of his that we see I may not like eight, but the two I like very, very much. But that's a great average. I just think it's very difficult for guys like Clement Greenberg to get into this. It's not their forte. It's easier for Emily Genauer who really writes a social ---

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. But then she just flips over the top of it.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. She just skirts over the top and she uses "space" "time" things like that. She doesn't have to get into it. But they're going to have to sooner or later.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, you mentioned before that you were kind of unhappy about being called a "light" sculptor.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I mean I think really "light" itself is not what I'm interested in. I mean I use the light when I said to you subject or object or just source. It's like saying well, I think today I'll paint in gouaches rather than in oil paints. Or tomorrow I think I'll draw. Which could be just etched glass like some of those pieces with fine etching on them. And then the light is certainly behind everything. The only thing the light serves as is to illuminate what I've done. I mean that Tiffany shade in the corner there the light is just a source to come through the shade and you're not looking at light. But there's light there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But as I think about the pieces most of the arrangements of the lights, the ones with the little bulbs, are very geometric pattern, they're all spaced - or they look as if they're spaced.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: They look as if they're spaced but they're not really in a grid system. Not at all. The only grid system that they're in there is that I want to achieve a certain symmetry. But that symmetry can be affected by one of 50,000 methods, you know, 50,000 arrangements of those lights. And the reason it looks that way is because it just looks like there are so many the eye really isn't trained to pick out the real ones from the fake ones.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And they're also different depths from the base they're mounted on, aren't they?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Some seem to be close.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Well, that gives the total thing from side to side. I'm sort of not put off by it but I'm really more interested in the fluorescence now and the big globular pieces that I want to work with.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You haven't used Neon for any?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, I haven't. I've sort of avoided Neon. I don't know why, but I just have. And I've done a lot of drawings with things that proposed Neon pieces but I've never done one.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But you've really thought about it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I've thought about it. I don't really know whether I like the light, if you have to call it that. I don't know whether I like the light of Neon. It's a different kind of - it's a filament light. Now there are certain pieces that I've made that are filament lights but they're more crystalline filament than gaseous. It's a gaseous sort of light that Neon has and it's a little bit offensive to me. Oh, maybe I just haven't worked out a suitable receptacle for it. That's probably more accurate.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You've used a number of smoked glasses and colored glasses.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. But I've stayed pretty close to - basically the variations are in the density of the glass. And that forms sort of the color. Usually the grays to the browns to the sort of sepias to the reddish ones. It's the density of the coating that's put on the glass. The glass is basically all the same.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: But if you go from, let's say, 40% reflectivity to 16% reflectivity - because you don't have that much light inside though you need that much. The more light you have externally the darker you're going to have to go because of the penetration. So that causes considerable color change. If they were all balanced perfectly you couldn't see the difference. But they're not balanced perfectly because that's a very difficult thing to do. And I really don't want to get that involved with the technology of the glass. Maybe at some future time I would. In fact I'd like to work with somebody who had that equipment. But I don't want to really get involved with switches and vacuums and all of that right now. Later.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You've mentioned that you like the fluorescence. Those are fluorescent, too, those little --- ?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. They're very cold, very direct light. And it's very, very linear. And it has very, very nice proportions I think. Neon could never do that. I mean the intensity, the directness of the light that comes out of this tiny little tube you could never get out of Neon, even though it's the same size and diameter. You just couldn't get it out of it. And so I think this serves my purpose much more. The great advantage, of course, to Neon is that you can bend it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And this you can't?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: You can bend it to a very small degree. But Neon because of it's property - just gas - you can bend it around anything you want. This has gas in it also. But --

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a different kind of glass?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, it has this white coating on the inside which is fluoride. Fluoride? - is that a toothpaste? Fluoride. I've got three cavities because I chew Neon tubes. What is it?

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's fluorescent powder.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. It's painted in there. It's sprayed in. And the properties have to be all the molecular things that have to be in a row. G. E. has been working like for ten years on making one that bends. And now they have this one that's shaped like a U and they found out how to get around that corner.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, they have the round one.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: They have the round one but that's really straight. It's a continuous thing. But where you want to go into patterns, you know, bending it like that you can't do. It just won't work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Isn't that strange?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. You'd think it would be a simple thing.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just straight line electronic discharge I think. I'm speaking as if I know what it is.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I'm glad you do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, have you tried things with great arrays of light sources?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I have a piece I experimented with at Columbia with a laser. And I'm going to make a laser piece. It has to be; I mean I have to make one sooner or later. It's an obvious thing that I would have to do because it's just so great.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you see the one at the Jewish Museum?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I saw the one at the Jewish Museum and I liked it. I liked it very much. I didn't like all the superfluous garbage that was with it. Who wants cutouts of human beings. It meant nothing. Why not just have it as it is, a pure thing. Do it, and just leave it that way. You know, all that other stuff is really just bad frosting. And it detracts from what he was really trying to say. And I know that that's not what he's all about, that garbage on the side. I don't even know if he's involved. I mean one thing is done absolutely beautiful and one thing is done really bad. And it's obvious he's into the thing that he was doing very beautifully.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: But he had to find a receptacle to put this thing into. And that's the sad thing. You know, like I say I have to find a receptacle to put my Neon tube into. If I want to do something in Neon why not just put it there? And he should have just put it there. But we get hooked in these things.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. You also talked about the fact that they are like "fat" paintings and not really sculpture.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I don't - it's hard to really say today, you know, what is sculpture and what is painting. It's a very tough line.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. Unless you're Morris Louis doing things on canvas.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Because you're looking, you just don't know what it is. You don't know whether it's painting. You don't know whether it's sculpture. It comes off the wall 15 feet. It hangs on a wall. So it must be painting. No, it doesn't have to be painting. It can be sculpture. It's really painting the guy says. And so I just can't make that distinction. The only reason that I say I have the mentality of a painter is because I think that way. And that's my training, you know, more than sculpture.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And actually you use the surface of the glass with the patterns and things behind it rather than the actual shape.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. I stay pretty close to as plain an outside as I can. And what's really important is what's inside. So chances are no matter where you view it from you view it on a flat surface, even if it's a corner, always seeing like a spatial thing, you know, so it's viewable from a flat surface.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I mean the fact that you would look at one thing on the corner it would still --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It would still look the same no matter where. I mean it won't look the same as if you looked at it flat but the imagery will still have that --

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. It doesn't change really because it's a corner.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And because, as I say, there are four sides or six sides or twenty sides to some of the pieces, as you walk around them, all sides being open, of course it changes continuously as you walk around. But at any one time that you're looking you're always looking at a flat sort of area.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You haven't made anything with curved surfaces yet, have you?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I haven't made any pieces with curved surfaces, no. They've all been ---

PAUL CUMMINGS: Multi-sides, but flat.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. exactly. It may be one of the natures of the beast.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. It's very difficult. What happens is you get all kinds of optical distortions setting in. And I'm not against that. It's still very difficult to use, and also very expensive. And there we go back into the old thing about technology.

PAUL CUMMINGS: About rolling a piece of glass.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And it becomes very, very difficult to do. And then after you do that then the coating process. Coating a curved piece of glass is very difficult because it's done in a vacuum chamber where, let's say, you're putting aluminum or chromium onto the surface it has to be almost a flat surface because otherwise your deposits at the closer point, you see, are heavier than the ones at the further points.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, I see. It's going to thin out in the middle.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. The Palomar lens of course was probably the greatest coating thing in the world. They had something like 28,000 electrodes with coating substance.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It's a fantastic chore.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There are two things, the one with the small bulbs, you know, the little dots, and the huge

thing, or the ones with the large spheres where the space seems to cut off somewhere sooner. Is that because of the sizes?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, no, it's actually a mathematical thing. Let's say you have two feet of depth and you have one sphere in the middle, well then you're working off a reflectivity angle of maybe, oh, one-quarter of it. So then you go on for about, let's say, 8 or 10 depending upon the coatings you put on - maybe 8 or 10 more of your objects that you put inside. Now if between those two-foot walls you have 12 or 10 rows of lights then this one is working off a 90% reflectivity, this one is also working off 90% because it's not bothered by this one. Each one is working off 90% so it can go much, much further. And also down much further. And when you're also working off one coated mirror, one coated surface and a solid surface, such as a fully opaque mirror, then you increase your space by about 75%. So if I made these pieces one-sided rather than four-sided they would really zoop and zip right through walls and everything, no matter where they were they'd go across the street.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you really have great control over the kind of space that you want by - ?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I want that control for the different situations that I might get into. You know, the different type of piece that I want to build.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's interesting. Because I didn't know that you could really exercise that much control over the material.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. A lot more than I really actually have. I really have just scratched the surface. I mean a lot of work has come out and been produced but I've really just scratched the surface of it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's terrific. Do you know anybody else who's working with this sort of thing?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I have a lot of disciples. I do. I really do. They're young people that just all of a sudden appear or call on the telephone and say I'm doing some things that are the basics of what you're working in. Could I come over and talk to you. I have some problems. And these young people come over. A lot of them are in school.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The second generation.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. That makes me valid. And I give them glass because they can't afford it. I mean it's like that whole thing we talked about, not being able to teach this kind of kinetics or light or things like that. Really most kids in school can hardly really afford good paint and canvas and stretchers and things like that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: And this stuff is way beyond.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: This stuff is fantastically expensive. My glass costs me $12 or $14 a square foot.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you're not going to run out and buy six-foot sheets and cut it up and make things.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. I mean the kids at school -- first of all they wouldn't handle it right and they'd ruin 90% of it. It's slightly perishable because it's glass. And it's very expensive. And there isn't that big a demand. Let's say, a plywood company can give to Visual Arts a thousand sheets of plywood for the kids to cut up. They're seconds; and they're not going to miss it. You're not going to get Owens-Corning to give you a thousand sheets of this for the kids to cut up. The handling is totally different. You can kill yourself with a piece of glass, you know, if it breaks and slips.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is it plate glass that you use?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It's polished plate glass. And it can do a lot of damage. So it's dangerous to work with. And of course mini switches and relays and circuities and all this is very expensive.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you have an electrical engineer or somebody you work with on laying these things out?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. I've sort of made it a standard practice to design exactly what I want and then I take the easiest method to get there. Which is very opposed to what a lot of the people that are working in this field do.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They try to make it complicated and profound.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. If you go to see some of this work you see that they're very involved in the aesthetics of relays and they put them in plastic boxes so you can see all the wires and all of the relays ticking away and everything. And I really have no interest in that. So what happens is you get, let's say, on a good Saturday, a nice balmy Saturday morning you go down to Canal Street and you'll find all of the kinetic world

walking up and down and they're looking for new switches and everything, or they're reading Scientific American and all the magazines, and they find a great switch that can do a lot. And so what they do is buy the switch and they build a piece of sculpture to work with that switch. And it's really the wrong way.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, they're really looking at it as an object for the sculpture.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, they are. But also one of the problems is that the switch goes bad, I'll guarantee that switch is going to go bad very shortly because of planned obsolescence of all that stuff. And you have fantastic problems with people who buy it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Then where do you go to get another one?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. In fact with some of these things you have to be a Ph.D. from M.I.T. to repair them. So I go about it in a totally different way. I conceive my ideas. Then I absolutely use the barest of all essentials, which is a wire. All I put in it is a couple of wires. And I usually put a rheostat on because I want people to be able to like, have the option to do what they want with it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It used to make the guards so nervous at the Whitney, somebody would reach around and touch this thing and they'd turn it, you know. And the guard would run over and say, "No, no. You can't do that." And turn it back to one particular place that they had decided upon.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I made them send out a letter telling all the guards that it was absolutely permissible for the people to play with the dimmers. Because as you're sitting in a room and there's a tremendous amount of illumination with it turned up high. If you're in a room with this - if you're sitting reading you don't want this offensive thing blaring at you from across the room. You turn it down to where you're comfortable with it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Or you might want it loud sometimes.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: If you want it loud leave it loud. But like you have it where you want it. It's not going to change the piece at all. But it's making it more compatible with you and your surroundings and everything like that. And I'm not sacrificing any artistic part of the piece by doing that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Are there any other art things that we haven't talked about that you can think of? I mean about building your painting-sculpture, sculpture-painting?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. I think we've really pretty well covered it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: We've talked about the materials and the lights and the equipment.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I think pretty much we've covered it all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you find that there's a tremendous difference in making a large, large one like the one in Texas as opposed to a smaller one?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. A fantastic difference.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just because of the engineering?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. There's this monumental thing with structural engineers. To get them working on something is monumental. And you've got to go to metal craftsmen to get them to do it. It's this whole idea of becoming a coordinator. I don't want to become a coordinator. Really I just want to be in my studio and I want to produce work and be very comfortable and drink coke and talk on the phone, you know. I just want to work.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you like working with architects? This is your first big architectural commission, isn't it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Is it? Yes, I guess it's the first major one. I've made bigger pieces than this but they're for museums and things like that. You run into union problems. That's the big sort of hangup with architectural situations. Did I tell you the great story about forming the artists' union?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I think that would be a great idea.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Raphael Soyer would be the president.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And Moses --

PAUL CUMMINGS: Would be vice president.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I want to be in charge of certain buildings though.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Which ones would you like?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I like the new General Motors Building. I think I would have liked to have done something on that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Instead of that huge thing they've got in there. Have you seen that chandelier sort of pie-shaped thing?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, I haven't seen it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It hangs there and it's lost. It doesn't really mean anything.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I saw another thing that didn't mean anything the day before yesterday. I wanted to see Noguchi's sculpture down in Wall Street. I had to. So I went down. I made a special trip.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, the Cube?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. And I really didn't like it. I did not like it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I was very sort of blah about it when I first saw it.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Have you gone back and seen it since?

PAUL CUMMINGS: I've seen it two or three times since. And it fits in there in a funny way.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It may fit. But I don't like it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a very bland piece.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It's not my cup of tea at all.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How do you like the one in St. Mark's Place - the Rosenthal? Have you seen it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I like that much better. I like the way it sits there. I like the scale of it. It's not offensive.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The Noguchi is just too big.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I didn't even like that phony perspective that he worked into it. It looks like a cube and it's not a cube and you get much more space, you know, and all of that. It didn't do anything for me. And I like some of the things Noguchi does. But this just didn't do a thing for me. I'd read so much about it that I had to go to see it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you see his show this year at Cordier, all his lamps?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. He's made a billion dollars on that lamp, that accordion.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, he says never.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: What do you mean never? I'd like to have a senate committee like investigate Bonnier's sales of that lamp throughout the world. Although I hear that there is some philanthropic thing that he does. It's not the profits that's philanthropic, but it's the factory that makes those for him.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, there's now a foundation, too.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: There's a town in Japan or some place like that that just produces these lamps. So you know if they have a whole town just producing these funky accordions they must be making a few bucks some place.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: He made one on a big bamboo shoot that I once saw at Ed Higgin's house in Pennsylvania. He and Ed Higgins were friends through Patricia Morgan who is I guess an ex-girl friend of Noguchi's and the agent for Giancarlo Menotti in Italy. And I really liked that one. It was a great - it had a sort of big iron ball on the

floor and just about six feet of bamboo stalk going up in the air and then just a round paper ball. And it sort of looked like it was floating because the bamboo is so graceful. It just sort of bent. It looked like it really had to do with his background and everything. It was good. But these variations on Thanksgiving lawn parties doesn't mean anything to me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Let's see, we took care of E.A.T. before, didn't we? E.A.T. and all that - the artist and the scientist.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I got an announcement from them yesterday to join.

PAUL CUMMINGS: To join?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. And then they list all these things that they'll do for you.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They'll solve all your problems?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, they'll solve all my problems. But you have to fill out all these forms and then they propose them to industry. I really want to get it done now.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I've had a couple of people, sculptors who used light or electronic equipment say that they just feel uncomfortable about explaining their ideas to a board of artists and technocrats, you know, who then decide --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It's very funny the terminology that they use. They use the word "collaboration." "Collaboration" is their big word.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Arts becomes cooperative or whatever. It doesn't happen, does it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Not very often. Although I think that's a terrific idea. I really think that people should work together. Artists should work together to produce something. And it would be great. Well, I mean can you imagine if Andrew Wyeth and Dan Flavin got together what they could produce?

PAUL CUMMINGS: It would be a light with a picture across it.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Or, let's see, you could have Philip Pavia and Kenneth Snelson. That would be a great combination.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, it would have certain poetry.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: There would probably be a lot of funerals we would all be going to, you know what I mean?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Duels would be come fashionable again.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. They would come right back into style again.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Anyway, well, let's talk about you for a couple of minutes here. Let's see, we've pretty well talked about all your other careerist activities on the side.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Do you have the ones that I haven't gone into yet?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, we can get into those.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That will be another life.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There'll be another one?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Another life.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You have this giant tape machine and all this stereophonic equipment. Do you listen to music a lot?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I listen to music when I'm working. Constantly. But I really like the looks of this stuff.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, well, that's because it's a classic machine.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I mean that's probably the worst tape recorder in the whole world as far as ... The one you're using is probably 400 times easier to use. I mean that's absolutely professional. It's stereophonic and it's 16 track and it's got ammeters and voltage meters and 18 speeds and 10-inch reels. But it ---

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's hard to drive.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It really would be great if you just pushed a button. You really have to pull out the manual every time you want to use this thing. So I'm going to trade it in. I'm over my visual era.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What kind of music do you listen to when you work?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Rock and roll and Western. I'm a great fan of Western music.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What are your favorite stations?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: The one that comes from Hoboken. It's the - what's the name of that thing? It's country music. Tom Wesselmann and I are the country listeners. We listen to country music and discuss it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They've got a radio station in Hoboken? That's terrific.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, it's a new station. It used to be out in Plainfield, New Jersey or some place.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is it AM-FM?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: AM only. And it's continuously on. Except for Art Linkletter's Chicago Breakfast Party. It's 24 hours of Western music except for one hour in the morning where you have the Breakfast Club with Art linkletter or Harry Linkletter or something.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Don McNeil?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Don McNeil! You're right? It's Don McNeil! And he's very disturbing. He really disrupts my whole day because he's always got this yokel broad on there and she tells these hokey sort of Mid-western stories.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's the same script he's been using since 1928.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. It's a perfect format. He's never changed it. Because they scoff it up and they love it and they laugh and giggle. And I just barely make it through because I know if I move the station I'll never find it again. Because it's a mystery how I'm getting it through this little Japanese radio that I play. And you plug it in the same plug that I put my sculpture and the toaster in and it gives me music, and the sculpture gives you light, and the toaster pops toast. Electricity is an amazing thing. Isn't that fantastic how that all works on the same thing. So there's technology.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What happens when Con Edison goes on strike again?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That's very interesting. People have said that to me. A major blackout and I'm out of business.

PAUL CUMMINGS: So you listen to real old-fashioned music?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I really like country music. I like rock and roll. I have a very good collection of jazz which I never listen to anymore - a record collection of jazz which I was a very big fan of. And of course that sort of takes us back into another era of The Five Spot and the artists sort of finding this place on the Bowery.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And Larry Rivers and that idea of having a place to listen to music and convincing Jud Terufi, who is the owner, to get the people down there to play, and he told him he'd make money. Of course he had been running a bum's bar for so many years that he didn't believe that he could really sell a drink for 85 cents. You know it had to be 45 cents and in one of those thick glasses.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. Beer with Three Feathers.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. And you really didn't have to have lines on shot glasses, that people would really take your word for it that you were giving them a good drink. And then he put in a piano. The first person he hired was Thelonius Monk. I remember he was paralyzed at the thought. And he was taking everybody's word that Monk was the person that he had to hire. So he rented an upright piano. Well, Monk walked in with the Countess and the Rolls Royce, took one look at this upright, had a fit, started screaming about Steinway. And they had to like go up to Steinway and rent a big concert grand and the whole bit. Which of course he really should have because he's a great pianist. But the owner was paralyzed. He didn't know what to say. Of course it became a great hit overnight.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Sure. Terrific.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And there you had another cultural center during the time of the Tenth Street era. And people would sit there and drink and listen to great music. And that era of jazz was great. It was really beautiful. But now when I listen to it it's so boring I can't believe it except for some of the classic - Herbie Mann, I listen to him on his flute. Certain passages are very beautiful and melodic things. When I listen to hard core jazz, Zootie Simms and the whole group - and I know a lot of those guys from those days - Zoot and Bobby Bookvine. But it's just very boring next to the Beatles or the Beach Boys. They're much more stimulating to me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Did you get to know any of the writers that were kicking around then, like Frank O'Hara and that poet crowd?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I just knew a few of them. I knew Frank a little bit from the Cedars and from parties and talks. He was more with Mike Goldberg and that whole group. I was really never that friendly with them. I knew them well and I could go over to their studios. But I was really never that tight with them.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, that was the other generation.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. You see, I had to bolster their reason for being.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Then you changed. You let them down.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I let them down, you're right. Don't think I didn't hear about it last night too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really? You know, it's a very funny thing because the guy who goes off in his studio and does his work and even if he does it within the big over-all tradition or whatever is happening now, everybody says if you paint romantic landscapes you're an abstract expressionist then everybody is. Even Barney Newman.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Barney Newman is one of the most romantic painters in the whole world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Not only paintings but personally.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, yes.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: A great raconteur. Oh, he was beautiful. About four weeks ago I was coming out of Leo's and this big black limousine pulls up and you expect the Maharrajah of Jaipur to jump out. Chubby old Barney jumps out. He said, "You don't expect me to go out in the rain, do you?" He was just great. Why shouldn't he rent it if he feels like it? It cost him $17. Big deal. Why shouldn't he have a chauffeur-driven limousine for the afternoon to go to a couple of galleries? So before he reached the corner it was filled.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you still read much? Or you haven't read since you left the Navy?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I haven't read in such a long time. I want to desperately. Every once in a while I go into a small depression and I read. Last week I read a book Man Child In the Promised Land. I don't want to get into the sociological thing. Forget it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, it's everywhere.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. It's boring. But it was an interesting book about this young Negro and his life in New York. It was an interesting book.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you have any hobbies or anything that keeps you busy besides working?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I think there are certain professions in life that you go into and I think the hobby and the occupation and avocation became one. If you stop doing sculpture, you draw. And that becomes the hobby sort part of --

PAUL CUMMINGS: But I mean like your interest in Oriental art and things like that. You don't collect things?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, I collect avidly all kinds of stuff. Right now I'm amassing the world's greatest collection of greenies, which is nondescript girls of the thirties, twenties actually, in 1927 I think, a form put out by something called Rich Art; not the paint company. And they're very nondescript figurines. Usually when one goes in and buys a bronze they look for detail and they say "Very fine detail." I go in to the store and say, "Have you got any with no detail." They all look like silhouettes from whatever angle you turn them they're silhouettes. There were millions and millions and millions of them cast throughout America. And they were all broken

because they're made out of pot metal and they just disintegrated. Every once in a while you find one. And more and more I find that strange people have started collecting them. I was in a place recently and I mean - this was great hunting area - and they kept telling me about this little fat guy that was in a week before and had taken everything that was in the stores all over town.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That was Ivan?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. it was Henry Geldzahler. So I have to go over and see Henry's new acquisitions to the world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Back to Hoboken.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Ivan Karp collects them also but only for me.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He's an agent.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: He's my agent, right. But I'm his agent also on all Coca-Cola objects.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is he a Coca-Cola man?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Oh, really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: He has one of the big Coca-Cola collections of the world.

PAUL CUMMINGS: There's an actress he should add to it.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: A lot of people of course have turned on to Coca-Cola and the objects are becoming fantastically expensive.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Really?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: A Coca-Cola bottle from 25 years ago - well, this Coca-cola bottle here with the printed label is the new bottle. But the ones that have the embossed, you know, the raised letters are worth two or three dollars already.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Fantastic. Pure American culture!

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. The streets are paved with gold. If you'd collected coke bottles since you were a kid you'd be a billionaire. Of course Andy [Warhol} knows this, you know. That's what he's sort of always been involved with in the Campbell Soup and coke and he's been taking the object and blowing it up and letting you take a good look at it. Finally after having it in your hand for twenty years, you really saw it. And that of course was the whole premise for Pop, one of the premises for Pop.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Lichtenstein wasn't involved with that, was he?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No, he was more involved with another form of the common object to all of us, which was very romantic, the comic book, and that sort of era.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Tell me about India and the film.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, the film was a fiasco.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, it was a government project?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It was a government project that the government sort of didn't want - it was like Mission Impossible. If you got caught the government would disown you. They would say they never heard of you. Channel 13 was also involved with this. So they bought us tickets and they shipped us over there telling us about all the splendors, you know, this house on the beautiful river we were going to have and the servants. We ended up sleeping in the projection room of a movie theatre. And we had a billion dollars worth of equipment - right? - that we were supposed to have to take with us. The most paranoid photographer I've ever met in my life who thought everybody was against him. So this made everything start out very well. We all were going to meet in London. Ended up on three different flights, needless to say. We were all going to get clearance to get into India with equipment, working papers and everything in London. One of the people got to Russia and never got to London. All of us really met in India. It was monumental getting through Indian customs with all this equipment.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They had to take everything apart and look at it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, it was another thing. Anyway, we were supposed to have sync equipment like big naugra tape recorders, you know, for synching the camera with the dialogue; which I was going to do. That was my role. And the cameras came unsynched. They had no sound equipment. No naugras. The wrong type of film. Everything was ass backwards. The wrong lights, everything. For one ten you needed two twenty - who knows - whatever it was. Channel 13 had sent a photographer over to help us technically. He was supposed to come with cameras, too. He came with a Leica, 35 millimeter. Nice guy. But just wasn't right. So anyway, they went about shooting this film. I had nothing to do. I was there with Ellen Johnson from Obelin University. And so what finally happened was Ellen Johnson and myself and Mrs. Gray, who was the financial sponsor of the film through the Smithsonian Institution, I think, made a tape recording at Voice of America, which is another world, discussing the show. Now our original premise, and one of the reasons I was anxious to go, and stated this fact which I think started the whole ball rolling was that it was supposed to be a 68-nation show.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was it called again?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: First New Delhi Triennale. And it's a very nice idea. I think the Biennale in Venice and the Biennale in Sao Paolo are fine and there should be more of them. So it's a very nice idea that if India wants to have one every once in a while - it would be three years - it's beautiful. What I was hoping for was since they did do a little pre-advertising about the show they had included the whole Red Bloc all the way through, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, every place was going to show. And it was all going to be new work. So I expected really to see - I expected it to be five years behind the times but I expected to really see what was going on in the avant garde in the cellars and all that that we had never been allowed to see before and the reason I figured they would send it to India was because they were all vying, you know, for India. So that was the reason I wanted to go over and do the social commentary on the whole show. I didn't really want to get involved with talking about Donald Judd and Joseph Cornell, which it ended up being. But the Bloc did show. and it was the bad, bad social realism portrait of Lenin carrying a flag, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The 1930's Whitney again.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, God, the Eight Street Whitney exactly! Really bad. And it was so obvious that the show was on such poor level that we decided we would just contain ourselves to the American show, which consisted of myself, Donald Judd, Bob Morris, Joseph Cornell, Larry Zox, Claes Oldenburg. That was one contingency. Stuart Davis, Jackson Pollock, and the great woman form the Southwest, Georgia O'Keeffe. Which made a very interesting cross starting from after the First World War right up to what was happening today. The tape was very good actually because we really went into it. What we did was we almost tried to take two sides. I would say, "Well, gee, I really don't understand what Claes Oldenburg is trying to say to me in soft sculpture." And then Ellen Johnson would explain the sexual quality and the soft idea in contemporary living to me, you know, like we were in the gallery itself. And then she would question, let's say, Larry Zox. And I would explain to her the idea of the very cool school of art that's going on. And so we bandied it back and forth. And it was a very interesting tape. It really worked out very, very well.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What was the Indian reaction to this?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: The Indians loved our exhibition. But really loved it!

PAUL CUMMINGS: How could they do something with it?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: There's nothing they can really do with it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where does it fit?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: It doesn't. They're trapped. I met a lot of the students and I gave a lecture to about 250 art students at the university there. And they were beautiful. And they're hungry for catalogues and announcements or anything that has to do with art. They don't get it. They want to leave the country; even the ones that have money want to get out. They can't get out. They can't take the money. They haven't got any money any place else. It's difficult. They're sort of a little trapped.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is there any modern art there?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. It's terrible. But really bad.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The new Kama Sutra.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: As visiting artists we were all escorted around to all of the studios of the so-called leading Indian artists. And they were really bad. They were hung up in Persian miniatures. They were trying to work

Persian miniatures and abstract expressionism together. Which is a tough thing. It was very sad. Very sad. I had the best deal of all of course because since there was no synch equipment what did they need a voice for? So every day I'd go off and look at another temple and wander through the streets. And I was awed by the poverty. I took trips to Bombay and to the mountains and to the temples.

PAUL CUMMINGS: How long were you there?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I was there about five weeks. I was there with a fantastic woman who was director of the thing - Bettina Cork. She had been there as political writer for the New Delhi Times. And she knew everybody. And we got all these invitations from the embassies to come and have cocktails. And we did. Because I really found myself... They have a knish, they make a knish, a potato knish.

PAUL CUMMINGS: An Indian knish.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: An Indian knish. They wrap it in a leaf but it's exactly like you get on Mulberry Street.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's a mulberry leaf.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That's right. It's a mulberry leaf. So you find yourself running because you want to get away from walking in the streets and, you know, like having five lepers come up. It's a very oppressive - it's a different kind of poverty than we know. It's a totally different kind of poverty. So just to be confronted all of a sudden with it is very difficult. To go off in the mountains and sit with some guru would be much more celestial than to sit in New Delhi. It's a freaky place. I mean it's 95 degrees outside and you're walking along and it starts to hail all of a sudden. It hailed three times while we were there. Everybody jumps under cars. It's very strange. And the black market is wild. While we were there we were offered about 800 jobs, you know. People would say, "Oh, you're the New York camera people? Would you consider shooting a small film for us and then taking it to the United States and we'll pay you in rupees and - who knows - it's 7 rupees to the dollar here and if you fly to Madagascar or wherever you go you get 27 rupees for the dollar and you smuggle...Everything is thriving on this sort of intrigue. And poor India is suffering.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Drained.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. And I had dinner with this guy Fatay Singh who's a terrific guy, he's the Maharajah of Baroda. I was complaining at this hotel one night that the curry was not like the curry I'm used to on 14th Street. And he said, "Do you like that?" I said, "Yes, I like that." He said, "All right. You come to the house tomorrow and my cook will make you some real curry." It almost killed me. I was in the bathroom for two days. It was so hot. And he said no one eats it like that but if you want it I'll make it for you. And those guys are complaining that the Indian government is taking away all their money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: They've only got fifty million.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: But he's got a 295 room house and 16 elephants. An elephant only costs $400.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But to feed it!

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I was thinking about buying one actually. We had financial problems while we were there. We had allotted ourselves food and drink and things like that. We found we ran out of money. We weren't quite certain whether it was the food or the drink that ailed us. But since the film had been shot and we were all finished we were thinking about going off to Kashmir and shooting our own little thing. But we really didn't have enough money.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Is it expensive to travel there?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. A car and a chauffeur is about four dollars a day. They chew betel nuts. That was my first experience. In the projection booth in the movie theatre in downtown New Delhi where I was sleeping this guy gave me this betel nut. He told me to chew it. It's betel nut and something else. And you get high from it. It's supposed to be terrific. It made me so ill I almost died. But everybody chews it and they're always slapped, sort of happy.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's the secret of survival in India. Oh, boy.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: They have some very interesting things over there. Very interesting.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, set up shop in California somewhere.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I don't think we'd get it into the country. I'm not ready yet.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Where else have you traveled? You were in the Aegean you said.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I went on a trip with some friends through Israel, Turkey, and the Aegean Islands, and then I went on another trip the next year from the Venice Biennale. It felt like the greatest thrill in the world. Everybody was leaving the Biennale. And there's a dock right at the entrance to the Biennale. We'd hired this yacht and it was sitting at the entrance to the Biennale. And everybody was looking to grab a vehicle. And we just climbed on board the yacht and we sailed off to Yugoslavia. We had cocktails waiting for us on board the boat. And we just waved at everybody and took off into the blue like one of those great McCormick travel films. Remember when you were a kid you always watched McCormick? There were the rays of the sun. We sail away from the Isle of Pongo Pongo. That was the first time I had ever been in Venice. And it was so beautiful. I have to go back some day. And then of course I traveled a fantastic amount when I was in the Navy. So I've sort of seen everything - Asia, the Orient, Asia Minor, and Europe.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You've got Africa and South America.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I've never been to Africa and I've never been to South America. I was sitting with David Navros last night and he was telling me about the Yucatan. He had just come back. And he was so peaceful and so calm I said if the Yucatan did that to you then I have to go.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Have you seen things in your travel that you use or anything like that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Only in the sense that everything that you see sooner or later comes out in your work though you don't really know from where. But, you know, as you see things sooner or later it's bound to come out in the work. Things are different. everything is just different. So you just assimilate it and it's stored away in one of your little cells and later it comes out.

PAUL CUMMINGS: One way or another.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Absolutely. I'm sure that's all very beneficial. The only thing with traveling is you can't work. Writers are the great travelers. Artists do a pretty good job but writers can carry a typewriter and a ream of paper and they can go to, let's say, Barbados for three weeks and type out in the sun. But can you imagine me schlepping my studio down there and ordering glass from Libbey-Owens-Ford, you know, "Send me down 16 percent coated and put it on a freighter."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Put it on a jet tomorrow.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Put it on a jet to me. It's just too much equipment.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. But your watercolors --

STANLEY LANDSMAN: The Stone Age painter can do that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: With waterwheels.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. With his crude materials - Liquidtex and canvas - can do that kind of thing. Old fashioned stuff.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You said you weren't happy with plastics. Do you think you'll use them?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Sooner or later I probably will get into plastics as they make it better. Now they have a new plastic out that a girl was telling me about on Sunday that you can't do anything to it. You can't break it. You can't scratch it. You can't do anything to it. Now that's very intriguing to me. It's a product that's put out for the government.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Of course.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Of course. And I want to find out more about it so there we go back into technology and all of that. So I'll find out.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Okay, one more thing: Who in the "modern" (quotes) ---

STANLEY LANDSMAN: "Modern."

PAUL CUMMINGS: -- "modern" group of artists interests you particularly?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I'm interested in a lot of them. A lot of it I don't understand but I'm interested. Like these earthworks things, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Trenches and hills and raking leaves.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. I like it, you know. I have no eyes for it but I'm interested in it. I feel something about it. I'm sure a lot of it has to do with listening to Carl this summer. Andre talked about a lot of this.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's art of the new agrarian movement.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. Exactly. At first I was so opposed to it, but really opposed to it. And now as I see more of it I'm beginning to actually enjoy some of it. The stuff that I'm picking out of it is already classic because there are new people that are doing stuff that I'm not really ready for yes, you see.

PAUL CUMMINGS: But who's doing the things that you're interested in?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh, Serat and Sera, I don't even know a lot of these people. Again that's my fault. I should. I'd like to know them. But the time - you know, it's just very difficult to get to know everybody. I had dinner with Eva Hesse about a month ago. She's into that, you know. And she was telling me about, she spent the whole night telling me about people. I never heard of any of them. She said, "They're the greatest." And so I've been looking to see more of this. Leo is sort of probing into this a little bit, too.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Up at the warehouse?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, with that show. Of course that's through Bob Morris who is their spiritual leader. And, you know, I don't see the correlation between the two that closely. It is interesting; it really is. And then of course the classic - how can you not say Claes Oldenburg is beautiful to look at, you know. Not as beautiful as Patty but --

PAUL CUMMINGS: But he's a big version.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: He's classic, Roy is a classic already, you know.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I had an old master drawing dealer say, "You know Oldenburg is the greatest Venetian draftsman in 200 years."

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Fabulous. Absolutely fabulous.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He's got all those curlicues and all that light business.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Great, great draftsman and execution, you know, of his work. You see a lot of good draftsmen around and a lot of good craftsmen and he puts the two of them together and it's a beautiful, beautiful job. Of course the more I look at Jasper Johns the more I really appreciate him. I've always been a fan, but now even more. It has a lot, lot more meaning to me now than it ever did. I was more on Rauschenberg's side than on Johns' but now the table is switching. I really feel closer to Johns.

PAUL CUMMINGS: What caused that, do you think?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I have no idea.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Just feeling?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Just looking at the work now, you know, over the years and just getting a feeling for it. It's in me, you know, how I feel about it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do you ever write anything about your work? Do you keep notebooks or anything like that?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No. I'm leaving that all to Dan Flavin.

PAUL CUMMINGS: He's writing for everybody.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I guess he's writing it for himself. But he's the guide to whatever. He writes every day in this log. See it's not really what I'm about.

PAUL CUMMINGS: No, but there are some people, you know, who keep notebooks or jot things down.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Nothing? No writing activity?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Nothing. No. Absolutely not. I would like to but it's not ...

PAUL CUMMINGS: It doesn't happen.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: No.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Do your write to other artists or people, letters, correspondence sort of thing?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Friendship things, you know what I mean? It's no pour your heart out. My brother will never publish my letters.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Only if they would be reviewed in the Times so he could see the review.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: That's right. I wish I could, you know. I wish that I could do a lot of things that I don't do. I'd really like to read more. And I'd really like to write and do all these things. But you just find it --

PAUL CUMMINGS: You do what you do and there's no time left.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. Time is like scooped up and it disappears at the end of the day.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, is there anything else you want to talk about or you think we should hit before we knock the machine over?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, I think we've covered an awful lot of territory.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I'll come back and do another one.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes, we can do another one in a year when it's all changed.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right. After you've had the painting show and really shaken everybody up.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. I really feel it. You look around today - I feel there's going to be a resurgence of some things from the past. I always say if you wait around long enough everything returns. And I have a feeling that certain parts of that romantic abstract expressionism are creeping back into our so-called cold, hard cool art. You can use Larry Poons, of course, for a beautiful example. It's a beautiful show he had. And I really think they're ten times better than his ellipses.

PAUL CUMMINGS: The tight one, those early tight ones.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. They're beautiful. And these are tortured but so much better. And I think that I've seen about 4 or 5 other people who have just taken what they were doing and bent it a little. And my thing of giving up painting and going into black and white because color became too easy, too beautiful.

PAUL CUMMINGS: You give yourself a new problem.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, it's not a new problem. It's a test of how far can you go. You get into something and everything sells. And it's selling, selling, selling, selling. Have I been trapped? Am I just producing now --

PAUL CUMMINGS: To meet the demand?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Right. To meet the demand. So then all of a sudden you say "Well, I've got to see where I am." And you go into this other period. And I'm looking forward to that actually. I have some things that I want to do. I can't do them right now. But I'm going to do them very shortly. You know, part of the painting thing and all of that.

PAUL CUMMINGS: I have the feeling in the last year that there's something going on with painting.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Painting? What's that?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes, you remember painting?

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Oh. The brush in the hand thing?

PAUL CUMMINGS: Yes. You remember? I don't know where it is. But it's there. People talk about it. Younger painters ask about old things.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Well, you run into everybody. Who are the young people that you see that ... ?

PAUL CUMMINGS: I don't know. I've seen some of the soft sculpture people and the box-makers - Bob Morris and Judd and all this. But it's not that. It's something else; I don't know what it is.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I agree. There's something there. But there'll always be something there.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Some years are better years that others.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. That's the heretic blowing his horn at the orthodox, "Move over." But the sad part about it is the heretic becomes the orthodox. And then somebody else comes along and is the heretic - "You can't do that. It's blasphemy."

PAUL CUMMINGS: Right.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: And that's good.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Well, when it stops it's the end.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Certainly. Look what Pop Art being the American heretic did for all of us, you know. And Pollock opened up everything for us. So there'll be another group and then we'll have romantic feelings about the New York School of Painting again. They're actually doing a very big retrospective in Minneapolis of ... The catalogue isn't called that but they feel that abstract expressionism never had it's proper burial. Pop came on too fast and too sudden and it took over. And so they're going to do the final rites for it.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Put it in a box.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: In a 200-man shot - Jack Taylor and Tracy Atkins at the Minneapolis Art Center.

PAUL CUMMINGS: That's Milwaukee.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Milwaukee Art Center, right. And it ought to be quite a show. And that's going to include every name that you can drag out of your wildest imagination from Felix Pasilis all the way through --

PAUL CUMMINGS: To Pat Passloff.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: I saw Pat Passloff recently actually. I was going to rent the studio next door to Milton Resnick and so I decided - well, he always had eyes for my wife - so I thought I'd go in there and renew old acquaintances. And I liked Milton. He's a poet. He really is. So I went. And Pat answered the door. She didn't recognize me. But Milton did - the kid on the block. And he was sitting there like an old master with all his books and papers and grave; he's mellowed a lot and still painting away, you know, doing these huge things by natural light. You know he built this big natural light wall.

PAUL CUMMINGS: It's too much. Well, that was a big of history today.

STANLEY LANDSMAN: Yes. it really is. It's a nice note to end on actually. He's still interested in natural light. I don't know when one of those paintings will ever be seen in natural light.

PAUL CUMMINGS: Some day.

END OF INTERVIEW

Last updated... *September 24, 2002*