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Oral history interview with Frans Wildenhain, 1978 April 10-1979 July 28

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

Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Frans Wildenhain on 1978 April 10 - 1979 July 28. The interview was conducted at Bushnell's Basin, New York by Robert Brown for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose. This is a rough transcription that may include typographical errors.

Interview

ROBERT BROWN: This is an interview with Frans Wildenhain. This is April 10, 1978, and we're in Bushnell's Basin, New York.

FRANS WILDENHAIN: Bushnell's Basin, Pitchfork.

MR. BROWN: Mr. Wildenhain, you were born in Leipzig, which is now in East Germany, in 1905.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Could you give a description a bit of your family? What did your parents do? What was your childhood like?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Leipzig is -- or was or has been or will be a famous town. Many people have lived there. St. Nicholas Church [Nikolaikirche] church, Richard Wagner was born in Leipzig. And Beckman was born in Leipzig. And Schiller came to Leipzig and Goethe studied in Leipzig, and it was once, Goethe called it "Little Paris" 200 years ago.

But my parents were simple people. My father was a cabinetmaker. And his father, my grandfather, was a carpenter, and his father was a kind of mason. They were always in wood or building business. So naturally, his brother was a cabinetmaker, too. Naturally, the inclination was perhaps he becomes a woodworker, too. Until my mother said, "No, I don't like this idea, because woodworkers have sawdust in their heads."

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: Were you the oldest child?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, I was the only one. I mean, I have a sister, but the only boy. But later, I became a potter. And I told her once, "Now, potters have clay dust in their brain, you know, in their head."

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: There was not much to decide when I was 13-1/2 years old. It was the end of World War I. My father came back from the war, and I think we were not too [inaudible] at this time.

MR. BROWN: Things were pretty grim, weren't they?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Grim.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Did he continue as a cabinetmaker?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes. He started out again and worked until he was 75 or something. But the next thing was, the young one -- "Oh, the boy, he has talent. You know, he could draw and he could -- he made nice pictures."

MR. BROWN: That's you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: That's me.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: As a boy. So, artists wouldn't come into the package, you know. That was out of the thing.

MR. BROWN: Really? What would they have thought of them?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Artists? No artists. You can't make a living as an artist. So as Lois Corrine [phonetic] said, "To become a painter, you have to have money first place. Second place, you have to have money, and third place, you have to have also a little talent." You know?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Now, talent I had, but not the money. So, I did my best to be an artist or to become -- I became a graphic designer or graphic draftsman and a [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: Really? Was this in a printing house?

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was a printing -- it was a kind of an art agency or something, which made big perspective pictures of factories and so forth. It was -- you could learn something. But I had a hell of a time to deal around it after.

MR. BROWN: Really.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Because you learn how to draw a tree, how to draw people, how to draw this. Everything, there was a kind of a logo, or there was a kind of -- a barrel that is round, there is a shadow, and windows, sunshine.

MR. BROWN: There was a formula for doing everything?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. And after four-and-a-half years, as I told you earlier, I made my journeyman. I became a journeyman, and then half-a-year later I was fired because of the inflation.

MR. BROWN: While you were at this art agency, you were an apprentice?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I was an apprentice, yes, working for nothing.

MR. BROWN: Did that mean you helped someone else?

MR. WILDENHAIN: As the first year, you had only to clean up and to get the breakfast, make the coffee, and take a broom. And you could grind up lithograph stones, and they have to be ground up. And you could help here a little and help there a little. But the whole apprentice system is built on this, because the first year the student learns nothing. It's the second and third year he learns. And in the fourth year, the master has the profit because he is now a journeyman, and he pays him a little bit. Now he has, after three years, some profit. Therefore, how is it that there is a lot going on in this country about apprentice systems.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Apprenticeship system -- but that will have a lot of repercussions with the union and with the wealth, with unemployment and, you know, sick and so forth happening, accidents. Ultimately, it's obeying, you know. I could have here, off and on, people ask if they could be an apprentice. Then I ask them what they think about apprenticeship. I get the funniest answers. Sometimes, I wonder.

I don't think that they would do it for a longer time. It should be -- I spoke with Wendell Castle what he thought it has to be at least two or three years.

MR. BROWN: Wendell Castle?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. He said the first year I have no -- I teach only, you know. And I cannot really -- he cannot really work for me. He can do certain things, but the real -- what you have going on as an apprentice, it comes a little later. But mostly, they go -- as I noticed the kids, they go for four weeks someplace, six weeks, summer course, summer school [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: That's not enough, is it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, that is good for orientation so you would know what you would like to do.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But in the moment when you have decided you will do this, and you go into an intensive study of it, not when you have to make a decision if you will just -- like a doctor has to make a decision, yeah, he goes into medical field, or a lawyer does his law, and an architect does his -- you cannot do this "by the way." And you cannot do it with shortcuts, and you cannot do it with a lot of children and supporting a wife and so forth.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It has to happen all before.

MR. BROWN: When you decided to become an apprentice -- or did your father decide for you? Did you know you wanted to be a graphic artist?

MR. WILDENHAIN: My father would have seen that I became a designer in furniture or something. The son has always to become a little more, better, higher [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: In America the farmer's boy, the father went to high school, the son has to go to college.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Did you enjoy your time at the lithography workshop?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. No. Yes and no. I enjoyed doing this, but generally the whole atmosphere was not really creative, you know. In other words, I had gone to the academy or something, which I couldn't afford -- I could go in the evenings, evening school.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But my whole -- as I told you, my whole education is very, very little. But I learned, I went to what you'd call "folk high school," or *Volkshochschule*.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: There I learned a lot about artists, the real Renaissance. I learned Italian and I learned how to draw and how to paint and different --

MR. BROWN: This was before you went into the shop?

MR. WILDENHAIN: What do you mean "shop"?

MR. BROWN: Oh, lithography, the graphics shop.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, the graphics -- draftsman -- this was all to get to know. That was in the same time.

MR. BROWN: Oh, the same time?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. But in this time, you had not so much time. How to get food or how to make a living? It was more important, this -- but it was a good time. It was tough, but it was good.

MR. BROWN: I'll bet it was tough.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: So then you had your one year's journeyman.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And then they fired you because of the inflation. This was about 1924, was it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: Did you know what you wanted to do then? What could you do?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no, no, I couldn't.

MR. BROWN: You had no money, I guess.

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. I had no money. So I worked for -- I belonged to this school, *Volkshochschule*, high school. And I went to -- I helped -- it was a special setup, this whole school. But I was in cooking or painting kitchens or selling books and carriages and so forth.

MR. BROWN: Odd jobs?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Odd jobs. But I was well liked by certain people in the higher echelon of this outfit in this town. And they were always looking for work that Frans could do. And in this time, they said, "Tomorrow is here

a lecture in town. And Mr. [Walter] Gropius speaks about the Bauhaus." But nobody knew what it was, "the Bauhaus" or Mr. Gropius. So I went there. And I was so fascinated of his talk and what he was showing.

MR. BROWN: What was it that fascinated you? Do you remember?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Mostly it was slides, black and white slides, glass slides with trackman [phonetic], they were the long-exposed, so they are getting hot. And he was a very good drawer. He had only two or three speeches. I mean, they were propaganda speeches. And he traveled over whole Germany or the country to make propaganda for the school.

And I was one of those which were caught by this Messiah or new gospel, and I liked those parts and I liked this jazz. I liked everything what they did because it was so different from what was around me.

MR. BROWN: What was around you? Very conservative things?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Well, conservative things. There were no modern things in our household. I mean, there was the essential things.

MR. BROWN: And Gropius showed what sorts of things?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Well, the beginning of the Bauhaus, what they did in the 1921, '22, '23.

MR. BROWN: But it was the pottery and the furniture that particularly appealed to you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes, pottery and furniture.

MR. BROWN: Did he talk about anything else? Did he talk about architecture?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, of course. He spoke about what he called the cathedral of the craft.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And then he came, of course, to the living machine or Rone machine for houses, machine what you live in. But that wasn't what attracted me. It was the shapes or the forms of the pottery which were, for me --

MR. BROWN: So when was this?

MR. WILDENHAIN: 1924.

MR. BROWN: And then what did you do?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I decided -- I was introduced to him by these people. And he suggested -- I told him that I had no money. But he said it wasn't the reason, really, because it would be, oh, somehow available -- but at least, the tuition, you know, not my living. So, that you'd get a scholarship. Then I was good. So, he said I should some drawings or paintings send, a package.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And I sent it. I was accepted. I thought it was a fine idea, and so I went there. But 20 years later or 30 years later when all those people became famous, so-called, I was wondering. I thought, I said, "Klee has really looked at this stuff from me when I was 19 years old or 17." And they have looked at it, you know?

MR. BROWN: You mean because 20 years later they were --

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no, when I was applying for it.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Someone has to look at it. The faculty looked at it.

MR. BROWN: And you realized that these things --

MR. WILDENHAIN: Then I realized, 20–30 years later, all these people have looked at this stuff. It's one of those small things.

MR. BROWN: So you went to -- this was still in Weimar at that time?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, it was in Weimar. I had been to Weimar and started out to live there, which was --

MR. BROWN: What was it like when you got there?

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was -- no, it was interesting. For me it was a completely new world. I didn't know how to fit in. Since I had no money, I had -- like many other ones -- to help in the kitchen. And there was a little farm, a garden, where they had vegetables. I had to work there. And then, by the grace of God, I could live in a house. The house -- the house on the horn it was called -- it was a simple house.

MR. BROWN: The house on the horn?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. It was a simple house. It was just a cube with a big square in the middle. And then arranged around this kitchen, the ladies room, sleep room, children room, and so forth, guest room. And this house was the most modern house in the world when built. And I lived there only when visitors came. They came not very often. I had to show the house. So I had a place to live.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And then I decided after I had -- I had now to go through the [inaudible], or what you call, four-course.

MR. BROWN: Four course?

MR. WILDENHAIN: What is called here --

MR. BROWN: The fundamental course?

MR. WILDENHAIN: The fundamental course where you learn about drawing and design. So there were classes by Kandinsky, analytic drawings, still lifes, which he put up. Interesting, very interesting.

MR. BROWN: Was he a good teacher?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Now, we will to later talk.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: The next was Klee, which was a man which was teaching color theory. And he taught life drawing. And life drawing was -- there was a model sitting there, and I can tell you a lot of amusing stories, but they don't belong there. And then -- or you go out in the garden and you take a piece of grass with the roots and put it on the table, and then we were drawing this with the roots and so forth. And it was drawing, life drawing, and color theory, clay, and Kandinsky analytic drawing.

Then it was Joseph Albers. He was the man for the -- what you will say -- for the craft shop. There was an old horse stable, and in one corner was a woodworker's bench, and in the other corner was a heap of clay and a potter's wheel, and in the other corner was a little loom and then a little bench. And you could try out -- I mean, in a very primitive scale, everything. And teaching there, someone was always, he knew a little about how to kick the wheel. But there was no really someone there. Sometimes was someone there. But this was the teaching class of Joseph Albers. I have spoken with him several times.

But the other man which was then important was Moholy [László Moholy-Nagy]. And Moholy was the replacement of [Johannes] Itten. Itten, they had fired or he was gone, of course, and reason which I am not -- well, I don't know. I know better -- no.

MR. BROWN: You can't say?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. Sure, but it's not -- doesn't belong in this story because then I go in psychology and to love affairs and so forth.

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: But this man Moholy, he came from Hungary. And he spoke just a bit heavy accent, only Hungarian accent. And he had sometimes trouble to find works, which I have, too. But he was very youngish and sympathetic in some way. But if I understood what he was talking, I don't know. Intellectual-wise, I couldn't because I tried to [inaudible] , and you can only read this with a lexicon next to you because there are so many words which I didn't know.

MR. BROWN: What course was he giving?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Kind of design when you will -- but this was, we had to pick up a piece of glass and to cut it in a square shape, and then a piece of wood. And we sanded this wood and gave it color or shine. But it should be perfect. And then a piece of metal, and then a combination of a kind of sculpture, which was free -- which was hanging up on a string, which you shouldn't see; it was free-floating. It was a kind of a three-dimensional sculpture and constructivistic, supra [inaudible], or whatever the name was of this period. They had names.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And directions. And there were a lot of things going on, especially in Europe, in central Europe, building and [inaudible]. In any town, in Munich or in Paris.

MR. BROWN: What was the effect of your doing these exercises, for him?

MR. WILDENHAIN: The effect for him was, he looked over the shoulder and asked me, "Wildenhain, what have you thought about it?" And I was -- I couldn't say anything except I said -- shrugged my shoulder, I said, "I think nothing."

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: So, he walked further and hasn't talked to me for the next two weeks.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: You were expected to be able to explain just what you were doing?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. Yeah. I wasn't, really. I could tell you I put this and this together. But he would like that I would have had a kind of a philosophic statement of art, that I had really listened to his words.

And there were also kind of opposition, mostly as it were, some girls there, quite a lot of girls at the Bauhaus, which were in opposition to this kind of intellectual approach of everything.

MR. BROWN: The girls were?

MR. WILDENHAIN: The girls and the artists were too. It depends. Klee was quite different in his criticism of us. He looked over the shoulder, too, and nodded his head, said a word and walked on. We have wrong, the picture of teaching here or in Europe. Here, when I was teaching, you have to tell everything. It's a kind of spoon-feeding. You have to be also in a relationship with the teacher, which is a man which is not a stranger to you. I mean, nobody would say to Klee, "Paul" or to Feininger "Lyonel." It was "Professor Klee" or "Herr Klee" or Herr Feininger.

MR. BROWN: I see.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I was "Herr Wildenhain," too. But it was this kind of -- it wasn't an arrogance, and it was also not reservation. It was just, you do things in this and this way. You know, I have a very good friend, and for 20 years we called each other what you call in German "Sie" or in French "vous" until we changed and in wartime, in the Second World War, we went to "Du."

MR. BROWN: To the more intimate, yes, the informal.

MR. WILDENHAIN: The informal.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Which has now, more probably, I have learned in Germany, taken over as it was. But this is a question that -- also, the lessons were very restricted. I mean, Klee came in, and he came in for -- I had a little notebook, and he walked on the blackboard up and down, writing from the notebook, matched his diagrams and notes on the blackboard. And when the 45 minutes were over, that was it. He walked out.

MR. BROWN: You couldn't see him?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes, he was walking there. But that is another story. Of course, you could when you made an appointment or something.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But this is the academic life that is a professor -- the class opens with students to this, I will say, club or this [inaudible] or this cache or whatever the -- anyway, after 45 minutes, the lesson is over and he

disappears. Of course, there are seminars and workshops where you work intimately. But so far, we were not -- I have smoked with Kandinsky, cigarettes, together in his studio and so forth, and we have talked. But I could do -- that was done in 1925 when the Bauhaus [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And with Gropius, or with Klee, you could talk. Also, you could bring your artwork on certain days to his house, this group of people, discussing. But, oh, he gave lectures in the evening, his latest work in slides or something, which was very interesting. I learned there. This is a kind of casual -- casualness, and on the other hand, very academic. You learned what's out and a few out there, you know, and not who counts. When I came here first to Rochester, I had a little book with names of the students were in. I had to hook off [phonetic] when they came and when they left.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: This we didn't have.

MR. BROWN: No.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was academic. You -- you come there, and when you will learn we will see it at the end of the semester.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: That's the old school.

MR. BROWN: The teacher didn't have to bother with those things.

MR. WILDENHAIN: No.

MR. BROWN: Were Klee's lectures -- did they have some effect on you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes. I mean, all his lectures were very well prepared. And he holds them down, and he has made his sketchbooks and his books where he has explained what he was thinking.

MR. BROWN: But they affected you at the time?

MR. WILDENHAIN: In this time, for me [inaudible] it was like reading *Vedas* or going into Buddhism.

MR. BROWN: Ah.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I mean, it was for me a completely new world. I had to learn what those people were trying to do, or what it meant. I don't -- I'm not so clear, because I am a very late-developed person. I mean, I am not yet developed. This is what I have. But then I was very innocent and very -- well, I will not say "ignorant." That's not the word. But I would like to know, but I haven't had that much time to --

MR. BROWN: Yes. Pretty hard. Would you discuss these things much with your fellow students?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes. We discussed it. But since I am interested in the visual arts, the eyes, you learn with your eyes. You haven't to explain -- you haven't to explain which works.

MR. BROWN: Yes, right, right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: You can be even deaf.

MR. BROWN: Were most of the other students like you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. We were all different.

MR. BROWN: There were some who were very intellectualizing?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, intellectual. Some were just like me. Some were rich, some were poor, some were women, some were men.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I mean, all the scholars -- one was, she wasn't probably [inaudible]. She was a countess, you know? She wasn't in poverty. But there was also a plumber, you know? The plumber made very good

drawings. Klee liked the drawings of his plumber better than my drawings, really. I had the education of four years. It was measured. But that was just my downfall, because I knew how to draw. It was so facile and so superficial. It was there.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And it took me at least 20 years to de-learn, because when you learn something in your youth, it is very difficult to --

MR. BROWN: Whereas this plumber was struggling, for the first time.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, he was struggling for the first time. He came with his box of tools from Berlin. And he went there, and he made his living in the afternoons or the evenings to do the plumbing for people.

MR. BROWN: Wasn't this quite a change for most European schools, to have people from such a range of backgrounds?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, sure.

MR. BROWN: Yes. That must have been different.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was not a university.

MR. BROWN: No.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Where you have to have probably 200 degrees and so on. Everyone -- but it was also the idea. You know, they have struggled, a lot if -- they called themselves professors or masters. Then they decided that "master," not "professor," to be teachers, a faculty.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: In Bauhaus, they were masters, not professors. Because professor was a title which, like "doctor."

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: We were a little ahead in this time. He has his cork lid [phonetic] on. Now, everyone makes here he is "doctor," you know. This is very funny, you know, how this is a kind of back-lashing and repeating. It runs always in -- not in cycles, in circles. You know, one after the other.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: So.

MR. BROWN: Some of the other teachers you had, you had one you mentioned, Gerhard Marcks.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Who later became [inaudible].

MR. WILDENHAIN: When I then had decided to go into the pottery workshop, I had to go to Dornburg [Germany].

MR. BROWN: Dornburg?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Dornburg.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was outside 20 kilometers.

MR. BROWN: From Weimar?

MR. WILDENHAIN: From Weimer, and near Jena. And there was this settlement of -- oh, one of many people, eight or ten people in total. There were Marcks, that is what you call the fore master. And then was Max Krehan. He was the crafts master.

MR. BROWN: Max Krehan?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Max Krehan. He was -- his father, his grandfather, great-grandfather, they were all potters since 1700. He was a very aware fellow and Gropius liked his men. But he said, "You can have me as a crafts master, but I don't come to Weimer. You have to come to me. I live in Dornburg." So they had to make it as a school in Dornburg for the pottery. And it was -- since it was a state school, it was possible to do something with an old castle. Take the horse stables out and use that.

So this were the two people which had a great influence on my life.

MR. BROWN: And you went there when? In 1925?

MR. WILDENHAIN: 1925, end of 1924, '25. I was in total at the Bauhaus not long. It was a year. But unfortunately, or fortunately, other people have been much longer there. I have a friend, and he had the Bauhaus. has not much -- did much to him, you know? And for me, I mean, you can go to France for a weekend, or you can go for four weeks. Or you go to Mexico for four weeks, you see the archaeological museum in Mexico City. But when I have been there, I can go home. I am saturated with so much things. I go not for fun. And so it is with schools, too.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I tell the students, which have always still to go to college, they might never -- of course, I lived in a time which was much more turbulent, when you were fired and kicked out and you had to look for a new position.

MR. BROWN: Yes. So you got a lot out of it then?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: So how long were you at Dornburg with Marcks and Krehan?

MR. WILDENHAIN: About a year.

MR. BROWN: What was Krehan's approach?

MR. WILDENHAIN: He was a country potter.

MR. BROWN: To you students, what was it like?

MR. WILDENHAIN: We had to make his forms, in the beginning, you know?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: In the beginning, we made his forms of the original -- as the old pottery forms of Syrian [phonetic], which is a special type of pottery, like Hashian [phonetic] pottery or pottery Balkan or somewhere.

MR. BROWN: This was the traditional --

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was the traditional form of pottery in this country. But it is too long to go there into it because it is a whole -- you can talk about developing the pottery and art in Germany or in Europe.

MR. BROWN: Now, you were used to this system because in the graphics workshop you would have had the same thing?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I had not no troubles.

MR. BROWN: No. You fit right into that.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I fit right into the system. Perhaps -- now I'm not too easy. But -- so I had not yet made a degree, and the Bauhaus blew up and I had to go to Dessau. Asking Gropius, "What about the pottery in Dessau?" He said, "No, we can't have it now; perhaps later." I said, "You know" -- but I know it's the philosophy of the Bauhaus already, and morally and other things. Pottery is the last thing what they should have.

MR. BROWN: Yes? Why is that?

MR. WILDENHAIN: What?

MR. BROWN: Why is pottery the last thing they should have?

MR. WILDENHAIN: You cannot -- sure, when you will create design for pottery or for chinaware, that's one

thing. But this is a thing which -- then you have to make the models and you have to have a factory which promotes your head design or something. But in the moment when you make pottery, that goes in a quite different direction.

MR. BROWN: From the Bauhaus?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It never did fit really.

MR. BROWN: Is that because you're working with natural materials?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. Clay is something you cannot fit in. You can fit works in. You can fit plastic, Bakelite or whatever -- there are a lot of new materials at this time.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Of course, you can make pots from aluminum or from enamel or from copper or from stainless steel or from -- why make it from clay now? This is -- pottery nowadays that it is so accepted by the people, which was for 20 years not the case. But now it is. And people like it because they like just the personal touch or approach of this kind of work, and not made by machine.

MR. BROWN: Of course, the Bauhaus stood for --

MR. WILDENHAIN: For machine.

MR. BROWN: Machine.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: How did Marcks fit into this workshop?

MR. WILDENHAIN: He did and he didn't. He did fit in our workshop good, but really it didn't fit in the Bauhaus.

MR. BROWN: No, no. What did he do at Dornburg?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, he made the sculptures, wood sculptures and woodcuts. He is a great artist.

MR. BROWN: Did you work with him?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. With him? I don't know in which -- he was my teacher. I had to sometimes perhaps in plaster, putting on plaster or things. But [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: But you got to be friendly with him?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes. We are friends still.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I write him every first week.

MR. BROWN: Was he more approachable than some of the other teachers?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes, the other teachers were approachable, too.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But I had no inclination.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: So, I have felt an inclination or when you -- well, I had the kind of affinity to his -- so as he was, asking Gropius about going to Dessau if there was pottery, he said, "Not yet; perhaps later." But I wasn't trusting of his story. So he said, "Well, you know, going to meantime in mural painting" or --

MR. BROWN: Mural painting?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, it was a class, too.

MR. BROWN: Did you show some interest in that?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I was painting and so forth. He could also have said weaving or metalwork or woodworking.

MR. BROWN: [Laughter] Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I don't know. He said "mural painting," which I thought was very far-sighted that I make murals.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: So, I couldn't go there. But in the meantime, Marcks got called to go to Halle [Halle-Saale, Germany] to this school for applied art Kunste Weberschule, Burg Giebichenstein [phonetic]. And it was a state school and city-supported, city and state supported.

MR. BROWN: What was it called, you said?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Kunste Weberschuler Halle , Burg Giebichenstein. Burg Giebichenstein means the Castle of Ebichenstein. There was it located.

MR. BROWN: I see.

MR. WILDENHAIN: In this environment, we prospered very well with our ideas. The Bauhaus was not far away. It was in Dessau and weekends we went over for dancing and for parties, you know. But we were separated already. Somehow, these people which felt that this direction -- you know, the whole direction of the Bauhaus is geared to becoming architect, really. It is a school for architects. And this had nothing to do with the class. I think Gropius had never really realized -- I learned only months ago when I read an article when he had been in Japan and he saw there this beautiful craftsmanship of these house builders, you know, built without nails and screws and so forth, and weaving and pottery, that it dawned to him that it was, I think, worthwhile to do.

We had discovered it already 20 years ago.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But I couldn't make a handle -- I mean, a cup on the wheel is round, you know? You cannot make a square cup. Of course, you can in Bakelite or in plastic. You stamp it or cast it, or even in ceramic you can make a square. You can do anything in clay. But it was just not what we are looking for.

MR. BROWN: Yes. You didn't realize the potential of the crafts.

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, not really. I mean, men like Boyer [phonetic], I think he was in the woodshop. He was a man before us doing woodworking. You know, he made chairs and so forth. And I had a feeling when I saw the Whitney Museum that as a craftsman, he has -- you see it on the doors, of the banisters when you go up in the museum, in certain corners and so forth. That it is not just a shell, concrete shell and now the interior decorator walks in, you know. I mean, it's the greatest contrast, of course, is this idea of architecture [inaudible] where everything is [inaudible] from the WC to the dinnerware or curtains, everything. So you live in a house [inaudible] and not in your own.

MR. BROWN: At Halle, who did you work with there?

MR. WILDENHAIN: There was a workshop, a ceramic workshop, where Marcks, he was the fore master. And Marguerite Friedlaender, which later became my wife, was the teacher for pottery. But I was very advanced in pottery. There I made very soon my journeyman's piece, and then I went for a year Wages of Workman's [phonetic] School in Essen, and then I came back to the school to Halle, 1930, and we got married.

MR. BROWN: Did you marry Marguerite?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. In 1933 we had to leave to Holland. But it is a long, sad story, which is -- there are people in America which have a typewriter and a secretary and they can write books about it. I mean, you can write a book about the war years. You can write a book after the war, what I personally experienced in the war, without touching any political angle. Or you can write a political book about it. Or you can write about the sins of our fathers, or you can write about the virtues of our grandmothers.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I mean, it is such a turmoil of -- like a big cooking pot. And sometimes pieces of meat come up, and sometimes it is only a potato.

MR. BROWN: But you said to me before that you weren't politically and that sort of thing -- that wasn't your --

MR. WILDENHAIN: I was apolitical.

MR. BROWN: You were apolitical?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. But that doesn't mean the background of my father, he was a Social Democrat. And he was a Freidenker.

MR. BROWN: A free thinker, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Which I call "non-thinker," but it was okay. I myself, I found the church for some reason. I like to go to the church. But it is also a long story, how -- I will not say that my father was unreligious, but he didn't like the church.

MR. BROWN: But you found you liked the church?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no, no, I didn't like the church as an institution, but I liked the church as a building of -- with the atmosphere which is -- especially when it is a Catholic church, which is more appealing to our sensual expectations of somehow that you see epiphany, of something happening there. But at this time of this -- I will not say that it is a -- that they are pagans, but they were not very religious.

MR. BROWN: What kind of work were you doing at Halle? Were you developing your own style?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, we developed our own style, and I have photographs of it.

MR. BROWN: Could you describe it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Mostly functional pottery, what I call functional pottery, pottery which you can use for the daily use, and done very well, very well done. I mean, [inaudible]. I mean, a cup could almost compare with a porcelain cup in thinness and delicacy.

MR. BROWN: What material were you using?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Clay.

MR. BROWN: It was not quite porcelain, no.

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no. No, no.

MR. BROWN: What about glazes?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Glazes, yes. We had our own glazes, and we had all the bought glazes. I'm not against buying glazes. In fact, when they make good glazes and when you know a little about glazes, you can always change this glaze yourself.

MR. BROWN: Were these brightly colored?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. Black and white and brown and greens -- earthen color.

MR. BROWN: Earthen colors.

[OFF THE RECORD]

MR. BROWN: This is a second interview with Frans Wildenhain in Pittsburgh, Bushnell's Basin in New York.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: This is July 28, 1979. We had our first meeting, begun to talk about your setting up your own workshop in Putten, in Holland, in 1933. And you were describing some of the work you were doing at that time. As I recall, you were doing production work, among other things. You had outlets or the like?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes. When we had left Germany for Hitler's sake, whatever it is. My wife, she left earlier. And she went to Switzerland, where she had her parents. And she was looking the situation over, or if there was a possibility that we could establish ourselves in Switzerland. But Switzerland was not very inviting to

things like this. Of course, it's a small country, and it's overrun with a lot of immigrants from east and west and north and south, and everyone goes to Switzerland. So it's a kind of self-defense. So we couldn't establish ourselves there. We would become a competition to some existing enterprise or something.

MR. BROWN: In Switzerland?

MR. WILDENHAIN: In Switzerland. Although we considered ourselves as obvious. So -- but since we were kind of -- we had to produce in order to live. We couldn't have just sit in the studio, paint a picture, and go to the art dealer and --

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. You were doing a lot of painting at that time?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I did a lot of painting, yes, and drawing. So she went to Holland. She was born in France. But France seemed to be to her not -- for some reason, she preferred Holland. And Holland was the greatest country at this time, not by size of geographic and inhabitants, but in the gesture to welcome any stranger which had to leave the eastern border country and what is Germany. And in the railway station in Amsterdam were big signs, "Welcome, Stranger," "Welcome, Stranger." And they let everyone in. And that is a small country, and it is overpopulated. But it's the spirit of the people, and the spirit of the people, the Dutch people, is that.

I couldn't go to America; no, that was not possible. You have a quota, and you have to have money, you have to have a sponsor, or you have to have family or something. So, Holland was the given thing.

MR. BROWN: So you left Germany after she did?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. It was only weeks or a month. It was in 1933. She left already before Hitler became -- when he became Chancellor, she left. I couldn't leave as quickly as she. She could just take the thing and moved away. Because we were both employed by the state as teachers in the school, which was called School of Applied Fine Arts [phonetic], Halle.

MR. BROWN: In Halle?

MR. WILDENHAIN: In Halle, Kursistan [phonetic]. And she left, but that is also her temperament. When she feels, she left, period.

MR. BROWN: Whereas you stayed on?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I stayed on to -- you know, someone had to take care of the things that we had. And since I wasn't Jewish, I wasn't too exposed to avenge or embarrassments and so forth and so forth. So I said, "Okay. I'll take care of the things here, and I'll save so much as we can." At this time, we could take our stuff with us, you know.

MR. BROWN: So you packed together all the work you had done and your equipment?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I packed everything together. Not my work what we have done -- some of the work.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Because in school, we were not interested in the moment in our work. We were only interested in kind of family heirlooms, things which are -- other things I had to sell to get the money for it to do things. So it was a complicated thing.

MR. BROWN: You went and met her then in Amsterdam?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, in Holland. And we found in Putten a place with some real estate agency, which there is a place which you could rent. And we went there, and we stayed there.

MR. BROWN: What is Putten?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Putten is a village.

MR. BROWN: Near Amsterdam or near a city?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, just between Amersfoort and Zwolle. It was near the Zuider Zee. And it was flat Holland landscape, beautiful with cows and meadows and the water and the sky. And we lived there for -- we tried to establish ourselves as potters in Holland. And we did fairly well, because we were both very hardworking. And we had a new concept in pottery, coming from the Bauhaus, which was in Holland. And artists were known, but not in the field of ceramics, which was a very romantic, patently influenced by French

ceramics [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: The Dutch pottery was?

MR. WILDENHAIN: The Dutch pottery was. I mean, they had pottery on their own. But the spring or the source where they got --

MR. BROWN: So you brought -- how would you characterize what you and your wife brought, then?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Well, we brought things. This I could -- I have collection of critics and newspaper clippings and pictures.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes, yes. You have already described a bit, but the style that you brought was different?

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was different. It was functional.

MR. BROWN: Functional.

MR. WILDENHAIN: A functional product. What they did was art pottery. They made vases and used the vases, not so much as a form, as an object which is a sculpture, a little sculpture in itself, but much more as a background to apply their beautiful glazes on it. So, I mean, there were pots. But it was, in our opinion, not impersonal, but not very powerful or something.

MR. BROWN: Simply decorative, perhaps?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. So, what we brought, we made things for the daily use like plates and cups and saucers and coffeepots. I have a coffeepot here, and a teapot. And one of these things is in the catalog, which you have there, a teapot from this period.

[Off the record]

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, or this kind.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: This is a big jug, a wine jug.

MR. BROWN: A wine jug shape, isn't it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, a wine jug shape. This was a coffee set for [inaudible] two people, which was for good coffee. [inaudible] coffee is not so bad.

MR. BROWN: Was this still fairly closely related to forms that were being done at the Bauhaus?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes and no. This is also such a teapot.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I mean, in contrast to this. This is a vase. But I could also close it completely, and it would be a sculptural form, which is [inaudible] and glaze. But it is a different thing than this. That is a thing that we will use, and this I have used.

MR. BROWN: Yes. It's much smoother and more finished.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Well, it cannot have this accidental glaze effect, which would be a dilemma by cleaning the teapot or the coffeepot. When you make things like this, you have to have a surface which is -- and also a kind of sturdiness which, nowadays I would say it can go into the dishwasher. These things are not made to put into a dishwasher. So this kind of pottery that was new. And also, we made vases. And very soon, I made other pieces which I decorated with Dutch scenes on it, flowers.

Now, when the people always say, "Your pottery influenced by the Bauhaus," this is not so easily to answer, this question, because it depends what you understand of the Bauhaus. There is a lot, I will not say "confusion," but a lot of different interpretations. But the main interpretation was, function is before form, or function is the principal thing. Form follows function, primarily. A car is a thing. A T-model is probably not the greatest, although I like the shape of the T-model. But today we have other. But the car, the function of the car is the same. But only the form has changed, of the functional thing.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Perhaps they are now more functional as the T-model. But it is other --

MR. BROWN: What you're saying is, the model T was a functional form.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was just built on things, four wheels, to sit on.

MR. BROWN: And you're saying that that is the essence of the Bauhaus?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. I wouldn't say that it is the essence.

MR. BROWN: That's the popular conception?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No -- yes. Yes or no, yes. It is a popular conception; that's true. But this is not always applicable to everything. For instance, when you work in wood or in metal, you have more possibilities, this principle, to develop this principle. You can make chairs. You make them first in wood with four legs or three legs or two-and-a-half legs or one leg, I don't know. You can replace it by laminated wood. And you can make the forms and the function of the things more of the kind what's the idea of function is that you sit comfortably in a chair. But you could also change your other material, like steel, stainless steel or tubes, seamless tubes like the [inaudible] chair.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I have a chair here in the workshop. This is the principle of the Bauhaus. So metal would be a more convenient material. Also, they made mostly what they did in metal were lamps, you know, where the part was chrome nickel, and then there was a mid-glass dome, the shape on it.

Now, this you could develop. But in pottery, what is very, very different that is material which is not so easily replaced or combined with other things. You can, of course, like the Japanese, put a rattan or a bamboo handle on the teapot. But that is almost the only combination which I know, which is a lucky combination of these two materials. But that is not really a Bauhaus combination.

Of course, I know that the Japanese teapot they are more functional as a teapot with a handle on the side because you have much better control for pouring, which is, of course -- depending again on your style of living, because the Japanese sitting on the ground, so she has other balance of the body to pour, as when you sit at the table and you have the tea -- Mrs. Smith: "Would you like to have another cup of tea?"

MR. BROWN: The climates are very different.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. The teapot -- let's say the function of the teapot was that he has to contain the leaves and the hot water. You should assist the shock, and he should also pour. Now, to pour is making in clay is a little difficult. It's more difficult as to make it in metal. Metal, you can make a sharp edge on the spout where the fluid which is coming out cuts off.

MR. BROWN: Cuts the surface tension, right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Cuts the water, you know?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: In clay on glaze, there is an adhesion, and it can run down the spout and drip.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: That we call unfunctional. That's not very functional, you know.

Now, here is the problem. And this is probably only a problem of aesthetics. But do you like a functional teapot? I mean, I put it in extreme words: Do you like a functional teapot, but which is by form ugly? Or do you like a beautiful teapot by form, but which doesn't pour, or pours lousy? Now, this is the divide of principles of the Bauhaus in some way. Here you can go on and on. And this is -- just the best thing was when I went to, when the Bauhaus blew up, which I told -- I asked Gropius about the pottery in Dessau, in the new Bauhaus; he said, "We will not have that pottery." "Aha," I thought. "That's it." He has recognized that pottery as such -- ceramic, you could do ceramic, anything from the nose cone of a missile to the toilets in the bathroom, or from a teacup to a big vase or something. So, you have --

MR. BROWN: He said no why?

MR. WILDENHAIN: He said no. You know, there are the voices -- there are inner voices and all the voices which

are whispering in your ear, what is the devil, which says probably that this is a very -- oh, what do I call it? A very -- not dangerous thing, but probably it was stupid to start out at the Bauhaus with the pottery. But it was probably more the initiative of Marcks, which was a good friend of Gropius. But in this time, people were not so sharp in their thinking in this way.

MR. BROWN: And so they just said, "Let's not have it"?

MR. WILDENHAIN: "Let's not have it." And he suggested to me, why I not -- "We will have it," he said. Which I didn't believe. You know, you can talk to different persons and you get the impression, in principle he is not for it. Or perhaps in the future, until we have settled the problem.

So, and I was -- you know, there you have also to know that pottery is something, you work in clay, you can work in ceramics. You make plaster models, which you rather can cast in porcelain or in clay. And you can also cast the same model in plastic. And where is it going? I wasn't interested to invent a new teacup or coffee cup. There is not much to invent. The handle was always laughing [phonetic] beyond the right side of the cup. The right-handed people are on the right side, and the left-handed people are on the left side.

MR. BROWN: Unless you'd gone into non-ceramic material?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. You can -- or you go in mass production. But then you have to design the things -- let's say the Navy makes Invicta cups, mugs, Navy mugs. When you take -- threw a mug into your hand you could kill a whole company of soldiers. The things are heavy and thick, you know? But then you have Lennox porcelain, which is a very refined material. And this is the rudiment of possibilities of porcelain or clay or ceramics or whatever you call it to produce something which is refined and spiritual, almost.

But I think that was not a real idea of the Bauhaus. We were a little -- what do you call it? At the Bauhaus, the whole pottery --

MR. BROWN: But it wasn't there. It was in another place anyway, from what you've told us.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And so they were in class sitting there in the middle of somewhere, nowhere. And they made their own religion or their own philosophy. And that was not always -- I mean, Moholy could never understand pottery. But because he came as a student to visit us, and he asked why we not make square cups? Or has the handle always to be going to the whole thing around? You can only make a half-a-handle, a hanging handle? This is all possible. I see the ideas, that there was a possibility. Perhaps we were too romantic, we were too heroic. We were artists.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: We were not this kind of engineering technicians, craftsmen, designers, which to design a chair. It's only that it meets on the road art that those people were artists. And not a man able to make a chair from the same material and the same principle and it would look ugly.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I mean, it's the lines. This is a very delicate problem.

MR. BROWN: It's quite true, isn't it? It's the individual artist's designs which are the perhaps the most successful, or at least the best known, Bauhaus products, rather than the engineered ones, which they hoped they would develop at that school.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. Yes.

MR. BROWN: They hoped that they would develop a lot of engineered design, right?

MR. WILDENHAIN: They came out of the [inaudible] to solutions like the Bauhaus [inaudible].

[End 1 of 2 reel Side A]

MR. BROWN: You were talking about your work. There were some major changes in your work.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: You were able to work even though you were so busy teaching.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. Since I always painted and drew, I had the feeling that I was a frustrated painter and probably was only a kind of -- but the situation was, I was a potter. And how could I apply my painting and

drawing talents towards -- as a medium, just making shapes and hollow forms, or pots? So I started out to make little drawings on clay tiles and painted things or cast, carved or incised or made scruffy doughs . And this was also new that you could draw in clay. For instance, this picture here is a red clay slab, red clay like this.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And then I incised the drawing and filled it up with white clay and ruptures. The thing is about so long.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Several feet long.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Two-and-a-half feet.

MR. BROWN: This was something you developed on your own?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, I wasn't thinking about -- there is nothing new under the sun, you know. It was done. The Chinese did it, the Greeks did it.

MR. BROWN: But I mean at this time, in the 1950s.

MR. WILDENHAIN: At this time it was new. Although people worked with glazes, it was colors, you know. Like I painted with glazes. I have in our living room a big plate now, which came just two days ago out of the kiln. It is a painting in itself, and I consider those things as paintings, and I price them also as paintings.

MR. BROWN: And this was a new concept at the time?

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was my concept. How news it was, it was my concept.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. WILDENHAIN: So I was well known in the city, through the Finger Lakes Show, where you send every year your work.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Or once [inaudible] . And I have sold them. Very good. And when also through my connection of knowing Curt Valentin, the art dealer in New York, I asked him where I could get rid of my stuff what I am doing. He said, "Well, you're not more than three flights down in the same building at 57th Street there, is the Bertha Schaefer Gallery."

MR. BROWN: Bertha Schaefer, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: "And you talk to her." And I talked to her, and she directly took it. So she was for many years my woman, which had my work.

MR. BROWN: Did your work sell quite well through her?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. When it [inaudible] okay. When she folded up this gallery, more or less, she had to -- she was self-interior decorating, [inaudible]. For some reason, the rest of it, I think, landed by Macy's or something department there.

MR. BROWN: In the 1950s, were you mainly sending her these slabs, incised?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. I brought it down 1950s, 1960s.

MR. BROWN: What other sorts of things were you doing in the 1950s.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Many things, but I started off to make art sculpture, wheel-formed shapes and make body and chest and a head and two arms, and holding a flute in the hand, and sculptures from two-and-a-half feet, three feet high. And one was in the first show of the Crafts Museum. And I showed all the things. For some reason, in this time there was no problem, really. And it was -- so since I was known in this town for this work, I had a friend, Barbara Schilling, which was connected with Strasenburgh Laboratory Company [Rochester, NY]. And she said to me, "Frans, I would like to ask you to meet Strasenburgh." Bob -- Bob Strasenburgh. "They built a new building, and there's a big lobby, and the designer, the interior designer has designed a mural there. And he didn't like it. And he would like to have your opinion, what you were thinking about it."

So I went to this building, and there was this big curved wall, 100 feet long, 12 feet high. And I saw the design, and I said, "No. This design is not very imaginative." It was with tiles, which you can buy, by ceramic design.

They are ready-made tiles, ready-made design and glazes. And you could take those and make variations of this, any kind of a Mondrian style or in a pointillistic, over the whole wall, like a swimming pool on an ocean steamer or something.

MR. BROWN: Oh, yes. But very unimaginative?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. I cannot say this because the interior decorator is still living.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. But then Strasenburgh then called you in and talked to you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. In the end, he asked me what I would suggest, because they were trying to pick my brain about it, which I felt from the beginning. And there was a long silence, nothing. And I thought -- see, I have never done a thing like this before. I made only things the size of two, three, four feet. But, "I will think about it, and I'll make a sketch and perhaps a detail of it. When you don't like it, you pay me $100. And when you like it and I make it, we can forget it." So, he liked it. And I started out to work on this big mural.

MR. BROWN: Now, what did you sketch? How did you approach the problem of a big mural?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Now, in this time, I was -- when you will say I was semi-abstract, it was a formal setting in company. He said, "Only one thing I wouldn't like to see on these walls is a pill."

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: Which, that I understood. So I thought, "What can I do?" So I tried to make a symbolic explanation or a symbolic picture in a symbolic way of pharmacy." So I put in the middle a sun, which is the all-healing power, which we have to accept without we wouldn't live, and so forth. There's a big sun, and this big sun is six feet wide and so forth, and in the middle is a black spot because when I look into sun I see always into sun a black spot. Then I made portable Bunsen out bursting around the sun, as it were. On the left side was a big figure seven feet high that was the alchemist, the man, the forerunner of the medicine or -- it was a kind of an abstract shaman or witchdoctor which was standing on his right foot and holding in his hand a mirror to exorcise the evil spirits. And in the right hand, he held already the pill. It was the biggest ball, only to give you a picture of the size, it was a little football. And the head was Eye of Osiris or something.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And on the right side, there was modern man or contemporary man. And this I symbolized by standing a man on a ball, balancing, holding himself in equilibrium, in balance, holding a scale in his hand, and weighing a star. On the one side is a weight, and on the other side is a star. And I had just read in a magazine or somewhere that we are now so far that we know the weight of the stars, I think. Someone must weigh it. I depicted it. The head was a face with the eyes looking up.

MR. BROWN: And you picked that, what? To show how man was able to harness so much, or at least was striving after so much?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. The left side of the shaman were the natural resources of plants, seeds, flower, saps of trees, nuts, mushrooms, and so forth. And on the right side there was the laboratory. There was a Bunsen burner. And there came steam out, and it went to retorters [sic] and calculators, and it came out -- a whole story. In a very little folksy way, I can almost say it was, not a form of pop art, but I call it always my pop art period. But it was before pop art was.

MR. BROWN: It was 1956.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, something.

MR. BROWN: Was there any difficulty doing things on such a scale?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: You made a sketch, and then you had to make it much larger?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. And that was a difficulty. I had only my workshop. I could only make pieces always. I have never seen this whole thing together until it was put on the wall.

MR. BROWN: Gosh. You couldn't predict the effect then, could you? It must have been very difficult.

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no. And as I say, I was high art. the artist is in it. Some empty spots are -- but then I got also a little lazy. I got tired of this work, because I did it all with my own hands. Students helped me, well, in the

housework of making the clay and so forth. But the actual work, I did. And it was my stupidity which was standing in the way of my success, because on the one hand, it was my personal work which I liked to do. And on the other hand, I know that modern -- that people, contemporaries of mine would do this with a workshop of four or five people, which was the division of labor. You do this here, you do that, the overall design, and I put my hands there and there, like the Renaissance.

MR. BROWN: Yes. But you wouldn't do that?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, I didn't do this because I was poor, too. I couldn't afford it. And I was happy here to build this house and this studio. But I couldn't have labor, which I could pay by monthly wages. It took me 12 months to do it.

MR. BROWN: Could you have gotten Strasenburgh to pay for them, your helpers?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No.

MR. BROWN: You really didn't want to, perhaps?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. I didn't know that I could ask those questions. See, this is the whole thing. I made also things always too cheap. I thought I was happy to do it, and I got just out now what I deserved for the work, but I had no real profit on it. But I was happy when it was up because it was the first time that a thing so big was established, at least in this region or in this part of the States. Later on, many people made big murals. But I was one of the first to do this.

MR. BROWN: Were you happy with the result?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. I'm happy. I mean, I go off and on there and look, or I take students there and I have to explain it. And it was very colorful, too. I worked with glazes and with colors and glass lumps, and so forth. But I can't tell you now how I did it. Because when I see it, I wonder how I did it. I mean, I couldn't do it today.

MR. BROWN: You mean the stamina and the technical --

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, the stamina and the technique and the energy and plain labor, plus enthusiasm to do this. But when I had it, it was a success. And so I was -- I said, "Yes, I have done this. I have shown that I can, and never again."

MR. BROWN: Did it have a good deal of effect on other craftsmen? Did it attract some attention? Was it publicized quite widely?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes. It was publicized. But I am not -- I have no PR qualities, and I didn't do a damn thing. Other people did it. But in the community, I was very well known and beyond this. [inaudible] Buffalo or Syracuse or something. Also, Mrs. Webber [phonetic] in New York -- she never did say it, but I felt that they had a way to appreciate it.

MR. BROWN: She saw it, Mrs. Webber?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes. So I said I will never do it again. But then, two or three years later, or when was it?

MR. BROWN: 1960 or so.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It came up. There was an architect, Mr. Kilham [O'Connor & Kilham, Philadelphia, PA]. I think he is a Boston architect, but he has his office in New York. He asked me -- he was building the National Library of Medicine [Bethesda, MD], if I was interested to apply. And I went there to his office, and he showed me the [inaudible]. And we discussed it, and so here I was again, doing or not doing. You know? I said, "Okay. I will do it." And this was -- I have here some pictures.

[Off the record]

MR. BROWN: Okay. So we're looking now at this. This was about 200 feet long, you said.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, 200 feet. Every part is 50 feet long. And it was in a building which is seven flights deep underground. It was built by the Navy. It's a bomb shelter, the whole thing, to save anything for attacks from the air or something. [inaudible] And in this hall or lobby on top, there was a catalog room.

MR. BROWN: This is the catalog room for the library?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And there I made this frieze around 50 feet, 50 feet, 50 feet, 50 feet. Now, I started out in the same way as I started out the Strasenburgh wall. I made kind of a semi-abstract -- I have more pictures of it.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: A semi-abstract picture of the field of metal. And I worked there for a whole summer on it, and it wasn't a time of fun. Harold Brennan [phonetic] made slides of it, and he thought it was great. I thought, too, it was great. I made only 50 feet.

MR. BROWN: Who was that made photographs?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Brennan, Brennan.

MR. BROWN: Right, Harold Brennan.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Harold Brennan. I made only 50 feet on the paper design, you know, painted it with poster paint. And every part of this, I have it still holed up somewhere here. [inaudible] It's a painting by itself. I mean, the most -- I can show you slides of it. They are very dramatic. They are just -- I saw in the Memorial Art Gallery, there was some art by Gorki. I think mine were just as good. Or I will not say better; that is not the word. But that I was in the same direction going as he was going.

MR. BROWN: These are very free forms, aren't they?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No.

MR. BROWN: No?

MR. WILDENHAIN: First, I made those semi-abstract. You could see this was an eye and this was a bone and this was a muscle, very semi-abstract. And so I had a whole range of 50 feet, the anatomy, to me anatomical. And I hold this up, and I made a detailed section six feet by four feet. And I went to Washington -- to Baltimore, to Bethesda.

MR. BROWN: The section in ceramic, you made?

MR. WILDENHAIN: One section.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And they were building the building, and there was the director of the library, which was in charge of the whole thing, Dr. Rogers. He -- I had hang it up in this unfinished building and show this detail. And he was very quiet about it. And he smoked on his cigar and looked at beyond and so forth. And in the end, he said, "I don't like it."

So, nobody has ever said this to me. Especially my wife was with me, in the presence of my wife, that he didn't like it.

MR. BROWN: What happened? What did you say?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I said, "See, Dr. Rogers, the thing is, we should have talked about this before a little more. But you were never available; you were in Africa or you were in India." He was always a man very busy traveling around. "But what had you in mind that I should make?" Now he said, "I will nothing see here from the medicine and from this stuff. I will have something there like a cloud. But it must be beautiful." I said, "Oh, God." When I had known this before, I wouldn't have gone through all this troubles. I worked my whole summer from the school out in the summer months. And to think, here -- so I said, "Well, I will try again." I hold it up like a little schoolboy.

MR. BROWN: And that was all you knew that he wanted, was a cloud, a beautiful cloud?

MR. WILDENHAIN: A beautiful cloud.

MR. BROWN: That wasn't much to go on, was it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, in some way. It should be -- he said, "When the people would ask me what it means, I would say 'Nothing.' But it must be beautiful." That was the concept, you hear this from someone that was employed by the state, by the federal building.

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: So, he -- I said -- I go along. So I went home. And in a week, I made the sketch, and I sent him the sketch. The sketch was only so long and so high. And he said, "Yes." So I started now this sketch to enlarge on 200 feet. Now, I couldn't do this here. I had to make a drawing of this whole thing. So, downtown was old department store, and there was nothing in it -- on the seventh floor. They had to leave the building because of the water. And it belongs to IT. I could work on the seventh floor. On the seventh floor, I built these two-by-fours, this 200-feet wall up with cardboards on it and paper on it. And then I started to design, to enlarge my design. And this design I have still, too, here, in the garage.

And this I translated then in clay. And it was a kind of a handwriting on the wall around which had -- was all clay, red clay, blue clay, black clay, white clay. And then the in-between -- you have to see this in color -- were very colorful spots like this here or here. So they were like precious stones around. And it was really ceramic. It was not plywood painted or something.

MR. BROWN: So, it was very luminous some of it.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: You used glass?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, glass and low-fired glaze and high-fired glaze and everything which was available. And as a painter, I knew how to handle the color, and I wasn't too concerned.

You know, I started out to make this here. And the first 75 feet, I laid here out on the ground. And I looked at it, and I didn't like it. I didn't like it. And then I came to the idea -- first I said the whole thing was glazed. And I came then to the conclusion, it shouldn't be glazed; only certain spots. Then I took -- made this over. And when it was finished, I put it downtown on this scaffolding, which I had built and nailed it on with nails supporting the pieces. The pieces were two-by-two feet big. And I have a lot of pictures of this. And I did put it up.

And then I sent out an invitation to my friends, to people which were interested, that tomorrow for one day I will show it to the City of Rochester before it goes to Washington. And I did it, and it was a big party. And it was a great time.

MR. BROWN: Were you using that also as a last chance to get some reaction before you sent it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no.

MR. BROWN: No. By then you were pretty sure.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, I was sure. Now I was sure. I had made it now; they have to put it up.

MR. BROWN: The patron had no doubts. He just let you go.

MR. WILDENHAIN: He let me go.

MR. BROWN: Once he saw the first sketch.

MR. WILDENHAIN: So I packed it in, and Mayflower transported the whole thing in big boxes there to Bethesda.

MR. BROWN: To Bethesda. But then, did you have to go down to supervise the installation?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Partially, yes.

MR. BROWN: Was this a plaster matrix?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes. There was -- of course, they had contractors hired how to put it on, because it has to be securely put up in case a piece falls down and hits a person. And it has to have 300 or 700 percent secured in. There was a sidewalk commission there from Washington. It was a long thing.

Now, how to put it up? And there were films, they asked, "[inaudible]?" Much more what I got for making it, only to put it up. And they found a little Italian. And he was a wonderful fellow. He scratched his head and looked at it and said, "No, I do it." And he did it. He put it up, and very secure. At least 200–300 percent, what I call. I mean, when you glue it on with a good glue, you think that's 100 percent. But then everything had the wire in the back, and there were nails in the wall to address hanging. Even the glue would get loose; it was still hanging on the wall.

MR. BROWN: Yes. It was nailed, it was nailed.

MR. WILDENHAIN: By the nails and the wire.

MR. BROWN: But then you stayed throughout the whole installation?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, not the whole.

MR. BROWN: You didn't?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I went three, four, five times down with a plane from here to Washington, with all the businessmen in the morning. I went with the businessmen down.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And the politicians in the same airplane to Washington in the evening, late afternoon I went with them back.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: Well, you had confidence enough. You had precise drawings that this Italian could follow; is that right?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: He could follow precise --

MR. WILDENHAIN: That was all fantastic. I don't know really how it was done by this man. But it was up. It was up. And I was satisfied with it.

Now, it was a piece of very -- when you will -- for the common people, very strange design. It is not like a picture like *George Washington Crossing the Delaware*, you know? But I go -- have gone over the years, and I pass Bethesda, I go there. And I mix with the people which are there. And I ask the people in the offices which are working here around in the mezzanine, how they like it? And they all say, "We like it. Because we discover everything every time something new." And so it is. You can see there are forms in it.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: So, even there's a guide, a girl which guides people through the office or building, but you have to have permission to enter and so forth. And she said, "Oh, the people like it." You know?

So I myself, when I go there, I'm still wondering how I did it and that it is still good. I like it still. I didn't know how to do it any different. I made everyone's labor at IT [phonetic]. This was quite a different way of doing it. But every time when I made something, I found a new way to do it.

MR. BROWN: The first one, the one at Strasenburgh, was symbolic.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was symbolic.

MR. BROWN: This one is abstract.

MR. WILDENHAIN: This one is abstract. This one was symbolic, semi-abstract.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: You saw still the figures, but [inaudible]. You recognize that that's a man and that's a sun and that's a --

MR. BROWN: Yes. But here now --

MR. WILDENHAIN: But here you don't recognize. It was so when I had to make this design, and I asked my wife -- I said, when she was cooking, she said, "I like it, but what means this shoe there?" She saw a form there. "I don't like it. It looks like a shoe." "But it's not a shoe. I don't see it." And when she was -- after a little while, I thought, "Yes. It looks like a shoe." But I didn't change it.

But when I made it in this building, I worked often until the night, eleven–twelve o'clock. I came to the night watchman. He looked in because I was completely concealed in these four walls. And he put his head in and said, "Hi." And I said, "Hi." And he said, "How's it going?" I said, "Well, so-so." *Asi asi* [phonetic]. He said, "Do

you know what you are doing?" I said, "Yes, I know what I am doing." So he went. When he was gone, I looked at it again, and I thought, "My goodness. Frans, do you know what you are doing?"

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: I was really -- but I forgot about it. I'm not too much a meditator, you know, in this way, that I now get involved in concepts, a rebel, or intellectual. I did it, and that's it. So, it hangs there, and it is there. And I think it's good. I think it's good.

Most people -- I have always to direct people there -- it is not so that in New York you can say, an office, a building in New York, and you walk just like in an official building, and you walk like in an institutional building where you can just see this on a wall

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: You have to make a special trip. And people which make the trips, "Yes, we saw your mural. It's good."

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: So it is something what most architects are always afraid when you work as an artist with them, that this is dated, what you are doing. So, after 20 years they will say, "Oh, that was made in the '50s." But the architects forget, too, that their buildings are also dated.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: You can't escape from this. I mean, I cannot make eternal value. But I think it has something that you could do today, too, again. But perhaps today I would do it differently. But I mean, in the execution --

MR. BROWN: You might do it differently.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: But nevertheless, in looking at this today, nearly 20 years later, you feel that it's so abstract, and yet you can associate with it, that people can always find something.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. They do find. It is illumination of this room.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Did you have any control or say over the décor in this room? Like I'm looking at, the floor here is sort of square, square and geometric kind of.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes, no, in the middle -- yes. When I saw the model, there were not these boxes then. I thought it was only a big hall. Then they put those boxes in.

MR. BROWN: Yes, the card catalogs.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It's awful, awful. And when you photograph it, it's awful. You see this -- in the photograph, you see these boxes here and all the other things.

MR. BROWN: Yes, these little card catalogs.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But when you are there, you don't see these. You see only this. It comes to you like this, and then you forget about these.

MR. BROWN: Did you think of the problem of brilliance, of bright colors, things that would carry quite a distance? The room is fairly large.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes. Yes, no, it's about 50 by 50 by 50, not too large. But it is a large room.

MR. BROWN: But it's very different than working on an individual vase or a cup, obviously.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Sure, sure.

MR. BROWN: There, people aren't going to stand away from it.

MR. WILDENHAIN: That could be probably a simpler, when you will. The more when you will integrated in this architecture, but on the other hand, every painter which is challenged by a wall, he will express -- let's say the

Mexican artist which made the first murals. They told the whole social revolution of Mexico and the war. Or created in the Ambruster library Old Moscow in Portsmouth. Where [José Clemente] Orozco painted. I was very taken in when I saw it three years ago, I saw it just for the first time. That's quite a story, what he is telling there, not very friendly too much capitalism.

MR. BROWN: That's probably why it's in the cellar, is it?

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, it's --

MR. BROWN: But it's down. It's not on the main level at the library.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, oh, I don't know. Yes, it can be.

Anyway, I mean, this kind of social realism is nothing for me anyway. But I thought that's like in churches, you know. You go to Havana, what you see in the church is -- oh, they are -- you don't see the rooms there.

MR. BROWN: No.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It's the second look. At the first look you see this. And it's --

MR. BROWN: And that's what you achieved here in Bethesda?

MR. WILDENHAIN: In some way. But I will not say that I am as good as in Ravenna. But I would say this similar effect for the spectator that he stops at least for two seconds to pause, you know. But that is some time.

[Off the record]

MR. BROWN: We are looking now at several pieces.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. On this photo, you can see the two directions were always in between. I'm a Gemini. What are you?

MR. BROWN: An Aries.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, Aries. Okay. There is the abstract form. And this is where I am always coming. I will extend this abstract form to more, right or wrong. But perhaps you say, "I prefer this to this" or "this to this." So it is not --

MR. BROWN: But you say you start with an abstract form and then what?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, I don't start with an abstract form. I make an abstract form, and the next time I come in a period of -- let's say that's an abstract form of a pot.

MR. BROWN: Yes. This is a pot with legs and with a bit of a flat --

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. This pot is an abstract form, which is a split vase which is split in the middle, but held up by each other.

MR. BROWN: It is a vase shape.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: It's not traditional, but it's recognizable as a vase.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. But it is a classical shape.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Just like this, or like this.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: There's a variation that goes over to what this --

MR. BROWN: These are out of balance, these. This one is still of classical shape at the top.

MR. WILDENHAIN: That's right. That's right. But there comes an element, which is going away from the study.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Now, these I call metamorphic types of pots. They are two people talking to each other.

MR. BROWN: The positive and the negative.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: So, they're tapering cylinders, one with a depression and the other with a protrusion, right?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. And that is a bird's nest in a tree.

MR. BROWN: Do these titles come afterward?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. Did I design -- this is what I call a cloud. Wait a minute. It belongs this way. It is a mural six feet long, so it is a thing in someone's house.

MR. BROWN: It is a combination of incised work and --

MR. WILDENHAIN: Incised and modern glazed and color.

MR. BROWN: And the natural body.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. And again, this is abstract shape. I call it "*Flight*." It moves away from some here.

MR. BROWN: This is a relief?

MR. WILDENHAIN: It's a relief.

MR. BROWN: This is unglazed?

MR. WILDENHAIN: That's unglazed. It's even unfired. See, and then I come in this kind again, of modeling much more freely like this.

MR. BROWN: Yes. This is a relief which is sort of like so many crinkled and crumpled shapes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And yet it has a rhythm to it and nice curves, curved surfaces leaning --

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes. It is like this, what you call -- inside. Now, here this is period which I call in my [inaudible] abstract shape. But this is a period which I was interested by the sea or by the waves or by the wind or by leaves. And this is all the same pot, different sides of the pot.

MR. BROWN: It is extremely different in appearance from one side to the next.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Now, is this a pot? This is a pot that could be used?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Well, because it's hollow.

MR. BROWN: Right, in that sense.

MR. WILDENHAIN: You can put water in and flowers, it's a pot. But for me it's a sculpture. I could have closed it, too, and made a shape what's closed. But [inaudible]. So, it's no dividing line between -- a pot is a very general name for something what is hollow.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Now, some of these forms are classical. Some of these leaves shapes are classical and Medieval.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: But they're just something that you incorporated for their form?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah. And over here, but here comes a wave. So, you know, and here's the wind. This was something to -- not to change my concept, but to bring something in it what I haven't done before. You know, when you work abstract, like Mr. Stella paints his big paintings, the abstract paintings, it is -- after a certain time, it becomes kind of a gimmick. They are always -- the proportions are always good, the size okay.

But it's a question of, you can have it as a lithography, but two-by-one feet or two-by-two feet. Or you can have it as a mural, 25-some feet. You know?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But that is quite different. Although -- how can I express it again? This is going away almost to dematerialize the clay. That could be cast in bronze, for instance. Then you would already get another feeling for it, and of course, when it is hollow and there's a lid on it, then you call it a jar. When there's no lid on it, you call it a vase. When it is closed, what is it then? A sculpture.

MR. BROWN: But the treatment of the clay is such that it could lend itself, say, to bronze.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes. I have a figure there inside which I have cast in bronze.

MR. BROWN: In fact, there's not much sense of the clayness here as there is in some of the other work. Is that what you're saying?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, not clayness. It is made in clay. But just -- see, a clay is a material. You can do everything with clay. You can make a tree trunk. You can make an apple, which is smooth and round and full-blown and closed from the inside. Or you can make something -- you can make a little *George Washington crossing the Delaware* so big. And you can enlarge it, or the Statue of Liberty, you know.

When you would say the Statue of Liberty, is it a sculpture or not? I have my doubts. I would call, this is definitely a sculpture although there is a hole in it.

MR. BROWN: It's a great egg-shape, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, an egg-shape, okay. You say it next to apple shape or plum shape. But essentially, this is an abstract shape of an egg. An egg is abstract.

MR. BROWN: Have you done most of these changes? There's such a great variety of shapes here. Have you just sort of drifted into them? Do you recall any specific reasons? How you said you went --

MR. WILDENHAIN: You can get tired of something. When I have done this, I have solved this problem, I can now not go on and on like people which work in a series of things. I would like to do this, and we'll see how I can improve it, the shape.

MR. BROWN: You would like to?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. Let's say like these two definite [phonetic] figures.

MR. BROWN: These two what?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Definite, what I call definite.

MR. BROWN: The definite figures, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: When I – there are two there. I have made two other ones to stand in gardens and look like people. Now, this is a theme which interests me, again, because it is a straight shape, and then it's something -- but it is -- but you realize it is abstract. But it is alive. It is suggesting something. You know?

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Um-hm. They're gesturing. They're like arms or twigs.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Quite like arms or twigs.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Now, when Brâncuşi makes a fish, okay, it's a slab of marble suggesting a fish. Or when Flannagan makes an egg I've spoken of, and lets a little chick out, there is adding something to it, something telling a little story.

MR. BROWN: Do you see yourself allied with that, with Brâncuşi or [John] Flannagan, I mean in some of your work?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. I like the work of Flannagan because that was the first sculpture which I saw in America, which was different what I saw in Europe. I saw lots of work which was great, but I have seen before. This Flannagan, I haven't seen before. This whole approach of this man, it's so unknown to most people. When you ask the average art student, "Who was John Flannagan?" he doesn't know. I have the only two books which exist

about Flannagan, which was the first thing that I bought 25 years ago. [inaudible] had promoted this man for a short time because he killed himself or he was killed. He was only 40 years old.

MR. BROWN: He combined them. You know, there's a strong sense in Flannagan of the material.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. He works in stone.

MR. BROWN: Abstract shapes, and as you said, maybe a little story.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: There's some of that in some of yours, isn't there?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. That is, the fish -- "*Jonas and the Fish*." [actually *Jonah and the Whale*] That's a sculpture by Flannagan. And I saw this for the first time in my life at the Brooklyn Museum. It has a little corner in the museum, and there's a Flannagan and the fish, and there's a piece of good work from the [inaudible] up here, what they call it -- [inaudible]. Anyway, I saw this fish, has this Jonas and the whale. I'd always thought it was stone, but it was cast cement. So I could cast it in cement, too, but then I would get another feeling. Those lines wouldn't be so fine or something.

This is thrown on the wheel, and it is -- yeah. It has something. It is really blown inside. So it's more central than just an egg shape.

MR. BROWN: Yes. I was just using that to identify it so people would know.

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. I mean, all the -- Marcks is, of course, a great influence of mine. But not so much as what he does, I couldn't do this, what he does. Also, I was inclined in the beginning, since he was my teacher, not to imitate him, but to get something of this human quality that was -- that I couldn't do. I had to do it simpler, because my life is too short to work --

MR. BROWN: You mean the human quality, his working with the human figure?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yeah, the human figure and the human figure expressing job or expressing grief, Castalia [phonetic], a woman or a man on a horse or something.

MR. BROWN: He was perhaps a great influence because he didn't try to get you to follow him? Do you think?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. He didn't know I had students. He could do without students.

MR. BROWN: I haven't asked, but by the way, as a teacher yourself, did you try to keep a little -- you didn't try to greatly influence just what the students did?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. No. I just not, you know -- just perhaps a weakness. But on the other hand, I will just get out of the student what he is. That is more important -- I mean, when you go in this direction, not when you make coffeepots and teapots and so forth. Then I would perhaps insist that he makes it for a certain period just like me, because the Chinese idea of art or craftsman or master craftsman or whatever they call it is, you are not branded as student or whatever. And you imitate your master. But then comes something beyond this, and that is you. So when you know the craft, when you know how to handle the material, and you are perfect in this, or almost perfect, then you can bring your own personality in. But not start out with self-expression and making a little thing and thinking --

MR. BROWN: That's the training you had, and that's what you do with your students.

MR. WILDENHAIN: One is dilettantish and the other one is professional. I mean, that's the difference between a dilettante and a professional. Probably the dilettante has more -- his love is greater for doing this work like musicians, to do it as a performance.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: For me it is a performance, that is what counts.

MR. BROWN: This sort of runs throughout what you've said, I think. It's the doing of it.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: Like with several of these big mural projects, you didn't quite know what motifs would be put in.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Well, no.

MR. BROWN: You do?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. That's right.

MR. BROWN: Now, these pieces here, they are like polyps or urchins, these flailing arms coming out of around it.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes. This is --

MR. BROWN: What did you do? Do you remember having anything in mind when you did these?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. They served as a contrast between the solid shapes, which are hollow, and then this sprouting out or spewing out, spitting out of this shape. But they were kind of feral animal.

MR. BROWN: But that's your analysis. But when you did them, you didn't consciously think of them in those terms?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, not really. I did consciously -- I don't do anything really consciously. It means also not that I don't know what I am doing. And that woman is cooking something, baking a cake. It's better she knows what she is doing, you know?

MR. BROWN: Yes. So you knew your materials and your --

MR. WILDENHAIN: But when you're a good cook, you don't go back to page 27 of the recipes. You do it by -- you have so much experience that you know so much, a pinch of this and this and that makes it. So, okay. I tried to make a cake here. I tried to make a sculpture. And often, I start out with no idea in my mind. But in working, it consolidates more and becomes -- at once I discover something on the way. And it happens subconsciously. You are -- I am doing the right thing. What is later is how I call it. You know, they will have for all the shows, they will have all the persons names. They are, of course, difficult -- pot number one, or vase number two. Those that will have a name, so --

MR. BROWN: The names are incidental. Are they ones that you --

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, that is here not incidental. [inaudible]

MR. BROWN: That is something that you were struck by in that particular case?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, I had an idea. I was thinking to put a nest on top here, the bird's nest on top and put the other egg in. But then I found it, as a sculpture, much more interesting to do so. But I did it in this way, that's me.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And when I had put the nest on it and put there the egg in, it was me, too. But it was too obvious. It shouldn't be so obvious, that you should have still a little for your imagination to figure out, you know. We tend to discover things. Like these two people, they are babbling to each other. Men and women are that way. It was just --

MR. BROWN: Very often, you know, you don't start out as with a bird's nest or the man and the woman with anything quite so concrete in mind.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes, sometimes I do. The bird's nest in the tree trunk.

MR. BROWN: That's very concrete, for you.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: But very often you don't start out with such a concrete idea, do you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no. But that is like designing.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: You start off -- I don't make a drawing first. I do it directly. When it is not good, I scratch it -- or I can try again. But more recently, I make drawings first.

MR. BROWN: Is that mainly recently that you made drawings?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Not mainly, but to clarify my mind before I start out. Because it's more economical for the failures.

MR. BROWN: There aren't as many.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But you learn by your failures, you know.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And you learn by your mistakes, as they say. And you learn also only when it is difficult. When it is easy, you don't learn anything. Only when it is difficult. My life -- don't like the philosophy.

MR. BROWN: So, from time to time, then, you do make drawings?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: To cut down on the failure rate?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah. I make sketches. Oh, sure. I have sketchbooks full of sketches.

MR. BROWN: And the only time you do things that are easy, or you did them years ago when you did repetitious things?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: That's a discipline in itself, isn't it? Being able to repeat?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. But then as you are also limited in your scope.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It goes only from here to here. But I would not like to go from here to here. I would like to go from here to here.

MR. BROWN: Yes. You'd like to take a leap and go in another direction.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, another direction. And then you are -- it's good or it's a failure. But often you cannot decide whether it is good or a failure. Another one can find it great, wonderful. I saw work from people where I saw the person thought nothing. Another one said, "Oh, that I like." For me it was -- I'm myself still.

MR. BROWN: I haven't asked this before. But how important to you has been the reaction of other people?

MR. WILDENHAIN: The reaction of other people and their opinion is -- there is only one reaction. When they buy it, that's fine. When I know they like it. When they don't buy it, they don't like it or they have not the money. There are many people which like it; they have not the money to buy it. But there are many people who have a lot of money, but they don't like it. But you cannot go only by this. But it is a stimulus for you. When someone likes what you are doing, then you feel there is affinity between him and you, and you can almost give it him for nothing.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Because it is only a gesture, a compliment from my side. But alas, I have to be --

MR. BROWN: You can't do that too often.

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: You can't do it too often. I have to be reimbursed for my -- and then it is only the material and the firing, you know.

MR. BROWN: Yes. Here's a piece here, I did want to ask about it. A classical vase shape. Overlaying it is something like a dead octopus or something.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: But then dribbling over that form and down into the lovely symmetrical vase shape is this darker glaze. How did this come about? It's kind of grotesque in a way, Beauty and the Beast.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah. This is a very interesting piece. I had it in Chicago in a show. And the gallery would like to have it, but it was [inaudible]. And I have -- the thing -- this glaze, that is accidental as it runs. Hunter Opf [phonetic], he would call it "by the law of chance."

Now, I cannot control it. But I know when I put it on, it runs. And you hope and pray it will run in the right way. And sometimes it does, sometimes too much, sometimes too little. But it's always a surprise because it goes by a certain law. When it is so thick it will run, and over this probably to here and not to top here down, because there is not much -- so, this is a glaze that is an ash glaze, which is very runny. So it runs. I can make it so it is even smooth, and it can make it that it is running, and I can make it that it is rough and that it is shiny.

So when I do it, when I glaze, I cannot have anyone around me. Even when I have students here on the day when I glaze, I say, "Better you stay out here," because it is for me a very desperate state. I teach always, when you make a pot you should know when you are making the pot how you will glaze or how you will fire this pot. You should have a clear concept in your mind. But I don't have it. And only in the [inaudible] in the sculpture shape and while you have the thing and the glaze is only an afterthought. And the glaze, I have to put on -- often, I have got special glaze on. That is not a camouflage property of my way. It's only that -- it is an act of desperation which works well sometimes and not to put on, you know. In case of doubt, you have to abstain. Or you go overboard.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And then it's only good luck, is what it is. You cannot have it -- I mean, there's no recipe how to do this. Here is a punchcard. I sent this sculpture. Let me have a punchcard sculpture I will have an exact replica of this what I have sent. But even the punchcard thing is not an exact replica.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And if you work it over, or you tell them I don't like it. But it is -- there's no mechanical process. From the beginning when I have the clay to the end when it comes out the kiln, I have control over this what I am doing. But I have no control about the behavior of the material in the firing or the glaze in the firing.

And I have now two things here I would like to have shown you, if you come on Tuesday or Monday after kiln.

MR. BROWN: [inaudible]

[End of recording 2 of 2 reel Side A]

MR. BROWN: You were talking about the Topeda [phonetic]?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Topeda.

MR. BROWN: Yes, Topeda.

MR. WILDENHAIN: What is hiding the wall, which I think is very unfunctional, you know. It is -- of course you have bare walls, concrete. And you can add plaster to it to make it more warmth, give it warmth. And you can paint the walls with paint. But in the moment when you put a hanging on it, a paper hanging -- at this moment, I think you are -- that's fine. I have nothing against it. It is only coming from the Bauhaus that this is so funny, you know.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm. Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It is like making ladies' underwear and the ornaments in it through the Bauhaus -- I don't know, squares or something.

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: You can do this. But -- so actually, they have -- the Bauhaus became the school for architects. That is the whole thing. And the crafts, we were only stimulating somehow the design possibilities for the student or students which -- not everyone can become architects. But you can do a good object, material. A chair is a piece of architecture, too, or a table, or a teapot. But a piece of sculpture --

MR. BROWN: Did you feel that Gropius and Mies van der Rohe later, they were somewhat ill at ease with the crafts in the Bauhaus?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. With these crafts, we are underlying crafts, you know. Crafts, as we have touched today, that is quite different. The crafts have been a good start of something.

But just coming back to Holland, in Holland there were good architects, have always been good architects. And an architect is not only the man which builds the shell of the house, he partially builds also the interior. And this was a typical European approach, I think, to architecture. The only one man which I know, great architect here, that was Frank Lloyd Wright, which designed everything from the roof to the doorknob. But mostly, the architect here, he builds the shell from concrete or wood, what is, and then moves the interior decorator in, the lady. And they have conferences about curtains and colors of blue and purple and lilac and lavender.

So, this is a particular thing. The crafts by itself, as we understood it, you work in the natural material. And you bring the natural material out. For instance, woodwork in America, like Warden Ashery [phonetic]. He would embrace in some ways the Bauhaus design-wise. On the other hand, the design would be too rich for him. But this feeling for the material of wood. We are working -- our world is a technical world, where we replace the materials like wood and clay and metal or something, when possible, with cheaper material, which is mass produced and is a consumer item. It may not wear too long, because then the protection is not good.

But this is also a tool with plastic. A plastic container -- speaking about this, like ceramic -- is only good on the first day. From this day on it loses, it deteriorates. It deteriorates, not really. But I have here the workshop for, with buckets. They are all difficult to clean. They stain and, of course, they break or they are easier. But that is in the strain of the economy, you have to replace it. You have to turn over. Now, pottery breaks easy, too, which is your counterargument. Your pottery would be better, you know. Instead, you do this.

But what I like in the primary materials is that they are getting better. Plastic door knobs, plastic. I had a discussion from a lady from California in the school. Everything what you make, lightings of a room, she made door knobs, she made this. And she said after there, after you have used it for a year, you can scratch it. You know, you can start it looking worn out or used.

MR. BROWN: Whereas this wouldn't happen with natural materials?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. And this natural material, it would happen, too. But through the human touch, it becomes better, you know? A table which is 100 years old which is clean, waxed and washed, and perhaps one has removed with sandpaper or what. Or you have metal, you polish it. You see, well, that is just what we like. When it is new, it is appalling, a new metal thing. But a coffeepot from silver -- I have one inside, which I got, by the way, from Mrs. Moore, a coffeepot. He is becoming better because I have to clean him with something.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But I can never get it really clean. And so this is also with pottery. You know, this is probably our whole feeling when we speak from a kind of nostalgic feeling of antiques. What is an antique, so appealing? Of course, the design is appealing. It's often very functional. But the most appealing thing is the material. You like to go with your hand over a table. A plastic table in a restaurant, you would not go over it. You would say to the waiters, "Please clean this up here."

MR. BROWN: But you wouldn't want to touch it.

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. I mean, I see always scratched or something. And then they of course, they say, "We can change this to unscratchable plastic or something." They can do everything.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But the main thing is, it's not becoming better. And it's of course also made cheaper.

MR. BROWN: This attitude you brought when you left Germany and you went to Holland?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. This was my attitude for my whole life. So I am not really a Bauhaus man in this pure sense of someone which has gotten the idea and is now working towards unknown fields -- I mean, let's say Moholy had -- he was the master of the metal shop. I saw it in the Paris show, the World Exposition in 1913.

MR. BROWN: 1907, wasn't it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: 1907 or 1909 or whenever it was.

MR. BROWN: Um-hm.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And there he sat. There he was. And I came from Holland because I was in the meantime in Holland. And first of all, I saw the old Englishmen going through his show. They were all glass walls and glass doors. And he has hit his head already several times. He was walking like a blind man, feeling first with his hands. Okay, you can change this, too. You put something on the glass -- and they do it -- to make you aware that you are not going through there.

But then he had plates. And they were from aluminum, pressed plates -- spun, we called it, spinning plates. And I said to Moholy, "Is this how Germany now lives? Is it the idea to eat from aluminum plates?" You know, is it functional, aluminum plates, or whatever his material was? Is it cheap?

MR. BROWN: What did he say to that?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Well, he had this -- you know, he was in some way a dreamer and in some way he was very sharp in his objective thinking about -- very realistic, too. But he said to me, "Yeah. That is what we call applied art in German." The word is "applied art." So he says, "For me, the most beautiful *angewandte Kunst*" -- applied art -- he said, "Telephone, this little thing you have." He thought it was so beautiful. It's functional, and it's beautiful. There's no doubt it's functional. It's beautiful because there is no comparison with anything. People have now in their homes the old stands with the little horn.

MR. BROWN: Yes, the old-fashioned, right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: The old-fashioned thing. There are many possibilities. Now, he had very funny ideas. He was a painter, a constructivist, or whatever they called themselves in this time, which he explained, the last painting, the last portrait which was painted was Rembrandt. [inaudible] The last writing that was Dostoevsky or something. This was coming from a segment of thinking. And I didn't think it was the whole group thinking. Of course, there is the Bauhaus, opened our eyes because there were other people, too. It opened the eyes for the essential, why use things to observe the design. You know, when 100 writers -- there was an article about shells. I see that's just a shell.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But a shell is a house. And he thought how functional this was. At the Bauhaus you couldn't make a shell. What is then functional from that? It's a square box. It's a prison, isn't it?

MR. BROWN: Prism or prison?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Prison. There you are, in prison. That is a square box. Now, it is of course not nice to say it. But when the house is called -- well, one is called the living machine, the room machine, where you live in it. It's a machine. Everything should be functional. Right-hand side, WC, left side, kitchen or something, and there is a middle, living room, and then the other room around the big room -- lady's boudoir, and children's room, and guest room, and so forth. I lived in this house and the house [inaudible] for a certain time, in Weimer. So I know about it.

I liked it. There was no doubt. But on the other hand, I like other houses, like the Jefferson house in Virginia. You know, these big rooms, which is, of course, sentimental.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But I have seen and heard many people, they have these modern houses and then afterwards they said, "Oh, I wish I had a Colonial house." Because this modern house wasn't good, let's say, in the first place, wasn't a very good architect. Or they had changed. Everyone is changing. You change your mind. You could live today in a cabin like Saul [phonetic], or tomorrow you can live like Jefferson or in a castle, or you can live in a house [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: So you don't want to be absolutely fixed as to your surroundings.

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no, absolutely.

MR. BROWN: So, by the time you went to Paris in 1937 and met Moholy and saw this, your attitude -- what you were doing in Holland seemed more correct to you, more what you wanted to do?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I couldn't do -- because we were educated by a traditional potter, plus a Bauhaus master, Marcks in this case. But the other one was a traditional potter. And you don't know how much you love -- it is just, you are a musician. You play the violin or the piano. You go to this teacher at this school. You go to another, he has this theory. And you change your -- and it changes you. You cannot escape. You cannot go there for a long time to be in opposition to it. You go with it. That's like people go, have a [inaudible] or a psychoanalyst or a priest or a father confessor. They go to them because of a kind of confidence.

And to those with this, too, I had no confidence in this idea. And it has later proved that I was not so wrong, because when Gropius went to Japan, he went to Japan in -- after the war, long after the war, I think. And then I read an article about him, that he confessed that he, not for the first time -- I hope that wasn't the first time -- understood what cast was, you know. You see Japanese architecture, how functional it is and how beautiful it is, and the use of material, without our modern materials. They have their highest things, too, [inaudible] and so

forth.

MR. BROWN: Sure.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But Japanese architecture is probably the ultimate of woodworking, always dovetailed, or there's no nail or no screw used. You hammer everything together. You kind of put yourself in there. And there is everything chosen with love. It is -- perhaps I am not justified talking this way. But I speak from my feelings about it.

MR. BROWN: You also, though, had going for you having worked with this traditional master.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And was this the strength -- when you got to Holland, was this the thing that really kept you going?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, it kept us going in a way, except we learned from him the craft, how to make the things. And this is much more important. This other one that you were attempting to become an artist, a so-called elevated craftsman, that is another story. But we learned our craft from the beginning.

MR. BROWN: And in this Dutch period, that particularly is what sustained you, isn't it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. But otherwise, I couldn't have -- I would have been a little lousy artist sitting and making little ceramics. It was this -- we knew what we were doing, and we could do it to kind of perfection, and we could do it quick and we could do it good.

MR. BROWN: Did you find outlets?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. There were -- it's a small country and it has a high living culture. The houses have kind of -- everyone has a good taste, more or less, by heritage, generally speaking. When you say specific, there are more cases where people appreciate a piece of ceramics. They have their own Delft. They had the first import from the East. They know what ceramic is. They know what textile is, also rugs and shawls from India and Indonesia. They were saturated. They were so saturated and brought up with it that we were almost a refreshing element. We brought something in which was different, very different, and it was still good. It was not that it was a machine or something. It was still an object, which you have. You can have your Delft plates and so forth. But it was more a kind of heirloom or --

MR. BROWN: Yes. This, they really took to. A good many people?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. We didn't need many people to support us. We were fortunate that we were so. That is the same thing as when we came to America, we were fortunate we were the first ones on the West Coast to make pottery in this way.

MR. BROWN: The same in Holland.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But, you know, we were appreciated by architects and writers, newspaper people, critics, you know, which are not just critics. They -- I mean, Mr. Hammacher, he was writing for the Audubon paper. And Mr. [A.M.] Hammacher, this man, he has written books about [Jacque] Lipchits. He was an art historian.

MR. BROWN: How do you spell his name?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Hammacher, H-a-m-m-a-c-h-e-r, Hammacher. And other people. I was really -- I have never found people like this in America, at least which were so well meaning to me. I found other people that were well meaning to me here. But in the world where you get your success, there was not -- I wouldn't say much support. But it is also -- then I was 40, 45, 40 years old. And this is where you have made it or not. I don't know. I mean that you make some things, too. But by 40, you find out, "I am a success" or "I am a failure." And I found out that I am not a success, and I am not a failure. I just reset myself. How I evaluate it by history.

MR. BROWN: But in Holland, you were getting a lot of support then from writers, this Hammacher?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: And architects and the like. This was very sustaining, very good for you.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes. Morally it was. We were also strangers. I talked to them. That's true, you know. And I got other good in it, except my accent; I had First to learn Dutch too. English is anything. But I learned a lot how to express myself in Dutch, and people appreciated this.

MR. BROWN: Who were some of the other artists and architects who bought your work, or that you got to know? You mentioned --

MR. WILDENHAIN: There was one man. He was -- Schelling was his name, S-c-h-e-l-l-i-n-g. He was living in Itwurst. And he was an architect for the [inaudible]. This means for the Dutch Railway Company. He built railway stations. And he has built in Amsterdam a very modern railway station, for his time. And he was a great support to us, a great man, a great family -- father. He had children, and his children -- every one of them is a great person now, too. He has died.

MR. BROWN: How did he support you? By buying?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, he bought. He visited us. We became friends. He had a whole collection of my work. Also, the museum in Amsterdam, Sandburg, you know, the director of the museum, Carl Sandburg, he bought some pieces for the museum, and [inaudible] at the museum. I don't know whether the Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam has some pieces, and they would like to have more pieces because they have some little lousy pieces which they bought after I have left. You know, they were all the flowers of Holland. They were great flowershops, which were cultural of flower, treatment and vasing. They bought flower vases. It was because we were also not the cheapest in the industry. But they were good only to be sold and so forth, in better places.

Rotterdam was a big shop, was called the Distel, it means the Thistle. And it was a shop for applied art, where ceramics, jewelry, textile, and so forth. But from a quality -- because they were also first people. They were mostly frustrated artists and the writers. They had little money, and so they make a shop like this. And then they supported the artists by giving some shows. My last show which I had, it's probably destroyed by the Rotterdam bombings, but I didn't care at this time for it. Beautiful pots -- I have still the photographs of it. And those were later my introduction when I came to America, those photographs.

At this time I was -- I mean, I haven't changed much in all the years, which you cannot. You cannot change.

MR. BROWN: You feel you had gotten very involved? You were creating what you meant to do, what you wanted to make, even while you were there?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes.

MR. BROWN: Now, was your wife with you through the 1930s? Or she came over here earlier, didn't she?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. Now, here is the problem that I will not discuss. But this is it. It's a personal thing.

MR. BROWN: Okay.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I wouldn't like -- I can tell you --

MR. BROWN: You yourself had a workshop in Amsterdam in 1941?

MR. WILDENHAIN: 1941, yes.

MR. BROWN: Was that a temporary thing, or were you invited to set up a teaching situation?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. I had a teaching situation in Amsterdam, and there was actually a little house. The house is not much, just a door and a window. But in the window I had my pots.

MR. BROWN: And so you began teaching?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes.

MR. BROWN: And you had taught at Halle, but you hadn't taught for several years until you came to Amsterdam?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. But when I was in Britain, I had a student which was Dutch. He was a Dutch student. He lives now in Mexico.

MR. BROWN: [inaudible]

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. And he came later to America and was teaching here at some college and lives now in Mexico. But he's a real Dutchman, so he knows what he is doing. I mean, he has his head on his shoulders.

MR. BROWN: So, you found that the Dutch were very practical? Is that what you're trying to say?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no. Of course they are practical people. They are -- how can you claim land from the

sea? I mean, they cannot be dreamers and among others or something. They are people which stand there and look out and fight against the elements and pray to God to help them. That's the Dutch people.

MR. BROWN: Were you able to keep teaching during the war? Because the war came about then, didn't it?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah. My wife left after seven years, for America. I said to her, "The best thing is for you."

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And it was against the situation. Since she was born in France, she was the French quota. She could go anytime. I was born in Germany. And the German quota was overfilled. And there were so many Jewish people, that I thought, "Let them go first. I will see how I come through this."

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And this is the story of the war years.

MR. BROWN: Well, you felt you could stay in Holland?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, through '73.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But this is quite a different story. It has nothing to do with my professional --

MR. BROWN: But you were able to continue working?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no, no.

MR. BROWN: Not really.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It's the story which, as I said, does not belong here. Forgive me. I mean, I was temporarily in the German army. And my wife has written this in her book. She has written two or three books. But she even didn't understand it really. And I don't like that she writes about such things. They have nothing -- who's interested in these things?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: It's only curiosity. And they can be misinterpreted, and they can be read out of context. And that makes so much harm. And I feel like I am in a kind of a completely defensive situation. I can only say, I am cleared by the FBI. I am cleared by the CIA. If that is not enough, I can't help you, you know.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And the rest is just my private story. But the Dutch people can tell about me.

MR. BROWN: They can tell about you. So, after peace came, after the surrender?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I went to America.

MR. BROWN: Were you in Holland for a bit, and then in Germany?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no. I wasn't -- no, I couldn't go to Germany then. I went from Holland to England, and took the Mauritania, and came to New York. It was in '47.

MR. BROWN: Did you have contacts in New York? Or you thought you'd just --

MR. WILDENHAIN: My wife came there. And she has a brother there, a sister. And she had an old Jalopy, and we went to California.

MR. BROWN: Had she already set up that thing at Guerneville?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes. She had already come. It was a group of people. It was what you would call today a "commune." But there was a metal smith's [inaudible], and there was a weaver, too, [inaudible]. And the hedge of this whole thing, the owner of this 100 acres was a man called Gordon Herr and his wife Jane. And they had dreams about having an artists colony. And they had once visited us in Holland on their way to Denmark, by accident. Because Jane had somehow a relative, which was a relative of [inaudible]. She came, you know

how those things happen. [inaudible] and then something comes out until you take this path, and you try a particular thing.

MR. BROWN: Things link together.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. Such is life, you know?

MR. BROWN: So when you got out there, did you find things pretty well set up?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes. It was all in order. I had the most wonderful time in California. First after the war, I was -- I couldn't imagine all the wealth or whatever else. And also, the people, you know, that started things out. They were wonderful people there and in a wonderful setting. It was 75 miles north of San Francisco. It was not Los Angeles, which I wouldn't have liked. Chicago, I did not like.

MR. BROWN: So, you started working again at that.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Did you find you could get steadily back to work?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. I had to -- we had some problems. We worked, and we made pottery and sold it. But in the summertime, we had also a summer workshop, where people came to learn. But then I worked, not teaching pottery in the States. I was teaching drawing or sculpture because Marguerite was teaching pottery.

MR. BROWN: How did the public compare with that you had known in Holland? I mean in terms of their interest -- the interest on the part of architects or designers in ceramics, in pottery?

MR. WILDENHAIN: We were then already known more or less.

MR. BROWN: I hear your reputation had come across.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah. Oh, sure. There was -- Gropius was here, and Moholy was here, and Joseph Albers . They were more or less our teachers, you know, our teachers or what you will.

MR. BROWN: And through them, people would know of you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. In this town, everything was coming up. You know, like Mountain College was there.

MR. BROWN: In California, also in the Bay Area, there were the beginnings of changes in architectural design.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah. There were young architects, and they built this kind of new style of these cliff-hangers.

MR. BROWN: Cliff-hangers? Yes. I know what you mean.

MR. WILDENHAIN: The Chinese fisherman villages is what you would call it.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: Were some of those people you got to know a bit while you were out there?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, architects, yes, yes. I made a lot of friendships with painters and musicians and sculptors. And one was a photographer. He made a very good photography of our work. His name was Otto Hagel.

MR. BROWN: Hagel?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Hagel. And he was a photographer which worked for *Life* magazine. And there were other people, and my wife knew more people than I. Because I am not a very socially inclined person. I mean, Bernard Leach came there, and [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: He came there, too, after the war?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, he came visiting.

MR. BROWN: Just visiting, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Visiting the West Coast. So he came up to [inaudible]. And Marguerite had met him before

somewhere.

MR. BROWN: What did you think of him?

MR. WILDENHAIN: In the Holland period, there belongs -- we made once a trip to England to Dartington Hall. And there were Sir Amherst, which had kind of an estate, big. And there was Joos-Leeder, the Ballet down there with a school. And there was a Montessori school and big textile mill. He thought -- Kurjo [phonetic] thought that we as potters could come there. But there were too many difficulties, too many German immigrants that was not liked. For some reason, that turned around.

MR. BROWN: What did you think of Leach's ideas, Bernard Leach, when he came to California?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I didn't know who he was really. When I was in Dartington Hall, they told me there, too, there was a potter here. And in the woods there, there was a little house and there was a little kiln hut. "Yes, this belongs to a potter. He lives mostly in China or somewhere." It looks interesting, so different from what I did, attractive. I was open for everything. That is perhaps my greatest asset or my greatest failure, that I am open for everything. So I had no really notion. I liked it, but then when I came to America and he was here -- "Oh, Bernard Leach, yes."

I was with the French, which was teaching sculpture in the school in San Francisco. And he was – I went through her class. And so one evening we went with the gang to school, and there was a room open to draw and a kiln. Inside I could see the screen and a man standing there. And she said to me, "Oh, that is a potter from England, Bernard Leach." [inaudible] some pots there or something.

MR. BROWN: "Sung pots." [inaudible]

MR. WILDENHAIN: So he -- later on he came once to Pond Farm, and when visitors came I was mostly the [inaudible] art. My wife was -- that's a burden to us.

MR. BROWN: She handled that. You slipped away?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. But later on he was out in the garden, and the garden was full of my pots. And he asked me, was I making such work? I liked this man. He's moved his tribe around. Many, many years later, in fact 20 years later, I met him in Japan, by accident. I stayed in the National House or the house in the National. And the morning I had packed first in this room. I was with a friend of mine, and she was sitting opposite me, and we had breakfast.

And there was a man sitting there. And I said to her, "You know who that is?" And I looked at him, and I said that it's Bernard Leach. And he looked at me. And in the same moment, we both stood up and we met each other and shake hands. So we had a little conversation. This man told me that he was now old -- I don't know how much, 70 or 80 or something.

MR. BROWN: I don't know.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Older than I, I felt. And he is older. He died just, I think, this last year. He must have been 10–15 years older than I.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: He said, "Now I have understood. Now I have for the first time understood Japan." And he has there been constantly off and on --

MR. BROWN: Yes, for many years.

MR. WILDENHAIN: -- so long takes it to understand the East. He recommended me then a book, *The Art of Archery*, by Herrigel [Zen in the Art of Archery by Eugen Herrigel, 1948].

MR. BROWN: *The Art of Archery*?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, by Herrigel. It is about Japanese archery. And the German which learned it there, which was in school at this archery or something. And he said it's the best book and I should read it. I have it in German, not English. Or I had it in English, I don't remember. I gave it away. So that is my connection with Bernard Leach. His pottery all are beautiful things. But I don't -- he had a great influence when he came to America the first time and the second time as a young potter because there was not much here. But they have -- and this book what we read, the potter's book, is still one of the best books about pottery.

MR. BROWN: But he didn't have that kind of influence on you because you were already --

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no, no, no. He had --

MR. BROWN: You were already a mature --

MR. WILDENHAIN: The only humanized is that he was an Englishman which knew the East and who is this -- I think he was even born in Hong Kong or something. And he had -- I liked him as an artist, as a craftsman, as a human being, a person of technically for his knowledge and all the good things. I couldn't say anything bad about him.

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I mean, as I said, I liked his work, too. And oh, sure. It was. But it was -- it's the end of a life. I don't know how you as a young man can go further. Than you have to make a really breakthrough and get what later happens in the rest of your life in pottery. And you are then influenced by more or less Bernard Leach. That's a great -- he was the first, which gave people in America, officially, because he was invited to [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: Yes, yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: I mean, when you are English, you are -- I cannot talk about this.

MR. BROWN: The Pond Farm then, you and your wife were then the nucleus of this group that created the importance of West Coast potting, I mean as a breakthrough?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No, no. But Marguerite is a person which -- she can write, she can [inaudible].

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And she has a great influence on students and has taught a lot. But I don't know -- I mean, I hear from former students of her, I hear only good things about her. Of course, there is a kind of criticism on every other one. But she is in the first place a good educator, craftsman, and someone which had gone solo and is not dreaming about it. So, I am different. We know this, you know. And we are also different that I found a better way to separate us for a time or forever.

So, as fate is the karma, just in a situation comes a letter in the mail from Rochester, New York, from this [inaudible] American craftsman Mr. Brennan. They were looking for a potter who could teach pottery. Did I know someone? So I wrote him back. "I don't understand your question." I tried, but, I am only three years here. I don't know anyone. But I can teach pottery [inaudible]. But that wasn't probably at that time a card that I would play from people. I don't know.

MR. BROWN: That was what?

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was a kind of circumstantial, but some people pushed probably the directing of this.

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Mr. Wright or somebody. They were looking for a good craftsman in the school, needed some good father, and then they had the principal. The pottery, weaving, good for you -- it is always to be an American and a European. The European was a background of his craft and skill, and the American as the bringing this in the right way over or something. It was very good, a very clever idea. Nowadays, no, not anymore. Now we have enough craftsmen and the old interests can then be exported.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: No.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But then we needed import, you know?

MR. BROWN: They needed the American because the American could speak the idiom and know the American student.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Not the idiom. It was -- then it would be a school for European customer.

MR. BROWN: Right.

MR. WILDENHAIN: And it was a school for American persons. And one day we had three Scandinavian. We call it already "the School for American Scandinavian Craftsmen." I was the only German there. But the other ones

were Danish or Norwegian or Swedish. It was a balanced collection. In this way, he did a good job.

[Off the record]

MR. BROWN: Well then, were you brought to the school in 1950 as one of the European contingent?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, that I discovered a little later.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: You didn't know it at the beginning?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I didn't know it from the beginning because I was innocent. I didn't know anything. My English was not so very good because I couldn't learn English. When I was on Pond Farm, everyone found my way of expressing so cute that they imitated it, and they didn't correct me. So I had a little hard time.

MR. BROWN: Well, you were brought in as instructor of pottery?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: And sculpture as well?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Ceramics, pottery, sculpture.

MR. BROWN: Was there another instructor, too, an American?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Who was that?

MR. WILDENHAIN: That is Hobart Cowles.

MR. BROWN: Cowles?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. I was a replacement of a potter which then he was going to England to Bernard Leach or, a little later, it turned out he had to go to the Korean War or something. Anyway, he left the school, and they needed a replacement. It was Olin Wesson [phonetic], was his name.

MR. BROWN: Olin?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Wesson. He lives in Monkton in Maryland or something.

MR. BROWN: You were -- the man who brought you in, did you come back here and interview? This was Harold Brennan? He was the director?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: He hadn't been director that long, had he?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No. The school had just moved from Alfred to Rochester in 1950. I don't know how long they existed in Alfred, a couple of years, not very long. Because in Alfred, they had their own big ceramic department. So Mrs. Webb was looking for, as a roof for the school, and it was the Rochester Institute of Technology. And those school was incorporated as a school, School for American Craftsmen, and the other school, School for Printing, School for Photography, it was under the umbrella of --

MR. BROWN: Of the Rochester Institute of Technology.

MR. WILDENHAIN: Of RIT, yes.

MR. BROWN: So they were just getting started?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah.

MR. BROWN: Did you have pretty good quarters here?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. I lived just downtown for a couple of years, but then I moved here.

MR. BROWN: You moved out here to the fringes of the city?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah.

MR. BROWN: What were the classrooms and all like?

MR. WILDENHAIN: It was an old private house, later a library, the Rundel Library, which later became a big building downtown. But Mr. Rundel -- and in the back, there were horse stables where during the war was the Red Cross in it, and there were still frescoes painted on the wall from Red Cross. And in these horse stables, there was pottery. And in other rooms upstairs, the doors were taken out. There was the metal shop, and there was the weaving, and that was all -- weaving -- and below, next to the pottery, was the woodshop.

It was all on a small scale. But we had although only a few -- relatively a few students. The idea was to have eight students, though we had sixteen students. It was a two-year course. After these two years, they got perhaps a paper or diploma that they had been there, but not a degree. And many years later, the School of Arts incorporated in the middle state a situation, and we became a college. And when that came, there came the troubles. Because now we had a four-year system, not a two-year system.

The two-year system was especially geared or formed on the idea of the GI Bill from people which came back from the Korean War to give them a base, for two years, something to study. They could become potters or barbers or plumbers or artists or, you know, whatever.

[Laughter]

MR. BROWN: Well, how did you feel about a two-year study? Because in Germany you had had a longer study, hadn't you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes. Yes. But the two-year study was -- the idea of a two-year study was to get the people very soon in the practice, in the life, so that they could establish their own workshop and could work for themselves and sell the stuff. When you do this eight hours a day, I think two years, it's all right for a talented student. Of course, there are students which have to -- they should take longer. But there are also many students which quit the school or some ended up selling newspapers.

MR. BROWN: How did you go about teaching? Because you hadn't taught so steadily before, had you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, but the teaching was really a very practical one. It was called what they called then the shop teaching, or as Mr. Brennan calls it, the bodega. It was a workshop and not a school, a class. They had a little -- that was acquired somehow. They had a little Englishman. They were not good at English from high school or something. But on Wednesdays, they had design by art teacher, it was Fred Myer.

And I provided -- we had complete control over their lives for age of -- it started early and stopped at five o'clock, and it was six days a week. And we had to teach three days. Three days -- my colleague, he taught Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and I am Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, so that it overlapped. And he was more teaching the technical part of ceramics like place calculations, and body calculations, the workshop in general and so forth, all what the technicalities are. And I was teaching if you will the craft itself, the pottery making, plus the philosophy. And so we were -- I was hired as an instructor under the title "instructor." Later on, I told it once to my director, I said, "No, I'm only an instructor." "Oh, no," he said. "You are not an instructor; Frans you are an educator." So I learned a little more about English.

[Laughter]

MR. WILDENHAIN: So when we were accepted by the Middle State Association, I didn't know what it was and I wasn't afraid that they were trying to getting ahead of it because it had no meaning to me.

MR. BROWN: You mean this accreditation business?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, this accreditation, and this team was in the school and checked up on us, you know. I was rather by myself. Of course, the director was a little nervous. So, my being naturally -- it went all well.

But the main essence, again, of the teaching was to learn to teach how to do things, how to do them good, as the ideal, the perfection, if you will, plus, the design. And this, I liked to do. The students liked this way, too, and I was rather well liked teacher or something.

MR. BROWN: You spent a lot of time with them? During a given day, you'd be --

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, yes. We spent the whole day together. I was more together with them as with my wife, or they were more together with me than with their wives. So it was a full-time job. And the results of this -- some turned out very well, and some less. But this is with any school. Because these people, they didn't know exactly where to go. And I tried always to introduce a thing like Bauhaus -- what's it called? -- full course or

fundamental school for a certain period, a couple of months or three months or four months, that people could try out in workshops, metal or in wood, or what they liked best. But they had to make this decision. They had to write up what they would like to do, because when the class was through, with the eight people, nobody could end up anymore. And first comes for self, and it was not really my idea.

MR. BROWN: You developed that, did you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No.

MR. BROWN: The school. I see.

MR. WILDENHAIN: The school developed it. I was trying to penetrate the system, of why we will not keep this until March, until we have plenty of applications and then we make the decision, you know?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: But first comes first. You could almost, let's say, sign up two years ahead. And then you were accepted.

MR. BROWN: That way you probably missed a number of potentially good students, didn't you?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yes, in some way. But this is not my -- I can't judge. It was what it is. I know when I went to the Bauhaus, I had to send drawings and to apply for it. And afterwards, I thought -- 20 years later, I thought, "When I sent those things to the Bauhaus, who had looked at it? It must have been Marcks, Klee, Kandinsky, Moholy." All the people that had looked at it, and "Oh, he's okay." You know?

MR. BROWN: Yes.

MR. WILDENHAIN: So I was accepted. But sometimes now, people have a portfolio, four feet by six feet. And some color slides or something. It was quite a different kind of approach to education. I will see the person or two. And sometimes came a mother with her son, and the son, he was in high school a bright boy, but he had a mood or a fight or an accident or something, and the mother thought he wasn't quite right in his top story or something. I mean, he had suffered a little. And, okay, could he get in pottery or something?

I said, "Oh, sure, just such people," meaning wizards, that I didn't pay too high attention to intellectual approach, when I see what the fellow was doing with the French [phonetic].

MR. BROWN: Did you screen them at all?

MR. WILDENHAIN: No.

MR. BROWN: Once they were enrolled?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Once they were enrolled.

MR. BROWN: You took whoever you got?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Yeah, yeah. And so, it is like harvesting. A farmer, depending on the weather and sunshine, the harvest is good.

MR. BROWN: Yes. But you didn't mind that system too much? That worked?

MR. WILDENHAIN: See, I had nothing to say about the system. You must not forget, there is a board of directors, and there is the director of the school, and the director, which was Mr. Brennan, and Mr. Brennan, his word was the word.

MR. BROWN: Was he very strong-willed?

MR. WILDENHAIN: I hope so. I mean, I wouldn't say that he was weak. But I will not say that he was not open for suggestions to consider this and this. Oh, no! That I wouldn't say. But he was also the duke [phonetic], or he was victim of this whole system. You know, that is like passing the buck or something. You cannot always blame other people for the system. You make the best of it, what there is. And I tried to make the best of it.

MR. BROWN: Mrs. Webb was still a heavy supporter of it, wasn't she?

MR. WILDENHAIN: She was a supporter financially, and [inaudible], he was -- what is it called? -- the angel.

MR. BROWN: Did you ever meet her? Would she come out here occasionally to the school?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Oh, yes, yes. I met her many times. And I taught her even a little pottery for afternoon. But she is a great lady, a grand lady. And I have a very good connection. We like each other in some way. I stayed always in her house whenever I was in New York. So, it was something that was new to me. I embraced everything what was great, you know? And I thought it was great.

But when I came and the people saw me in the school, and I came through a battered station wagon, all fraught from wood, with my belongings in it, and funny belongings -- not worthwhile to transport 10 miles, and I brought it for 3,000.

MR. BROWN: All the way from California.

MR. WILDENHAIN: With stones and shells. And later, [inaudible] article in a magazine what is *American Artist* on what he compared my workshop with a kind of a goats den or stable or what it was. It was not the workshop or the studio of a Kandinsky or something, you know, which was very formal.

MR. BROWN: Neat and precise?

MR. WILDENHAIN: Neat and precise and clean, orderly. But it's the first person. Later, we would have the period of the hippies, and so forth, in America. But I was always in some way compared a hippie because in Europe you called those people Bohemians. They were not hippies. And I have never changed. You know, I have never had a haircut since -- I wore not a tie because it was to me a symbol of [inaudible] open shirts. Otherwise, I could not breathe.

It is a thing of you as a working man that I considered myself. I felt that my holey gown is the working gown, and not -- it's just the opposite what your Kodak manager. He works in the suit the whole day in the Kodak office. When he comes home, he puts himself in jeans and works in his garden. And he tries to be finally a man again. But I was always a man. When I came home, I had only a martini, because I was exhausted from my teaching and often paralyzed to do some of my own work. You know? And still I did a lot of the work.

When I consider the whole thing of pottery making, then I must say I developed very soon to [inaudible] direction.

[End of 1 of 2 reel Side B]

[END OF INTERVIEW]

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