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Oral history interview with Ann Rice O'Hanlon, 1964 July 8

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Ann Rice O'Hanlon on July 8, 1964. The interview took place in Mill Valley, CA, and was conducted by Mary McChesney for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Also present were Richard O'Hanlon and Robert McChesney.

Interview

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: First I'd like to ask you, Ann, where were you born and when?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I was born in Ashland, Kentucky on the longest day of the year, June 21, 1908.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: And where did you get your art school training? Or, art training?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I graduated from the University of Kentucky as an art major, which was my basic training. I had some very good teachers there, actually, and then I came, after a years teaching in a small college, to the California School of Fine Arts, now the Art Institute for two years of post graduate work in San Francisco.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: What year was that?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That was thirty, oh what, thirty-one and thirty-two.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: We were just talking about your art training at the School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. How did you first make any connection with the government art project?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, that happened as a bit of mana from Heaven when Dick and I went back to Kentucky in the spring, I guess, it was of thirty-three. (1933) The - was that it? Was that when it was? I know that we starved in Kentucky for almost a year and then Roosevelt came to the aid of all of we starving artists or artisans and had each --. Didn't he assign somebody in each major city of each state or community or area, to hire artists for some major project? It wasn't a relief thing in that case, it was simply, they said that the government wanted some art work done and I just happened to be the only person, apparently, in Lexington who was available to do a major work on a wall. And so I was chosen. There was one other person in the area, whose name I can't remember now, but he did a large mural in the library for the University of Kentucky and I was assigned or asked to design a fresco in the concert hall on the campus called Memorial Hall. It was in the foyer of the building and so I did a fresco -- Kentucky's one and only and probably last fresco.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: What was the subject of the fresco?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, the subject was, as you well remember one had subjects in those days, and it happened to deal with the historical events of the particular area around Lexington which is rich, terribly rich. It's one of the richest spots in the whole United States, it seems to me when I started digging into it, in historical material and very wonderful things had been invented, had been discovered there. It was a town of great --. It was an educational center. As a matter of fact, there were three colleges there almost from its beginning. And so in order to get so much material on a single wall, forty feet by eight feet in height, forty feet long, I chose to use a scheme of continuous events interwoven, so to speak, or in continuity, you might say, over the wall's surface. Similar to adding a whole group of Persian miniatures, one next to the other, though the design itself was woven together plastically I felt at the time.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Describe some of the first things that happened there.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: How do you mean?

RICHARD O'HANLON: Steam boats, hypodermics, nail factories ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, yes. The first vaccination, what do you call that? Injection in the United States, I think, was given in Lexington or was concocted by a doctor there. The first steam boat...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Was that the time they had all the race horses down there?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Could be. Ha Ha Not bad.

RICHARD O'HANLON: It was considered the Paris of the United States in those days before the revolution, before the civil war.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: This was in the fort days, actually, that the vaccination thing was discovered by a doctor, when it was still a fort. And on the little town branch somebody invented a steam boat idea and made a model of one which ran up and down the town branch. The first planetarium, supposedly, in the United States was designed there and still was there. I found it in the basement of Sarah College, which is now out of business, but at that time it was a girl's finishing school and the town didn't even know it existed...

RICHARD O'HANLON: The first nail factory in the world.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... there it was sitting in the basement.

RICHARD O'HANLON: The first headed nail factory in the world was there.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: We were all quite amazed.

RICHARD O'HANLON: And one of the first steam engines in the United States was there.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... for awhile. My fresco managed to stir up a lot of civic interest among the business clubs and so on, after it had been completed though. During the time it was being done, because it wasn't traditional portrait painting, the townspeople couldn't have cared less. Curiously enough the most interested audience I had, while I was working on it, were the Negro janitors on the university grounds and they would come in every night and watch me paint and sometimes bring me apples or coca colas. They were just delightful people to keep my spirit up and believe me, at times it wanned very much. Ha Ha Ha.

RICHARD O'HANLON: You should say something about the technique of the fresco which is unique.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, do you wish that?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Yes, I would. I was going to ask you where you learned, this was painted on what, plaster?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Where did you learn how to do this?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: True fresco I learned from Ray Boynton at the School of Fine Arts in San Francisco, which had been my major work in the two years that I was at the art school and I had executed a fresco on one of the school's cafeteria walls which is now whitewashed. As you know, as a preparation. It was the only large one that I had done prior to the P.W.A.P. project in Kentucky.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Was this the School of Fine Arts?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: You say you had a fresco there?

RICHARD O'HANLON: It's still there, painted out.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: They just painted over the top of it.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: It was in the cafeteria?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, on the wall between the doors into the hot table, the major part of the cafeteria, the food part.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How large was that one?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, that was about ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: The width of the room and the height...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ...eight by eight perhaps, maybe it was twelve by something.

RICHARD O'HANLON: ----- stuck through the wall, it was three spaces over the top.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That whole center wall. I think they have a vending machine of some sort in front of it now. But, it was very interesting when I decided to do a fresco, there was nothing in favor of a fresco being put in that spot, but it was my medium by that time I was tremendously anxious to do a fresco. The building is a replica, the building in which it is, is a replica of the Independence Hall, is it Philadelphia, one of those fired jobs

in red brick and it had been just fairly recently completed and if you know anything about fresco, you know you're not supposed to put a fresco on a fresh wall or on a new wall. It is supposed to be well seasoned and settle and so on and we ran into another obstacle. We couldn't find any of the proper sort of lime back there. Did you ever do fresco?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: No. Never.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: We were taught to use lime putty. In fact, we were told that you couldn't use anything but lime putty. The commercial dry limes or the sort of thing that you can buy in sack and then put in a solution of water absolutely would not work for fresco. But I tried it. I tried it in small patches down in the lower floor in the basement of the Memorial Hall and found that it seemed to do very well and it gave every indication of working well. I was also not supposed to use some of the colors which I had to, finally, and I did finally use, and it has withheld. It has withstood time simply beautifully and when I go back to see it now, all these years later, I'm very pleased with the way the color has mellowed, it's rich. There are few if any cracks in the wall and those had to do with possible shakes in the building and not bad ones at all which in view of the fact that I wasn't working with the right material is a good thing. We couldn't find plasterers. The government couldn't find plasterers for this sort of job so they were forced to take Dick on for that job. Though he wasn't either a plasterer. He had studied fresco also so he didn't mind plastering on one end of the day and I did the painting on the other end of the day and for eight months we didn't see one another.

RICHARD O'HANLON: I would get up at midnight and go downtown and have coffee, wet down the wall with plaster. By dawn I'd have the wall ready to be painted on. Ann would come in after breakfast. I'd go home and go to bed and then we worked twenty-four hours a day, right around the clock.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How large a section would you do in a day, painting?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Very small, actually, because it was so figurative and there was so much happening in it. Actually not, the largest piece that I ever did was twenty inches across an area twenty inches across and that was the largest. Sometimes much smaller. It took about eight months including the time for developing the design and the large full-scale cartoons that we used to trace into the wet plaster ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Tell about the main street of town, these buildings.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: And I used all local material to develop the environmental notations, would you say, in the design?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: You mean in the objective material of the design by itself...not the ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: ... elements.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: The elements were dictated... the design aspect was dictated by the esthetic need and the elements, I would call this the elements, were drawn from, that made up the whole webbery of the thing, were drawn from the local area either rural or urban, the town itself, and there are so many marvelous buildings both, of the what? Mansard influences.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Georgian.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Georgian and Greek Revival.

RICHARD O'HANLON: These are pre-civil war buildings on the main street of town and Ann merely made drawings of the main street of town - all of the buildings. She wanted to use old buildings, incorporated them clear across the top of her fresco, including some of the country homes, country estates, on the end of the fresco, but she stripped them of their shoe signs and their department store signs and created a two page article in the newspaper -why don't we do the town like this again? Those buildings are still there and they're actually very beautiful.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Did they take the signs off?

RICHARD O'HANLON: Well, there was a big movement to do this but nothing happened obviously.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: The chamber of commerce actually had ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: This part of town was very stirred up about it. They asked her where did she get these beautiful buildings and she said, just go down the main street of town and look at the these without the signs, just imagine how it would be without the signs and there they are.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Such events, for instance as the Chautauqua, which was one of the major marvels of my childhood in Lexington. It was a great, great event of each year, because it brought things that we wouldn't ever have had otherwise, in the way of lectures and concert and such elements, such events as that were what I used within the time layout and I, in order to somehow get some kind of logical continuity in the thing, in the design, historical aspect, I started at the bottom with the earliest coming in by the pioneers, into the wilderness and gradually, as I moved up the wall, I also moved forward in time. It's sort of the top layer of the design actually was contemporary. The lower layer, within the design, was the first historical introduction of the white man at any rate into an Indian country. And the center panel is going vertically, which could be seen from way out the front door. These panels, (when I say panels I don't mean separated panels but they were rather cohesively pulled together as that) and the center panel gave this kind of content, table of contents, as you moved from bottom to top for the whole mural. It was lots of fun to do and in a sense it's very abstract.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: It sounds very interesting. Well, it was like running on several levels at the same time.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That's right. That's right. And I ---- one reason why I chose this rather eventful affair for the wall was that it was located in a fairly, well, you know, fairly narrowish foyer where people would gather during intermissions or wait until they were allowed to enter the auditorium proper so that when there were a lot of people in there the, wherever one's eye would hit there would be a completed event to be seen. It wasn't dependent upon an empty room in order to be a whole thing, you know ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: It's a tapestry like effect.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: A tapestry-like effect.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: This was up ... how high was it?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Actually, oh no, no, no, not that high about three feet, actually from three feet it began, three feet off the floor and it was eight feet from there up about an eleven foot ceiling - an arched ceiling.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Did the panels run together? You said there were three panels. Were they touching each other?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, there are not three panels ...

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Oh, you said the "center panel"...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, that's why I say it was not divided, it wasn't actually a divided panel but within the design webbery...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Area ... central area.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Oh, I see what you mean.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It was ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: The panel suggested ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: .... that one area was complete in its own right.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: It ran the complete length to the floor?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, broken by the two doors on either end. The figures, of course, that make up the main panel are tiny, tiny in that the largest one was about twelve inches, about, yes, about twelve inches high to figures that would be as small as six inches, shall we say, so that it became more or less an all over pattern. Then in the long and narrow panels, which were made to be panels, actually, by being enclosed by the edge of the door and the edge of the wall, in one end was a man and in the other end was a woman, just working people, and they were sort of symbols of this whole thing. The woman held a history book and a rake, I think, and the man held a hoe. They were both portraits of people. One a poet that I knew in the area and because we were at that time concerned with making these things visually meaningful in ideas and it turned out I, at the time, was curious, just as soon as I had finished the fresco, I was just tremendously disappointed with it. I felt as though I'd done a tremendously horrible thing to the people of Lexington. I guess that's normal. Is it? I don't know, ha, ha, ha.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: I think it is.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: But when I went back to see it after five years or so, I was rather surprised. It was quite jolly and it had a sparkle that I hadn't remembered existed because I was, had been too close to it and now that

I'm completely detached from it in ways of working and attitude toward painting, I find it, I enjoy very much looking at it.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How recently have you seen it?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: A couple years ago.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Were you given any assistants, painting assistants, to help you with the project?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I did all the painting myself.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: And did you submit drawings? You mentioned the final drawings, the final cartoons. Were they submitted to anybody for approval?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Ned Bruce?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: No. No, I don't think so. Just Edward Rannells, who was the head of the ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: The local head.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... he was the head in Kentucky. He was the state head. And I had presented one idea first which was an abstracted use of the shape of the state of Kentucky, which fit itself so beautifully into the long rectangular shape of the wall, which was a horizonal rectangle and the shape of the state itself is a fascinating one anyway and I think that first design was going to concern itself with the things of Kentucky, not so much the events of Kentucky, but certain aspects of its geography, geology, its agriculture. It's the center of the bluegrass, it's the center of the burley tobacco sort of thing, and I think that that design would have probably been the one that would have been chosen had this program come up in the late forties instead of the late thirties or middle thirties rather, because it was very abstract. But Mr. Rannells wasn't happy with the idea for some reason. He wanted it figurative. He wanted it eventful, human events and so I switched that whole thing and worked out this other historical plan, which was based actually upon the golden sector division of space. That's how that center concentration happened to occur that happened to work very nicely into the symmetrical aspect of the building, which is of course very symmetrical.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: This project was done under the P.W.A.P.? It wasn't W.P.A.?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No. Public Works of Art.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: So you were not on relief. You were not on relief then?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No. No, it was a straight commission.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: What, may I ask, what did they pay you and how?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It seemed to me to be a huge fortune.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Ha ha ha.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I had not seen so much money in my life, as a matter of fact. It seems to me, I vaguely remember something like thirty-eight dollars a week.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Oh, you were paid by the week, not for the total commission?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, we were all paid by the week as far as I can recall. And I don't know how this sum comes to mind.

RICHARD O'HANLON: We had enough to go to New York and come back to the West Coast on. By living on a dollar a day, it was quite simple.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, that was, that was thirty-eight a week. That was a very good wage.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It was near forty dollars, I believe.

RICHARD O'HANLON: You sure you don't mean a month?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: No, no, it couldn't have been. Regular W.P.A. people got about ninety a month. So this wouldn't ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Somebody else I talked to in St. Louis was on this project and he said he got about one hundred and fifty a month so that would have been about right.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It was about that same amount, I think.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: It seemed, of course a fortune to him. He saved enough money to come to San Francisco. Ha ha ha.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I never ever had hit it quite so rich.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Instead of sleeping on the ground when going to New York, we actually slept in motels at $2.00 a night just about every night. It was fabulous.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Did they have motels?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, we'd go into a private home or a ...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Oh you, tourist, tourist homes.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Tourist homes, that was it.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Tourist homes.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It was a great -- it was a godsend...

RICHARD O'HANLON: We even bought meals. Instead of cooking and eating dry bread, we bought meals even.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Ha ha ha.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Ha ha ha.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Were your materials paid for by the project or did you have an allotment to buy them?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I think that they were paid for. Now I can't remember that really. Whether I was given an allotment or whether I presented the bill for the materials, I can't remember, but that wasn't included in the wage scale, I know. It was very wonderful not to be in competition with anybody. That I enjoyed very much. It was ...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: I can see that ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ...it was tremendously interesting set-up all the way around ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: It was the only project at Lexington, Kentucky at that time.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No...Frank Long...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Because the painter painted...Frank Long painted out in the country though.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: And he did an oil mural that was very much smaller than mine and it was more of a painting, actually, than a mural. I had some very fascinating reactions to this thing. Of course, no one, absolutely no one, including the teachers, knew about fresco back there. They had remembered reading about Giotto having done frescos, of course, but having never done it or contacted it themselves they had no concept of it at all. And I'll never forget having a visitor from...from the Art Institute in Chicago one day...

RICHARD O'HANLON: The director, furthermore ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ...Yes, I guess it was the director of this school and they were apparently doing fresco up there by this time and he looked at my thing which is very brilliant in color. I used a full palette, you know. As you know, Boynton encouraged us to do and he was a little bit stunned because apparently in Chicago they modified all colors with white. In fact ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Fresco secco.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ...they worked more on fresco secco type of thing than they did on true built up intensity to a color. Now mine was, the reason why I did it in such small patches, by the way, was because the process of

getting or the way to arrive at full hue, a full intensity due, was not just to paint down green in one stroke. It wouldn't work on fresco. It wouldn't stay on the wall. As a matter of fact, it would powder off its surface or become opaque when it dried.

RICHARD O'HANLON: It's a glazing technique.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, it's a glazed technique.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Twenty to thirty coats of water-ground color, ground in water, painted twenty, thirty, forty coats. This was hour after hour after hour, going over and over and over ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: The first wash is very, very light, just the tone is established and then after building up numbers of layers of glaze, this is what it amounts to: you get rich and luminous color and I believe that that is probably why the wall stood up so well, because I kept it wet for hours by keeping adding the wet coats. I mean the wet washes of color...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Well, the humidity of the climate helped. If it were at, say Arizona, it would have set up more quickly. Once plaster is set, then you can't do this anymore. Also once the plaster is set, the calcium crystals form on the outside of the color.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: What size brush did you use for this work?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I usually used Chinese ink brushes, you know, those sumi ink brushes.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Very sharp point?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes. Only I didn't, I wasn't, I didn't develop my fresco technique in the pointillism system which I know they do in some places. In Chicago they did - these little points of color one on top of the other. I simply put broad washes one on top of the other and it simply concentrated itself and became more and more and more concentrated in brilliancy of hue. For instance ...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: I ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... excuse me.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Is there any similarity to the work of Clay Spohn, the way he worked?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, none at all. I would say, now let me see. How ... I would say that ...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: His would be the most likely to have worked that way.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes. He used a great deal of modeling and that sort of thing. I stuck, as much as possible, to the concept of flatness without being flat. As a matter of fact, there's one section in the bottom of this fresco that looks very "Giottish". Now if you can remember what Giotto, the way Giotto painted - he would use light and shade or the idea of modeling around a thing very, very sparingly. A fold in the skirt would give you the idea more than shading. This was the say I handled the thing.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You mentioned the Indians. Were they included in the wall?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, there is an Indian or two.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY:_____

ANN RICE O'HANLON:_____

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: What kind of Indians were around there?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, dear. The tribes I don't know. As a matter of fact, this particular area was known as the dark and bloody hunting ground. It was a land of magic to the Indians, who never considered it a place to live in. They would go to hunt in it, but for some reason or another, from greatly prehistoric times that particular area of Kentucky has been held sacred by the Indians or magical or filled with witchcraft or something. So that, perhaps, this is one reason why the land retained the beauty that it did have up until, well, it still is beautiful for that matter. But, certainly ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: It was one of the most heavily forested areas in America and Ann's father told us when he was a boy going from Ashland to Lexington, which is about eight miles, that he would go through a tunnel in the trees and hardly ever see the sky. There was solid trees all around.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: It's the same way now.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Huge black walnut trees.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It looks very much like English landscape. Tremendously.

RICHARD O'HANLON: They had to cut down the forest to grow corn, of course.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: There's one thing I think you might be interested in knowing about the fresco palette. It isn't the same palette as for any other medium for the simple reason that lime is an active chemical agent that can destroy or act upon certain of the minerals that are in some of the hues, so the palette is very, very limited to the earth hues, some of which can be fairly brilliant, as you know, if you concentrate them, and this is the reason I did concentrate them. But one of the lacks within the fresco palette would have been considered the red range. The red earths that we can get in this country aren't as brilliant as the ones that are available, or were available, in Italy. But, I decided to try cadmium and I found it worked and it has stood up beautifully, it hasn't faded...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Three or four years now. It's still intense.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... in the slightest. It hasn't turned and it didn't change in the action of the lime. I also used cadmium yellow, very sparingly, because naturally you don't want to throw a palette off key, but I could use those two brilliancies just simply because I did build up the other hues so firmly and solidly.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: That's very interesting. Do you know anybody else who has used the cadmiums?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I don't know if whether...ask John Haley if they used cadmiums in their true fresco sometimes. I forget that. I've always forgotten to ask him. But, we were told "No, no, no, never."

RICHARD O'HANLON: He worked under Ray Boynton too and probably, therefore, wouldn't have.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: But he might have discovered by this time that you can. Oh, I imagine that the palette has been very much enlarged anyway with these new synthetics.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You mentioned that you included a portrait of a poet friend of yours in the mural. Were any of the other people in the mural portraits of local dignitaries or people that you knew?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes. Lots of them. There were professors there on the university campus who either happened to have impressed me with the quality of their faces, but none of a national order. The poet that I put in was Wes Littlefield, who was a very sensitive person and whom I respected very much, had done some writing but I can't ... I think that I tried to ... It comes very naturally to me to use material that is around me.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Yes, I think this ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It's easier than settling upon some sort of a stereotype which doesn't seem very natural to me.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Part of the research was of the first newspapers printed in what -- 1700? - way back - little, tiny newspapers. The small letters, the lower case, came over the mountains from Virginia but the mule that had the upper case letters fell in the river and drowned so he had to carve all the upper case letters. The title letters and the capitals were all hand carved. So these early newspapers were very charming. We looked through these for weeks and we got a great deal of material for the fresco from the old library there and including these wonderful old newspapers.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: And the old type of schoolrooms because education was so very important item among even the pioneers there ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: The first university West of the Atlantic seacoast was there.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: The county fair is in it with its red horses, I think the horse that I put in the thing was probably taken from Man O War, too, because I used to ride right by Man O War every day, actually, when I went on a morning ride on my aunt's farm.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You mentioned that, at the time you were doing this, your's was the only project going on in the town of Lexington, Kentucky. Were there many other artists living there? Was there any kind of an artist's community?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, there was actually. I think there was quite an active one, actually. There was a very

active little theatre group. There was, the art department had been developed by Carol Sachs, who had made quite a name in Europe for himself, and brought a great deal of those contacts with him to Kentucky. What is his name, John Rothenstein, who is the head or the director of the Tate Gallery in London, was my art teacher, as a matter of fact my art history teacher when I was in Lexington and we had Edward Fisk, who was a well known painter in New York and Eugene O'Neil's son-in-law there. It just happened to have drawn a rather interesting group of people into this little area so the activity wasn't in any way like the art activity that you think of today in the New York area, for instance, or even the San Francisco area. It was more dispersed simply because the town itself. The way of the people of the South or of that middle South wasn't conducive particularly. It wasn't very encouraging to art, I should say. If it happened to be a portrait of some ancestor, well, that's all fine and well but anything that went beyond the portrait was subject to high criticism, even a landscape.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Also, the portraits of horses and dogs were quite prevalent, weren't they? Famous horses portraits.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, but those usually were reproductions of colored engravings, I believe, from much earlier times.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Oh, really?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I saw very few. I mean there wasn't very much of that when I was there. I don't remember that part.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: It's an interesting fact that Gordon Woods (Head of SF Art Institute), you know made his living for a long time right in the south there doing portraits of dogs and race horses.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Did he really? Well, which part?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Kentucky, I believe, but I don't know what town.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, this was somewhat later.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Yes, it was later.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: This was later. But I made my way through college making portraits, ancestor portraits.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: This was in Kentucky territory.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, in Lexington.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Working from photographs?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Working from daguerreotypes and little photographs and these marvelous old, old, old photographs of some very ugly uncle John, for instance. I would be asked to, wouldn't I please, after all Uncle John had been dead for some few years, quite a few years as a matter of fact, maybe fifty, couldn't I make his eyes a little farther about and give him a little bit handsomer nose than he happened to have in the photograph. Ha, ha, ha.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Ha, ha, ha.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: So this is the sort of thing that made me a little bitter about art in Kentucky, actually.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: What was your reception going back? You sort of went back to your Alma Mater as a celebrity.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Actually, almost nil. I think that the town couldn't have cared less, nor even the people who were in the art department on campus. They were sort of apathetic about the whole thing until I had just about finished when my former teacher came in and looked it over. Now this is all on the same campus, mind you, and he was aghast. He, in fact, he was slightly speechless and finally he said "Well, I didn't realize this was what you were doing over here", and he said, "I'm just amazed". So proceeded to write a whole page article in the paper on the thing.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: In the school paper?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, not the school paper, the city paper. But, that is one of the things about the land. They didn't realize how apathetic they were. These people are just - they were apathetic - and it is only in the last ten years or so that the university art department has become, out of the sheer labor of a few very enterprising people, has become an alive thing in the community, though it's much more apathetic by our standards than

ours. It is still very, very much more alive than it used to be. And now, of course, after the thing was done, I understand that people come and did come to see it all the time. I mean, there were numbers of people who would come and it would be on tours for people to see as one of the things to be seen.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: That's fantastic that none of the art department came over to see it.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Almost never. It was so, it was so funny. Because it was alien, in the first place, to the sort of thing that they were doing in the art department. They were painting still-lifes in oil paints. This was probably the most that they did do. Occasionally landscapes. The whole idea of a fresco was something that was alien to their way of doing things at the time.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Also, a historical portrayal of the area must have been very strange to them.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, I think so, actually. I definitely believe so. Oh, I did -- I don't know what makes people tick like that. Perhaps the reason I came back out here.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, that's the reason I'm here.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: From where?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Missouri

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: What did you do when the mural was completed? That would have been in 1934.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes. I left as quickly as I could. We went on to New York and spent several months in New York, catching up on life and then returned to California.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You weren't on any of the government projects in New York?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: And then you came back to San Francisco?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: And did you have any further connection with any of the art projects?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, then I started starving again and then I did go on relief and joined the W.P.A. During which time, I was occupied in several of the activities of the W.P.A. At first, in the lithographs - in making lithographs, which incidently have popped up here and there over the United States, and one of the most curious experiences that I had, later, much, much later, years later actually, was to go into the faculty club in the University of Kentucky when I was back on a visit and was taken to lunch in the faculty club and we, there on the wall was one of my lithographs that I had done out here on the W.P.A. And it had been sent back to Washington, from which it had been distributed to various public outfits. They didn't know it was mine or that the person who had done this particular lithograph had been from the University of Kentucky and it happened to have been a quite abstract landscape of Mt. Tamalpais.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Was this the only one they had there? This one of yours or did they have other lithographs from San Francisco?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I, no, I don't recall but they did have two or three other prints in the faculty club on the wall but I became so excited about seeing mine there and finding out about how it happened to be there that I didn't proceed to see about any of the others.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: We ran into someone recently who had seen one of this prints -clear across the country. I think it was the same way, in a school or in a University. I forgot just what it was.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It was great fun. Then I also helped, I actually executed one of George Harris' designs, a small mural in an aquatic park in egg tempera. I wonder if it's still there?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: What section of the building is it in?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: In the second floor, relatively small. What was it, about twenty by forty or fifty? It was a long narrow panel.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Was that during the same time that Hilaire Hiler was working?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes. Very deep, like a deep stained glass window. I didn't design that. I merely interpreted

it in egg tempera, again meticulously building up ten million layers of glazes.

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(Back to conversation about the mural at the University of Kentucky.)

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You said that people did come to watch while you were working there?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes. On Sundays people would come - on weekdays they wouldn't. One Sunday the biggest undertaker of town showed up with a group of people and I, at first, was sort of interested in his interest in the mural but then it turned out that he had heard that I had used his building in a part of the design because it happened to be one of the local landmarks of good Georgian Colonial design and from there on the mural itself was completely lost to his interest and all he could think of was reminiscing about whom he had buried from that particular building. The conversation went on for about three quarters of an hour concerning the people who had been buried from that particular building and the people he had known, who had lived in certain of the other buildings, whom he had buried.

RICHARD O'HANLON: As a sequel to that you should have had a doctor who said, "I gave birth to this or that well known person in this or that building."

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes. But the thing that I noticed above all was that the really curious audience, or rather that the audience that was curious, about what was going on and about the nature of the fresco in general, its design and the way it was being done, were the Negroes. They were fascinated with the whole process and they would ask endless questions about it, whereas the interest on the part of white population there was just totally devoid of curiosity and had only to do with the events - the literal aspect of the events that were going on the wall.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Were there any Negroes included in the mural painting?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh yes! Right in, in fact, they're strategically wound into the most important part of it because all of my life I have been, for some reason or another, tremendously interested in their aesthetic quality actually. My family, not my own personal family, but relatives who had Negro servants who were usually very adept, often they were very fine musicians, often quite well educated. This had been a part of my whole childhood and so I couldn't possibly have left them out of the thing and this was long, long before any of this racism had crept up, because, as you know, Kentucky was a border land. We were always much more tolerant than the southern, more southern areas even though there was a certain amount of, well, a considerable amount of segregation there. It wasn't nearly to the extent of the farther southern states.

RICHARD O'HANLON: What most people don't know is that Cassius Clay, did you know that Cassius Clay, Henry Clay's brother, had actually a fort there? His beautiful big house had guns, cannons on top, a printing press in the bottom to help the underground. Part of the Negro slaves' underground went through his house on to the north and this is right in the middle of Lexington.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Were any of the historical events that Dick mentioned involving Negroes in the mural? Or were there any ones that took place that you thought were in themselves important enough to be included in the history of Lexington?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, I think so and it's hard to describe this mural. Very difficult to describe it. It's full of little anecdotes and little humorous connections, if you really look at it. If you really wanted to spend some time looking at it, it's almost like a funny paper, in a sense, because there are little incidents and, what would you say, groupings of events that are to me very full of double meanings, both visually and otherwise meaningful.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: You must have done a tremendous amount of research.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, heavens, yes! Let me see now, I worked on - I did research for at least two and a half months or three months of the eight. Just digging up and making small drawings which I then put together and assembled in the proper mural fashion.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Ann had enough material for at least six more frescos by the time she was through. She just couldn't stop. The library is just full of fabulous old things. That is from the 1700's.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: You must have done a lot of reading too...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I guess I did. It's so long ago, I can't remember but most of it was drawing and none of it is simply copied. It's all freely interpreted and very freely adapted to the needs of this particular mural. It was, oh, another interesting comment was, (this came through several times). They would look at the wall and as you know, you paint a fresco from the top down because the wet plaster might fall onto a finished piece if it

happened to be loose.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Also stays more damp at the bottom.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That's right. And, you complete it - each days' work is a complete thing. You can't work over it afterwards, except in a very minor way, but after I had gotten about halfway through, someone who should have known better, this happened to be an artist...

RICHARD O'HANLON: The head of the Art Museum in Chicago.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, not he. No, this was another one. Asked me when I was going to start with the oils on top of it. He thought I was making an underpainting in the old sense. He had read somewhere that the old boys made an underpainting and then they would paint over the tempera or fresco with oils.

RICHARD O'HANLON: None of the art students from the university came over to watch this.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, we've already gone through that.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Ann mentioned that, yes.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: But the whole area was so oriented to oil painting or watercolor. But they would never associate this with a watercolor simply because it was so rich and full-bodied in color. It didn't have the technical identification with watercolor that they were used to.

RICHARD O'HANLON: I think I should add that Ann worked her way through the university doing copper engravings, among other things, drypoint of these old buildings around town.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Not copper engravings, etchings. I never did an engraving in my life.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Drypoint etching and she would sit down with a copper plate and draw the building backwards so it would print properly when it came out, without going through the process of tracing, just sit down and do it directly. And these were sold in the bookstores instead of photographs of the buildings around. They were actually Ann's etchings. So she had a headstart on the history of the place.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Yes.

RICHARD O'HANLON: In terms of art.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Ann, speaking of frescos when I was in Piza in Italy, the cemetery there, I've forgotten what they call it, a huge, huge cemetery?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, that. I know the one you mean.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Campa Santa.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Yes, something like that. Campa Santa. Anyway, during the war, groups of these things had been destroyed. This had left the frescos open to the weather and it's the most amazing study of the structure of these things I've ever seen in my life. Evidently, they would put on a basic coat and then they would do the drawing and then the next coat, of course, they would lay on the fresco.

RICHARD O'HANLON: That's routine - the bound coat, the undercoat.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: And then they would ... but all the way, the color, the last work on it, all the way down to the basic wall, was exposed in layers, you know.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How marvelous.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: ... there'd be a section of it off and then there'd be a very large section of nothing but drawing, evidently, in something like sanguine pencil..

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, you do it in charcoal or in something like sanguine.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: These were in sanguine.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Or some stain.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Evidently done with a very sharp pointed pencil or something like that, a very fine drawing, very meticulous line drawing.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That's right.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Did you know the Egyptians did exactly the same thing?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Oh, did they?

RICHARD O'HANLON: We saw lots of them in one of the tombs. We were taking a tour, three days there, and got into tombs that normally tourists don't get into and one of them was an unfinished tomb where at the very top, and it started at the bottom started to paint, was finished. Then as you went up or down, I forget which, you saw this undercoating and the master's drawing. First, the students' layed out, or the assistants, and then the master came along with big sweeping strokes and changed the position of the figures. Same thing that Diego Rivera did on the drawings that I made for him.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: There's a good reason. It's very -- there's a very wonderful reason for doing it this way. I mean, the big drawing first. It is also, one of the reasons why it becomes immediately and instantly, that is at that very first stage, a mural, because you have to see the whole thing in full scale. That first drawing on the ground wall has to be there so that you'll know how far down to plaster in a given day. So you'll plaster down to the certain area that you're going to handle in this particular day, then the cartoon is rolled down over the new plaster and the tracing is made by one of two ways. One is with a stylus and a pouncing of powdered black or something through the holes. The other way is with an indented line, pencil - that's the stylus system. Yes, which is the way that I used. That's what I did. And ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: And then you cut back at the end of the day, undercut the plaster, so that the next coat for the next day will cling to it, be keyed into it, not cut straight into the wall but at an angle.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: There's no time, in the process of the painting of the fresco, that you can possibly lose the fact of its being a wall and that's a good thing about it as a medium. However, I think as a medium it is probably forever, I suspect, and it will be taken over by the acrylics now because it is so vulnerable to gases and all sorts of things. Fresco is. I mean the true fresco, the old fresco ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: The sulfuric acid or sulfuric fumes, like the Louvre, the outside of the buildings in France, are being chewed away. The black is now washed off but it actually eats into the surface and the same would happen on fresco.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: But the same qualities of surface, painting quality, or flat quality, can be achieved with the acrylics now so there's no point in going through all of that bit, it seems to me.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: I don't see why there should be any reason to.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: We had begun talking about your return to San Francisco. But, I meant to ask you earlier about Ray Boynton, who had been your teacher of fresco at San Francisco, at the California School of Fine Arts, and the reason I'm interested is you said that when you were in Kentucky, nobody had heard of fresco technique. I interviewed a man who was on the project in Washington D.C. and he said there they didn't so any fresco, so apparently the influence of the Mexican muralists, if this was what it was, came up the West Coast and somehow didn't get over to the East Coast ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: No, Ray Boynton was prior to Diego Rivera.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: He was? Well, this is what I wanted to know about. Where he got his training ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: He was the only one in the Western Hemisphere doing fresco when he did it first.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: When was that? Oh.

RICHARD O'HANLON: I mean in America, the States. Diego and Orozco, Siqueiros and all. But Ray Boyntonn, this went back into the late twenties and I worked with him as an assistant at the art school in thirty, thirty-one and he, at that time, had already done frescos including encaustic, a wax technique. And then Rivera came but he actually wasn't the first here.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Where did Ray pick up on this?

RICHARD O'HANLON: He studied it abroad and read about it and experimented himself.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, also ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: His Mills College frescos were prior to Rivera being in the States.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... there's another reason for its not going East and that has to do with the coal tar in the air.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: We were just talking about Ray Boynton's background and I had said something about the fact that it seemed to me that the fresco came up -- the fresco technique came up the West Coast of the United States and hadn't gone to the East Coast and I thought it might have been due to Rivera's influence and you thought that there were other reasons.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, I think it was because Boynton himself found, in his researching in Italy, that conditions were ideal in California, particularly in California, not the Northwest but the more tropical part of the West Coast because of the lack of coal and what would you say, sulphur in the air. The thing they found that had deteriorated fresco in Europe was sulphur in the air.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Industrial ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Yes, industrial smog. Every house used coal.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: And since we had nothing of that out here at all, it made a perfect place for the development of fresco and I suspect that that is one reason why it didn't go East. It seems to me that, didn't Orozco a small --

RICHARD O'HANLON: Fresco secco ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That, yes, that's right.

RICHARD O'HANLON: At the new School for Social Research.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: The example of frescos in the East were mostly secco or dry fresco.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Tamayo may have done the best at Smith College, a Tamayo fresco is there.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Of course, this was inside too.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, and that's one reason why I was -- really it was a very daring thing for me to have even thought of using fresco in Kentucky which gets its entire heat from soft coal and the air must be full of the stuff, but for some reason or another it never seemed to bother my fresco at Memorial Hall.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Give it another three hundred years instead of thirty.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: And now ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: By then we'll know.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: And now heating techniques have changed so actually the fresco has improved rather than deteriorated in thirty years.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Is Ray Boynton still living?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No. He died several, quite a few years ago actually. But he was a great influence in this area.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Can you tell us something about his background. Was he a local artist? Was he from this area?

RICHARD O'HANLON: He taught at the University of California and he taught at the School of Fine Arts in San Francisco... traveled extensively...was a wonderful person, we're all very fond of him. But, I don't know really where he studied. He had studied something in Paris at the Beaux Arts School but there they taught only fresco secco. He made a great point of this when we first learned, that in all the Yale, Harvard, the schools of the East that had Beaux Arts type training in the twenties and in the teens usually came out knowing about fresco secco but they didn't use actual true fresco.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: What is the difference? Fresco secco is done on the dry plaster?

RICHARD O'HANLON: This is done on a plaster wall that is dried and then with a medium mixed with the colors...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: A binder.

RICHARD O'HANLON: A binder onto ... its like a watercolor or a gouache.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: You know ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: It's closest to gouache than it is to anything else.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... in true fresco there is no binder, you simply used pure dry color that has no glue nor anything in it mixed with water, ground in water, and the thing that binds the color to the wall is actually the chemical change in the plaster itself which forms a crystalline surface over, well, it forms a crystalline surface which locks in the color just as if you put a glass wall on but there's no glue. There's no binder.

RICHARD O'HANLON: The medium is water.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That's the reason it's so pure. There isn't anything about it that can change because of change of chemical composition as oil can or even glue can.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, actually the pigment itself becomes part of the wall. Something to do with silicone.

RICHARD O'HANLON: No, there's no silicone. It's calcium -- plaster is calcium.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Calcium silicate, isn't it?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It's the same as - it turns into glass in effect.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: The calcium silicante is the stuff we used to put eggs in to preserve them.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: It's called waterglass.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That's right. You're right. Good heavens, I haven't heard that term used for years and years.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: I remember using it in the pottery shop but I can't remember what we ever used it for now.

RICHARD O'HANLON: To make the clay run without too much water. It's the floquelent like bourbon, etc.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I wish it were possible to have more projects like this thing. I think it would be wonderful, actually.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Are you saying we should have another W.P.A.?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I'm saying that everything that ... that we should have very, very many more artists at work.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: In this kind of large project?

RICHARD O'HANLON: By projects you mean art projects, projects of things to do but not W.P.A. type projects.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, I don't know, the W.P.A. type project that made prints and small paintings and whatnot that were sent around and distributed to areas that would never see a painting otherwise ... I wouldn't do it the way ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: No, but you're not asking for another depression, that's what I mean?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh no! But we ran into something in Norway which tickled the life out of me and it didn't have anything to do with government projects but the artists groups would gather together things which would be sent to all of the villages. The tiniest little hamlets all up and down Norway would be exposed to these works of art and people just loved them. The country was educated to these things just by being, participating in it. They would buy, on time most of the time, things for their own houses. It was a circulatory system that we have in every other branch practically in our American way but we don't have it in art -- a circulatory system.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Did the government sponsor this?

RICHARD O'HANLON: Yes. They paid for it.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I think it helped. It approved of it without a doubt. And they would rig up ways of showing these things in local firehouses or schoolhouses and make something of a jolly affair out of them. So that no one was ever quite completely behind the times on what was going on in the world visually. We have these terrible blind spots in this country, very dead spots where there is no exposure. There's no interest because how would there be interest if things didn't get put in their direction?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: That was part of the W.P.A., setting up the art centers around.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That's right and I suspect that it would have to be encouraged on a national basis. If you leave it to the communities, it doesn't happen.

RICHARD O'HANLON: It's been left to them for three hundred years and nothing happened. When did we come back from the East? After the fresco was New York. We had a wonderful few months there ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: We were there in the end of thirty-four. Or early thirty-five I guess.

RICHARD O'HANLON: R.O. Coit Tower was finished.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That must have been a jolly thing. Were you -- did you do something there?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: No, that was before I got out here. I didn't get here until the latter part of thirty-six and then I got on the project in thirty-seven. Went directly to the Volz mural.

RICHARD O'HANLON: That's right we moved to Mill Valley in thirty-seven and I had just met you just before then. You were on the lithograph, Ann, and did some wonderful things that were sent all over America, museums ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: We mentioned that.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: I wanted to ask you some more about that. The first project you were on when you came back to San Francisco was the lithography project? And was that under Ray Bertrand?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh no. Bill Gaskin was the head of my division of the project. I did a series of lithographs before I was shifted down to the Aquatic Park project.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How did the lithographic series work? Were you given there some subject matter to ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You were given complete freedom to do anything ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: This was the wonderful thing. You chose a stone and you did the piece. As a matter of fact, I don't remember ever having had to submit a design. I never was required to show Bill Gaskin what I was going to do. It was very adult, the whole thing. I just kept working; and we were, that was our responsibility, to do our job. We weren't told what to do, nor how to do it, but just to do it. And so for eight hours a day, I think that was the -- wasn't that the length of time we would be on the project?

RICHARD O'HANLON: So many hours a week, about three days a week. It came to three or four days a week.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, I would work on a lithographic stone on any subject that happened to suit my needs and my desires and my way of thinking at the moment. And Bill Gaskin would come around and look with interest upon what we were doing and I'll never forget a marvelous long discussion on one stone that I was developing which was actually turning out to be perfectly adjusted to the golden sector thing which I hadn't known anything about whatsoever, but he was hip on it at the moment. There was, do you remember, there was dynamic symmetry which ... well, that just followed the bit of the golden sector thing and whatever was happening as I worked along on the stone caught Bill's attention because it, well, it actually was rather fascinating as he worked it out there with us. But that is the extent of any kind of supervision, which you can't call supervision really. It was just more enlivening, stimulating conversation about pieces.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Where did you actually work? Was there a central area or central studio where you worked on lithography projects? You didn't work in your own studio?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, no. At the project center which was out in West San Francisco some place.

RICHARD O'HANLON: People came from the East Bay also and went in to work at the lithograph center. The stones and the presses, you see, were in one place. They are very massive, you see, and it takes a great deal of gear.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: The only people who worked in their own studios as far as I know were people who were doing canvasses and I did do, I think one or two canvasses. I can't even remember those.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: On the project, at the time you were there, on the lithograph project was Reuben working, Reuben Kadish.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, he was ...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Ric Olmstead, Barbara Olmstead.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Herman Volz.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Now I don't know where they were I rarely saw them. Maybe they were working in their own studios, I don't know. But I was working in the - near the stone. After all, a lithographic stone is a ponderous thing.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, I think a great many of them did take their stones home.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Did they?

RICHARD O'HANLON: Arthur Murphey took all of his stones home, that's right. I worked there. I did about three lithographs before I started on sculpture. We were allocated to, the sculptors were allocated to Benny Bufano.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Did Slivica work with Benny?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: No, he was on the treasury project.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Slivica and I had the Berkeley Post Office together and then I was given the Silinas Post Office and then David went on. What happened then? He went East, I think about that time.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Maybe he wasn't on relief.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, no, when the war broke out ...

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Well, he was on the TRAP it was called ... treasury relief but it was a different kind covered under the W.P.A. so his sculpture project was separated and his boss worked from L.A., I think he said.

RICHARD O'HANLON: That's what I was on, that's right, it wasn't P.W.A.P. On the other tape with Lewis (Ferbrache) I mentioned -- it was actually TRAP.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Treasury Relief Administration Project.

RICHARD O'HANLON: I'd completely forgotten the term. That's right, David and I were on the same one. We shared the same studio and the whole bit. The same building but when we went to Berkeley to check it out, it was each end of a loggia and my end had a window in it. It had been cut in since Washington, D.C. had seen the last blueprints. So I designed around the window, sent the design East, and they said "Oh no, this will never do" and sent out a brand new blueprint which worked beautifully because I got two sculptures in Silinas to do then. I got a brand new building that was just being built, with two large motifs to be done there in walnut.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, Dick was Paco Sandow on TRAP? What was he on when he got that Oakland job?

RICHARD O'HANLON: Who?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Paco Sandow. Franz Sandow.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: He did some work at the Joaguin Miller Park. In Oakland.

RICHARD O'HANLON: I never knew him.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Had you had any earlier training in lithography before you went on the W.P.A. lithography project?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You hadn't? So that you were actually trained there by the W.P.A. lithography people?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, as a matter of fact, it's not quite the way we handle lithography today. Nobody ever printed their own lithographic stones in that day, not even in schools, as far as I know. The act of making a lithograph was merely drawing on a stone with the proper tools and then it was turned over to a technician who pulled the proofs or pulled the prints. It's only since then, I believe, that the printing end of the stone has become part of the artist's work too. So that didn't require training really. I simply worked on a different kind of

surface. Since I had done a considerable amount of etching in my earlier years, it was nothing at all to transfer to a lithographic pencil or to touche.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You said that you did a series of lithographs during that time. What were the subject of these? Were they abstracts?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: They were rather abstract landscapes of the area -- around in the area.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How many did you do? Were there a dozen or half a dozen?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, let me see. Oh, I should say about a dozen.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Were they exhibited here locally. Did they arrange for exhibitions?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, never.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: They didn't?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: They never did. This is one of the things that I -- at least I don't know of exhibitions that they had of works. At least I never heard of any. They should have.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Didn't art centers have exhibitions now and then?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: In Los Angeles?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: No here. You know there was an art center where they taught -- they had a life class painting.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: The Art Center? I don't know of .. downtown you mean?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: It was on Kearny Street. Kearney and Washington and Kearney.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I was never ever connected with them. In fact, I never heard of it.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Victor De Wilde taught there and Louis Siegriest.

RICHARD O'HANLON: That developed after we left San Francisco.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Do you remember any of the other artists who were on the lithography project when you were there? And Dick, you were on the project for awhile doing lithos, do you remember any of the other people?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, I don't. I just was sort of a lone wolf around the place as I recall.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How long were you on that project? A matter months, a matter of years?

RICHARD O'HANLON: Two years.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, not that long.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Do you mean the lithograph project alone?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Yes. Just this section of it. Was it a matter of months ...?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: On the W.P.A.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: No. No. Just the litho project in San Francisco.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, I just couldn't remember ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Six months? Under a year

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... because I wasn't on the W.P.A. as long as you were.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Then you were put on to Hilaire Hiler's project.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I don't ... I simply ... time just was and I never made any account of it at all.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: But, from the lithography project you went to Aquatic Park where you worked on a

George Harris ...?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: George Harris's design, a tempera panel, egg tempera and I don't know where that was to have been installed. I know that I worked on it there. It was on a panel, a detached panel, but whether it was to go somewhere in that building, which I thought it was to be, I don't know.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Did you do the panel in the pickle factory?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, in the Aquatic Park. It was attached to one of those square columns in the middle of the second floor. Do you recall?

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How large was it?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Approximately twenty-four by maybe four feet.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Twenty-four inches by four feet?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: And what was the design that George Harris had done?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It was an abstract, completely abstract, non-objective, I should say. Rather dark and deep and moody in deep purples, deep reds, deep greens, deep blues. It had a little wee bit of an effect of a stained glass window in the dusk.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: You asked if I had seen that. Well, you know, they keep some of that area closed up.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, do they?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: There's a lot of it you can't see, I'm sure.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How far along was this project when you began it? Had he done the cartoons or had he transposed the cartoons onto the panel?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, he just turned the design over to me and I put the --- carried it from there. Enlarged it to the panel itself and started from scratch.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Where did you work on that?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: In the second floor of the Aquatic Park building. While everybody else was buzzing around on other murals and whatnot, I was quietly going along with egg tempera, which is quite a fragile medium, you know. Very susceptible to scratching and whatnot. And it was true egg tempera.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Did the government buy the eggs, or did you have to buy them?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, I don't ... I'm sure I didn't. I don't know where I got the eggs.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Clay Spohn, he mentioned that the government man said that he could get him a dozen eggs or a chicken but he couldn't get him one egg.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, that would have been a problem. I can remember.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: He asked for one egg everyday for a project. This was impossible.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I don't know why George didn't execute the panel himself but I suspect he didn't have the patience.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Was he a ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: A supervisor? He might have been a petty supervisor. I mean a lower down one.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: He might have gotten promoted to supervisor and turned the job over to you because he had more important things on his mind. Was it done on a wood panel?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Did you size the panel before you began?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It was gessoed, a gesso size, and very carefully polished, highly polished, as a matter of fact. It was a very luminous thing. Very rich. Naturally because of the ten thousand layers of thin washes of eggs and pigment.

RICHARD O'HANLON: What ever happened to this?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I have no idea. I never saw it after I left.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: How long did you work on this panel?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, gracious, I really don't know. I was able to read through half of a very large philosophical tome during lunch hour. Maybe that would give you an idea.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: So it must have been a matter of months?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Several months.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You mentioned that there were other people running around there at Aquatic Park while you were working on this panel. Who were some of those people?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Oh, heavens!

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Hilaire Hiler? Was he there?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: He was around and about. Who was helping Hiler on his big mural? Was Clay .. would Clay Spohn have been there? For some reason, I have a feeling that Clay was helping on the on those big Aquatic things on the first floor.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Phyllis ...

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Zakheim.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Not Phyllis Zakheim. I don't know what her name was.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Oh, Phyllis Wrightson who later married Bernard Zakheim.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, I know she worked there. She told me, you know that she worked on Clay's project. She was working on it the same time as you and I.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Could be. I really was a most unsocial person, I realize now. I never mixed with anyone. I didn't know who else was on there. I simply did my job and that was it and went off to rest someplace.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Did you know Sargent Johnson?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, I knew him. He was around and about but I made no connections whatsoever. It was no chummy affair so far as I was concerned. It was a matter of doing what I needed to do and that was it.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Did you do any other jobs there at Aquatic Park?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: That was the only one. Then where did you go?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I disconnected myself.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Didn't you work with Hilaire Hiler?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No. Never had anything to do for him.

RICHARD O'HANLON: I thought you did some spreads for Hilaire Hiler?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: If I did, I've completely forgotten it.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Yes, you were the only one on the job who could take a brush and go straight down four feet.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That is utterly and completely erased from my memory. Because I so disliked what the man was doing, I probably would just negate it completely. I don't remember having done that at all. Oh, come

to think of it, there was something else. Something light I did something on. But I ---

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: A color chart?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Ha ha ha ha. No. It was some sort of design. But I've developed a very neat way of crossing things out of my memory apparently.

RICHARD O'HANLON: I'd forgotten I did actually a design for the Aquatic Park which I missed on the other tape.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Well, talk about it.

RICHARD O'HANLON: A twenty-five foot long glass wall. After they built the building, the front door, as it turned out became a ventury tube and would blow hats off people as they went in so they asked for design. I was allocated to design a glass panel. I had completely forgotten about that. About twenty, twenty-five feet long, eight feet high, in etched glass and I conceived the thing with water and the whole bit but like everything else I designed I found that Bufano's name was going to go on it so I just quit the whole thing.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: So, it was never executed.

RICHARD O'HANLON: No. It was about that time that I left the whole project. Because it was obvious ... I had already written my book I was doing with Bufano which I mentioned in Lew's tape. Other things came up at that point.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You didn't have any connection with the Treasure Island, the Golden Gate exhibition?

RICHARD O'HANLON: We both worked over there.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I demonstrated ... yes, we worked over there. I demonstrated techniques there and I ... would that have been through the W.P.A.?

RICHARD O'HANLON: No, we were just given the ferry fare or something.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: I understood that there were no small concessions, no small groups at all.

RICHARD O'HANLON: We were in an art building. Rivera was doing a fresco and a carver with an ax was doing a big thing. I did a wood carving.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: But you were doing this on your own?

RICHARD O'HANLON: This was just for kicks.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, I don't know that I would have said just for kicks because we were given whatever it was, under what aegis I do not know, but we had entrance to the fair permanently for the entire time and ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: Food or something ... not very much. I don't think any money.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: ... I had an easel and I did an egg tempera, I remember.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: But this wasn't on the project?

RICHARD O'HANLON: No.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, I don't know.

RICHARD O'HANLON: This was after the project. This was 1939. By then the art project had closed.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, who would have enlisted us? I'm sure I wouldn't have gone out and solicited such a job.

RICHARD O'HANLON: No. You were solicited.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I was. By whom?

RICHARD O'HANLON: Beatrice Judd Ryan. She had charge of all the artist's working area and she merely got together as many artists as she could just to bring in people and the startling thing to everyone was that Sally Ryan Rand who they thought would outdraw everybody with her girls and fans, was completely overwhelmed by the art building.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: She herself was.

RICHARD O'HANLON: The Sally Rand concession was the ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Took second place.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Well, they had topless bathing suits.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: The fine arts pulled in more people.

RICHARD O'HANLON: That's right. The topless bathing suits didn't win as many people as the art building, which was very interesting. Cultural and all that sort of thing. Now topless bathing suits come up again but ..

ANN RICE O'HANLON: You know, I can't remember ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: There were crowds in there every day.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I can't remember for the life of me how the W.P.A. project terminated. It sort of dwindled off as I vaguely recall in petty jealousies and petty little squabbles that were going on and around about. This is the thing that I seemed to end up that project with. That it didn't come a grand and glorious halt somehow.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: No, it certainly didn't.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Well, the war, of course. The thing in Europe was very evident by the time Hitler had gone into Austria that we would be on a war footing and industry began making the equipment for European countries ...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, they were trying to cut the project down. They were trying to, actually they were trying to eliminate it.

RICHARD O'HANLON: That was on the K.P.F.A. hour. That the man who helped end it, the most difficult job they had was ending the thing. They had a certain fund and they had certain things to do to close and this became quite a chore, it turned out just to end this enormous project. With the momentum this had gained, they had to bring this to a halt and that wasn't as easy as I would have thought. Then the war went headlong on after 1941 and the whole thing was just arbitrarily dropped.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: I guess it was during the winter of -- what was the fair, thirty, thirty-nine?

RICHARD O'HANLON: Thirty-nine and forty.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Thirty-nine and forty - the winter of thirty-nine and forty there was no work done over there and I came over and worked with Clay Spohn and at the same time, you were on that small job too.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You were working with Clay Spohn?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Was I? Ha ha ha. What did I do on Clay Spohn's project?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: The same thing I was doing.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Did I really?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Same thing I was doing, egg tempera.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: This is another thing that has been blocked off out of my memory, utterly and completely.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Yes, you worked on it.

RICHARD O'HANLON: How long?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, I don't know how long it was, I don't think it was a terribly long time. Maybe a couple of months.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It couldn't have been very long.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Where, what city?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Yes, where?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: In the pickle factory.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Over near the art school in San Francisco?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No. This is where I have to beg off. Your memory is bad. Because I never, ever worked in the pickle factory.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: You never worked in the pickle factory?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No. I sort of wanted to. I was rather envious of the people who got to work in the pickle factory but I never did.

RICHARD O'HANLON: You visited there.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Once. I was in the building once and only down below. I didn't really get around in it because I was too timid to just go around and see.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: That's utterly fantastic because I could have sworn you worked there.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, never.

RICHARD O'HANLON: He wanted her to.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Ha ha ha.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Another girl that looked like her?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: That's a funny thing. Now where did we meet?

RICHARD O'HANLON: You made lines on the Hiler project. I recall that. You were the only ...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: I didn't work on that project. I was only on the Federal Mural at the Treasure Island and at the pickle factory and then later on, after the whole thing folded up, I was back over at the pickle factory, doing odd jobs until finally it was folded then.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Were you ever out in the lithographic thing on ... When would you have told me of your fascinating experience in the Merchant Marine where you discovered that the blokiest blokes on the boat would be less horrified by non-objective painting than ...

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Sometime, probably, at one of the openings of the San Francisco Annual ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: No, I can remember a long, long conversation with you on something of that sort.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: When I was working up here on a studio? I worked on Dick's studio.

RICHARD O'HANLON: What stage was the studio in when you worked on it.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Putting in that wall.

RICHARD O'HANLON: The concrete wall. That's right. The rain.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: The retaining wall.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, then, maybe that's the only time you met me.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: No. On the W.P.A. you used to talk about the fascinating Robert McChesney, I remember.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, I don't think I knew him then, as a matter of fact, and I know I wasn't ever in the pickle factory so I ... now somewhere along the line I did know Clay but where did I know Clay?

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: You lived near him.

RICHARD O'HANLON: His studio was down near ours.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, he was doing lithographs somewhere, too.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: He did lithographs.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Then, that's where I know Clay.

RICHARD O'HANLON: He would wake up in the night and write on a pad that was beside his bed a title and then he would paint a painting to the title.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Or make a lithograph from a title which would come to his mind. Like, "Why not enjoy yourself", which was one of the most famous ones, I think.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Maybe we could sum up the impressions that you have of the W.P.A. period. What kind of an effect did it have on you as an artist?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, as an artist it gave me an opportunity to work independently and with the dignity of an artist. I mean, I wasn't ... I had no boss in other words and yet I was paid for it. Which is a good thing, to be able to do what you want to do, not what you've been told to do. I appreciated that aspect of the W.P.A. as well as the P.W.A.P. I don't know. Perhaps if it had happened when I had been older, I might have had many more really succinct conclusions for you but ...

RICHARD O'HANLON: It was basically a good thing.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: It was basically a good, good thing at the time, it seems to me. In spite of the waste, the wastages that must have gone on, in spite of all that, it was basically good. I met people for instance who would never, ever have had the opportunity to be calling themselves artists. I remember one woman who was just wacky who did the most wonderfully, primitive abstractions. Fascinating, lyrical things. She would never, ever have warranted a moment's attention if it hadn't have been for the W.P.A. And as it was, her things were in great demand. I believe she has probably long since gone on to Nirvana but I ran into various and sundry kinds of things and approaches to things which would not have happened if it had not been a program of that sort that drew all kinds of people together in a need, in time of need somehow. I think it was a good thing.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: If a new government sponsorship of the arts were being planned or set up in the United States, would you have any ideas about corrections that could be made or new ways of handling the problems that might improve on what W.P.A. did?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I definitely would broaden to the contact area. It would be a much more circulating thing than the narrow little local thing. It was too, far, far too parochial for one thing in so far as area was concerned and nobody dared step over into someone elses' area. This, I think, was a ridiculous aspect of the W.P.A. If it were a government project sponsoring artists for any other reason than relief, (and let us hope it would always be for any other reason than relief), I can think of some tremendously rich distribution systems that might be set up for all kinds of arts, for all kinds of people, actually, who might accompany these arts to various exhibitions, to various small areas, rural areas, back country areas and not in an effort to teach because this always insults people but rather in just as the Chautauqua circuit went throughout the rural areas of the country, the East that is, in the early days... These projects, these paintings, prints, sculptures could be taken throughout the country and I think, it would do a great deal for a number of people and a number of causes and things.

RICHARD O'HANLON: I would like to add one point to that. If this should ever happen, they should have the top artists and not politicians. Under no circumstance should it be completely controlled politically. It would inevitably and almost immediately become a beaux arts system. Which is a deadly, cold kind of thing.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: This is one of the bad things of the W.P.A. I think that often they got administrators rather than people who were, I shouldn't say often because I don't know that, but sometimes they might have had administrators who were more politically oriented than they were esthetically oriented.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Yes, well, this is a tremendous problem. For instance, how many artists would want to become administrators? The only happy medium is to find someone who is extremely interested in the arts...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Who is extremely interested in teaching in the new sense which isn't teaching but exposing.

RICHARD O'HANLON: Well, there are many museum people .....

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Administrating is a tremendous job. Regardless of what the project is, you are going to have to have administrators and these administrators, I think, should have some knowledge of the arts.

RICHARD O'HANLON: That's what I'm saying. Not necessarily artists but people in the museum world. There should be a panel, as it were, and on that panel would be people who are either practicing artists or museum people of a high caliber. But this .. I'm well aware of the difficulty because we've discussed this before.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: In the past, these people have been very few and far between.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: But I don't think they will be so very few and far between in the era coming up.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: Well, maybe, perhaps not. I'm sure there are far more now than there were then.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Far a broader attitude on the part of people. I mean, on the part of the artist. Art itself isn't quite as chauvinistic as it once was. How could it be after pop art? Oh, I can envision a fascinating something or another of a program.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Do you think it would be a good idea?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I think it would be a splendid idea. A marvelous idea. It would have to be thought out rather sensitively and tried out rather tentatively but if one person or two could accompany a series of works around and about through various unexposed areas or rather deprived areas - someone who was gentle in his thinking, sufficiently, to accept the lack of knowledge on the part of the audiences but who would anticipate and nurture the curiosity on the part of the back country areas.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: You think, then, there's a real need for this to be done?

ANN RICE O'HANLON: I think there's a terrific need - one of the biggest needs in the whole, the whole United States, I suspect.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: How do you feel the artists, the majority of artists, would accept a thing like that? How would they feel toward it? Particularly today when they've become isolated from each other so much.

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Well, you see, I don't know much about the artists, therefore I couldn't even answer that question. But, I have a feeling that the Kennedys, both of them, particularly JFK, had some kind of vision of this sort, though he may not have himself known it. I can hear in so many of his works the thing that I'm speaking of is anticipated, is suggested, is pointed to and I feel that the time has come to quit separating art from the rest of life. It belongs in the same area of general experience that the other, the local fair or the, well, the other advertisements that we do.

ROBERT MCCHESNEY: I think that applies to all of the arts. Music, dance ...

ANN RICE O'HANLON: Absolutely, to all of them.

MARY FULLER MCCHESNEY: Do you have anything to say to sum up, Dick? Have we covered it all? Thank you very much for giving us the time for the interview.

END

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