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Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Constance Glenn,
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Constance Glenn on April 13, 1995. The interview took place in Long Beach, California, and was conducted by Maudette Ball for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

[First 30 minutes of Tape 1, Side A was erased during duplication. This transcript begins 3/4 into taping.]

CONSTANCE GLENN: ...to go to the NEA and say that these people have not been shown or this body of work has not been seen in California, these artists have not had shows in California. It's pretty hard to turn down. I wouldn't be able to do this today. This isn't something that could be replicated. The other thing was, when I found that I was tending to teach Cal Gross' class and my students were having to learn about these people from slides only, I thought that was ludicrous, when it was possible for the artist to be here. The same is true at Irvine. Roy had a show at Irvine... That is not true, because I said that Roy hadn't had a one-man show out here and he had. John Coplans did a show in Irvine about a year or so before I did. But that particular body of work that I showed had never been shown out here. So it was one of two things, either the artist had never had a one-man show out here or the body of work being shown had never been seen out here. The third criteria was we didn't show anything that students would have access to in a regular gallery in L.A., because I didn't see any point in utilizing scarce resources for something you could send a student off to see in a short trip in a car.

MAUDETTE BALL: Did you get pretty good support from the university administration? Steve Horn was here at that time, was he not?

CONSTANCE GLENN: After the first half dozen years, yes. I would have to go back and look at exact dates as to when his real interest and support kicked in. My guess, late '70s, '76, '78, right about then, his primary support being in the eighties. But it happened not so much because we sought him out, but because he was very active in the Civil Rights Commission. He was on a number of government commissions that kept him traveling. When he traveled people would say things like "I have never been to your university and I don't know your background, but am acquainted with your university art museum." He quickly perceived that we were a very good tool for public relations for the university in recruiting and that sort of thing. He wanted to support that and did, to his detriment.

MAUDETTE BALL: In what way?

CONSTANCE GLENN: They used the museum to hang him. When his ___ were ready, his support for the museum and the arts and the building he was planning to build for us by Peter Eisenmann was a way to force him out.

MAUDETTE BALL: Was it primarily about the building or was it around the program? Was it about building an ambitious building by a major architect?

CONSTANCE GLENN: It wasn't any of the above. Steve was what the faculty called a collegial president. He was an autocratic ruler, but he made this university from the funky place, when I came, into a very fine university by the mid-eighties. And the change that I observed in the quality of the students was quite dramatic. And he willed it into being, the way you and I both know creative, ambitious people will bring things into being whether they are possible or not. But, in so doing, he didn't stop to consult with every fool along the way. It was a period of academic politics when collegiality was the big word and if you didn't consult with the entire faculty every time you crossed the street, you were... Obviously he favored programs, there's no question that he favored particular programs, and so some very strong faculty members began to coalesce in an effort to get rid of a president that didn't favor their program. When they were strong enough to force him out, they used the programs that he had championed to hang him, primarily in the local newspaper. It was partly because it was concurrent with the decline in funding for education. Nobody bothered to talk about money being spent on art in the early '80s and the late '70s when money in education was fairly flush. By '84, when money was getting tight in the whole state for education, that was the time at which people could fault him for raising money for a museum. Had it not been concurrent with the decline of funding in education, they might not have been able to find a way to attack him. I know he's not an uncontroversial president. I do think that everything that is of high quality, that remains of high quality about this institution, is a result of what he did while he was here.

MAUDETTE BALL: Well, he clearly was supportive of what you were trying to do. Did you get some support from the press, media?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yes.

MAUDETTE BALL: Long Beach Museum was also doing some innovative stuff. David Ross was around running the video program. One of your students...

CONSTANCE GLENN: Kathy Huffman.

MAUDETTE BALL: Kathy was involved with that. Was there much crossover between the university gallery and the Long Beach Museum or the university gallery and the city of Long Beach, the press? Who else did you draw from? Who else supported you or were active with you?

CONSTANCE GLENN: We didn't have a close relationship. The university as a whole did not have a close relationship with the community. It was perceived as being an impossible place to go and an impossible place to park, and so on. And because those were not user [?] type funds, the university did not go into the community. The university didn't start fund-raising on a very serious mode until four or five years ago. So the university wasn't out in the community fund-raising to any large degree and there wasn't any town and gown relationship. For a large part of time that I was here, the Long Beach Museum of Art was without a director, as long as it was with a director. I mean, it would go for very long periods of time with no director at all.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: I served on the board of the Long Beach Museum of Art for a while during one of their periods without a director. In hope of helping, I always have thought and think we always have had a good relationship with that museum, and I have always stayed out of video specifically not to duplicate resources and because that was the area in contemporary art that they chose to make their own. I have very carefully stayed out of video. Hal Nelson, who is there now, is a very capable director. Jan Van Adelman, who I was close to before I ever came to California, was a favorite with me because he was such a creative curator. He drove everyone in the city crazy. He was the one who almost built the I. M. Pei building.

MAUDETTE BALL: That was shot down because of the snow removal equipment.

CONSTANCE GLENN: It was also shot down because it came in double the scheduled budget. And the funds money, the oil money that was suppose to build that building, by then disappeared as well.

MAUDETTE BALL: They weren't able to build their Pei building and you weren't able to build your Eisenmann building. Do you think the city of Long Beach had a certain bias against building anything that is cultural?

CONSTANCE GLENN: No. I think the city of Long Beach remains a bedroom community, where the funding for this sort of thing doesn't exist. Maybe there is going to be a new generation. If anything turns Long Beach into a community where buildings can be built, it will because we are all ghettoized by the freeways, and people will have to stay here and get their art here rather drive to LACMA for the weekends, and that is generally happening. I have seen both museums' audiences in this community grow larger as the traffic has grown worse. The big money in this community is very conservative, and when it has surfaced for the arts, it has gone to Los Angeles. I suppose you might use Dorothy Chandler as an example, Buffums is a Long Beach ... But in addition to being a bedroom community, it strikes me as a community that has not needed or prioritized the arts or chosen to spend money on the arts. You know me, I think this is a weather issue. I've talked to you before. Having been raised where there is both a tradition of patronage and also a phenomenon -- where you simply don't spend year-around outdoors -- there is this situation where in the winter there is a clientele that goes indoors and participates in the cultural activities of the community. And that doesn't happen here.

MAUDETTE BALL: You mean, because the weather's lousy, they don't have anything else to do?

CONSTANCE GLENN: In a sense that is true. When I lived in Kansas City, people, particularly women who were the main volunteer workers for everything from the junior league to the museums to the symphonies to the ballet, wanted to be a part of the growth of their community, and they went indoors when the weather got cold and contributed. They worked hard as members of boards of symphonies, ballets, museums. I thought from the very first few years I lived here that was the reason and I was close to Tom Garver. I watched Tom Garver struggle with Newport. It was always my opinion that if we ever had a cold season, these people would have to come off their boats for a while and they would find a need for something in their lives that might be fulfilled by music, theatre or ... Just think how long it took South Coast Rep to really get off the ground.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right, and they started in a store front...

CONSTANCE GLENN: Jack was the founding president of South Coast Rep.

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh, I didn't know that.

CONSTANCE GLENN: ... on the first board before he was the founding president of the board. He was founding

president of the first board and ...

MAUDETTE BALL: We're talking about the South Coast Repertoire Theatre in Orange County.

CONSTANCE GLENN: They existed for years in holes-in-the-walls, for years there, about twenty years, right? I think part of what helped Orange County develop were some things that are going quite well culturally. I perceive the Bowers Museum to be doing very well, which it didn't for a long time. The building is very beautiful. I don't know how it's doing in terms of audience, but it seems to be in better shape than it's ever been. But I think Opera Pacific is doing well. I think South Coast Rep is doing well. And I think that is in part due to the ghettoization of the freeways. I think that there are people in Orange County who do need some of these things in their lives and those people at least are not willing to drive anymore. Do you think that?

MAUDETTE BALL: I think that's got something to do with it.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Part of it?

MAUDETTE BALL: Sure.

CONSTANCE GLENN: I also think perhaps that for a younger audience it was nothing in 1970 to commute to L.A. Traffic has gotten so much worse that people who are raising families... My own children won't spend the weekend here. They were raised in museums, and they don't spend the weekends on freeways. I suspect that there is a whole generation of people like that who will significantly change the audience in Orange County. I don't know if that will happen here; it is possible that we are still too close.

MAUDETTE BALL: Here you are building a program. Your president travels around the United States and people tell him that this is a terrific program, the NEA is funding you, major artists are working with you, you're getting support from major galleries. Did the local press do anything? The L.A. Times? Were you getting critical press, any kind of help reaching out to developing larger audience?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Minimal.

MAUDETTE BALL: I remember Bill Wilson came down to see an exhibition, walked in, spent probably thirty seconds and walked out. [laughs]

CONSTANCE GLENN: Bill Wilson's gotten positively ___

MAUDETTE BALL: Really?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yeah. He's actually a ... I'm supposed to say the L.A. Times critic that everyone loves to hate and I suspect, in retrospect, those years were tough on Bill, and I think that most of that feeling has been transferred to Christopher Knight, which in a way has sort of freed Bill to be himself. I certainly have a good relationship with Bill. He's been very gracious about coming down here when I call him and say, "I have this up. Nobody has come. How is anybody in Los Angeles going to know that XYZ is here?" He's been really good in the past three or four years, maybe five years. Responding to a plea ...

[BREAK]

[taping begins in mid-sentence]

MAUDETTE BALL: ... in the midst of all this stuff, with all the exhibitions that you were developing and the gallery, trotting back and forth between here and Orange County and so forth, for reasons only you can tell us about, you started a museum studies program. What prompted you to do that?

CONSTANCE GLENN: It was simultaneous with starting the museum.

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh, I didn't realize that.

CONSTANCE GLENN: There's no job description at CSU for a museum director, you can only be hired as a teacher.

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh, OK.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Tom Ferrero said, "What do you want to teach?" At that time they had a full-time 20th century art historian and I thought it over and that was the very early years when museum studies programs were being thought of in this country, there were only a couple others. And so I thought, as long as we're going to have a professional art gallery, we might as well teach people how to work in museums. I had observed in both Kansas and California there were a lot of small museums that had enormous potential if the people who were running them had been trained. And so from the very beginning I said, "We're not going to be training people here who are going to be curators of Byzantine mosaics, let's train people who can wear all of the hats in

small museums." And if we do a good job of that we won't have community museums in over their heads, like most community museums were in the early seventies.

MAUDETTE BALL: So you did it partly to generate FTE, the university was not designed to run galleries.

CONSTANCE GLENN: No, it wasn't to generate FTE, there was no requirement for FTE, I just had to teach.

MAUDETTE BALL: OK.

CONSTANCE GLENN: They waived any FTE requirement, in fact museum studies program was limited from the very beginning to 12 people.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: I don't think we ever had over 8.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: And nobody told me that you couldn't invent something like that without selling it to Sacramento and so forth. So we just invented it off the cuff and apparently you don't--- I don't know. Those were the days when everything was laissez faire around here and you could do things. I think that was what I liked about Steve Horn's administration it was a "do thing" atmosphere. If you were ambitious and had ideas, people didn't try to throw a ton of red tape in your way to keep you from doing them. Which is much more the atmosphere now. So we just invented the museum studies certificate program, and I taught all the classes in it until--- all the core classes, five classes, I think, until about '84 or '85, when you and Jane--- When did you teach?

MAUDETTE BALL: Actually, I was teaching before '80, I think, '79. I was teaching introduction. I taught---

CONSTANCE GLENN: When did you teach introduction?

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh, '79, '80, '81, '82, somewhere in there.

CONSTANCE GLENN: OK. Then I was still teaching the core course and the 500 courses and you taught introduction and Jane taught introduction.

MAUDETTE BALL: Nancy taught, Nancy, um, Whose last name I can't remember, who used to be the curator of Long Beach Museum.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Oh, Nancy Drew.

MAUDETTE BALL: Nancy Drew taught.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Oh, I had forgotten about that. I'd totally forgotten about that.

MAUDETTE BALL: Is she still in ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: I don't know where she is. We keep talking about having a museum studies reunion, it would be fun. If we could find all the folks. But I was basically working two jobs and being paid for one. And I also worked all summer and didn't get paid for it. One time in the middle of the eighties and I just woke up, I guess, not only realized that I was working all summer and not being paid for the summer, but it wasn't counting that I wasn't working toward my retirement, none of that work that I was doing was counted toward my retirement credit.

MAUDETTE BALL: Good grief. WOW!

CONSTANCE GLENN: I vaguely remember going into the then vice president's office and just saying, "I'm not going to do this anymore. You can either pay me for working year-round or I'm going to stop, which means you won't have any programs in the gallery until January, if I come back on the 1st of September and have to get the act together. I really lost patience with the fact that I was working 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round and they were paying me for 9 months a year. What happened was the first time I said that they began paying me for the summer, but they paid me on a contract basis and that contractual payment was not part of the pay record that goes into your retirement.

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh, really?

CONSTANCE GLENN: And someone had advised me that, you know. Your retirement plan is based upon the amount of your salary and my record was only showing three-fourths of my salary because the summer payment

was a contract payment.

MAUDETTE BALL: Well that's pretty cheezy. I don't see why---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Also no benefits. So when someone pointed out to me that I was being taken to the cleaners, I'm not someone who complains about --- I really have to get fried before I start complaining about being taken advantaged of, but somebody finally pointed out to me that I had probably been taken advantage of long enough and maybe I ought to do something about the year-round employment.

MAUDETTE BALL: How many shows a year were you expected to mount?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Oh, we were doing in your time up to 15, 16 shows a year. We don't do that anymore. Now, this fall we did five shows beginning in August. On the other hand, we at one time had a full-time staff of 14 and a total staff of up to 25. We now have a full-time staff of 4, plus a half-time curator, a contract educator, a half-time preparator and some students.

MAUDETTE BALL: How many of your staff positions were funded with outside grants like the NEA funds or NEH funds or other kinds?

CONSTANCE GLENN: The educator is funded with outside funds, the curator's salary is funded with outside funds and this past year almost the entire spring of student assistants staff was funded with outside funds. The university does not begin to pay the staff bill, and the university provides no program funds at all.

MAUDETTE BALL: OK. That's what I was going to ask you. Are they trying to get out of ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: They would like the museum off of the books.

MAUDETTE BALL: That's what I was ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Of the six programs that Steve Horn espoused and that they used to hang him with, five of them are gone.

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh really?

CONSTANCE GLENN: We're the only one left. Gone off the books.

MAUDETTE BALL: Well you have responsibility, I don't want to get ahead of myself, you have responsibility not only including the museum but for the university's permanent collection and for the public art collection. Do you not?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yes.

MAUDETTE BALL: In addition to mounting 5 shows a year.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Oh, it's not 5 shows a year, this is 5 shows in the next three and a half, four months.

MAUDETTE BALL: OK, I thought you said you were going to do 5 this year.

CONSTANCE GLENN: No, we're going to do 5 this fall.

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh, OK, I misunderstood.

CONSTANCE GLENN: We'll have probably 4 this spring, maybe 5.

MAUDETTE BALL: With a staff of four.

CONSTANCE GLENN: With a staff of four.

MAUDETTE BALL: Is the museum studies program still alive? Are you still involved?

CONSTANCE GLENN: By the way, the staff are all students. There are only two of us who are not students.

MAUDETTE BALL: Well, but the staff, during the time I was here, was mostly students.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yeah. They're trained, I trained them.[laughs]

MAUDETTE BALL: Right. [laughs]

CONSTANCE GLENN: But, Ilee and I are the only people who are not enrolled. The person who does public relations and publications is still taking classes. Maria, whom you met, our registrar, who fortunately I inherited from Lee Spenstein [?], fabulous, who is also working weekends, is getting a special major master's in museum studies. The part-time curator is getting a master's degree in art history. And Greg, our half-time preparator, just graduated last year, is going to Claremont for graduate school this fall.

MAUDETTE BALL: What's---

CONSTANCE GLENN: I've never had much of anything in the way of employees who weren't students, except Lucinda.

MAUDETTE BALL: Yeah.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Lucinda Barnes was a curator, who was hired to be the first professional curator. She was phenomenal and I'll take credit for putting Lucinda on the road.

MAUDETTE BALL: Good for you.

CONSTANCE GLENN: I think she's done a wonderful job and I'm crazy about Lucinda and I think as good a curator that anyone is ever going to find anywhere. The curators who followed her was Diana du Pont who was here for a brief time and is now at Santa Barbara and she was the last full-time curator we had. Of course for years I was the only curator. For the longest part of the 20 years, I had been curator. Jane did curatorial work.

MAUDETTE BALL: Some of your students did ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: And students did curatorial work and museum studies classes did phenomenal exhibitions, to this day I'm very proud of. I mean, some of the museum studies exhibitions were way before their time and ---

MAUDETTE BALL: What were your goals for the program? What did you expect from the students? What did you think was most valuable?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Why did I beat them to death. [laughs]

MAUDETTE BALL: [laughs] About standards?

CONSTANCE GLENN: My goals were for them to go out of here so professional that they would be prepared to be in any museum and succeed. Generally they hated me, because I worked them so hard, but usually about three years after they graduated they would come back and say "Gee, we had no idea what you were doing for us."

MAUDETTE BALL: That's true.

CONSTANCE GLENN: You think that's a fair assessment?

MAUDETTE BALL: Yes.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Because the time and energy required was so far beyond anything else that anybody asked of anyone around here that I think most people wanted to kill me. During the time they were going through the program. Anybody who had serious aspirations in the professional arts world, I think, probably later thanked me.

MAUDETTE BALL: Uh huh, I think that's very true.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Because they came out of here much better prepared than anybody I knew who was coming out of any other program.

MAUDETTE BALL: Have a number of your students stayed in the field? Are you aware ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Oh, yeah, I'm sure.

MAUDETTE BALL: What people are doing?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Do you remember Mary Schoeser?

MAUDETTE BALL: Uh huh.

CONSTANCE GLENN: She is still a --- She's written a great many books on textiles. I don't know if you've seen her books. They're marvelous.

MAUDETTE BALL: No, I haven't.

CONSTANCE GLENN: As far as I know she's still the archivist for Warner, which is the parent company of Salamander in London. She comes every couple of years from London and brings me a new book. I don't know, I wish I knew where Nancy Drew was. I don't know where she is. A lot of them I see, I mean you know. I suppose Kathy Huffman is still at the public radio station in Boston.

MAUDETTE BALL: I think so. And Kathy Lucoff---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Kathy Lucoff has been very successful in her own business. Barbara Wilson Bishop has been running this Archives office for many years.

MAUDETTE BALL: You mean, the Archives of American Art.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yes. After having returned here from New York. A good many of the students went through the curatorial, the museum studies program at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right. Internship at the Whitney.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Registrars strung around the country. [laughs] If you were to say was the program successful because you, you know, it certainly was not a whiz mafia program, where we were turning out the directors of the world's major museums.

MAUDETTE BALL: That really wasn't your goal.

CONSTANCE GLENN: But that was never the goal of the program. The goal of the program, this is going to sound really strange, but the goal of the program, because I was extremely fond of Tom Enman, do you remember him?

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh, yes.

CONSTANCE GLENN: And the good of each museum in Tom Enman's day was, had a charm and a gentle quality about it and probably will never have again. I was very fond of Tom and that was one of my first involvement with the museum and I loved that museum [Laguna Beach Museum of Art], but what really started the museum studies program, I thought, if Tom had ever been trained to run a museum rather than having fallen into it, as almost an avocation, he wouldn't have been overwhelmed by its problems and it would have grown up in a different way than it did, and maybe it wouldn't have been desirable, I don't know. Because a lot of what Tom did for the museum was very desirable, but I've looked at that museum as an example of a museum that had an incredibly devoted audience, much more so than any other small museum that I had ever come across because it had begun as an art association and Jack was the first chairman of the board of it after it became a museum from having been an art association. I carried in my head all of the time a vision of the potential for that museum would be to train a director, which was not to discredit what Tom had done, but was to recognize that we were in a different era when it came to managing museums.

MAUDETTE BALL: Was that part of the whole post World War II thing where things non-professional began to be professional with professional staffs?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Of course, yes.

MAUDETTE BALL: Was part of your goals ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Well things were Jr. Leagues had managed for years. [laughs] I don't think these ladies went to work at full-time jobs and there was no one left to manage the world.
[phone rings]

MAUDETTE BALL: Picking up paintings with ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Oh I did a lot of dumb things like that.
[tape recording stops]
[tape restarts]

MAUDETTE BALL: Ah, let's see, we were talking about the museum studies program and you said that your goals for the program were to train people who were good generalists, who could go into a small or medium-sized museum and do whatever needed to be done.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Wear all hats. You remember I used to say to you, "Even if you don't want to do this job, you have got to know how to talk to the people who are going to this job. If your not going to be a good designer, you at least have to know how buy a good design. If you're not going to be a preparator, you have to be prepared to supervise the preparator." Which was the whole purpose in having the core of program be a major

exhibition that was published, so that everybody who participated had at some point in time had to do everything, from handle the art, to write about it to, if you remember they also had to do their own education programs, the goal being that when that harrowing two semesters were over, you had had more than a passing acquaintance with every single activity that was a part of presenting art to the public. I suppose what was significantly lacking was care of the permanent collections which is of course endemic in working in a museum, but at that point in time we were not collecting. We didn't begin collecting until '79

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: If you learn to present, handle, interpret and care for works of art surely you can transfer some of that to the permanent collection. I would hope. I think that was probably the most lacking focus was care of collections.

MAUDETTE BALL: If that was lacking, you put a great emphasis on publication. Why did you feel this was so important?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Partly because I don't think you can be in the profession without knowing how to write. Even if you're not going to be the curator. If you're not going to write catalogs, it's still a profession where you have to communicate in a very intelligent way. I don't think I have spent a day that wasn't, I doubt that you haven't either, very well consumed with writing of some sort. The other reason I thought it was important was because, you'll probably remember my saying this too, this is what we give you to take away from here with your graduate certificate to show what you're capable of doing, which no other student walks out of a program with a major publication.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right. That's really unusual.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Your portfolio, your calling card to get a job, and the third reason this is probably selfish, it was the museum's calling card for recognition in the major fields, which is where we got our money for the programs.

MAUDETTE BALL: I remember you saying how important scholarly documentation was very important. Can you elaborate on that? Why you felt this was so important?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Well a lot of the programs that you remember were unique and that it was the first time documentation of the work being shown and I've always felt very strongly about primary source material and I detest people who write about, well for instance, Pop Art is my field, I detest people who write about Pop Art and ignore the fact that primary source material is all still around. I mean there is more garbage that's been written about pop art in the name of theory, without consulting the primary source material. It simply appalls me and that's what you guys were dealing with every time you wrote was primary source material. I've always felt to the degree that you make a contribution to getting primary source material in some sort of stable form you have made a contribution, someday will make a difference how people will look at this period. I've never been a writer as you well know, who is interested in putting forward my theories and opinions in convoluted ways which became very popular in certain kinds of teaching. I've been a person who's been interested in documenting what happens. The work word that they used in early day was "Intentionalist Criticism", My concerns were never to put forward my own theory about the art, but to find out what the artist's intentions were because I figured the period we had to find out what the artist's intentions were will disappear in my lifetime, and that was why I ought to be devoting my energies to. I suppose it was perhaps a selfish attitude on my part, but I don't think students ever suffered from getting to work with primary source materials on major artists.

MAUDETTE BALL: Your field is contemporary art and you have worked a lot with contemporary artists would you say even working sometime with the artists help shape what they're doing. I know at times when things were frustrating, you would say, "17th century dead Dutch." But you didn't choose to work in that arena.

CONSTANCE GLENN: "17th century dead Dutch", it would have to be explained. I gave the pen back to Jane when she went to Georgia. Well, there's no question it shaped what the artists were doing. Don't you remember talking George Segal into showing those pastels.

MAUDETTE BALL: Yeah, Yeah.

CONSTANCE GLENN: He never had any intention of showing those pastels.

MAUDETTE BALL: He had them under his bed or tucked away.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Nor did he have any intention of showing his photographs. Now there's a George Segal photography show out traveling.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: You know, I think a good curator really has good relationships with an artist you certainly can't make a contribution to that art but perhaps you can at least offer intelligent advice that might bring work to the fore that wouldn't see the light of day otherwise.

MAUDETTE BALL: Did you provide a opportunities for students to work one on one with artist, it seems like ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Oh sure, always.

MAUDETTE BALL: You have enough confidence in the students to sort of ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: I trained them. [laughs]

MAUDETTE BALL: Right. [laughs]

CONSTANCE GLENN: I didn't put any together with an artist I didn't train. Well, you well know that it was the training was so hard that most of the people who wouldn't have been safe with the artists were weeded out very early on, and the people who were put together with the artist, you also well know, were put together very carefully the way you were put together with George and [?].

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: I always chose with exquisite care the people, the students that I married to particular projects with particular artists. I suppose Annie Kresl will live to be my ---

MAUDETTE BALL: [laughs] Who married her artist.

CONSTANCE GLENN: [laughs] Among other things. Oh, my. I would never figure that Annie Kresl, when that class began, Annie Kresl's the only person in this class they won't eat alive. It wasn't long before she was married to Bob Graham.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right. [laughs] No longer. [laughs]

CONSTANCE GLENN: No longer. Also as you may well remember, the program itself was pretty tough to get into. There was a get-in test and that's not to say there weren't failures, as you well know in your class, there were failures. The gal who sold shoes at Bullock's, whose name I can't remember.

MAUDETTE BALL: Heidi.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Is that who it was? And there was some pressure from the art department to keep a decent number of students in the class. I mean when it would drop below four or five, people would begin to get nervous.

MAUDETTE BALL: I remember the university commissioned through program certain things like the Lloyd Hamrol installation.

CONSTANCE GLENN: That wasn't through the museum studies program. Or was it?

MAUDETTE BALL: Students worked on that. I thought---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yeah, student's worked on that piece, but that was through the 16 projects for institutions program? Some of my students worked on it, there's no question about that.

MAUDETTE BALL: Yeah, it was documented in one of the catalogs.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Uh, huh. But I think it was documented in that 16 artists, I'd have to go back and look it up. We entered into a program with four other universities that were commissioning--- We did it for three years. They were commissioning artists to do installation pieces at each of four universities four artists, 16 projects and we did it three times and it brought an amazing number of people here. It was funded by the NEA. It was Laurie Anderson's first footset in California.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Siah Armajani, Mary Miss, Michele Stuart, Bill Wegman, of course Bill was already here, but I mean Bill was in the program, Dennis Oppenheim [?], um...

MAUDETTE BALL: Bob Irwin. Was that piece part of it?

CONSTANCE GLENN: I don't know if that was part of that program or whether that was part of --- He was a guest in the department. That was part of a project that we talked him into when he was giving a couple of lectures down here.

MAUDETTE BALL: Was Larry Bell a part of that?

CONSTANCE GLENN: ` Larry Bell was part of it. Larry Bell has had a couple different relationships. We also did that program that Jane did called "Monuments Two" which was a competition, which Larry Bell won, but the piece was never realized and Richard Turner also. The Richard Turner piece in fact is here on campus, on long-term permanent loan from Richard.

MAUDETTE BALL: When did you, because the sculpture, the public art program had begun...

CONSTANCE GLENN: The Terry Schoonhoven mural, by the way, was a museum studies project.

MAUDETTE BALL: It was? That's right, it was. The public art program was begun on the University campus ...

CONSTANCE GLENN: 1965

MAUDETTE BALL: Right, then it became the responsibility of the University Art Museum when it became a museum? Was it then ...

CONSTANCE GLENN: It's all so very loose. I mean that's one of the problems, no one took responsibility for it and when Steve Horn was here "Chips" the highway patrol TV program was filmed with some regularity on this campus...

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: and he set up a fund that when the campus was used for filming portions of the money would get deposited for projects and portions of the money from the filming got deposited in a fund to conserve the sculpture.

MAUDETTE BALL: Really.

CONSTANCE GLENN: And that for a long time was where, and of course "Chips" disappeared and Steve was gone and of course and now no one provides any money to conserve the sculpture. We've had a couple of grants to do some conservation surveys and some conservation work. The university provides no money for the sculptures at all.

MAUDETTE BALL: When did you switch from --- Let me just finish up this section first.

CONSTANCE GLENN: We've doubled the collection, by the way, from ---

MAUDETTE BALL: From the old, old days?

CONSTANCE GLENN: From the 1965 collection to the present. No it's more than that, because there were nine pieces that were completed in the 1965 symposium, which we're trying very hard to bring oral histories on that collection up to date because they are quite interesting now.

MAUDETTE BALL: Thirty years, too.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Well, we did a big anniversary program. We did a 25th Anniversary program that had a big seminar called In Situ Conference, sculptors from all over the world. But we're still working really hard to get all of our records together because it was a pretty amazing project.

MAUDETTE BALL: It was an amazing project.

CONSTANCE GLENN: It was the first symposium in the United States and the first symposium on the university campus. The marriage of art and technology, it long preceded the Art and Technology exhibit at the L.A. County Museum. And I'm still hearing stories that amaze me everyday. In fact I had a call two days ago, Joe Pompadoro was one of the artists who was chosen, and something happened and it's not real clear to me, he picked up and went back to Italy before the program was over. But I was told that the maquette for the piece that would have been done in bronze was in white fiberglass on a swimming pool lawn in Palos Verdes and these people are about to retire and move to Italy and would like to have it.

MAUDETTE BALL: Do you know who it is?

CONSTANCE GLENN: I gave the name to Ilee, she's got it on her desk.

MAUDETTE BALL: It might be somebody I know.

CONSTANCE GLENN: They were people who were affiliated with the university at that time and helped support that summer and I guess Pompadoro must have stayed with them or something and the piece has been outside by this swimming pool, Palos Verdes, for 25 years or 30 years and I am told it is in perfect condition.

MAUDETTE BALL: For heaven sakes!

CONSTANCE GLENN: I need Ilee to contact them.

MAUDETTE BALL: From the early years, what do you feel---

CONSTANCE GLENN: At any rate that was nine pieces and it's now twenty-one or two pieces.

MAUDETTE BALL: From the early years, what do you feel was really your greatest success? What do you feel best about, you know, in the early, formative years and what was you're greatest disappointments from that time?

CONSTANCE GLENN: What do you consider the early years?

MAUDETTE BALL: I suppose I'm looking years before you moved to the library and...

CONSTANCE GLENN: To the library?

MAUDETTE BALL: ... and became a museum?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Well, I think fairly the greatest success was making this, in spite of its outrageously inadequate facilities, an internationally known place for contemporary art. I mean the fact that the Roy Lichtensteins and George Segals and some artists of the world were willing to exhibit here...

MAUDETTE BALL: And come here.

CONSTANCE GLENN: ... and come here. It felt like a major accomplishment to me. It felt to me like a really significant gift to students. I mean, where would you have gone to school and studied in an art department where these people who were the major artists of their time frequented your campus.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Especially in a place with no budget and ratchet facilities, and as I look back it's remarkable to me they were willing to allow their art to be shown here. Let's face it, no matter how many times we painted the walls.

MAUDETTE BALL: And as I remember ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: And I think it was the publications that made it possible.

MAUDETTE BALL: Yes.

CONSTANCE GLENN: I don't think for the most part that the people that we talked into exhibiting in those spaces, and we also traveled all those exhibitions, where they went to a lot of fancy places.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: And I think that the publications and the travel are what made it possible. I don't think those people who are very intelligent artists would have allowed me to do just half-baked things here in half-baked spaces. The fact that the catalogs were credible and the exhibitions traveled to major institutions, were what made it all possible here. Don't you think?

MAUDETTE BALL: Yes, very much so.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Certainly that's the success. Failure.

MAUDETTE BALL: One disappointment, failure, whatever you want to call it.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Oh, I think that my disappointment continues to be the same as it's always been in that there's significant public support for the arts in this city or in this area. They just don't understand the lack of patronage and it isn't just the visual arts. I don't understand the lack of patronage for the Long Beach Opera

which is the only thing of its kind this side of Brooklyn Academy of Music in Brooklyn. I guess I never understand [pause] I think I have a New York mentality rather than a California mentality about the life of the mind, and I will never understand why it is so unimportant in California.

MAUDETTE BALL: Do you think---

CONSTANCE GLENN: I used to think I could will it into being when I was young. I used to think I could will people to be interested in this art and will people to understand that they were fortunate to have intimate experiences with major figures of their era. It can't be done.

MAUDETTE BALL: Do you think---

CONSTANCE GLENN: And by the I'm not sure it should be done.

MAUDETTE BALL: Why?

CONSTANCE GLENN: I no longer believe that artists necessarily are a populist activity.

MAUDETTE BALL: That was my question. I know we've discussed elitism vs. populism before---

CONSTANCE GLENN: I don't think there is any reason to expect the great numbers of people who are ever going to clamor to be a part of the making and showing and discriminating of contemporary art. I suspect it's probably not in the best interest of that art. You saw what happened in the eighties, when people did clamor and it was a very unhealthy scene.

MAUDETTE BALL: Where will this support come from?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Well, I guess that my primary disappointment is that the University doesn't see it as a major part of education. I mean in the best of all possible worlds, a university would see the arts as an important part of education. Right?

MAUDETTE BALL: I would think so. Do you think that this is not---

CONSTANCE GLENN: Outside the university environment where is the support going to come from, I think that is a real important question. When you look around at our museums, most particularly in Southern California and you see a lot of trouble.

MAUDETTE BALL: Do you think that's because the high rolling eighties are behind us and people are wanting things that are practical or ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: You know, I've always thought the depth of patronage in collecting was extremely shallow here and it always disappears with bad times. This is just not New York.

MAUDETTE BALL: You mentioned something over lunch about its having to do with the end of the century?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Well, that doesn't have anything to do with the geographic area, or why the ends of the centuries produce very strange art climates historically. This is an interest of mine and I looked at ends of centuries and they tend to be quite chaotic and this is not a new theory. I began talking about this in the sixties, that we were going to face a very strange end of the century because it was going to be the millennium as well. All you have to do is think to yourself about what Vienna was like and the era of Sigmund Freud and Gustave Klimpt, Gustave Mahler, I mean[laughs]

MAUDETTE BALL: We should produce such guys.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yes, but it's not that, but it was extremely decadent, and in some ways violent. When you think about the opera that came out of it. Have you ever seen "LuLu"(?) the Klimpt opera?

MAUDETTE BALL: No.

CONSTANCE GLENN: When you think about the music that came out of that period. It's very intense, very rich, very decadent and in some ways very violent. And I don't necessarily mean physically violent, I mean assault the ears and assault the eyes. But yes, physical violence in some pieces as well, wars. I think what's going on in the arts, that we find so confusing and so frustrating and someways so unfocused, you and I think so haphazard is pretty typical of what I might have expected. In 1960, you didn't have to be any sort of genius to know who the major artists of the period were, at least for our time. Maybe permanent history will not show those figures to be major artists, but you would have had to have been born blind as a bat to not to know about where to find Jim Dine, Andy Warhol and Jim Rosenquist and Tom Wesselman and George Segal, or the Beat poets or whatever

field you wanted to discuss. Not only were the numbers rather small and the spectrum of creativity very obvious, these circles of patrons were also quite small and in the early sixties we used to say that there were 250 people who were active in the contemporary art world in the American way, and we always knew each other by first names. One of the things that happened in the eighties was that that scene was completely away.

MAUDETTE BALL: Do you know ...

CONSTANCE GLENN: Millions of people all over the world were active in a scene that was falsely supported by speculators and it wasn't good for the arts. It may have seemed nice at the time. When everyone was living high on the hog, it must have seemed nice, but it certainly wasn't good for the art scene.

MAUDETTE BALL: You mentioned the support drying up close to home and the cutbacks and so forth, isn't this a part of the national thing? We were discussing the NEA and the NEA is very apt to be history.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Well the arts are typically supported by a liberal society and the era of the liberal society that you and I grew up in is apparently over for the time being. Have a look at France or Germany or where ever you want to look, the smallest dollar of citizen tax money in any major western country is being spent in this country, at the present time, but on the other hand you look at France where they just elected a conservative president.

MAUDETTE BALL: Um.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Whether you liked Mitterand's grand projects or not, with the amount of money spent in France and Germany on the arts, while we thought the arts were flourishing here, was hundreds of times what was being spent here. I don't think the era of support for the arts is over simply in this country for the time being I think it's in trouble everywhere.

MAUDETTE BALL: Over a period?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yeah, I think that the arts are simply not prioritized in a highly conservative society and it appears that all the western countries are headed toward highly conservative societies. The only one that puzzles me a bit is London. Of all places that I have traveled, I think the most exciting young art is in London.

MAUDETTE BALL: Oh really.

CONSTANCE GLENN: And since they have had such a rough time politically and financially, because their conservative society came in with Margaret Thatcher, it's interesting to me that so much that's really quite phenomenal is coming out of London, in the way of young artists. If you asked me where to go to see exciting young artists, at this point in time I would certainly say London. Because you and I grew up in the era when America was considered the headquarters of world-wide art, having been established here with abstract expressionism, I think we tend to think that was going to last here forever. We have no reason to expect it to last forever, New York is still the central market, but I do not think that America is the central place for making art anymore.

MAUDETTE BALL: Is that why, when you achieved university museum status and moved over across campus, which was ...?

CONSTANCE GLENN: '84

MAUDETTE BALL: '84. The focus of your programming shifted, did it not? You began to show more international kinds of things.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Yes.

MAUDETTE BALL: Was this part of that thinking, that you would focus less on regional art and national American art?

CONSTANCE GLENN: Art became international. Through the sixties American art was the primary art in contemporary art all over the world. In the seventies and eighties much of what you wanted to see or know about came from all over the world. I mean I think showing only American art in the seventies and eighties would have been very strange, don't you? If you were interested in contemporary art? A lot of interesting work was being done in Germany, some in France, some in England.

MAUDETTE BALL: You were given support at that time to make the move across campus to, I guess ---

CONSTANCE GLENN: That was to have been a temporary move.

MAUDETTE BALL: Right.

CONSTANCE GLENN: Steve Horn already knew that he wanted to build a building and he knew that we were in spaces where we just couldn't run the programs that would support a building or prepare the university for a building anymore. And at the time he chose to move this over there, the library was without a director and he was pretty much able to make it a fait accompli. If there had been a director of the library at that time, the director would undoubtedly have fought the move. But he did take it through the academic senate and the academic senate did OK it. But when they did in fact finally hire a director, we were pretty much unwelcome guests there from then on. They wanted and needed their space back, and it was never to have been a 10-year period. It was to have been a very brief period while Steve raised the money. Oh, my god..

MAUDETTE BALL: Do you want to stop?

CONSTANCE GLENN: I'm late.

[END OF INTERVIEW

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