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Oral history interview with Anne Truitt, 2002
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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Anne Truitt on April 16, 17, 25 and August 8, 2002. The interview was conducted at Anne Truitt's home in Washington, DC by Anne Louise Bayly for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

Interview

MS. BAYLY: It is April 16, 2002, and this is Anne Bayly interviewing Anne Truitt for the Archives of American Art, at the artist's home in Washington, D.C.

Why don't we talk a little bit about your childhood in Easton, Maryland. I've read in your books that your first experience with seeing art or seeing a painting would have been when you saw a Renoir at a friend's house, was it?

MS. TRUITT : No. That was my first experience of seeing great art. My house was full of art, just full of it. My forebears were Boston -- were New Englanders who owned clipper ships that went to the Orient, to China, and so I grew up in a house full of Chinese things, full of Chinese Canton china and beautiful tapestries, which are now -- now that I'm 81, those tapestries are coming back into my work. Very interesting to me. Very interesting to me. One hung upstairs in the upstairs hall and the other one hung in the dining room, and they were both very beautiful, old -- very old, ancient -- Chinese tapestries. And my mother had a beautiful Chinese Mandarin coat, which came down to me.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: Fascinating tapestries because, of course, details are subsumed into a whole and yet no detail is lost.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And the whole effect is one. The colors of those beautiful tapestries are so well keyed that nothing is lost. And my grandfather had been ambassador to The Hague and he bought art in Europe, so the house was full of French furniture and the house was full of sculpture. There was a marble pedestal in the front hall with a bust of Caesar Augustus on it. That was, I suppose, since the beginning, that. And then on an inlaid French sort of chest with a marble top in the living room was a fascinating bust, I thought, of Marie Antoinette which was part enamel, part gilt and part marble.

MS. BAYLY: Wow.

MS. TRUITT: Almost Rococo, but more restrained.

MS. BAYLY: Did you feel free to explore these objects in your house? Did your parents keep the children in a nursery or somewhere else, or did you feel that you had free rein to go and touch the tapestries?

MS. TRUITT: Oh, I could do whatever I pleased. My parents never interfered with me. The only thing they did was make sure I wore ground-gripper shoes and ate three square meals a day and had a nap every day after lunch. And I was required to do those things. And then I was required to let them know where I was.

MS. BAYLY: Right. Certainly.

MS. TRUITT: Other than that, I don't think I had any restraints put on me. And any questions I asked were answered as fast as they could be asked. I was taught at home until the fifth grade by a governess. My parents set up a little "dame's school" overlooking our garden. And my two younger sisters, 18 months younger than I -- twins -- and I -- that's three students, and then my oldest friend, Helena Johnston, was one of the students. She's about two years older than I. And then there were two little girls who were my contemporaries.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: Or our contemporaries, my sisters' and mine. Helena died about five years ago, my lifelong friend since I was a baby.

MS. BAYLY: I'm so sorry.

MS. TRUITT: And one of the other little girls died, Peggy Chapman. But Kitty Chapman I'm back in touch with

because I had an exhibition in Easton about five years ago or something --

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: -- and I looked her up again. I sort of tracked her down. Very interesting. Those little girls were both adopted. One came from Denmark and one from I don't know where. They were very different little girls. So there were six little girls and we were taught in a room overlooking the garden by this wonderful woman named Ms. Francis, whom I talk about, I think, in "Turn."

MS. BAYLY: Yes, and you went back and you saw her much later.

MS. TRUITT: Much later, when I was in my sixties -- or was it seventies? And yes, I went over to see her in Denton, Maryland. I was so glad to see her and she was so glad to see me. I think probably both equally glad. I think she must have been a little bit curious, although she had not, I think, really liked me when I was a child.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: I think perhaps I was really not all that agreeable a little girl, in the sense that -- in the book I said I asked her if I was interesting and she said no. Ms. Francis was always so honest. But then when we met again, when she was in her nineties and I was in my sixties, we liked -- we had so much in common, you know.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So I'm awfully glad I did that. And my temperament is such that I tend to -- I go back and re-collect - - not only recollect, but re-collect experience that interests me or that I feel is unfinished.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I do it all the time. I do it with books. I re-read books. I read *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* each four times, and I might re-read them again before I die. I re-read in order to double check what I think.

MS. BAYLY: Is this something you've always done?

MS. TRUITT: Yes.

MS. BAYLY: Even when you were a child you would do this?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. My mother used to read to us every night on that little sofa you're sitting on.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, this one right here?

MS. TRUITT: Yes.

MS. BAYLY: And you were saying [The] *Lady of Shalott* was one of your --

MS. TRUITT: Well, that we used to read up in her bedroom from that chaise longue over there, which was in the bedroom. And right next to it, just as it is here in my living room, there was a fireplace and a fire. And we used to sit up there and she had tea every afternoon. We'd read and have tea. My mother was wonderful. She read to me in her beautiful voice. She went to Radcliffe. Very interesting person. And her mother went to Smith. I come from sort of a line of bluestockings.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Well, besides reading to you, did your mother let you just explore on your own -- I read that you, of course, got a bike one day and were able to ride around Easton and go exploring on your own.

MS. TRUITT: My father gave me the bike.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: It was like the *Mes Eglise* way and the *Guermantes* way, to some extent, in Proust, although God knows I'm -- you know, that sort of may be drawing -- it's not drawing a long bow, it's just using Proust as a paradigm. My parents came -- my mother came from Boston, my father from St Louis. They met in Cuba in the First World War. And they went to Cuba because my grandmother, my mother's mother, had very bad arthritis and her habit was to go to Aix les Bains in France every year for her arthritis, but she couldn't go during the war, so they went down to Bermuda, and my father -- to Cuba -- I beg your pardon -- and my father was there.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: And so they met. And then they met again in France in the first -- during that war, where my mother

went as a Red Cross nurse and my father was in the Army.

MS. BAYLY: Oh. So they sort of left one another in Cuba, and then --

MS. TRUITT: I think they stayed in touch, I gather.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: So then they met again in France and they were married on May 8, 1919. Would that be correct? Yes, it would be correct. It is correct. It was in New York.

MS. BAYLY: And from there they moved to Easton, where they --

MS. TRUITT: Yes. They moved to Easton. And I wish I'd asked more questions. I always asked a lot of questions, but the questions weren't the right questions, necessarily. [Laughs.] I think they moved there because my father's sister married a man who lived there.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: They lived out at Avonville, which was a house out in the country, and we always lived in the town.

But I began to tell you about the difference between my father and mother.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Not only was I in a situation in which the Guermantes way was represented by my parents, who came -- they were foreigners in this very provincial -- in the very best sense of the word, in a French sense or an English sense -- sort of "county," that kind of thing. They were foreigners. What the Japanese call *gaijin*, outlanders. *Gaijin* is Japanese for foreigner.

MS. BAYLY: How do you spell that?

MS. TRUITT: G-a-i-j-i-n.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: So that gave them a kind of distinction -- I don't mean distinction in the sense of distinguished -- distinction in the sense of being distinct in the community. And the reason why I was taken in on the eastern shore of Maryland had nothing to do with them, although it did have to do with them because they were also to some extent distinguished. They stood out. It was the fact that Helena Johnston and I were such good friends. Her family had been there for I don't know how many generations. Sort of native-born Eastern Shore people, Washington and Eastern Shore.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: So that gave me a place on the Eastern Shore. What I'm really leading up to is the fact of why this is so charged for me, the whole Eastern Shore. It was the first thing I opened up my eyes on. I think it's very important what you open your eyes on first. There's a kind of decision that you have to take as you go through your life: whether you're going to stay in your body, so to speak, whether you're going to look at it realistically or actualistically and whether you're going to settle and address yourself to the situation. [Laughs.] I think the first environment on which you open your eyes tends to tincture or tint or color the way in which you view the world from then on.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: The exterior world as opposed to the psychological world.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So the first things I opened my eyes on were in the Eastern Shore. And they're still there in my work. I'm still, you know, never -- it's just ingrained in me. And because of the freedom that my parents gave me -- my parents were very intelligent; they let me alone. You know, that's a huge boon.

MS. BAYLY: I think you said, as your mother said, to raise children like cabbages?

MS. TRUITT: Yes.

MS. BAYLY: And give them lots of space and let them be to grow.

MS. TRUITT: The minute she said it, I saw exactly. I saw myself as a cabbage on a --

MS. BAYLY: [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: [Laughs.] -- on a well-cultivated field with the sun and the rain and plenty of space around me so my leaves could go out as far as I wanted. That's exactly what she did. And I think many parents pore over their children. You know, they want them to be something. I was born when my father was 42 and my mother was 32, and it was a big pleasure to them when I was born, and then my sisters followed 18 months later. And I think I, in particular, was a very great pleasure to my parents, and particularly my father, who really thought -- he just adored me; there's no point of fooling around with it. And I think that gave me the thing that perhaps little girls get from their father, a feeling of real affirmation, a kind of inner confidence that I notice that very few people have.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: It doesn't occur to me to question my decisions. My deep decisions, the ones that I make out of myself. And I've always looked on the inside to make decisions, and I think part of it is that sort of natural confidence.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Plus the ground-gripper shoes, the orange juice, the brown bread. The fact that I was expected to be able to go out into the world on my own and stay there for the morning as soon as I got old enough.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And the bicycle my father gave me, which gave me wheels under me, and independence. Plus the fact that my mother read all the time to us, and my father read to us, too.

MS. BAYLY: So really, though you were in a smaller -- you know, Easton, and you were just a small person -- your world was actually quite vast, I guess, if you were reading so much and you were able to go around on your bike wherever you wanted.

MS. TRUITT: Completely fascinating. I just loved my childhood.

MS. BAYLY: That's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: Then when I was about 13, the axe fell on me. But you're quite old at 13.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I just adored it. I thought it was so interesting. Of course, for the eastern shore of Maryland -- if you're a child, you're low down to the ground.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And the landscape is low. It lies down under the sky, sort of like Holland. Van Ruisdael. You know, that lowlands -- the low horizon?

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. If you think about it. Have you been over there?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: It's a Dutch landscape. Or Rembrandt, *The Three Trees* etching. The water is here on the horizon, and then just a few little incidents above it, and then the sky.

MS. BAYLY: The sky.

MS. TRUITT: So the horizon is set very low. And if you're a child, you have the enormous advantage of being low down. And then you have the advantage of the fact that when you are low down, your little naked feet are in the ooze. [Laughs.] And because of the fact that Helena Johnston was two years older than I was, I had even more freedom because I had the freedom of being with an older child.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And she was a very prudent person, which I am not. So we used to play in the ooze and note

everything that goes on where the water and the land interchange.

MS. BAYLY: And you just kind of explored everything.

MS. TRUITT: We just looked at everything. And Helena had a bicycle too. Hers was blue and mine was red. But mostly I went on my bicycle alone. She had a house in the country, and that was a big boon to me because then I had all the swimming and all the things having to do with the river and all those pleasures. The pleasures of childhood.

MS. BAYLY: And you said, Anne, I guess it was -- was it *Prospect* or *Turn*? -- that her mother was great fun and was always --

MS. TRUITT: Oh, her mother was wonderful. I called her "Ju-uey" because I couldn't say "Julia." I was really too young. See, we were lifelong friends. I miss her every day. Ju-uey was perfectly wonderful. She was -- she's what they call "intellectual," a word I really almost never use, but she was. Her mind was very far ranging and she was very interested in entertaining new ideas, and she loved poetry. Well, my mother did too, but my mother was not so -- my mother was better educated. She'd been to Radcliffe and her context was very different, you see.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Her context was very much wider than Ju-uey's, but she didn't have that kind of -- she didn't have the temperament of somebody who jumps at things. So Ju-uey was just a lot of fun. I mean, if she liked Yeats, she loved Yeats. So she just would read Yeats and we'd just sit and listen. Or she always had a lot of papers around her, so you could pick up her papers. That's how I found out about Freud. Pick up her papers and read what she was reading. She was a clipper.

MS. BAYLY: And she would encourage this in you?

MS. TRUITT: I never paid any attention to what she thought. The papers were all over her bed. She had a great big bedroom and she had two beds in it, and the other bed was always full of papers. I don't think the older people had that much effect on me, other than to just set me free. Other than -- I mean, you've asked a couple of questions now about what I was allowed to do.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I never had the feeling that I was being allowed.

MS. BAYLY: To do anything.

MS. TRUITT: I just had the feeling that I belonged, and I made choices of what I was going to do and not do, within reason.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And if I had questions, I would go and ask my mother.

MS. BAYLY: And she would usually be forthcoming?

MS. TRUITT: Oh, completely. Completely. She had a lot of faith in me. She was right.

MS. BAYLY: So once you --

MS. TRUITT: She was right because I was level-headed.

MS. BAYLY: And so she could trust you to --

MS. TRUITT: Yes, she could trust me. She brought me up to be trustworthy, and my father did too. And then they trusted me. And so what they got was this little girl who knew what she was doing. Sturdy-legged, strong little girl. Independent. Also, my family's house was not universally cheerful. So my father drank and my mother was sort of really not awfully well all the time. So it was a little bit gloomy. But you see, from my point of view, I had my bicycle, and then the weekends I almost always spent out in the country with Helena. So I had a great deal of compensation. And one of my first decisions was to turn out of my family.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I don't think families are that -- you know, you don't have to stay with the egg forever.

MS. BAYLY: No.

MS. TRUITT: And I stayed a very short time.

MS. BAYLY: Now, you went away to high school?

MS. TRUITT: Excuse me?

MS. BAYLY: Did you go away to high school?

MS. TRUITT: No, I didn't. I was taught until the fifth grade in the -- under that situation, and then the Depression hit. Well, from my point of view and the point of view of -- my mother was about to send me to the National Cathedral School or something like that. And I think because of money, because they lived on inherited money, and the money was cut by the Depression, she decided she'd send -- also, Ms. Francis married. She got married.

MS. BAYLY: Oh. So she, of course, needed to leave and --

MS. TRUITT: Yes, so the little school came to an end and I was put, thank God, into public school.

MS. BAYLY: In Easton?

MS. TRUITT: Quel shock! It only happened to one other person I've ever known, Jamison Parker. He and I used to discuss it.

MS. BAYLY: It must have been quite a shock.

MS. TRUITT: It was a terrific shock. And we both hit it simultaneously, both in the fifth grade. It was wonderful! It was just wonderful! It's like nursing. It was the way nursing was for me when I hit Red Cross nursing.

[Telephone rings.] You needn't worry about the telephone.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: If I hadn't gone to public school, I wouldn't know anything.

MS. BAYLY: Really. Was it the experience of being with many different students, or was it that the curriculum was so different, or -- ?

MS. TRUITT: Well, the curriculum was different. That's a good point. The curriculum, of course, was far more objective. It was the first time in my life that I was required to meet objective standards, because Ms. Francis didn't like arithmetic.

MS. BAYLY: Ah.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. So when I hit the fifth grade, I knew that five times five was 25 because something about it stuck in my head. I knew three times five was 15 and seven times seven was 49, and of course I knew the second table and I knew three times three was nine. But actually, there were huge blanks. There just were blanks. And I could figure it out because I'd been taught how to figure it out by adding on my fingers, you see. But it was a tough sort of transition because, first place, the standards were objective; second place, there were about 30 children in the classroom, or 25 to 30. Now, I had never seen that number of children before. I'd never seen any boys.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Except, you know, just at a distance.

MS. BAYLY: That must have been mind-altering. You know, just so opening for you.

MS. TRUITT: Oh, it was wonderful. And I was so different from the others, and yet so much alike. I had little pigtails and I wore these cotton dresses that were made for me, with little collars and cuffs. And there were big boys at the back of the room -- I can see them now, two of them -- who were really quite big. I think they had been too badly taught to go from grade to grade, and they couldn't pass them so they were just kept in this classroom at the back. And they giggled and laughed and threw spitballs and stuff. Why, I was fascinated!

And then I had a friend named Johnny, who was a little boy in my class, the first -- the second friend who was a boy. I did know one boy, little Billy, Billy Miles. Billy Miles and I were friends when we were about two years old. We used to sit on the step in the sun and talk, I guess. I don't know what -- I don't remember --

MS. BAYLY: And he was a neighbor?

MS. TRUITT: He was a neighbor.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: And then Johnny was my first friend through whom I learned what it was like to be desperate. And he and I walked home from school one day. I don't know what he thought. We sat down on the curb in front of my house, in the dirt, you know, with our feet in the dirt, and he had on a sweater that had big holes in it. He was very poor and it was the Depression. The Depression was far more depressing than anybody seems willing to talk about now. They talk about depressions nowadays. They don't know what they're talking about.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Depressions is when -- depression -- a depression is when people have nothing to eat. I mean, it's a serious matter. And the pain of it and the suffering is perfectly terrible. I remember seeing a man rooting in a garbage pail near my house. And my father did a great deal of work with the Red Cross and the Children's Aid Society, trying to help. It was truly terrible.

Well, little -- this boy, who was a very nice boy, he and Billy Miles were the prototype of the friendships with men that I've had all my life. I have very good friends who just happen to have been men. So we sat on the -- scuffled our feet in the dirt, and then the next day he disappeared. He never reappeared. I remember going in and walking upstairs to my mother's bedroom, where she was working at the desk which I now have in my bedroom, and I said, "There's a little boy who has holes in his sweater and I like him a lot. He's such a nice person," et cetera. I don't know how I said it. And Mother said, "Well, we'll see what we can do," meaning that she would keep an eye on him and help him. But he disappeared.

MS. BAYLY: Where do you think he --

MS. TRUITT: Oh, I think he went back to the farm.

MS. BAYLY: To work?

MS. TRUITT: He probably was just given a couple of days in school, you know, or -- I think it was in the spring; it was warm enough to sit outside. So maybe when warm weather came, he went back to work on the farm. But he was an intelligent, strong-minded boy with character. I've never forgotten him. I haven't the faintest idea what happened to him. I can't go back and pick him up. If I could, I would. I don't even know his last name. If I knew his last name, I'd ask Tom Bartlett, who lives on the eastern shore of Maryland and still -- and knows everything. He's like me; he collects everything and keeps it in his memory.

MS. BAYLY: So it must be hard for you to have some of these things that you can't re-collect and --

MS. TRUITT: No, but that's the way life is. And also, whatever was, whatever experience you have had cannot be taken away from you.

MS. BAYLY: Right. That's, of course, very true.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah.

MS. BAYLY: How long were you in the public school in Easton?

MS. TRUITT: I think it was two years, maybe three. I went into the fifth grade. How does it go in schools? By the eighth grade I was in -- by the ninth grade -- nine, 10, 11, 12 -- I was in St. Anne's. So the eighth grade I went -- it was eight, seven -- you can see my math -- six, five. So four years. But I moved from the grammar school to the junior high.

MS. BAYLY: Okay. And were your sisters enrolled in the same --

MS. TRUITT: My sisters were two grades below me. They went into the third grade.

MS. BAYLY: And they went all the way through, as you did?

MS. TRUITT: They went through. And then they went to -- we by that time moved to Virginia and they were in public school in Virginia near my aunt's farm outside Charlottesville, and I went to St. Anne's in Charlottesville for a year. And then we moved to North Carolina, and then I went to St. Genevieve of the Pines in Asheville. And I graduated from there in 1937.

MS. BAYLY: D you have any sort of artistic or arts classes there at all?

MS. TRUITT: No, none.

MS. BAYLY: Or art history?

MS. TRUITT: Absolutely none. The only thing I remember when I was a child that had to do with drawing or -- oh, yes, two things. One of them is I went to Sunday School and we had these horrible crayons and horrible books with pictures of Jesus and little children and stuff, with big, thick black lines. Do they still have those?

MS. BAYLY: Oh, yes, they have them.

MS. TRUITT: They do? And crayons. We were supposed to fill in. But I knew it was completely useless.

MS. BAYLY: Yeah, it is.

MS. TRUITT: I was obedient, vaguely. I found it profitable to be obedient when I was a child because if you're obedient, people leave you -- they trust you. Reasonably obedient.

MS. BAYLY: And they give you more freedom.

MS. TRUITT: You don't have to be slavish, but you do have to do what's right, get up in the morning and get dressed and go to school and do well in school. I loved school. I love school; I've always loved it. I've always adored it, ever since I hit the public school.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But Ms. Francis, I really did more or less what I pleased. Ms. Francis, the only thing she ever did in the way of art was make a flour map of the Andes.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, yes, I read that. It was sort of a relief map. It was wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: And we painted it green and white. It was lovely.

MS. BAYLY: Did you feel particularly attracted to the activity of making and creating something like that? I know you said later when you were at your aunt's farm in Charlottesville you saw them making soap or creating or making things on this farm.

MS. TRUITT: "Creating" is a word I just never use, you know. I think God creates. We just make things.

MS. BAYLY: Making.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. But I know how you're using it. I'm not correcting the word or anything.

I never really thought about it much. I mean, when you breathe, or when you move around, everything seems to me of a piece. But I've always liked making things, yes. I like the fact that something comes out of nothing.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But I never gave it much thought.

MS. BAYLY: So you didn't feel, though, when you were --

MS. TRUITT: In fact, I never gave it any thought.

MS. BAYLY: Really, until you were much older and --

MS. TRUITT: Well, not until 1948.

MS. BAYLY: Right. So when you were a child, then, and you were experiencing the landscape -- the Eastern Shore and the layout of the town and how --

MS. TRUITT: And the light.

MS. BAYLY: -- and the light -- you were just sort of experiencing them as they were, but did you not feel an urge to sort of capture them and --

MS. TRUITT: I never thought of myself at all, except I thought how interesting everything was. No, I felt no

inclination whatsoever.

MS. BAYLY: So it was just thoroughly --

MS. TRUITT: I just was busy absorbing, like a sponge. In fact, I'm still the same way. I never make sketches. I never draw unless I'm making a work on paper. I never just fiddle. I don't need to. I'm a sort of one-shot person. I'm terribly serious, I'm afraid. The problem is I'm really very serious, and if I do something, it's really serious.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And there was no need for me to. In my house there were a lot of pictures, French pictures, and there were beautiful old ship pictures. There's my mother.

MS. BAYLY: Oh! Oh, that's beautiful.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, she is beautiful, actually. There she was painted when she was 19. There were beautiful ship prints because of the clipper ships in the Boston stuff, history. The house was full of beautiful things, really. And the sort of still lifes you see in books, sort of 19th/18th century with dead hares and things -- though I don't remember any dead hares, but that kind of thing. Big floral pictures.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, dark. Dark. And I would not call them beautiful. I would call them sort of first-rate third rate, or first-rate second rate, something like that. They were --

MS. BAYLY: [Laughs.] That's a good description.

MS. TRUITT: -- practitioners. They were artists who were practitioners. The first work of art I ever saw was that little Renoir on my way out the door at the Arensbergs. And I think that's Conrad Arensberg. I think those are the Arensbergs who collected the Arensberg Collection, oddly enough.

MS. BAYLY: Wow.

MS. TRUITT: Funny how life is, isn't it?

MS. BAYLY: It is. And so that was what really struck you, though.

MS. TRUITT: Was that painting. I would never have held up the line otherwise. I mean, I was very polite. But that's a wholly different order of things. I saw that art was possible to make something of an entirely different order.

MS. BAYLY: An --

MS. TRUITT: Entirely different order. Art bears no relation to life at all. Very little.

MS. BAYLY: All right.

Well, after you moved to North Carolina and you completed high school, you went on to Bryn Mawr, where you studied psychology.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. I think we should dwell a tiny little bit on Asheville because that's where I --

MS. BAYLY: Oh, absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: No, we don't need dwell very long. There, instead of the landscape being flat and horizontal and without incident, there I encountered mountains. Fat, bulky, filled, powerful, shouldering shapes. And I was very interested in that. Closing you in. Closing the landscape, closing in the horizon and looming. Things looming over you. I was very interested that the -- I mean, valleys and clefts and Courbet-like landscapes. It was just a totally different place. And different colors. And different people, with whom I felt really virtually nothing in common. I mean, I was really isolated there.

MS. BAYLY: Did you feel sort of isolated --

MS. TRUITT: Exiled.

MS. BAYLY: -- from the landscape?

MS. TRUITT: No, not a bit. I never feel --

MS. BAYLY: The landscape --

MS. TRUITT: I never felt exiled from what's around me.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I shouldn't say that, because I did in Japan.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: But Japan really is different. But we'll get to that, I suppose.

But Asheville, I learned two things. One was the mountains. The second was discipline in family life. My parents were really never well after the age of 13. They just weren't. I learned the discipline of family life. I learned to bear up and endure. That's a very good thing to learn. And I learned to live in a very alien environment, not only the people around me -- whom I didn't love. I mean, there was nobody I loved except my family, whereas in Easton, there were plenty of people I loved.

And then I learned the discipline of more Latin. I'd already had two years of Latin. Then I took three more years of Latin and learned the structure better. I studied Cicero and Virgil. I learned the structure of the language better because the structure of my sculpture comes, to some extent, from the structure of Latin.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. I studied Latin for a long time and --

MS. TRUITT: You did?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Good.

MS. BAYLY: So I was actually very interested in reading everything that -- you know, you kept sort of referring back to the poets and the Greeks, but I didn't know necessarily your work was based on the structure of Latin --

MS. TRUITT: The Latin --

MS. BAYLY: -- [off mike].

MS. TRUITT: -- sentence, you could -- well, then you know what I'm talking about.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: The Latin sentence is a very plain sentence. They're clear-cut. The nouns are nouns. They stand up straight. The verbs carry the action, and sometimes they stop the action, and sometimes they carry it. And sometimes they don't come till the end of the paragraph, like Caesar's praeponic [sp] sentences. I think the structure is just completely fascinating.

MS. BAYLY: It is. It's so simple, yet says so many --

MS. TRUITT: It's blocks. They're in rectangular, in square blocks. So that the nouns and the verbs and adjectives, everything has a place and it's orderly. And it's expressive, but the expression is not necessarily in the words themselves, but in their juxtaposition, their connection, to make sense.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It was a revelation to me. I adored Latin from the beginning. I began to study it in Easton. I had --

MS. BAYLY: In the public school?

MS. TRUITT: Yes, in the public school. I was taught by a wonderful woman. I think her name was Ms. Lord. She was very tall and very thin and she wore a lot of bright clothes. She's the sort of person that Sherwood Anderson would have latched on to as being typical, sort of spinster teacher. And she later married. She married a man whom I also had my eye on when I was a child, who was very fat. Not too tall, and very fat, and I always was interested in that. And they married.

MS. BAYLY: And then did you --

MS. TRUITT: He courted her. He courted her and he married her, and I saw the whole thing from my bicycle. And I cared about her because she was teaching me this absolutely wonderful stuff and I was learning as fast as I

could learn. And my mother was a Latin scholar, really, much more than I, and she studied it all the way through college. So we could talk about it. My mother and I talked a great deal about objective things -- Jane Eyre, poetry, Latin, French. She spoke beautiful French, and I studied French too. I got extremely good French teaching in Asheville because the nuns were French. I'm not a Catholic.

MS. BAYLY: Right. But it was a convent school that you were --

MS. TRUITT: I learned about the structure from the convent, too. It was the first time that I saw a structured religion, because the Episcopal Church -- you know, if you say you're sorry and you're an Episcopal person, Episcopalian, you're all right.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I mean, there isn't any such thing as something landing on you or anything. Dante is very alien to them.

MS. BAYLY: Wow. I'm sure that being in a monastery or in a convent is extremely structured and --

MS. TRUITT: Extremely what?

MS. BAYLY: Structured. Did you like the structure of it or were you drawn to it, or did you feel that there was like sort of a lack of freedom?

MS. TRUITT: I disliked it. I thought it had no air.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It had no air. I realized then that I must never get -- that I had been right to avoid it.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Avoid that kind of smothering structure. And I realized how people could endure, because the girls who did accept it and did take it for granted and didn't have any interior life that they could resort to could be killed by it. I saw people getting killed. That was the first time I saw people getting killed. I'd seen them being made almost unspeakably unhappy when I was a child.

MS. BAYLY: And this is "killed" in the sense of their spirit is killed?

MS. TRUITT: Stultified. Mm-hmm. So limited by rule. And of course it's very common. I just grew up without it, so it seems to me -- I think it's tragic. That's actually what I do think. It is one of the things that sent me toward psychology, the idea of freeing people from the internalization of a structure that bears no relation to the spirit.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

Well, back to Latin. How long did you study Latin?

MS. TRUITT: Five-and-a-half years.

MS. BAYLY: Five-and-a-half years?

MS. TRUITT: Into college.

MS. BAYLY: And so I guess it was all the things that you were taken with, the Latin and the landscapes in Easton and things like that, just sort of built up as you moved into starting your work.

MS. TRUITT: Well, only in retrospect. This is all in retrospect. I mean, I'm telling you as it was as I was living it.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But in retrospect, if I have to put my mind on the structure of how my work evolved, I think Latin had made a huge contribution to it.

MS. BAYLY: That's fascinating.

MS. TRUITT: And also the structure in my house. I grew up in a very formal, structured environment which was also beautiful. It had the beauty of ritual, the beauty of repetitiveness and the beauty of the beautiful things in the house. And then my mother and father's behavior, which was very good. Nobody ever raised their voices or anything. Nothing jumped at you. Some of the places that I began to go out into when I grew up a little more,

the parents were squabbling and yelling and jumping on the children. The children are frightened.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I was frightened, all right, but I was frightened by their illness. They couldn't help that. I got a combination of structure and freedom. And I got the strength.

MS. BAYLY: Which is a nice balance.

MS. TRUITT: Hmm?

MS. BAYLY: Which is a wonderful balance.

MS. TRUITT: It's a very good balance. I'm very interested in balance. And people talk about my sculptures. They're not -- it's not a matter of checks and balances, the old cubist checks and balances.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: The balance is interior and runs on the line of gravity that holds the sculptures to the ground. But that concept of balance is something I began to get after when I was very young. I had to balance. In order to keep my freedom I had to balance. It was very interesting, really.

MS. BAYLY: So then in Asheville you were just --

MS. TRUITT: Well, Asheville was really pretty miserable. I had friends because I really like people and, you know, I'm sort of adjustable. But I didn't understand them. They were interested in boys. Have you lived in the South?

MS. BAYLY: I've lived in Washington my entire life.

MS. TRUITT: Well, the South was a revelation to me. They were interested in boys, whom I didn't really -- in the first place I was too young. I was 15 when I graduated from high school. I was just barely 16 because, you see, when they put me in school, there wasn't any way for them to tell, when I came out of Ms. Francis' hands --

MS. BAYLY: Where you fit.

MS. TRUITT: Exactly. So they just guessed, really, I suppose. So I ended up, then, I had to stay home for one year before I went to college. My parents said I was too young, and they were right. But I learned a lot in Asheville. I learned about bulk and weight and, to some extent, about shape. And I learned about structure and I learned to endure.

MS. BAYLY: And did you learn about that from, would you say, the mountains and the hills and the landscape?

MS. TRUITT: The mountains. By that time I was driving. I got my license when I was 14. So not only was I riding on my bicycle, I was driving.

MS. BAYLY: So now even more freedom to explore the terrain.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, and responsibility, which is, of course, extremely strengthening. Responsibility is very strengthening, and I began to have it when I was about 13, when my parents got sick.

MS. BAYLY: Sort of taking care of the family and your sisters.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah.

MS. BAYLY: From there you went -- from Asheville --

MS. TRUITT: Is this -- excuse me for interrupting you. Is this too much detail?

MS. BAYLY: No, not at all. The detail is wonderful, absolutely wonderful. And please give as much detail as you can.

MS. TRUITT: All right, I will. Then I'll keep on doing sort of -- it doesn't have to be too much of a linear progression. You'll keep us to what you want.

MS. BAYLY: Not at all.

MS. TRUITT: Okay.

MS. BAYLY: No, you please just tell me what you're thinking. I don't want to interrupt anything.

MS. TRUITT: Well, then I'd like to say a little bit about ancient French poetry because when I didn't go to -- when I couldn't go to college -- and my parents were right about that. I was too young. I would have gone then at 16. One of the girls in my class was 16 when she went, and she had a terrible breakdown. Bryn Mawr is a very -- in those days and I think still is -- a very difficult, demanding, scholarly atmosphere.

But during that year, I went to the junior college that was run by St. Genevieve of the Pines, and I had the good luck to run into Mere Jena, who taught medieval French poetry. That was extremely lucky. Then I picked up romanticism, which I had not picked up from English poetry, even though my mother read it to me all the time. I don't know quite what it was, but it was the French who taught it to me. Anyway, I picked it up, and I picked up nuance. I picked up inflection. You know, that very early French poetry is very beautiful. I picked up inflection, which I really hadn't picked up from English poetry. So that had a huge effect on me, and I'm very glad I did that.

I also began to write poetry, really bad poetry. I began to write. I wrote during that year. It gave me a sort of a breathing space for me to mature.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I needed it. I needed it. I'd had a lot of stress and strain before I got to Asheville, and then I'd had to adjust to a lot of different things. And I had a year of lying fallow.

MS. BAYLY: You read poetry, and writing yourself.

[Begin Tape 1, Side B]

MS. TRUITT: And reading. I read all the time. And my mother and I talked. The twins were there. My father was there. It wasn't altogether happy. It wasn't happy, but it was reasonable. And I lay fallow.

MS. BAYLY: So you weren't drawn to go on to pursue writing or poetry necessarily from that?

MS. TRUITT: When you ask the question, I think what it implies is that I thought, "Oh, I'll be a writer," or something like that. It never crossed my mind to be anything except a psychologist. That was the only thing I set out to be where I made up my mind -- that I had made up my mind toward a goal.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And I didn't make up my mind to that until after I did exercises at a mental hospital in Asheville, after I'd been for two months at Bryn Mawr and had the bad operation for appendicitis.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It sounds as if I'm not very introspective. I think perhaps I don't question my own motives or anything. It didn't seem to me I needed to worry about it. I was busy breathing and living and --

MS. BAYLY: And doing.

MS. TRUITT: And living my life.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And my mind was in no way assaulted by images, because, of course, there were no images. I guess we had a radio someplace in the house, but I don't really remember that we did. But I guess it must have been there someplace. And I read all the time and I took walks. I liked the dog and I took walks. And I just existed.

Asheville is a good place to just exist in. The air is fresh, the mountains are there, the colors are beautiful. And when I hit the French poetry and picked up nuance, I began to see things I hadn't seen before: the shadows and the movement of -- the movement of the clouds over the mountains.

On the eastern shore of Maryland, the sky seems to be uniform, more or less. It's not a place of clouds. It's a place where the molecular -- the osmotic -- everything, all the color is held up in osmosis in the moisture, but it's not cloudy. But Asheville was different. The sky was bright and blue and the clouds were very big -- you know, cumulus clouds -- and there tended to be a lot of wind, so you could watch the shadows on the mountains. So you had two contexts, one on top of the other, looking back on it.

MS. BAYLY: What were the colors like?

MS. TRUITT: And I was very interested in nuance then.

MS. BAYLY: How would you describe the nuance of the colors, or even just the colors, in Asheville?

MS. TRUITT: Just great big blocks of color. You know, I'm blind as a bat if I take my glasses off. My eyes have gotten better since I've gotten older.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: I can see you quite well. But I like to take my glasses off, and so I'd just see big blocks of color. And then I'd watch the clouds go over the mountains. And then I used to practice. When I went to Bryn Mawr, I went down the mountain on the little railroad that Thomas Wolfe describes in *Look Homeward, Angel* and *Of Time and the River*. There's a little train -- there was; I don't know what there is now. There was a single line that went from Old Fort up to Asheville, and it wound through the mountains like this, so. There was a fountain at some point, an artesian well at some point going up the mountains, and you could see it about six times as you wound around it, you see, going up. And you went way -- you went straight up and straight down through these quite big mountains.

And when I was going to Bryn Mawr, I just adored being independent. I loved being alone and traveling. I've flown the Pacific eight times. I like to do it alone. So I used to practice being in the mountains. I would -- let me think, now, if I can express it. I would look at the side that I was looking at, and then I would imagine what the other side would be if this side looked like that. In other words, if it went in, I thought of it as going out on the other side; and then if it went this way, toward me -- convexly -- then I thought there must be something concave, possibly, on the other side, or the convex energy would flow into a concavity someplace.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But what I did was to project myself into the mountain, so where it went out, I went out; and when it went in, I went in. Sort of like breathing.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And that had a huge effect on me. That was a habit and I got it when I first went to Bryn Mawr when I was a freshman, and I kept it all through my four years. So it made those trips up and down the mountain just heaven for me.

You went up the mountain, you got to Old Fort at 8:00, and they transferred two little cars to a little choo-choo that huffed up the mountain. So you saw the sun come up from the east. You were going due west, but the sun came up from the east and all the shadows went this way. Then you left Asheville, Biltmore, at 4:30, so as you went down the mountain -- depending, again, on the time of year -- the shadows you can imagine.

MS. BAYLY: Right. Of course.

MS. TRUITT: The sun was coming from the west, so the shadows were the other way.

MS. BAYLY: That sounds amazing.

MS. TRUITT: It was amazing. Thomas Wolfe talks about it. He thinks of it more as an umbilical cord, because Asheville was his home place. He was born there. I was not.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I never thought of it as an umbilical cord, but I see it as an umbilical cord. Well, you know, would like that, and with two ends.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And nourishing. [Laughs.] It's hard to convey the simplicity of life, without any of the stimuli that everybody is so used to now. I suppose if I were doing it now, I'm sure I'd have a cell phone and I would be in touch with people. And I'm sure now they have cell phones if you even travel on the Metro Line, unfortunately. And my mind would have been filled with secondhand images. But my mind, until I was -- we got our first television set when I was pregnant with Alexandra. That would be 1955. There were no secondhand images.

MS. BAYLY: So everything until that time you could just -- is what you saw.

MS. TRUITT: It was your naked nervous system and mind and spirit, or whatever you want to call it. Your élan, as the French would say, in touch with whatever was right in front of it. You know, the central nervous system only

meets the outside world through the eyes. The central nervous system consists of the 12 cranial nerves, of the spinal cord and the 12 cranial nerves, and every single one of those nerves is hidden in the body inside the flesh except for the ocular nerve, which comes right out here in the fovea. So the ocular nerve is in touch with what's outside of you.

And nowadays -- I'm not objecting to what's happened, because that would be stupid. It's a different -- whole different kind of a thing now. But nowadays a great deal of stimulation comes into the central nervous system, and it's not coming in to the -- less information is coming in through the autonomic nervous system, which is where most of my information came in to me. It came in to my trunk or my body. The autonomic nervous system, the parasympathetic, sympathetic nervous system -- have you studied all this, or --

MS. BAYLY: Very superficially, but yes, a bit.

MS. TRUITT: Well, the parasympathetic and the sympathetic nervous systems function together in a kind of balance to keep the body balanced. They energize it and they also quiet it down. That's a little thumbnail sketch of it. But most of the information that came in to me came in through that nervous system and my central nervous system through my eyes and, obviously, through the senses. But it was all personal. My children pointed out when they were growing up that my experience is very personal. It's not selfish. It's not selfish, but it's personal. Very personal. And then when I hit the art world, all my relationships there were personal. I had to learn impersonal things, and I've never learned it very well. I'm not particularly good at that.

MS. BAYLY: So do you think that's what kept you, I guess, a bit removed from what one might say is the art scene, or --

MS. TRUITT: You mean when I hit New York? Oh, yes, I think so. I was already rooted in myself. I'm really pretty rooted. But that was a long way from when I was just a young -- very young woman going back and forth to Bryn Mawr.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And at Bryn Mawr I learned, I mean, almost more than I can say. I learned to be independent again. I mean, independence has sort of been the thread that ran through all this. I was extremely lucky. There were 230 undergraduates or something, and there were these great professors. So some of the classes were just two people.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: Can you imagine? You have this full professor and two people.

MS. BAYLY: That's phenomenal.

MS. TRUITT: Two students. Yeah, phenomenal. And then we had -- it was very strict. In first-year psychology we had eight hours, two four-hour labs a week; and we were expected to write up the experiments as if they were going into scientific journals. The reports used to be 90 pages. I mean, we had to write the materials, the procedures, the course of the experiment, the outcome of the experiment, and then we had to write quite a long essay on the meaning of the whole thing.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So --

MS. BAYLY: It's quite a bit of work.

MS. TRUITT: Sometimes I wrote those twice a week, and sometimes I wrote them once a week, and sometimes I wrote them every two weeks, depending on the course of the experiments. It was a lot of work. My sisters went to Radcliffe, and their papers were 20 pages or something, which is really nothing.

MS. BAYLY: So that must have taught you a lot of discipline and --

MS. TRUITT: Excuse me?

MS. BAYLY: It must have taught you a lot of self-discipline and --

MS. TRUITT: A great deal. And you had to do everything by hand, you know. I had a typewriter. My father gave me a typewriter, but I wrote everything by hand. I still do. When I'm writing a book, I write it by hand. You see, it's sort of an old-fashioned life, but then I was born in 1921.

MS. BAYLY: Right. I find writing by hand, you feel like you have more connection to the work --

MS. TRUITT: Exactly.

MS. BAYLY: -- than when you type.

MS. TRUITT: It's integrated, isn't it, to your -- everything --

MS. BAYLY: Yes. It's all right from your head and out your arm or --

MS. TRUITT: Or up.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, exactly.

MS. TRUITT: Exactly.

MS. BAYLY: So whichever way it goes, it's coming out of you, I think.

MS. TRUITT: And it's honest.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Yes.

MS. TRUITT: We now have what I call computer books, which are overlong and you can see where the people -- the writers just simply took out -- put in great chunks of information. I found it out from reading a biography of Toulouse-Lautrec about 10 years ago. And I thought, "My god, I can't wait for him to die."

MS. BAYLY: [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: [Laughs.] One shouldn't feel that way.

MS. BAYLY: No, not at all.

MS. TRUITT: No. But there's so much information.

MS. BAYLY: And do you think it's just from typing on a computer?

MS. TRUITT: It doesn't cost you anything, does it?

MS. BAYLY: No.

MS. TRUITT: Well, I think I have -- I did diverge. But I think the French poetry was worth diverging for.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely. Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: And I think the nuances, the inflections, it was that nun, Mére Jena. I can see her now. She conveyed it to me. So lucky. I was just so lucky.

Where are we now? What would you like me to --

MS. BAYLY: Well, whatever you think. I was going to move on if you wanted to talk a bit more about Bryn Mawr or about your nursing.

MS. TRUITT: Bryn Mawr comes before the nursing. Well, in Bryn Mawr I learned the habits. I already had them from school. I had them really from the beginning, I think, because of just my temperament. You see, because the outside world is just not that interesting to me -- or it is extremely interesting to me, but it's interesting to me in the sense that I absorb it like a sponge. And I'm very interested in what I do with it and putting it in a kind of an order which will then yield, yield understanding.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So from the beginning I concentrated on homework and making it right, you know, that sort of thing. And I had to work hard because I couldn't do any math. I didn't know any arithmetic. Why, you can imagine.

MS. BAYLY: I certainly can.

MS. TRUITT: It was difficult. And I was always counting on my fingers, trying to make it come out. On the other hand, writing for me was just always easy from the very beginning. I think I was just born knowing how to write, as soon as I figured out -- as soon as I was taught -- again, in public school. I loved Ms. Francis, but I don't really

think she knew how to teach. But I'm so thankful she didn't because I was just let alone to kind of grow, again like one of my mother's cabbages. But Ms. Gretsinger, whom I got in the fifth grade -- I was thinking of her this morning. The people whom you know in your life who disappear because they die and you can't any longer say thank you, those people sort of haunt you.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, I'm sure.

MS. TRUITT: So Ms. Gretsinger said that there were -- we did something -- I don't know whether people still do it. We diagramed sentences.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, people still do it.

MS. TRUITT: Charlie Finch knows how to do it, my grandson. We diagramed the sentences, and it fitted in with Latin. You have the noun and the adjective and the adverb, et cetera, et cetera. And then she said, "Write three sentences" -- or something like that -- "Write three sentences" -- or one sentence -- "using adjectives and adverbs and nouns." And I -- immediately this picture of green, green water springing out of a mountain and down the mountainside into a pool -- not into a pool, but into a kind of continuation of a river with green meadows on either side, the matching of the emerald water coming down with the emerald grass. So I wrote a cheesy sentence, something about the green water ending up in the emerald grass. I mean, really bad, you know --

MS. BAYLY: Right, right.

MS. TRUITT: -- over-flown writing. Nonetheless I got them all in, and I was interested in that because I could use adverbs, verbs, nouns, prepositions, you know. And from then on I was home free, in a way. I've always known how to do it, how to put them together.

MS. BAYLY: That's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, it was wonderful. It's as if I recognized how to do it.

Well, back to Bryn Mawr. I learned the habits that have sustained my life, which -- I mean, I confirmed them and they turned out to be very serviceable. And I extrapolated them and strengthened them. That is, the habit of always getting my work done ahead of time, which I almost never broke except once in my junior year when my mother was sick. The habit of making a lot of preparation for something and then doing it in one fell swoop.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So I would read maybe 15 books or something. And we didn't have "Post-'ms." I don't know how we lived without them, but we didn't. We just tore out pieces of paper and put them in the books and made notes. But in the meanwhile, I formed the structure in my head. I learned to form a structure of knowledge in my head and then distill it out into papers, either into exams or -- we didn't talk in class much; there was almost no discussion -- into exams and into these long papers.

MS. BAYLY: And do you think this eventually was how you -- you know, when you're making something, is it the same process?

MS. TRUITT: It's unconscious.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: At Bryn Mawr it was conscious because it was linear material.

MS. BAYLY: It just sort of stayed with you, I guess, in your subconscious.

MS. TRUITT: The habit.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, the habit.

MS. TRUITT: The habit of taking in a large amount of information. The habit of taking in apt information and then simply living with it until it distilled. That's what I got. And I didn't do what other people did, which is to wait until the last minute and then write it. I've never been able to do that. If I have an exhibition, if I say I'm going to, I've already got the work.

MS. BAYLY: Okay. So everything ahead of time?

MS. TRUITT: Well, everything so there's no scurrying, you know.

MS. BAYLY: Scurrying.

MS. TRUITT: So that everything is allowed to be itself. And my habits of going to bed early. The other people, very often people would stay up late. The habit of solitude. The habit of going my own way and paying very little attention to other people. Almost none. All my habits, my way of thought.

And then I thought the professors were extremely interesting. They knew so much and it was so available. All you had to do is to ask questions, so I asked questions. And when I asked questions, I got answers; and if I didn't get answers, then they told me where I could find them. It was just wonderful. I had a perfectly heavenly four years. Sometimes unhappy. My mother died in my junior year, and my senior year was very unhappy. My father was sick, my two sisters were sick in Boston, and I failed my honors because I spent my whole year on the train.

MS. BAYLY: Going to visit your father and your sisters and back to school?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. They were all so sick. Everybody was so uncomfortable. And I told my mother I'd look after them, so I did. On her deathbed she said, "Will you look after them?" I said, "Yes, Mother." So I did.

MS. BAYLY: Again, obedient.

MS. TRUITT: Hmm?

MS. BAYLY: An obedient --

MS. TRUITT: Also responsibility.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: She couldn't help dying. She died when she was 54, just barely 54. Terribly young, you know. Very, very young. You know so little in your fifties. Your fifties, you know a fair amount, but you haven't begun to turn it over in your mind so that it's -- you're still in midstream.

I think if I hadn't gone to Bryn Mawr and if I hadn't concentrated, I would not have been able to sustain my life. I just don't. And the other people I know who went to Bryn Mawr, sometimes they didn't work as hard as I did. And I'm not that bright. I mean, I'm not one of those people for whom everything is easy, and I didn't have very good training. The nuns taught me French. That was invaluable. And I kept on with Latin, and the nuns taught me a certain amount of structure. But it wasn't a very good school. I didn't even know what a footnote was when I hit Bryn Mawr.

MS. BAYLY: So you didn't feel terribly prepared, then, for --

MS. TRUITT: Excuse me?

MS. BAYLY: You didn't feel terribly prepared when you arrived at Bryn Mawr, then.

MS. TRUITT: It wasn't a feeling, it was a fact. I wasn't prepared. I wasn't prepared. I had not been prepared by the school. I was just lucky to get in, wasn't I?

Were there any more questions about Bryn Mawr, or do you want to move on to the Red Cross nursing?

MS. BAYLY: Well, no, unless you have something else you wanted to say. I would like to talk about the Red Cross nursing because I know that that was a very important time for you. And also there is the one event, I wanted to get to too about when you realized that you didn't want to do psychology.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. It was the second big decision I made in my life. The first one was to go out on my own.

Well, I graduated from Bryn Mawr, and I remember walking up the aisle. I did not get honors in psychology, which I would have done if I'd gotten -- distinction in psychology. I did not get that, and that broke my heart. Well. Well, it did break my heart, actually. I'd worked hard; I should have gotten it. And I would have gotten it had I not become slightly arrogant because it was my fifth year. See, I had two months at Bryn Mawr my freshman year, and my class had gone on ahead of me. I didn't have that rub of peers that you have when you stay in the same class.

MS. BAYLY: Right, right.

MS. TRUITT: Sort of implicit competition.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And that's not good for the ego. It's sort of ego inflating. It's not good to stay on one more year beyond your class. And then my father was sick and my sisters were sick, so I spent a great deal of time with them.

But I learned how to fail. I failed. It was the first failure in my life, and it was a failure on all the levels, on every level. I couldn't make my father well. I never could make him well. I couldn't make my sisters well.

When I hit the exams, I was appalled. I realized "Uh-oh," because in order to graduate from Bryn Mawr you take four four-hour exams in your major subject. And I had not gone back and reviewed Mental Tests and Measurements, which bored me in the beginning. I hadn't gone back and reviewed Animal Psychology. I hadn't reviewed Abnormal Psychology, though I got a very good grade on that because I'm interested in that. Et cetera. I hadn't done enough reviewing, partly from being distracted and partly because I thought that I knew it. And I did. I knew as much of it as I found useful for my own life, which is my way of being. Ever since, I've followed that too, and it's not necessarily intelligent. I just simply have a kind of magnetic center that attracts to itself what I need, but I don't pay attention to a lot of stuff; I sieve it out.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So I graduated from Bryn Mawr. I was very, very tired. For the first time in my life, I realized what it was to be tired, and I came home and I vegetated for three months at my father's house in Asheville. And I took the Red Cross nurse's aide course because my mother had been a Red Cross nurse in the First World War and because I have a very strong impulse toward that kind of helping people. But what I did not know was I was going to be trained how to use my body. I had never used it. I was used to using my mind.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. But the mind stuff that you learn when you're studying nursing is really nothing; I mean, if you're a Red Cross nurse's aide. If you're a trained nurse you have to learn chemistry and stuff.

MS. BAYLY: Right, certainly.

MS. TRUITT: I mean, it was absolutely nothing for my brain. But my hands and my body - [laughs] -- you have to lift. You have to learn -- that's where I first began to lift. I use it in the studio today. When I move my sculptures, I'm using the principles I learned then.

MS. BAYLY: Wow, that's amazing.

MS. TRUITT: Because I move these great big things. I know how to lift. [Laughs.]

MS. BAYLY: It was great training for you.

MS. TRUITT: Great training. I know how to turn a patient over in bed, how to -- you know, how to do the thing. And I'd never put my hands on other people. I knew nothing about that. And the training that I learned from Aunt Nancy to begin with in how to do chores on the farm -- she lived on top of a mountain in Virginia, and there were seven cousins and we all did chores. She taught me how to sew, how to make things there a little bit. But other than that, I never really used my hands. And I'd never used my heart objectively.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: Objectively. So on total strangers, you know, if you're a nurse, it's an extraordinary situation really. It's intimate. If you're a nurse, you walk into a room and there's a patient. The patient is a full-grown, usually, human being, and they're frightened. They're scared and they're anxious and they hurt, and you have to make the bed for them and give them a bath. It's very intimate. The whole thing is -- you put your hands on their bodies.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It's quite an extraordinary thing to do. Fortunately, a very good trained nurse trained us. She didn't talk about that, but she trained us so carefully and so specifically that we were given exact, detailed instruction about how to go about everything. So we came in equipped. But the psychological part of it is very different from person to person. And, of course, it was in the mountains, so many of the people I nursed were mountain folk. And one of my little chores -- because they give the nurse's aides what's called scutwork in hospitals -- was to make little boxes into which the patients could spit, because many of them chewed snuff.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my.

MS. TRUITT: Interesting, isn't it?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Seems so antediluvian. They had snuff, and they put it in their mouths, tucked it into their chins -- I mean cheeks, I guess, and then they spat. So every morning the old containers of spit -- I mean, I hope I'm not revolting you.

MS. BAYLY: No, no.

MS. TRUITT: No, I hope not, because nothing human -- remember Terence, nihil humani a me alienum puto?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: -- [one of my chores] was to change the little boxes of spit and make nice new ones. So I could talk to the people, too, while I did it.

MS. BAYLY: I think if we could just pause here for one moment?

MS. TRUITT: Excuse me?

MS. BAYLY: If we could pause here for a moment.

[End of Tape 1]

TAPE 2

MS. TRUITT: I think the scientific training, too -- it occurred to me in our little hiatus, I think the scientific training in psychology had a huge effect on me. The paying attention to every single detail without dwelling on it unduly but noting it, being alert to little changes, being alert to facts, I think that had a big effect on me because, of course, I had to write those reports and the reports were based on fact, on observation. The habit of observation and then the habit of deducting from observation. The habit of inducting a fairly large amount of rather complicated information and then deducting from it.

And then the other thing I should mention which really was, I think, pretty critical was while I was there, there was a man named Bordemeyer, Dr. Bordemeyer. He wasn't a doctor then, he was Mr. Bordemeyer. He was an assistant. He was getting his Ph.D. on the matter of differentiating lightness and brightness in white light.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. Funny. Right in line with my work.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely, yeah.

MS. TRUITT: I don't know which was the cart and which was the horse, but it certainly was the horse because I spent about two years being a subject for him. And he paid me. He paid me \$2 an hour or something. He said, "I'm going to pay you." I said, "I'll be happy to do it." He said, "No, I'm going to pay you." And he was right about that. That was one of my first lessons in how you should always pay. You know, it should be even-steven.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And I sat in a small dark room and in front of me were two circles, and then I was asked to say which was brighter or which was lighter. It sounds mad. It was extremely interesting. The circles were quite big -- about, I would say, 18 inches in diameter -- and they were about maybe 10 feet away from me. And I sat in the chair, and every now and then I just had to have a break. [Laughs.]

MS. BAYLY: I can imagine.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. So he would start me out and he would make the two squares light. They would both be of the same light. Then I would equate those. And then he would give me two squares -- I mean two circles that had the same brightness, and thus he established a kind of baseline. Then he would say, "Is the left-hand circle -- or the right -- Is the right brighter or lighter than the left?"

MS. BAYLY: So it must have been very difficult to --

MS. TRUITT: Well, it focused my eyes in a way that only Japan did when I got to Japan, because Japan, the whole landscape, everything in Japan depends on value. I didn't realize it. What I was judging was value.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. From an art point of view.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But it never crossed my mind. I don't think it crossed Mr. Bordemeyer's mind. I'm not sure what was crossing his mind. But I used to sit for hours. I think the sessions were two hours or maybe until there's some optimal place and then you can't do it anymore. And every now and then I would go off and he would correct me and pull me back to what I had judged before. And that was his Ph.D. thesis. And I read his obituary in the Times about five years ago.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my. Did you ever read his thesis?

MS. TRUITT: No. He went to the University of Michigan. He left Bryn Mawr and he went to the University of Michigan, and there he got his Ph.D. I think they called him to be an assistant professor. He may have been getting his Ph.D. from University of Philadelphia - Pennsylvania. Bryn Mawr had no male students then.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I'm glad I remembered that because those two things factored in.

MS. BAYLY: I see.

MS. TRUITT: A great deal factors into an artist's life, as you've undoubtedly discovered.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Everything factors in. But we should try, I think, to just touch on the little things that were particular, particularly important.

MS. BAYLY: Would you want to talk about -- back to the nursing?

MS. TRUITT: Back to the nursing. Well, I learned never to flinch, because you do bedpans, lots of bedpans. You do very intimate things for people. And not only would I never flinch anyway, because I think to flinch away from anything anybody does or any product they make or to flinch from anything is a kind of lie. And so I learned not to. I learned to accept pus and feces and urine and to always be cheerful and never to show what I felt. And if I -- it's hard to see people suffer. And how to be comforting in ways that would not have occurred to me before because they depended on hands, not on words. Words are no good to patients.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And it also cultivated in me a kind of physical empathy that I do not think I would have had otherwise. The kind of empathy I had with the mountains, but that was my imagination.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: These were living human beings, and on my empathy with them their comfort depended. So if a big strong man has a broken right arm, not only does he feel frightened for the future, but he's never had pain before, usually, you know, if they're strong and young. And you have to be careful never to -- I mean that whole area of the body is sort of sacrosanct. You have to be careful about it. And yet you have to handle it in a very matter-of-fact way. Everything has to be handled in a matter-of-fact way. So you say, "Oh, I see you've had an accident. Oh, well, we'll fix it up." So then I would fix it up.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So that influenced the way I brought up my children, too.

MS. BAYLY: You were just sort of --

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. When something happened and they spilled or god knows what, I would say, "Oh. Well, we'll fix it." My attitude toward things was we'll fix it.

MS. BAYLY: Right. Take care of the problem.

MS. TRUITT: Take care of the problem and not make much of it, and never -- always to defuse.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So that's it. I got that training.

Then what happened is, during that summer I got rested. And before I left Bryn Mawr, I had gone up to -- I decided -- I'd always wanted -- I intended to get a Ph.D. and to be a psychologist and to do what I could to alleviate suffering, I thought, on that level. So before I left Bryn Mawr, I went to Yale and I went to see Dr. Clarke, who was the head of the department, whose experiments I had read about so I knew about him. I called him up and I made an appointment and I went up to New Haven -- where my grandson's about to graduate in about two weeks.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: Life is so interesting because it turns, as you know -- you must already have noticed -- it turns on itself.

MS. BAYLY: Exactly.

MS. TRUITT: So I went to see Dr. Clarke, and we sat in his office and he urged me to come to Yale. He urged me to come and stay, and he said, "Come and stay with us." I was in that old Taft Hotel. My, it was uncomfortable. And I said, "No, thank you," because even then I knew that you must never -- you know, I didn't want to get too close to him, because he was going to teach me. So I went through the application, which I finished when I was down in Asheville after I graduated, and sent it in to Dr. Clarke. And in late August or early September, sometime around in there, I got a letter back saying, "Dear Miss Dean: We're glad to offer you a place as a graduate student at Yale."

And when I read it I thought, "Uh-oh." You know that funny little feeling you have that the thing is really, after all, not exactly right?

MS. BAYLY: Exactly.

MS. TRUITT: So I went for a walk. I've described it in my book, so I won't dwell on it. But I went for a walk and I made up my mind that I wouldn't go. I realized I could. My brain by the time I graduated from Bryn Mawr was so honed, you know, you could give it anything. It was like a performing dog.

MS. BAYLY: [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: [Laughs.] You could give it information and it --

MS. BAYLY: It would know what to do with it.

MS. TRUITT: It would collate it and put it in order, and then it would be able to make something new out of it. And it just was a perfectly good functioning mind. And I wrote Dr. Clarke and he was very disappointed, actually. I think he really wanted me to come. It was during the war. If you were alive and breathing, you know. I think that's one of the reasons they accepted me, because the acceptance letter said, "You might be interested to know we've never taken a graduate student at Yale with such a low grade in math." Because I've never really understood it, you know.

MS. BAYLY: Right. Right.

MS. TRUITT: So I wrote and said no. But before I did that, I made up my mind what I would do -- since it wasn't a negative decision. It wasn't against Yale, it was for what I had learned outside of academia. So I decided I'd go to Boston and get a job, and that's exactly what I did.

I forgot to say that when my mother died I inherited money. Without the money that I inherited, which is not masses and masses and masses, but a respectable amount, I wouldn't have been able to live either because I've invested in myself all my life, and my --- education for my children and grandchildren. So I was independent.

MS. BAYLY: This affords you the opportunity to make many more choices, allows you --

MS. TRUITT: Yes.

MS. BAYLY: -- to choose what you would like to do.

MS. TRUITT: It allowed me to choose. It gave me freedom. I'm grateful to my ancestors.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, certainly.

MS. TRUITT: Don't you think?

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. Really grateful. Grateful to all the circumstances in my life, really. Although one has to watch out for post hoc, propter hoc reasoning; you know, that because something comes after something, that the previous factor was the cause of it.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But in any case, I am grateful. So then I just took a train and went to Boston. It seems amazing, doesn't it, in a way?

MS. BAYLY: Very much.

MS. TRUITT: I mean, I was 22. I was healthy. A 22-year-old in the middle of the war. And I got a job out of the Massachusetts General Hospital -- I'll launch us into this -- for the National Research Council for \$150 a month -- which was a good salary in those days -- for the Williamstown project, which was a group of 10 people, young people my age, who were at Williamstown, Massachusetts, at Williams College, where a whole squadron of naval air cadets -- people who had been accepted into the Navy who were air cadets -- were being trained to fly. They hadn't started their flight training yet. They were doing their preliminary studies at Williams College.

So up I went. Two doctors drove me up there and I stayed at a boarding house with the other people who were working on the project, who are still my friends, those who are alive. Who is alive out of that group? One.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. Sort of undoing, isn't it? But I talk to her.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, that's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: She lives in Philadelphia. One could call it sad, but it's not; it's just the course of time.

And then we worked on twelve-hour shifts. I worked from 7:00 until 7:00.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my.

MS. TRUITT: I thought all jobs were like that. I didn't know. I'd never had a job in my life. And we tested naval air cadets. Every 30 minutes, we'd run through a new air cadet. What we did was, we ran them through a whole series of tests. And I'd been trained to give the Rorschach and trained to give the Thematic Apperception Test, which I suppose they still give, and several other kinds. I gave the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test. I was testing, really. And then we correlated those results. The National Research Council correlated those results with the air cadet's performance when he was trained as flyer.

So you see, the idea was that we would sieve out. With this information, the air cadets could be sieved out before they were given their flight training, because it cost about \$25,000 then to train an air cadet for flight, which I suppose would be \$100,000 now, maybe more. But the idea was to save money for the Navy and also save the student, because --

MS. BAYLY: To have to go through all the --

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. Might get killed, too. I mean, terrible hard to land on an aircraft carrier.

I did that for two months, I think, and then they asked me to stay on at the Mass General. So I stayed on at the Mass General and worked in the psychiatric lab during the day and nurse's aided at night, all through the war.

MS. BAYLY: Quite an intensive schedule.

MS. TRUITT: It was. Well, I only nurse's aided three nights a week, I think. I can't quite remember. I think it was three. And we worked five and a half days a week. We worked -- yeah, five and a half -- half day on Saturday. It was hard, but I was 22 and so strong.

MS. BAYLY: And feeling up to it.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. I wasn't as strong as I'd been before the operation I had in Bryn Mawr.

We went rapidly over that. It's interesting what you forget in this sort of linear thing. We should go back and pick that up, but maybe we could do that tomorrow.

MS. BAYLY: Okay, if you like.

MS. TRUITT: Because it's quarter of 11 now, quarter of 12, isn't it?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, it is, quarter of 12. So we can stop --

MS. TRUITT: Are your fingers strong enough to make that quarter of 12?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: You could, couldn't you? You did it right away. Didn't you?

MS. BAYLY: Yes. [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: Thank you very much.

MS. BAYLY: Of course. It's a little stiff .

MS. TRUITT: It's funny; I can't do it.

[End of this day's interview. Next day of interview begins on this same tape.]

MS. BAYLY: This is Annie Bayly interviewing Anne Truitt on April 17, 2002, at the artist's house in Washington, DC.

We are set.

As we ended yesterday, you had wanted to go back and talk a bit about -- oh, you have a list.

MS. TRUITT: I have a little list.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, good!

MS. TRUITT: Well, I didn't sleep awfully well, partly because of the heat, which is very unusual, isn't it, at this time?

MS. BAYLY: I know.

MS. TRUITT: And then things went round and round in my head. I thought of Mère Jena, who I hadn't thought of for years. She taught me medieval French. I couldn't remember whether it was Mère Jena or Mère Jenine [sp], but "Jena" is correct. It's one of those little minor points.

I thought I should say about St. Genevieve's, at the time that I was a student there, I was very young. I graduated when I was just a couple of months 16, as I told you. I didn't have any idea what the religious life was like. I was brought up an Episcopalian, not a Roman Catholic as these nuns were. Many of them came from Belgium and from France, most of them. I didn't know what it was like. I didn't really understand what a convent was. I didn't understand what that kind of commitment was.

So I think I was too harsh when I spoke to you and said that I made up my mind that I would never go in a situation where that kind of grid was put on me or on anybody else. And that is true, but it was a little too harsh because if you aim your life toward the divine, I think you have to narrow it. I think it's probably in the shape of a very sharp angle. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin says that, and I think he's quite correct. Well, obviously he knows what he's talking about.

It's my experience that if you want to get anything done, you have to narrow yourself to a point. And they obviously were aiming to do something. I just was a child and didn't quite see it.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I don't change my final decision. I mean, I think I was -- I would never go into that kind of situation. On the other hand, I have been in that kind of situation all my life because in order to do anything at all with any degree of intensity, you must narrow, and you must impose on yourself. Quite different. The imposition of a grid on oneself is quite different from having it imposed on you.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But nonetheless, the discipline is no less intense and probably is more intense. So I just wanted to clear that up because it was a little flip. I don't think it's right to be flip about any kind of intense thing that people undertake. I wanted to clear that up, to sort of just explain a little more about that, extrapolate it.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: Then, I wasn't sure that you had read Marcel Proust and understood the Mes église to Guermantes way

MS. BAYLY: Very loosely.

MS. TRUITT: Yes, I understand. Well, I translated a book on him with a friend of mine, so I read him very carefully and I'm devoted to him.

MS. BAYLY: When did you translate the book?

MS. TRUITT: It was published in 1955, Rutgers University Press. It's *Marcel Proust and Deliverance from Time*, by Germaine Brée. It's in my CV. And I translated it with C. J. Richard, who -- well, Ricky Hill [sp], Ricky went to Bryn Mawr. She was a couple of years above me. Graduated in 1940, I think. And she called me up one day and said, "I don't feel well. I'm having another baby. I don't feel well. Would you consider editing this translation I'm doing?" and explained. I said, "Well, I'll be happy to read the book." So her husband brought me the book, and it was a fascinating book. And I had not read Proust, so I realized that I would be a tabula rasa and a good person to translate a book on him because if I understood it, it would be easy for somebody else to understand it.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So I said yes and we translated the book together. And the little baby she was pregnant with later married my second daughter.

MS. BAYLY: Really!

MS. TRUITT: And we have four mutual grandchildren. Isn't that interesting?

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: One of those little pas de deux that occasionally life presents you with.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, that's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: Mes église is M-e'-s E'-g-l-i-s-e. Mes Eglise is the little town attached to Combray, C-o-m-b-r-a-y, which is where the narrator of the whole novel -- it's a very big book, as you know -- lives. But what it refers to is a locality, the locality in which you're born. And then the Guermantes way in that locality, in the church, was Geneviève de Brabant, G-e-n-e-v-i-è-v-e, Geneviève de Brabant. The church of her ancestors is in Combray. So she is sitting on the top, in the church, of the bones of her ancestors, which the young narrator compares to a honeycomb of her ancestry, and she herself is charged with the past of her forebears. So then she marries the Duc de Guermantes, G-u-e-r-m-a-n-t-e-s, so she becomes the Duchesse de Guermantes, who is at the pinnacle of the social hierarchy of France.

So Proust contrasts the local way -- I think we call it the domestic way, the personal domesticity, domestic way -- with the worldly way -- the personal way with the worldly way. And I think in my family I had both ways. I had the Mes église way -- much more than anybody else in my family because, as I explained to you, of the fact that I was taken in to the Eastern Shore of Maryland through my friend Helena and because I was a little tiny baby there, I was born into it -- and the Guermantes way, which was really my parents' way. I mean, the house I grew up in bore no relation to any other house on the Eastern Shore. Everything had come from Europe.

So I had those two, one local and one narrow, so to speak, in the best way, because if you want to be deep, you tend to have to be narrow. I mean, even the Grand Canyon, which is pretty deep, you know it isn't really narrow, it's sort of broad. And the more you think about it and the more you look at it, the less meaning it has. Interesting about nature: the more you look at it, the less meaning it has. The first -- the real virtue of it is its shock value in the beginning, I think.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, exactly.

MS. TRUITT: I don't mean living with it, but I mean as a visual object, just visually. So you have to be deep. And the Mes église way tends to be very deep. The Guermantes way tends to be broad and out into the big world. So I just wanted to make that clear. I think a lot of families do not have that. And I think what they do have is something that I notice in other people; that is, they form a kind of a unified closed system in which the judgments of values are personal, which wasn't true in my family.

MS. BAYLY: So it was a good balance, you know, a perfect balance between --

MS. TRUITT: Yes, it was a balance. And in that context, I wanted to say that I didn't -- I just wanted to emphasize my parents' generosity, because out of this context, which was a very big context, it was taken for granted that I

was going to go to college. My grandmother went to Smith. She was in the first graduating class of Smith. My mother went to Radcliffe, and I could go to college wherever I wanted to. And I chose Bryn Mawr; I mean, assuming I could get in.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It was assumed that I would be myself in whatever context I was put into, and that there wasn't any context broader than that to which I had been introduced as a child.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Now, that wasn't entirely true, because in my lifetime I've seen many much broader contexts of power and some broader contexts of intellect, both power and intellect, but I've never seen a broader context of values. What unfortunately President Bush -- he now calls values, I wish he wouldn't. But really, actually how you weigh, how you bring to bear on a situation an intelligent balancing or weighing of factors; how to absorb information and reach a conclusion in line with your principles. And I think the generosity of my parents really was very unusual. When I hit Bryn Mawr, I found to my astonishment that the freshmen were saying -- I would say, "What courses are you taking?" and they'd say, "Oh, well I'm not sure; I'll have to talk to my parents." It never crossed my mind to talk to my parents.

MS. BAYLY: To not choose for yourself what you wanted to take.

MS. TRUITT: I talked to the dean.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But they felt as if they had to get permission. Now, the opposite side of that -- because everything has an opposite side -- is that I wasn't that close with my parents. The temperature, the emotional temperature in the house was not that high. It was warm, but not really frightfully warm. Very New Englander.

So I think I've explained that pretty well, don't you think?

MS. BAYLY: Oh, yes.

MS. TRUITT: Then on Bryn Mawr, I think again I hit a very wide range. So what I was able to do on the basis of what I already knew or felt was I was just able to expand the range on a sound foundation. I already had the foundation, like the Latin sentence that has a verb and an adjective and -- or just, let's say, a noun and a verb.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I had the noun and the verb when I hit Bryn Mawr, and then I added the adverbs and the adjectives and all the other things just as, you know, a little pastiche.

Then the range -- the depth of the knowledge was just an astonishment to me. To be exposed to people who really actually knew as much as the people who taught us knew was an extraordinary thing.

And I got from Bryn Mawr the attitude of what used to be called "address." Address means that you can address yourself to a situation. Whatever it is you have in front of you, you address yourself to it, just as you and I are now addressing ourselves to this problem of this request that you interview me for the archives. We're addressing it.

MS. BAYLY: Right. Right.

MS. TRUITT: I got the attitude that I could address anything, which I already had from my parents, but it was expanded.

Then on the business -- we had gotten out into the big world and we'd skipped Johns Hopkins, which is what you, I think, were going to bring up. Wasn't that right?

MS. BAYLY: Oh, yes. We had skipped your appendicitis and the year you took off from school. We kind of touched it a bit, but you had said we had skipped over something that was a crucial event.

MS. TRUITT: We skipped over the appendicitis, and it's interesting that I didn't remember it, sort of. I just skimmed over because, of course, it's a long time ago. But its effects on my life actually have lasted to this day.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: Helena's mother was a Christian Scientist, and when I had a stomach ache when I went to stay with them for Thanksgiving of my freshman year, she refused to get me a doctor. And I think you read in my books, but I didn't --

MS. BAYLY: Yes, yes I did.

MS. TRUITT: She refused to get a doctor, and my appendix burst in the night. The pain was just extraordinary. I'd never had pain before, really. And I crawled to the telephone and called Dr. Suke [sp], who was a doctor at Johns Hopkins who was a friend of my parents. And he -- I think he came over. I'm sort of fuzzy. I would have died, apparently, in two hours. I was actually dying.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my gosh.

MS. TRUITT: I think he came over. I seem to see his body there someplace at the end of the bed in a coat. I think he came.

Then he called Dr. George Finney, who was a surgeon, and Dr. Finney came. And he came in a coat over his pajamas. I can see that now at the end of the bed. And he said, "Just put her in a taxi and get her to Johns Hopkins. I'll meet her there." And they didn't call an ambulance. They didn't do anything. They just rushed me down the stairs in my nightgown, in some sort of a something or other, and put me in a taxi. Helena and her mother went with me. And then they wheeled me into the operating room and they operated. They didn't even prep me. I mean, you know, they're supposed to prep everybody.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: What happened was, while I was on the gurney going up to the operating room, I thought to myself - I didn't think anything. I just found myself on a sort of a white stream that was pulling me. So I thought, "This is lovely." It was sort of like being in a river. And I was happy. I didn't look back once. I was perfectly happy.

MS. BAYLY: That's amazing.

MS. TRUITT: But there I was on the gurney, and then appeared Dr. Finney. Well, Dr. Finney was a man about 45. He was a very good surgeon. His father had been a surgeon. His brother was a surgeon. He was a famous surgeon, actually, but more than that, he was a man with a lot of vitality. And he took my hand and he said, "I'm going to take care of you. You're going to be all right." And I thought, what are they doing pulling me back? Let me just go. I mean, why should I bother? I mean, I didn't think why should I bother, I just thought, why are they pulling me back?

But Dr. Finney had that power and he did pull me back, and then they shoved me into the operating room and that's the last thing I remember. Then I came to in terrible pain. They had no anesthetic. They had no antibiotics.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my goodness.

MS. TRUITT: I know. And what they did -- really extraordinary -- what they did was they left the incision open. [Laughs.]

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my goodness.

MS. TRUITT: And in it they put these great big tubes like pieces of macaroni. And theoretically, the poison from the peritonitis was supposed to drain out of it, out of the pieces of macaroni, the tubes. It's absolutely medieval. [Laughs.] Well, it didn't drain out.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my.

MS. TRUITT: And I had a terrible relapse. They moved me. My mother came up from Asheville and then they moved me. I'd been in a private room where I could see the sky and the ground and a wall, but the wall was quite a way away and I could see the sky and the ground. And the ground was green and the sky was blue and the wall was red and I could see the clouds from my bed. Then they moved me in order to save money. My mother was a New Englander and she used to have these spasmodic periods of economy.

They moved me into a room with another woman in it, and the other woman was beside the window. And close to the window was a brick wall, very close to the window, maybe three feet or something. And the woman was old and obviously very sick, and there was no air. I was toward the door. And I thought to myself, why should I bother to stay alive? It's not worth it. I just won't stay here.

So I began to die. I just decided I wouldn't bother. It's sort of an interesting thing, really. But my temperature shot up and Dr. Finney appeared. Everybody got terribly excited, and they moved me back to my room.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. I don't know what Dr. Finney did. He was a very intuitive man. I don't know what he did. He must -- I don't know what happened.

MS. BAYLY: Do you think he sensed that you really weren't there?

MS. TRUITT: I don't know what he sensed, but my temperature was shooting up and I just was slipping away. I can't tell you how easy it is to slip away if you really want to. I mean, you know, if it isn't worth it. I'd only lived 17 years. I didn't really have deep roots.

Then they moved me back to my room, my same room. And the nurse -- there was one extremely good nurse, really good nurse, who made such a difference. I often think about her, say prayers for her, though she must be long dead. And she made all the beds straight and made me comfortable, and everything was clean. And there was nobody around, not a living human being. Everybody had gone. Which was a huge relief to me; I was alone in this white space. And then I looked out the window and it had snowed. So the ground was white and the sky was blue and the wall way over there was red. And I thought to myself, if I get well, I can eat a red apple and walk in the snow. And I just turned.

MS. BAYLY: Wow!

MS. TRUITT: I turned and came back.

MS. BAYLY: That's amazing.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, it is amazing. It's amazing because it's true.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. It's just a fact.

Then what happened is, I had perfectly terrible adhesions. Dr. Finney, who really turned my life around, said, "You can't go back to Bryn Mawr. I won't let you. It would be very unwise. If it were some other college, perhaps you would be okay, but it's too demanding. And you're going to have a long time getting over this, and you really -- I won't let you." "I forbid you," he said, something like that. It was very categorical.

So my mother went home. My father came up and took me back to Asheville, and then it took me about a year, a year and a half, to recuperate. It took me a long while, and I had adhesions virtually all my life. I still have them. And I couldn't conceive a baby for eight and a half years after my marriage. The only way I conceived was to go back to Johns Hopkins. I went to a very special doctor in John Hopkins on the advice of a friend, and he looked up my chart and then he blew out the tubes. I only had one-half -- a little bit of one ovary.

MS. BAYLY: Wow. Oh, my.

MS. TRUITT: Well, I tell you all this because if you're talking about art, this is what you're talking about. This is the level. This is the ground out of which art grows.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: People talk as if art were something that you did with your eyes and your brain, but it's not. It's something that grows out of a ground. So I'm giving you the ground and I'm -- I'm just giving you the ground.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Instead of talking about art, which I could do till the cows come home -- it's very easy for me to do that. This is not so easy for me to do.

MS. BAYLY: We'll get there. But yes, this is --

MS. TRUITT: So then from there I went to -- they said I had to do exercises, and that's what led me to be in touch with mental patients. And that's where I saw that the patients suffered, and I decided what to do with my life.

MS. BAYLY: So it wasn't even from your own suffering in the hospital.

MS. TRUITT: No, not my own.

MS. BAYLY: It was when you had seen others.

MS. TRUITT: I don't worry about my own suffering, particularly. I don't know. Well, it never crossed my mind I would go through life without some suffering. And I didn't think I was anybody special. Everybody suffers. So you take it for granted that -- nor was I allowed in any way. Now, I didn't have any self-pity. That's an interesting thing; I really didn't. I just didn't, that's all. I could have, I suppose. And I certainly wasn't going to blame Helena's mother, whom I dearly loved.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So I didn't blame anybody and I didn't have any self-pity. So I just kept on going. My hair fell out.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my goodness.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. It was pretty awful, really. It took me ages to recover.

So then we got to Bryn Mawr. I mean we got beyond Bryn Mawr. We were up in Boston.

MS. BAYLY: We were getting to Boston, yes.

MS. TRUITT: I think I've done all of the things that I had in my mind. But I think without that operation when I was 17, I would have had babies right after I got married in 1947. That would have meant that I didn't have the eight and a half years it took me to devise and to get used to, to form and to get used to, to form the habit of working that I formed during those eight and a half years. I don't know whether I would have had the persistence and the experience and the training, the self-training that I had gotten during those eight and a half years. I don't know whether that part of my character would have been strong enough, would have had enough muscle to hold me through the years when I had to bring up my three children alone, plus earn a living, plus write books and everything that I did do. I don't know whether I would have had strong enough muscular structure in my character. Do you see what I mean?

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Absolutely. Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: And I think the muscular structure in a character is something people don't talk about when they talk about art. Most people talking about art bore me to tears because they're talking about something that I can see perfectly well exists, but it seems to me they're talking about it from a very narrow point of view, as if it were an exercise or something you learned like a language, which of course it is. But that's its least aspect. And they don't talk about the experience that goes into it. You take a man like Piero della Francesca or you take Rembrandt or you take any great artist -- Picasso -- they wouldn't be who they are if they weren't human. It's the humanity. It's the human experience that is distilled into art that makes it great. You can be a good artist.

Now, I'm not saying I'm a great artist, let me state that. But I'm saying that what goes into being a great artist is this kind of thing that we're talking about. It's not that you just make smorgasbord art, which is what most of the people are doing, I think. You know, you have a little pickled herring and a little lettuce and a little egg or something, and you put it together. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. It has sort of a new look. Smorgasbord art is what I think of that. That's easy to do. You can teach somebody to do that, just as you can teach them to draw. You can teach how to be that kind of artist, if you want to call it artist, which I don't really. A practitioner.

A great many people talk about art as if it were on that level, and also they talk about it as if it were play. It's not play. It's just not play. It's very difficult to do. It's difficult to hold the line and it's difficult to stay true, true in very many ways. True to yourself, true to your experience so you don't lie about it, don't fudge it. It's difficult to stay true in the sense of truing yourself to a line, where you hew to a line, which is the line of your nerve that you were born with. It's extremely difficult and you have to make sacrifices. That's the reason why I returned to the nuns at St. Genevieve's. That's what I learned later. You have to make tremendous sacrifices. You can't have it all. You can't. In a way, you can't have much of a personality or anything because everything has to go into your work. So often you just look dull.

MS. BAYLY: Do you feel that about yourself?

MS. TRUITT: Oh, yes, I think I'm very boring. Yeah.

MS. BAYLY: I think probably most would disagree.

MS. TRUITT: [Laughs.] Well, I'm talking to you, but normally I wouldn't. I'm sort of underground. I stay there. I live -- since I separated from my husband and I brought up my three children in this house. I'm very quiet. I don't go out. You can't go out for dinner, you know, and then work the next day.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: At least I can't. Now, some people can. There are no rules. There are no rules. Everybody does it differently. But I can't. So you give up having -- I never used to have lunch with people. Now I have lunch with people. I'm in my 80s. I'm not under any pressure. I can work at 3 a.m. if I want to. I can get tired. I'm allowed to get tired. I can get tired if I want to, and then I rest. I don't have children to bring up or other people needing me.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So I have lunch with people. No wonder everybody was having such a good time around me. [Laughs.] It was fun to have lunch. Now and then. I don't do it much. There are a great many things you have to give up if you're going to concentrate on your experience. Very difficult. And you can't cheat on what you feel, whereas you might like to. You might like not to feel it. I would just as well not know what that woman was feeling on *The New York Times* this morning when she put her head down on her son's grave. But I do feel it. And that's what goes into work. That's what goes into work.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Well, what was I actually talking about? You have to keep me on the track.

MS. BAYLY: I think we had been --

MS. TRUITT: Have a drink of water.

MS. BAYLY: -- going from how the muscles of your character were -- you kind of built them up in the eight years between when you got married and before you -- [tape ends midsentence].

[Begin Tape 2, Side B]

MS. TRUITT: [In progress] Well, you never know whether they're alive or dead.

MS. BAYLY: That must be so difficult.

MS. TRUITT: It's amazingly difficult. And when people -- as I said yesterday, when people talk about war now, they haven't the faintest idea of what they're talking about. This reminds me of the phony war of '39 before the German -- the Second World War really got started. They had a period where they thought, "Oh, if this is war, it's not so bad." The Americans now are thinking, "Well, you know, it's not so bad." But actually it is truly terrible. It's what the Palestinians are going through now and the Israelis are going through now and the Afghanistan people and Rwandan people.

MS. BAYLY: I can't even begin to imagine.

MS. TRUITT: Unbelievable. And what happened in Vietnam. Anyway, for that length of time, you just don't know whether the person you love is alive or dead. So you don't know whether you have a future. You certainly don't have a future you can predict. And you write letters, and you get letters if you're lucky, and you go along from day to day and work. And that's very strengthening to the spirit, to the character.

And again it has the ring of authenticity. Experience that is ingrained in your body like color staining cloth. It is actually as if it were staining your body. It becomes yours. In a sense, you own it, and you're responsible to it and for it. That kind of experience has an authenticity that other experiences don't have. It's not like going skiing; you know, where you whop off to -- you can imagine.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I'm sure you've been skiing. It's not like going skiing. It's not like riding a wave, either, in Hawaii. It's not like anything else. It's steady and it's slow, and in the end you own it. And I think probably if you ride the waves every day in Hawaii -- I've read wonderful stories about surfing -- then you do own that. It becomes ingrained. And if you're a great skier, that must -- I think anything you do consistently becomes ingrained.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Then the experience is authentic. So the war was authentic.

Now, in my generation there's a poet called Randall Jarrell, who wrote a wonderful book called *Little Friend*, *Little Friend*, a book of poems which I lent to somebody and they never returned it. So now I don't have it, which is very vexing to me. But the last poem in that book is *The Ballad of the Ball Turret Gunner*, and the first line is, "I fell from my mother's womb into the State." And he was right about that. Our generation, my generation, born in the '20s, they fell from their mothers' wombs first into the Depression, and then they barely got their heads --

we barely got our heads above water when we fell into the war. And the war, when you fell into the war, you fell into a dark place from which there was no exit. No known exit. If you were lucky you were going to survive, but there was no -- you couldn't look to the future.

MS. BAYLY: So it was like a constant uncertainty, with the Depression and then the war.

MS. TRUITT: And it wasn't imagined uncertainty. It wasn't any revving up of the senses such as people can afford to do, say, in this generation -- not yours, but the one just above yours -- where they can afford to play with it, you know, and imagine. Well, the art shows it. Imagine also all sorts of horrors and imagine extremities of feeling and imagine extremities of events, and where that -- what was the French woman's name who had herself a number of operations so she gave herself a Leonardo Da Vinci nose and there was something else? Orand [ph]?

MS. BAYLY: I know who you're speaking of but I don't remember her name.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. Or the man who cut off his penis in little pieces. Festus [ph] or something, a German man. I've forgotten his name. Now that I'm not teaching, I don't have to hold a lot of that stuff in my head, as much in the forefront of my head. That kind of thing doesn't go on in wars. War takes care of it.

MS. BAYLY: You don't have to imagine something horrible, because you're experiencing.

MS. TRUITT: You don't have to imagine. The war has taken care of it. So we were in that. I think William Manchester's book, *Wave of Darkness* or *Return to Darkness* -- you might write that down if you're interested. I think it's the best book written by a man of our generation. He was a Marine who went through all those terrible campaigns in the Pacific. It really is a wonderful book.

MS. BAYLY: I'll have to read this.

MS. TRUITT: I hear he's sick now. He has a bad heart.

So that's when there's muscles. And you learn to be alone because you are alone.

Then we get to the end of the war. Well, toward the end of the war, I lived in a house, Mrs. Cadbury's house. Dr. Cadbury was a professor in the School of Divinity at Harvard and they lived at 7 Buckingham Place. And they were Quakers. He was the head of the American Friends Service Committee. And Mrs. Cadbury had been to Bryn Mawr. By lucky chance, I landed in their house. On the third floor I had a room, and there were two other women up there and a bathroom which we all shared, and I paid \$4.50 a week, as I remember.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my gosh.

MS. TRUITT: And she gave us breakfast. She had four or five children and they had all gone to Bryn Mawr, the ones that were female. And it was very comfortable and I was very happy at Mrs. Cadbury's, as happy as I could be. I couldn't have been in a better situation to live through the war.

MS. BAYLY: You were so lucky.

MS. TRUITT: Very. I've been lucky, very lucky. Toward the end of the war, one of the other people -- I went in to have tea with her one afternoon. We used to have tea on Sunday afternoon and drink tea with a little rum in it and listen to the chamber music. I went in and there was this extremely attractive young naval officer just back from the Pacific. He had blue eyes and yellow hair and he looked like me. He looked like my brother. And he was born in Baltimore -- or born in Chicago but grew up in Baltimore, and he went to Ocean City when he was a child, just as I did. So I thought, "This is wonderful, so comfortable." And he was a restless -- a restless, vibrant, curious, intellectual, entertaining man.

Well, I saw him -- I told him his mother was dying, because he had gone to a movie and they called, and I called up the movie house. He was watching *Open City*, the Italian movie. I said, "I'm awfully sorry, but your mother is dying and you better go back to Baltimore." It's interesting that that happened, because later I married him. That's James Truitt.

Then we fell in love much later, about a year later, something like that, and we married in September of 1947 here in Washington. And then -- he was in the State Department, and in '48, in the spring of '48, we went for that summer to New York. He moved over to *Life Magazine*. Then we moved back here, et cetera, et cetera. Then from then on, we moved. He worked for *Life* and then he worked for *Time* and then he became the -- then he worked for Philip Graham as his personal assistant and he became vice president of the *Post*, *Washington Post*, and vice president of *Art News* or something -- publisher of *Art News*, I think it was -- and vice president of *Newsweek*. In other words, he just rose.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: But he was ill. He was an alcoholic and not a bit well, really. And the alcoholism and various other problems got worse and worse, and we separated in February of 1969 and I got my divorce -- final decree in March of 1971. And then I brought up the children, my three children, in this house. Thank God. The Lord had me by the hand when I bought this house. I bought it in '69. Wasn't that lucky?

MS. BAYLY: Was this time for you -- I mean, were you nervous or unsure or did you feel --

MS. TRUITT: What?

MS. BAYLY: Were you nervous or unsure to be raising the three children on your own?

MS. TRUITT: No, not a bit. Why would I be nervous? I'd already been doing it. James didn't have much to do with raising the children. He never changed a diaper in his life. No, I wasn't a bit nervous. It's funny that I wasn't nervous.

MS. BAYLY: [Off mike.]

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. It's interesting that I wasn't. Well, you see, when I was nursing, I'd taken care of babies. So I wasn't a bit nervous about the babies.

MS. BAYLY: What about the balance of your work?

MS. TRUITT: That was very, very difficult. The real problem is anger. You have to really watch it if you're bringing up your children alone and you have something else you're interested in.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And fear. Anger and fear. Those two things I had a very hard time with, but I didn't have trouble with self-confidence. I moved my children from school to school and camps and all that stuff. I'm really very practical. I'm a very practical person. But I was afraid, with good reason. I was terribly afraid I was going to die before I'd have a chance to bring them up. I had no idea I was going to live to be 81 and have seven grandchildren. You know? I just didn't. Now, I'm about to go to -- one of my grandsons is graduating from college in about a month.

MS. BAYLY: That's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: And another one's already graduated, and a third one is out at Caltech in Pasadena and he'll graduate next year. And then I have four little ones. I had no idea that I would live. My mother died when she was 54. And of course, James Truitt could never have brought them up, and he was so ill he committed suicide in 1981. He just couldn't last, you know. That kind of illness is incomprehensible. It's terrible. He remarried and moved to San Miguel Allende. He married a woman, an American woman who had a house in San Miguel and lived there. And he moved down there. That's what he always wanted to do. He always wanted to do it. He always wanted not to work and to be an expatriate, to live in Mexico. So he got what he wanted, from that point of view. But quite often you get what you want and you find it isn't.

MS. BAYLY: Right. Exactly.

MS. TRUITT: I've just run along quite quickly, but I've given you the narrative.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And before, filling in a narrative, but that's the narrative structure.

MS. BAYLY: To go back a little bit --

MS. TRUITT: Oh, yes; we have left art out of it completely.

MS. BAYLY: You said in 1943 and '44 in a trip to New York, you went to the Museum of Modern Art.

MS. TRUITT: I asked you to remind me, yes.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: I started working for the National Research Council in September of 1944. And in the spring of 1945, they had some sort of a meeting at the Waldorf Astoria in New York. Seems incredible. The whole thing is incredible because I've been there for other things since, but it was some sort of psychiatric -- American Psychiatric Association meeting, And the doctor that I worked for asked me if I would go down and stand with or

be with their demonstrations or whatever and answer questions. So I said yes. I had never been to New York. So I was what? I was -- in the spring of '44, I was 23.

Well, Doris Bry, who worked at the hospital and who later worked for Georgia O'Keeffe -- she was O'Keeffe's assistant --

MS. BAYLY: Oh, really?

MS. TRUITT: Very interesting person. She explained to me the grid of New York -- East, West, North, South.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: So I got oriented. I was born knowing east, west, north, south, but then I could find my way around once I had the keys. You said you liked maps?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: I do too. So now I had the map of New York. But then I went to the Museum of Modern Art, which was -- I don't know when it opened, but it hadn't been open very long. And in those days there wasn't much in it. It was tiny. It was a little tiny building. And then James and I became members later and we used to have lunch there all the time. They had a little lunch thing on the top floor, and it was the first place that I encountered what now is commonplace, which is a nice, elegant little lunch. You know, when you have a little glass of white wine?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: It's the first place I ever went where they had glasses of wine and a little salad and a piece of bread.

MS. BAYLY: It's such a nice way to, you know, have a lunch during going through a museum.

MS. TRUITT: Yes.

MS. BAYLY: I love that.

MS. TRUITT: But it didn't exist before that. That's the first time I ever saw it.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: I have allergies. That's why I'm rubbing my eyes.

MS. BAYLY: Oh.

MS. TRUITT: Oh, James and I were entranced. [Laughs.] We had such a good time. So I went to the Museum of Modern Art, and there I saw -- you went up the steps, Calder under the steps, and then turned this way, back toward the east, and then on your left was the great -- oh, what is his name -- le Douanier, Rousseau -- the great one in which the gypsy woman is lying and a lion is -- *Le Rêve* it's called, I think. And then at right angles to that, opposite to the steps as you came up, was *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*, which was the first great painting I ever saw. When you see great art, your bones just shiver in your body, it's so powerful. Mine do.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. Happened to me at the Jeu de Palmes, too, where I saw the *Déjeuner sur L'herbe* and the *Olympia* -- the Manets. It doesn't always happen. I think the Delacroix *Naufrage*, the *Raft of the Medusa*. It happens with the *Mona Lisa*. It doesn't happen all the time. It happens with the *Venus de Milo* and the *Samothrace*.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: You know what I'm talking about.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, the first time seeing that was -- I don't even --

MS. TRUITT: Yes. You feel alive. I mean, as I've said about the little Renoir on the way out to swimming on the river, it's just of a different order. Great art is of a different order. And there's no point in thinking it emerges out of nature; it doesn't. It doesn't emerge out of nature, it emerges out of concept, out of a higher mind. That's what I realized in November of '61 when I went to New York. Before that, I had been thinking that art would emerge out of material. But that isn't the truth. It doesn't. And that's the problem that many artists nowadays are really caught in. They're stuck.

They're stuck – one, it doesn't emerge out of material, so they're trying to get rid of material and substitute the mind for it. But since nowadays they have this tremendous wave of technology, they're substituting technology because it's mental and it's conceptual and it's beguiling. It's fascinating and entertaining.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Well, entertaining sounds as if I'm being patronizing, but I am not patronizing. I think it's a very serious problem and I don't in any way, shape or form have anything but the utmost respect for people who are trying -- are working to try to see how the technology can serve them.

And that's what I tried. I tried to make the material world serve me, but I had the wrong end of it. I was expecting it to come to me, just as I think people now -- some artists now -- many of them are expecting technology to come to them.

MS. BAYLY: Well, I think some of that may -- technology is sort of something that's so geared to being useful to a human. You know, it's supposed to serve you in some respects. So I think some of the artists working in it might have that same -- you know, they're just so used to technology, as you said, coming to them and sort of stepping up --

MS. TRUITT: It's like a brush.

MS. BAYLY: -- and fulfilling something.

MS. TRUITT: It's like a brush.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. And just that's not necessarily the case that it will do that.

MS. TRUITT: Well, it will in the end. In the end. I mean, sometime in the next 20 years we're going to see great art coming out of what's happened.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, I'm positive. Yes.

MS. TRUITT: No question. You will see it. It'll be wonderful, won't it?

MS. BAYLY: I know. There's already some really wonderful stuff that is being done and you can sort of see where it's going. It's exciting to think about what the next step will be and what's going to happen.

MS. TRUITT: I think it's very interesting, whether it'll happen in art, but it will in the end because the spirit or the higher mind or whatever you call it, what word you put on it, a human being's experience, the meeting between deep human experience, authentic human experience, and what is available in the way of form, those two things will meet and something new will come out of it. I don't know what. I'm not even sure it'll have to do with image. It might have to come out in music or something, that meeting. But something is going to happen. I think images are such common coin now, it's difficult. It makes it difficult. Or at least I would think it would.

I think being born in 1921. There were no images except the art that was in the house and then what I invented for myself when my mother and father read to me. Those were images that came out of my own head, plus illustrations, the illustrations in books were very important. But no images. All the experiences we talked about yesterday, all the experience was sensuous, had to do with your senses. And I think the very young -- my little granddaughter, one of my little granddaughters, Julia, when she was 18 months old I went downstairs in my daughter's house where there's a room where the computer was parked, and Isabelle -- Julia had climbed up on the chair. And her little paw was not as big as the mouse. And she turned it on, the computer, and she was moving the little mouse around playing a game where you match oranges and oranges, and apples and apples.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. And I just watched her. I stood and watched, and she moved the little mouse with her little paw on top of it like a little postage stamp on the mouse and watched the little images and matched them up. And then she came to the end of the game and she flicked it off and climbed down. Took her quite a time to get down from the stool.

MS. BAYLY: That's amazing.

MS. TRUITT: So for her, you see, she takes it for granted, as you say.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Something will come, though, out of it. Of course, I really think it's out in space. I mean, I think

probably science. I think if I were moving now I would move into space and into physics, I think, if I had that temperament. That's not been my fate, nor is it my temperament, nor do I have the intellect. I have one grandson who does, the one who's at Caltech. He's working -- remember the little rover they sent up to Mars that flipped over and the poor little thing just lay there like a beetle on its back?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: I felt sort of sorry for it. It was sort of human by that time.

They've decided now -- you know the Jet Propulsion Lab is right next to Caltech. They've decided now not to send up one robot, but 50!

MS. BAYLY: Omigosh.

MS. TRUITT: Or whatever, a large number. And they're going to be only about 12 inches by about something, and they're going to be the size of shoeboxes, roughly. And Alastair Kusack is my grandson. He'll be a senior next year. And he's working on a ratcheting mechanism that will keep these little rover things from turning over.

MS. BAYLY: Wow.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. Now, that's interesting.

MS. BAYLY: It's very interesting.

MS. TRUITT: He may go up into space himself. I wish he would.

MS. BAYLY: I read somewhere you were saying you were hoping that one of your grandchildren would take an interest in space.

MS. TRUITT: Oh, I do. I do hope for it. I do. I do.

Maybe the great new experiments are not going to be humanistic, as they've been in the past. We're used to humanistic things. We're used to humanistic art. And it may be that humanistic art is not -- art's not going to be humanistic. And that may be a good thing because instead of being homophobic, homo -- what do I mean -- homocentric, homocentric, instead of things centering on the human being, that may end and it may center on the forces of the universe, which are invisible and indescribable and to some extent ineffable. And the whole thing may -- it may be like the Copernican Revolution; instead of heliocentric universe, we now have a homocentric universe. We may have a -- what would you call it -- a "uni-universe" or something. I mean, the context may become very quickly so much larger that even the terms in which you feel and think would change.

That is what I would really think. I think that may be going to happen. In fact, I feel that it will happen, in which case the human art that we're talking about or that I represent in my own body is going to be quaint. It'll be quaint to think that people -- Just as we think it's quaint that anybody would think that the Earth was the center of the universe, people will think it's quaint that the human being was considered as important as we feel it is. So I'm telling you about a human life. The human life may be rendered irrelevant at any moment.

MS. BAYLY: It's amazing to think -- to start thinking in those terms.

MS. TRUITT: Well, all they need to do is invent an antigravity device. And I wait for it every day, really. I've been waiting for it for years. I don't understand why they don't do it. I can't talk to it with my grandson. He says, "Oh, Granny." [Laughter.] But it's true. Antigravity device. That's all they need.

MS. BAYLY: What does he say? What are his thoughts on it?

MS. TRUITT: Alastair Kusack's?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, on the antigravity device that you're waiting for.

MS. TRUITT: Alastair's is a deep file. You can't really tell what he thinks. And I've been asking. That's his little -- see that hedron thing up there? He made that.

MS. BAYLY: Oh.

MS. TRUITT: But he was about 10 or something. I'm not sure what he thinks. He thinks that I'm a romantic. [Laughter.] I am, too. And his point of view is very scientific. And he's reaching the age where he would take me seriously enough to -- I'm not sure what he thinks. I think he thinks anything is possible.

We've gotten off the subject again. It seems impossible to stay on the subject.

MS. BAYLY: It's wonderful to go off the subject because it always brings you back, you know, to the subject.

Well, so when you were in New York in 1944 and you were at the museum, this was sort of a turning point for you, or a departure point?

MS. TRUITT: You mean personally?

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Yes.

MS. TRUITT: You mean did I think of myself in relation to the things that I was looking --

MS. BAYLY: Mm-hmm.

MS. TRUITT: No, I did not.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: I thought, my, how wonderful! But I never thought about myself. At that time I was working in the psychiatric lab, you know, six and a half days a week and nurse's aiding at night. Talk about humanistic.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely. Did you want to perhaps touch on one interaction with a specific patient that I guess sort of --

MS. TRUITT: Patient?

MS. BAYLY: I had read that when you were testing --

MS. TRUITT: You mean the young woman who had viral pneumonia? Did I --

MS. BAYLY: You didn't tell me, but --

MS. TRUITT: There are two that stay in my mind. Is that what you're asking me?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, this is what threw you into a different course or it sort of took you out of -- you know, you removed yourself from psychology after this. Once a patient who you were administering a test --

MS. TRUITT: Oh, that was different. I wrote about that. Yes. It's a man.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I can see him so clearly, just as clearly as I see you. It was so instantaneous. I just jettisoned eight and a half years of work. It just dropped off me. Sort of like the white knight, remember, in *Alice in Wonderland*?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: How the pots and pans drop off him? It just disappeared. And I never looked back. It was gone in that split second. He threw up his head and looked at the fog. Couldn't keep on living a lie. Totally irrelevant to him, and correctly so. It's in a false position. And too egoistic or something. Anything that separates you from human beings, anything that separates you from another thing or human being is just ipso facto wrong. It's a mistake. It's not the truth. Everything that brings you closer to another human being, or to that flower or something like that, is in the right direction. So I realized I was in the wrong direction for me. Not necessarily for other people, but for me.

MS. BAYLY: For yourself.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. So then I reduced the hours I worked at the hospital. I left, really.

MS. BAYLY: Was it at this time you started to --

MS. TRUITT: And then in the meanwhile -- excuse me for interrupting you, but in the meanwhile I had begun to write, anyway. I'd changed behind my own back. But I didn't know that I had.

MS. BAYLY: Without noticing that you were?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. So that in a sense, the decision to leave psychology was just as natural as, I suppose, if you had a penny and somebody gave you a hundred dollar bill. I mean you'd just pick up the \$100 bill and the penny

would become more or less irrelevant. I never forgot it. And in the end, it's two patients whom I nursed, particularly, not the patients in the psychiatric lab, that stay with me. Because those, you see, I was on a kind of a different level. That's the level I realized was wrong. I've never quite said this before because I don't think I really quite realized it till this minute. You see, the level I was on was wrong when I was being a psychologist.

I was separated from the people by a starched white coat, of which I was very proud. I mean, I thought I was hot stuff in my coat. But I was separated from them. I was in the wrong position. I was above them. But with the patients, I was not above them, because my hands were on them. And I was not above them in any way, shape or form. It was the patients that I worked with as a nurse that really taught me. I didn't learn from the psychiatric patients. I think I can really safely say I never learned from one, except one who was one of the people who was sent back from the war. He came in as a subject for something. We were working on lack of oxygen. We were trying to find something that would counteract anoxia for pilots. And I was observing, and there was a sound outside in the street and he got under the desk with the speed of light.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my goodness.

MS. TRUITT: He just crunched like that and got under the desk. Of course it was nothing but something in the street, a car backfiring. And the doctor who was interviewing -- I was watching through a one way mirror, recording, and the doctor, when he got up, he got up, he was embarrassed. But I understood that perfectly on that level, you see. Then that's the sort of thing that you weave into your -- and keep.

And then two patients whom I nursed. One was a man, a big, big man. And I was doing back rubs, and he had that thing you have when you have a bad heart. I was on B-3, which was a very old ward with very seriously sick patients on it. Not neurological; sick. Physical illnesses. And he had a bad heart and he was sweating and it was summer. In those days we didn't have air-conditioning.

And I rolled him over. I mean, you know, helped him roll over and he said, "Excuse me, sister, I have hair on my back." It brings tears to my eyes even to remember. I said, "Oh, that's all right, we all have hair on our backs," or something. I don't know what I said. I said, "Oh, it's beautiful!" I said, "lots of black hair. Just like the hair on your head. And isn't that extraordinary? Were you born with it?"

In the meanwhile, I began to rub his back, and which was really -- it was covered with curly hair, like pubic hair, I guess it was, don't you think? Curly hair, not very long but very thick. It was a pelt. But so sweet. They always call you sister, if you're a nurse. "Excuse me, sister. I have hair on my back." Such a degree of intimacy.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And the other one was a young woman. I was thinking about her the other day. Black. Beautiful color. Beautiful color. Much better color for skin than white. And young, about 20 maybe, maybe 18. And she had viral pneumonia. It was in the emergency ward, which really was my favorite place to work because it's so quick. And they diagnosed her as having viral pneumonia. And you wear a mask. I mean, it's all so antediluvian. But we wore cotton masks that were tied by strings behind your neck and then there were two strings that hung off it. So you lifted it and tied it on the top of your head. I put up my mask and I pushed her up to again B-3. Terrible ward. A terrible place, and people often didn't live there.

And she was delirious. She was completely out of her mind, her temperature was so high. And she held my -- I held her hand. I took her hand. Her hands were waving around. I put one under the covers so she wouldn't hurt herself as I took her in the elevator, and then the other one I held. Her hand was so hot, it was like a stove. Maybe she died. I think she was very, very sick. And of course, she was black. Black people quite often don't come to hospitals until they're too far gone.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, no.

MS. TRUITT: I'm so sorry, aren't you? I still feel so sorry. And I had to leave her. I took her and delivered her over to the floor nurse. I had to leave her. I had to pry her hand.

MS. BAYLY: Aw.

MS. TRUITT: It brings tears to my eyes. I had to pry her hand out of mine.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, that's so --

MS. TRUITT: I had to leave her. I don't know what happened. See, there is no way to go back and see what happened.

So it was from those people I was learning. You see, I was learning that level of experience, which is true experience. And then I was using my brain up in the psychiatric lab. It was that lie that I saw when the man

looked up at the ceiling. He saw it too. He must have seen, too. What was he confronted by? This young woman who looked to be blonde with blue eyes, obviously well-educated and perfectly comfortable, above it all, for God's sake, sitting in a white coat behind a desk in a dark room with one bulb hanging from the ceiling. And he and his paper slippers and those thin -- horrible thin little cotton bathrobes that the patients are given when they're on a psychiatric ward so they won't hurt themselves.

MS. BAYLY: I can't imagine.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. That's unimaginable. I thought it was too, and I thought it was wrong. So I shifted everything.

MS. BAYLY: Is it at this point that you started thinking of sculpture?

MS. TRUITT: I know you're waiting to get to art. [Laughs.] I think I'd better call you Anne, don't you think?

MS. BAYLY: [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, you call me Anne too. We both have the same name. You must be thinking I'll never get to art.

MS. BAYLY: No, no, not at all.

MS. TRUITT: But actually, I didn't get to art, you see, for a long time. I got to it through the back door. No, we're nowhere near that. Well, yes, we are a little bit nearer. Now let me think.

So then the man to whom I was engaged came back and said he didn't want to marry me. Well, I was completely stricken. Obviously, I was really stricken. But I rallied. What did I do? Oh, I know what I did. You know, sometimes when you're in bad mental pain, when you feel very sad, if you act, it helps. So the first thing I did was to go to Force, Pennsylvania, to see if I could work with a doctor there. They refused to have me come and work with them, and they were right because I was a young, idealistic, totally inexperienced woman and I would have made nothing but trouble, really. I would have been like a child on their hands.

And I was terribly sad, deeply sad, which they must have seen, the doctor, who was a woman doctor, a wonderful woman, and the head of the mines. I was going to go work in the mines with the miners. Well, you know, that would have been a mistake on my character. I mean, it's not my character. But it was the urge to help, again, still going on, sort of like when your head's cut off, you still keep on. And my head had been cut off. In the first place, I'd left psychology and I knew I had left that pond, and then I'd been rejected. So I was flopping around like a chicken with its head off.

Then I went back. I moved out of my room at Mrs. Cadbury's very quickly because that whole lovely little room -- I loved it -- was associated with this gentleman, the doctor to whom I had been engaged.

MS. BAYLY: Let's just pause here so I can change the --

MS. TRUITT: Do you have to change the thing?

[End of Tape 2]

TAPE 3

MS. TRUITT: I was just thinking on that homocentric/heliocentric thing. Suppose you interviewed Cimabue, or let's say you interviewed Giotto. You would get a Deocentric -- is it not recording? Is it okay?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: If you interviewed Giotto, you'd get -- if you interviewed Cimabue, you probably would have gotten a sort of nature-centric thing. He must have thought -- or maybe -- when he drew his perfect circle -- if he did -- he must have thought -- what you were getting with Giotto and with Piero, you were getting nature in the service of God, so you would have been getting a Deocentric universe. Amazing to think back and think what they thought. So they thought that the Earth -- they thought that the Earth was terribly important and they thought that it was in the service of God. And then they began to think that human beings were important, that human beings were in the service of God. And they had a terrible wrench when they realized about the Copernican Revolution.

And I do think that is what we're in for. At some point the whole thing is going to be rent apart and we're going to be able to perceive that the context in which we live is, from the point of view of the human being infinite because our sense of scale comes from the size and the reach of our bodies. It's going to be a real shock. Maybe it will happen in your lifetime. It might.

MS. BAYLY: I would love to see that.

MS. TRUITT: Should be interesting.

MS. BAYLY: Very interesting.

MS. TRUITT: I'd love to see it myself. I'm curious. But I don't think it will happen in my lifetime. I'd be really surprised.

MS. BAYLY: It's possible.

MS. TRUITT: It's possible. It's Aristotle's improbable possible.

Well, now let me think where we are on my little old life. Where were we? [Laughs.]

MS. BAYLY: You had just been discussing --

MS. TRUITT: We were in New York.

MS. BAYLY: -- trying to work in Force, Pennsylvania, in the mines after you had your --

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, but that was very quick. It only took a short while. And then I moved -- oh, I see where you are. Yes, and then I moved into Boston itself. I moved into a cold-water flat for \$16 a month. Do you know what a cold-water flat is?

MS. BAYLY: No hot water, I guess? [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: [Laughs.] Did you see the movie Pollock?

MS. BAYLY: No, I didn't see that.

MS. TRUITT: Oh, what a pity.

MS. BAYLY: I know. I've been meaning to rent it and I just haven't gotten a chance to yet.

MS. TRUITT: It's not that the movie was so good, although there are a couple of places where it is very good, just a couple, but the cold-water flat was authentic. That's a cold-water flat. I don't know whether they had maybe hot water, it might have been a sophisticated one. A cold-water flat has no heat and no hot water, obviously, and has no -- it's very primitive. And it's like this, a sort of a railway flat, mine was. So you came in here, and on the left was a toilet with a little door in front of it. Have you seen those in the lofts in New York?

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And then there was a kitchen with a stove and a table and a little kind of a heater thing that you could turn on that made hot water. It scared me to death. And then there was a room that was supposed to be the -- it was the bedroom. It had a bed in it. And then there was a little room that was supposed to be the living room. Nearly died of cold. I was writing then. And in order to keep some connection with the outside world, I worked in a bookstore for 50 cents an hour, something like that, in Cambridge.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: A bookstore that I knew. And I was living on the money that I inherited. I'm always very frugal, you know, don't need much to live on. And then I decided that there was enough of that. And the people from whom I rented the flat wanted it back, so then I began to walk around and I walked on Beacon Hill. I just walked around. But I crossed -- I've forgotten the name of the street, Somerville Street or something -- I crossed over to the other side beyond the Mass General Hospital. I'd been living behind it. And I crossed over to the wrong side of Beacon Hill. If you face Beacon Hill, here's the statehouse. The right side of Beacon Hill is on the southern part. That goes down to -- that's where my mother was born, down there.

MS. BAYLY: Oh. Okay.

MS. TRUITT: Funnily enough. But the wrong side of Beacon Hill, so-called, goes down like this.

MS. BAYLY: Okay, yes.

MS. TRUITT: And I found there -- I saw a window, three windows in a big, old house that had no curtains. So I knocked on the door, and Joe Kaplan answered the door, Justin Kaplan, who wrote the definitive biography of Mark Twain.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Well, we looked at each other and we were friends instantly, like animals meeting in the jungle.

MS. BAYLY: Wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: And we're still friends. He married Anne Bernays, who was Freud's granddaughter. Isn't that funny?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, I read that .

MS. TRUITT: Entertaining, isn't it?

MS. BAYLY: Very entertaining.

MS. TRUITT: Entertaining.

So I said, "You have three windows up there..." And I said, "Is anybody living there?" And he said, "No, Mabel moved out." Mabel was a prostitute. She'd moved out. And I said, "Oh, good, let me look at it." So I went upstairs and I could see right away I could live there comfortably. It had a little fireplace, and the ceilings were about 12 feet high. It must have been the drawing room of the house originally. Had a big bathroom. Not as big as this room, but a big bathroom where I could put a kitchen thing. I was going to buy a cabinet and buy a little stove and stick it in there. You know, a little hotplate.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: So that's what I did. It cost \$40 a month. Then I was married out of that apartment. I mean, James and I, courting, so to speak, we moved back and forth between Baltimore and Washington, and I was married in September of '47. And I wrote. I bought, for \$4.50 -- the prices are interesting --

MS. BAYLY: They're very interesting.

MS. TRUITT: They're extremely interesting, aren't they? For \$4.50, I bought a very large table. I had it for years. It was as big as my dining room table and it was old. It was some sort of an old kitchen table. And I covered it with a piece of oil cloth or something and there I wrote. I was very happy there. I decided I'd never get married. I didn't want to get married. I didn't. But I didn't calculate on falling in love. So then I fell in love.

MS. BAYLY: You can't always calculate it. [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: [Laughs.] You can't calculate on that. So then I fell in love with James Truitt and married him, moved to Washington, and I felt as if I'd moved into a shoebox. I could not believe the consistency. I guess it was the -- not cultural, but the fact that everybody was so well taken care of and there was a certain level of everybody being the same. They'd all been educated. The women had never worked. So I simply rode on top of all my experience. I didn't mention it. I never talked about myself, for one thing. Of course, it's not polite to talk about yourself.

MS. BAYLY: I've heard people mention actually even recently that Washington sometimes to them seems like that; you know, that it's a very consistent sort of --

MS. TRUITT: Well, it's like living inside of a very-well baked bun; I mean, mostly dough with a few little currants and raisins. But we had very good friends. I had a wonderful time. In some ways, it was very good for me because James was popular. He had very interesting friends. So they became my friends and I got a lot of self-confidence because he had very good manners, and I did too, fortunately, but we looked after each other at parties. So I had this -- he took good care of me and we went to interesting parties, and I never was allowed to feel -- I was so welcomed. I was never allowed to feel inadequate.

MS. BAYLY: It's a wonderful feeling.

MS. TRUITT: It's a wonderful feeling. He took me by the hand and led me out, and it just was a wonderful feeling on that level. I just kept quiet. But then I found lately -- I'll tell you -- I found a really awful thing. You know my archive is at Bryn Mawr.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And my daughter went to look at it and see what was what. Just to go through it, she and Breece Honeycutt, for the catalogue raisonne. And when she came back she said, "You know, Mother, you were writing in 1948. You wrote sort of a journal thing in '48." I said, "Oh, no, I didn't. I don't remember that at all." She said, "Well, you did. I saw it." "I read it," she said. And she said it was sort of horrifying. She said, "I think when you go

next to Bryn Mawr, you better look at it." And she was sad. She said, "It made me feel very sad."

So I sort of tucked that in the back of my head. And when I went last to Bryn Mawr, which was last year, I found it. I said, "Is this what you mean?" to Alexandra, who was there with me, obviously. And she said yes. So I had it copied and then I went out and sat in the sunshine and read it. I felt sick.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Just sick. Well, because it was written from October of 1948 to February of 1949, and it was what I wrote in my books but it was not -- it's different because it was from a different -- I just wrote very personally for myself. And my marriage had come to an end. I realized that James drank too much and I had realized that he wasn't what I had thought he was, which of course is normal for marriage. Have you been married?

MS. BAYLY: No. No, never.

MS. TRUITT: No. You're too young. That's all right. Everybody has to recognize that the people they marry are not the people they knew, because they're not. You get to know all sorts of other people in them, you know, and you just learn a great deal about the other person. That's one of the pleasures of marriage. But in this case, I had learned a narrowness that I didn't know was there and a kind of -- just not like me, whereas I had thought that he was like me.

I think it was partly a sculptor's reaction. He was the same shape and color. He was taller and bigger but he was the same shape and color. He had blonde hair and blue eyes, as I told you earlier. And he had the same kind of education, and he was interested in D.H. Lawrence, which I was too. We had very many interests in common. So when we married, our libraries -- we often just had to get rid of duplicates.

I had thought we were completely compatible, but it just wasn't true. I found that he didn't have a kind of depth and he didn't understand intimacy. He didn't really understand what it was to progress and deepen. And I was very lonely. And I was horrified. And it came out in this writing.

Now, what I did with that was, I kept the copy. It's in the studio now in a box. I'm writing another book. And I took it to Yaddo with me last fall when I went up in October. One morning I woke up at 4:00 and I thought, I'll just grit my teeth and do it. So I went over and I got out the damn thing and I inserted it into my book. I extrapolated it. What do you call it? I excerpted. I did a sort of exegesis. That isn't quite right. I didn't do an exegesis. I really excerpted --

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: -- sections of it and put it into this new book. I felt just sick. I felt so sick that when I went over to breakfast -- I went over at 8:30. We usually have breakfast at 8:00 in Yaddo. I went over at 8:30 or a quarter to 9:00. And Jem Cohen, who's a friend of mine, said, "What's wrong?" I was as white as a sheet, apparently. I was just sick, very sick.

MS. BAYLY: Was it because --

MS. TRUITT: The realization that I had realized it that early and kept on going. So that was the way that was, but kept on going. And we were very compatible in lots of other ways, and I struggled with writing for a while, for quite a while, I think, until one sunny afternoon in the -- I read Joyce. That was my principal pleasure, was Joyce.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. Thank God, I found him just when I needed him. One afternoon I was -- well, just to go back a minute, I was struggling with writing, and what I was struggling with was time. I couldn't -- I had studied Dujardin's *Les lauriers sont coupés*, which is the first book that began just to deal with how you deal with time in writing, how you can eliminate it. And I studied, obviously, Virginia Woolf and I studied Joyce. That was the reason I was studying Joyce. And I struggled. And the more I struggled, the more I was like a fly in honey or something. I couldn't get my wings. I couldn't do anything. And one day I was standing in the living room of our house on East Place in Georgetown, a lovely, sunny little living room, and I thought to myself, "If I make a sculpture, it will just stand up straight and the seasons will go around it and the light will go around it and it will record time."

So I stopped writing and I called up the Institute of Contemporary Art and I enrolled myself, and I began in January and studied for one year. That's all the art training I ever had. I made one of my jumps.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Oh, I couldn't solve the problem of time. Nowadays people solve it by simply eliminating. They solve

it stylistically. But I've never much been interested in style. I'm just not. And anyway, I couldn't solve it. And I found out too I wasn't interested in narrative. You wouldn't think so from the way we're talking, but I'm doing it specially for you. I'm not very interested in it. I think most lives are very anecdotal. People are born -- they are anecdotal, you know.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, very much.

MS. TRUITT: Mm?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, I agree.

MS. TRUITT: You do?

MS. BAYLY: Yeah.

MS. TRUITT: They're born. They grow up. They fall in love. They get married. They have children, maybe. They have grandchildren. Their bodies wear out -- just like my life -- and they die. It's an anecdote, really. And I'm not very interested in it. One of my daughters is a writer. She's really a born writer and she's really interesting. When she writes something, for her it's not any old anecdote. For her it's really rich and has all sorts of details and it's unexpected and genuinely interesting.

MS. BAYLY: And which daughter is this?

MS. TRUITT: Mary.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: So we used to say to Mary, "What are you doing lying on the sofa reading? Get up and write so we can read it!" Anyway that's what happened, and then I began studying sculpture in January of '48. Isn't that right? Was it January of 49? It was January of '49. In the meanwhile we went back and lived in New York for three months. James switched over to Life and we lived there for three months and then we came back. He was made a correspondent for Life in Washington and we came back and rented 2514 East Place, N.W., a little sort of side street in Georgetown. Is that right? Yeah, that's right.

MS. BAYLY: What was your time like studying?

MS. TRUITT: What was what?

MS. BAYLY: When you were training and studying sculpture, what was that like?

MS. TRUITT: Oh, it was wonderful. It was wonderful. First place I realized I mean, it was just the way that nursing is. I liked to move, you know. I'm a natural-born mover. So every morning I got up early in the morning and I made my lunch and James went off to the State Department and I got on the subway -- the subway, there wasn't one. I got on the bus and went down to -- I went down to 17-something New York Avenue. Here's the Women's Museum and here's New York Avenue, and here's a church. And over here on the other side there was something called George S. Muth Company -- M-u-t-h -- which was the art supply company in Washington.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: And then there was a funeral parlor, I think. And then above it, on the second and third floor above George S. Muth, as I remember -- if not, it was the building adjacent to it -- was the Institute of Contemporary Art, patterned on Black Mountain College, started and run by two gentlemen. One is Robert Richmond, whose grandson was here the other day, and whose great-granddaughter comes to see me. She's only five; her name is Miranda. And whose son and I have become friends as time goes on. I met him when he was little, tiny boy about three or something.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, really.

MS. TRUITT: I treasure continuity. I cherish it and I guard it and protect it. And the result is, my life is full of continuity.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. It seems that.

MS. TRUITT: If you keep continuity in your life, you can reexamine it and turn it and see how it inflects as you get older because, of course, every time you get another year or even sometimes another minute, you see things differently. And yet if you can see them in the light of what you already know -- so I now know, what would that be, four generations of that family. And there's another family -- a couple of other families where I have known

five generations. So when I look at them, at their offspring, I can see a sort of a genus, a sort of a kind of person. It's very interesting to see. It's like a sculpture standing there with the light going over it but it's the years.

Then I met a man named Robert L. Green, Robert Green, who was a very interesting man. They worked together to found this place. And Robert Richmond was a poet. The thing segued into something called -- and they continued to call it the Institute of Contemporary Art, but they stopped the school because the school really was subsidized by the G.I. Bill of Rights. Remember when they -- no, you don't remember, obviously. Right after the war, the government did one of the really intelligent things that it ever did, one of the most intelligent, maybe even the most intelligent, aside from the Constitution. That is, they offered all the returning veterans a college education.

So that's the reason why my generation is so well educated and that's the reason why education went down to their children, who rejected it in the '60s. They rejected the sort of square values that my generation had upheld. And they broke the mold. And we, the people in my generation, owe them a great deal. There was a very high price they paid for it.

But they broke the mold of sexuality, of the secrecies around sexuality. They broke the mold of secrecies around money. They broke the mold of secrecies around the expression of emotion. They just cracked the whole damn thing wide open and it all fell apart like an egg revealing the kind of self-exploration and homocentrism or human centrism which we now have, which is not the kind of humanistic philosophy that we've been discussing, that I was brought up in, but another kind of thing, which is the Aquarian business of examining and talking about everything and what they call "sharing" -- a terrible word. The sort of obsessive self-examination.

But all that is necessary. You have to have things broken. That's what happened to us. So when the G.I. Bill of Rights ran out, sort of, and the number of students dropped off, they stopped the school and continued it as a lecture bureau. And they brought to Washington every single major artist in the world, really, including thinkers like Suzuki-san from Japan, who was a great Zen scholar; Dylan Thomas; Sir Herbert Read. We used to call him "Sir Erbert." He was good at washing dishes. We all would go to these lectures and then we'd come back to our houses and have parties. It was fun. Noguchi. Everybody you could think of. Marcel Duchamp spent a whole night in our living room talking.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. Everyone. Raffino Tomaiolo. Hans Richter. People known and unknown. The man who wrote *The Woman in Rome* -- you probably haven't read it -- Moravia -- sat on that sofa and reached over and picked up my cat by the back of her neck with his teeth.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Uh-huh. Calliope was outraged. [Laughs.]

MS. BAYLY: I can only imagine.

MS. TRUITT: He was very famous then. See, it's all sic transit gloria mundi. I mean the fame does -- we're always right.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Anyway, we had wonderful times and we had very good friends and we had such -- we just enjoyed ourselves. And my only sorrow then -- because I had adjusted to James, I sort of just adjusted, that's all because -- was I didn't have any children. So then I went to many, many doctors and finally ended up with the doctor at Johns Hopkins about whom I told you and then conceived Alexandra. She was born in 2728 P Street, which is the first house we bought in Georgetown, in December of '55, and then we moved. James was transferred to California. Yes. And we lived in San Francisco and Mary was born in San Francisco in '58, and then we moved back here and James became assistant to Phil Graham, the owner/publisher of the *Post*. We came back in May of 1960. I was pregnant with Sam and he was born in November of 1960.

MS. BAYLY: When you were living in --

MS. TRUITT: In Washington. The same hospital Alexandra was born in. And we bought a house at 1515 30th, down the street from Kay and Phil Graham. I miss Kay Graham. She died last year.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: I miss her a lot.

MS. BAYLY: You were close friends?

MS. TRUITT: You miss your friends very much when they die. They take your life with them, leaving you on a diminishing little piece of earth with the water lapping around it. Yeah, they take great chunks. She took a great chunk of my life with her. Now I miss her a lot. Well, so that's the sort of narrative structure.

Now on art. You asked about the school. Why, I reveled in it. I reveled in it. So interesting to me. And it was so native to me. I mean, I understand how to do it. My hands understand things. And what is it the French say? *Le coeur a ses raisons*; the heart has reasons that the mind will never know. My hands have reasons. My hands know this. And so the line from the patients went into clay. If I did what I wanted to do in art, I'd make clay. I love clay.

MS. BAYLY: What kept you from --

MS. TRUITT: Oh, because of the concept. The concepts that came into my head in November of '61, you couldn't do in clay. I just abandoned the whole thing. I never did clay again.

I studied with a man named Alexander Giampietro. There were about three of us studying sculpture, a very small group. And Alexander Giampietro is still alive. He lives, I think, on Irving Street or something, right across to the east of here. And for years he was the head of the art department at Catholic University. He was a wonderful man. A wonderful man. An Italian. And he was born in that part of Italy in the curve. You won't see it I guess, you'll be too far north. And I've never seen it either. Where Pythagoras was. The boot comes down like this and here's Sicily in that curve.

MS. BAYLY: Ah. I don't recall being --

MS. TRUITT: They have a special name. And he's an ardent Roman Catholic, which I find very compatible. I'm not, but I like the -- what do I like? I like it because it's golden and scarlet and blue, and it has depth and history and power, and it's consistent and it has a very high price. I believe almost all that we have in life has a very high price, and I think -- are you a Catholic? Excuse me, I don't mean to --

MS. BAYLY: I was raised Catholic. I went to Catholic school.

MS. TRUITT: Well then, you understand it. You know what I mean.

MS. BAYLY: Mm-hmm.

MS. TRUITT: And whenever I hear somebody's a Catholic, I'm perfectly contented. I think they're going to be all right. In fact I know they are, particularly when they get older. That's my feeling. It isn't necessarily the truth. That's just my opinion. Not an opinion as much as it is a sort of conviction. I might be completely wrong. A lot of one's convictions are wrong.

Anyway, I'm not wrong about Alexander Giampietro. He had seven children and he had aspiration but not ambition. He was a potter, really, and he made beautiful pots. And he was in the Bauhaus tradition, which is a very easy tradition for artists to be in. It's possible to be successful in the Bauhaus tradition because it's a craft, essentially. And he taught from that point of view. He taught me everything that I know about materials except steel. I learned that from myself. Welding, I learned that on my own.

So he taught clay, wedging clay and making clay sculptures. And he taught casting in plaster. I loved that. He taught casting in cement. He taught stone carving. He taught wood carving. He taught everything. And I had a perfectly wonderful time. I just loved every minute.

I went at 9:00 in the morning and came home at 4:00 in the afternoon every day. And I studied and worked and he let us alone. As I said, I think, in *Daybook*, he let us alone. There was no talk about exhibiting. Finally, at the end of that year, we had a little exhibition in a market, the K Street Market. But no talk of exhibition, no talk of the big art world. There wasn't any art world to talk about. No talk about anything. The sun poured in. We carved our stones and carved our wood. It was like being a child. Could have been 1350. Could have been the Quattrocento. And I could have been apprenticed to, you know, Ghirlandaio or something, Verrocchio probably.

Then James was transferred. So I went home one day and he said, "We're going to Dallas." I said, "We are?" and he said, "Yes." So we went to Dallas for a year. And there I studied for three months with Octavio Medellin at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts. And I learned everything he could teach me, really. I mean, it sounds arrogant, but actually I think it was the truth. I did more stone carving, but the thing he really taught me -- which formed the foundation of the work that I did until 1961, really -- he taught me how to build up very large -- figures. He's Mexican. Very large sculptures in clay with very heavily grogged clay.

Do you know what grog is?

MS. BAYLY: No.

MS. TRUITT: Grog is the little bits of fired material that you put into clay to strengthen it.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, yes,

MS. TRUITT: And when you wedge, you wedge the grog into the clay so that there are no air holes in it so it won't blow up when it's firing. He taught me how to make life-size figures in clay. Invaluable. And I invented -- yeah, I think it was I that invented -- because I wanted to do life size figures, and he taught me the roll and push, which Alexander Giampietro did not teach me. He taught the carve method. He was Bauhaus, you see. He saw the sculpture inside the block of clay and then you moved in on it, as if you were Michelangelo or something. You moved into it. You cut away. You cut the figure and set it free inside the block of clay.

But Giampietro -- and you see, you're limited then, you can't make big things. You can't make big things. And you can't -- you can make them pretty big, like that, and you can hollow them out from inside because when you fire clay, the thickness of the clay has to be consistent throughout the sculpture; otherwise, it will blow up. And it has to have a hole in it if it's big. But with Octavio Medellin, I figured out how to make flying buttresses inside the body, and I left it hollow at the bottom so the air could come up. And I put flying buttresses -- not flying, but I buttressed. See, I ran the clay in big crosses like, what do you call it, cross beams, supporting cross beams inside the sculpture. Thus I was able to make life-size figures.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: But I'm trying to think now. I went zapping through the '50s didn't I? Because by that time -- no that's not true. I did, I learned that from Medellin and then I began to do that. And I did that off and on until '61. But for real life-size figures, you can't do that. So then, when I came back to Washington -

[Pause.]

MS. BAYLY: And when you came back when --

MS. TRUITT: Before Alexander was born. My God, have I gotten mixed up here? I don't think I have. We came back from Dallas, Texas, and bought a house at 2728 P Street.

And then by that time I knew about the clay. Then I had a studio, I had various studios, and then I began to make life-size figures, sort of bestial looking objects out of pipes that I screwed together and then covered with chicken wire and plaster and Sculp-Metal. So I came out with sort of a metal-looking object, life-size figures. Very heavy work.

I have a scarred heart and scarred lungs from all the heavy work I've done, actually, because I'm not really very big, you know, and I have to do all this work. And I did a lot of casting in cement, all sorts of stuff. All that work I destroyed in 1962, every bit of it, except for one head, a carved marble head, limestone, which is out in Chicago, which was bought by Sidney [Hyman/Harman ?].

MS. BAYLY: And everything else was destroyed?

MS. TRUITT: And one other thing -- two other things in clay, three other. maybe, and an unfinished wood thing. I mean, I destroyed everything.

MS. BAYLY: Was it that you just couldn't have it with you?

MS. TRUITT: No. It just was perfectly intelligent art. Most of it was enough. I mean, it was just bad art. I had it carted away to the dump. I had all the work I did -- all the sculpture I did in Japan I had destroyed too.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: That was intelligent art, the stuff that I did when I was just struggling along with matter. It was perfectly intelligent derivative art. But it wasn't really all that intelligent. It had something. It did have something because looking back on it I can see that if I were teaching I would encourage. Had a little something. Had a kind of passion. Sort of bestial art, really. So that's what happened.

MS. BAYLY: And so in '61 you just started --

MS. TRUITT: '61?

MS. BAYLY: -- [off mike].

MS. TRUITT: It's now quarter of 12, and I think we will have to save that. And we have two more sessions planned.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: And I think we will begin at November of 1961.

MS. BAYLY: Okay. Well, we'll stop here.

[End of Tape 3.]

TAPE 4

MS. BAYLY: This is Anne Louise Bayly interviewing Anne Truitt on April 25, 2002, at the artist's home in Washington.

So last time I know you wanted to discuss November in 1961 and also get to the part where we would discuss your life as a mother and as an artist. But I know you have -- we've both been thinking about this, so --

MS. TRUITT: We've both been thinking about it.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Well, we made our way finally, didn't we? [Laughs.]

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Going lichen by lichen, as they say.

Well, one thing that occurred to me after we talked last time was that I was talking on a very broad way about the future. But what occurs to me is that if you're an abstract artist -- you know abstract, you're a classicist, so you studied ab tractoare, that you're pulling forth the principles. So abstract art is art that pulls the principles, the underlying principles of phenomena, into visibility.

James Meyer, when he came to talk to me, made me understand finally what I never really understood before, which is that people have trouble understanding abstract art because what they're looking at are principles made visible, from my point of view. What seems to me crystal clear in my work does not seem to other people crystal clear; it seems the opposite. It seems to mean either nothing or to mean something threatening, or I don't know what else they might apply to it. But they don't understand it. They tend not to move to make that leap, which I consider to be more my fault than theirs.

The juxtaposition, the line or "the interface" they call it now, between physics and abstract art is very close because both are dealing with principles, so it seems to me. So consequently, when I spoke about changes in physics, such as the discovery of antigravity principle, what I'm talking about is essentially art. I'm talking about the principles behind the phenomena, behind the phenomenological world. And I think the next big change, my guess would be, will be a change in what's discovered in physics and science, after which I think art will pick up on it just as it did in the 19th century and early 20th with cubism and picking up on changes in knowledge of physics, and people in the late 19th century picking up on insights that Helmholtz had and another one I never can remember, a Frenchman's name, whom I didn't study as much about -- principles of color, how color works.

While I'm on the subject of color, you couldn't pay me to study it.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Never. I've never studied it. I never will study it. I suppose if they offered me a million dollars, I would leaf through Albers' book; but it would take a million, and I would leaf. I would just go woof, woof, woof, not looking, partly with my eyes closed. That wouldn't be honest, would it? I probably would refuse the money. [Laughs.] I think if you apply your linear mind to color, you're going to come out with a linear scheme for color, schema, and I think it would bear no relation to what color means to me. And it would be the same situation that we've been sort of more or less discussing in which a grid, a kind of intellectualized grid is clamped down on experience, thus rendering it inert, in my opinion. And I think that sort of grid is to be rejected whenever you can see it and to be fought against when you can see it.

So I just wanted to make that a little bit clear because it sounded as if I were going off into left field. But for me it's not left field; for me it's center on.

MS. BAYLY: No, that makes complete sense.

MS. TRUITT: It does to me. And I think the opposite when I talk about gravity. The line of gravity in the center of my sculptures is really the essence. It's the essence of them. Around the line of gravity, I can magnetize -- or is

magnetized, the color, the meaning of the sculpture, just in the same way that along the line of gravity in our bodies our lives are organized. Without that line of gravity, you haven't got anything. We wouldn't be here. Nothing would be able to stand up. There wouldn't be even the implication of order. And the implication of order in the law of gravity is a very strong – it's implication of a very strong order, intractable order, which in the end of one's life one has to submit to. In the end of life, you have to submit to order. Nobody likes it. I don't know anybody who thinks that it's hot, hot stuff that you have to submit so much.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It's just not all that much fun, submission. Mr. Gradgrind put me onto it when I was a child. Did I mention Mr. Gradgrind?

MS. BAYLY: I don't think so.

MS. TRUITT: In *Hard Times*? The schoolmaster in *Hard Times* who told Sissy Jupe, a little pupil who came to study with him, that she couldn't have roses on the rugs or roses on the walls because that wasn't the fact. Roses didn't grow on rugs and roses didn't grow on walls. And he kept saying "facts are facts." And my mother read it to me on that little sofa you're sitting on, and I thought to myself, "Uh- oh." [Laughter.] I was very young and I thought -- and everything in me rose against it.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: I didn't want to submit to it, like the order of gravity.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: But I realized -- I never forgot it, and I hoped that I wasn't going to have to submit. But the truth is I have had to submit, and Mr. Gradgrind, I'm sorry to say, was correct. Facts are not facts in the larger sense of the word, because I think our experience is phenomenological and refers really to something else in the platonic sense. But in terms of how the world wags, he was correct; facts are facts. That's a fact I don't like.

But the opposite -- within this scheme of "facts are facts" and gravity/anti-gravity, when you see something, its opposite is implied. If you see black, white is implied; if you see light, dark is implied; good, evil. It seems to be set up on a line of dichotomy. And as I said before, I think the line of dichotomy runs in Heracleitus' convex/concave curve. And I try to stay in the center of it, in the pith of it, in the middle, neither one side nor the other, just as the line of gravity is neither one side nor the other.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And the reason why I have not used the checks and balances that were traditional in sculpture is because of that. It's easy enough to do sculpture. It's easy enough to make art, what they call "making art" – a phrase I really dislike. If you understand, if you've been sort of trained a little bit and you've thought about it, it's very easy to do. But to stay straight year in and year out on the line of your own nerve is very difficult, and that bears no relation to what other people might think.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Nor does it -- it tends not to bear much relation to what other people think art is. Everything becomes irrelevant. It's sort of like balancing on a high wire over a -- not a wire, a string -- over an abyss. It sounds over-romanticized but I don't really think it is. I don't think it is over-romanticized. I think it's about as near a description as you can get.

So I just thought I wanted to say that while I – I'd made a little note about it after we talked last time.

MS. BAYLY: Well, I'm glad. I know that the work that you did in Japan you were not happy with, I guess you could say.

MS. TRUITT: To say the least.

MS. BAYLY: And you destroyed it. Would you feel that it was unbalanced?

MS. TRUITT: The work I did in Japan, I made with my brain. We haven't got there yet in our chronology, have we? Have we gotten there? Yes, we went through and we're now -- I've had my first exhibition. Are you going to talk about that? Where are we, exactly?

MS. BAYLY: We left off at November 1961.

MS. TRUITT: November 1961. Now, I've described what happened to me in that weekend over and over and over.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: So I don't really think I need to do it again.

MS. BAYLY: No.

MS. TRUITT: But the basic thing that happened was I turned from looking on the outside to looking on the inside. It was a basic turn and it just took me a long time to get to it. But I think it was exactly correctly timed, because without the 12 years of training my hands, I wouldn't have had the experience that I then brought to the ideas that fluttered into my head. Not that the experience was directly relevant because one of the things I discovered was that if you have a concept, it magnetizes to itself the materials and the ways in which it requires to materialize itself.

It's extremely interesting to me, and it's a principle, I think. It's a principle. When you need something, need tends to magnetize experience. When you want something, I believe it probably magnetizes it too, but that, I think, is very dangerous. But if it's a true, real need in your work, a serious thing, then I think it magnetizes events, and that's what happened to me in November of 1961. Every place I turned, the problems were solved. All the technical problems were solved for me. The solutions were just put in my hands and I just used them. And the whole thing was just as smooth as a roll of silk unrolling, almost smoother. It was almost miraculous. I don't mean that I didn't work. I did work. But all I did was to render real what had already been given to me, both in terms of concept -- the concepts just simply poured into my head like a torrent -- and also in terms of how to realize them in the world.

MS. BAYLY: Are you referring to when you began to realize your work, you were able to find the mill or the cabinetmaker shop that could make -- [cross talk] -- for you?

MS. TRUITT: Yes, exactly. The work that I've done ever since.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Up until that time I made rather brutal work. I told you about that.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And in 1962, I destroyed all the work I did from '49 to '62, except for a couple of pieces -- one stone head and one clay head, two clay heads.

MS. BAYLY: That's remarkable.

MS. TRUITT: I destroyed it all. And it's perfectly all right art. There was nothing wrong with it, it just was bad art. It was what I call bad art.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And then in 1974 when I had the retrospective at the Whitney, I destroyed all the sculpture I made in Japan from '64 to '67 because that was intelligent work. Intelligent art is extremely boring, and I looked at it and I could see that it was intelligent art. That was it, though. That's all it was, so I destroyed it all. Now, I've never really regretted it. The only thing I regretted -- sometimes you regret one little thing. I regret one thing from the first batch and one thing from the second. The first batch was I regret some stones I made out of cement. I just regret the feel of them in my hands. If I had them, I would still have them. But I was ruthless. And you have to be ruthless if you are an artist, I think. Anyway, I'm a ruthless kind of artist. And then the second thing was a small sculpture about five feet tall that was in a kind of a zigzag. It was black and tan. And that was an okay little piece, where, for once in that work in Japan, the flatness of the execution matched the concept.

To just return briefly to Japan, because you started out asking me. When I hit Japan, I went off my nerve completely. I was in a foreign country. Everything in Japan is different. You bring the needle to the thread, not the thread to the needle. The doorknobs turn the other way. Everything is different. I had to learn the language, which I learned in three months. I went to school and I studied hard, and I learned in three months workable Japanese, verbal Japanese. I didn't try to write.

MS. BAYLY: Was that school here before you went?

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, the Nognuma School. I didn't have a private tutor. I don't believe in private tutors. I think you can con them.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: [Laughs.] I went to school three afternoons a week from 1:00 to 4:30, and we had three teachers -- two women and a man. And it was taught verbally. [Speaking in Japanese to demonstrate.] I don't know: [Japanese sentence] something desk. Everything was, "What is this?" "This is that," et cetera. All taught verbally. And then we had a book and we had practice books. And I just studied the way I've studied all my life. And I didn't cheat, exactly, but I learn best by looking, so what I did was I just kept one lesson ahead. So I studied the grammar book and then we got the verbal part, and then I studied and we got the verbal part. And we got it from three teachers, you see, so we had three voices, and it was fast.

And we started out with about 15 people. One was an American woman and I liked her so much, but she was about seven months pregnant. And I know you are not married or anything, but when you're pregnant you get very sleepy. And it was 1:30 in the afternoon. [Laughing.] She used to just sleep through most of the class. Her brain had sort of gotten -- your brain gets a little squishy sometimes. Well, when you're pregnant, your brain is just not interested in learning.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It gives up a little.

Well, we ended up with three people. [Laughs.]

MS. BAYLY: From 15 to three?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. [Laughs.] The attrition was terrible. I suppose they paid their tuition in advance. One was a young American soldier, a young American veteran of some sort, about 30; and one was a Chinese man, Sey Sa [ph]. He already spoke pretty good Japanese, and the young American and I just trudged through it. We had terrible trouble.

We had trouble with the same things: [Japanese sentence] means "Please sit down on"; [Japanese sentence] means "Please sit on the floor"; [Japanese sentence] means "Please sit in that chair." And there are about six ways of sitting, and you have to use different verbs.

And then you have different modes of speaking to different kinds of people, and you have four levels of Japanese. It's a very complicated and interesting situation. And then you have -- I think there are 32 ways of counting. There's one counting for thin things and one counting for long things and one counting for --

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. And a counting for birds. All the different systems. And that young man, I've forgotten his name, he was an awfully nice man. [Laughs.] And we laughed because we used to have trouble; our tongues wouldn't say the words, the syllables. And Sey Sa [ph] just went through. He played Mahjong every night. Anyway, we ended up with three students. I got 98 on the exam. It's the only mark I ever got that I was really proud of.

MS. BAYLY: That's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: I was really genuinely proud. I had really worked hard. I even could do math in it at the end. Anyway, I went for three months and I learned enough to run my studio and run my house. And then the children by that time were speaking perfect Japanese. And I had a household with a cook, a maid and a driver, and we spoke Japanese in the house. I just was that accustomed.

But in Japan my husband was not well and got sicker, and I just simply endured, really. And I was cut off from everybody that I loved, except my children and my husband. All my friends, all my whole world I was cut off from. Everything was alien. And I suffered very much from a lack of imaginative nourishment, which I've gotten all my life from my environment without really thinking much about it.

That was for the first year. The first year I spent walking around looking and imagining and just being unhappy, really, until I got to the point where I did understand how it worked, in the sense that when I passed an old woman crouching over a hibachi in the summer -- in the winter twilight, I knew how she felt. I knew what it felt to crouch over a little charcoal stove and be cold. Everything around you is cold in Japan if your house is not heated, which ours wasn't. The houses are not heated. Everything is a little uncomfortable. You wear seven layers around your stomach, the cook told me. So I wore seven layers around my stomach, your solar plexus.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And I got terrible chilblains from my studio. I had a very hard time finding a studio. What happened

is, I just was completely thrown off. I got completely defeated in Japan. And I went ahead sort of like an animal, a chicken with its head chopped off or something like that, except I didn't flop, I got even more rigid. I got very rigid. You might say a chicken with a line in front of it. I got extremely rigid. And I used my brain to solve everything. The brain is singularly uninteresting, really. It's like a computer; it only knows what it already knows. It lacks life.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It only knows the facts that it already has. So I used my brain to learn Japanese, perfectly adequate for that. I used it to run my house, which was a very interesting thing to do in Japan. To run a household is an interesting thing to do in Japan because everything is so different. I used it to bring up my children, to pick schools for them and make sure that the household ran smoothly. Very complex. Three children and three servants and a husband who has an erratic schedule. So it was complex. I used it for everything.

Then I used it in the studio. And I went around looking at the laws of what was around me, but it was all alien. And the laws that I looked at were laws of perspective and arrangements of space, but not mine. Not my space. I studied, and I just looked and looked and studied it and turned it all over in my mind to no avail, and I kept on making work because I'm a stubborn person. I'm obstinate, and it was obstinate work. I made it out of metal, aluminum, so I could ship it back to Andre Emmerich for exhibition. So, of course, that in itself, you see, was just way off where I should be.

MS. BAYLY: What was so different for you in it?

MS. TRUITT: I don't really --

MS. BAYLY: I mean, did you feel it was wrong right away when you first started working in metal?

MS. TRUITT: No. That's exactly what was wrong with me: I didn't feel it was wrong. My brain told me it would be a good idea because it would be easy to ship.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: You know how your mind is.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: It's a mechanical thing. Then I went to the Nippon Marine Company and got ship paint, and I undercoated with yellow iron oxide. This probably doesn't interest you. But I undercoated with yellow iron oxide and then I used Nippon ship paint. Well, ship paint is not -- again, it's just not my paint. It won't inflect. And whatever came into my head had to be done in these colors that didn't at all match what was in my head, and what was in my head was intellectual. I did it with my mind, as I keep saying. The work was perfectly intelligent. There was nothing wrong with it, except everything was wrong with it.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It had no life. It just had no life. The thing that did have life in Japan for me was value. All the dark/light relationships were very interesting. The colors are off in Japan, for my eye.

MS. BAYLY: In what way?

MS. TRUITT: No wonder I couldn't do color in Japan.

MS. BAYLY: In what way are they off?

MS. TRUITT: Well, Clem Greenberg noticed the same thing, so I felt a little better when I mentioned it to him when he came to Japan in '65. He said all around the Pacific Rim it was true. Japan is the only country in the Pacific Rim that I went to until I went to Australia, and that's not true in Australia. Australia's okay. There are no blues. The blue is drained out of the color in Japan in some funny way.

Jim Byars was there, James Lee Byars. He's one of the very first artists, minimalist artists. But he really was a performance artist. Do you know him? James Lee - L-e-e B-y-a-r-s.

MS. BAYLY: I'm not very familiar with his work, but I do know of him.

MS. TRUITT: Well, he turned out to be a really quite famous performance artist. He was fascinating. And a friend of mine whom I'd known from Big Sur, Louisa Jenkins, gave me his name and wrote him a letter, and he wrote me letters and we became friends. He's about the only friend I had in Japan. James Lee Byars. He used to come

up from Kyoto and stay with us, he and his girl, Taki. Taki San [ph]. Taki San [ph] is perfectly charming. And he went back and forth to America. But what I started to say apropos the color was he had blue glasses. He bought some blue glasses because he missed the blue. So we used to trade back and forth his blue glasses.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Just for a little bit of something familiar. James Lee Byars is someone whom the Archive must have, really.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Off the top of my head, I don't recall what we do have.

MS. TRUITT: I have some of his work -

MS. BAYLY: Oh.

MS. TRUITT: -- which he gave me with the instructions for me to destroy it, and I said, "I'm not going to destroy it. If you want to give it to me, you can give it to me, but I'm not going to destroy it." And he said, "I want you to." And I said, "Well, I'm not going to." So he gave it to me anyway and I have it.

MS. BAYLY: And you haven't destroyed it?

MS. TRUITT: I have not destroyed it. Imagine destroying it. I wasn't going to do that. But that was the whole essence of what his work was about, coming into being and going out of being, and about the passage of time. But we mustn't go off on him, because I could talk about him for hours. A very interesting man and a real friend, and the only person in all of Japan that I found with whom I could really talk. We used to converse back and forth. Compatible. He was compatible. Mad. Quite mad, but compatible.

Finally, he ran out of money, but that was usual; he never had any money. But he ran out of his visa, and that was a serious matter. Then they were going to deport him, so I called Maurice Tuchman at the Los Angeles County Museum. And greatly to his credit and forever to his credit, he met him at the airport. I put him on the plane in Japan and Maurice Tuchman met him in L.A. and took him under his wing and launched him into America.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: It was wonderful. T-u-c-h-m-a-n. Maurice Tuchman.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, I'm sure you know who he is. And he did it. I'd only met him once before in my lifetime, and I called him up from Tokyo. He could perfectly well have ignored me. I think his name should be written in gold for that.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: And he could have ignored a perfectly unknown artist. Not only was I unknown, but also James Lee Byars was unknown, more or less. We both were.

MS. BAYLY: Well, back to the colors.

MS. TRUITT: You better keep me on the track more.

MS. BAYLY: [Laughs.] Back to the colors of Japan and your work while you were there. It was just that it was lacking a blue. What were the other, I guess, parts of that or parts of the color in Japan that you didn't, I guess, feel a kinship with or made you uneasy. Or not uneasy, rather ----

MS. TRUITT: How did the color fail?

MS. BAYLY: Yes. I guess that's --

MS. TRUITT: Is that what you mean?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, exactly.

MS. TRUITT: I didn't mean to take --

MS. BAYLY: No, absolutely. I was searching for the right phrase. [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: [Laughs.] Well, I think you were probably trying to be polite. It's a little difficult to say that to me.

How did the color fail? Well, in the first place, I didn't stick with the Nippon paint. That failed partly because of the paint itself. They just didn't have the inflected colors and it wouldn't inflect, period. The wrong texture. Everything was wrong. I couldn't work with it. After the first pieces made with that paint, I came back here and had an exhibition in '65. And then I went back to Japan and I called up the Liquitex Company and I got the vice president, who had already become a friend of mine just from talking about how to use this new paint, and he shipped me paint then. He shipped me Liquitex to Japan. So I shifted to Liquitex. Then I put the Liquitex on the metal, but it didn't do me any good. It didn't do me as much good as I thought it would, because my mind was so numb. It was like a limb that had gone dead. I mean, my spirit was numb. It had no feeling in it. It was terrible, terrible, terrible, terrible, and it lasted about the whole time I was in Japan.

Every now and then it would give way and then I would weep. I would cry. Sometimes the Japanese gardens, the Daisen-in -- the abbot of the Daisen-in Zen Temple in Kyoto was a terribly forceful man, and he told the story of the little turtles that's in the Daitoku-ji, a little dry garden with a turtle in it. I didn't cry in public, but I certainly went off to the edge of the thing and cried a little bit. It was agonizing to me that the little turtle couldn't find his way to revelation. Yes. It makes you weep. The little turtle did finally, you'll be glad to know if you ever go to Japan. The Daitoku-ji, it's beautiful.

MS. BAYLY: I haven't been, but I've read of it and I know of it.

MS. TRUITT: It isn't as famous as the Ryoan-ji, but it's just as beautiful. Not quite as beautiful. Not quite as finished, not as accomplished, but dearer to my heart.

MS. BAYLY: You probably felt some kinship with the turtle.

MS. TRUITT: What?

MS. BAYLY: You probably felt a kinship with the little turtle.

MS. TRUITT: Real kinship. He came out of the mountains and then he goes down in the river and he -- well, you'll see it some day. Because I myself was like the little turtle; I simply couldn't find my way. I could not find my way. And all was dry, like the rock garden. It was awful. Everybody has to go through some sort of thing like that. You have to die. You have to go through some sort of death. Birth, death, rebirth. I do think it's necessary. And I am so glad that I went. I am so glad. I think it's the best decision I made in my entire life, was to stick with my husband and go to Japan.

MS. BAYLY: Why?

MS. TRUITT: Why?

MS. BAYLY: Mm-hmm.

MS. TRUITT: Well, in the first place, it was in line with my duty. And in the second place, I gave up so much more than I ever thought that I was going to. I essentially gave up everything that I had built up. As Walter Hopps said to me, he said, "You just turned your back on success." I was on that funny elevator in New York where you go up on the elevator. Somebody else puts you on. I mean it's all critical judgment and stuff, has nothing to do with you yourself. You're put on the elevator. And I was put on it in February of '63 and up it went. And I could have stayed on it and gone up, and I could have divorced my husband then and taken my children to New York, et cetera, et cetera. I mean, I could have gone in an egoistic direction, instead of which I didn't.

And the result was that those parts of myself which were unnecessary to the artist and had been acquired by the ego, by this sort of energetic, wayward, dominant person who liked to get her own way, those parts were pretty much killed off. So I came home without much of a shell. I mean, everything had gone away. Now, I continued to exhibit. I continued to exhibit. I was introduced to Shumisi San, who was a wonderful man, later committed suicide. I think he fell into debt. But such a nice man.

MS. BAYLY: And how do you spell that?

MS. TRUITT: Anyway, he ran the Minami Gallery. "Minami" means south. In the Ginza. And it was his gallery that Jasper Johns showed in, and Rauschenberg, and the people whom I was sort of vaguely -- Sam Francis. Now, how did I get introduced to him? I guess through Andre Emmerich or through Clem Greenberg. I can't really quite remember, but somebody did. And due to him, I got a studio right away in the Japan Art Center. I followed Jasper Johns in it. But you could only keep it for three months. It was for visiting artists. Then I had to find a studio myself, which I did finally find.

Yeah, I'm very glad I went.

MS. BAYLY: And so you were exhibiting --

MS. TRUITT: Very isolated.

MS. BAYLY: -- at the Minami?

MS. TRUITT: Oh, I showed there. I beg your pardon. I got off the track.

I showed at the Minami quite consistently, really, about every year. And Shumisi San did the best he could with me, but the work is sort of difficult and was big. And then I made many, many drawings in Japan. I made a lot of drawings partly because the studio was tiny. They had to take the windows out of the studio to get the sculpture in, and then take them out to get them out. And partly because I knew I was off, I kept feeling that I was going in the -- I wasn't feeling I was going in the wrong direction, I knew I was going in the wrong direction. And yet it was the only direction I knew in which to go, so I kept on going.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: If you're lost in a dark wood, if you keep walking it's better.

MS. BAYLY: Than just stopping.

MS. TRUITT: If you stop, that would be fatal, I think. I had the feeling it would be fatal if I stopped, so I kept on going. And I exhibited and then I came back once and had an exhibition in '65. And the next one I think was in '67 when I came back to live here. Then I came back to the United States in 1967 and I jettisoned; I just left behind me everything. And I came back on my own soil with my land under my feet -- at the right latitude and longitude right, here in Washington -- and I began to make my work the way I had before. I made it out of wood. I went back to Bill Lawrence at Gallaher Brothers. I had my work fabricated out of wood. I used my Liquitex and I followed my undercoating pattern.

I hadn't quite worked it out, but I perfected it when I got back; I mean, as perfect as it is. I got it to my hand when I got back and I began to make work that was my work. It was like coming out of the dark into the light. That's so banal, but it's true.

MS. BAYLY: It must have been so wonderful just --

MS. TRUITT: Oh, it was wonderful.

MS. BAYLY: -- to feel yourself again.

MS. TRUITT: I felt myself again. In a way, I know what people must feel who have mental illnesses. I don't think I had a mental illness in the sense of being -- you know, I wasn't deranged in any way, shape or form, I just was -- in fact, I was the opposite; I was all too sane. [Laughs.] But to come back to myself was wonderful, just wonderful. Then I had an exhibition in '68. And simultaneously with that, Clement Greenberg wrote an article for *Vogue*.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: He sidled up to me at the gallery one day. Were we putting up the exhibition? I can't remember. But he sidled up at Andre Emmerich's and said, "I'm writing an article for you in *Vogue*." And you know, I've always been really pretty indifferent to the world, in a sense, and I didn't really feel anything. I said, "Oh, that's interesting, Clem," just as if he'd told me that he was, you know, inviting me to lunch. I never gave it a thought other than to be sort of pleased. Art criticism is necessary for artists, as I wrote in *Prospect*.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It's necessary, but it's not necessary to the artist's work. It's just necessary -- I mean, while the artist is working. At least I have not found it so. Other people might be entirely different, and there aren't any rules in this thing, as you know.

MS. BAYLY: Exactly.

MS. TRUITT: So he did. He wrote that article and I had the exhibition in '68. And everything sold off the floor. But I was still married and I hadn't really suffered from anything like financial trouble. I barely know much about that. And Andre kept sidling up to me and saying "So and So has bought this and that," and I would just think to myself, "That's nice." That was the last time I ever felt that way. From then on whenever I've sold anything, I've thought, "Ah, summer camp," or "Oh, school," or "Oh, clothes," or "Oh, shoes for the children." I mean, I have never had that peace of mind since. But I was so indifferent that I just sort of didn't pay much attention.

MS. BAYLY: Right. It didn't occur to you that at one point the sales would be so critical to your --

MS. TRUITT: No, I just didn't think about it.

MS. BAYLY: -- raising the children.

MS. TRUITT: It was not carefree, exactly, because James was still very unwell and it was just miserable, really. It wasn't carefree, but at least I wasn't worried about that.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: That was an interesting thing that happened with the *Vogue* article, which is that Anthony -- something -- Jones, who used to be married to Princess Margaret Rose -- you know his name.

MS. BAYLY: Oh. Um --

MS. TRUITT: Oh, dear.

MS. BAYLY: Um --

MS. TRUITT: You know.

MS. BAYLY: [Laughs.]

MS. TRUITT: We both know. He came and took my picture!

MS. BAYLY: Oh, really?

MS. TRUITT: It's the best picture that was ever taken of me. In fact, in some ways it's the only really good picture I've ever had taken. And I've tried to get a copy of it. Tony something. Armstrong-Jones! Armstrong-Jones. Lord Snowden.

Now, he's not a very big man, but he carried *Odeskalki* (1963) out. I got the gardener from next door to come over and help carry it outside. He said, "I want it outside." I liked him; he's very direct. But he carried it, and he carried the heavy end. I have a lot of respect for him. He looks as if he's frivolous, but he's not frivolous. And it took him about four hours, or maybe five, to take the photograph. I have never in my life seen anything like it except in *Blow-Up*. It's a little bit like that movie *Blow-Up*. And after he'd finished taking the picture of the sculpture -- I think they must have told him at *Vogue* to get one picture, and it was black and white. And I tell you, it was a beautiful picture. His work is really beautiful.

MS. BAYLY: I saw a copy of it. I can't remember -- it wasn't a photographic copy of the photograph. It was just a Xerox that someone had taken of the article. But I'll have to look for it.

MS. TRUITT: If there were some way to get -- we tried to get his photographic place in London and called back and forth, but they don't respond.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: If I could think of some way I could get -- I think I'll ask my dealer in New York to see if he can get those pictures, those two pictures. They're both black and white. And the one he took of me, he just kept after it. There was a young girl who was perfectly charming who was with him from *Vogue*. After about four hours, she said to me, "Would you like a drink of water?" I said, "Yes! Please!"

MS. BAYLY: Desperately.

MS. TRUITT: I've never had so much concentration on me. And he put me under trees, and he gave me cigarettes to smoke, and he gave me a -- put me in my old jacket, which I felt comfortable in. And he sat me down and he stood me up and he moved me around. Finally, he backed me up against a tree. And I like trees, and I felt the tree at my back. And then he knelt down in front of me and he said something really funny. And there's something about him sort of, you know, crouched down in front of me with his little camera. [Laughs.]

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And he said something really witty and I laughed! And he took the picture, and then he said, "That's it." And we went in the house and we all had, I don't know, two or three drinks of scotch or bourbon. We were just exhausted. Just exhausted. So that was a good thing that came out of that article. I'm very glad about that.

So what happened then? I got separated in January -- February of '69 and bought this house in May of '69, and

I've lived here ever since. That's a pretty long time.

MS. BAYLY: That is a long time.

MS. TRUITT: Yes, it is. And I brought up my three children. Alexandra was, I think, 13 or something. And Sam -- and Mary was, I guess, 10, and Sam was eight. And I brought them up in this house. It's a perfectly wonderful house. The Lord had me by the hand. The minute I walked into it, I knew I was going to buy it if it had enough bedrooms. So it did have enough bedrooms. It's got five bedrooms, in its quiet way, and I just bought it. I said, if it's a sound house, I'll buy it. And if I can build a studio in the garden. Those two things.

So I called up a man who had looked at houses for us in Georgetown when we lived here. And he said, "Yes, absolutely a sound house." It was offered for \$40,000. And the woman I bought it from was a woman who had brought up two children in it herself. And I paid the full price. I thought to myself, "I am not going to knock off \$2,000 and make her an offer or something. She's a woman like myself. She's brought up her children in this house. I think it's a fair price," and I just paid \$40,000 for it, after I'd found out I could get a permit to build a studio. And I've never regretted it. I mean, I've just been blessed by this house.

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Absolutely. So then I just kept on going. I got grants and all sorts of things. I got two National Endowment grants and two Guggenheim Fellowships, with which I built the studio.

MS. BAYLY: And at the time you were not teaching yet?

MS. TRUITT: I began to teach in 1975, because in '75 I really was sinking. And Ramon Osuna, who was my Washington dealer, said, "Maybe you should consider teaching at the University of Maryland." Well, I was just about to go and apply to work at Woodward & Lothrop or something. I mean, I used to live on Mary's babysitting money sometimes. It was really pretty tight. But behind me, you see, I always had my capital, the money I inherited, and that I just invested in my children, in education, in myself, in my own work. I invested it and I kept it together and invested it, but I did have it. So I wasn't destitute. I mean, I would not have been destitute, but it was tough going.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Tough going. It's extremely interesting to have tough going. Most of the people whom I know have never had it. They don't know what it is to worry about money.

[Begin Tape 4, Side B]

MS. TRUITT: [In progress] - *Nickel and Dimed*?

MS. BAYLY: No, I didn't.

MS. TRUITT: I think it's worth reading. E-h-r-e-n-r-e-i-c-h, Barbara Ehrenreich, and it's called *Nickel and Dimed*. It came out earlier this year. It's about a woman who tries to live on the minimum wage.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. It's very well worth reading. That kind of thing should be understood by every living human being.

MS. BAYLY: What it is like to do that.

MS. TRUITT: It's just that people don't use their imaginations and many of them haven't had the experience. They just don't know what it's like.

MS. BAYLY: Right, which is --

MS. TRUITT: One winter we lived on Alex Castro's potatoes. Alex Castro is an artist, a wonderful artist.

MS. BAYLY: Yes!

MS. TRUITT: And he had a farm down in Virginia and he brought me a big bushel thing of -- a great, big box of potatoes. We had potatoes all year. Yummy potatoes. We all loved them. Wasn't pitiful or anything, but they were a big help.

MS. BAYLY: I can imagine. Was there ever a point when you thought you would have to put your work aside, or

you did put your work aside because of –

MS. TRUITT: No, I never contemplated putting it aside. I always just put it to one side. There was a year when I drew in this room on the table I used to change the children on in San Francisco, because I didn't have a studio. I have a policy of never applying for a fellowship unless I actually need it. I don't think it's honorable. And I would never apply now, no matter what happened to me, because I'm too old. I don't think old artists should apply. I think they should go to young artists. But I applied in 1970 for a Guggenheim and I got it, and then I built my studio. That's what happened. I drew a picture and worked with -- and the architect took the picture and turned it into the studio. Made a scale drawing. A perfectly plain fisherman's shack, gray-shingled. It's out in the garden now.

MS. BAYLY: It seems quite lucky for you to be able to have your studio for your artist's life, and then right next to your house where you were taking care of your children.

MS. TRUITT: It isn't luck; I intended it. I made it happen. When I say I made it happen, we don't really make anything happen. But I did intend it. I magnetized it as best I could. I woke up in the middle of the night and thought -- when I got the Guggenheim -- and thought to myself I could build a studio with it. And I wrote Stephen Schlesinger, who was the secretary then, and he said, "We don't mind what you do with the money." And I took it in two years. At that time, in your lifetime you could have \$3,000 a year in grants tax-free, so I took it in two years. And he said, "We don't care how we give it to you, either" -- in a nicer way than that. [Laughter.] So that's what I did and I built the studio, and thus I solved the problem forever. And I also kept myself near my children, which is pretty important really. It's important to stay with your children.

MS. BAYLY: To delve a little deeper into that, I know in your books you keep writing about the point you as an artist -- you know, there's Artist and then there's Mother.

MS. TRUITT: The two "I": the artist "I" and the mother "I"?

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Two sort of separate -- and I don't know if you mentioned it, but I definitely thought of it, though again, the convex and the concave ideas.

MS. TRUITT: Right. Opposite and identical.

MS. BAYLY: Did you find it affected your work at all?

MS. TRUITT: That what affected my work?

MS. BAYLY: Your role as a mother. Aside from just being able to turn around and you said that as you got older and your children grew up, you were able to focus more on the artist rather than just the mother.

MS. TRUITT: Was that what I said? I don't think --

MS. BAYLY: I may have misread it.

MS. TRUITT: I'm sure you didn't misread it, but you might have drawn a conclusion that it didn't occur to me somebody would draw. It isn't a matter of time, it's a matter of where your being is concentrated.

There were a couple of questions you were putting in there. One was whether having children had an influence on my work?

MS. BAYLY: Mm-hmm.

MS. TRUITT: Oh, yes. Every single bit of my experience has gone into my work. There's something about carrying a child. Women are just infinitely blessed. I'm awfully glad to have been born a woman. Carrying a child is a really, really interesting thing to do. It's worth everything. And because I had that terrible operation when I was 17, I had a very hard time having children. And for eight-and-a-half years I couldn't have children, which, as I told you before, was when I formed the habits of work which have sustained me ever since, derived partly from school, partly from Bryn Mawr and then from those eight-and-a-half years.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Because carrying a child is a -- it's so intimate. In the first place, it starts intimately and then it continues intimately. It's the most intimate thing that you can do, I think, probably. And I don't know whether men have anything that's quite that intimate. I don't know about that. That's a funny thing to think about. I'm just not sure. In any case, the minute you get pregnant -- the minute I was pregnant I dreamt I was pregnant. When I got married, it took me a really long while to dream I was married. But the minute you're pregnant, you dream you're pregnant. When you dream, you dream you're pregnant.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. You never stop being pregnant. And the baby keeps you company. It's just ineffable, really. You have this -- it's sort of like the spirit of God. They talk about the Holy Ghost and all that stuff, because obviously we are spiritual beings having physical experiences, I think. The spiritual being, which we're not always in touch with but which we do get occasionally in touch with, is always with you if you'll reach in that direction. In the same way, the baby inside your body is always with you. It's so companionable. It's just indescribably companionable. I just adored it. You're uncomfortable. You know, you have nausea to begin with the first three months, et cetera, et cetera, but none of that makes any difference. The baby is so companionable.

Then I almost died. Alexandra and I almost died together. I had a ruptured uterus because of the adhesions left over from that operation when I was 17. But the amniotic sac pushed up and sealed off the rupture. We were written up in the Johns Hopkins journal.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Mm-hmm. It sealed off the rupture, so she lived and I lived too. Wasn't that lucky?

MS. BAYLY: That's amazing.

MS. TRUITT: They did a caesarean section, emergency caesarean section, but it was just lucky. Wasn't that wonderful?

MS. BAYLY: Wow. That's amazing.

MS. TRUITT: I was in labor about two days.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my goodness.

MS. TRUITT: And then it didn't go well, you see; then they did the caesarean section. It was all perfectly wonderful. And my daughters are very brave women. They've had five children, unmedicated births. You're in the hands of nature when you're pregnant, and you're in the hands of nature which you don't understand. I mean, you can't understand the force of nature. One can feel it. It's not anything you can put your mind on. You just feel it. And you're in the same kind of hands when you're making work in art. You don't know what it is, what force you're working under the influence of, but you're working under the influence of a force and it's with you. You have the same kind of companionship. I've only had that companionship -- because human companionship is different. It's different. It's different. I've only had that kind of companionship when I was pregnant or when I was working.

Now, let me immediately say that works of art are in no way like children. That is sheer sentimentality and perfectly ridiculous. Nobody who has had a child or made a painting could possibly equate them. A child is just so much richer. It's so much more serious and so much more rewarding. I mean, there's no comparison. Sometimes people say to me, "Oh, your sculptures must be like your children."

MS. BAYLY: It is so funny.

MS. TRUITT: I land on them like a ton of bricks. Hmm?

MS. BAYLY: It is so funny. I hear that comparison used so much.

MS. TRUITT: You hear that what?

MS. BAYLY: The comparison used so much that someone might say, "Is your work -- do you feel like it's your child" or something. And it seems so --

MS. TRUITT: You mean people say that when you're interviewing them?

MS. BAYLY: No, just in general I've just heard people say that about an artist and their work, or someone will write something, and it will be --

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, "Your book is like your child."

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: I've written three books. They're no more like my children -- I mean, there's just no comparison. There's no comparison.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It's the richest thing that happens to you. It's just wonderful. Perfectly wonderful. And then it continues because -- and as for its influence on your work, the visceral -- that's not quite the right word. Or maybe it is. The visceral, the internal sensations of carrying a baby to full term instruct you about the nature of the body, the force -- the structure of the body. They are structurally instructive. I seem to be struggling with the words here. They teach you about the structure of your body in a way that nothing else could quite do, because what happens is that the baby pushes everything out of place and you can feel it all happening and you have to work with it.

In the meanwhile, the baby gets bigger and makes you a little uncomfortable, sort of pushes against things. And you're on the side of the baby, so you're submitting. You're learning to submit to the baby's growth at the cost of your own comfort. I think "at the cost of your comfort" is a little bit too strong, maybe. At the cost of your complete comfort -- because it's not completely comfortable. That would just not be the truth.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And you're so glad to do it. I mean, comfort means nothing compared to the baby. Nothing means anything compared to the baby. And of course, as soon as you have a baby you understand sufferings of people. The unbearable suffering that women must go through when they can't feed their babies, which of course is all over the world all the time. There are millions and millions of women who have no milk. They have no milk in their bodies to feed their babies and they have no milk outside or food to feed their babies with, and their babies die in their arms. That's just a fact. It's a fact, and it's a fact that your imagination can grasp, and then when you're in the situation yourself, you understand it even more.

That's the reason why I said that everything in my experience goes into my work, because that kind of understanding, the understanding that stains your body, stains your being the way color stains cloth, that is what is then distilled into your work.

I'm not saying that my experience is any better than anybody else's. I mean, you might have an artist like Peter Voulkos, who just died. I was on a panel with him. He was wonderful. Great big, strong man about 6 feet 8 or something, with great hands and great feet and great arms and legs and a big trunk and -- woof, woof, woof. Very strong. It was at the National Gallery of Art. And he was a very powerful, masculine, virile presence. Now, his experience would be very different from mine because of his body and his character and his nature, and he made these beautiful, extraordinary sculptures. You know his work.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: He must be in your Archives.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: He should be. His experience would be different, but the principle remains the same. So I'm not in any way making a claim for -- and I'm not making a claim that women's experience, because of having babies or carrying children, is any better than a man's experience. I'm not making anything in the way of an invidious comparison or anything like that, nor am I over-romanticizing it.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: The French expression for giving birth is *mettre au monde*, meaning "to place in the world." *Mettre au monde*. I think it's great.

MS. BAYLY: It is great.

MS. TRUITT: It is great, isn't it. I think we might have a little break here, don't you?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, of course.

[End of Tape 4]

TAPE 5

MS. TRUITT: [In progress] -- know him better. I only met Peter Voulkos once, and only briefly. Took his experience in with a very different kind of body, a very strong, very muscular, very powerful body. A very efficient body. And on the level of a man, it's really quite different.

And then I think there was a quicker transition. I think there was a quicker -- my impression is that in the artists

that I've known there tends to be a quicker transition than there is with me. I think I'm very slow. Maybe the little turtle had something to do -- [laughter] -- the *Daitoku-ji*. Maybe I really am like a turtle; no wonder it's so slow. But I think I take in my experience and then it takes me many, many years to get to it. I just finished a sculpture called *Swannanoa* (2002), which comes out of the summer after I graduated from Bryn Mawr.

MS. BAYLY: Okay.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. Funny, isn't it? But there it is and it took me all those years. It's interesting, isn't it?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: And I was very surprised to find it all flooding back into my head and distilling down into that work. Now, my impression with David Smith was things were much quicker. I know it was on the Voltri. And I think with David -- he came to see us right after he'd come back from Voltri -- it's the only time I ever saw him be really happy -- and threw the pictures of the Voltri sculptures on the sofa and said, "There, that's what I've been doing." It's just wonderful. David was a wonderful man. But with him, you see, he went to Voltri, he saw the material there, the material matched. It's something about what James Joyce calls equivalence, which I firmly believe in.

Stieglitz uses the same concept; I think he's using it in the same way; that you find in the outside world, the exterior or material world, you find in materia itself a match for concepts which belong to you which, which you already have. It's as if you were born already knowing certain things and then you look for their equivalence in the material world. And when you find them you recognize them. I think in that way you recognize your life as you live it, so I feel I have recognized my life as I've lived it. Certain things belong to me. When they happen I say, "Oh, of course," something like that.

And I think that process can be fast or it can be slow. And I think in Voltri, which is the almost quintessential, perfect example of the way an artist works, David went there, he was expected to make one piece for that Spoleto Festival, and I think he made 25 or 50 -- 25, I think. He said he bought a lot of rolling stock and had it shipped back to Bolton. But I think when he got there he found -- one thing he found was the material, which he hadn't really had enough of -- he hadn't been in a real train yard since he'd worked in the original Bolton Terminal ironworks or since he'd worked during the war on real rolling stock. He found that and I think he was just -- well, I don't even have to think; I know he was just overjoyed.

And the other thing he found was something he'd never had before, although he liked his assistant. But he talked about him, David did. He found companionship and he found it not among other artists. He found it with Ken Noland and he found it with, I think, John Graham. I think he found it in other artists occasionally. But in this case he found it juxtaposed with this wonderful rolling stock and the companionship of the Italian man.

His description was so -- I wish there had been a recording there because he found he had -- every noon they knocked off work and they had their sandwiches. And David said they were great big, rough old pieces of bread, you know, with meat between them. And they ate their big bread things and cheese and stuff and they always had red wine, which David liked.

And they all would drink a little wine and then they'd sit around in the sun and talk, and they'd talk like this, moving your arms, sort of jostling. Did this, this sort of -- how they jostled each other, and a lot of it was jovial and happy. It's the only time I ever saw him happy, was describing Voltri. That's the only time.

MS. BAYLY: So just -- this is it.

MS. TRUITT: I think for that period of his life, it was about six weeks, he was genuinely happy. And the person who knew him best during that period was Beverly Pepper -- if you interview her for an archival thing. Beverly Pepper, I think, was a really good friend of his. Better than I was, really. I didn't know David all that well, though I knew him pretty well. But she, I think, knew him when he was over there. I think her description would be good too. It was the high point of his life.

So that experience, you see, was very quick. But what I'm describing to you are the long, slow evolutions by way of which I learned in my person a certain amount of experience which then is distilled into my work. And I've been trying to give you the experience itself so you could see how it was transmuted, because it's a mystery. I don't know quite why it does it like that but it does; it just does.

And it isn't as if you had control over it. An artist, I think, has no control, or at least I'll just say I have no control over it. And when it doesn't happen, as it didn't happen in Japan for three and a half years, then you're just up the creek. I mean, you're reduced to making intelligent art, if you're reasonably intelligent, or you're reduced to doing what they call "making art," a fate worse than death. Much worse than death. So I just wanted to say that.

Then we want to go back to children.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: The only problem -- the problem with children and women and work is -- I think probably runs straight through, whether you're a lawyer or whatever you are. And there's absolutely no reason why women cannot aspire to whatever aspiration they choose to have and have children. It absolutely can be done. You just have to make up your mind to do it. It has to be valuable enough to you for you to work harder, get up earlier, go to bed later, keep your temper. The main thing you have to do when you're bringing up children and working is to be equable. And that is difficult. It's difficult not to be angry when you're balked.

And I don't think artists are any more prone to that than anybody else, but I do know that that's the problem. That is the basic emotional problem of being an artist and having children, is if you're an artist, you tend to get the bit between your teeth, or anybody who's aiming, has an aim, gets a bit between their teeth. And then you can't do that if you're bringing up children.

You cannot be angry, because if you are angry it's going to hurt the children, and of course you try never to do that. And you may lose your temper now and then. That's all right, that's just a summer storm, there's nothing to that. But if you get angry because they're interrupting you and keeping you from what you're doing, what you want to do, then you're going to hurt your children.

And if you think that's going to happen, I think it's wiser not to have children, really. It has to be worth it to you to have them. And the price is pretty high. You have to give yourself over to them. So if you're working and you have children, you have to do a certain amount of -- you have to be light on your feet, to be nimble, because you may have to turn. You may get up in the morning and you're just obsessed with this thing you're making, and you're ready to go to the studio and a child has measles. So you have to stop for maybe a week and nurse the child through measles, with nothing held back.

So you have to always -- and you can't say, "I'll have an exhibition in 2003" unless you have the work. I've never in my life said I'd have an exhibition without the work, because you can't tell, a child might get sick. So you're always thinking in terms of putting the children first and your work second. And I think that continues even now, although all my children are grown up and I have seven grandchildren. I'm perfectly poised if something happened. I would leave the sculpture I'm doing and the other things I'm doing in the studio and leave for New York if I had to.

And I keep -- having brought up children alone, I have an emergency mentality. I keep a large -- a fair sum of money on a shelf in the back room, so I can put my hand on it if I need it. And I have a viable passport. But now I'm too old; I wouldn't be able to do that and I'm not able to do the things I used to do.

You have to have a kind of an emergency mentality and a kind of lightness, an ability to turn from one thing to the other. So you can't afford to be selfish, as selfish as you want to be if you're working. The only times that I've been able to afford selfishness have been when I went to Yaddo. And Yaddo in some ways sort of saved my life, because I began to go in '74. And I would drop Sam off at camp and then go for two months and then pick him up. But at Yaddo you can get tired. You can't afford to get tired if you're bringing up children.

You just can't. Because if you get too tired then the children are going to feel it. They won't be well taken care of. You won't have that ability to lift them, which you have to have. They're dependent on you for the lift of their spirits and to keep them -- to underwrite them as they find their way in the world. You have your hand under them all the time, although it's invisible, because I agree with my mother that children should grow up like cabbages. But to some extent you're making the sunshine that makes them grow. And it has to be honest. It's not fake. You can't make fake sunshine.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It's a problem, but it can be done. It's a question of what you value in life. And I think for a lawyer it would be an awful lot harder, but I don't think it would be that much harder probably. And if I had been a lawyer I simply would have worked fewer hours. You have to be good at what you do, because if you're good at what you do then people will be glad to have you and they want you to work.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: If you're a really good lawyer, then you could write your own ticket to some extent. And I think you should. I think when women -- when women make up their minds to do something, to have children, then I think they should make up their minds to write their own tickets. You have to make up your mind to be so good at what you do that you can write your own ticket, if you possibly can. I mean, ideally speaking, because sometimes you can't. I hate to think of all the women who have given in. I think there are millions and millions

who just plain give in.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. It's heartbreaking really. And then they end up with kitsch, very largely. And I have a lot of respect for kitsch. I think the people who quilt, the people who sew, the people who do this and do that, I have a lot of respect for it. I have a sort of tenderness for it, too, don't you?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Yes, absolutely, me too. Quiet agonies that people go through. But I do think it's important for somebody who's my age and has been through what I've been through with children to say that it is absolutely possible to do it; you just have to make up your mind.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. I mean, it is absolutely possible.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. It's the truth; you can do it. And my children and I -- you really make your own friends. Out of your own body you make your own friends. You know, you just do. We sat around that table there in the candlelight every night year in and year out, you know. And we talked, and ate nice things, and talked. And friends joined us and it was fun and we laughed. I don't mean it was all laughter or all fun, but by and large you weave a -- a "nest" is not the word, sort of a psychic cat's cradle which holds the affections of the family firmly enough so it can stretch and move.

And I think children should move out. I firmly believe that they should move out and go wherever they want to go.

And on the empty nest syndrome, I haven't found that at all. The children go and you have that bleak feeling that I had on that sofa when Mary went to Paris. And it's very bleak. I've had it for every child. It's sort of like a second birth of the child. It's a strange feeling. "Unhappy" is not the word. "Bleak" is the exact word. They just go away and proliferate and come home, and then you have little grandchildren running around. And that's very interesting because then you can see what the germ plasm is doing. You can see how irrelevant the parents are to the child, so it's very chastening to see how irrelevant you've been. You've really carried the germ plasm one generation further. And it's the grandparents, you know, who supply the germ plasm for the baby.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: It's a very interesting and very humbling business to have grandchildren. Very interesting.

MS. BAYLY: I can't imagine.

MS. TRUITT: Hmm?

MS. BAYLY: I can only imagine, I mean. Or I can't imagine that.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, but I think you can imagine. And then you see -- in them you see traces of your family.

MS. BAYLY: A continuity through it all.

MS. TRUITT: A continuity. And you see the humility of what it is to be human. It's very humble. And almost everybody reproduces. You know, it isn't as if it were fancy. It's nothing to congratulate yourself for. Have you read the Nannies, *The Nanny Diaries*?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, I read them. I gave them to my daughter just for fun.

MS. BAYLY: And did you enjoy them?

MS. TRUITT: No, I didn't, because of the agony of watching the little boy.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: I thought it was -- if I had reviewed it, I would have called it a tragic book. It's a tragic book. They wrote a tragic book.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: It's funny, it's entertaining, if you call it that, but it's tragic. It's a truly tragic book. It's about this

little boy and how he manages his life. He's the protagonist in the book. I don't know why the reviewers haven't pointed it out.

MS. BAYLY: Yeah, I haven't read that in any of the reviews I've read.

MS. TRUITT: Well, it's strange. But if you read the book you keep your eye on that little boy and he's just heartbreaking. I wept, practically.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my.

MS. TRUITT: I'm not sure, but I did weep. I mean, it's really heartbreaking.

Now let me think on children and art. I've also kept - the other thing I've found useful was to keep it separate. So when I move from the house to the studio, I just make a transit. And I don't take the house to the studio and I don't take the studio to the house. I just keep them separate. And on the children, the children come in, and nobody else comes in my studio, but the children can come in and grandchildren can come in. And they help me, too. They move things for me. And now they're all big and grown up, most of them. And they move these heavy things for me.

MS. BAYLY: I think I read -- you've written that one of your daughters said she saw some of your work somewhere, you know, in a gallery or something, and said --

MS. TRUITT: In Baltimore, in the Baltimore Museum.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. And she said she felt like it was something of hers and that she had such a strong connection to it.

MS. TRUITT: I think my children do feel that. They're very loyal to me. I think my children are interested in the fact that I made all that stuff. I think they're interested in it. And I think they think it's -- I think they think it's interesting. And I think it gives them, too, something else, which is that after I'm dead they will feel they can go back and look at it.

That was what Mary meant about the museum. She could come and look at those things later, after I died. And I recorded two of my three books. They haven't listened to the recordings. They say they're waiting. And they don't re-read my books, because they're waiting to reread them.

MS. BAYLY: That's wonderful.

I was on a bus one day and I passed a gallery on 7th street, and I looked in and I almost fainted. I just had the oddest feeling because I saw my mother was showing a painting there and it was a painting that had been in my bedroom for years. And though I'd moved out of my parents' house, and I couldn't believe that it was so removed from me.

MS. TRUITT: Isn't that amazing.

MS. BAYLY: And I had no idea it was there. So as soon as the show was taken down, she gave it to me and I took it and put it in my apartment because I couldn't - even though it was hers, I felt it was mine.

MS. TRUITT: I understand.

MS. BAYLY: And it was such a connection to her that I didn't want it to be broken. So I can only imagine what -- you know, I can feel what your children must --

MS. TRUITT: That's a wonderful story. So your mother's a painter?

MS. BAYLY: Yes, she is.

MS. TRUITT: You talked about Marcella Winslow, but you didn't tell me your mother was a painter.

MS. BAYLY: She is. She hasn't done too much recently because she's been sick, but she's been painting for a long time. She's from Baltimore originally.

MS. TRUITT: And she exhibits here in Washington?

MS. BAYLY: Mm-hmm. Not too much recently. Just, you know, sort of casually, but yes. But I do feel quite a strong connection to --

MS. TRUITT: That's wonderful. Well, no wonder you like to do the interviews.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Your interviewing is sort of a family thing, in a way.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: That's a wonderful story about seeing the painting.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, it was really --

MS. TRUITT: And she gave it to you so you have it now?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Good.

MS. BAYLY: And it's funny too because, as you're giving your work to your children, she said she would give it to the three of us; there's three girls. But the ones that each of us are attached to are totally -- you know, the one that my sister feels the most attached to and wants to be with her all the time is one that I've never even thought about.

MS. TRUITT: That's interesting.

MS. BAYLY: That I don't even particularly like.

MS. TRUITT: Isn't that interesting?

MS. BAYLY: So it's funny that each child has such different tastes.

MS. TRUITT: It will be interesting too as you all get older, because then you'll see maybe you may like that one more when you get older. Because your life changes the way you see things, obviously.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: I think that's wonderful. Thank you for telling me.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, you're welcome.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, I appreciate -- I'm glad to know that. That's a good thing to know. It's very difficult for artists to take themselves seriously, I think. At least it's hard for me to take myself seriously, though it certainly wouldn't sound like it since I've done nothing but talk about myself with you all this time. But I'm not talking about me; I'm talking about this business of being an artist. You have to take your work seriously but not yourself.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And you're not interested in the results much. At least I'm not. The results are quite a lot of trouble. They're a lot of trouble. I pay \$800 a month on storage just the way I pay my utility bills. That's a terrible amount of money, you know.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: But you have to protect what you've made. So I've been doing that all my life. I've always had to support my own work.

On the business of children, there's a continuity in your own work that's reflected in the children's lives or vice versa. And there's a kind of a reinforcement because you have these friends who are your own children. Not that it's not complex, because relationships in families are very complex, but it's very reinforcing. Very reinforcing, more so than almost anything I can think of, that very powerful -- the children coming up under you the way you came up under them when they were growing up into maturity.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Very strong, very powerful feeling. And now with my grandchildren I feel the same thing. One of my grandsons [Sam Kusack] has turned out to be an artist. He's in New York. He graduated from the Cooper Union two years ago and he's working as a young artist in New York. Very brave he is.

MS. BAYLY: Very brave.

MS. TRUITT: Very brave. And his work is really beautiful. It depends on engineering. He's interested in the passage of time, and he makes these beautiful gears that move extremely slowly, so that time is measured very slowly. In one of his pieces, you look through a -- you have to bend down. He makes you do it. You have to bend down and look through a kind of an eyepiece. And then way down below in the darkness you see, in the sort of slightly golden light, you see these very beautifully engineered gears very, very, very slowly meshing.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. It's really quite beautiful.

MS. BAYLY: I'd like to see that.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah, I'm proud of him. I mean, you know, it's wonderful to me that he did that. And then another grandson is at Caltech.

MS. BAYLY: Yes, you mentioned that.

MS. TRUITT: I think I told you that. And then another one is just about to graduate from Yale. And they're all very strong.

Well, I think that does children, unless -- can you add any questions?

MS. BAYLY: No, not at all. Should we stop here?

MS. TRUITT: I think we better stop, yeah.

[End of Tape 5]

TAPE 6

MS. BAYLY: Ann Louise Bayly interviewing Anne Truitt at the artist's home on August 8, 2002.

So did you want to talk a little about your teaching? I know that you taught at Madeira. Was that right? And then at the University of Maryland.

[Audio break, approximately one minute.]

MS. TRUITT: Mrs. Lloyd.

MS. BAYLY: Mrs. Lloyd?

MS. TRUITT: Mrs. Lloyd - L-l-o-y-d. A very nice woman. And that's where I cut my teeth on teaching and I cut my teeth on discipline, because the girls were really wild as March hares, of course, as of course everybody is at that age. They were 14 to 18. And I taught clay, which, you see, I'd studied all those techniques and I really understood it, and I was working, too, in it.

So I got clay and I got in all the supplies, and the school couldn't have been more generous, and the classroom was big and full of sunshine, and I enjoyed the students. And I think I was a little over-strict. I didn't know how to be -- I didn't know how to teach.' And I didn't even have a concept of teaching.

And what happened is that within a week or two, the girls came in at night, I guess, and they took the clay out of the big containers and they threw it on the ceiling. The ceiling was made of some sort of Celotex, that absorbent material, you know. And it stuck. So I came in to teach one morning and the whole ceiling was covered with big blobs of clay. Not big blobs. It was amusing, actually, but my heart sank because, of course, I realized it was a failure on my part.

So I went to the headmistress and I said, "Mrs. Lloyd, I'm really very embarrassed by this but the children, the girls, have flung the clay up on the ceiling and I think I just wasn't a very good disciplinarian." And Mrs. Lloyd laughed. Wasn't that nice? She laughed. And she said, "Oh, that sort of thing happens now and again with a new teacher, and I gather you've never taught before." She said, "It'll be all right." So she took me back to the classroom, where all the girls were waiting because I had just said "Excuse me" and left the room.

So back came Mrs. Lloyd with me, and she looked at the ceiling and she said, "Well, this won't do," in a quiet way. "This won't do. I think we'll just excuse this class," or we'll do something else. I can't remember. She said, "I'll have it cleaned up tonight. And it won't happen again." And she walked out. Intelligent. And in that -- I mean she taught me too, didn't she?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: So I just went ahead as if nothing had happened. But that was my first sort of bleeding as a teacher. I taught there for three months. And that was when I began to conceive of the fact that you can't teach art without teaching history of art. So I began to teach history of art and weave it in, weave their work as best I could. It was interesting because they were resistant. The girls themselves only wanted to know the technique, and they couldn't grasp in fact that there was a tradition.

So then I only taught for three months. Or did I continue? Yes, I continued because Mary Orwin found out that she really wanted to stay more with her son than she had thought. So I taught one day a week. I taught sculpture one day a week, something like that.

Then I went to -- I think I went to San Francisco. Went to Japan. I went to San Francisco. Then while I was in Japan I read Sylvia Ashton-Warner, A-s-h-t-o-n. Did I tell you about that before?

MS. BAYLY: You told me about it or I read it, yes.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. Spinster. And I was utterly fascinated because she was a teacher. She's a New Zealand woman who taught Maori children. And the way she taught them was not the usual way. They were little tiny children she taught, in kindergarten or pre-kindergarten. She was teaching them how to read, and the way she taught them was not the usual way of little books or something.

She taught them by asking them words and teaching them how to write the words on a piece of cardboard. And the words were "mother" and "father" or whatever, and "sister" and "brother" and "food." I don't know what they were, but they were emotionally charged words. Then the emotionally charged words would become these pieces of cardboard, which the children then naturally adjusted to. And thus, they learned how to read out of their own emotions. I thought it was absolutely brilliant. Really brilliant. It's a brilliant book. So I tucked that in the back of my mind.

And then while I was in Tokyo, in the last few months that I was there, V.V. Rankine had been writing me, who is a painter, a sculptor here in Washington, sculptor and painter. And she was teaching a Madeira school. She wrote and asked me if I would teach with her at Madeira two days a week or one day a week or something. So I had not done any public service. I had not done anything for anybody else except my own family and my own work for almost four years. Now, that's not a good situation for somebody like me who likes to be of some service if she can. And I had tried in Tokyo and been rebuffed.

MS. BAYLY: In what way?

MS. TRUITT: In what way? I tried to join -- I tried to become not one of but an adjunct to a group of Catholic women who were lay nuns and who were working in an area of Tokyo that no tourist ever sees. It's the area lying to the east of Tokyo and it's the fill-in. It's where all the trash and stuff of Tokyo is taken to fill in -- they fill in out from the land. I've forgotten the name of the section now, but I can see it perfectly clearly.

And what it was was landfill, and on the landfill lived otherwise homeless people, and some of the eta, who were the people in Japan, a kind of -- it's not a sect -- a genre of people in Japan who do the dirty work. They do the prohibited work of Japan. They do the killing of the animals. They handle the hides and they do leatherwork and butchery and stuff like that. And they're different, they inter-marry. They're not allowed to marry into good Japanese families. They marry with each other.

So they're inbred, thus perpetuating this caste system, essentially. They're like the outcasts in India. And you don't hear about them if you don't live in Japan because they're invisible.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, no.

MS. TRUITT: And they usually have a sort of distortion in their hands, too. It's an inbred situation. Sometimes they have club thumbs and that sort of thing. Yes, it's tragic. My husband found about it, James Truitt. And he wrote a story about it and sort of exposed it, really.

Anyway, I went to work with this group of nuns. I've forgotten -- the Grail. They call themselves the Grail. That was it. And there were about eight women, very serious women in their 40s and 50s, most of whom had been trained, almost all of them had been trained as nurses, and they were trying to go out into the Japanese hospitals more or less as missionary nurses. So they were serving the Japanese in this very poor area and they were trying to kind of move out like a river and spread out. The way missionaries do.

Well, I had been a Red Cross nurse's aide and I went to this group of women, introduced to them by Louisa Jenkins, who's a Roman Catholic friend of mine who lived in California. A ceramicist. A wonderful woman. I went

to them and I said humbly that I had been a Red Cross nurse's aide during the war and that I would like to help them in any way I could, and I was willing to wash dishes or do whatever they wanted. Whatever I could do to help them.

Well, they didn't accept me. They rejected me just as the Japanese had.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. And for good reason, I guess. I mean I don't know exactly what their reasons were. I think they thought I was playing, maybe. Maybe they thought I was just a rich woman. I'm not rich, you know, but maybe they thought I was just -- I don't know what they thought. They thought I was not serious.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Or if they didn't think I was not serious, because there was some disagreement among the women, I think they thought I would not be useful, that they could wash their own dishes and they didn't want any help in the hospitals for legal reasons partly because, you see, they themselves had to be accepted. And to be accepted in the Japanese system is very difficult. So they didn't want any interference with it.

I was really -- "hurt" is a strong term. I was awfully disappointed.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Yes.

MS. TRUITT: I really had hoped. And I was very lonely in Japan and I didn't know anybody like myself, and I had sort of thought that possibly these women would be like me in the sense that they were serious and were doing something that I considered to be serious service.

Anyway, we parted company with me acquiescing to their decision, in effect. They rejected me. But it wasn't mean. It wasn't mean. It was just the factors didn't work out. Aside from that, I had done nothing except run my household and do my own work and bring up my children, which is really not enough.

MS. BAYLY: So you were eager to get back to giving to others and --

MS. TRUITT: I wanted to get back into something where I'd be of some service. So I wrote V.V. and I said, "Yes, I will." And then I came back. And thus I began to teach at Madeira School one day a week. And then V.V. got less and less interested in teaching, and so I went to two days a week, and then she stopped teaching and I ran the department then for four days a week.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. And I had a wonderful time. A really wonderful time. I used Sylvia Ashton-Warner's way of teaching. That is, I had no curricula, no plan whatsoever. I simply taught every single girl wherever she was.

MS. BAYLY: That's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. I never had a plan. I never tried to foist anything on them. I provided them with masses of materials, just as Sylvia Ashton-Warner had done. And anything they wanted to do, I made it possible for them to do. So I taught clay and I taught marble. I taught everything. And painting. And then I started a life drawing class one day a month. And I had a model come out, a female model come out. And I arranged for the doors closed so nobody could -- it was an inner room that they worked in. I taught them life drawing.

MS. BAYLY: That's amazing at a high school level.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. I taught them life drawing. And I made them stand up and I used masses of -- just the way I taught it later. I cut my teeth on teaching.

MS. BAYLY: That must have taken so much energy from you to teach each one in that method.

MS. TRUITT: It did. It took a lot of energy. A lot of particular energy and a lot of thought. A fair amount of thought. I mean, it's not brain surgery, but you have to keep all the girls in your head and you have to remember, and you have to be one step ahead of each of them if want to teach, you know.

The main thing I learned how to do was to make it comfortable for them so that they could grow. I tried to do that. Like Aesop's Fable where the sun comes out and the man drops his cloak, so that they dropped their defenses. And when the defenses fell off, what people refer to as creativity -- a word I really dislike -- would then be able to grow. Their armor. They dropped their armor.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: And they knew that I was not going to be critical. They knew that I was fair-minded, which I think I am. And they knew that I was enthusiastic and would encourage them, and I did. One of them turned out -- she's now the head of Harlequin Books.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow.

MS. TRUITT: So you see, I had no prejudices. She made these silly little things that were really wonderful, I thought. Little scenes with little tiny inventive trees and houses and things. They were not what you'd call art, but they were something. And I gave her lots of encouragement and that's what happened to her.

MS. BAYLY: That's great.

MS. TRUITT: And one turned out to be a poet and is now publishing books. It was wonderful. And every fall I bought a great big box of Kleenex, and by the spring it was gone because the room, which I kept extremely neat -- and I had a smock. I wore a smock. I was very formal. I've always been formal teaching. And my smock was always freshly ironed and starched at the beginning of every week. And I had flowers. I had plants in the studio.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, that's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: It was a comfortable environment. Then I added in -- this is the way my teaching went, so this is the sort of paradigm of the teaching. I added in ceramics because of a woman whom I know -- a student at Bryn Mawr -- getting her master's degree in my senior year. Eleanor White lived across the road from Madeira School in her house in the country where she had a ceramics studio. So I asked her if she would teach pottery, teach ceramics to the students. So then a certain number of students went over twice a week and studied ceramics with her, an independent study with her.

MS. BAYLY: What a great opportunity.

MS. TRUITT: Oh, it was great. Then I added in history of art, without which you cannot teach art, obviously. And I got Sam Gilliam first, but he didn't like it. He's a little bit too shy to teach. You know, just doesn't like to teach. Some people don't like it. And all sorts of people. But I got a history-of-art teacher, a regular history-of-art teacher, which is now a department of the school. And then I added in photography. And Miss Kaiser was wonderful, the headmistress. She just encouraged me and did everything I wanted to do. Not unlike me. Everything I wanted to do, she'd say, "Oh, yes."

So she had a darkroom made, and then I taught -- I didn't teach it -- got a photographer to come and teach it. And all that was independent of me.

MS. BAYLY: So you -- [off-mike] -- art program.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. And I didn't keep fingers on it or try to control it. That's what happened. Then I left in -- I began to teach in '67. So '68, '69, '70, '71, '72; '72 I retired from there because I got a grant of some sort. I've forgotten which one. And then I worked at home until '75, by which time it was apparent that I didn't have enough money to bring up the children. Oh, it was just awful. Awful. It was very scary in a way. Then Ramon Osuna suggested I teach at the University of Maryland, and he asked a professor named Richard Klank to come and talk to me.

So Richard Klank came and sort of lured me. He sat where you're sitting now and he sort of lured me to the University of Maryland. Then I saw the head of the department there and I asked if I could teach any way I wanted to, if I could ask the students to read Proust or Hawthorne, and he said, yes, you could do whatever you pleased. So I began as a lecturer, which "lecturer" in academia means you're neither fish nor fowl; you know, you're just called it.

And I taught sculpture, theoretically, three mornings a week. Then I found out that nobody knew any history of art and that the art students didn't. So I began to give lectures on contemporary art for the whole college. I sort of started that. And then I slowly realized that there's no such thing as part-time work. Well, I started a seminar for the graduate students because they began to come to me and I began to realize that there was sort of a need.

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: I started a seminar which was once a month or something. I remember getting a young man to come and talk to us about Wittgenstein. And I began to get my feet under me in how to factor the history of art and the history of thought, philosophy, et cetera into the teaching of art itself, the making of things.

I sort of cut my teeth. I sort of began to get used to it and feel my way. Then I discovered that there was no such thing as part-time work. I was not working from 9:00 until 12:00, I was working from 9:00 until 5:00 -- because of my own interest. So then they said, "Would you be a full-time lecturer?" So I said, "Yes." And then they said, "You should be a professor." And I said, "Should I?" And they said, "Yes." So they said, "Fill out these forms." So I filled out the forms and I jumped from lecturer to full professor.

MS. BAYLY: What a great way to become a professor.

MS. TRUITT: [Laughing] It was a great way to become. So that's what happened to me. And by the time I was a full professor, I was teaching from 9:00 till 3:00; 9:00 until 3:30 every day. I mean twice a week. Not every day. I mean, my dear, that's nothing. Why people fuss about academia, I mean, it's ridiculous. I taught from 9:00 to 11:30, from 12:30 to 3:00, and I taught my advanced seminar to advanced undergraduate students, graduate students and people who came in from around Baltimore and Washington to come in for that seminar. And always I had or usually I had one what they call Golden ID, Golden ID, which means that it's a person over 65 who gets a free education in the state of Maryland.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Mm-hmm. So I always had people in there, one person, at least, in the seminar who was 75 or 80. Interesting, isn't it?

MS. BAYLY: That's really wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: Yeah. One would have been a jazz musician who went blind while he was studying with me but we kept right on anyway. He'd come to the seminar and we would talk. And he was a big contributor. Very, very intelligent man. Name was Goldsborough. He still calls me up now and then to find out if I'm still alive, and I'm always glad to find out he's still alive. He's older than I am.

And then another man, Mr. Costo -- he was a great contributor to the seminar -- who had been with NASA. He used to supervise the transportation of the rockets to the launch pad on those great big tractor things. He's a very interesting man. And at Harvard he had been in that soundproof thing. You go into a place where there's no sound. You can hear your heart and your blood going through your veins. Wow. So he had a lot to add. So my students then, you see, I had this rich brew of interesting people, not only students from the university.

Then they appointed me Distinguished Scholar Teacher for one year. My God, Anne, all I did was I taught one class, one honors class, one day a week. The rest of the time I was free. And I had to give one great big public lecture for the whole university. That's nothing. Essentially, it was a year of sabbatical plus this honor.

MS. BAYLY: Did you get a lot of work done on your own?

MS. TRUITT: Oh yes. I always worked. And oh, yes, I did a lot of work, and I wrote three books during all this. Two. I guess I wrote two while I was still teaching. I think I wrote three while I was still teaching. Anyway, then in 1970 I had to retire. Mandatory retirement. Mandatory retirement became illegal for university professors two years later, but I had to retire. I was forced to retire. I was forced to retire and then they made me professor emerita and then I taught for five more years.

And then teaching ran out in my hand. Ran out like a string in my hand. I knew it was coming to an end and I simply wrote a letter of resignation as of December in 1996. I wrote it in the spring, and then around November of 1996 I began to withdraw my books and things out of the university. And on the last day of the last seminar I simply walked to my car and left, leaving behind me nothing. It was wonderful. It was a very interesting thing.

And the way I did the teaching, you can see how I did the teaching. I taught advanced drawing, and I taught it exactly the way I'd always taught it, each individual person, except I always had a skeleton. I forced them. They read Vesalius so they'd get an idea of the history of the skeleton, the history of the knowledge of the skeleton, and they wrote a report on Vesalius. And then the skeleton was brought into the studio and put up. And I got a great big roll, 100 yards of brown paper 36 inches wide, or 78, the widest you could get.

And I used to roll it out on the floor, only I didn't do it. I said, "You roll the paper out on the floor and cut off as much as you want and make a life sized skeleton." Then I turned my back and went and did graduate critiques. I'd come in now and then to see how they were doing, but I never offered advice. Thus, they discovered for themselves whether they compressed or expanded, where they compressed or expanded, what their image of the body was, what they would do if nobody talked to them at all and had nothing to do with it whatsoever. And it was extremely interesting and the students did very well.

Then at the end of three weeks of that, which would be nine classes -- they had plenty of time. I wasn't rushing them. And God knows I wasn't breathing over their shoulders. Before they did their skeletons I made them copy

the hands and the feet, which are the two places where people go wrong, and I discussed a little bit, just enough, and then I took those in before I put the skeleton up, and I graded them and I talked to each student about what he or she had done with the hands and feet.

So we did the skeleton. And then I taught them how not to use their eyes because in art school -- it's ghastly, really, I don't know why they do it -- there's some sort of tradition that you're supposed to use your eyes. It's really wrong. You're supposed to use, I think, a cross in the center of yourself, the same thing that we were talking about earlier about east-west-north-south. There's a kind of a cross in the middle of you, in your midriff, a little bit above the belly button, in which you can guess, if you know where you are, where the balance of things is. And there are two crosses -- one above the belly button and one below it. And with those two you sort of can tell what's what. Though I tried to disengage their eyes by forcing them to look at the model for 10 seconds and then close their eyes and draw a gesture drawing.

MS. BAYLY: So often I feel it gets taught -- in my experience, it's been taught, where you have to keep your eyes on it the entire time to see.

MS. TRUITT: It's terrible. Oh, well that's the contour drawing.

MS. BAYLY: The opposite, even, of what you're saying here: It's all in your eyes rather than just feelings.

MS. TRUITT: But it's not. Art is in your midriff. It's in a magnetic center, and that magnetic center is the same center that magnetizes your experience. The same thing we've been talking about in these sessions. It magnetizes your experience, but if you don't refer what you're seeing with your eyes and experiencing to your magnetic -- magnetized experience, nothing new can emerge. All you're going to do is reproduce.

MS. BAYLY: Right. Exactly.

MS. TRUITT: And that's a trick. You can teach it to a monkey. But I never taught it in all my life of teaching. I never taught it and I never let it happen if I could stop it. So I taught them contour drawing, which is a very intense observation, as you know. Slow. And then I taught them contour drawing which is fast. And I demonstrated. So I made them realize and I taught them all sorts of things like -- I would stand up -- I will do it for you. You stand up in front of the class, and I would teach them how to balance, how to balance themselves.

And then I would teach them that if they could balance, then I'd make them shut their eyes and balance. Of course, if they got faint or anything, they had to shut their eyes and balance and gather their forces five inches below their belly button where the iliopsoas muscle connects up. So you can balance.

Then I taught them how to bring -- with their eyes open -- how to bring their hands in straight and into that magnetic field -- which varies for different people. Sometimes it's five inches. For some people it's one inch, and I think for some people it's nothing; they don't really get it. But for most people, there's a point at which you can feel the magnetic force of your two palms.

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: So I said, "Every single thing you're going to make in your entire life with your hands is going to come into that field of magnetic force. Every time you pick up a baby. Every time you pick up a potato. Every time you pick up a tomato. Every time you touch somebody it's going to be in that field of force. So all the work you're going to do is going to come out of there."

Then I taught them how to use their strength out of that center five inches below the belly button. Now the students in the beginning, I think, thought I was mad. But I really have never cared what people thought of me much. So I would teach them to force -- [off-mike] -- particularly the girls. The men caught on much faster than the women. Women are very afraid of force.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Maybe I should try your balancing way.

TRUITT: What?

MS. BAYLY: Maybe I should try your balance.

MS. TRUITT: Try.

MS. BAYLY: So you just stand --

MS. TRUITT: You have to stand so that you gather your energies about five inches below your belly button. You have to tip your pelvis slightly. You see, all this is very intimate talk to students, but I thought either I'll tell the truth or else I won't be any use.

MS. BAYLY: Of course.

MS. TRUITT: So then you put your arms out like that and you turn your palms in and you give them a little bit more strength, then you bring them in very slowly. I like to keep my eyes closed.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my gosh.

MS. TRUITT: See what I mean?

MS. BAYLY: Wow. I could feel the sort of – it's an absolute magnetism.

MS. TRUITT: It's an absolute magnetism. I've never heard any other teacher who did this.

MS. BAYLY: I've never heard of it.

MS. TRUITT: I found it out for myself.

MS. BAYLY: It's really amazing.

MS. TRUITT: It's amazing. And everything you'll ever do in your whole life is right in there. And your palms actually tingle.

MS. BAYLY: I really feel like I have two magnets. A magnet in either hand.

MS. TRUITT: Yes. You want to try hitting?

MS. BAYLY: Yes.

MS. TRUITT: Force. Now you stand and you have to balance yourself again. Pivot on that field of force. Pivot your pelvis slightly forward and very slightly forward on your toes. Then you use your strength of your arms and go -- that's it. That's it. That's it.

MS. BAYLY: That feels great.

MS. TRUITT: Isn't it great? Then I said, every time you do a gesture drawing that's what you're doing. You're using your –

MS. BAYLY: That's the way to get --

MS. TRUITT: Your force will be evoked by the model. And I said, "Don't worry about where everything is in the model. Just regard the model as a field of force, a field of energy. It's not exactly a body, it's a psychic energy. I didn't use the word "spiritual," which should never be used talking about art. It's too messy. It gets fuzzy. Psychic field of force. I said, it's a human being in front of you. The human being is alive and the human being has blood going, and I did the circulation of the blood and the history of Harvey [sp] and blah, blah, blah. Kind of to make it real.

MS. BAYLY: That's a really wonderful way --

MS. TRUITT: It's wonderful.

MS. BAYLY: -- to make you feel – you know, to make the students feel – [off mike].

MS. TRUITT: And to honor the body. And I said that each body was the history of the person, and I taught them respect for the body. And I was very strict about the model. None of this business of slopping around naked. They had to have their little shoes, their little slippers – flop--flops or whatever. And then they had to have kimonos. And then they got up on the podium and the podium was high so everybody could see. And I never, never, never let any of my students sit down.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Never. Because, I said, if you sit down, all your strength will go down into your bottom. You'll never have it again. You won't have anything to – any force to work with.

I loved teaching drawing. And I taught not only advanced drawing, but one year I went away for some sabbatical or something, I came back and they'd reduced me down. Even though I was a full professor, they'd reduced me down to two classes of first-year drawing.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. At first I felt really sort of appalled and rather hurt and a little angry, but then I thought, hmm, I can teach this with my hands tied behind me. I'll just work more. So I happily taught a whole semester of two classes of first-year drawing students. Much easier to teach because they had no preconceived ideas. And I taught them how to throw away their work. Oh, then at the second semester of that year they put me back and I got my seminar back and my advanced drawing. It was just some sort of little ruffle in the academic world.

My whole way of handling everything at the university was to go in, give my full attention, 100 percent, and then withdraw. Slid in and slid out. But I went in when I was 54, or 53, and I already had the history, my own history behind me, which is the reason they hired me. So I went in in a privileged position and I had a privileged position. One of the nicest things that's ever happened to me is that they have now a fellowship. The Anne Truitt or the Truitt Fellowship. I tell you, Anne, it's given me more pleasure than any other single honor that's ever been given to me.

The university did it, and they founded a fellowship for one year of graduate work. One graduate student does not have to work while he or she is a graduate student. And they get a stipend.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, that's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: I was so thankful. That means one student is not having to struggle, whereas sometimes my students have two jobs. They struggle terribly and they have this horrible heavy debt. I mean, it's just awful, you know. Thank God, I taught at a great big public university. Thank God. Nothing privileged. No privilege.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, that's absolutely wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: Well, it's fun, isn't it, to talk about it?

MS. BAYLY: It is fun.

MS. TRUITT: So that's the history of my teaching. And when the string began to run out in my hand, I could feel it plainly. I could just feel it plainly.

MS. BAYLY: And you knew it.

MS. TRUITT: I knew it was coming to an end.

MS. BAYLY: And you didn't regret it? You were fine with it then?

MS. TRUITT: No, I was 75. I think that's -- I taught five years as a professor emerita, and I think I'd given my due. I was, perhaps, getting a little bit tired, 75. I can't remember. Was it tiring? Yeah, a little bit.

MS. BAYLY: [Off-mike]

MS. TRUITT: Yes. You had to drive out there. I love to teach. You'd drive out there and drive back. And the snow. I've never regretted teaching. I've never regretted anything about teaching at all. I love teaching. I just adore teaching. And if I were 20 I'd begin it again. But I'm not. The students are very -- I love seeing the students go out in the world. You know, Cord Meyer is an old friend of mine, and I had done a sculpture for him and his twin brother who was killed in the war -- they were both Marine lieutenants and they both had graduated from Yale. And I did a sculpture. The sculpture Two really came from Cord Meyer and his brother and also from my two sisters, but really for Cord Meyer and his brother because one had gone and I always knew that Cord missed him.

Anyway, I did a sculpture called Two in 1962, early '62, and it's one of the first sculptures in which I counterpointed color. So what happened was -- Cord died. Cord bought the sculpture from me for \$100 in 1962/63 or something and he kept it in his front hall in Georgetown. Then he died and -- who was it who suggested -- somebody suggested to me that it should be given to Yale. I think it was Charlie Finch, who was studying at Yale then. My grandson. And anyway, that's what came about. So it was given to the Yale University Art Gallery by his two sons in memory of Cord Meyer and his brother, Quentin Meyer. So that sculpture is now in Yale University Art Gallery along with a drawing which they just bought, plus I think another sculpture's going in soon.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, wow. That's wonderful.

MS. TRUITT: But what was I leading up to? What was I on before?

MS. BAYLY: You were saying the students --

MS. TRUITT: Oh, the students. Well, then I got to the Yale University Art Gallery, and who was there but one of

my former students.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Mm-hmm. He's now the deputy director.

MS. BAYLY: Oh, my gosh.

MS. TRUITT: Entertaining, isn't it?

MS. BAYLY: Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: It's more than entertaining; it's satisfying. And furthermore, he had married another student of mine named Eva Lundsager, who is a painter, exhibits in New York, and they have one child and were expecting another when I was there last year.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Yes. You see that makes teaching -- you know, it's not as if you were just teaching dead things. They live and they go on and they proliferate and they live.

MS. BAYLY: Well, that's a wonderful story.

MS. TRUITT: I think it's wonderful too. I think it's perfectly wonderful. Teaching is really very selfless, you know. And I never let the students look at my work or have anything to do with my work at all. They said, "What do you do?" I'd say, "Look it up." And they called me "Mrs. Truitt." I kept a great big distance. I think it's very unfair to be seductive.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Yes. It is.

MS. TRUITT: Really cruel, in a way. And I never let them call themselves artists. I would say, "You're not an artist. You have a way to go yet. Takes about 12 years." You know?

MS. BAYLY: Right.

MS. TRUITT: Just keep on.

MS. BAYLY: Sure.

MS. TRUITT: We'll see. And I've never lost touch, if they write me. And I always respond. I never fail. Because that's part of the responsibility.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: Otherwise about teaching, I don't know. I don't have any theories. I think everybody does it differently. My daughter is a wonderful teacher. She's a really wonderful teacher.

MS. BAYLY: What does she teach?

MS. TRUITT: She teaches English over at Key School in Annapolis, where four of her five children go to school there.

MS. BAYLY: Really?

MS. TRUITT: Mm-hmm. She's a great teacher. I went over for Grandparents Day. She's teaching *Beowulf* and Carson McCullers. I couldn't have been more interested to hear out of my daughter's mouth things that I had never thought about either of the books under discussion, considering I read *Beowulf* about 18 times and have taught it myself. It was interesting.

And she teaches quite differently from the way I did, but not too much, though. But she's a much lighter hand. She's witty. I'm not very witty.

I just think teaching is the highest calling. It's the highest professional calling for me, or law. Or I don't know. A lot of them are high. Medicine.

MS. BAYLY: Teaching is definitely one, if not the highest.

MS. TRUITT: Definitely one.

MS. BAYLY: Yes. Absolutely.

MS. TRUITT: There's something about putting yourself in the service of others which is multiplying oneself. It's a proper use of yourself. It's a proper use of yourself.

MS. BAYLY: Well, thank you so much for telling us about that.

MS. TRUITT: You're welcome.

MS. BAYLY: It's wonderful. I know it will be very appreciated.

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