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Oral history interview with Tom McGlauchlin, 2006 October 13

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Tom McGlauchlin on October 18, 2006. The interview took place at the offices of the Archives of American Art in Washington, D.C., and was conducted by Joan Falconer Byrd for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Tom McGlauchlin and Joan Falconer Byrd have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

JOAN FALCONER BYRD: Let's just start off with you just talking a little bit about where you were born.

TOM MCGLAUCHLIN: Okay. I was born on the family farm that my great-grandfather purchased in 1854. And my mother had nine children, and the first one she went to town to the hospital to have it, and then -

MS. BYRD: Nine?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - from then on she decided that going to town was too much trouble and had - the next eight children were born at home.

MS. BYRD: Oh, my word.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: My father left the farm, and we moved to town when I was three, and I grew up in Beloit, Wisconsin.

MS. BYRD: And so were you involved in art at all when you went to school?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No. I took one course in ninth grade and I enjoyed that. And it was a very diverse introduction to art. I know that the only thing I remember from it was making a model - designing a house and making a model of it. And I designed a square house with an atrium in the center with a skylight over it and no windows on the exterior walls, for artwork to hang on the walls.

MS. BYRD: I see.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: But anyway, the high school art teacher was strictly two-dimensional, and I knew I couldn't draw or paint and so I didn't take any art courses. And in fact, in my senior year I took - the school offered aptitude tests to see what we wanted to do with our lives, and so I took it, and it was very extensive - as I recall three or four hours - and the conclusion - the psychologist talked to me about it, went over the results, he said, well, probably the major thing is you shouldn't find a occupation where you work with your hands.

MS. BYRD: Isn't that amazing?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I couldn't move the little pegs from the holes fast enough, from one hole to another.

MS. BYRD: Oh, my word. Now, did you become interested in art as an undergraduate?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. I graduated from high school and went to the University of Wisconsin. Well, first of all I worked for two years when I got out of high school.

I had become very active in the theater in high school. We had an amateur theater group, and I was introduced to it by a Sea Scouts skipper. And I became fascinated with stagecraft and built sets for him and built the sets for the senior class play. And went to the University of Wisconsin, immediately searched out the Union Theater and became active in backstage. But I majored in engineering -

MS. BYRD: Oh, I didn't know that.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - because I had worked in a machine shop for two years and really enjoyed it and thought that I could do something with engineering and machine experience. And didn't really think - I didn't see that I had any talent in art, because it had to be - as far as I knew the only thing you did in art was either painting or sculpture.

MS. BYRD: And so you graduated?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, no. After two years of engineering, one of the students backstage, the art students working backstage, said, why aren't - you're talking about art all the time; why aren't you majoring in art? And I said, well, I never could find the art department. [Byrd laughs.] It was in the school of education.

MS. BYRD: I remember that. Yes. That is very funny. [McGlauchlin laughs.] You couldn't find it.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: So they showed me where to get a school of education bulletin, and I switched majors. And after the first year of drawing and design I still had doubts about whether I wanted to be in art because I hadn't done well.

MS. BYRD: Well, drawing and design, those were the fundamental courses.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Right. And I took a semester off to think about it, and went to L.A. And my brother Alan was in the Army, stationed on the Eniwetok [Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands] for the atomic bomb tests.

MS. BYRD: Eniwetok? We'll get the spelling of that later. [They laugh.]

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: You'll have to look it up; I wouldn't be able to spell it for you. But it's one of the - it was where the first hydrogen bomb was set off around '53, '54, something like that.

And he said that machinists were being hired at that time. At a very good salary. In fact, if I went out there and worked for 18 months, I could come home with enough money to go all the way through school. And my parents didn't have any help for me and I didn't have any scholarship money; my grades were not good in high school. And so I went to L.A. to apply for a job to go out to the Pacific for 18 months and discovered that they only hired when a vacancy turned up and it could be months.

And so I looked for a job thinking I would stay there for a little while, for the semester. And I saw an ad for someone - an inventor, a physicist, who had worked at Los Alamos [NM] on the atomic bomb project - Atomic Energy Commission - had teamed up with a salesman to produce his inventions. And they were looking for a plant manager and they thought I was perfect for the job, and they offered me the job. Told me the salary, and in six months if we were both happy with the relationship, they would make me a partner.

And I had to really think about what I wanted to do with my life. And after I was staying with a cousin, I think I spent a week on it and they kept calling me asking me what I - if I had decided, and I finally had to say no. I was going back to art school. I decided I would rather be a failure as an artist than a success as a businessman.

MS. BYRD: Oh, that's nice. [They laugh.]

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I really did believe that I had to try it, I guess. I just couldn't quit after just one year. And so I went back to Madison and, fortunately, got a very good summer job for that summer that put me in a good financial situation. And then I took sculpture that fall and got an A and discovered I should have been in three-dimensional work all along, and discovered that is where my talent was.

MS. BYRD: When did you meet Harvey [Littleton]?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Well, he was on leave - let's see, that was the fall of '57 and then - and I didn't take pottery that semester; I took sculpture. And in fact, didn't even know that there were people that made a living from pottery. I had no idea, no concept that there were - that pottery was a field of art. The next semester I took - signed up for pottery, spring semester of 1957 - '58.

Harvey was on leave in Spain, spent that semester working with a primitive potter in Spain, and he almost got fired. They wanted to fire him, half the faculty; actually, I think the majority of the faculty were ready to vote not to renew his contract for the next year. And John Wilde said, well, the least you could do is have the courage to tell him to his face. Wait till he gets back, give him a contract for one year, and next year - well, once he got back, they didn't have the courage to tell him he was fired. But he came back very scared, and he had lost all of his graduate students.

My first semester I had a class with the graduate assistant Ralph Peotter. Harvey came back. There was one grad student, and she wasn't interested in being Harvey's graduate assistant. And he looked at the students and decided I was probably the best choice because I was older, two years older, than the other students. And I guess he talked to me enough to find out that I had been in engineering, which helped, and so he signed me up the next semester, and I was his grad assistant for the next three years.

MS. BYRD: So this was the fall of '58.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. For three years, then, I was his graduate assistant. And spent a lot of time with him; taught me how to fire the kilns and made sure I got things done. And it was interesting, at the time I didn't think much about it, but because his father was vice president of Corning Glass, he got all the glass catalogues of any exhibition of glass in the world. And he would bring them in and he would show them to me and he would discuss them with me - what do you think of this, what do you think of this? And we would go through the catalogues and pick out our favorite pieces and decide what is good glass and what is bad glass. He didn't talk much about wanting to blow glass.

In those years, '57 to '60, he spent a lot of money going to Europe. He had taken his family to Spain, and he had a little research grant; that's all. He had just taken a leave of absence. And then they bought a car there, a Fiat, and they drove to Paris and he met Jean Sala that year. And then he went to Venice. And he went to the glass factories and watched them blow glass, and found that he could - decided he could blow glass and bought the tools: blowpipes and jacks and scissors and everything.

So he came back; he immediately had to get work - get to work and make some money to get back in financial health.

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: So that was the big thing. He was going to art fairs all summer, and I'd go to art fairs with him as his assistant. And then he went off to conferences and asked me to stay on the farm. He had a farm outside of Verona, Wisconsin. So I would take care of the farm. I took care of it once alone, and then the next year Pat and I were married, and we spent our honeymoon on his farm while he was at a conference.

MS. BYRD: Oh, that's a nice story. So that was -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: That was '61. And I got my bachelor's degree in '59, and '60, I got the master's degree. And that was a very nice year. Bernard Leach came and spent a week with us that year, and he - after my badgering him a great deal - agreed to walk down to the library to look at my master's exhibition, and walked through it with me, and he kept saying, no, I don't do critiques of student work. And I said, I'm not looking for a critique; I just would like to - have - anything you say about it, I would appreciate - negative, positive, indifference. Well, it was about half sculpture/half slab-built sculpture and half thrown pots. The only thing he said was, you should make a decision which you're going to do. He said, I think trying to do both is really more than you should ask of yourself. So I switched and just went to functional work.

MS. BYRD: And you and Pat started a family fairly soon.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, we were not married at this point. Well, then in the next year after I got my master's, I was planning on going for an M.F.A., and Harvey said, would you put it off for a year and teach my classes next year? He was going to take a leave a absence again for a whole year and wanted me to teach a full load of pottery. And that's when you were in my class, right?

MS. BYRD: I don't remember being in your class. I was?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: You were in my grade book. [Laughs.]

MS. BYRD: Oh, that's fascinating. Okay.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: So I taught the year '60-'61 and decided that I didn't want to spend another year there living on student loans.

So I tried looking for a job that year that I was teaching Harvey's classes, and found one at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, Iowa, as an instructor, full-time, tenure track position. So I decided to take it, and then proposed to Pat, and we got married that summer of '61.

MS. BYRD: Sixty-one - okay. Because, actually, I didn't come until - I graduated from Agnes Scott College [Decatur, GA] in '61, so I came up the fall of '61. But I just - the only reason I mentioned your children was I thought that probably affected your financial situation. So you received an M.S., not the M.F.A., but the M.S.?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Right.

MS. BYRD: And didn't go get your M.F.A. because you -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, I didn't.

MS. BYRD: - you really wanted -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I never got an M.F.A.

MS. BYRD: You really wanted just to settle down and start earning some money, I assume?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: At that time a lot of people put off getting the M.F.A. until they had been teaching for a while.

MS. BYRD: Looking back on this whole situation, you just didn't realize that Harvey really was melting glass at that time in his studio?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Oh, sure. No, I was aware of everything he was doing.

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: He spent that year, 1960-'61, starting the Paoli Clay Company, to give him financial security that he could invest money in blowing glass. I don't know what his plan was. But he did take an old kiln and put one of his pots in it, unglazed stoneware pot, and put the chemicals in it and tried to melt glass. And he did - I don't know how much time he spent on it. I doubt if it was even more than a month, probably, out of that year. But he did produce some pieces of glass that convinced Otto Wittmann, the director of the Toledo Museum [of Art, OH], to start the first workshop.

MS. BYRD: So you came back from Cornell College to take that first workshop.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. First workshop was in March of '62. And it was Easter - spring vacation - and I drove Pat to Madison, to her home, and Harvey and Clayton Bailey, his grad assistant at the time, and I drove to Toledo together in Harvey's van.

And the first night we got to Toledo - and Harvey had contacted Norm Schulman, who was teaching pottery at Toledo then, and Norm had been told by the director that he would be the liaison, help us get the equipment ready to blow glass. So he was going to be working with us all week. He said he would put us up at his place, and so we got there, went down on Saturday, and spent Saturday night with Norm on three cots in his basement.

MS. BYRD: Oh.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And we discovered in the morning, having breakfast at a restaurant in Toledo, that the three of us had laid there all night awake, and hadn't said anything to each other, because we were so excited about this workshop starting.

MS. BYRD: So you, Harvey, and Clayton. Yes. That's a lovely story.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: People have asked me about that, whether we - what did we think of this workshop, and I know I was very aware that it was an historical event, because Harvey had talked to me about Bernard Leach. He talked about Bernard Leach all the time in class, and Leach - and *A Potter's Book* [London: Faber and Faber Unlimited, 1940]. And he made his students buy *A Potter's Book*, which tells the story of how Leach studied pottery in Japan and went back to England to teach, and looked at the folk art pottery in England and found that there was only one or two folk art potters still in existence.

[Josiah] Wedgwood, when he started mass producing ceramics in the 1700s, he completely wiped out all of the village potters. And before Wedgwood, Leach said that pottery was all made in little one-man, you know, small family potteries, where the potter ran everything - he built the kiln, he made his wheel, and so forth. Just like potters today - or used to be. Not anymore; now it's all purchased equipment.

And so Harvey saw Leach as a man who revived pottery as a medium, and he wanted to be the Bernard Leach of glass. He didn't talk about that but I - you know he did. He also mentioned Stanley William Hayter, who did the same thing for printmaking. In fact, he asked me that question on my orals for my master's degree; he said, what is the significance of Bernard Leach and Stanley William Hayter?

MS. BYRD: I see. So you think he was comparing himself. Some people have said he was trying to be the Peter Voulkos of glass.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Oh, no. No. No. He was higher. I guess; I don't know. If you look at the history of pottery in the United States since World War II, Leach was, I think, just as influential in a way as Voulkos, if not more so. But Voulkos is what enabled people to get away from the Japanese tradition.

MS. BYRD: That's true.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And it would have been the very tight, functional pottery. He attracted a lot of people to it also because of his spirit and vitality. But Littleton definitely - I'm sure he saw it. And the fact that we didn't sleep all - he didn't sleep any more than I did that night, suggests that he was pretty excited.

MS. BYRD: Yes, absolutely; he was very excited.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: The workshop itself was - the first three days were quite boring. [Byrd laughs.] And I wrote a letter* to Pat during the workshop, which we saved and now we can't find it now that the Archives would love to have it. [*Excerpts from the letter may be found at the end of the transcript.]

MS. BYRD: It will turn up.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, it will turn up. We haven't thrown it out.

The participants in the workshop were to come Monday morning. And we started working on the furnace on Sunday and got all the steel parts to put it together. By Monday noon, I'm sure it was built. And we got it started, put Harvey's pots in it again and the chemicals to make batch melt into glass.

It was a big furnace; it was 18 inches square - 18-inch square cube on the inside - with nine inches below the door sill for the pots to sit in. About the furnace in retrospect, yeah, it was a very small, a little blower like this on it.

MS. BYRD: And coming in from the top?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Side.

MS. BYRD: Side.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Through the wall at a 45-degree angle towards the rear of the furnace.

MS. BYRD: I see. Okay.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Anyway, we were able to blow a few pieces a day on Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday we went to Mr. [Dominick] Labino to get marbles.

And Labino came in on Monday morning as a member of the class. And I saw letters in the museum's files when I taught there that - a letter from Otto Wittmann addressed to Labino suggesting that he might be interested in this workshop. The director of the museum and Labino were members of a weekly poker club, poker group, that got together, so they knew each other quite well. And Labino was an amateur potter; he built his own pottery kiln; he was a member of the Toledo Potters' Guild.

MS. BYRD: Oh, I hadn't realized that.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: He was an amateur enamelist. He made his own glass enamels, and he enameled copper. And he had blown glass before this at the factories in West Virginia. I think he had been - specifically he mentioned he had been to Blenko [Blenko Glass Company, Milton, WV]. They had hired him as a consultant to come up with a new formula for their glass. And he was the expert on glass formulas. He did the formula for the glass used in the Gemini space capsule. NASA came - a little aside here?

MS. BYRD: That's all right.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I went out to see him once, I think, before Gemini went up, probably earlier '70s. But he said - he was high as a kite. He was so excited. He said, NASA came to me. And they had been after him for a year or more to come to Houston or Alabama - I've forgotten which - but someplace to their offices to talk to them about a formula for a glass for the windows in the space capsule that would be opaque to gamma rays but transmit transparent light.

MS. BYRD: Oh, yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And he said, well, he could do that, but he didn't have time. He was too busy blowing glass. [Laughs.]

MS. BYRD: Oh, yes. [Laughs.]

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: He was retired at the time from Johns-Manville [Johns-Manville Fiberglass Corporation, Toledo, OH]. And they finally - four scientists from NASA came to Grand Rapids, Ohio, to talk to him, and he gave them a formula and I guess it was used in the capsule.

So anyway, Blenko had hired him as a consultant. And when he would give them the formula, they would melt it, and then the workers would try it out and make something with it, because they wanted to see what it actually looked like and what its working properties were. And when they were blowing his glass, they would offer it to him to blow it, and so they'd showed him how to blow glass.

I was out there visiting him once in the '70s and we were talking about the first workshop, and I had said nobody knew how to blow glass. He said, I know how to blow glass; I'd blown glass hundreds of times. And his wife was standing there and she said, how many times? [They laugh.]

And so she and he discussed it, had a little discussion, and he finally agreed that he had blown glass five times before the workshop. In my letter to Pat I did say that Labino is the best glassblower in the group, which I think is indicative that he had blown glass before and he knew how to do it. But he had never thought of blowing glass in his own studio. He had a glass furnace for melting glass for enamels. He had a glass furnace for making glass fibers, which he made into paper. He made a wonderful looking - looked like Arches 90-pound paper and it was all glass fibers.

MS. BYRD: That's amazing.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: In fact, he played a practical joke on Jack Schmidt once. Jack Schmidt was doing drawings where he would get some glass on a punty and let it drip on paper. He would take a very expensive paper and soak it in water and squeeze it out so it's damp, and then he would drip glass on it - hot molten glass in a trail. And it would burn and leave a little fuzzy brown border to this line that it burned in this paper. And he would exhibit it as drawings.

Well, Labino said, I understand you're doing some interesting drawings on paper with glass, and Jack said, yes. He said, well, I have a piece of paper; will you do one for me? We brought out this paper and put it down; Jack dripped the glass on it and [it] didn't burn.

[They laugh.]

MS. BYRD: So you were there, I guess.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. It was his own glass paper.

MS. BYRD: That's funny.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: But anyway, at the workshop, after three days of very little glassblowing, Labino suggested, why don't we try the marbles? And he was vice president of - oh, my memory -

MS. BYRD: Johns-Mansville.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes, he was vice president of research on glass fibers, which were made from marbles. So we went out there, I think, on Wednesday of the week - after lunch went out to Labino's, and he gave us a tour of his studio, which was huge. And he had every imaginable metalworking machine there. He had 10-foot-long metalworking lathes, milling machines, drill presses, his own handmade table saw that was built out of wood that he said was just as accurate for cutting wood than anything you go to the store and buy, and his pottery kiln and his enameling projects and his paper projects and so forth.

Well, then he stopped at Johns-Manville factory, which was close by. I think got two 55-gallon drums of marbles and went back to the museum. And by that time it was four, four-thirty in the afternoon. And so we cleaned the furnaces out, took the pots out - and I think one or two of the pots had broken and there was a little glass in the bottom or chemicals - we scraped that out and then just loaded it up with marbles - and I think it held probably about 250 pounds of marbles - and then we went out to supper.

And we came back from supper about eight o'clock and it was all melted, had beautiful glass in the furnace. And so we sat and discussed. I guess everybody just kind of stuck a pontil or something in to see what it was like, but they all wanted to go home to bed. So Clayton and I decided we wanted to stay and blow glass, so Harvey left his van with us to get home. We were staying with some of his former pottery students in Toledo. And Clayton and I blew glass till 4 a.m. - tried to blow glass.

MS. BYRD: Yes. Oh, how exciting that must have been - and maddening.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: We just couldn't stop. We just kept - and then we created a huge pile of scrap.

MS. BYRD: Did anything survive?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: From that night, no, but from the whole workshop, yes. I had an exhibition at Cornell of - I

invited everybody to send the pieces they made, and I had an exhibition there of the results of the workshop. There were 23 pieces of glass.

MS. BYRD: My word.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And there is only one - two - in existence now that I know of. Edith Franklin, who's a good friend of mine in Toledo and is still working in pottery, has the one she made. And I have one that I made, but it broke all by itself from not being annealed.

MS. BYRD: Yes. Were you trying to anneal with vermiculite?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: We tried that. This is another question I have; I don't think I ever asked Nick Labino why he didn't help us with the annealing. And I kind of think that he was being very deferential to Harvey. That Harvey was the leader and he wasn't going to try to take charge, and he was very reticent, I think, about offering suggestions, and he didn't offer any suggestions for - that I can remember - about solving the annealing problems.

So we were - Harvey had these crude ideas that came from books on primitive glassblowing techniques, that people use when they don't have any modern equipment. And we tried heating vermiculite and then putting the glass in the vermiculite and then sealing it up and leaving it there until its cold. Coffee cans mainly - coffee cans of vermiculite.

Norm Schulman did get a top-loading electric kiln in, and we used that, but then we couldn't stay and cool it down slowly. We had to cool it manually, and I think what we did was just turn it off and hope that it cooled slowly enough for things to be annealed. And so a lot of those pieces probably did break.

MS. BYRD: But you did have enough at one time for an exhibition.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: For an exhibition yes. Quite a few pieces, really. And then after Clayton and I had blown Wednesday night, the next day everybody else tried all day long, took turns, blowing glass.

On Saturday Harvey was scheduled to give a lecture on what we were trying to do - and it had been written up in the *Toledo Blade* - and it was in the museum's auditorium. And when he finished, he had the pieces - some of the pieces we made sitting on the stage and people came down to look at them.

And one of the people was a gentleman in a black suit and tie who picked them up and said, you really did blow these? And he said, where? And we said out in the garage. And so he said, well, can I see it? And he introduced himself and he was a retired Libbey Glass Company [Toledo, OH] glassblower, Harvey Leafgreen. And he had started blowing glass in Sweden.

Anyway, he came over and immediately asked if he could blow a piece. And so he took his jacket off and then, his tie still on, he had a blowpipe. And about, I would say, eight minutes he blew this vase about eight inches high, four inches in diameter, lovely vase.

And I was watching it and I - very carefully because I had been struggling with the glass trying to control its movement when it was - it had to be flexible enough to do anything with it. It had to be hot enough to move, but as soon as it starts moving, it's moving on its own and you can't touch it, and I didn't know how to control it. And he never - that vase was never cold enough to stop moving. It was always flexible, and felt so hot that if he stopped moving the pipe, I would say it would have bent in 90 degrees in a second and it would've just have flopped.

So then he said, now, if you tell me what you would like to make, I will work you through it and show you how to make it. So each of us - we took turns and each of us said what we wanted to make, and then he would tell you, okay, get a gather of glass like this, do this to the glass, now do this, now do this.

And so when my turn came, I said I wanted to make - I had seen - well, as a potter I very often took the last half, top half-inch of the clay and turned it over and folded it over to thicken up, make an extra thick lip. And I had seen pieces of glass in the museum where they had done that; they had folded over the lip the same way I had, especially in plates. If they spin it out into a flat plate, often the lip had been folded. So I said, I would like to make a plate with a folded lip. And he said, okay.

So I got the lip folded just fine, I got it folded over, melted in, and it was a bowl probably three inches in diameter, three inches deep, and then I had to spin it out. Well, when I went in to heat it to spin it, I only got the top half hot enough and it went out into a horizontal lip that was probably four inches, five inches in diameter with a hemispherical bottom bowl at the center. And it was quite thin, eighth of an inch. Thinner than -

[END TAPE 1 SIDE A.]

- anything I was able to blow for years, but with his help I was able to.

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: He kept telling me to make the bubble bigger, I think, until I got where it should be to make a nice thin plate, but I was never able to blow with that kind of skill.

MS. BYRD: That probably was one that would have been impossible to anneal, wasn't it? Did that survive?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: It was so thin it should have been - and I think it had probably a half-inch ball of glass stuck on the bottom from the punty.

MS. BYRD: Oh, yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And I was afraid to grind that off for fear that that would cause it to break. And so - because I assumed there was stress in it from not being annealed probably.

MS. BYRD: Yes. Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And that might have been what finally caused it to break. I don't know if I had ground that off, it might have survived.

MS. BYRD: But that one did last for a while.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: A long time.

MS. BYRD: Yeah, that's amazing.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: It broke just in the last 10 years.

MS. BYRD: Oh, it must be hard to see those things go like that.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: After the workshop I went back to Mount Vernon, Iowa. All I talked about was glass. For the next two years it was looking for a place where I could build a studio. I couldn't build one at the school; they had no space; the art department didn't have any possible space to put a furnace in.

And I was very much a potter. I built a salt kiln the next year in my backyard in town and started firing that. And the town was very tolerant for a year, and then our neighbors got upset with the college and took it out on me and filed a complaint about my salt kiln. And the mayor didn't like me either because I would come to faculty - the mayor was the professor of education and he didn't like me because I would come to faculty meetings with clay on my clothes, and so he sided with our neighbors and said that - signed an order that I had to shut down the kiln.

MS. BYRD: Oh.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Public nuisance.

MS. BYRD: Oh, dear.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Don Reitz and I, I think, are only two people that had our salt kilns declared a public nuisance. [They laugh.]

MS. BYRD: Let me ask you - one thing going back just a moment. You did not go to the second workshop because of the fact you had - your first child was born at that time.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Right.

MS. BYRD: So you missed the second workshop.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, I was late because Pat was in the hospital for five days in those days after the birth and was ready to leave, I think, after two but had to sit there. And so I couldn't leave until she got out of the hospital, and she was quite well aware that I was ready to leave the instant she was out of the hospital.

So she called her sister and wondered if she would come and stay with her so that I could come to the workshop. And so she came home on the Friday of the workshop - Friday morning early - we got back to our home and - quite early in the morning - and her sister said she would be there at four, and Pat said, okay, go ahead and go.

So I left for Toledo and got to Toledo about eight that night. And Clayton said he would meet me at the glass

furnace, and so I drove straight to the museum, and then he and I did a little glassblowing that Friday night. And that was it. The next day was the last day of the workshop, and actually, I don't think anybody blew the next day. And they didn't - Clayton - he gave me a rundown of the week's events at that workshop and said they hardly blew glass. They spent most of their time in the museum looking at glass and discussing what was needed for a glass furnace in a studio and to promote glass education in the country. And I think, basically, Harvey was running it more for what he had to do to get this movement going.

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And he was already working on that during that workshop. And they published a mimeograph day - oh, a stack - probably 35-, 40-page recapitulation of what they had done, a document of what had been accomplished that week.

MS. BYRD: I think I still have my copy of that.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah.

MS. BYRD: Purple, you know, whatever that process was - mimeograph.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. A potter friend came to visit and said he could never forget - he saw me at a meeting of the Iowa designer craftsman group, and he said he never heard anybody speak so poetically about a technique as I did about glassblowing. And I didn't stop.

MS. BYRD: Well, when did you build your studio?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: We bought a house in '65, summer of '65, and it had a stable. It was a house built in 1890 - 1889, '87, something like that, and still had the stable - all wood, wood floor stable. And I built a furnace in that and built an annealing oven, and the total expense - now I've got the breakdown, an itemized list. Pat was keeping a family expenditure book, outgoing and incoming, and she has - she listed every single cent spent on that studio.

MS. BYRD: That is -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: It came to $500. [Laughs.]

MS. BYRD: Oh, my. That is neat. I can remember Harvey saying, when I was there, that you should be able to start a studio for $300 if you wanted to. And this was a couple of years later.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yup.

MS. BYRD: That's amazing.

MS. BYRD: I told Labino about it. He said, in a wood building with a wood floor, it will burn down. You can't do that. And it didn't burn down.

MS. BYRD: Didn't burn down.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No. In fact, I didn't even build a door on in the furnace; I bricked it up.

MS. BYRD: Oh, yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: When I was -

MS. BYRD: Like at night and stuff.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And then the days when I was using it, I just took the bricks out. And one night the bricks fell off the door onto the floor, onto the wood floor, and I think the hot side was up.

MS. BYRD: It must have been. That's amazing.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: But they scorched nice brick-shaped burns into the floor.

MS. BYRD: You were just teaching clay, teaching clay only, at Cornell College?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, I was teaching pottery, art history, design, and introduction to art history, art history, pottery, sculpture, and design.

MS. BYRD: And never glass.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Never glass, no. I had the students - the pottery students - I would invite them to come and try it, but that was about it. It wasn't really - I don't know. I never even thought about talking to the college about adding new curriculum. I mean, the students who work at my studio - it was a three-person department, and I don't think I really had felt that I could drop anything else to add it.

MS. BYRD: I can understand. Well, now you started glass during the summer program in Iowa.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Well, that was '64, before I had bought the house. And Harvey had approached - I was at a conference with Harvey; we had driven to the conference from Madison, and he was going up to deans and art department chairmen asking them why they aren't starting a program in glassblowing. And he approached Frank Seiberling, dean of the University of Iowa School of Art. When Harvey and I approached the dean, Harvey said that he should start a glass program, and the dean said, well, if we did, we would have to hire one of our alumni. Tom here would probably do. So I thought, oh, my God. And so right there they said, okay. They started discussing the details for a summer course in glassblowing. And Harvey got $500 for coming down and doing a workshop, and I got $500 to teach all summer. [They laugh.] And that was about it. It was decided there in about five minutes.

And so at that point I had blown glass about - now this was in - yeah, this again - this was sometime that winter, '63-'64. Must have been January, College Art Association meeting in January maybe -

MS. BYRD: Okay.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - because I got back - and I had had a student at Cornell, a pottery student, who had gone to Madison, Rodger Lang -

MS. BYRD: I remember Rodger. Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: He was a student of mine. And he was taking glassblowing. And so I called him and said, if I come up during spring vacation, could you take me down to the studio and show me what is the current skill people are doing - what are people doing with glassblowing? Bring me up to date on what is going on with glassblowing. And he said, sure. So I got to Madison and we went down, and so he showed me what was being done in the studio.

And there was one guy who was a lampworker from the physics department.

MS. BYRD: Bob Barber maybe?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Bob Barber. And he was the only one making anything that looked halfway controlled, and Rodger said none of the art students liked him because he was this complete engineer-type personality.

And so we spent two or three hours blowing glass. And so I blew, I think, maybe two pieces there, but I couldn't put them in the annealing oven because it had already been closed up for the day's work. The only reason I was able to go in and blow was because the ovens were closed and hours were over. And then that was it. And that summer I started teaching.

And I afterwards tried to remember how much glassblowing I had actually done at that point when I started teaching. Well, I blew that one evening in Toledo with Clayton, and I can't really call it blowing glass. It was [they laugh] creating scrap glass. And then at Harvey's - I visited Harvey at his farm and I had blown glass. I think I had blown two pieces at Harvey's studio, and then I blew one or two pieces with Rodger. And that was it.

When I give a lecture on this topic, I simply say that I had blown glass for about eight hours before I started teaching. And I stayed ahead of the students by one week. [Byrd laughs.] What I did the first day, they were doing the next Monday; and what I did that day, they were doing the next Monday, right straight through the summer.

And the second summer - that was summer of '64 - and Fritz Dreisbach was a graduate student in painting at that time in Iowa. And his professor told him he should take glass class, this new glass class that is being offered. He thought it was stained glass, and he thought Fritz needed work on color and that taking a look at stained glass might help his color sense.

[They laugh.]

MS. BYRD: That's lovely.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And Fritz got hooked on it.

And the second summer I had to leave town right after the class ended, and there was a month before fall term.

The glass furnace was in the sculpture studio, and the sculpture people - it was the bronze casting facility and they didn't do any bronze casting in the summertime. It is too hot. Of course it wasn't too hot for blowing glass.

MS. BYRD: No. No. [Laughs.]

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: It was 135 degrees -

MS. BYRD: I can imagine.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - in the - one of those Quonset huts at University of Iowa that were built in World War II.

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: But at the end of the summer I told Fritz, why don't you - if you're going to stay in town, why don't you use the furnace till classes start? So he did. And I came back and went down to visit him in that fall and saw his work and he was way ahead of me. In that month he had gotten a good - whole summer past me. And then that was his last summer. He went to Madison that September to go for an M.F.A. with Harvey.

I taught it one more summer, summer of '66, and then I got a grant from the Associated Colleges of the Midwest. Cornell was a member of a 10-school alliance and they had gotten some Ford Foundation money to stimulate non-Western studies. And I had applied for a grant to study non-Western art history for a year at University of Washington, and I had been accepted. The grants paid your salary for a year, transportation to and from the school for your family, and subsidy for the rent you had to pay for living away from home.

MS. BYRD: Hard to refuse that.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Wonderful. So I went out to Seattle.

And I had told Harvey I was going, and he said, well, Russ Day, who was the chairman of the art department at Everett Junior College [Everett, WA] north of Seattle, said Russ Day had taken one of Labino's workshops at the museum and Harvey said he wants to set up a glass studio but he doesn't want to do it himself. He wants to find somebody who will do it for him. So Harvey said, why don't you take your furnace out? So I rented a U-Haul trailer and put my furnace and annealing oven and glass bench, tools, everything in the trailer.

MS. BYRD: I never heard that.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I had a Dodge van that I had put bunks in, bought it without any seats in the back, and I built seats that folded into a bed, and a bed for our two children above the bed for Pat and I. And we went off and camped on the way to Seattle.

And I got there and called Russ, and I said, I have a furnace and annealing oven and everything you need to have a studio; would you like to get started? And he said, yes!

MS. BYRD: Oh, how nice.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: So I went up and he was overjoyed. And found the sculptors had a very nice welding setup with an exhaust hood where the furnace could go, and they allowed me to put the furnace in there.

And he had said, you can come up and use it anytime you want. I don't have time now to work with it to - he wanted me to teach him how to blow glass, but he never had time for lessons. And we would get together maybe one Saturday afternoon a month. And then finally Christmas vacation, I think, we spent two or three days that he took off and came in and we spent the whole day together. I spent 20 hours a week there, I think, for the whole year, nine months, and that's when I learned how to blow glass.

MS. BYRD: I see. You were working fairly intensively then in glass.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. I really worked and that was very intensive. The work - amazing change -

MS. BYRD: Oh, yes. I can imagine.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - from the pieces I did in the beginning to the end of the year. In fact, a very nice glassblower, one of Harvey's M.F.A. graduates named Whitley -

MS. BYRD: Oh, Michael. Yes. I knew Michael.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes, Michael Whitley. He lived right near there and came - I guess he had studied with Russ; he had gone to Everett Junior College - and came over and met me and I demonstrated for him. And I blew a big

bowl, I remember, bowls, 12- to 14-inch diameter bowl, and he was very impressed. He said nobody in Madison could do anything like that.

So then I packed everything - I guess I left the furnace there for Russ -

MS. BYRD: It was at the college or it was at his home?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: College, Everett Junior College.

MS. BYRD: Oh, okay. It was at the college, okay.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah. And we went back home, and I had the furnace in - the studio in the garage - the stable. And that following year, '67 - '68, I really tried to get all my schoolwork, all the designs graded, test papers graded, anything that had to be done, would try to get it done immediately and try to arrange where I would have a week of both weekends free to blow glass and every night in between the two weekends. So I could turn the furnace on, blow Saturday and Sunday, Monday through Friday evening, maybe three hours a night, and then the next two weekends, and then turn it off. And I think I probably did it at least 10, 12 weeks that year and produced quite a very nice body of work.

MS. BYRD: Could I go back for just one second? I thought you took the furnace from the stable out to Washington, and then you built a new - you left that one there, and you built a new furnace.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Built a new furnace.

MS. BYRD: I just wanted to make sure.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Actually, turning them on and off like that was very harsh on the furnaces, and they didn't last much more than a year.

MS. BYRD: Okay.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I built a new one almost every year.

So I was looking for a job. And the opening at Toledo - and I - in the last couple of years in Iowa I didn't blow much glass. It became too - I don't know - disorganized with everything that was going on.

Fritz got fed up with Otto Wittmann, the director of the Toledo Museum of Art. And I knew that I was more tolerant person than Fritz. Fritz had an Afro that was out to here, and his beard was down to his belly button, I think, and the director offered him a bonus of $1,000 for one year if he would cut his hair.

MS. BYRD: I hadn't heard that one.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And Fritz said no; it would have to be $1,000 raise. And he refused to give him a raise, so he talked to Bill Brown about going to Penland [Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC] and he got accepted. So then he cut his hair. And the director saw him with his hair cut, and didn't talk to Fritz, but he went to Charlie Gunther, who was the chairman of the department, and said, I see he did cut his hair; why did he cut it? And I guess Gunther asked Fritz why he cut it, and he said, well, I couldn't go down there with those hillbillies in North Carolina with that hair; they would have cut it for me. And the director said - you can erase this, can't you?

[They laugh.]

MS. BYRD: That's all right; it's a good story.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: He used some very strong language about Fritz.

MS. BYRD: Strong language.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And would cut it for those hillbillies but he wouldn't cut it for me, which I think Fritz intended all along.

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: So I took the job.

MS. BYRD: Was it an inside thing between you and Fritz? Did Fritz strongly recommend you, do you think, and that's one reason why you got the job?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Oh, yeah. And Labino did, too.

MS. BYRD: Okay.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Harvey did not. Because I hadn't gotten an M.F.A. in glass from Harvey. He not only did not recommend me for jobs, he actually said bad things about me to people, negative things. Because I hadn't - and he asked me to come back and get an M.F.A. with him, and I wasn't very tactful. I said to him, well, what would I learn, because I knew they weren't - [laughs] - they weren't learning anything about glassblowing from him. I don't know. I think they did learn something about promoting themselves.

MS. BYRD: Had he seen your work?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Not very much. No. I stopped dropping in on him, because he had become chairman of the department; he was gone 20, 30 weeks a year - not weeks but trips, at least -

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - out to - as a missionary selling schools and starting glass programs. And he was - his health was going. I talked to Bess, his wife, and she was quite worried about his health, and he was just driving himself way too hard.

MS. BYRD: Did he have ulcers, I think, at that point?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I don't know. I don't know what it was.

MS. BYRD: Something.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I know he took an awful lot of medicine and was having trouble sleeping. I know I saw him at a conference in Minneapolis, sat in his hotel room and talked to him for an hour or two. I think in the late - just before I left Iowa, '69 or '70, and I was very shocked at his - he did not look healthy.

MS. BYRD: Now, is that the time you and he were together and he saw the men from Corning? Remember the story that you tell about that? You and Harvey were together at a conference, and Harvey showed some of his former friends from Corning some of his work.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, that was with Don Reitz. The three of us drove to Pittsburgh for - it was the predecessor to NCECA [National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts] - American Ceramic Society -

MS. BYRD: That's right.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - meetings. It was '64. Reitz had just started at Wisconsin. I think it was his second year. And because it was the American Ceramic Society meeting, all of the Corning scientists who had worked with his father were there. And Harvey talked to them about what he was doing in glass, and talked two or three of them, I think three, into coming up to the hotel room to see what he had done in glass.

We were sharing a room, the three of us, and I happened to be in the room. These men walked in, and Harvey showed them his glass and they burst out laughing. They thought it was the stupidest-looking glass they had every seen. They just ridiculed him. They said, why are you wasting your time with this? This is ridiculous.

And of course, it was exactly the same thing his father said to him. He was disappointed in his father, because he told me once that his father should have become president of Corning Glass, but he was too much the engineer. He didn't really have the people skills to - rapport with the other - the sales area and the other areas to be able to become president. He was the first Ph.D. to be hired by any American glass company to conduct research for them, and that was in 1904.

And that's a wonderful story Harvey told. When his father came there in 1904, it was summer, and they rebuilt the furnace [at Corning] every summer. And they had finished the rebuilding, but they weren't turning it on. He said, why aren't you turning it on and lighting it, start getting it hot? And they said, well, you've got to wait till the dark of the moon. And he said, why? And they said, well, you know, you get better glass if we start at the dark of the moon. [Byrd laughs.]

So I say that Harvey's father brought science to the glass industry, and Harvey brought art to the glass industry.

MS. BYRD: That's very good. Now you moved to Toledo -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: In '71.

MS. BYRD: So at that time you really - was it hard for you to turn your back completely on clay?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. I was still continuing to teach pottery at Cornell till '71, and I wasn't exhibiting. I had stopped sending pots to exhibitions around '64, I think.

MS. BYRD: So you did not teach - I guess, Norm - was Norm still teaching?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, he had left. He went to RISD [Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI] in '67 when Fritz came.

MS. BYRD: That's right.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: He had been teaching glass, not in the university curriculum, but he had been teaching - well, he had taught basically from '62, after the second workshop.

In '63 the museum hired Labino to conduct a workshop, like a two-week workshop. And that's the one Russell Day took. Rodger Lang went to one of them, and Marvin Lipofsky did. And the way it worked was that the students would work at the museum with Norm Schulman, and they would go out every afternoon to Labino's and he would demonstrate for them.

But he had now retired from Johns-Manville. When he worked for Johns-Manville, he saw himself as an engineer, and so artists weren't competing with him and so he would tell you anything you wanted to know about glass chemistry or glass anything.

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: When he retired, he became a glassblower, and now we were all competitors and he wouldn't tell us anything.

MS. BYRD: That's interesting.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: The workshop that Marvin Lipofsky was in - Ray Grimm taught pottery at Portland State University. Anyway, he was in the workshop, Marvin, and I don't know who else, but they got very upset with Labino because they had paid the museum for this workshop, and the advertisement was it was being led by Labino and it was an education workshop. I don't know if they went to court - but they demanded to the museum to get a refund because this was false pretenses. They had taken their money under false pretenses, and it wasn't being taught by Dominick Labino.

He led those workshops until Fritz came in 1967. Norm had kept blowing glass on his own while helping Labino with the workshops, so he was pretty skilled by the time he left. And actually, I'm not sure; let's see. I don't know when he left, but he went to RISD.

And he says that he taught [Dale] Chihuly how to blow glass. When Chihuly came to RISD, Norm says he couldn't blow glass at all. He had an M.F.A. with Harvey, but he hadn't learned anything about blowing glass. And Norm was hired by RISD to teach glass and ceramics.

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And he had been teaching it. And then he had to teach Chihuly.

When I came there, the building, the glass crafts building, was - one of the reasons Fritz left was because, when the museum built this building just for the glass classes, that was the first building in any college in the country to be built brand new just for glass. Unfortunately, Fritz and Labino helped design it, mainly Labino, and he used industrial tradition for it instead of his own - building it like his own studio. And then the director of the museum got involved in it and really screwed it up, and it had become a really horrible studio.

MS. BYRD: So this was Wittmann?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah. Otto Wittmann.

He moved the ventilators on the roof to where they created a symmetrical pattern on the roof; just in case he ever looked at the roof of the building, he would see symmetry. [Byrd laughs.] And what it did is it put two elbows into each stack, taking the heat out of the building -

MS. BYRD: Oh, dear.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - which took 20 percent off their efficiency.

MS. BYRD: Oh, yes. I can see.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And I recorded 135 degrees in the center of the room many times. And they had had an awful lot of publicity when it opened. CBS news came and did national - was on the national news, segment on the new studio. Mister Rogers came and spent an hour there.

MS. BYRD: Incredible.

Well, now the first Glass Art Society Conference is - you attended the first Glass Art Society Conference -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes.

MS. BYRD: - did you not? At Penland. And had you been teaching at Penland by that time?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes, yeah. I taught there the second year they had glass. I've forgotten who taught there the first summer. Oh, the guy from Southern Illinois University [Carbondale, IL], Bill Boysen.

[END TAPE 1 SIDE B.]

MS. BYRD: Yes, absolutely.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And then the second year - I don't know - I've forgotten. I was there about '69 - I think '69. And then the next year, I think Fritz - no, two years - he came in - it was '71. They had it in '71, before I came to Toledo. That was it - yeah, he had just gotten there and found - he felt stuck in the mountains and suggested to Mark Peiser that, instead of going someplace else to see somebody else, why don't we invite them here?

And they got a grant from the Sears Foundation, I think for $500, and the rumor was that at the time they spent the $500 on beer.

MS. BYRD: [Laughs] I'd heard that myself.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Fritz denies that. They didn't spend nearly that much. But I know they did make a run to Asheville one afternoon for beer, and I'd swear somebody came back with six packs across the floor behind the front seat that were up to the level of the seat, and they were gone by 10 o'clock that night; they'd been drunk.

But the weavers were helping, and the potters, which were mostly girls - women. But anyway, they invited eight or 10-12 people, I forgot. I've got the list somewhere.

MS. BYRD: I think it's about 12.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And I know they didn't invite - Fritz told me they didn't invite Marvin Lipofsky because he just wasn't very pleasant to be around, and he was mad. Marvin was quite upset that he hadn't been invited.

MS. BYRD: That he wasn't invited

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: So he got invited the next year, but -

MS. BYRD: Do you know whether they invited Harvey?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Hmm?

MS. BYRD: Do you know if they invited Harvey Littleton?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No - oh, no.

MS. BYRD: They didn't invite him.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, it was just students.

MS. BYRD: Well, I know it was after the NCECA conference at Gatlinburg [TN].

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, that was the second one. This was after Toronto.

MS. BYRD: Oh, I see. All right.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, the first Penland workshop - first GAS conference - was very casual. Basically we just got together to blow glass for, I don't know, three days. And I get it confused with the second one. There were a lot more people at the second one - I think more like 30 people, and that was Gatlinburg.

MS. BYRD: Okay, after Gatlinburg. Yes. I see. I had it confused.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And that was the one where it snowed. We had six inches of snow, I know, and that was - the first one, yeah, it was just Mark Peiser, George Thiewes, Bill Boysen -

MS. BYRD: Billy Bernstein.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Bill, yeah. Yeah, he came down with his motorized blowpipe turner so you could put threads on it. The motor would turn -

MS. BYRD: Oh, no, that was - well, let's not worry about names right now. Yeah, I know who you mean - oh, starts with a "G."

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Gibberson.

MS. BYRD: Gibberson. But Billy Bernstein was at Penland.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: But it was - it was just very pleasant - what's her name?

MS. BYRD: Audrey Handler?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Audrey Handler and a woman from California College of Arts and Crafts.

MS. BYRD: Oh -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And she lost her job to Marvin -

MS. BYRD: Tamura, wasn't it?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Ruth Tamura. And then the - yes, and that was the one - Norm came down to talk to Bill Brown about quitting RISD and becoming a craftsman-in-residence during the - while we were there. And when we left - I had flown. And so when we left, we both were flying out of Atlanta. And Norm had rented a car, so he drove me down to Atlanta. He spent, what was it, three hours, three and a half hours, something like that - the whole trip he told me why I should not go to Toledo.

And I had signed the contract, and he said, they won't enforce it; don't go. And he gave me reason after reason after reason. And so I couldn't complain about things when I got there because I -

MS. BYRD: You knew.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I knew. [They laugh.]

MS. BYRD: But you had already signed the contract, so it really wasn't a matter of choice at that point.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Well, no, they wouldn't have enforced it. There's nothing they could do if I hadn't shown up. But I couldn't go back. They'd already hired my replacement at Cornell, so I didn't have a job there.

And I decided I wanted to commit myself to glass full-time to see - I still had questions about whether I wanted to be a potter or a glassblower. And I still do. I'm still very much a potter. I have a much closer - I have a much deeper affection for pottery than I do for glass.

Yesterday Pat and I went through the museums here. We spent an hour and a half in the Freer [Arthur M. Sackler and Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution] looking at Japanese ceramics.

MS. BYRD: We were there, too. Yes.

Well, you said you got to know Labino quite well.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. He was the most - I don't know if I wrote that to Pat, but I know I told somebody right after the workshop - he was the most creative engineer I've ever met. And I had been in engineering for two years. I had a brother who was in engineering, who switched to insurance, but met - his friends were in engineering. I had uncles that were very good engineers, one in electric brakes who had 50 or 60 patents in electric brakes. In fact - and I have a brother who is a geophysicist and oil engineer, and he has several patents on sensors for oil drills.

Labino was the most creative engineer. But when it came to glass, he didn't have any imagination at all. Actually, Harvey and Nick argued - every time they got together, they got into these fights. And Harvey would criticize Nick's glass because it wasn't art. He had no sensitivity to form, three-dimensional form. You could show him a, you know, really ugly shape, a beautiful shape, and Nick wouldn't really be able to tell you why one was ugly and one was beautiful. And Harvey would criticize Nick for making things that were completely insensitive,

and Nick would criticize Harvey for charging too much for his glass and spending too much time on publicity and claiming all the credit for the studio glass movement. [They laugh.]

MS. BYRD: Labino criticized Harvey for claiming too much credit for the movement?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Labino criticized Harvey for claiming too much credit for the movement. Nick wanted - he wanted credit for helping Harvey get started. In fact, when Harvey had a retrospective in - I don't know, after he retired - the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Mint Museum [of Craft and Design, Charlotte, NC] in Charlotte or Atlanta, I don't know which one -

MS. BYRD: Yes, in Charlotte.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - had a retrospective of his work, and the curators at the Toledo Museum of Art wanted the retrospective to come to Toledo. And I think that was '79. The director of the Toledo Museum at that time was Roger Mandle. And Roger didn't know anything about Harvey. All he knew about the workshop and the studio craftsmen is what he'd heard from Labino.

So the curators tried to put it in the budget for the year, and the director said, well, I have to talk to Nick. And he called Nick and asked Nick if he should have Harvey's retrospective. And Nick answered him and said, no, Harvey never said thank you for the help I gave him. And so the curators called me and told me this story and said, would you help us work on the director to try and get him to change his mind? And the three of us went in and had a talk with the director but got nowhere. He was adamant that it wasn't going to come to us.

Now the problem - Nick's problem in thinking that he has some ax to grind with Harvey because Harvey never said thank you. Nick never would have blown glass. I mean, he had every opportunity to blow glass. He knew how to blow glass. He knew how to build a furnace. But he didn't, until he met Harvey, and he never gave Harvey any credit. And an awful lot of people in Toledo had gotten the impression from Nick that Nick was responsible, completely, for the workshop, that if it hadn't been for Nick, it never would have happened.

MS. BYRD: Well, Harvey is apt to blame - Libby, Nick's wife, she feels, somehow or other, that there was - I don't know exactly what it was, that Libby felt that -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Well she was very aggressive at promoting Nick.

MS. BYRD: Yes, exactly. She didn't feel that Nick was taking enough credit, and so she was really pushing him to take more credit.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, and then Harvey made lots of enemies all over the place through his lack of tact. And so, you know, Fritz Dreisbach won't say anything positive about Harvey.

MS. BYRD: I know.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Now, Fritz and I - he was just in Toledo for the opening of the Glass Pavilion, just settled our differences for the first time in quite a few years because - I guess we've gotten over our fights over Nick versus Harvey. But we have had arguments over who's responsible for what, and can't we give some credit to Nick? And Fritz really was a very dear friend of Nick's. I mean, he was much closer to Nick than I was. He didn't have to stay in Toledo and work in Nick's community, and that harmed my relationship with him because he saw me as a much closer competitor than any of the other glassblowers.

MS. BYRD: Oh, I see. Well, you told me once that Nick had told you that he never - in a particularly candid moment - that he never would believe it was possible to blow glass in an individual studio.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Well, it was melting glass.

MS. BYRD: Melting glass.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I guess I'd asked him why he hadn't blown glass. I don't know what brought it up, but it might have been that I'd asked him why he had never blown glass in his own studio. Or it might have been asking him why - Harvey's father told Harvey that an artist can't blow glass alone. But Nick said, if you'd asked me in say '55, 1955, is it possible to melt 50 pounds of glass in a little furnace suitable for an artist to use up in a day, I would have said no, because it had never been done.

Nobody had ever had a need to melt that amount of glass. They had melted a pound of glass to do a test in a little crucible - four-inch crucible - to just do tests on that glass - physical tests, not to blow it. Or they'd melt a thousand pounds, which would be used for a team of three to five men, and they'd use it up in a day in doing production glassblowing - hand glassblowing - but nothing in between.

And I think also it helped that from the moment the glass blowpipe was invented by the Romans around year 1 A.D., they immediately had teams of men blowing glass. They immediately went into production and used it for a factory, which is logical. You're spending a lot of money building the furnace and importing the chemicals, getting all these things together to make glass; you're not going to give it to an artist to blow one piece at a time. You get a team of men, and it becomes a production. Basically it was the first division of labor. And it was always done that way from the year one right up to the present. All glass was blown in factories except for some rare instances: Jean Sala in France, a man started the -

MS. BYRD: Oh, um -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - who rented a furnace, rented a -

MS. BYRD: [Maurice] Marinot.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Marinot rented a factory. After the workers left, he went in alone with a helper. He did hire a helper to assist him, but he was basically blowing the glass alone. The helper barely assisted him.

Marinot, Jean Sala, and Erwin Eisch were the only artists working alone until the first workshop, and then everybody was doing the working alone. Now, of course, that's almost over. I have just started doing a poll of glass schools. Does anybody teach students how to blow alone anymore? I don't think they do.

MS. BYRD: Oh.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I think every time the class starts, the instructor tells the students, you've got to divide up into teams and you can't blow alone.

MS. BYRD: Well, you know, in North Carolina we've got quite a few artists who work alone. And you?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I've still - well, I'm quitting, too.

MS. BYRD: Are you?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I have worked with an assistant, actually, because I want to build big pieces. And in order to blow big pieces, you've got to blow them every day or you lose your muscles. At my age, if you don't use your muscles for two weeks, they atrophy. In two weeks you'll see the difference. And so I don't have to blow glass that often. I blow a series of pieces, and then I spend six months drawing on them with pastels.

MS. BYRD: Yeah, I was going to ask you about that. But let me finish up with where - when did you leave Toledo, I mean, the school?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: They shut the glass program down in 1984.

MS. BYRD: Nineteen eighty-four, I see. So then you - and since then you've been - you haven't been teaching at all. You've been working in your own studio.

[Audio break.]

MS. BYRD: This is Joan Falconer Byrd interviewing Tom McGlauchlin at the Archives of American Art, in Washington, D.C., on October 13, 2006, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number two. This is session two.

We were just talking - before we had that great lunch - about your own work, and you were talking about how you had begun to work with surfaces -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Textured surfaces, on the glass.

MS. BYRD: - textured surfaces. Why don't you just tell us about that?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: In the late '70s, I kind of think it was in '78, a former employee of Libbey Glass Company gave a glass engraving lathe to the studio that he had built himself. He had been a glass cutter when Libbey was still making cut glass. And he'd just served his apprenticeship, I think, and nothing more, and then they shut down the cut glass program. And he had built this lathe and continued to do his own cut glass as a hobby, I guess.

He gave me the lathe and I had just been told by the museum that I had to cut the amount of gas used in the furnaces. And the best way I saw to do that was to start using color rods. We'd been melting batch, which takes more gas. And so I switched to buying scrap glass and melting that. And rather than add colorants to that glass,

we just had one furnace of clear glass and the students furnished their own color. They'd buy color rods.

The color rods put color only on the inside surface of the bubble instead of permeating the whole wall thickness of the glass. And so I wanted to use that characteristic as part of the design, so I was trying to think of some way I could manipulate that inside surface. And I thought of the lathe and putting the cylinder of the vessel that I'd blown - finished piece - over the lathe. It's a shaft with a grinding wheel on the end of it, a 12-, 15-inch-long shaft that rotates, with a grinding wheel on the end of it - put it over the grinding wheel and grind on the inside surface of the bubble and cut through the color.

The color is oh, 10 thousandths of an inch thick, maybe 20, 30 thousandths, but that's it, nothing bigger than that. It's very easy to cut through it. And then you've got a spot of clear glass surrounded by color. And then for about a year I thought about doing this, and I did some pieces just grinding on the inside - as a vase or a bowl.

I thought if I did this on a cylinder, straight-sided cylinder, put it back in the oven and blew a bubble inside that cylinder, I could pick up the cylinder on the blowpipe as a new external layer of the bubble that's on the blowpipe. And between the two, the new bubble and the old bubble, there'd be bubbles trapped where the engraving had cut through the color. And so I started doing pieces using that technique for about a year, maybe two years, maybe early '77 until about '79.

MS. BYRD: I remember those pieces. They often had bottles with very flared-out rims.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I saw a show here at the Corcoran [Corcoran Gallery of Art] of the Washington Color Field painters: Morris Louis, Davis - I think it was Gene Davis - and there was another one. But anyway, I realized that using the color rods you could do color field paintings on the inside of a vase or bowl very easily. They really lent themselves.

In fact, when you put a chunk of color on the blowpipe - colored glass on the blowpipe - and then blow the bubble out to eight or 10 inches in diameter, that color would get stretched and become thinner. And that looked very much like acrylic paint that's been poured over a canvas, which is what these artists did for their color field paintings. Morris Louis, especially, simply poured acrylic - very thin, watery acrylic paint over the canvas and let it bleed into the canvas.

I was doing a lot of what I called color field vases, but at that time glass vessels, pots, whatever, were completely out.

Littleton especially thought that artist glassblowers should not be making anything but sculpture. And so did Tom Buechner, who was the director of Steuben [Steuben Glass, Corning, NY] and director of the Corning Museum of Glass, and Marvin Lipofsky and Henry Halem and Joel - well, Joel [Philip] Myers was making vessels but also sculpture. But anyway, while I was making those pieces, I got the idea of doing three cylinders, one inside the other - I was explaining to you earlier -

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I would have three colors interspersed with the layers of clear glass through the wall of the glass vessel. I used red, yellow, and blue. So when you finished, you had a black form.

I would put this piece in a diamond saw - and the wall was very thick. The wall was probably an inch and a half to two and a half inches thick. And I would cut big slabs off of the wall just to remove the outer layers of color, and I'd end up with a circle of the one color inside the other, three circles of color: red, yellow, and blue. And if you looked through the vessel to the other side, you could get a mixing of the colors and see orange, purple, and green as well, and all kinds of other shades from the various mixing of the colors.

MS. BYRD: Sounds very rich.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: But I was doing those pieces, and then I got a commission to do this 23-foot-high sculpture. They wanted me to use these pieces. They saw one of them at an exhibition at the museum and said, could you make a sculpture out of those pieces you're making? And they were selling for $3,000 apiece. And I said, yes, I could do a sculpture out of those.

So I started thinking about it and we talked about budget and I ended up with a compromise of doing a similar piece but using powders, powdered color rods. I'd grind them up to a powder.

MS. BYRD: Oh, you had to grind them?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah. They didn't sell powders at that time, just color rods. So I'd crushed the color rod, grind it in a ball mill, and then sift it onto the hot glass. And I'd get a layer of color. Then I'd put some more clear on it. Layer of color, layer of clear, layer of color, layer of clear, to get four layers of clear and three of color. And

I'd make a vessel, a round piece five, six, seven inches in diameter, anywhere from 10 to 14 inches tall, with a one-inch-diameter hole down the middle. Then after it was cold, I'd cut it in a diamond saw at a 45-degree angle so that you got ellipsoid discs of glass. I cut one-inch layers, cut it up into one-inch-thick layers like salami, so that they became more elliptical. And the colors were - the bands of color were at 45-degree angles, so they were thick in some points and thin at other points. And I made 900 of those discs -

MS. BYRD: Oh, my word.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: - and hung them on the wires. And it's now 22 years old and still looks good.

MS. BYRD: Tell me again where that can be seen?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Four SeaGate, which is an office building in downtown Toledo.

MS. BYRD: Four SeaGate.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And while I was making those, I was sprinkling these color rods - powders - and they were getting on the blowpipe, and they weren't melting completely because it didn't get hot enough up on the blowpipe. And they were - textures looked like ceramics, and I thought, ah, I can make ceramic glass. I'd spent about three months blowing these cylinders to make the discs, and all the time I was looking at the textures and colors on the blowpipe and designing pieces to use with that technique.

We got through with it in June of '84, and that's when the museum shut down the glass program. Roger Mandle, director of the Toledo Museum of Art, decided that. They had a budget shortfall that year that happened to be exactly the budget for the glass program. And somebody on the committee suggested that there's our budget shortfall right there. Why don't we take it from the glass program? And nobody was there to speak up for the glass program.

MS. BYRD: And you were not invited to defend the program?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, and I wasn't even informed of the decision for three months. So, it was a very chaotic situation, and I had gotten so fed up with the museum's administration policies and - I don't want to go into all that, but it was very bad. And so I didn't really want to teach there anymore, anyway. I feel bad that the glass program got shut down because we couldn't cooperate, but personally I don't regret it. And they didn't shut it completely down. What they did was - the university student program was cancelled, but the adult program was revived and is stronger than ever.

And the museum administration never had any interest in the university program. In fact, Otto Wittmann told me once, you can't teach a person how to be an artist. Either they have the talent and they'll be an artist or they won't, but what you do has nothing to do with it. And this is a man who'd been an art historian for 50 years, and I guess he rejected all claims of student-teacher relationships - had no effect on the artist.

Anyway, I immediately started blowing pieces with this texture. What happens is when the powders are underfired, they have absolutely no gloss, no glassiness at all. Most nonartists, nonpotters thought it was raku. Potters didn't. Potters could see the very tiny reflections would get through the underfired enamels from the surface of the bubble. And they could see that and know something was going on here - it's not ceramics.

But I would coat the whole surface, and I started making - well, first, I went back and did a recapitulation of what I was doing as a grad student in ceramics. And my first year was a lot of ceramics. I went back and made the same pieces, but in glass. And that was very exciting. It was really a thrill to be able to go back and do the pots I made my last year in school and first two years out of school, probably the highlight of my career as a potter.

I'd gotten into Korean ceramics and was throwing - and it was also Toshiko Takaezu - closing them up, putting them in closed forms and then turning them and paddling them and doing things like that. So I started doing that in glass. I'd paddle it with wet newspaper and make the same kind of shapes as I had in ceramics, and then had this opening on it, making vases. And Corning Museum has one of those pieces in their collection that Susanne Frantz bought from that period.

But then I decided to do sculpture and saw that I could make glass rocks that looked very much like beach rocks. And so I started blowing these - closing them up, closing up the glass forms completely and coating them completely with glass powders, so that they're simply these lovely beach rocks with this nice texture. And then I would stack them and create sculptures that were basically a cairn of rocks, and did that for a couple of years.

And then I was trying to do something with powdered color rods, the colored enamel, but by sprinkling them on, I couldn't control the placement. And so finally I decided I've got to - well, I had picked up a box of pastels, soft pastels at a garage sale, very nice set of Rembrandt pastels for $2. I thought, well, for that, I can experiment on

some of my glass, so I started drawing on it and found that it was a perfect surface for drawing with the pastels.

I started out very timidly doing just a tiny bit of drawing, not really trying to interfere with the glass. It was interesting. The glass galleries dropped me. Habatat Gallery [Habatat Galleries, Lathrup Village, MI] had been showing my works since they opened. Heller Gallery [New York, NY] had - I'd just had a one-man show with Heller, and they dropped me because this wasn't glass.

MS. BYRD: That's interesting.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes.

MS. BYRD: It wasn't glass anymore.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: The Glass Gallery in Bethesda [MD], she [Sally Hansen] sold a lot of these pieces. And I got into one of the country's best collections of American surrealist art because I was doing pieces with rocks and cast glass to make stick figures. And I had one called *Ballet Dancer* that he saw as a surrealist image of a ballet dancer and bought it.

MS. BYRD: Which museum is this?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: It's not a museum; it was a private collection. Yasuna Collection [The Penny and Elton Yasuna Collection].

MS. BYRD: Yes.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I'm re-creating some of those pieces again, the cast glass and head-type pieces. Around '87, '88 I started drawing on them - I first drew a face on one of these little vases with pastels, and it was a revelation for me.

MS. BYRD: Well, that's interesting because, you know, you said when you started dabbling in art, you really couldn't draw a thing.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Right. I got Cs in all my first-year - except for one with Dean Meeker. Meeker gave me a B, but he also told me to go back to the machine shop. And I probably should go back to the machine shop.

But then slowly I started using more and more pastels. And for the past, oh, I don't know, 10 years at least if not 15 years, I've been completely covering the glass with pastels almost. And I'm doing - looking at nothing but the abstract - the human face and what you can do with it.

MS. BYRD: Do you look at Paul Klee?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Oh, yeah.

MS. BYRD: Because it seems that both Miro and Klee must have been influences on you.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And the Russian, [Wassily] Kandinsky, for color.

[END TAPE 2 SIDE A.]

And we had a wonderful exhibition at the museum. I went back and taught one semester of design a couple of years after they shut the glass program. Somebody was supposed to teach one class part-time and cancelled at the last minute, and they called me and asked if I could teach it.

And they had a wonderful exhibition there that year of the Baron von Thyssen [Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza] Collection from Switzerland. And he was buying paintings from late [Vincent] van Gogh through about 1917, 1918. And he bought Paul Klee, Kandinsky - he had four big Kandinskys, four- or five-feet-wide paintings. He had two or three cubist paintings by [Georges] Braque and two or three by [Pablo] Picasso. He had another dozen Picassos, [Oskar] Kokoschka, most of the Blue Rider group. I don't know who else. It was incredible. And it was the history of design. Here they were, going from painting realism to removing all of the suggestions of the world and just looking at line, form, color. It was the perfect exhibition for design class. And I took the students up to look at it, I think, once a week.

I took pictures of their faces, just the face, gave them three copies of it, four-by-six prints, and said, cut these up and make a cubist self-portrait. And I got the best results from that project that I've ever gotten from a design class. They just cut their photographs up and glued them back together. I did one also of myself - had them take my picture and did one, and was quite happy with it. And then later around '89 I got it out and drew it on one of my pieces of glass - drew that cubist self-portrait from my photographs. And that's, I think, one of the best

pieces I've done drawing on glass.

MS. BYRD: Is that one that you have kept?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes.

MS. BYRD: Have you kept some of your finest pieces?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Well, Toshiko told me, keep your best pieces. She said, Harvey keeps only his rejects and sells all of his best pieces; it's a terrible mistake. And I didn't listen to her. Every time I had a real good piece that I should have kept, I thought, well, I'll make another one; I can let this one go. No, didn't even photograph them.

MS. BYRD: Now, you're doing flat glass also.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. There was a period in '74, the museum - we had a gas shortage. The OPEC had an embargo on oil and the price of natural gas went up, and the museum director, Otto Wittmann, decided that rather than pay extra-high prices for oil to heat the museum, that we should shut the glass program down for a year and use that allotment of gas to heat the museum. So I was told on about two months' notice that I wouldn't be teaching glass the next year, and they weren't giving me a leave of absence with pay or anything; they were suggesting I come up with something else to teach.

And so I'd been seeing a lot about stained glass. There was quite a resurgence of artists getting involved in stained glass at that time - a lot in California, very fresh work. And so I decided, okay, I'll teach stained glass for a year. And so I did, and I made about 10 stained glass windows. A couple I still have that I'm pretty happy with. And that was it - got the gas, the furnace back on again. That was it. I didn't do anything more with stained glass until this past year.

I've been looking at what people have been doing since Bullseye Glass Company came out with stained glass, a complete line that's all compatible. You can melt any of their glass, combine it in heat, and it won't crack from differences in coefficients of expansion. I've been watching it and been interested in it and have thought about doing something with it, and this past year I decided to get started in it.

And the rocks seem to provide a wonderful surface.

MS. BYRD: Yeah, that's interesting. Do you fix the pastels with a fixative?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah.

MS. BYRD: So they are very permanent.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And I have done a few drawings on paper with pastels. I did a self-portrait a few years ago, not nearly as good as the one I did on the three-dimensional surface. And I've done quite a bit on my own handmade paper. I've been doing handmade paper for about five years - sculpture.

I got the idea that I wanted to make bigger heads, but I can't do them in glass-like four foot high. I actually had a vision of doing something - a head six foot high out of glass - and was thinking about slumping it, you know, making a big mold and putting sheet glass over it and letting it sink down into it. But then I saw a sculpture conference that advertised a workshop for sculptors who would like to make big pieces that don't weigh anything - in paper. And so I signed up for it and learned how to make big paper - pieces from paper, three-dimensional, and some techniques for casting paper. And the technique I picked up was using a spray gun to blow - spray the pulp into a mold.

MS. BYRD: Interesting.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And so I use a cloth mold, stretch it over a frame to give it relief. Basically, I work with something that will go on the wall with four- or five- or six-inch relief, and spray the pulp on, let it dry, and then after it's dry, I take it off the mold - and then I draw on it with pastels.

MS. BYRD: So you're working in - you're continuing to work with your blown forms?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, yeah.

MS. BYRD: And then you're also working with fused glass, and you're working less now with paper than you were.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Well, I haven't quit; I'm just doing a few pieces a year.

MS. BYRD: And you haven't thought really of getting back into making pottery again?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Oh yes, yes. I went to see Don Reitz's retrospective [October 8 - December 31, 2005] at the Mint Museum and - the School of Art and Design in Charlotte [NC].

MS. BYRD: Yes, yes, yes, I went to see that.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And I got out of that, and I wanted to go back to pottery so bad.

MS. BYRD: Oh, it was so - did you see Don? Was Don there?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No. I was down there for Thanksgiving with my nephew, who lives in Charlotte, and felt very fortunate to see the show. I was very impressed.

MS. BYRD: Very beautiful show.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: You know, I keep track of what he was doing off and on but not really consistently, and it was very impressive to see the whole body.

MS. BYRD: Yes, and to see some of the fairly recent pieces, really monumental pieces.

It's amazing that you've stretched out into so many different areas. As far as the market goes, do you find the market is still best for the glass?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Oh, sure.

MS. BYRD: I know Harvey always had said that it's good to have something you can put on the walls when you are exhibiting three-dimensional work. But these now are more relief - I mean, are they reliefs that you could put on the wall?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Oh, yeah.

MS. BYRD: So in that sense then, they might make a very striking exhibition, the two types of work.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. They do. What did you think of how the piece was displayed at Penland?

MS. BYRD: I don't remember anything specific -

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Well, that's good. If you don't notice the way it's displayed, you were seeing the piece, not the display. That's what I was worried about.

MS. BYRD: But I certainly enjoyed seeing your work and it's been very interesting. You seem to have a direction that is really all your own in glass, I think.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, actually, it's very close to what a lot of potters do. Do you know the Natsoulas Gallery [John Natsoulas Gallery, Davis, CA].

MS. BYRD: No, I don't.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: They kind of specialize in painted ceramics. They carry a number of artists that I feel very close to.

MS. BYRD: So, as far as the Glass Art Society goes, is that still important to you?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: No, no, I haven't been going. I've always had a problem with the whole glass field. I've never been a real part of it. Even back at the beginning when, you know, there was only 10 of us, 15 of us, I'd swear the rest of them were seeing each other every week. I remember one time Fritz came - Fritz went to Toronto to do a demonstration, and I went up to it, and Jack Schmidt was there demonstrating. I guess both of them were demonstrating. And Mickey Taylor was there, I don't know who else.

And the next week they were all at Kent State [Kent State University, Kent, OH] doing something with Henry [Halem]. And the guy from Toronto came down to go to Kent State. He'd just seen all these people at his place, but he came down to Kent State to see them again. And I asked him about it, and I found out that these people were someplace at a workshop practically once a month or oftener. And they were just - and they were all single and they all were just - it was a very incestuous time.

MS. BYRD: I understand, and I find the - I always feel very isolated when I'm at the conferences. It's a very political conference, and so, you know, unless you feel meshed with everybody, it can be a lonesome kind of

experience.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: I was also older, I think. Joel and I are the oldest. And I'd been blowing glass longer than anyone else now, since Harvey quit blowing.

MS. BYRD: Hmm, I hadn't thought about that.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah.

MS. BYRD: I know you make a point of saying you're the only one from the first glass workshop who's still blowing glass.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, well, nobody was blowing glass before the first workshop.

MS. BYRD: Absolutely.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah. It does make me feel old. But I am - I'm very happy, very excited about what I'm doing.

But I find that doing the flat glass, going into this new - all transparent, for one thing - I'm back into transparent glass, which I haven't worked in for practically 20 years.

MS. BYRD: You're working in many different areas.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes, but they're all tied together. Actually, I don't see much difference in them.

MS. BYRD: The imagery.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yeah, it's imagery; it's the image, whether you work in a computer and then print it - and I've printed images out that I then draw on my glass. I've taken photographs of my glass, printed it on a poster for the jazz festival in Toledo. I took one of my flat glass pieces, photographed it, then put it in PhotoShop for the Art Tatum Jazz [Heritage] Festival in Toledo.

MS. BYRD: Oh, jazz is the biggest influence in your career.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes. And she really got into me and discovered this, and because of this article, the committee that had been looking for somebody to do the poster for the jazz festival called me and said, well, if you have this interest in jazz, how would you like to do our poster? And so I did the poster for them in PhotoShop.

MS. BYRD: You're describing right now posters you've made over several years now for the jazz festival.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Three.

MS. BYRD: Three years for the jazz festival. And this is on the cover of the *Toledo Blade*, sort of the weekend supplement, "The Joy of Jazz," and it features three of your posters.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: Yes, and the reason for the jazz influence is that - when people ask if I was interested in art as a child or if anybody in the family was artistic, I say no. But, I had an older brother, 13 years older than me, and when he was in high school, he started buying jazz records. And this was '38, '39. And I was four years old, five years old, and I started hearing jazz. He would come home with a record, a 78 RPM record. It lasts three minutes. He'd put it in this very crude, cheap turntable that had a steel needle that rested on the record, and you could replace it with a tooth pick and it sounded pretty good.

MS. BYRD: Oh, my word, I never heard of such a thing.

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And it was hooked up with two wires on some of the tubes in the Sears radio that we had. And he would listen to that with his ear right next to the speaker. And he would play a record, I would swear, 20 times straight through, over and over and over, because he just had to get it into his brain so he knew the whole record note by note.

I didn't even go put the records on myself when he wasn't home. I mean, I never thought of wanting to listen to some of that music. I probably didn't have to because I heard it so frequently. There was never any reason to - I was happy to have some peace and quiet, maybe.

But he left home. He went to college and lived at home throughout - on the GI Bill after World War II. I was a junior in high school; he left. He graduated and moved to Chicago and left his records. He'd come home on

weekends, and Saturday mornings from 7 a.m. on would come the jazz.

And I started putting his records back on and listening to them and realized that I had to - I had to keep listening to them. They really did something for me, especially Jelly Roll Morton.

Jelly Roll Morton, at that time, you never heard of him in the '50s. He had died in '40, I think. And you could still hear jazz on the radio all the time, a lot of it, up until '51, '52, and then it just died.

And his music is very difficult. He was very concerned with harmony, but he also had to play discordant notes constantly to, I think, shake up the listener, to disturb you. You can't just make something nice and pretty; you've got to add something in there that adds some tension to it.

MS. BYRD: And you think that transferred into your work?

MR. MCGLAUCHLIN: And it wasn't until probably when I was drawing with pastels, on the glass, and I realized that I could never stick to the melody. Just like jazz, I've got to get something in there. Somebody had asked me about how I judge whether something is successful or not. And basically, I judge it through time. I won't make a judgment until I've seen the piece for several years, preferably not every day - see it once a month. Or put it someplace where you only - where you don't expect to see it, and suddenly it pops up there in front of you and then see what your reaction to it is.

But I realized that I've always got something in there that is disturbing the viewer, always trying to - I don't want it to be safe. I want - and I want it to be fresh, no matter how long you've known it, you should be able to come to it and see something new in it. And that's what, I think, the very best jazz always has.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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