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Oral history interview with Cindy Kolodziejski, 2007 May 5-16

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Cindy Kolodziejski on May 5, 7, 14, and 16, 2007. The interview took place in Santa Monica, California, and was conducted by Frank Lloyd 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.

Cindy Kolodziejski has reviewed the transcript and has made heavy corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

FRANK LLOYD: This is Frank Lloyd, interviewing Cindy Kolodziejski at the Frank Lloyd Gallery in Santa Monica, California for the Archives of American Art on May 5, 2007. And this is disc number one, track two.

So, Cindy, we're going to go over some questions that have been sent to us by the Archives of American Art. Some of them will have to do with background and biography and some will have to do with influences and documentation. But let's start with some simple questions. Basically the first is about your personal background. When and where were you born?

CINDY KOLODZIEJSKI: I was born in 1962 in Augsburg, Germany. My dad at that time was stationed there as a 2nd lieutenant. He had just married my mom and moved to there where they lived for four years. We then moved to Arizona for a short time. And then from there he got a job at Procter and Gamble, so we moved to California, in Covina. It was myself, my brother, my mom and my dad.

Covina, which was the middle of — [laughs] — I'm trying to think, off of the 10 freeway, by the foothills of California. I went to a school there called Badillo [Badillo Elementary School, Covina, CA]. We lived in a cul-de-sac on 1685 East Palm Drive, which I remembered because it rhymed. [Laughs.]

MR. LLOYD: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: We lived a fairly middle-class life. We weren't wealthy but we lived in a house that was close to a school and I had friends to play with.

MR. LLOYD: You lived there with your father and your brother?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, and my mom. For the most part, it was a happy childhood. My mom was very nurturing and would teach me how to bake cookies and to do things like that. She was a seamstress so she spent a lot of her time sewing at home. The difficult part of my childhood was when I was in second grade; my parents announced to us that they were getting a divorce. I think that any child that age — without a lot of obvious fighting, which there wasn't — is always surprised when their parents decide to end their marriage.

So that was really kind of devastating for me. I thought that I would be living with my mother. I didn't know a lot of people that had divorces; I just assumed that I would stay with my mom. I found out that my dad would be the one caring for my brother and I and that was just devastating for me because I really loved my mother and my dad had a bit of a temper and I felt like I was being left with the scary guy. [Laughs.]

Also he worked during the day so I had spent all of my time until then with my mother and was very close to her. So that was a really traumatic experience in my childhood and I think one that probably shaped some other issues that would deal with, like, abandonment and not feeling a lack of control.

MR. LLOYD: Now, you've described missing your mother and spending a lot of time alone.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: So do you think that was formative in your development as an artist?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I think maybe I turned to art because it was a way of comforting myself. At an early age I decided I wanted to be an artist. I was probably five or six and I liked drawing and painting. I mean, I always fashioned myself as a good artist at school. I would make interesting things and was really fascinated with the process. For some reason, I knew the artist Vincent van Gogh when I was five or six. And I wanted to be an artist and I thought, "Oh, I'll be an artist like Vincent Van Gogh." I don't know where that all came from but I did spend a lot of time teaching myself how to draw and developed that as I got older.

So my parents divorced and then my dad remarried about a year or two later. We then moved to Ohio when I was in about fifth or sixth grade because my dad got a job with Procter and Gamble. At that point, I didn't see my mom as much because she lived in California. So I would probably see her about once a month or once every two months when they would fly her in — she would stay at my grandmother's house, who lived in Dayton, Ohio.

My grandmother was an artist as well. She was actually a high school art teacher. I think that some early influences in art came from going over to my grandma's house and doing art projects with my grandmother and my mom. I do remember making a lot of art with her but I did miss my mom a lot when I was in Ohio. And that was always something — kind of a missing piece.

When I was entering seventh grade, our family moved back to California and we moved to Malibu. From there I went into junior high. And again, maybe because my dad worked and my stepmother worked when I came home from school, I would spend time drawing and doing things at home. I remember teaching myself how to draw and setting up little still-lifes or copying something from an image that I liked. I was one of the better artists at my junior high. I did the illustrations in the yearbook, which related to things like seashells or people surfing or things like that. I was the person chosen to do the job.

I remember getting praise from my fellow classmates. So from junior high I went to Santa Monica High School [Santa Monica, CA], still interested in art. And at this point, about probably 15 or 16, I moved back in with my mom. So I think from maybe age seven to 15, I lived with my dad and then I was finally able to move in with my mom.

At Santa Monica High School, I had a really great art teacher named Lamont Westmoreland, who was really influential in furthering my interest in art. He was a great mentor and took kids who were interested under his wing and made sure that we were learning. He introduced us to a lot of different art-making techniques and different artistic movements in history.

He would tie together assignments with art movements. We would learn about Surrealism and then make a surrealist piece. We would learn about the Renaissance and pick a Renaissance image and then import ourselves into the portrait so that we were then learning how to draw. Through observation we were also learning about different artists from that movement. So he was very influential because he did so much to make it interesting for his students and was very nurturing. For the really talented kids he would steer them in the right direction and tell them about art schools that they could go to or other classes that they could take.

He also ran the gallery at Santa Monica High. It was called Roberts Art Gallery. That was a gallery that, besides showing the student artwork, would also show professional artists. He had shows that would rotate. So within the context of the school, you also could go in and see interesting artwork in the gallery.

At Santa Monica High I learned silk screening. I worked on drawing and painting and certain kinds of graphic design elements. I had enough interest in art at that time and had been introduced to enough art historical movements. It might have even been his suggestion, I'm not sure, but I decided to take some classes at Santa Monica City College [now known as Santa Monica College, Santa Monica, CA] in art history. I had to get some kind of special permit because I was under age — [laughs] — to take the classes, either a parental signature or some kind of "okay" to be able to take a college-level class.

I took a beginning art history class, which would start with the Greek civilization. I had a teacher there named Herb Stothart, who was really impassioned about Greek art history in particular and did a wonderful job teaching it. He also, during that summer, had offered a tour of going to Greece and seeing all of the Greek ruins in person.

So, I decided to do that. He had some daughters that were going, some other classmates that were all — [laughs] — much older than me. And then my mom decided to go as well. That was a really enriching and wonderful experience, to go and see that stuff in person, to go to the Acropolis, to go to the Parthenon, to see the kouros in person, to watch the development of Greek art from these kind of stiff kouros figures to very classical sculpted Greek figures. It was a really great experience. We went all over Greece — I think it was three weeks that we went to Athens, to Turkey, to some of the Greek islands, to the Temple of Poseidon [Sounion, Greece]. That was pretty spectacular because it was just ruins that overlooked this vast ocean view and it was really amazing to be able to see that.

I think these experiences really shaped my love of art making and art history and the journey I knew that I would take. When I came back the following year, I was still in high school. I continued on with the art history studies and took the Renaissance class that he taught as well, so I had a pretty good foundation at 17 in art history.

I was finishing up at Santa Monica High, which gave me a wonderful education in certain areas but in other ways

just completely fell flat. Their history classes were terribly taught by people that had been there forever and had no passion for it whatsoever. They would just read you off the Constitution verbatim — [laughs] — in a really dull monotone voice. It was the teachers that made the difference. The school system was out of the loop.

I knew that I was going to go to art school so I took more classes in art. Then I went and toured some art schools. I went to San Francisco Art Institute [San Francisco, CA] and also to Otis [Otis Art Institute of Parsons School of Design, now Otis College of Art and Design, Los Angeles, CA]. And I decided after seeing the two that I wanted to go Otis, partially because it was close to home and it would mean I wouldn't have to move. I didn't really want to experience the dorm life. It wasn't something that was appealing to me. I think part of it was that I'm a private person and I like to be alone. I like to work alone and the idea of sharing a room and having all these people around wasn't something I was going to do.

I also didn't want to go to a big college and Otis supplied a small nurturing environment that would let you explore and know your teachers personally. I knew the other people within the school and my graduating class; I think there were only 26 of us in the senior class of fine arts so I think I knew those 26 students — [laughs] — really well.

MR. LLOYD: Were you encouraged by your high school art teacher, Lamont Westmoreland, to apply to Otis? Did he have anything to do with that decision?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, he did. He talked about good art schools to go to. He mentioned the San Francisco Art Institute [San Francisco, CA], probably Rhode Island School of Design [Providence, RI], Chicago Art Institute [The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL], and Otis. He encouraged me to be an artist. "You're good at this. You should pursue this. Here's some avenues to take." So —

MR. LLOYD: So you really had support from your family, encouragement from your father and from your mother. Is it their support and encouragement from your high school art teacher that fostered your development as an artist?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Both my dad and my mom always encouraged me to pursue art and they would take me to museums. They would take me to cultural events. We weren't wealthy but if we went to New York, my dad made sure that we saw a Broadway play. If we went to San Francisco, we would, of course, eat in Chinatown and little Italy, but we would also go to the museum and see what was there.

So I was always encouraged and it was never something that was thought about or talked about as something that I shouldn't do because I should try to make a living doing something else. I was really kind of thankful to have a family that was so supportive of letting me go on this journey without saying, "No, you need to make a living," or "You should be thinking about long term." I was encouraged to follow my passion.

MR. LLOYD: Now, in an earlier conversation, you mentioned a visit perhaps with your father to the Watts Towers [Simon Rodia, 1921-1954, Los Angeles, CA] and —

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes. It was just a few years after the Watts riots [Los Angeles, CA, August 1965]. I was about six or seven and my dad took my brother and I to Watts Towers for a festival they were having there. And I remember seeing the Watts Towers and just being blown away by it, being in awe of the glass and the structures and the height of it. I remember also that it was a big day there. They had galleries too. I remember seeing, which was funny because it was my brother and I, naked pictures of black women in the gallery and being kind of nervous about it, but being intrigued as if viewing the taboo.

The Towers really stuck in my memory and I didn't remember where it was. And what's interesting while at Otis is that one of the field trips that we took was to Watts Towers, and when I got there, I had this huge déjà vu because I hadn't realized where I had been when I was six or seven. It just all came flooding back to me like, "Oh, my God, I've been here before and I was just a little girl and this had such a strong impact on me." And it was kind of amazing to know you've been somewhere and have it flood back to you in that way. But it was a really strong memory and the towers were spectacular.

So that was the type of thing that my dad would do. He would make sure that we were completely exposed to all kind of cultural aspects. We went to Watts Towers. We ate sushi before sushi was around. Thirty-nine years ago there weren't sushi bars. You had to really know how to get to these locations. So my dad was really good about exposing us to all kinds of cultural events. He saw L.A. [Los Angeles, CA] as this place that could offer all of these different types of experiences. He might have accessed partially through cuisine — [laughs] — but he made sure that we were exposed to it. Every different culture, Japanese, Indian, Hispanic. He just made sure we had been some place, had eaten something there, and it had stuck in our heads.

MR. LLOYD: Now, we had Otis College of Art and Design. When you entered, can you described a little bit more of the program that was presented for students? I think you've talked before about the foundation program and

how every student had a similar program for the first year.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: When you started at Otis, you started with a foundation program regardless of what you were going to do. Whether you were going to enter fine arts, illustration, fashion, graphic design or interior design, everybody started with the foundation year. You were given a basic course of seven classes that would be covered during that foundation year and you had a basic sculpture, drawing, painting, composition class. It gave you a really good, as it's named, "foundation," for what you would then carry into any class you were going to do. It covered all kinds of compositional elements. You learned things that were just about formalism, what formalism meant, what were its aspects. You had a color class that just dealt with color.

So that first year really set the groundwork for what you would be doing later on in whatever field you decided to choose within the art school. So that was an important year and it covered a lot of things. I think when you come into art school at a young age, you don't know what you're going to be doing, so it's okay to follow some assignments, learn things, and develop skills that you can then turn into ideas as you mature more.

So from there I chose a fine art background. I was thinking about whether I should go into an area that would "make me money", like illustration or graphic design, but in my heart I couldn't see myself actually doing that. I really wanted to pursue fine arts. It's a big decision to choose which direction you want to go into because you're making a pretty big commitment to go there. It was the only decision I could make but it still came as a hard decision because I knew that once I did it it would be my path. Even though I had always know I wanted to be artist, I hadn't always known what type. To then say, "Okay, I'm a fine artist; I'm not going to do a commercial route, I'm going to do this," was a big decision.

So from there I chose fine arts. Every year my classes would rotate about — every year I would have a drawing class, a sculpture class, and electives in areas that I liked. The first year — even within the fine arts program — a video class, a printmaking class, a ceramics class. All different kinds of disciplines to find a direction.

So I was a fine arts major and I took a lot of classes in ceramics, as many electives as I could. I took more classes than I needed to, just so that I could continue ceramics and my other fine arts studies.

MR. LLOYD: Now, in an earlier conversation, you described some of the faculty members and talked about their influences or perhaps just their examples to you as working artists. Some of the artists that you mentioned were Lita Albuquerque, Jill Giegerich, Peter Lodato, Barbara Thomason, Roy Dowell, Eugene Sturman, Carol Caroompas. Can you tell me a little bit more about how these people influence your vision of an artist and/or just what they offered to you as teachers?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, what was amazing about Otis' program is that the artists that they had, as teachers, were all practicing artists. So, you're exposed to a lot of amazing ideas and a lot of things are set straight for you about how art making takes place. Each teacher could offer something different. Of all of the different kinds of opinions that you got and the opinions that would join up later on, things would come to agreement so that you could realize what kind of art making steps made sense.

So somebody like Eugene Sturman could offer this wonderful sculpture background and talk about monumentality because he made large-scale work and the impact that could have. I had a class with Lita Albuquerque in my second year and she really introduced the whole idea of installations and atmospheric work. Going along that path for a while and seeing what that has to offer, and then realizing later on how influential that was — I can see in my own work, even though it is object oriented, there are certain atmospheric qualities that I tried to create that could have come from that type of exposure or learning about installations.

Somebody like Peter Lodato is an amazing colorist and painter and would really teach you the relationships of color, and because it's so strong in his work. Then you're taught by him how to mix color and how to make these connections, all of this stuff starts to fall into place.

Barbara Thomason was also one of my teachers. She was a drawing teacher and she would have these very interesting drawing assignments that would really push your limits of creativity so that within the realm of these assignments, you would have to come up with very creative approaches to it while also using observational drawing. So it was very skill based and you learned a lot but it was all put into a context of either viewing their work and seeing how assignments pertained to their work. In the case of somebody like Jill Giegerich, she would show you the importance of trying different mediums and trying different types of things that aren't traditional art making tools.

The other thing is that every teacher would also do slide shows. Besides showing you their work, they would show you other people's work, so you kind of cascaded into this very broad spectrum and this amazing background of L.A. art, of people that were successful at what they were doing. It also gave you the sense that this was something that you could do as well. I would look at them and think, okay, they have shows and they're doing this and they're impassioned about their work and they became role models so that you could then realize

that making art is something that you can succeed at.

MR. LLOYD: I'm going to just go back to some of the questions that are posed within this interview format, although you've already anticipated a number of them in describing your early education both with your high school art teacher and the segueing into your choice of Otis College of Art and Design and the teachers there. But basically, to return to the interview format question, discuss your early education and career choices and what motivated your interest in different media.

The discussion here has to do with the art school environment and your training in an art school environment with, as you said, the foundation courses, your exposure to painting other sculptural media, and your exposure even to video and other media. There's a question here: could you discuss the difference, if any, between a university-trained artist and one who has learned his or her craft outside academia? Do you know anyone who's learned to be an artist outside of the art school or academic environment?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would have to say quite honestly, no. I think art has become so complex in its theories and ideas and that without some of this art school background, the idea of somebody truly being naive doesn't exist in a way that maybe it did a hundred years ago.

MR. LLOYD: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

And in line with that, do you think that it's fair to say that your experience at Otis was your most rewarding educational experience?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, I would. I would say in terms of the years that I was there that it really offered me a lot of information which has become the foundation for what I do as an artist. I obviously developed, after I got out of school. I tried to synthesize all of this information and my learning didn't stop once I left school. I think that it continues. It's always continuing and if it did stop, that's when I would definitely become worried. So I think that that would be the pinpoint, the most rewarding experience in terms of an educational experience. But it also just set a pathway for continuing an exploration into all of these ideas and an openness to that.

MR. LLOYD: Right. And then following up on your educational background, there is on your record a degree from California State University, Long Beach. A Master's of Fine Art but to my knowledge this was something that was done after you were actually quite an established professional artist and you entered into that program essentially on a peer level with the faculty members. So could you describe a little bit about how that came about and your 1999 degree from California State University, Long Beach as a Master of Fine Arts?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, I decided alone with the professor and chair of the ceramic department, Tony Marsh. I was teaching there at the time and Tony suggested that it might be a good idea for me to follow up with an M.F.A. His concern for me doing this was actually to be able to benefit me in my teaching so that I could then jump to the idea of a higher — [laughs] — paycheck and what that would ensue because when I left school, everybody didn't have to have an M.F.A. to teach. I actually had been teaching for more than 10 years, and probably five years in the college level without an M.F.A. So I didn't need it to teach but if I wanted to pursue a tenure-track job or anything like that then the M.F.A. would then give me the stamp that would ensure that my resume wouldn't be set aside because I didn't have the M.F.A.

So Tony said, "Well, you know, you're already doing this work and let's work with you on a peer level; you can continue doing your work and when you have shows, those will count as your M.F.A. shows." So we negotiated something like that. There were classes on campuses, the art history classes and theory classes that I was required to take but I love art history so it didn't bother me. It was really refreshing to go back into an art history class and take contemporary art or an "Art from 1965" class. I wouldn't say that it wasn't challenging and I had to write papers and do things like that on campus. I like the idea of continually learning — it was nice and refreshing to take those again. So I did all the required academic classes on campus and then I continued my work in my own studio and I got my degree that way.

MR. LLOYD: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And then going back to your experience at Otis, you've described the foundation courses and your interaction with the fine arts faculty and then also your elective classes in ceramics. You were a student of Ralph Bacerra's and I was wondering how many classes you took from Ralph and what kind of an influence that had on you?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, I wanted to be a fine art major but I really loved ceramics. So I took all of my electives in the ceramics department and a good part of my senior thesis was actually ceramic work. Ralph was the teacher there and I would have to say that while I was there, I probably took six or seven classes with him. I studied with him for three years. I took a ceramics class every semester that I could.

What was amazing about Ralph was — I went to the fine art faculty for ideas but I went to Ralph for technical information. Ralph can do anything in clay. He can build anything. He knows every single glaze. He's a wealth of

information. So anything that I wanted to do, if I said, "Okay Ralph, I want to do this." He'd say, "Okay, well then you need to make a mold," or, "I want a glaze that's like this." "Oh, okay. Here's a recipe for a crackle glaze and if you put this underneath you're going to get that pink crackle that you're trying to go for." Or, how do I apply this or how do I build this?

So Ralph was this wealth of information in regards to technical stuff and it shows in his work because technically his work is amazing. You can look at pieces that he does and he'll have a Persian luster glaze that you have to fire in this type of kiln with this kind of atmosphere and then on top of that, it might have this other China paint that's happening. So he really gave me my whole background for what I do in terms of being able to build anything or glaze anything or know how to do it.

It's one of those things — the amount of information that he has is something that very few people have and when you meet somebody like that you make sure that you try and get the information because it's disappearing. So that's what I mean in terms of what Ralph offered. He is a supportive teacher as well. He still comes to my openings. He's come to my weddings. He has become a part of my life, so I would say, yes, it's like a lifetime of influence. That's an amazing teacher.

MR. LLOYD: So you're describing a wealth of information and technical facility and a kind of ongoing mentor relationship with Ralph Bacerra. He's mentioned to me that he thinks that the value of an art school education has to do with problem solving. Do you think he was helpful in setting up an environment that encouraged questioning and problem solving among his students?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, I do because he did. If you needed to know how to do something, he would set you the direction but he didn't do it for you. He would say, this is how you make that glaze or if you want that glaze in five different colors, here's the stains added in this percentages and run your test. Then you would get those and you could find what you wanted. So he would give you the information that you would need to get to where you wanted to go. He never built it for you. [Laughs.] He never glazed it. He showed you how to do it and then you did it yourself and so you learned from what he did, how to get to another place.

MR. LLOYD: Now, in your work you're using a lot of ceramic mediums to achieve a painted surface — painted and fired on to the surface of a ceramic object. Is that something that you were specifically taught or did you learn by experimentation?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: It's interesting because I would have to say I developed the painting process. Ralph had a recipe for the vitreous engobe that he uses on his pieces but he uses it as a flat color. Because I liked painting so much, when I left school, I started adding more medium to it. That would make his vitreous engobe flow better on a paintbrush and by the process of doing that, I found that I could mix a palette range of colors. Instead of just putting a blue on, I would have nine shades of blue and then I could layer it in the way that I had learned how to paint.

I developed my own painting technique with a recipe that Ralph had given me, so he didn't say this is how you paint with clay. He said, well this is something I use and then I took it and just went further with it so that I could get it to do what I wanted it to do. I wanted to paint with this, and I was out of school and I had been making ceramic objects and making paintings. And then at some point I said, I want to put the two of these together and so I sat around and painted with this stuff and figured out how to get it to work. And the first couple things that I made were kind of chunky and very awkward and then I got better at it. And I'm pretty good now. [Laughs.]

MR. LLOYD: So what you've described, actually, is a lifelong interest in fine art that was fostered by an educational system. But you weren't a product of an apprenticeship or a craft tradition that has to do with something that's learned within a workshop situation. You've solved your own problems with the tools that you learned in an art-school environment.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I'd have to say that's correct.

MR. LLOYD: Right. So there's some questions here regarding a — did you ever have any involvement with the Penland School of Crafts [Penland, NC], Haystack Mountain School of Crafts [Deer Isle, ME], the Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts [Gatlinburg, TN], Pilchuck Glass School [Stanwood, WA], the Archie Bray Foundation [Helena, MT], or other educational institutions devoted to craft?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: No.

MR. LLOYD: This is very interesting because you essentially evolved in an entirely different environment than that. And what you've described is largely influenced by the contemporary art scene and various movements that were prevalent during your educational period or available to people who were young artists in Los Angeles. Do you think that's fair to say?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, I would say I'm a product of an L.A. art scene. I think that within the art schools, not only Otis, but Cal Arts [California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA] as well, they hire teachers that are all practicing artists. And now at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] as well, there are a lot of very well represented, well known artists that don't teach full time. They might teach part time and some of them might teach full time but they're available within this art school context.

As a result, if you're in L.A. and you're going to an art school here, you get a wide range of artistic ideas and movements. A lot of these teachers make completely different work from conceptual to minimalist to color field and then you end up with this vast exposure to a lot of different things. Then I think you, as an artist or as an art school student, synthesize this and then you create what you want to become out of it. So it becomes a filtering process but I don't think you could get that unless you were in a big city that could offer this range of artists.

I think New York, maybe San Francisco and L.A. can offer this but if you went to a university in Wisconsin you might have one well-known artist or two. You might not get this wide range of all of these people that are making it and practicing it and then being able to filter through all of that information. So I think it is a unique situation.

MR. LLOYD: In the past couple of decades, there have been some highly influential schools in Los Angeles that have produced a number of artists that have gone on to receive international recognition. The art journals as well as the mainstream press have reported the significant development of those schools in Los Angeles: obviously Cal Arts and Otis but also, and particular in the last 15 years is UCLA and The Claremont Colleges [Claremont, CA] and University of California, Irvine, other schools. Would you say that, as an artist, your peers are more from that group or from a craft background?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say they're more from the L.A. art world background and all of the influences that those schools have had in the last say 10, 15, 20 years.

MR. LLOYD: And is your selection of the medium of ceramics because it's just a natural affinity for that medium and for it being a vehicle for what you want to express or are you trying to tie into a craft tradition?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say that I chose to use ceramics because of my affinity to the medium, that it offered me the ability to take something and shape it into what I wanted and then bring to it the imagery and content that I want. So I'd have to say I went to it because of what the medium offered to me in terms of flexibility.

MR. LLOYD: Do you think that the imagery that you're talking about is something that you select according to meaning or is your imagery something that is selected by any other means? Can you tell me a little bit more about how you choose to display certain imagery? In the past there have been images on both the front and back, a kind of juxtaposition of the individual images, that may create some kind of a dialogue. And now within your work, the images are often continuous around the surfaces of the object that you're painting on. Can you tell me a little bit more about how those images come to be? Are they something that you associate with the form or are they something that you associate with an idea and want to put onto the form?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: It's interesting because first I would have to say that the idea is the most important part of choosing the imagery. However, because it's going onto a form, I have to then — because I feel I've been trained this way and it's such a strong part of art making, think about compositional elements. So if a form is elongated, I am going to find an interesting image that fits my idea and is also elongated so that the images fit on to a form in a way that doesn't make them feel like they've just been superimposed haphazardly onto it.

But primarily the idea is the leading factor and then I take into account the formal constraints of what I've created. For instance, the piece needs to span around something completely. I have used things that were landscape oriented or horizon lines, but I used that in a way so that it would grace the form but also follow the idea that I was trying to portray. In some images I've used landscapes that have gone all the way around it. With water, I was trying to create kind of a piece that was about meditation or about the stillness of something being contained.

So that would be why I would choose something that would wrap around in that way. I would have to say that the idea is first, but the formal constraints becomes like problem solving. Maybe that's something Ralph taught me, that I make these objects and then I have a problem I have to solve; how to make the images fit on to it and make it interesting within the piece.

MR. LLOYD: I'm going to pause for a moment now so that we can have a little something to drink. Let's pause this.

[END MD 01 TR 01.]

MR. LLOYD: This is Frank Lloyd interviewing Cindy Kolodziejski at the Frank Lloyd Gallery in Santa Monica,

California on May 7, 2007, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

So Cindy, now, when we were discussing things in our previous session, we made a lot of progress in recording your biographical history and your family relationships, and also your educational background. I'd like to continue with that, but move on to some of the other questions that are a part of the interview here. Basically I'd like to go back to the question that was posed in the last session, and it has to do with the issue of functionality in the work. I think there is a relationship in your work to functionality, but it is not literal and it is actually much more about the relationship of the form to the image or perhaps to some concept. Could you tell me a little bit more about that in general and then maybe we can address some specific works in your history?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes. I would have to say that I've used functionality in not all of my work, but definitely a large enough portion to warrant this conversation. I will tie into the content of the work through the function. I will try to tie the image that I am using into the function as well. So I think it might be easiest to talk about some examples and then elaborate on other ones as well.

One piece I can think of in particular is an early piece called *Soup Tureen* [1994], and this has on the top a variety of Chinese soups; when you lift the lid off, you would see, for example, a wonton soup or egg drop soup. On one side of the soup tureen is women serving up soup; on the other side is an image of a pig's head in a vat of boiling water. So in that, the images tie directly into the functionality of the piece. I chose the idea of soup because I knew that I would be using a soup tureen. There was an obvious tie that made the piece have more layers of meaning by using the soup tureen as a format.

Another piece I can think of in particular is one that is called *Champagne Bucket* [1999]. On one side is a man climbing a ladder and on the other side is a prostitute, maybe from the 1890s, swinging back and forth on a swing with billowing dress and a little tiny peek show up her skirt. I think about champagne as being something that's about celebration, about even, in a certain way, getting high. If I think about the man climbing the ladder, trying to obtain something. I saw this as a piece that should be used or that you could actually physically put a champagne bucket in. So I would say I used those images and the function of the piece so that I could add to the meaning by tying the image into the functionality of the piece.

Another piece that I have done that ties into a certain kind of conceptual piece is called *The Origin of the World* [1999], and it is piece that is based on a gravy boat and also on an image that Courbet painted in, I think, the 1890s called *The Origin of the World* [Gustave Courbet, 1866]. It is just a crotch-shot of a woman where you see her crotch and then a slight bit of her breasts, and then the rest of her body is covered up by robes. I took that image and put it on the interior of a gravy boat. The idea was to think about something that was warm, and luscious, and fatty and kind of indulgent gravy, and then tie that into a sexual reference of a naked woman on the interior of the gravy boat. That would be another connection into the functionality of the piece and a way of making the meaning stronger within the work.

MR. LLOYD: Now, even in the show that we just had here at the gallery, which was called "Floral Fountain" — or no, it wasn't. That is the name of one of the pieces, isn't it?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: It's called "Reversal of Fountain" [Frank Lloyd Gallery, Santa Monica, CA, March — April 2007].

MR. LLOYD: "Reversal of Fountain" is the title of the exhibition. But in many of the works, and actually the main form of many of the pieces, there is a relationship between the function of the vessel and the imagery, and then you've also layered in another level of meaning in its reference to an art historical precedent. As you mentioned the Courbet, I was thinking about the reference to Marcel Duchamp's urinal in your most recent show. But there are a lot of very different images that you used there, most of them concerned with water, women, and bathing. Could you talk a little bit more about that?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, what I did in this last body of work was, as a jumping off point, I used the idea of the urinal as a more personal urinal based on antique forms, something that you would urinate in when you were sick in bed. They were all very small, handheld urinals. So I used that as a jumping off point, and then the obvious reference to the Marcel Duchamp urinal [*Fountain*, 1917], which he made famous by hanging it on the wall in 1917. His was a readymade. And in some way, my forms were found, so they were also readymades, but then the very process of my work makes this a very obvious, labor-intensive, painted object, which then takes the first highlighted readymade and plays off of the fact that this a completely belabored piece.

But the function nonetheless is the idea of using these as a urinal. The connection between the fluids and the women swimming in the water try to take something that is normally thought of as — well, there's one way of looking at it as a sexual fetish; there's another way of looking at it as simply urine — but I was trying to make it so attractive that anybody, regardless of their normal predisposition towards the idea of a urinal, would be attracted to my urinals.

So I was trying to create a very specific allure with the women, and the water and the cool blue colors, trying to create an underwater world, a netherworld that doesn't really exist, but was presented to you in these pieces. I used women swimming because there is an ability to either float or flow. I also had them turning — in some cases — into octopuses or tying together correlations between fishing and the idea of a mermaid. Although none of them were specifically painted as mermaids, there became reference to mermaids where parts of the urinal would then turn into a tail, and then that might suggest the female form that way as well.

I also was thinking about when you have to pee and you can't pee — [laughter] — the idea of running water makes you have to pee, so there is a connection of that of the cool running water and creating that need. Also, some of the pieces were displayed at crotch-level with these openings that would then suggest insertion of a penis for the very function of urinating. I would have to say I have a sense of humor about my work. I was playing off of the idea of something funny, of some sexual fetish, of something beautiful, and I don't think that I could have done any of that as successfully if I didn't tie in the function of the piece to the content of the work.

MR. LLOYD: Exactly. I can see in the photograph that I am holding the references that you are talking about, specifically the handle on the found object of a urinal, but also the tail that you have added to give it kind of an amphibious reference. This one that I am looking at is called *Floral Fountain* from 2006. But also in *Dual Entry Water Ballet* [2006], I can see all of those references, including the kind of references to an underwater world that you were talking about. I also see some octopus tentacles and things. Could you tell me a little bit more about that? Does that have any kind of relationship to your early interest in marine biology?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say yes, it does. I was always fascinated by marine biology, and then also things like the diatom studies and looking at the plankton underwater, and the zooplankton and seeing the way that these structures are and the beauty within them. Pulling together some of the references of the sea life — it becomes a mesh of two worlds, but there is a scientific approach to it. They weren't things that were directly made up. If I looked at the fishtail, I actually, in that case, got a fishtail and looked at the fish so that I could carve things out. I would say there is a reference and a direct connection to the idea of a scientific study or observation, science based on observation in much the way that the Audubon would draw birds or things like that.

MR. LLOYD: All of this is based on not only your own experience, but also it sounds like a lot is based on your kind of research into imagery. Where do you do your research into imagery?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I take a of couple approaches. Before the easy availability of imagery on the Internet. I would go to UCLA library [College Library, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA] and go into the medical libraries [Louise M. Darling Biomedical Library, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA] and into the 10 libraries on campus there. You can go to the medical ones, you can go to specifically the research libraries [Charles E. Young Research Library, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA] — and I would just scour stacks of books or get into sections where I would think that I could find something interesting, and then I would just start looking through books and trying to find imagery. In the past, I found images in X-ray books based on the X-rays of animals, which I found extremely beautiful and also had this quality as an X-ray, which is not discernable as a human form. Then you don't know what kind of animal it is, you just know that it is an X-ray. So there is something nice about being able to find things represented by what is inside them, but not know what they are; to still have that ambiguous part left open.

Or I found a two-headed skeletal baby. Many interesting things have been found in the libraries there. Currently, I will search the Internet, but again, I will either do image searches or I will go into the archives, as these same libraries that I went to are starting to post their collections on the Internet. So you can look in university libraries as well as they are becoming up-to-date. I think that Google has a big project with putting all of that kind of information online.

So my image search — it's kind of an intuitive and random pathway. I might choose a topic to look into but a lot of times it's looking over many things and having a response to certain images, not always specifically looking for one thing. It might be I know that I want it to be sea life, but I don't know what kind of sea life. Or I know that I want something that feels microscopic, but I don't know that it's a specific cell study. I'm not saying — oh, I'm going to look up malaria, because I want to see that. But I might find in that, that the malaria virus is particularly beautiful and I might choose to use imagery based on that.

But I would say that it's a broader search that is narrowed down by an intuitive response to things that then pertain to, for example, composition. It's a gut response, even; just a laugh if I find humor in something that I come across. That might be good — if I think it's funny, I think somebody else will think it's funny. And I know that in a lot of my work, there is kind of an irony to the imagery that goes back and forth between some of our darker human nature issues.

MR. LLOYD: Now, I think that kind of ties in with one of the questions — and we're encouraged to explore these here and the questions are about the issues of gender, race, or ethnicity as it relates to your work. You may not have some specific references to race or ethnicity, but it has been noted that your work contains a lot of thought

about gender, identity, and perhaps relationships. Could you explain that a little bit more? Do you agree with that or do you not?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say I agree with it, but I think I come about some of my gender issues also with an exploration into some of my own sexuality or, again, things that I think are funny. I did a piece years ago that was called the *Grand Canyon* [1995] that on one side had a painting of the Grand Canyon that looked like a pot you might get in a souvenir shop a hundred years ago when souvenirs were nicer [laughs]. And then, on the other side was the backside of a woman in kind of — almost like a spread-eagle — or she's on her knees doggy-style — I guess that's how we'd say it. I thought that was funny, the connection between the two. I wouldn't say that I was particularly exploring issues when I chose that of gender per se, and what exploitation of women or anything like that — I simply thought there was something very comic about the idea of wide-open expanse as a Grand Canyon, and what a man might perceive as another wide-open expanse.

MR. LLOYD: So for you that's not a feminist statement either way; it was just an opportunity to explore maybe the play on words that exists there.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes. Even in the last body of work, where there is a very specific tie-in to women and maybe a sexual fetish of the idea of urine or urinals, it was more about exploring something in a way — I think I was trying to present something that became very beautiful and very experiential. I think when you saw this particular body of work that there was a certain atmospheric quality to them in the colorations and the positions that would engage you. So maybe it was a way of taking an idea that might seem deviant or perverse, and presenting it in a way that it isn't normally looked at. But I don't know. I wouldn't say that came from a feminist side per se either. But then I would say it's more of like an exploration into the idea of sexual identity and what that means for people, and what people respond to and how I can use that as a tool. I think as soon as you paint a naked woman, you've then presented — just by the nature of the nakedness — you've presented something that is sexual.

A lot of the forms, a lot of the images of the women didn't show their faces. So then, in that sense, I was trying to make them anonymous. They then became objects, as opposed to an individual that you could relate to. There was one figure in a piece that was looking straight at you, and you really had to engage and maybe imagine that person as a person who had a name, whereas another figure might have an arm in front of her head, and what you notice is her perky nipples. So there is something to be said about the fact that I was trying to, in that particular case, show the human form or the woman's form as something that was an object that was then maybe just for sexual gratification, just for the allure of looking at it. So I think that when you use the woman's form naked, you tie into this whole historical content that is very heavy and very loaded.

MR. LLOYD: So it is a loaded thing to use the female form, the naked female form. How do you think people see that? Do you think that they are responding to those issues? And how do you think that that has been received over time? Do you have any idea? It's not necessary for you to know. I'm just curious to know how you think the audience is responding.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, I have a perception that it's been well received. I've gotten praise. I haven't particularly talked to somebody about it. But I think based on somebody's own agenda in viewing the work, I've read reviews about my work where they've put a lot of feminist ideas into it that I didn't particularly think were there. So sometimes, I think that somebody's agenda can direct how they perceive the work, and then somebody else might look at it and be more in the direction of how I presented it, in particular with these pieces creating kind of strange sexual references. I was calling these pieces fantasy urinals. But I think somebody else might respond to it in a way where they see them for objects or they find the beauty in the painting and then somebody else might bring another agenda to it and kind of superimpose that idea. But I think, again, once you use a loaded image of the female form, you have to expect a lot of different responses. I can't say that that would be something that was under my control.

I find it interesting, though, when I find kind of a strong feminist viewpoint put on it. It doesn't bother me.

MR LLOYD: Well, I think it's particularly interesting and applicable in looking at your work and in the written response to your work, both in books, periodicals, and also in reviews. And the reason is that a lot of times, your work is referred to in — the titles of the exhibitions that you are included in allude to that. There is one called, "The Nude in Clay" at Perimeter Gallery in 1995 ["The Nude Show", Perimeter Gallery, Chicago, IL, 1995]. And there was a catalogue including essays by Bruce Depich and Jody Clowes. And there is also an exhibition — no, an article — that is titled, "Foot, Belly, Shoulder, Lip," [Judy Clowes, *American Craft*, June/July 1996] clearly alluding to the body. And, indeed, at the museum in New York, this is an exhibition that was reviewed in *The New York Times* by Grace Glueck and it's called, "Corporal Identity: Body Language" [December 19, 2003]. I think even in the *Art in America* review by Michael Duncan, he alludes to some of these issues.

So do you think that those things are accurate readings? Again, you've mentioned that you know that the writer

is bringing certain things to your work and illuminating them according to what may be their agenda. But do you think that the writers have done a good job of documenting your work in the reviews and in periodicals and in the books?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, for the most part, I do. I remember the — is it Joyce Glueck in *The New York Times* — that review was about a piece that was called *Testitube* [2002] that was a vase that was held up by a scientific apparatus that you would hold up a test tube with. The top part of it was a test tube, and then down at the bottom, it turned into something that strongly resembled a male scrotum. [Laughs.] That was also painted blue, with kind of white highlights to show off the wrinkles. But with that, it was very obvious that I made a very strong sexual reference. You go into the whole notion of blue balls and not being able to climax or perhaps being teased by a woman. So her review of that was very accurate in her perception of what I was doing with that.

So I wouldn't say I operate within a void with that, or I have no idea why that image was perceived that way. I knew when I made it the direction it would take.

MR. LLOYD: Now, to my mind, some of these writers are reviewers who are employed by major publications, are generally considered to be mainstream art critics. Grace Gluck is certainly one, since she writes for *The New York Times*. Michael Duncan writes for *Art in America* and other art journals on a regular basis and is also kind of a mainstream art curator. But the question here in the format of this interview is, in your opinion, who are the most significant writers in the field of American craft, and why is their writing meaningful to you?

Or, is criticism by artists more valuable to you? How do you feel about that? Is the criticism within the world of craft significant to you? Is it something that you read or do you read other types of art criticism? Also, you've written something that was published in *American Ceramics*. Early on in your career, you wrote an article called "The Vessel as Canvas" [*Ceramics Monthly*, Vol. 43 (1995): 55-59]. It was more of a statement actually. So how do you feel about the role of writing, not only in the world of craft but in art in general?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, in the world of craft, I would have to say that since I have always operated and seen myself as a fine artist, and I went to Otis Art Institute and was trained as such, I haven't paid as much attention to craft criticism or writing in the craft world. Most of the reading that I've done that would further my education or give me insight into the contemporary art world have been criticism that was either in publications such as *Art Forum* or *Art in America* or writings of — Dave Hickey, I think he is a very important art critic; Michael Duncan, in terms of the reviews in the *LA Times* [*Los Angeles Times*] and things like that. So I would say within the craft world, it just doesn't seem to pertain to me as much. And when I am reading things, they are reviews about fine art exhibits and things like that.

I also like to read — when I'm reading novels, I try and choose literature. I am not going to pick up a mystery. I would hold myself up to the same standard in writing and reading as I do to my own art making. So then, I will look for the list of people who have won the Pulitzer Prize to see what books are out there that would be the most interesting for me to read. So that could be something that could then influence my art, that type of writing, or other types of art criticism. I don't spend as much time as I would like reading, but I would say I'm relatively up to date.

MR. LLOYD: And about writing your own statement, which was published in *American Ceramics*, I believe — no, it was in

MS. KOLDZIEJSKI: *Ceramics Monthly*.

MR. LLOYD: *Ceramics Monthly*, that's right — "The Vessel as Canvas," how do you feel about artists writing about their own work?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Within the context of what I was trying to achieve with that, which was to get some exposure and to get something heard from my point of view — since I am the artist, I know what I am doing about my work probably better than a critic unless they had the time and energy to interview me and really make some important questions or they had done enough research so that they have a background in what I'm doing — then I think it's fair to say that they could make a good assessment. But when I did that it was because I was young and I wanted to get some exposure and I wanted to get some imagery out there and then talk about the idea of painting on the vessel and using the vessel as the canvas, which is slightly different from a lot of ceramic artists. I wanted to show that, which was basically the function of that article.

I think it did serve me well, and it's also something that somebody could reference. And the information that was there in a large part is still accurate. I've moved on and developed other aspects of my artwork, but if somebody wanted a background, that would be a good place to look.

MR. LLOYD: I'm rather fond of that kind of thing anyway, as a document, and there is certainly great precedent in things that I have read — [Piet] Mondrian's statements about abstraction are an often referenced document.

Ad Reinhardt's public works are often used as well, and certainly the advent of Minimalism was kind of documented and theorized by Donald Judd. So there is a great kind of precedent for these things and I think it's good to see this in your work, as well. So along with that, do you think any of the specialized periodicals for ceramics, such as *American Ceramics* or *Ceramic Review* or *Ceramics Art and Perception* have played a role in your development as an artist?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: No, I don't think they have.

MR. LLOYD: So, as you say, if you were going to read about art or read art criticism or anything, you might go to either a mainstream art publication like *Art in America* or *Art Forum*, or you might go to literature itself as your sources for those things?

[END MD 01 TR 02.]

FRANK LLOYD: This is Frank Lloyd interviewing Cindy Kolodziejski at the Frank Lloyd Gallery on May 7, 2007 in Santa Monica, California. And this is another track but still on disc number one. So I'd like to continue with those questions and try to find out a little bit more about your relationship to the craft movement, as such.

It doesn't sound like you really have a whole lot of relationship on an ongoing basis to the periodicals and to the movement itself, other than perhaps your contact with other artists. So could you tell me about some of the artists who you are in contact with and whose work you admire in the world of ceramics?

CINDY KOLODZIEJSKI: Let's see. In L.A. one thing that it does provide is contact to a lot of L.A. artists and ceramic artists. My teacher, Ralph Bacerra, I'm still in contact with. I admire his work greatly for the craft and the beauty and the intricate nature of the design that he builds up and his knowledge of ceramics in terms of glazing. And he's able to take all of these and create very beautiful, well-resolved objects. I think that aesthetically, they're beautiful to look at and he really understands that whole broader context of how to use all of that stuff and make a very beautiful thing.

At Cal State Long Beach, Tony Marsh. I respect his work a lot. The simplicity that tie into some of the minimalist aspects of the work, the perforation of the form, the idea of bringing light into it. I think that he is another person who kinds of deals with ideas within his artwork and what he's trying to do with the forms that he makes. I respect Adrian Sacks' work. I think he's another artist who is working in a context that looks at the finer arts issues. The kind of the scatological references to some of his work I find really irreverent and funny.

There's also, again, just a mastery of the medium and I think when I'm mentioning all of these people, I am mentioning how well they understand what they do in ceramics. Unlike other mediums, if you don't know and understand glazes, the pieces aren't going to turn out well. You have to really understand a whole lot of information. It's not as simple as taking paint out of a tube. I'm not saying that painting is easy, I'm just saying that there's a whole alchemy that comes along with ceramics that a lot of other mediums don't have. To do it well and to mesh all of those things into a seamless piece as what you see when you see Tony Marsh's or Ralph Bacerra or Adrian Sacks' work. There's an understanding that is so great that the piece looks like it came into being. Their hand is erased and to get that, you really need to know a lot.

I really like Ron Nagle's work. I think he also is very funny within the forms and the drips and has these other kinds of sexual references that are very amusing but also in this candy-coated way that these things look like strange little drippy Japanese forms. Not Japanese ceramic forms, but I think of them as anime or some of the stuff that you see. So his work can be very interesting. Then of course, Ken Price and what he's done in terms of liberating a lot of the perception of what ceramics are and going up to this whole other realm in the art world. I don't know him personally; I know him but not in the same way that I know the other people that I've met or I've talked about that I would consider friends of mine.

Another artist that has passed away, Roseline [Delisle]. She was amazing and had to understand throwing and the formal aspects in how to make something large scale and to bring in the figurative element. The simplicity of basically two to three colors; blue, black and white. These are people that I think really have gone somewhere with their artwork and are really, really saying things with it. I don't want to leave people out. [Laughs.] But I know that I would have to say that L.A., because there are a lot of artists working in this medium here and I find it a very supportive and nurturing group of people.

Here at the gallery is John Mason; he's very influential in terms of making monumental work. The slab forms that he builds are very complex and beautiful. It's interesting to think about how he comes up with these studies for them and seeing his paper patterns and how he goes from one step to the next and then creates these things that are very well thought out.

MR. LLOYD: So you really have an admiration, not only for these individual artists, but for what they've done technically within their methodology to kind of have a technical facility that facilitates indeed their vision and

just the knowledge of the materials, processes, and methods is something that you admire. Is that fair to say?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: And would you say that that's a pretty good definition of craft?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, I would — [laughs] — because I would say that what you need to know and the more that you know about what you do, the easier it becomes to facilitate and get at your vision. My work in particular, requires a very painstaking painting process that not many people would have enough patience to do, but for me in particular, since I have the patience and the ability to do it, it enables me to create these things that are in my imagination. I can envision something and know that I can get there.

So in that way I would say that's what knowing my craft is that part of the process and the more you know about that. In this sense, we're talking about ceramics, but if I think about somebody who really knows how to paint, they would have to know that same information about their medium. Be it somebody like Peter Lodato, who I really feel knows his color and is able to combine things in a way that creates a beautiful sense of movement and kind of a liquidity between colors where they can resonate on two different planes, that you really have to understand what you're doing to get there.

So that's what I admire when I look at what I think is good work and artists that know their stuff. Their medium is just a medium, it's not a hindrance. It's what they choose to make their art out of but they know it so well that it's a language for them.

MR. LLOYD: Now, how do you feel about the environment in which you show and the artists that you're associated with? And I'm thinking of this also in context of, not only this gallery, but the gallery that represents you in New York, the Garth Clark Gallery. I think it's true that you had your first one-person show at the Garth Clark Gallery in Los Angeles and have had several subsequent exhibitions there and in New York. [The Garth Clark Gallery had multiple locations: New York, NY, and Los Angeles, CA.] I think there are at least four or five shows here that you've participated in at the Frank Lloyd Gallery. Can you tell me a little bit more about the affect of exhibiting in these galleries and how that spurs your work or how the association with the other artists helps or hinders you?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: Now, you don't have to answer this question, of course. [They laugh.] It's sort of a big question.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would have to think that the time that I started showing in 1989, I was pretty fresh out of college. I was actually somebody I would consider lucky in that I got gallery representation fairly early and fairly easily, all things considered, and that was good. I am glad that I did and was placed where I was at the time. I think that working within the ceramic medium at the time, it seemed like Garth Clark would be the only place to go. So I guess, in looking back at it, I would say that was a good thing.

But it seemed like at the time period there wouldn't have been a lot of other galleries that would have looked at my work because it was what could have been considered so medium specific. That bothers me because I was trained as a fine artist and to always be earmarked as a ceramic artist or then to say, well, what medium do you work in? Many times I would say I'm a ceramic artist and the response was, "So, you're a potter?" I know that you probably heard this but nothing I do has to do with throwing a pot. So I can just be obviously earmarked into this and that's something I think that in the long run didn't really help my career. I don't think I got as much exposure as I would have liked if it wasn't tied into a medium specific gallery. I don't know if that answers it.

MR. LLOYD: No, I think that's interesting in light of our — we had a previous conversation. I think, and I don't know if you would agree with this, that it might be quite different if you were coming out of Otis or even out of the UCLA department where you teach now. Do you think that you would have more chances for representation at commercial galleries now?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I do. Particularly because the way that I work is one that encompasses this broader fine art market in terms of ideas and content that I think I would be able to, if I was coming out now, have better gallery choices. I would have many more, rather than thinking I only have the one and this is the best place to be.

MR. LLOYD: Right.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Which at the time, in 1989, that was a good choice. I wouldn't say that I can look back and say, oh, you made the wrong choice. I would say that there weren't a lot of choices and the one that I took was a good one and I was lucky. A lot of people would tell me that — [laughs] — that I was lucky to have that gallery representation. But now if I was graduating I would have broader choices and my career could perhaps go in more directions than it could then. How long ago was that? Almost 20 years ago.

MR. LLOYD: Well, it's almost 20 years.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: That's what I was just thinking. And during that period of time the art world and the gallery world changed considerably. It certainly has, in the number of galleries that are available to any young artists here in Los Angeles; I think it must be several times as many galleries. I don't have the statistics with me but it seems like it is. And in the market place, there seems to be a larger group of people who are collecting, actually, as well. I'm going to pause this here.

[END MD 01 TR 03.]

MR. LLOYD: This is Frank Lloyd interviewing Cindy Kolodziejski at the Frank Lloyd Gallery in Santa Monica, California, on May 14 [, 2007] for the Archives of the American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number two.

So today, Cindy, I'd like to start with some questions regarding, first of all, your travels and how they've had an impact on your life and work, or if they have. Could you tell me a little bit more about your travels? I know we briefly mentioned before a trip to Greece when you were in high school. Is that right?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, well, I won't go back into that one, but what I will say is that I was lucky enough in my early teens and 20s to be able to travel to certain places that not everybody's gone to. I went on a trip when I graduated high school — I went into China in 1981 so people were still wearing Mao suits and things like that. It was pretty interesting since capitalism hadn't really come into play so much in China. I was able to see a culture that was completely different for about three weeks. You had to go in with a tour guide with a tour at the time, unless you paid for an interpreter and had special permits.

I did a tour with my mom and we did see some really amazing things on the trip. I was able to go to the Great Wall, I was able to see the terra cotta soldiers at Xi'an and watch them unearth them out of the earth. They actually had a big indoor covered area where they were excavating and they had all the soldiers standing in a line in the way they had been buried in the tomb as they excavated them. So to actually see a couple hundred of those soldiers and the horses in place was pretty amazing to just imagine what kind of culture would make those. Of course, the whole notion of pagodas and the king's palaces, or the emperor's palaces — it was just a pretty marvelous trip and something that you just wouldn't see, and even if you went back to China now, you might see some of the same things, but the culture has changed so much that I could never go back to where people were still all wearing Mao suits. I feel like I was really lucky to be able to be there before capitalism came into place and before it had been so westernized.

MR. LLOYD: Did you see any other art forms that were of interest to you while you were there?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: We went through a lot of museums. I wouldn't say I was really drawn to the Chinese ceramics at the time. I'm not historically trained in the whole history of the Eastern ceramic tradition. I appreciate it, but I probably didn't know what I was looking at age 18 or 19. I think the most striking thing were the terra cotta soldiers and then some of the buildings that we saw, and then also they took us to "cultural events," quote unquote, which involved things like some Chinese operas and then some shadow puppet performances that I thought were pretty interesting.

So artistically, perhaps that wasn't the trip where I went into museums and was completely blown away. Although I did appreciate things, it wasn't as moving as, say, other trips, artistically.

I really like going into places where you can really see something and envision it in a way where you can think, well, this is what it was like 300 or 400 years ago. I traveled to Nepal for two weeks, and again, that was a totally different culture: water buffalo, people living off of the land in a much different way than we do here.

I like that kind of travel, and then the other kind of travel would be European travel where you get to see museums and also New York. I went and did a semester in New York also when I was in college during the summer. That was the first time where I was able to go to museums, and I was there three months, so I was able to really go to the Metropolitan [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY], go to the Museum of Modern Art [New York, NY], go to the Cloisters and really appreciate what the New York museums had to offer rather than if you go there for three days — you have to cram so much in a little amount of time. I hadn't lived in New York before so being there for three months allowed me to be familiar with the city and know where things were and how to get around on the subways. I really took advantage of seeing a lot of things there.

I would have to say that I've been able to travel a lot. When I was 27 I went to Italy for the first time. Again, this was a really quick trip. It was about 10 days or two weeks, it was three days in each city, Venice, Florence and Rome. But, I would say that the most amazing or pivotal museum was the Uffizi Gallery [Gallerie degli Uffizi,

Florence, Italy]. I have a real strong affinity for early Netherlands paintings from the masters of the Flémalle. To be able to go and see those paintings in person was amazing. To see the altarpieces and the diptychs and the triptychs that were there.

That was something I was drawn to in college, and if you look at the way my painting style is, it makes sense that I have a real affinity for that type of painting. I don't know how they even accomplish those in terms of time because the canvasses, or the wooden panels, are so large and there's so much detailing on it. They had apprentices that would help work on things. But to look at, say, the hair, and to see every single beard-hair or somebody's curl and to see the highlights and all of that is something that really moved me. I felt lucky to see that.

MR. LLOYD: You know, that's a very interesting thing to hear from you because if you look at the way that you paint, you're working with a hard surface, a ceramic surface, and working in layers and glazes, and from my understanding, the northern Renaissance painters worked on wood panels that were highly prepared, and they worked in layers of glazes. The only difference really then becomes the firing process. That kind of meticulous attention to the process of building an image off of a hard support is very similar, in a way. So, that's really an interesting observation.

Now, did you ever return to any of those places again after having gone, say, to Italy that time when you were 27? Did you go back?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I recently went back to Italy and went to Venice. I went to the Academia [Academia Gallery, Galleria dell' Accademia, Venice, Italy], which is a great museum as well. And they have a good enough selection of art there. The Uffizi still is a topper. They seem to have the hit list of a lot of things. But, again, it was amazing to be able to see the large panels from the northern — well, I think there they might have a lot of Italian art, but there are certain styles of Italian art that are close enough to some of the northern Renaissance. I think there's an influence at some point between the communication of the two styles and some similar things were going on.

When I travel, I always go to museums. If I'm in a city where it's cultural, even though I have a daughter and that makes it more difficult because the timeframe that you can stay in a museum when you're traveling with a child is much different than when you're by yourself. But I'm able to talk to her about what she's seeing and then I will say, for example, "Well, what does Matthew wear? What does John wear? What does he hold in his hand?" I'll try and find an interesting thing that we can carry through, like all the ways that Jesus is portrayed in the stories, and because so much of this art is based in Christianity, you have to know the stories behind it to understand a lot of it.

When I traveled with her recently, I tried to point out things that repeat enough independent of the timeframe, whether it was from the 14th, 15th, 16th, or 17th century: they're still holding the same thing; John the Baptist is still wearing rags — or the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian. That's one of our favorite ones because we like to see how many different arrows and why at one point there's only a few and then the Germans really like to layer up the punishment with many more arrows.

So I would say that going to the museums, even with being a mother for the last 11 years, I've been able to engage her and get a lot out of it. I see it as something that reinvigorates my whole notion of art. It moves me. I can get a contact high from looking at things that are really beautiful and I amazing. I also become very humbled by it because in the light of so much greatness, sometimes you can feel that your contribution is somewhat small.

MR. LLOYD: Well, that seems to go to the heart of the function of a museum, doesn't it?

In addition to your travels, you've been talking a lot about your experiences with museums, and I recall that you were invited by the Getty to give a point of view talk regarding some of the works they had on exhibit there. They had the large-scale animals from —

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Meissen.

MR. LLOYD: Meissen animals, and you were invited by the Getty [The Getty Museum, Los Angeles, CA] to give an artist's point of view talk at that time. Can you tell me a little bit more about that invitation and what that entailed for you as an artist and for you in relationship to a museum?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, I saw it as an honor to be able to talk at the Getty. They had a show that was up for a limited time — it's called the "Royal Menagerie" [2001] — and it was based on these large-scale white porcelain, or porcelain that just had a clear glaze on it, animals that had been commissioned by a king at the time. It wasn't my specialty, but I researched the information regarding the animals and learned about the sculptors at the time, the firing process, and gathered enough information that, between my knowledge of clay and what it

takes to sculpt and my impression of these animals and what they were trying to do, I was able to give a talk within the museum. It was an honor to do, and it was interesting, too — their whole point is to bring an artist in and have them discuss what they feel about the work, so it becomes a dialogue, too. You have this historical information, but then you can tie it directly to your own knowledge of the field and what you do with your work, and the accomplishments of these sculptors at the time.

It's a rather interesting story because it was based in the idea of alchemy. They had hired an alchemist to come in, and he was supposed to discover gold for them, to find out how to make gold, which is the basis of alchemy. He really couldn't do that, and he tried a few hat tricks, and knew that he wasn't going to really be able to come up with this, or he hadn't figured it out yet, because I still think he believed there was a possibility of being able to make gold. But what he did realize was that what the king also wanted, besides the ability for somebody to make gold for him, was somebody to replicate Chinese porcelain. Porcelain was something that was only imported from Asia, and he wanted to be able to make porcelain himself.

So he decided that since he couldn't make gold and it probably would mean his life if he didn't come up with something, he figured out how to make porcelain. It was easier than making gold because it's actually possible. So, he invented a porcelain recipe that they could then use, make their own porcelain within the Meissen factory and that's what those animals were made out of. So it had an intriguing, mysterious, life or death situation involved besides the animals that were portrayed. So it had a fun historical information that tied itself to the actual Royal Menagerie.

It was a fun event and it was also just nice to have an affiliation with the Getty.

MR. LLOYD: Now, we were on the subject of museums here, and were talking about various ways in which you've interacted with museums including being a visitor and using it as a source of inspiration and as a source for observations about your own work. But you've also participated in a number of exhibitions at museums, and the first one that comes to mind is one called "Color and Fire: Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics," which was at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 2000. There's a large publication by the curator, Jo Lauria, that includes essays by Garth Clark and Susan Peterson and Jo Lauria herself. Can you tell me a little bit more about that exhibition, your observations of it and what kind of an impact you think it might have had for contemporary ceramics, because, indeed it was a survey of ceramics from 1950 to the year 2000. The subtitle of the exhibition is "Defining Moments in Studio Ceramics, 1950 — 2000." So could you tell me a little bit more about your participation in that and then maybe observations as, not only an artist, but as a visitor to that exhibition and, again, the impact that that may have had either locally, nationally or elsewhere.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, I was invited to the show. Basically, to be included in the show, your piece had to already be in the museum collection.

MR. LLOYD: That's true.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I had some pieces in there, one that they had purchased and one that had been left by donation from Betty Asher — *Sumo Wrestler Cup* [1991] and also *A Day at the Races* [1995], which was a large trophy-base-like piece with greyhound dogs racing on one side and on the other side there were cheerleaders, '50s cheerleaders, cheering them on. Those were the pieces that were represented. I think, at the time, that it was a good representation of what I was doing, and I felt like it had an impact in terms of what could be done with clay.

Because of its chronological order from 1950 to 2000, and also because it was showing studio ceramics, I think the show was a good survey of what had been done by people who were important in ceramics and between, say, things that were more pottery based to things that were more fine art-based, and just a good crossing of a lot of different types of ways of working with clay.

I think the show was really well laid out. I felt that you walked through and it seemed to be chronologically laid out, and in sections of things that dealt with figurative, things that dealt with narrative, things that dealt with political issues. So there were subdivisions within it that I think were helpful. I don't know if they're always accurate, but I think it's necessary when you're curating something to make certain types of divisions so that it fits in place. I haven't really curated a large show like that, but I think that if I did I would probably approach it in a similar way.

I'm not sure how many people went to the show. I think it had a pretty long run up there, so I think within LA it got a lot of good exposure, but what I have found is that the publication for the book seems to have a very good life and is used a lot in reference to contemporary ceramics. So a lot of people will pull out the "Color and Fire" book. It was published by Rizzoli [Rizzoli/Universe International Publications, New York, NY], which I think was a good move for the museum to get that affiliation with Rizzoli since they publish beautiful art books. So there's a beautiful document that goes along with the exhibition that suddenly has this other life. I think that somebody can use this book as a reference. Although obviously no book can contain all information, this is a good

reference book for what it says: defining moments in ceramics.

MR. LLOYD: In other publications, as far as we're segueing into the publications, there is a publication that is produced jointly by the Garth Clark Gallery and the Frank Lloyd Gallery about your work. This centers on work that was done in the late 1900s — 1999 is the date of the exhibition — May first through June first. And there are a number of color reproductions, but also a wonderful essay — at least in my estimation a wonderful essay here. Can you tell me more about this, and did this have any impact on your career? Do you think that this kind of publication has a place in the world of ceramics?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, the publication came about between the Garth Clark Gallery, myself, and Frank Lloyd Gallery. I feel that documentation is very important — to have artist catalogues. Obviously you can't do it for every show, but the idea of documenting the work in a small book format is very helpful. It's really good for curators; it's really good to even pinpoint a movement in your work. My work has changed quite a bit since then, but you could look at this and say, these images were done then. Then in regards to the essay, I had read an article by Stephen Luecking, who wrote this, that he had written in *American Ceramics*, and I had never met him and he had seen a show at Kohler [John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sherboyen, WI], and what he wrote about the show at Kohler, from his observation of my work, was so right-on that I knew that he would be a good source to approach for an interview. He could gather such accurate and perceptive information about my work by viewing it, without very much other documentation. I was a young artist without a lot of history that he could look into and pull from, and he basically made very astute opinions about my work that I felt were valuable and pinpointed what I was trying to do.

So I approached him about writing the essay and he did just that for my essay as well. He looked at the slides that I sent him, looked at the work, and very accurately described what I have been doing with my work, with juxtapositions, with metaphor, what type of things I'm looking for, the idea that with a lot of my images, I want to leave you feeling like — I think he quotes it in there — like you do when you've finished a good novel — you know, the satisfaction that you have after you've read something that was really well written. So this part of my work was highly narrative and he was able to portray, in his writing, very good points about what I do with my work.

MR. LLOYD: Yeah, for the record, the author is Stephen Luecking and his article in *American Ceramics* that you're referring to is called "Stories Seldom Told" [Vol. 10.1 (1992): 40, 42, 45]. And the essay that is published is published in the catalogue called *Cindy Kolodziejski* [1999], which is published by the Frank Lloyd Gallery and the Garth Clark Gallery, and the essay does specifically focus on the narrative qualities in your work. This is not about technique; it's not about your personal history, your biography, but it is focusing on the literature, the narrative quality, the juxtaposition of imagery that creates the narrative, and has some wonderful observations in it. Some of them are very pointed, for instance, making reference to specific works, and I might just read one and maybe you could tell me something else about that piece. One of the pieces that's often been written about, not only by Stephen Luecking, but by Michael Duncan and David Pagel is a piece called *Pearl Necklace*. It was included in this publication, and it was included in the exhibition. Here, Luecking makes the observation — and maybe I'll read the whole paragraph so that we have the context here:

Pajama Party [1998] also demonstrates one of the exhibit's most recurring themes, juxtaposing a 19th century image of women with contemporary or natural images of masculinity. Each work, though, possesses its own distinct flavor. Most reserved is *Balance* [1998], which, in the Victorian penchant for things oriental, counterpoises a Chinese servant woman with a male water buffalo stepping from a stream. Back-grounding both images, a watery field proffers a layer of Freudian symbolism. *Pearl Necklace*, by contrast, draws its humor from overt visual puns. Here, Kolodziejski has shaped the pot into an hourglass covered on one side by the similarly shaped torso of a woman in a tight evening gown. On its opposite side, an image guaranteed to make all male viewers wince: the shape of the pot constricts a cucumber and nearly dissects it. As if to add insult to injury, a woman's hand is paring the cucumber."

As I said, "Pearl Necklace," has been reproduced a number of times and written about. Can you tell me more about the way that it came about as a piece?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I was playing a lot with the idea of making my images have to go to some kind of great lengths to continue on the pot. So I figured if I made a very small place, that the images would then be forced into this — in this case it ends up being an hourglass form, and I wanted to see what would happen. I came up with the image of the woman holding the pearl necklace that goes down through this kind of small hourglass form and then her fingers are fingering it down at the bottom, which, to me, would then suggest a certain kind of body language, either the idea of rosary beads or the idea of just slowly fingering a bead one after another. And so that was my intent on that side of it. There's an elegance to it, but then there is also a tension within it because it's almost corseted there. On the other side, it took me a while to come up with the image, but I was actually in the kitchen peeling a cucumber — [laughs] — and I went, this is it.

MR. LLOYD: So it just arrived spontaneously —

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: And it is also very Freudian. So that's wonderful.

Can we talk a little bit more about some of the other images on here which, in this period of time, you're really doing a wonderful juxtaposition of front and back on images, and there's this marvelous one that's on a cover here, which is a serving tray, sort of a covered serving dish, and on one side we have the image of women's panties and on the other side we have the image of a bra. Can you tell me a little bit more about this piece?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well that's called *Hors D'oeuvres* [1999], and I was playing again, as we talked about, with the idea of the function of the piece as a covered tray. If I'm going to use the function of the piece, it's usually to enhance the content of the work, than perhaps the actual functionality of the piece as an hors d'oeuvres tray and, to me, calling it an hors d'oeuvres tray is something that you have before dinner and so it becomes somewhat of a play on the idea of foreplay.

So, again, I would say that's where my sense of humor comes in, to have this change of panties laying there with the crotch up, and then the attention to detail and painting them so that you can see that they're black satin and they're shimmering and there's a whole allure there, and then again on the other side with the bra tossed off. Then, of course you wonder, "Well, what is underneath the tray?" There doesn't happen to be anything underneath the tray — [laughs] — but it suggests, again, what would come next, what would come after the hors d'oeuvres. So, it's again, playing off of the idea of sexual play and sexual tension and using the function, in this case of a covered tray, to enhance the meaning of the piece.

MR. LLOYD: And along with these publications, can you think of other uses of publications that have been helpful in your career, or uses within the context of, again, our discussion of contemporary ceramics and being a ceramic artist? Have there been other publications that have helped in educating the public about your work and in enhancing the public's knowledge of contemporary ceramics?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: There was one that I think is a fun book, called *Sex Pots* by Paul Mathieu [*Sex Pots: Eroticism in Ceramics. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2003*], and within that, he wanted to show the history of sexual references in ceramics dating back to actually even the Moche Indians, the pre-Colombians, and then ancient Greece and the Japanese. There's tons and tons of ceramics that portrayed sexual tension and action and all of that, and he wanted to highlight that and then bring it into current-day exploration of the same subject.

So, since so much of my work has sexual references, especially from this time period, I was prominently featured in this book. I think it's a fun book, but it also has a lot of historical content in it, and he does a good job pulling together the contemporary ceramics. It's a fun coffee table book and something that I think actually got pretty good exposure, and so I was happy to be in that.

MR. LLOYD: Your work has been included in some other publications that may serve a very specific audience: the makers of ceramics. There are some publications here: Lynn Peters, *Surface Decoration for Low Fire Ceramics* [Asheville, NC: Lark Books, 1999]; Paul Scott, *Painted Clay: Graphic Arts and the Ceramic Surface* [London: A & C Black, 2001], and I know that we've had other requests here at Frank Lloyd Gallery for reproductions, photographs of your work, to be included in articles or even lectures regarding them. I think that's because there's a very strong interest in your use of —

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Underglaze.

MR. LLOYD: — underglaze. And it's a really good example of what you can do with underglaze.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, I think I've been invited to be included in a lot of books that were based on technical aspects of ceramic-making. Although they use the pictures, I don't think there's ever been any step-by-step how-to, but they use them as examples of underglazed painting or in that case painted clay. There's even some china paint books because, besides the underglaze, I've used china paint and so I've been invited a lot because a lot of people can't do what I do, and they use it as an example of what you can obtain.

MR. LLOYD: It's interesting that that's where it winds up being documented. In a sense, because in the context of this interview we've kind of isolated that the interest comes from painting, and your examples come from the history of painting, and your technical process is both your own invention through trial and error and then perhaps some influence from some of your teachers, but it's not a ceramic-specific practice, right?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: No, it's not. And I think that —

MR. LLOYD: It's really something that evolved out of your interest in painting.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: What's kind of funny is that if they see it there in a how-to book, they're not really going to be able to achieve that, unless they're very gifted. So, I think they want their book to look good and it's a beautiful example of something. But, yes, it is kind of interesting because it doesn't really come out of that tradition. I call myself a painter — I don't know if I'd call myself a painter first, but I wouldn't call myself a ceramicist first either. I would just call myself an artist. I do so many different aspects within what I do, and painting is a very integral part, and if you remove that, I wouldn't really have much to my work if I didn't paint upon it. So, it's paramount to what I do.

MR. LLOYD: Also, forgive me for wandering around like that, but I think we're getting at some central points here in identifying the sources for your work and identifying its exposure and trying to define more about where you fit into the world of art. One of the things that I'm noticing here about the literature that's been written about your work is that you have a number of reviews from mainstream art publications or just general interest publications. There are reviews not only in general art publications such as *Art in America*, there's a review by Michael Duncan in *Art in America* in February of 2000, but there's also the review, I think we mentioned earlier, in the *New York Times* by Grace Glueck, and there are two reviews — one, two three — well, actually I take that back; there are three entries in your bibliography written by David Pagel. Pagel writes for the *Los Angeles Times* regularly as a reviewer. He has also written something here in a publication called *Art Issues*, and it's a review of your exhibition at Frank Lloyd Gallery in 1999. The article is called "Cindy Koloziejski at Frank Lloyd" in Art Issues September/October 1999, page 53.

I see that as a kind of a different thing from being included in ceramic-specific things because the *Los Angeles Times* has an entirely different circulation. I think the circulation, at that time, was close to a million people. It may have declined somewhat in the past few years, but how do you think that helps — or does it help — an artist in exposure to the audience?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, within the context of how recent it is, it helps get people into the show that are actively reading the reviews. A lot of people will read the Friday reviews and then go to a show because it's been validated by a critic. So I think within that context it's very valuable. I think that people will remember that you've been reviewed, but then it seems also that to keep everything current you have to kind of have a constant influx of reviews and exposure, which is hard to maintain for anybody because there are so many artists are in L.A. now more than ever. I think there's a lot of competition for very few spaces. In terms of galleries and what is reviewed percentage-wise to how many shows are out there, I think that it's harder probably no. It seems like we have a lot more galleries in the last 10 years.

So, in that way, I think it's hard to always be in the public eye, but I think that when you are among your peers, they remember that, and then also you can use these reviews when you're applying for grants and then they're looked at again in a different light. I think that the reviews become a validation that you're able to use if you want to give somebody exposure about your work and what you've accomplished. Besides your slides, handing someone a stack of reviews from the *L.A. Times* or *Art Issues* or *Art in America* kind of puts a stamp of approval so they can see what you've accomplished. And it is an accomplishment. It's not easy to have happen, so I think within that they're very helpful.

MR. LLOYD: On that first point, I read about four months ago I think it was in *Art and Auction*, an interview with Roberta Smith of the *New York Times*. The interviewer asked a number of questions, and one of them, to paraphrase this article, had to do with what Roberta Smith saw as her job, and she quickly responded, "Well, my first job is to get people out of the house." And that's a certain power that a newspaper critic has that another publication does not, just because of the timing of their review or their article. Radio would have that as well. The other documentation, of course, can provide more lasting documents, but I think that's really an interesting point.

The other thing that you mention is the interface with foreign artists, documentation for grants. You've received a number of grants. Can you tell me a little bit more about them? Just for the record, I think I will enter them into the record. One is from the Virginia A. Groot Foundation [Evanston, IL] in 2003. Another one is from the California Community Foundation [Los Angeles, CA], also the J. Paul Getty Trust for the Visual Arts [The Getty Foundation, Los Angeles, CA]. You received an individual artist grant from that organization in 2003. And then in 2004 you received the Durfee Foundation Grant [Durfee Foundation, Santa Monica, CA]. Can you tell me a little bit more about those grants — what happened to alert you to their availability, what the application process was like, and then, were there exhibitions that you participated in in conjunction with the award?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I think there might be one other one too, the LA Cultural Affairs Grant [City of Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Departmant, COLA Fellowship], and I think that was in 2004 or 2005. I have to look it up. It might be 2005. One thing I find for the grants is that it's a source of revenue, and as an artist, what you're looking for most is the ability to be able to make your artwork without the hindrance of financial need. So if you

can receive a grant, it can give you a free stretch of time, theoretically, in which you can work on your art without having to worry about your jobs. You might be able to then take a sabbatical on your job or even hire in some assistants to maybe help you. Sometimes some people help me with the mold-making, but for me that's the only part anybody can help me with. There's not much anybody else can do because it's so much about my hand on it and not anybody else's. So that would be like one of the impetus for even applying.

Another one, again, would be the recognition of your peers and exposure to other people, because on the grant committees, there's a panel. Usually it's not one person deciding who's going to get the grant. In the case of the Virginia Groot grant, there's a woman named Candace Groot, the daughter of Virginia Groot, who runs the grant program, and she has three people on the panel when they decide. That was a process I which you send in slides, 20 slides, and then also you fill out the application form and it tells things about your career. You write an artist statement and then in that one, you say what you would do with the opportunity during the grant time.

So I filled all of that out. With hers it's kind of a special grant because it's a small organization and you're allowed — after you've received the grant, if you get first prize, which is substantial — it's $35,000 — but then you're also invited to sit back on the grant panel for another two years, which then gives you firsthand experience to what the process is of reviewing slides and talking about people's artwork and who you think is going to get it. So you get to see, one, how you probably received the grant and the whole thought-making process, and because it's such a small organization, there's an intimacy within it that I actually enjoyed a lot. That also gave me the ability to work for nine months without having to worry about other jobs. I could stop some of my teaching in the meantime and just focus on the artwork.

The J. Paul Getty Grant is basically for LA artists, whereas the Virginia Groot Grant is international. So, for me, I had applied for seven years, and I think that any grant that you want you should continually apply for because, one, the people change that are on the grant panel, and two, your artwork is developing, and if anybody's staying the same on the grant panel, they'll also see your development along the way. So then they might say, "Well, wow, this work has really started to grow here; I remember when she applied two years ago." So I don't think anybody who applied the first year and didn't get it should be discouraged; they just aren't trying hard enough [laughs]. You have to be pretty tenacious about the application process and don't be disheartened when you don't get it because there are so many people that can apply. Yes, they're picking good work, but it's not completely personal.

So, for the Getty grant, because that was L.A.-based, it was important for me because I am a ceramic artist and I wanted to have L.A. artists recognize me. And to receive that award when basically it's given to painters and sculptors and very few people that work within the ceramic medium, I felt that that also gave me another validation of being accepted in the larger L.A. art community. So that was important for me to continually apply because I feel my work is fine art and should be looked at in that context. I think when I applied for that, I might have said I was multi-media just to not draw attention to something that is medium-specific, to just say, well, this is it; I paint, I sculpt, I use clay as a medium, but part of it was to get a recognition within the L.A. art world, which is a substantial force.

Then the COLA grant is also for L.A. artists. The Virgnia Groot didn't involve anything but giving you the money and the ability to do your work. So there's no show with that. The Getty grant had a show where they represented artists that had received that grant at REDCAT [Roy and Edna Disney/CalArts Theater, Los Angeles, CA], which was nice, again, to have the recognition in a gallery. I did like the idea of having a show. Then the L.A. Cultural Affairs grant also had a show at Barnsdall Art Park [Los Angeles, CA]. And the Durfee grant is basically a grant that helps you complete some part of a show or involvement in some endeavor where you need some financial support. So, for that, I had them help me frame some work and ship some work to a show that was going to be at the Northern Clay Center. That specifically, the Durfee grant, is pretty much a completion grant that helps artists achieve some part that would be difficult if they didn't receive the grant. So it could be something for shipping, it could be a technical piece of equipment that you needed. If for some reason your artwork involved some kind of recording or a special type of camera, you could apply for the grant because then they would give it to you so that you could complete some aspect of the work that you couldn't do as well without their financial support. I think those are important grants to get too because they all offer something different.

I think that looking for grants and applying for grants are important, one, for the financial support, and, two, for the validation of your peers and also for the exposure to anybody who could be on the panel that didn't know about your work before. Even if you don't get the grant, they're then still exposed to your work, so I think that the idea of just doing it as a process is very beneficial for an artist because it just gets your work into an eye and an audience that is otherwise not this easy to access. A lot of the grant panels have curators on them and fellow artists and museum directors because that's who they employ to do it since they need a knowledgeable source to pick the artists. I think it gives you an exposure that can be very important, and you don't even know how it will reach out and affect your career later.

MR. LLOYD: I'm going to pause the tape for a moment so we can take a break.

[END MD 02 TR 01.]

MR. LLOYD: This is Frank Lloyd interviewing Cindy Kolodziejski at the Frank Lloyd Gallery, on May 14, 2007, and this is disc two and track number two, I hope.

So, Cindy, we were talking some more about your experiences and the influences of the university system on the development of an artist, and we've covered a lot about your involvement as a student. But I also wanted to find out some more about your involvement as a teacher. Could you give me some personal insights into the teaching programs that you have participated in, and also the breadth of experience of teaching from workshop situations to lectures, and to the environments in which you've taught? I think you have taught here in Los Angeles at Ryman [Ryman Arts, Los Angeles, CA], and at USC [University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA], and most recently and over a period of years at UCLA.

CINDY KOLODZIEJSKI: I started my teaching career at Crossroads [Crossroads School for Arts and Sciences, Santa Monica, CA], teaching high school and middle school, and I did that right out of college. That became my basis for learning how to teach and how to structure classes. I did that for about 12 years, and then somewhere during that teaching time, I got an invitation to teach classes at UCLA. The thing about the Crossroads program is that since Crossroads is a school that's designated for the arts and sciences even though it's a high school, they gave me a lot of freedom and they valued the idea of having professional artists as teachers. I was pretty much able to develop my own program of what I thought was important to know about ceramics. Part of teaching ceramics that I would say is true in all of my teaching experience is that when you're teaching beginning classes, you have to teach a lot of skills. If you can't make anything out of clay or you have to worry about whether it's going fall apart or blow up or any of the technical things, then you can't really get to any of your ideas until you understand the fundamentals.

I would say part of the basic structure of my teaching is to make sure that they come away with a good skill knowledge of how to do things in the same way that if you were teaching oil painting. You'd want to teach somebody how to underpaint and about colors and the process of how that would all work so that somebody would understand how they would get to a finished painting — not that it's just about instantly putting paint on canvas, because it is so much more than that.

I started teaching at UCLA there about 12 years ago, and I still teach there. I came in under Adrian Saxe who heads the ceramics. In the beginning classes, basic hand-building skills are taught so that everybody has a broad-base knowledge of how to make things, and then every assignment is then based on a creative approach; trying to tie in their own artistic ideas. I try and leave projects open enough so that it's not that you're just making something that's completely skill based. It has a skill that's attached to it, but then they also have to explore ideas. I'm exposing them to other artists and ideas that I think will spur creativity.

When students at UCLA come into ceramic class they are all art majors, and so I feel like I'm very lucky because they already have a pretty good knowledge of composition, of form, of color, how to draw. They're also at UCLA so they're talking about concepts and ideas within the work. I'm lucky from the get-go of what I'm handed as fodder to teach. They already have a very good working knowledge, so I can kind of pick up from there and hopefully get them exposed to other ideas. I tried to not pin everything on that it has to be a vessel or that we're making traditional ceramics and trying to help them see that this can be one of many mediums that they're working with. That is my basic approach.

I also like the constant exposure to young people. I think that they have a certain naiveté and a lot of joy in life. It's a pleasure to be around young students and at UCLA, you're given a lot of good students, so I have found the whole process is good for me. What I do like about it also is that I've always taught part time; I'm able to then dedicate a lot of my time to my own artwork. I'm not a full-time teacher. I teach the class. I do a very good job, but I don't have the responsibility of an entire program. That frees up a lot of my time, and there's something nice about having a job that you are already very good at. I already know ceramics intimately, and when I've taught drawing at Ryman I knew drawing intimately. There's not a lot of prep time that goes into it, so I'm able to focus most of my time on my work. That's been a big reason I've stuck with teaching — it offers me the ability to spend a lot of time on my own artwork. And I still impart this knowledge, but I don't have the responsibility of a whole department and all of the paperwork and the meetings and all of the stuff that would come with a fulltime job.

MR. LLOYD: Do you have interaction at these schools — I'm thinking more of USC or UCLA — with other faculty members? I'm saying this knowing that the department head of the UCLA ceramics department is Adrian Saxe. Do you have interaction with him or any of the other faculty members in that setting?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: You have interaction with faculty when you have department meetings at the beginning of the year. Because Adrian has brought me in, we have a lot more communication because he's my, quote,

unquote, boss. But he completely lets me do and teach the class how I want. There's not really a question about that. It's just certain things about maybe who the TA is and who we're bringing in. There's an interaction within Adrian and myself, but within the rest of the art department, there isn't much interaction because everybody comes in and out, and they pretty much only teach their class. There's not tons of exposure. However, when I'm on committees for some of the graduate students when they're doing their thesis, then there's an interaction on a teaching basis between the faculty that they've chosen to be on their committee. Then you're interacting, and there's some great teachers there. When I've been on the committees, it's very interesting to have the input of John Baldessari or Don Suggs or Roger Herman. All of these people are lively discussionists, and also, you can learn a lot from them and you can see how they impart their knowledge onto the students as well.

MR. LLOYD: Does this facilitate in any way your contact with these people in the professional arena, outside of the teaching arena? Does that interaction or familiarity carry over into your professional activities?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Somewhat.

MR. LLOYD: Somewhat?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Somewhat. Yes. I actually, would like for it to happen more. I think a lot of artists are pretty well focused on their career and try to move that forward, and so, it doesn't seem to happen as much as I would like.

MR. LLOYD: Now, you maintain a personal interaction with Barbara Thomason, and can you tell me a little bit more about that? You talk to her on email and she is someone who teaches drawing. Is there any professional interchange there or is that just a social and friendly kind of relationship?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say it's social and friendly. However, when she comes over or I go over to her house, we will look at each other's work and give each other input. I would say there's some kind of critical analysis between us but it's on a peer level. I would say the same thing is true with Peter Lodato. I might say, "I'm having a show and could you come over and look at the work before I bring it over to the gallery," or, "I have an apprehension about this." I think that there are certain interactions that take place that are interesting but primarily based on friendship.

MR. LLOYD: Now, we've been talking about your involvement here in Los Angeles with teaching. Have you ever had any teaching experiences at any other institutions in the United States including the Northern Clay Center [Minneapolis, MN] or any of the other places?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: It seems to be about once or twice a year I will be a visiting artist. I've gone to the University of Colorado and been a visiting artist. I've gone to the University of Reno [University of Nevada, Reno] in Nevada. I've gone to Kansas City Art Institute. Those are the ones that I can think of offhand. I interact with the students, look at their work, and give them input on what they are doing. I've gone to Northern Clay Center, where they had me as a visiting artist, but it was under a different format. I didn't really address students per se. They just wanted me to work there for a week-long period and then do a slide presentation. Primarily all of the visiting artist jobs that I've done have involved a slide lecture, where I bring a chronological selection of my work and I talk about the development of what I've been doing for the last 20 years. It becomes about what I do as an artist, and it's not based on technical ability but more on portraying what my ideas have been in art making and the directions I've chosen. It becomes evident, when you're watching a chronological slide presentation, the growth and development and where one thing could lead into another. I think that's been beneficial for the students that I've done that for, because they see a path. When other people give slide presentations, say within the L.A. community — I might have watched Tony Marsh or somebody like that — I find them beneficial, so I would have to assume that students watching mine would also be moved and hopefully inspired by the process.

MR. LLOYD: Have you participated in any panel discussions, group discussions, or public forums regarding your work or ceramics in general or contemporary art in general?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I have somewhat. Not a lot. I've done one at NCECA [National Council for the Ceramic Arts, Erie, CO]. I've done one in Toronto.

MR. LLOYD: Yes. In Toronto at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes. I was on a panel —

MR. LLOYD: Can you tell me about that panel — the composition of that panel? Was that also with Jean Pierre Larocque and —

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: It wasn't with him. He had done a separate presentation there, but it was with Garth Clark,

Tony Marsh, myself, an artist named Ah Leon, Richard Millete, and Akio Takemori. We all presented our own separate slide presentations, and then at the end it was followed up by a panel discussion. Part of it was around the Sonny Kamm Teapot Show, although I wouldn't say that teapots were a subject of the panel discussion. It was more about the process of making our own work and what that meant to us.

MR. LLOYD: So this was at the Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art [Toronto, Canada] and was the moderator or the organizer Sue Jefferies?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, it was. She's done a great job over there, and she did a very good job with organizing the whole event and the series of discussions that were done there in regard to the show and then the subsequent symposium that happened afterwards. It was a two-day symposium.

MR. LLOYD: And what was the title and the content of the program that you participated in at NCECA, the National Council on Education and the Ceramic Arts?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: That was a long time ago. It was about the narrative, the narrative of ceramics. We had five or six artists that showed their slides and then at the end they talked about their use of the narrative within their own work.

MR. LLOYD: Okay. I'm going to stop the track now, and we'll resume this tomorrow.

[END MD 02 TR 02.]

MR. LLOYD: This is Frank Lloyd. Today is May 16, 2007. This is an interview with Cindy Kolodziejski for the Archives of American Art. The interview is conducted at the Frank Lloyd Gallery. And this is disc three and this is session number one on disc three.

So today I'd like to explore some of the other topics that we haven't addressed so far. First I'd like to talk about the use of technology in your work. There's not only technology from your understanding of ceramics and your understanding of glazes and firing, but in your work I think you've also made use of technology and the transfer of images and the transformation of images. Can you tell me a little bit more about that use of technology and whether or not you've used digital technology in your work?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, yes. In regards to technology, I would say the computer is my technological link in this case, though my pieces are painted by hand and the images are transferred on in a relatively archaic way — as a pencil transfer on the back of the paper. For finding images and the paper I use for them, I would say that technology has played a very large part. In many cases, I will find images out of books, which I then scan onto the computer. I also might take images directly from internet sources, and I also have used my digital camera to take images. From these, I have a picture file where I keep a lot of images and can always add more. I can pull and collect images and when I'm ready to use them, I can pull them up on the computer. I can play around with the size of the images, making them larger or smaller, pushing intensities of brightness and darkness and also, in many cases, distorting them or elongating them. Then once I get an image that I like on the computer, I print that out onto paper and that is the basis for the paper transfer that is used for the work. From there, it becomes something that's very old world in that it's transferred on by hand, drawn, and then painted. But I would say that the technology really opened up easy access to a lot of images, a lot of manipulation of things that would take much longer to do if I didn't have the use of the computer and digital camera and scanners and also the use of images off of the internet. I would say, in that way, it's really made a lot more things possible and also made the process easier.

MR. LLOYD: And to a certain extent then your internet research, in a way, as the use of a technology that wasn't available. I think in our earlier sessions, you said that you have also used libraries as a source for your imagery, including the pathology library at the University of California, Los Angeles, and this allows you to do a wider search.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: A wider search and also the ability to do a lot more of it from home so you don't always have to make a trip out. You're able to find a lot of similar images, and you can also be very specific about your search. There are image searches that just have scientific images on them and you can go into libraries — image libraries that just house things that are for scientific world, like medical studies or in some cases cell studies. Now that the internet has become more open and more information gets on there, I've been able to find a broad range of images. It's been helpful.

MR. LLOYD: Now, speaking of searching for images, that makes me think about searching for some of the other elements in your work: the forms themselves or some of the objects and things that you've added to a form. I think in the earlier work — correct me if I'm wrong — but I think in the earlier work you would source those things from found objects and from flea markets and antiques stores.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes. I was more apt to go to flea markets and thrift stores. Also, now with eBay where you can almost buy anything through some type of search, you can find a lot of unusual objects there, and you can kind of scour the whole country. Before I could just go into one thrift store, so it's opened up a lot more options for things to make molds out of, and it becomes a search engine where you start looking for strange things. I don't necessarily know right away that — like in the last body of work — that I wanted urinals per se, but I was searching around medical supplies, and then one came up. I thought that was interesting and then a lot happened from, say, stumbling onto something in a search that you weren't looking for exactly — in a way, that describes the word "search." You're not looking for the exact thing, but you might find something in that search that takes you someplace else. So, I don't think without the whole worldwide web this would have been possible, and that's happened in the last 10 years. So it's been an interesting transformation, and also one that I pretty easily adapted to.

MR. LLOYD: So you think about search in this case as a kind of exploration where you may uncover something that is separate from your original intent, right?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes. That's right.

MR. LLOYD: Yes. In another way, your work can be seen. There's a show at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California that included your work and had to do with the uses of digital technology in art making. Most of what, I think, was shown in your work, I think the imagery is what would have been applicable to the curatorial premise there. Some of the other artists used digital technology in the electronic fashion with showing multiple computer screens with images, and someone used sound technology in a sound sculpture. But can you tell me a little bit more about participating in an exhibit like that? Do you think that broadened the audience for your work or in any way enhanced the understanding of your work?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, I think it probably did both. I think it broadened the audience because people that went in there might have been thinking about the subject of the show — technology — and not really knowing what they might encounter and probably not thinking of technology as ceramics or something that would be a clay object. Then — I'm sorry. I forgot — [laughs] — the second part of the question. I was all involved —

MR. LLOYD: It was just whether it had broadened the audience for your work, and then did do you think it broadened an understanding of your work in any way?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I think yes. I think it did, because I think when you look at the images you don't really think where they came from. You're more involved with the perception of the image on the object, and then being included in a show like that suddenly brings into light that there are other sources of — because I see my work as something that's made in a very old-fashioned way since it's so labor intensive and so hands-on. Then to realize that the use of computer and technology plays a part in it. That isn't something I think somebody would necessarily attribute to my work in the same way that you would obviously have to if somebody was dealing with a video image. You have to attribute that to technology, whereas with mine, it might not be your first thought, but you then realize that it encompasses more. So I think it did.

MR. LLOYD: Are there any programs that you use to — not that this is meant to endorse any programs, but in the manipulation of an image would you use, say, Adobe Photoshop or something to not only select and crop the image but do any manipulation of the images that you used?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I've used Adobe Photoshop and then I've used — it's kind of an old program, but it still offers a lot of things, Corel Draw, Corel Photo, and they have a lot of ways in which you can grid work and then pull images into a grid pattern by moving the grid around so things are distorted. I think they offer some similar outcomes. It's just, if you become familiar with one program, it's sometimes easier to go back to what you know, but I've used both of those. If offers you many options. You can do that without a computer, but it's going to take you a lot longer and visual artists actually do that. So, in that case, it just eliminates that whole process of having to painstakingly draw and imagine how something would get there. With the computer you have the image and you can work from that.

MR. LLOYD: So these tools — the camera, the computer, and the software that works with both of those tools — really become part of your working method.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, I see them now almost like paint brushes or pencils. It's just another tool that I use.

MR. LLOYD: Yes.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: Another related question has to do with the way that you've used that technology, because in your earlier work, we'd usually see the juxtaposition of two disparate images on either side — of both sides of a vessel

form. Then, a few years ago, we began to see images that are continuous around a vessel form. And in particular in the later work, there are separatory funnel shapes that have an image that goes all the way around. Now, do you compose that with these tools or is it something that requires still your own manipulation by hand?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: A little bit of both with pieces where I've used landscape images or certain images to wrap all the way around. What I've been able to do on the computer is to make a mirror image of something, so that I can double the length of it and suddenly it's twice as long. Then it becomes this interesting, almost like Rorschach block print, where the image is repeated as it mirrors itself. So you can play off of that, and then like the one that wrapped around — all the way around — I measured the diameter of the piece and made the image the same exact diameter, so that when it did wrap around there was a seamless marriage of the image around the forms. Around it there were two spots where it had a mirror image of itself, but it became a part of the piece. This is something I obviously couldn't have done without the computer, but I then had to physically maneuver it onto the piece and measure and make sure that it would work. It's a little bit of the technology and then a little bit of magic — [laughs] —getting the thing to wrap around.

MR. LLOYD: It's interesting to hear all of this in the context of a group of interviews that are about craft, because in some ways what you're talking about is the craft of how you make your work, and though it isn't the traditional craft that we're thinking of — the tradition of tying into a material — it is a way of proceeding in developing a work of art that has to do with a step by step building of an image, and you're talking about the ways that you do it and the tools that you use in order to do it. So to my mind, that's how you craft your work in a way. It's a very contemporary version of it. Is there a way that you could also talk a little bit more about your view point on where your work would go in using this kind of thing? Do you have any idea about how you might use some of these tools and technology in the future? Do you have any ideas or any projects planned where you might be using that technology?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I recently finished a triptych, and I was kind of interested in the relationship of many objects that were then seen as a whole. And so I've been thinking again of maybe having images that fall across more than one form. I'm trying to think of ways in which I could maybe make groupings of things and either play with the size of the image in terms of maybe having a bigger piece and smaller pieces and having images that then relate to each other within the group of pieces. So I think that the idea of technology would have to play a part in terms of one: getting the images and then finding ways of making them fit across more than one image and playing around with the size.

So that's one direction I've been thinking about going, and I'm excited about it. I finished a show and I'm excited about getting back in and working, and I feel I'm at that —exploration period again in terms of where to go next. With the last show, what I found about a lot of my work, is that the body of work that I make leads to the next body of work. There are connections that are made and there are things that I want to then try and develop. I think I have left myself enough unanswered questions from the last body of work that I can then pull from and develop. So that's what I'm thinking, and I'm thinking about the ideas of multiple images across more than one form in dealing with the idea of either triptych or diptych, but having more than one piece relate to each other.

MR. LLOYD: It sounds like where you're talking about one of the fundamental benefits for an artist of exhibiting, which is a chance to put up a body of work and to assess it and see what direction it points. Can you tell us a little bit more about some of the other ways that exhibiting is good for you as an artist? In terms of other people's reaction, were you able to have any meaningful discussions with other artists during your exhibition or following your exhibition?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes. I did. I think the whole process is a journey; you work on an idea and you work on a body of work for about a year, and within that process, one piece can then lead to another piece, but then you're tying the whole thing together with hopefully a general idea that makes sense within the body of work, so that although all the pieces are different, there's a progress and relationship between the pieces. My husband's an artist and I can talk to him about the process. I have lots of friends that are artists and I'll get input from them, not usually during the show, but after the show I can talk to somebody about my work and they will say, "I really like this part or I like this direction that you're going in." Also the relationships — which we get into — also with gallery dealers and their perception of the work. I also find that to be very valuable.

So I think the process is challenging in many ways: the deadline, as hard as they are to always meet, drive you on, and you make the work. There's something invigorating about the process of knowing, okay, I have X amount of months to get this done and I work pretty steadily, so I'm not somebody who rushes at the last minute. I can't, it's too labor intensive to actually cram. I can't cram and I don't mind that. It's okay. But the whole process of working that way, I think it keeps you going. There's some pressure, but then at some time there's the realization that I didn't get everything done that I wanted to, but I still feel really confident about the work. I think I've made important work. That would be the thing about exhibiting and a lesson you would learn from the idea — I've obviously had many deadlines — is that although you have the deadline, the goal isn't just to make the deadline. The goal is to make the best work that you can possibly make. So that's what I have to

think about first, and then if I'm true to myself and I end up maybe with not as many pieces as I would have wanted, I'd rather that they were really good pieces and I felt confident about the work than just filling a gallery. I think those are things you learn as you mature as an artist.

MR. LLOYD: That makes a lot of sense. As your maturity as an artist goes along, you probably would even look forward to the exercise of exhibiting and consider it as all of those things that you're talking about — as a part of what drives you, right?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: Yes. Now, you've had a lot of exhibits already for someone your age. You started right out of school exhibiting at the Garth Clark Gallery in Los Angeles. You also exhibited a number of times Garth Clark Gallery in New York, and you've exhibited at my gallery, the Frank Lloyd Gallery here in Santa Monica. Can you tell me more about your experience in galleries? I know that's very general and you may be guarded since I'm the interviewer here — [laughs] — but can you tell me a little bit more about that experience, not only in the commercial galleries for your one person exhibits, but also you've participated in a number of group exhibitions and museum exhibitions. One that we already talked about was the exhibition "Color and Fire" at the Los Angeles County Museum, a survey of ceramics from 1950 to the year 2000. But what about, first of all, your affiliation with the Garth Clark Gallery, your first gallery, and that whole experience for you.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, I started exhibiting there in 1989, and I was pretty fresh out of college. I probably did what you're not supposed to do in that I showed up with some pieces in the gallery and wanted him to look at them. I know the only reason that he actually looked at them was that Ralph Bacerra — who was one of his gallery artists at the time — was my teacher, so I knew there was an "in" there. I also had a friend that worked there and he would tell me when he was in so that I knew that it was a good time to show up. At that time, he looked at the pieces and kept them for a little bit, not to show, but just to get a sense from some other people, and then really nothing happened at that point. But I kept going. I was entering contests and things like that to try and build up my résumé as a young artist, and I entered one that was called Young Americans. It was at the American Craft Museum in New York — I think that was in 1988 — and he saw the work there and was impressed and decided to start me in a couple of group shows. At that time and at my young age, that was the ceramic gallery to be seen at. For me, that was a big deal and I felt that it was a good thing. From that point I was given my one-person show and —

MR. LLOYD: Now, the "Young Americans" show, what year was that?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Nineteen eighty-eight. They did a lot in terms of promoting the show. They made a catalogue that had a big audience and there were a lot of people at the opening. I flew out for it and it seemed to open some doors for me. I had more interests from galleries besides just Garth. So I went from there to showing at Garth Clark. I was met with a pretty good success rate in terms of sales and continually getting group shows and solo shows through Garth and I seemed to make it through the cuts of artists as those would happen. It's an interesting relationship with Garth, because I started so young. I was so young. I had a kind of an authoritarian complex — I was a bit afraid of him in the beginning, that had more to do with my perception of authority than the fact that he can be intimidating, but he's also a very nice, intelligent person. So for a while I could say I didn't live in fear, but I was worried about what he thought and didn't want to cross him the wrong way. But that had a lot to do with my own perception of authority, and I think I outgrew that, which is good.

MR. LLOYD: Well, apart from the development of a relationship with your dealer in social situations and in other ways, I can see that indeed most people do regard Garth as an authority in the world of ceramics, and that's justified, of course, by his writing, his scholarship and his ability to present his ideas and to have a successful gallery for as long as he has — that maybe there's a point in which the relationship can open up into something that has a different dimension as you're saying, learning about other aspects of his nature or something like that. Did you also work with Garth's partner, Mark Del Vecchio?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, I did, and then also in L.A., Wayne Kuwada who was the director because the gallery was bicoastal at the time. I look back on it as a fond memory, because I was young and I felt like they always cared about me. I felt they kept my career in interest. They got things placed in good collections and museum collections as well. They made sure that I was reviewed in *American Ceramics* which, is not exactly the venue that I want to be interviewed in, but as my career grew, I started to get other reviews that I think are more important like that ones that were in *L.A. Times.* Things like that have more impact on my career. But I think overall, there was a good career development. It was a good working relationship. There's also a friendship there. Mark is very friendly and nice, and has a great sense of humor and Wayne was also very good at developing careers here in L.A. and getting things placed. Unfortunately — Frank and I know him intimately — he died of AIDS, so I think there was a certain point where he couldn't really extend that energy, because he was trying to stay healthy, as healthy as he could. But he was important.

MR. LLOYD: Right. I think Wayne had several qualities that are very important in the position of a commercial gallery. One of course is his ability to connect object with a collection.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: He seemed to know when artists brought something in. I think it was that way with your pieces as well.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: He would know where to put them.

MR. LLOYD: He would just know where the individual object would go in someone else's collection. He would make that connection and almost unfailingly was correct. So that's a — [they laugh] — remarkable thing isn't it? But also I think he had a way of communicating to the artist a sense of caring and enthusiasm for their work, which was a very supportive atmosphere if he chose to like you.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I actually felt like I was one of those people. [Laughs.] He liked my work.

MR. LLOYD: You had to be chosen.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: But that's the nature of a gallery is that it is a filtering process, right, and then that it does also act as a kind of supportive atmosphere. Now — and then within the galleries that you've been affiliated with, both the Garth Clark Gallery and Frank Lloyd Gallery, do you think that the environment in itself lends support for an individual artist? Did you find that your contact, in moving into the gallery, you would have segued from having contact with Ralph Bacerra, but then as you move into the gallery, you would have come in contact with other major figures in contemporary ceramics such as Adrian Saxe. Do you think that facilitates anything within the —

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Garth Clark and also Frank Lloyd, currently, have a very supportive environment, and there's a kind of a family of people that are affiliated with the gallery that genuinely care about one another within the artists and friends of the artists and gallery dealers. So I think it was very supportive of your work, of who you are, and I wouldn't call it just a professional relationship at all. I think these are friendships that have developed. I have friendships — for example, with photographer Tony Cuñha — after all these years of knowing people there are deep and meaningful relationships developed. And I've been thankful for that; it's been a very supportive relationship.

Currently at your gallery, Frank, I think we also have a friendship that goes beyond just the professional relationship. You're supportive of my work, of developing my career, and I think you have the integrity to do a job as a gallery dealer. You have an idea of what you think a gallery dealer should be and you're making yourself that person. I think it's a very high standard, and I respect you for that because it makes it a pleasure to be here. I know that with the artists that you have — you have their careers in mind and their best interests in mind. This is not just because you're the interviewer. I would say that to anybody. I'm happy to be at this gallery.

MR. LLOYD: Well, thank you for acknowledging that and making it part of the record. [Laughs.] But going back also to this sense of a gallery being a family and there being a supportive atmosphere among the artists. At one point, I addressed this kind of issue with John Mason, and he had an interesting observation. I'd like to hear your take on it. What he said is that the supportive atmosphere is a part of the culture of ceramics, and I said, "How so?" And he said, "Well, in the early days, there wasn't any information. There were no books. There were no glaze formulas, and we all banded together in order to share information." You can see pictures of that early group, and it's really pretty well documented that indeed they did share that information — the making of — the adaptation of industrial technology to ceramics was done with his group of people. He and his colleagues experimented a lot. And John does, to this day, a lot of testing of materials. Do you think that's true now of the ceramic arts? Do they share as much information as they may have before?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say if you're friends with somebody, they're willing to share their information. Like within the group here in L.A., it seems very open, and, for example, the whole idea of some of the workshop circuit — the very nature of that is to expose ideas and to share information. So in that sense, I think it's true. I mean, I also think that if I look at the microcosm of the Frank Lloyd Gallery or the Garth Clark Gallery, years ago when you would think about openings and who would show up, and that that makes sense within the clay community, because if I talk to another artist that showed at another gallery, there wasn't the same camaraderie among artists that I find within these galleries. Others seem to be more concerned with their own career and they think that being so friendly might backfire on their way up to the ladder, so to speak. I don't know every gallery relationship. I only know this one, but I've heard from other people that, "Oh, that would never happen at our place. We're too busy trying to get the next show" or something. They were more self-serving — I think of this as a more generous group, and maybe it does come out of that, the clay tradition.

MR. LLOYD: Maybe it does.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: It could.

MR. LLOYD: It's just kind of passed on because of the people that are participating. They are supportive of one another. I find it truly remarkable, because my colleagues in the gallery business have lots of reports of competition. And apparently, the competition gets tougher and tougher as you go up the ladder into the kind of rarefied atmosphere of the highly competitive New York art world. So it's a very curious thing, and maybe it is one of the characteristics as Mr. Mason suggests of the culture of ceramics in those days.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: We're lucky is to have John as part of the gallery. He's kind of like the godfather of the gallery. [Laughter.] We'll pause here for a moment.

[END MD 03 TR 01.]

MR. LLOYD: This is Frank Lloyd interviewing Cindy Kolodziejski from the Archives of American Art. This is disc number four and today is May 16, 2007. We're recording at the Frank Lloyd Gallery in Santa Monica, California, May 16, 2007. We're continuing our discussion with Cindy Kolodziejski.

So one of the things that we were talking about is your experience with commercial galleries, but I'd also like to talk a little bit more about exhibitions at municipal spaces and galleries that may have been part of craft organizations and also museums. You've been included in a number of documented exhibitions, starting with those early ones that you talked about previously today, including Young Americans at the Americans Craft Museum in New York. But also, some others at institutions, including the John Michael Kohler Art Center — and I think this is at least two times in your history you've been part in exhibits there.

CINDY KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: And also the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York. There are entrees in your résumé that include the Scripps Annual at Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery in Claremont, California at Scripps College, and there are a number of ones of note at the Mint Museum of Craft and Design, the Long Beach Museum of Art, the LA County Museum, another one called Confrontational Clay at the American Craft Museum, and the Northern Clay Center.

Do you think this kind of activity gains your work a larger audience, and if so, has that been beneficial to the development of your career?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say that the group shows, depending on the type of group show, can do a lot in terms of exposure for your work. I find if you're in a show where you only have one piece, you might be noticed, but it's not necessarily going to have a huge impact, although the one at the American Craft Museum with Grace Glueck reviewing at that — I was lucky that she saw the power in that piece, and it was reviewed. But I find that if I'm in a group show where I have at least four to five pieces of my work that people can get a broader sense and an idea of what I'm doing. So in shows like the one at REDCAT, regarding my grant, or at the Northern Clay Center, there were drawings as well as ceramics and there was a group of people and a group of work. I think there were six or seven pieces in that show. The other thing, again, is the idea of the catalogue in exhibitions having a life of its own, like "Color and Fire", which is still used as a reference — I find that when the shows are documented with a catalogue — somebody's seeing the show has one impact, but then this lasting documentation for reference I think is very important. So I would — yes, I'd have to say that the shows that have had the most impact were instances where I had a large enough body of work that somebody could get a feeling of what I was doing, and also being put in a museum show — the one show — at L.A. County Museum — the defining movements in clay. But I was also included in another show there called "Made in California" that was the history of California art. I think that had a nice impact in that I was included as a California artist. I obviously would like to be in more shows like that.

MR. LLOYD: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Well, that was a broad-based survey exhibition titled "Made in California" in the year 2000 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Not only was it a survey, but it was done in an encyclopedic museum that has a wide audience. So I think that is a different kind of exposure for your work. There are a number of entries here also of the exhibits that were done in conjunction with your awards. One at REDCAT at the Walt Disney Music Center in Los Angeles and the one for the C.O.L.A. [City of Los Angeles] Award in 2005 at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery pertained to that. I think you were also part of an exhibition in 2006 — Otis LA: "Nine Decades of Los Angeles Art" at the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery. Can you tell me a little bit more about that, because your participation not only marks you as a Los Angeles artist but as a graduate of Otis College of Art and Design.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, I felt that was an important show because of the history of Otis and also its connection to clay in the 1950s, which was also documented by other artists — John Mason was in that show. It was nice and gave exposure to artists that have come out of Otis and portrayed it as a school that produces successful artists. I feel that this show was a tribute to the legacy of Otis as a school. I think that it was an important documentation of what Otis had accomplished and being included in it — there are a lot of people that obviously graduated from Otis that weren't included in the show and voiced discontent. [Laughs.]

MR. LLOYD: Right. You're included in a number of museum collections. So not only have you exhibited at museums, but you have a number of museum collections listed here, including the Wustum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine, Wisconsin [now known as the Racine Art Museum, Racine, WI]; the Gardner Museum of Ceramic Art in Toronto, Canada — excuse me — Long Beach Museum of Art [Long Beach, CA]; the Los Angeles County Museum of Art [Los Angeles, CA]; the Mint Museum [Charlotte, NC]; the Museum of Arts and Design in New York; the National Museum of History in Taipei, Taiwan; the Newark Museum [Newark, NJ]; the Shigaraki Ceramic Cultural Park [Shiga, Japan]; and the Southern Illinois University Museum [Carbondale, Illinois].

Do you remember when each one of these museum collections or museum acquisitions was made? How do you think that's affected your career and exposure of your work?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes. I actually know just about every piece that the museums have in their collection. I think the one thing that's important about museum collections is that they show the work, so it's not always in storage somewhere. It seems that a lot of these museums have things that are in collections where they actually can be viewed. I find that important. It's nice to be in a museum, but if the piece is in the basement, it doesn't do you much good. But it's nice when the museums — even if they know you can't exhibit all art at all times — have shows that might have a theme related to them that would then bring out work in their collections. The idea of a museum is that people go there to look at art, so the idea that people are seeing your piece within the museum context is important. I think for a résumé it's nice to have things in museum collections, and it looks good on paper. But I like the idea of the museum actually living up to the name of exhibiting the work. I find that to be an important aspect of museum collections.

MR. LLOYD: Now, the Newark Museum had the wonderful exhibition entitled "Great Pots," so not only did you gain a piece in a museum setting but also the opportunity to participate in a large scale survey exhibition and the publication as well. So that's one of the benefits I would imagine for you. Is that not true?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Oh, yes. Those are the shows and the things that you're trying to have happen for you — shows that do all of that or the museum acquisitions that come along with the show, and maybe a catalogue that then gives the work life.

MR. LLOYD: Something that lives on.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: Now, we talked a little bit here, of course, about your support system as far as galleries go — the Garth Clark Gallery and this gallery, the Frank Lloyd Gallery, and then we're just covering here the process of exhibiting and collecting within institutions, particularly museums. But can you tell me a little bit more about how private collectors have supported your work? I can think of a couple that have been extraordinarily supportive. Those would be Mr. and Ms. Kamm — Sonny and Gloria Kamm — who were supportive of your work early on and who continue to be. And also your — the patronage of Charlotte Chamberlain. Do you think this has helped you, and what do you think about the role of private collectors in supporting artists' work?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I think it's very important. I mean, you develop a friendship with the private collector. Other times, you don't — not every collector geographically makes sense. As the collector continues to collect your work, there is a validation in their interest in your work. There's also something very nice about somebody following your career as your work grows and knowing that you can continue to develop and that they're open to your new ideas — the new development — because my work does change, I would say maybe not drastically, but there is a definite continual growth and evolution from early work to what I'm doing now. So to watch as a collector goes along on that ride with you, is very rewarding and supportive and it makes you know that you have an audience out there. It's not the same as somebody who's a singer selling gold records or something, because they can't possibly know their whole audience. But since these are individual pieces and they're one of a kind, you know if somebody's coming back for more and more that there is a genuine love for what you do. That's very rewarding.

MR. LLOYD: And you're thinking of your support in terms of ongoing and — so these collections, do they have pieces from your early work, your middle period for the — they're supporting each change that you make?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: In some cases, yes. Not every collection, but I can think of a few that could definitely have that within them. Alan Mandell and Charlotte Chamerlain have current and past work, so there's some who have

gone along and known about my work for a while. I've had other patronage — Betty Asher, and I think if she were still alive, she would still be buying work and so I can think about people that I would call great supporters and collectors and that seems to go hand in hand. I would hope that people collect my work because they genuinely like it and find interest in it, as opposed to somebody buying something strictly for an investment purpose. I think there's a marked difference in that type of collector, and I'd rather have the one that's collecting because they really appreciate my work. So yes, I would say there's a difference with that.

MR. LLOYD: In any other forms of support that you can think of, did you find that — well, you're going all the way back to the beginning of our interview here — do you find that your family has been supportive, your father, your siblings —

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say that my father's been very supportive. He's at every opening, he's very proud of me. My mother, who recently passed, was a big supporter and would help tie up loose ends before the show deadlines. My mother-in-law from my first marriage who I still call my mother-in-law is very supportive as well and will send flyers out to people, her friends. So I have support within my family, past and present. I think my daughter's proud of me. She asks me about the work, and I feel there's support there. Also, at certain times, when I'm getting finished for a show and at the end when I'm having to put in longer hours than she would like, she's okay. It's all right with her that mom has to work in the studio. So I would say I have support from her and my first husband, Adam Leventhal, was very supportive, and I recently married a man named Ken Hurbert and he is also very supportive, and he is also an artist. So I also get the intellectual ideas and artistic input from him as well as support for what I do and the desire to see me continue making art and living that dream.

MR. LLOYD: Good. We have discussed now a lot about the venues for exhibiting at the commercial gallery, the institutions, the museums, and we've also talked about your participation in many different types of exhibitions. One thing that I've kind of wanted to go back to a little bit more is meaning and content in the work, as I've seen these come along here. There is a strong thread of curatorial ideas that have to do with content, in particular the narrative, and in — here's a show that was entitled "Confrontational Clay: The Artist as Social Critic" at the American Craft Museum, and I think that was — Judith Schwartz's curating — and I'm really interested in how you tell a story, and how that narrative content or that social idea enters into your work. We've talked, obviously, about the ways that you gain your imagery, but there does seem to be a story behind the imagery and how's that brought about?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Well, one way in which I do it is I try to pinpoint it. I think that when I'm choosing images I have a general idea if some of the images are dealing with sexuality or with the idea of women or, in the last body of work, trying to create a kind of floating world that's very sensual. Then I think what I do because of my knowledge and tying into even American culture is I think I can respond to things that might be archetypical images. I know that if I'm choosing this that I can direct the viewer into my interpretation of the story. So I can choose an image and develop an image that will put a spin in the direction that I want it to go. In the last body — I could go, all right, well, I want the women to be in the water, but then how can I make it more ethereal, how can I make it more about an atmospheric quality, and maybe even a state of mind? And then I could tie into that ocean and sea life, and the peacefulness that comes with that, and then I could incorporate the use of the octopus or seaweed or things that are floating. And then through background colors and undulations, I can direct a certain kind of feeling. I think they're images that I know people will respond to, but I also try not to use a clichéd image. So there's a balance between using something that's stupidly obvious and directing somebody into a thought that they wouldn't necessarily think of immediately on their own, but suddenly they're there. So I can do that with images and ideas of juxtaposing two images that are very different, but then suddenly you're making up a story about what these two might have to do with each other. And so I think it's manipulation in the same way that an author might manipulate, or even a movie, might manipulate your feelings. And, well, if I do this, and this, and this, at the end they're all going to be crying. And sometimes it's very obvious they have been manipulated and other times it's not, but I think that's, in a sense, what I'm doing with imagery.

MR. LLOYD: And do you think that an author — since we're talking about this narrative structure — that an author would shy away from the use of a clichéd image in literature, as well?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I think they will shy away from a clichéd image if they have information and are good at it; they're going to know that's not the direction they want to put somebody. Or if they're going to use the cliché, they're going to use it successfully in a way that puts a twist on it so that they're not just coming up with the obvious plot that you could break down, "Oh, this is how plots go," and it's a happy ending or he dies in the end or he's a hero. I mean, how do you manipulate the ideas of narrative so that they're interesting and not something that your viewers have seen before? You know, you want to give them new information but based on things that they would respond to and maybe in an instinctual or archetypical way.

MR. LLOYD: You also may choose your imagery in order to, as you said, not overstate the obvious kind of thing. In the last show the narrative had to do with gender, sexuality, the form of the urinal, water imagery, all of these different things. You have a wide range of images to choose from in your search, yet you didn't choose ones

that were blatantly sexual or on the side of the obvious. Right?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: And that's a very refined process that you're dealing with there, so how do you come about that process? Is it through a long period of thought?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Part of it's a long period of thought, and then it might be that I will get a series of images, including some of the ones that are obvious that I then, through the process of eliminating, I'll tell myself: No, that one's not going to work for these reasons or that one's too — we were using this word when I was describing things "twee" which is too sweet, or I actually started painting one and in the midst of it, it took on a fairy kind of quality, which definitely was not a direction I wanted to go. So I just tossed the piece, because it was, "Oh, wrong way." It was close enough that it could have gone the right way, but somehow, in the painting process, it started to go wrong and then I just wasn't going to continue. But I think there's a process of elimination that I go through and a dialogue with myself, of how this will work, and what is that saying, and that's how I come about it.

MR. LLOYD: And within the parameters of the curatorial ideas here, you have addressed gender, identity, and sexuality — we've discussed that — some earlier in the interview. Have you ever addressed any other social issues — ethnicity or race, or anything like that — in your work?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Not specifically.

MR. LLOYD: Are there artists within the world of ceramics that do that in a way that you admire?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I would say that I have a hard time with things that deal with the ideas of race and even ethnicity, because I think that it's hard to do that well. And it pinpoints so much on the idea of a specific — be it an American Indian or a black artist. It's hard to do it well. If somebody can pull it off — I can think of a few people — maybe not ceramic artists that have. The New York painter — I don't know the name, but he painted the kind of a black rap stars in kind of a northern renaissance technique. Do you know how I mean?

MR. LLOYD: I can't think of his name right now.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: But you've seen —

MR. LLOYD: But I have seen them.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, and I think that has dealt with race in an interesting way because it ties so much into art history, and the craft of the painting, it kind of imparts a meaning to it. But I don't think it applies for me. I can think of some people that have done it well, but a lot of times it just falls flat on its face. So I think that when you're dealing with that, again, you have to avoid all the kind of clichéd images that are going to get you into trouble.

MR. LLOYD: One of the questions that we were supposed to address in this interview is: Do you feel that your work is in any way distinctly American? Well, do you? Or do you think of it in some other terms as your work or as something that belongs to something else?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I think of it as — well, I would have to say I'm an American, so there's going to have to be some outside factors that I can't even pinpoint historically or just socially. I don't think I'm an expert enough in the idea of what that is, but I think that, because I am American, there is probably an American sensibility to it. Do I think of my artwork as American? No, but I do think of it as my work. I think if you took a broader view away, as an art historian, and looked at it, you probably could pinpoint some things that were American traits within it. But I don't feel like I'm expert enough in the field to say that I would see it as distinctly American, or even, in some cases, Californian. Or I know that you can even get in regional areas. So I would say I'm making my work, I'm exploring ideas that I think are important. There's probably something that could be attributed to it as being American, but I can't pinpoint it myself.

MR. LLOYD: So the qualities of your work that seem to be the strongest are its relationship to your investigation of painting, its narrative and imagery, and your relationship to the community of artists that you grew up in and developed in, which is Los Angeles. But you don't think of yourself as a Los Angeles artist. Or do you?

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: I mean, I think of myself as an artist that lives in Los Angeles and makes work, but I wouldn't say that I'm a Los Angeles artist.

MR. LLOYD: Well, I think of this as a question: it's not distinctly American, and it's not distinctively of a region.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes, and I'm not distinctively a craft artist.

MR. LLOYD: And you're not distinctively a craft artist — you are an artist.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Yes.

MR. LLOYD: All right and that's where we'll stop.

MS. KOLODZIEJSKI: Thank you, Frank.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]