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Oral history interview with Dan Dailey, 2008 January 21

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Dan Dailey on 2008 January 21. The interview took place at Dailey's studio in Kensington, NH, and was conducted by Tina Oldknow for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Archives of American Art's Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Dan Dailey has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. This transcript has been lightly edited for readability by the Archives of American Art. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

TINA OLDKNOW: This is Tina Oldknow interviewing Dan Dailey at the artist's studio in Kensington, New Hampshire, on January 21, 2008, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc number one.

Dan, we're going to start at the beginning. When and where were you born?

DAN DAILEY: I was born in Philadelphia in 1947.

TINA OLDKNOW: And did you grow up in Philadelphia?

DAN DAILEY: No, I was born in Germantown [PA], and my dad was, at that point, working for RCA as a designer, which was based in Camden, New Jersey.

TINA OLDKNOW: Designing machines?

DAN DAILEY: He was a designer of televisions, radios—the first televisions, radios, mostly televisions and radios. I think they had a Victrola at that point, because he designed one of those big long gizmos that had—

TINA OLDKNOW: I love those.

DAN DAILEY: —components in it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah.

DAN DAILEY: But that was later, as I recall. In any case, we moved to Camden when I was two, and I don't really remember much of Camden. I have some memories of Germantown and a little bit of Camden.

TINA OLDKNOW: So because your father was designing kind of radios and TVs and stuff, did you have a big basement with all kinds of cool things in it, maybe to tinker with?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, we did. We had stuff around everywhere. My mom, at the time, was doing fashion illustrations, because if you recall, in the newspaper supplements, they would often have the current fashions drawn rather than photographed. And she did those—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh.

DAN DAILEY: —for companies like Sears and one other company. I can remember taking a bus after nursery school and going to Sears and meeting my mom at the bus stop, who had just walked across the street from where she worked.

TINA OLDKNOW: So both of your parents were designers.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, they both drew and designed things.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: But we moved to—they were building a house in New Jersey at the time when we had the apartment in Camden. And apparently, my dad was being helped by his dad, who was a carpenter at the shipyard in Philadelphia—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: —when they still had that sort of thing going on. And he [Dailey's grandfather] had a heart attack

and died, and my dad lost heart in the project and quit building the house. And so we moved onto a farm in Moorestown, New Jersey, and that's where I spent about six years, I guess, on that farm.

TINA OLDKNOW: And your dad was designing all this time.

DAN DAILEY: And he was still designing. In the living room of that farmhouse, we had, for instance, televisions. Remember when the screens were—well, the tubes were round, but the screens were kind of laid over them. There was like a veneer of fancy wood, because it was a cabinet to go in your living room. And they had a lot of them look like Chippendales, only he didn't like that; he wanted them modernized.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's really interesting to me.

DAN DAILEY: So he would take these Chippendale things from the RCA warehouse and bring them to our house, and then, like you said, in the basement he would be cutting stuff off and modifying and building in new wood parts. I remember there was a mint green one with slanty legs, you know, and very Moderne kind of thing.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: And they would look like his drawings.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, there—

DAN DAILEY: So that was quite influential on me.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I was going to say, because those early TVs, they look almost like they're something that come out of—it's like future Moderne.

DAN DAILEY: It was, yeah, definitely Futurism, Futurist. I don't know what you would call it, but streamline was part of it, and it didn't look like Art Deco either.

TINA OLDKNOW: No, it didn't.

DAN DAILEY: Nothing like Raymond Loewy, although, Raymond Loewy was one of his heroes.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: In some respects, I suppose you could say because he designed some vacuum cleaners for the Philco company, vacuum cleaners and refrigerators.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: You know, Philco is Philadelphia Company [Philadelphia Storage Battery Company, then Philco Corporation]. I don't know what its—they made appliances and things. But for RCA, he was a radio and TV designer and mostly the cabinets, not the components.

TINA OLDKNOW: And what was your father's name?

DAN DAILEY: David Dailey.

TINA OLDKNOW: And your mother's name?

DAN DAILEY: Barbara Tarleton. She got remarried when my dad died.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] T-A-R-L-T-O-N?

DAN DAILEY: T-A-R-L-E-T-O-N. Barbara Tarleton. So, I grew up on that farm for quite a while, and then we moved to another rented house in New Jersey, in Mount Laurel, New Jersey. And we lived with a Quaker family on the other—it was a split house.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Like a duplex?

DAN DAILEY: And at that time, I already went to Moorestown Friends School [Moorestown, NJ]. I was raised Quaker.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, okay.

DAN DAILEY: And I went to Quaker school from first grade through 11th grade.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's a long time. Do you think you have been—I mean, it's hard for you to know because it's not like you then went to Catholic school and could compare, but if you—

DAN DAILEY: A lot of my friends went to Catholic school.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, they did. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, we didn't have any nuns whacking our fingers with steel-edged rulers.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you think that being in Quaker school affected you in any particular way?

DAN DAILEY: In many ways. Yeah, in many ways.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] That's nice.

DAN DAILEY: Well, I mean, there's a question on this list about education.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And I'm sure that it was the foundation for my strong belief in education and for my attitudes about educating.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Meaning? I mean, you were a teacher for a long time. How did you put some of those into practice?

DAN DAILEY: Respect for every individual and their potential. It's a good basic way to say it.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's a pretty good way to say it, yeah.

DAN DAILEY: I mean, there has to be some kind of commonality to format, but as much as you can deal with everybody on their own, not, say, level, but, you know, within their own perspective, trying to understand them in order to get to them, right? It's a matter of understanding each person.

TINA OLDKNOW: A lot of education when we were young was about fitting people into molds, more or less. I mean, you weren't allowed to write with your left hand and stuff like that.

DAN DAILEY: That's true.

TINA OLDKNOW: They were trying to regularize things, so the Quakers weren't really about that.

DAN DAILEY: No, definitely not. I mean, they tried to—well, I can cite a lot of examples, but I remember distinctly one. I think it was eighth grade, where the first class of the day—the first 45 minutes of the day - we had to read the New York Times and then discuss it in class.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: And that was our first hour and a half or so of the day.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's pretty impressive.

DAN DAILEY: And things like that were not done commonly in schools at the time.

TINA OLDKNOW: No, they weren't. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: I suppose it's done these days, but I don't know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Maybe. I don't know either. Do you want to talk about some of your early education and career choices, such as what motivated your interest in glass or illustration?

DAN DAILEY: Well, illustration—I don't know how I—I drew from as early as I can remember because it was common in our household. So I would draw just to entertain, or I would make—you know, I was the kid who did the school notebook and the assembly program covers and all that stuff. And they would always ask me to do things like that, so it was fun. It was really fun to come up with something. Art was always my favorite class, and I liked making things in Boy Scouts. You know, objects and so on. I loved shop class.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I always had a good time doing that. And—

TINA OLDKNOW: Did you work with your dad at home on any projects?

DAN DAILEY: Mostly drawing with my dad. I can remember making some vehicles with him. He made me an electric car.

TINA OLDKNOW: He did?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, but it was a bomb. He put an automobile battery and an automobile starter motor in one of those little metal push cars.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, my God. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: And at the time, I was making downhill, you know, gravity racers to race on local hills with my friends. But he made me this electric car, and he powered it by having a rubber wheel pushing against one of the back wheels of the vehicles. So it was so powerful, it just spun in circles, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: It was like a bronco ride when I first tried it, because he couldn't fit in it, so I had to be the guy to try it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: But he was always fooling around with things like that, so that was kind of fun. I guess—

TINA OLDKNOW: So you go through high school and your—

DAN DAILEY: Well, my dad died when I was 12. I was in sixth grade, and at that time, we had moved into Philadelphia at that point, so we were back in the city. And he had pneumonia five times and died of a lung hemorrhage—

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, gosh.

DAN DAILEY: —on the operating table—

TINA OLDKNOW: It's unusual.

DAN DAILEY: —in a Philadelphia hospital. Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: So he was young.

DAN DAILEY: He was 39, I think.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, God.

DAN DAILEY: So, I was 12, and that was, you know, pretty devastating to our family. And I don't think I had any influence of any particular kind in making things or drawings things, but I didn't stop doing it. It was still kind of a refuge for me, you know, to retreat into that kind of comfort zone, and think and draw and make things was really what I always found solace in. And later on, during the time that I—when other times came along when I wasn't right, there's always turning back to the art. That's a kind of self-indulgent—it's expressive in some ways, but it's also something to record your feelings and record your thoughts. So—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Do you have brothers and sisters?

DAN DAILEY: I have a brother, and I have a stepsister. So my mom kind of pulled it together and got a job, and my grandmother came and lived with us. She, within three years, had met a man who she fell in love with and married, and he became my stepfather, and I really loved that guy.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, good.

DAN DAILEY: He was an advertising agency guy at the time she met him. No, he owned a print shop at the time she met him. But he opened an ad agency, and they ran it together for about, I don't know, 30 years. So that was good. I worked with them, you know, making brochures and doing other things, doing graphic art in the ad agency, besides being the janitor.

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: I had tons of jobs. I mean, I had a job when I was—when my dad died, I had a paper route. I always

cut grass, and whenever it snowed, I'd have a snow holiday. I'd go make money shoveling everybody's walks.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I had a regular routine, you know.

But—when my mom got remarried, that was a good thing. It was a really good feeling. And I can remember my first meeting with my stepfather. You know, he wanted to just get to know me, so we went out in his boat on the Delaware River.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh, how nice.

DAN DAILEY: And I said "What should I call you," because I knew they were going to get married, or maybe I didn't at the time. No, he just wanted to get to know me. I just asked, what I should call you? He said, "Ken." You know, not Mr. Tricebock. He wanted me right away to call him by his first name, and I always did. He was a jazz musician—

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh.

DAN DAILEY: —and he had a group he played with on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City [NJ].

TINA OLDKNOW: What instrument did he play?

DAN DAILEY: He played the banjo in the band. You know, it was those kind of things where they all wore white gloves, and they turned off the lights, and his banjo had a lot of mother of pearl inlay.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: There was a gold-plated thing for show. But he was really good at the piano, and he also had an electric guitar or two. So there was always music in the house, and friends would come over, and they would all sing to these kind of nightclub things. My mom liked to sing.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] That's nice. So there's a lot going on in your house. Is your brother an artist?

DAN DAILEY: My brother could be an artist, but he chooses to build cars and houses.

TINA OLDKNOW: Okay. But he's designing and building something.

DAN DAILEY: He's building a house right now up in Bath, New Hampshire. He moved to New Hampshire before I did.

My stepsister works currently for some kind of a think tank for the navy doing a bunch of secret stuff. She's a computer whiz and makes software systems. So she's not creative in the same sense. Her creativity comes out in other ways.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: But she's a really pretty brilliant thinker.

TINA OLDKNOW: But you're all kind of and vaguely connected with engineering in some way.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, it all comes back to, kind of, systems, and I always liked the design aspect of making things, too. I like thinking it out in advance. But I've said that to you in prior interviews.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: That that's my mode of approach. I always think it out. It's just the way I feel good about it. I mean, sometimes things come to me suddenly, and I jot them down or put a sketch down, but for the most part, it's ruminating for a while, and then it takes shape in my mind, and then I put it down.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, I love to look at your sketchbooks, and you've kept an incredible archive of them since the '70s. Do you have some earlier? When did you start keeping—

DAN DAILEY: My first sketchbooks, I don't get satisfied looking at them because they're so—I don't know if you could call it adolescent, but there's something about the way I thought then, I think.

TINA OLDKNOW: Really?

DAN DAILEY: More than the ability to draw; that my thinking was so scattered and so full of what I would call junk these days.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you don't feel that you thought the same way that you think now?

DAN DAILEY: No, I don't think so. I'm not sure why, but there are just—well, I had some pretty turbulent teenage years and early 20s years.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: You know, things were not settled for me in various ways, in spite of the fact that I had a pretty good home life. And I always did all right, but with school and with jobs and cars and girlfriends and all the important stuff to teenage years. I gave up on Quaker school in 11th grade. I felt like I was being kind of too controlled.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you chose not to continue?

DAN DAILEY: No, I quit Quaker school in the 11th grade, to the dismay of my parents. You know, they pointed out that, here it is, your school is in Time magazine this week. You know, why do you want to leave this great place? But I didn't want to wear penny loafers and tweed jackets and a tie and kind of fit the mold and be that kind of good citizen.

TINA OLDKNOW: What was the name of your school?

DAN DAILEY: Germantown Friends School [Philadelphia, PA].

TINA OLDKNOW: Interesting. So where did you go for your senior year?

DAN DAILEY: Well, first I went to—I was going to go to Germantown High, but there had been a shooting there. You know, some gangs with zip guns and things like that.

TINA OLDKNOW: Already? I mean, what year was this?

DAN DAILEY: It was '61 or two.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: You know, zip guns.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: That whole scene from Westside Story was pretty real. It was based on exactly what was going on in New York and Philadelphia and Baltimore schools and probably a lot of others. But Germantown High was rough. I mean, there was some question in here about the issues of race, you know, and being raised Quaker, my mom, you know, made sure that I—well, in every one of our classes, there was at least one or maybe two black students, male and female. And they became my friends. They were people whose houses I went to for their birthday party and things like that, and they came to my house. In the largely Catholic neighborhood where I lived, I'd get questions like, you know, "I saw a nigger go into your house."

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: You know, that was very hard to justify to my friends. But it kind of rolled off me because it was normal. I guess that's what I mean about the kind of education. It wasn't just reading books and talking about those kind of ideas. It was a social education and a moral education and a kind of, you know, incitement of responsibility to the world around you.

TINA OLDKNOW: And that was also the beginning, really, of - the Civil Rights movement would be starting in the next few years.

DAN DAILEY: That's right. Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: And certainly the Quakers were probably very supportive of that.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, they're very into that. So, right at the beginning. You know, right there with all the marchers and so on. A lot of my teachers and friends—I went to local sit-ins and marches and things like that in the Philadelphia area, but I didn't go to Washington [DC] or didn't travel. But when I left all that, it was for different reasons. I guess I just didn't like the sense of conformity. I've always been a person who doesn't like to be with

the group. I like to get outside of the group. When I see group thinking, I retreat from it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And that's, I think, what pushed me away from that.

So I went to Jenkintown High School [Jenkintown, PA]; then I went to Cheltenham High School [Wyncote, PA]. I graduated from Cheltenham. And it was kind of educationally worthless, both of those experiences. There was really nothing that I remember.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

DAN DAILEY: Everything kind of stopped for me in high school education in the 11th grade because everything—you know, I had English literature in the same damn class three years in a row at three high schools because they were ahead in the Quaker school—

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: —of what the public school programs were.

TINA OLDKNOW: So do you remember being eager to go to college and, kind of, new challenges in terms of your studies?

DAN DAILEY: I guess so. I only applied to one college, although I was offered a scholarship [to another]. There was a visiting guy from IIT, Illinois Institute of Technology [Chicago, IL], who came to Cheltenham, and they offered me some kind of scholarship to go there. But I didn't want to go to an engineering school, and I went to Philadelphia College of Art [Philadelphia, PA].

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, you did. So when you were in high school, did you pretty much feel that art was going to be the direction you were going to go?

DAN DAILEY: Definitely.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, so that you hadn't—you know, a lot of people went through a lot very painful thinking about, oh, am I an artist? Do I want this lifestyle? Especially if their parents aren't artists, it's a very hard kind of thing to conceive for yourself. Did you ever have any those side thoughts?

DAN DAILEY: I had nothing but support from my family.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I didn't feel that I was especially talented, it's just that I knew that's what I wanted to do, and there was no question or second thought at all.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's great.

DAN DAILEY: I remember I went off to my interview there; the admission guy said, "Well, you didn't apply to any other schools." And I said, "Well, this is where I want to go."

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: So he thought I was very presumptuous, but it didn't occur to me that I was thinking of it that way. I didn't mean it to be insulting or—

TINA OLDKNOW: No, it's just what you really wanted.

DAN DAILEY: I said, this is what I want to do, and this is where I want to be.

So it was so fantastic the first year of the Philadelphia College of Art. Eight hours a day of classes, five days a week, and it was intense. And then you'd—you know, I'd take the train back to Elkins Park [PA], where my family lived at the time, and work until one or two, and then be back in class at eight o'clock the next morning, you know, and just over and over and over again. Long days of making things in response to assignments. There was such a competitive, strong group of students. Everybody thrived on each other's energy.

TINA OLDKNOW: Was there anyone there that you remember going to school who is known today?

DAN DAILEY: Let's see. Well, in my immediate group, you know, there are—I'm trying to think of classmates who are still working.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's kind of a hard question.

DAN DAILEY: There weren't too many of my immediate classmates who I see their names here and there or who I've even stayed closely in touch with. It's a little bit unfortunate, but for some reason it just didn't go that way for me. I can't think of anybody whose name you might recognize, that's, you know—

TINA OLDKNOW: You probably—if you had a list, I think it would probably be pretty clear. But I just was wondering if there was anyone who jumped out. In terms of your professors, is there anyone who jumps out when you got there your first year?

DAN DAILEY: Well, yeah, Bill Daley was an immediate, strong influence and became my, probably, largest true mentor. I mean, he's still a friend, but he was my teacher every year that I was in that school. And I worked for him in his studio, helped him on some big commissions. And there's always been a kind of close relationship between the two of us.

TINA OLDKNOW: And he worked only in ceramics, isn't that right? Or did he work in other media as well?

DAN DAILEY: For some reason, I think he had a bit of work with wood, but I may be wrong about that—or bronze. Maybe that was just student work. But, yes, I mean, he's an artist who works in clay and—he draws a lot.

TINA OLDKNOW: I was just about to ask you if his method of working is something that you feel comfortable with, the way you draw everything.

DAN DAILEY: He draws totally different from me. Most of his drawings, he likes to draw on paper just this size, with a ballpoint pen, and there are millions of lines all over the paper. You know, he's just a different kind of a drawer. But he's thinking out form, and he's playing with line, and he's composing on the rectangle just the way, you know, any artist would. He's thinking about the thing he's making on that piece of paper while he's making drawings. It's not a throwaway thing for him necessarily. It's an idea to be recorded, and he's probably got it in a file somewhere.

So he was a super-strong influence on me. He really encouraged me to be myself—which is something I incorporated into my teaching, you know, when I became a teacher. I never intended to become a teacher. Although I did take some art ed classes and taught in the Philadelphia public schools while I was in my senior year and then after I graduated, briefly.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] High school level, or younger?

DAN DAILEY: Well, when I was a substitute teacher, it was anywhere they had somebody missing.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, I see.

DAN DAILEY: And they would call you up at six in the morning and say, here's the place you're going to today. But I also taught filmmaking in a Quaker school in Philadelphia to a sixth grade class. And then—

TINA OLDKNOW: Were you doing film yourself?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, when I graduated from Philadelphia College of Art, I was not a—you know, I wasn't a full film major because I was mainly a ceramic—I guess they called it a craft major or a 3-D major. I forget exactly what the term was, but I couldn't be a glass major. I built the first glass studio there.

TINA OLDKNOW: At the Philadelphia College of Art?

DAN DAILEY: Under the direction of Roland Jahn. Roland was a ceramic student who had taken a class at the University of Wisconsin [Madison, WI] with Harvey Littleton, and he got a job at Philadelphia College of Art in the ceramics department. And the college got a grant from Fostoria [Fostoria Glass Society of America], the glass company in Moundsville, West Virginia.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And we went out there and got a lot of equipment in a rented truck, and then Roland taught me how to build a bench and a furnace and a kneeler. And he could weld, so he welded up all the steel. I cut it and ground it. The two of us built the shop over the summer, and then it got started. But you couldn't be a glass major. There were only, I think, five of us the first year.

TINA OLDKNOW: What year was that?

DAN DAILEY: Sixty-six—'67.

TINA OLDKNOW: Okay.

DAN DAILEY: Billy Bernstein was one of them, one of the first five. A guy named Wayne Filan, who now owns a company called East Bay Glass in Richmond [CA].

TINA OLDKNOW: What's his name again?

DAN DAILEY: Wayne Filan. F-I-L-A-N. I can't remember who else was in our class. But Billy and Wayne were two of the first people that tried glass in Philadelphia that first year we had it lit up. So that was a thrill, and it was part of the mix, but I was still a ceramic major.

TINA OLDKNOW: What did Bill think about glass? Bill Daley?—I'm sure he encouraged you to explore.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, he did. He liked it. He was always enthusiastic about everything.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I mean, he could talk to somebody that was, you know, a photographer or an industrial designer. He was head of ID for a while. He's just a very high-energy, kind of, multiple-thinking person.

TINA OLDKNOW: Did you ever think about going into industrial design?

DAN DAILEY: No, not as a department; not as a major in school or anything like that. Product design never really intrigued me much.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, it's not about you, really.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, not only that, it's just—I don't know. I just didn't feel the spark. There wasn't—maybe you're right. Maybe it's not about me, if you think of it as a way of expression. If that's what you mean by that. You're right; it doesn't.

TINA OLDKNOW: I mean, usually you design to a brief.

DAN DAILEY: That's right, you're solving a problem.

TINA OLDKNOW: Excuse me.

DAN DAILEY: Do you want some water?

TINA OLDKNOW: I think I'm going to get some. I'm getting a little bit hoarse. I'll just put us on pause.

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Okay. I was hoping it would keep my time, but it didn't. That's all right. It was about 20 minutes. Do you have a watch on?

DAN DAILEY: I don't.

TINA OLDKNOW: Okay. It's okay. I have this, and I'll just look at this, and it'll be fine.

Okay, to get back to where we were, we were talking about looking at your work. You do so much kind of illustrating and designing, and I'm really interested in that. And I thought, were you ever interested in industrial design, and you said, no, and we talked about designing to a brief, and it's not really, kind of, about you and that kind of thing.

DAN DAILEY: That got turned around pretty significantly when I began to learn about factories.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh.

DAN DAILEY: So, my first factory visit, I believe, was the Fostoria Glass Company in [Moundsville,] West Virginia.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Is that when you went to go get the materials for the glass studio?

DAN DAILEY: When I went out there with Roland, and just wandering around that huge place and seeing all those guys blowing glass and seeing the facility. I mean, to think of the facility, really, was kind of mind-blowing.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's a beautiful factory, too, except it's so sad, you know, it closed and all of that.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: But it was kind of like—did it always look so—Gothic, in a way? [They laugh.]

DAN DAILEY: All of them do, don't they? Well, no, no, not all of them. I've seen some pretty slick and clean factories.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] But no, the older factories, they get a real patina of dirt.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, they do. Yes, they do.

DAN DAILEY: And—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mystery.

DAN DAILEY: You know, just cultch, just accumulated junk everywhere that more or less gets cleaned up, but a lot of it gathers dust in corners and where people don't walk. And you know, there's definitely a scene that gradually develops. And that's part of the sense that you get when you're in the vast spaces. But the thing about design that I guess I had, you know, in Philadelphia College of Art, in the first two years of my education there - there were design classes, and they were taught by industrial design people.

TINA OLDKNOW: That was part of your foundation, right?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, for foundation, just to get a taste of it. And then in the sophomore year, once I had chosen 3-D as a major, as opposed to 2-D—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Were you ever interested in choosing illustration, for example [inaudible]?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I was, and I took illustration classes and printmaking classes and so on.

TINA OLDKNOW: And we talked about your interest in underground comics.

DAN DAILEY: And that, too. I mean, yeah, the cartoon thing is a separate deal. But the industrial design or - solving a kind of dimensional problem really was my interest in the industrial design. I didn't want to be a product designer. But then when I first went to Italy, the Venini factory [Venice, Italy] was a profound influence.

TINA OLDKNOW: And when were you there?

DAN DAILEY: I went to Venini in—I believe it was August of '72.

TINA OLDKNOW: Had they had the fire?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, they just had a fire.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Okay. That was 1972.

DAN DAILEY: My first work in Venini was shoveling debris into trash cans and cleaning up after the fire. And I could have gone to Barovier & Toso [Murano, Italy], but I chose to stay at Venini and help them clean up and get to work.

TINA OLDKNOW: It was sad. They lost their entire archive of objects in that fire.

DAN DAILEY: They lost a lot, yeah. Yeah. But fortunately, they had enough out in the world and could regather some of it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, yeah, sure.

DAN DAILEY: But that experience in the factory was—

TINA OLDKNOW: But that's not a normal—I mean, that's really not a factory in terms of, like, Fostoria, in a way. I mean, isn't it a much smaller scale? Or would you say not really?

DAN DAILEY: No, I don't think it was hugely different. Yeah, it probably had another hundred workers in Moundsville. I'm not positive of that, but I think so, and definitely at Fenton [Fenton Art Glass Company, Williamstown, WV]. I mean, later experiences in Fenton - that was quite different - and even at Daum [Daum Frères, Nancy, France] in the beginning, or especially after they got their location in Vannes-le-Châtel [France]. I mean, Daum was at one point pretty darn big with that second factory. But it was more the potential of the

facility and the common goal of all the workers, from the administration to the designers to the workers of all kinds. It was clear that all that energy being put into developing beautiful, finished things was powerful. You know, that was a strong influence on me. I liked that a lot.

TINA OLDKNOW: Did you like being part of a community in that sense?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, yeah, I did.

TINA OLDKNOW: You've always worked well with factories, and they love you when you go there because you know what you want. I mean, they told me that at Waterford [Waterford Wedgwood USA Inc.] when I was there. They're like, "Oh, we love Dan Dailey." And I know you've worked for Steuben [Steuben Glass, Corning, NY, now closed], and people enjoy being—you fit well into the factory environment, and not a lot of people do.

DAN DAILEY: Well, I just love it, so it's easy to get along. And I like knowing what every person can do and what their function is in the overall scheme.

TINA OLDKNOW: So I know that you feel comfortable at factories, and you can really get people in different areas working for you to do different things.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, you're right. Yeah, I do feel very comfortable. So I kind of hope it's not over. I haven't really done anything in factories now for three years. Yeah, three years. Anyway, that's kind of another story. [Laughs.]

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Well, is there anything else with Venini that particularly—were you interested stylistically in what was being produced there?

DAN DAILEY: Oh, definitely, yeah. When I first moved to Italy, I had thought about it quite a bit and gone around to showrooms in New York looking at product, specifically chair companies—Saporiti, Cassina—and thinking about designing chairs and thinking about what could I design for Venini. When I met Santillana and talked to him, I wanted to do something that would be successful for the company, and I chose to make lamps because, in graduate school, I had focused on lamps. I don't remember why, but I just had this notion of making objects that lit up.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And that's what my graduate school show was based on, and then when I went to Venini, that's what I mainly did; I made lamps.

So I thought of them as viable product, because it was all their processes, their machines, their people, and their materials. Even though I made a lot of it myself, because I didn't have a team assigned to work for me that often. I mean, it would happen, but probably, you know, once every two weeks, I could get a team to make me certain things that I had drawn. And their skill level was much, much higher than mine.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: You know, I didn't really have any training. In PCA [Philadelphia College of Art], there was nobody to teach you glassblowing.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you like the process of glassblowing, or do you like it just as well working with a team that you work with and they're doing it?

DAN DAILEY: Well, I have to say, I like it, and I did it pretty much totally myself, or with assistance up to a certain point, maybe into the mid-'80s. But when I went to Pilchuck [Pilchuck Glass Society, Seattle, WA] one time as a visiting artist instead of to teach, I deliberately removed myself from the team. And I found a picture the other day, and it was Rich Royal and Billy Morris and Ben Moore and Peter Hundrieser and Robbie Miller. They were all helping me make my things, and it was so cool to step back like I had done in Italy and have those guys, you know, just working on it. And they're all so skilled and enthusiastic. You know, it was just a good time.

And then later, Ben said, why don't we do this in my studio in Seattle, after he bought the Glass Eye building [Seattle, WA] from Rob Adams. So I've been going to Seattle ever since. I mean, that was from the factory, really. It boils down to that. That's the factory influence right there. That kind of team work and team pursuit of a single idea. And I didn't mind at all giving up the physical making of it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Because I think a lot of people would miss that maybe.

DAN DAILEY: Yes, perhaps so. But to me, it's not so much an element of hands-on control that I need, because my feeling is, it doesn't have to be my hands.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Well, because—

DAN DAILEY: It's still going to come out my way.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Well, you also have really thought it out in advance. You don't necessarily think on the pipe, like other people do.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, that's what Sam McMillen, who is a young guy in Seattle that helps me, was telling me the other day. He said my drawings are all he needs to really understand what needs to be done. I draw it from the top view, side view, bottom view, like a designer would, you know, orthographically. And then I have 3-D drawings, so it's kind of floating in space so you can see an angle that I think is important.

TINA OLDKNOW: Now, your drawings are amazing. I mean, they perfectly live. Those objects live in those drawings. It's clear, so I can see why he says that. It's very, very clear.

DAN DAILEY: Thank you.

TINA OLDKNOW: You're very, very clear on paper, you know.

DAN DAILEY: But like my art, to me, it's a method of communication, right. That's what I think drawing is really for from the beginning, from the caveman. You know, it's about communicating a thought or capturing something in time. So, yeah, drawings are the heart of my work, and that's—although I love objects. I keep on developing more and more things.

TINA OLDKNOW: Now, you said that you were just talking about—you draw fairly efficiently in three dimensions. Do you find that there is an essential difference once you actually have a three-dimensional object in your hands from how you envisioned it three dimensionally on paper?

DAN DAILEY: Yes. There is something in the process of translating a drawing to a three-dimensional object. There are things I haven't visualized, so when I see it for the first time in dimension, there's an element of surprise. Sometimes I don't like - I remake it.

Yeah, I'm not, let's say, as productive as I could be because of it. I throw away a percentage of what I make during the making. In other words, if we blow glass for a week, and I come away with, let's say, 22 parts, maybe 15 of them will get used, and the others will get remade or, you know, not remade. I don't know. Sometimes I'll make things more than once to have the best one.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you do all your blowing at Benny's now?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, pretty much. Once in a great while I'll make something at Mass Art [Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston, MA] if I need it right now, and I'll take some time and get somebody to help me.

TINA OLDKNOW: So how many times a year do you go to Benny's?

DAN DAILEY: Four average. Four weeks. And then also, in addition to that, for instance next month, Richie is going to make some big lamp shades for me for a couple of projects.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, great.

DAN DAILEY: And Dante's [Marioni] going to make small lamp shades for me for the same project and a different project.

TINA OLDKNOW: I'm interested that Dante is doing that for you. That's kind of great.

DAN DAILEY: I've known Dante since he was, well, 10 or 11. We used to play together, kind of, at Pilchuck, you know, making fireworks for the Fourth of July or something.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] That's great.

DAN DAILEY: You know, just dumb stuff. But yeah, I've always had a great respect for Dante. I really love him and it's so cool to see how confident and sure he is, you know, and how respected he is. To see my friend's kid grow up like that is just a thrill.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] He's a good man.

DAN DAILEY: He is, yeah. He's a good man.

TINA OLDKNOW: Paul [Marioni] was a very good father, I think. It was a good situation there.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, yeah. No, that was a lucky meeting. I've always had a great respect for Paul, too. I mean, as an artist, too. He's such a thinker, and he's so involved, you know. His explanations just send my mind.

TINA OLDKNOW: I know. He starts talking, and everyone's just like, oh, my God, you know. Really interesting man.

I wanted to kind of come back and circle around to our questions again because there is something here that I'm interested in asking you about, which is, do you think that there is any difference between a university-trained artist and one who has learned to have their craft outside of academics?

DAN DAILEY: I've thought about that question quite a bit to see who I know that's not university trained that's involved in glass. I know a number of glassblowers who came through the factories and who are not trained artists and are non-academic.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Your generation, there weren't that many. I mean, you don't have a bunch of the people that basically have received all their training from places like Pilchuck and Penland [Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC] and Haystack [Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME], because those are more your students' generation.

DAN DAILEY: Right. Well, let's put it this way: I don't know if I consider—some of art school education is not necessarily academic to me. This is the reason that both of my children chose Cornell [Cornell University, Ithaca, NY] instead of RISD [Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI], Philadelphia College of Art, CCAC [California College of Arts and Crafts, San Francisco and Oakland, CA]. They looked at those schools and, you know - that's what I'm saying. I kind of wondered if Owen would go to the University of Pennsylvania [Philadelphia], because he had some kind of connection there. I forget what it was that intrigued him. A teacher or somebody he had met when he went to Choate [Choate Rosemary Hall, Wallingford, CT]. You know, they had a really developed art program at Choate.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

MR. DAILY: And somebody teaching there had a connection at the University of Pennsylvania. A painter, and he loved that guy. I thought maybe that would get him to go to the University of Pennsylvania, to continue working with him. I think that was what it was.

In any case, the reason I said I don't think it's necessarily academic is because it's so skill-based and process-based, the education, let's say in painting. Art history would be what I would consider academic, but I'm not so sure I consider the, I don't know, functional classes so purely academic. They could exist at Pilchuck and Haystack, and probably do in a better sense, because more time can be devoted, and you can develop your skills. But when you come down to the thinking about what you're doing and why, then the art history classes and the other things that give you a perspective on yourself and on history and on—I don't know, make you question your role in society or what it's all about. That complexity of thought that's so concentrated in a good college or university is pretty darn rich, and you don't find that at any of those schools. You just don't. You can't.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. It's not what they're doing.

DAN DAILEY: They're too brief, and they're about, you know, attacking something for a short period of time and having an experience.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And skill is really the basis of that. I can remember discussing this with Tom Buechner [ph] at some point when he and I were at Pilchuck together. And it's kind of an ongoing argument or debate or difference of philosophy, really, but he told me pretty firmly that he only thinks, in art education, that skills can be taught.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I know. He really believes that.

DAN DAILEY: He doesn't think that concept can be taught.

TINA OLDKNOW: No. He does not think that.

DAN DAILEY: And I, in a certain way, understand—I totally understand what he's saying, but I disagree, because I think, as I said earlier, it's the job of the teacher to understand the individual and bring out from them what they're capable of doing. I think Bill Daley is a perfect example of somebody that can teach, not put his concepts into your head, but to bring your concepts to the fore, you know. So in that sense you can teach conceptual thinking. You can train somebody to get their inner thoughts out through their fingertips into their work of art.

TINA OLDKNOW: Or even to have what resources you go to when you get stuck. A lot of people I know - this is

not your problem—[laughs]—but a lot of people will be like, I just don't have any ideas right now, or they feel that they just don't have that kind of resource to come to work from. They get a little bit stuck. And I find this happens mostly with people who have not been to art school, who have not learned—maybe it is just about what resources, visual and otherwise, are available to you that you can mine, you know, for those kind of periods when you don't really know where you're going.

DAN DAILEY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

TINA OLDKNOW: So it's an interesting question for me, and I'm glad they're asking it. And certainly everybody thinks about it very differently.

DAN DAILEY: That's true and that's the beauty of it. I mean, it's pretty amazing, really, the opportunity that we all have to indulge ourselves in our thinking this way in our predilections for making this or that.

TINA OLDKNOW: They have a couple of questions here about whether you apprenticed with anyone, and you were talking about Bill Daley being your mentor. And there's another question here about what has been your most rewarding educational experience. Was that involved with Bill Daley?

DAN DAILEY: Probably. You know, I was Dale's first graduate student—

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, Dale Chihuly?

DAN DAILEY: —at RISD.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, I did not know that.

DAN DAILEY: And I had gone to California to—

TINA OLDKNOW: I did know that.

DAN DAILEY: —go to Berkeley [University of California, Berkeley, CA] or CCAC. Marvin gave me a choice, but he wasn't around when I moved there, and I got caught up in Haight-Ashbury [San Francisco, CA] and sidetracked for awhile. Then I had a carpentry business and drove a cab and did a bunch of stuff in San Francisco, and then moved back to Philadelphia.

TINA OLDKNOW: When was that?

DAN DAILEY: Sixty-nine.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, interesting time to be in San Francisco.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, it was really on the downside, lots of heroin addicts and just weird stuff going on.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] The innocence was gone.

DAN DAILEY: My mail was always stolen out of my box. It was just not the society of love that was in the media. [Laughs.]

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, or earlier even.

DAN DAILEY: It was kind of the society of rip-off.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah.

DAN DAILEY: But that aside, I just wasn't ready to go to school. I needed time—and I applied to RISD while I was back in Philadelphia working for Bill Daley, and I became Dale's first—actually, his second graduate student, but the first guy had dropped out. He would show up with a six-pack of beer every morning and finish it by lunch. [They laugh.] And he didn't last even a semester, I think. I don't know what he was thinking. He wasn't. [They laugh.] I forget his name.

TINA OLDKNOW: Who else was there at that time? I know that you were probably one of the first people that Toots [Zynsky] saw.

DAN DAILEY: Well, Jamie Carpenter was there.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes.

DAN DAILEY: Jamie was—I forget what his major was, but I don't think he ever majored in glass. I can't remember

for sure. But he was an undergrad student, and Dale and Jamie worked together all the time. You know, they were already kind of partners in making things. But Jamie and I built the shop, along with probably a few other people helping.

TINA OLDKNOW: How many shops have you built, Dan?

DAN DAILEY: Well, I built two at Mass Art—

TINA OLDKNOW: And PCA.

DAN DAILEY: —and one at Haystack-Hinckley [Haystack-Hinckley School of Crafts, Hinckley, ME], and I helped Pilchuck a little bit.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] You did that great illustration on how to build a furnace.

DAN DAILEY: Oh, that was a stupid thing. [They laugh.] That really was a dumb illustration. But at the time, it meant something to me, and I'm sure people built furnaces like that, you know, elsewhere, because I had seen it and done it myself.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] So you've built a lot with studios. I mean, basically, you built a lot of shops.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you enjoy them?

DAN DAILEY: I did at the time. I'm not interested in it anymore.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And like other things, there are people who are really very good at that.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Right. It's their specialty.

DAN DAILEY: And there's no point in spending my time on that.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, you really had to, because you really didn't have any other choice. Your were either going to build it yourself, or there wasn't going to be—

DAN DAILEY: If you're going to have it, you had to make it. So what I was getting to was—

TINA OLDKNOW: Who were some of the other students when you were at RISD?

DAN DAILEY: Besides Jamie?

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: Well, Toots, I think, was a sophomore when I was in my second year of graduate school. That's when I met her, and Bruce Chow was there. I'm trying to think if anybody—Therman [Statom] was around, I'm pretty sure.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, he was.

DAN DAILEY: I can't think of anybody else.

TINA OLDKNOW: Did you know John Landon?

DAN DAILEY: Was he at RISD? I didn't know that.

TINA OLDKNOW: He was. That's where he and Dale figured out that they wanted to do a school during—it was 1970.

DAN DAILEY: Well, I didn't know John at RISD—not at all.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: Richard Harned was there in the same class with Toots, I think. And at the time, I was teaching beginner glassblowing there.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh, when you went as a student?

DAN DAILEY: When I was a grad student at RISD.

TINA OLDKNOW: A grad student? So you were teaching glassblowing and then also—

DAN DAILEY: I had a fellowship to RISD, so teaching—you know, I got paid by the school, which was paid right back as tuition.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] So what did you think of Dale as a teacher?

DAN DAILEY: Dale's not really a teacher's teacher. He doesn't like to—I can remember the school got on his case for not giving grades—

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: So he gave everybody As, turned it in and said, there; they've all got grades. But he wouldn't stand in front of the class like I do and address everybody. His idea of a class would be to gather everybody at a restaurant or at his studio or something like that and have us all, you know, well fed and just having a good time. And he figured that getting a group of good people together, everything would rub off on each other. It would be good. That's my take on it, and I love Dale. He's always been an admired and good friend and extremely generous to me, and, you know, I love Dale. So I had a different kind of relationship with him than with Bill Daley. Bill Daley was really a teacher down to the details.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, plus he was older.

DAN DAILEY: And Dale's, what, only six or seven years older than me. But Bill, yeah, he's 20-something years older than me, so, yeah, there was a different kind of relationship. But the contrast of those two guys as strong, strong influences on me—they both had a profound influence on my—self.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you would say that [they] really influenced you somehow.

DAN DAILEY: Well, yeah, because Dale was about teaching me more about the independent professionalism through his example.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And he was in pursuit of something totally different from Bill Daley. Bill Daley wanted to be a teacher, and he concentrated probably more on that. He even said it to me the other day, that at some point, you know, he sees that he really spent a good deal of his life being an educator. And he's going to do a book about his work now, and we were talking about it, and he wants to have a section on himself as an educator. He thinks that's important, so the people that are doing the book - he's emphasizing that.

TINA OLDKNOW: What do you think about you in that way?

DAN DAILEY: Well, you know, it's not really part of the book that was just done about me and my work.

TINA OLDKNOW: No.

MR. DAIELY: It's mentioned, but you may know, I quit full-time teaching right after I got my tenure. So I was a full-time teacher and head of fine arts and did all that stuff, but I realized when I got tenured, it felt like the door closed on me.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, that's interesting because, you know, so many people want tenure. They go through hell to get it.

DAN DAILEY: No, these guys came to me and said, why would you quit your tenure, you know? You got it after seven years, which is good, and then, you know, you could retire and stuff like that. And that's an odd concept to me.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And it felt like I was being - put the clamps on me, you know, when I got tenure. I didn't want to be there for the rest of my life. I didn't want that to be me. So I took a sabbatical—

TINA OLDKNOW: And when was that that you quit?

DAN DAILEY: —and I spent half of my time France.

TINA OLDKNOW: And when was that, do you remember?

DAN DAILEY: Eighty-three or something. I don't know exactly what the date was, but as soon as I—I think when I got tenure, I took a sabbatical right away. And instead of taking it in one year, I took it in two years. So I split it up. I worked half a year both of those years. So I was at the college in the fall semester, and then from January until the following September I was free, but I got paid year round at a lower rate, and I went to France. I worked at Daum, which I had started in '77 in the summer, but then I could concentrate on it. So I went there in the winter and did more. It was quite productive. Those were good times.

And then when I was done with that, I realized, I don't want to stay—I think they considered me three-quarter time at that point. So dropped back to half time for about five more years. I forget what it was. And then I went down to quarter time in 1980. Well, no, I guess '85 or '86 I went to quarter time. So I was only half time briefly. So I've been quarter time for more than 20 years, which means I teach 14 days a year. So if you're doing 14 days a year, you're not very committed to teaching.

TINA OLDKNOW: No.

DAN DAILEY: But I couldn't give up academia. I love that feeling in September of going to school to start a fresh year. I've been doing it every year of my life since I was in kindergarten—

TINA OLDKNOW: So you teach in the fall semester.

DAN DAILEY: —except for two. Yeah, I would just teach September to Christmas. Every Monday except for Columbus Day or something. And then I would teach glassblowing, and I just stopped. You know, I'm not going to teach glassblowing anymore.

TINA OLDKNOW: And you also taught at Pilchuck.

DAN DAILEY: And I would teach—and I had taught at Pilchuck. Patricia Watkinson introduced [me] the other day to a group at The Ruins restaurant, a group of collectors, and I gave a talk there for the school. You know, for their fundraising options and so on. She introduced me and said I had taught at Pilchuck 18 times. I wonder if that's wrong. I mean, it doesn't sound quite right, but I know it was a lot. For me, it was a lot, even if it was only 14 times or 12 times. It's still a lot.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] It's still a lot. Did you ever teach at Haystack or Penland?

DAN DAILEY: I did. Penland, I co-taught with Fritz Deisbach one time. At Haystack, I was on their board for nine years, and I'm still a supporter and advocate of the school—

TINA OLDKNOW: Good. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: —as much as I can be, and maintain some contact, mostly with Stuart Kestenbaum.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: But I've taught there at least three times and done some special project workshop things. But Pilchuck was—I devoted more time teaching to Pilchuck, and I tried there to make it a serious educational experience for my classes, where we had an agenda, and we pursued a goal and discussed it and so on. It wasn't a free-for-all. I don't teach that way. [They laugh.] I guess I like control. I'm sort of a control freak in my work and in my teaching.

TINA OLDKNOW: Are you really, Dan? [They laugh.] I don't see you as a control freak. I just see you as someone who knows what they want to do.

This question always interests me because of the issue of identity. You know, what is American? But the question is, do you think of yourself as part of an international tradition or one that is particularly American?

DAN DAILEY: I think I'm particularly American. Yeah, I mean, any foreign experiences that I've had make it very clear to me, in my mind, that I'm a patriot.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, what does that mean?

DAN DAILEY: I love America for what it is. I like it for the mix of cultures and ideas and traditions. And I don't think that—it's kind of a complex question, but it really comes down to what my work is about.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: The themes that I follow are largely social themes, and they're about people. I mean, there is some element of French and Italian society in my work because I feel close to both of those, having lived in those countries. But for the most part, it's American, and I don't know if I can say probably, but there's something about it. I love America. When I come home to America after being away, I feel pretty darn good that I'm American.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, it's always really an interesting thing for me. I think most American artists do feel American, and do feel part of an expression that is American as opposed to something else. And I've always seen that in artists as almost being something that's free, you know, and kind of—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, absolutely, free, and there it is right there. I mean, when I first had Asian students, I was amazed at how they clung to the traditions of their aesthetic history and couldn't really break out. Now, at some point, it seems to me that they began to imitate Americans and have some independence from those traditions. But they were rare, and they were mostly people, I think, who had time in America to develop that sort of thinking. Europeans are pretty much ruled by tradition, in my mind, as well. It's partly due to the sort of nationalism that's so evident in European countries and people's conviction that their country is the best, and their way is the best, and why change? But I think Americans are always open to just about anything, and there is—I mean, you can see in this sort of—I've made some things that are pretty deliberately stupid and pretty, I don't know, raucous or overtly sexual, but kind of a play on that aspect of our society. You know what I mean?

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: Mostly my work is focused on looking at the society around me and making things about it. So when I use it, it's a subjective kind of attempt to portray something that I've seen.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] It's funny because your pieces seem to me to have, I don't want to say satirical, but it's commentary.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, absolutely right.

TINA OLDKNOW: And it's stylized, and it's often humorous, but it's not negative.

DAN DAILEY: No, I'm not too interested in negativity, period. But art, you know, I don't want to make things about politics or things that are temporal so much. It's kind of meaningless to me—and I like to make things that are uplifting.

TINA OLDKNOW: So, when—

DAN DAILEY: I like to think about those kinds of things.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I guess I want to know, well, so when you're talking about temporal things are meaningless, what is meaningful?

DAN DAILEY: Well, when I say temporal things are meaningless, I guess what I'm saying is that when I see art made about politics, for instance, it's something that might mean something now, but I think in a certain period of time, it will be maybe a little record of what went on and therefore not universal and not understandable by somebody who can't speak our language. But I'd like to think that some of the things—you know, if an idea can be conveyed without words, just through the look of the piece, then, to me, it's maybe more successful as narrative as it might be.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

Who were some of the artists you admire in terms of how they do their work? Obviously, Bill Daley.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I mean, when you think—well, it depends on the way you look at it. I do admire Bill, and I admire his dedication to the development of his work—through form and through—you know, there's a kind of logic that he's developed for the development of form. He's so into it. All the curves, all the joining forms, all the geometry that's hidden in organic shape, that kind of thinking is a really complex amalgam of, you know, looking at ancient culture, looking at architecture. He's a very observant person, and it comes out in the forms.

And there's even a progression, I think, from the early work to his current work that's—there was a time of great complexity, and now it's going back in a certain way to simplicity, and there's some religious aspect. There's some element of not exactly ritual, but there's something in the things that he alludes to in the object, that when you confront the object, you wonder what its purpose is. It's not just a beautiful object. It seems almost functional, like it's made to address a ceremonial event. Or something like that.

TINA OLDKNOW: So he's successful at creating a symbolic object that's something that tells you that it is—

DAN DAILEY: I think so.

TINA OLDKNOW: —more than something.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah. There's a lot of deliberate thinking going on. It's not just one beautiful shape moving into another. It's a pretty deliberate combination of forms to achieve a goal that he's set for himself.

TINA OLDKNOW: Are there other artists whose work you admire that you—for different reasons—

DAN DAILEY: Well, I like Wayne Thiebaud's painting, especially Wayne Thiebaud's paintings of landscapes in California. And it has to do with the manipulation of color and with the play on the depth in the painting and the kind of thrill of beauty. I mean, there's almost no relationship at all. But you know how Thomas Hart Benton's landscapes are, and his scenes are that—he's not afraid of color at all and, you know, not afraid of being corny or anything. He just put it down. And despite his early training, he moved into that stylized way of representation and so on. And I think Thiebaud is similar. There's a real confidence to the placement of color on the canvas and to the creation of the image or in the cityscapes. You know, the San Francisco hills with the really steep up and down. I mean, just think how different it is from [Richard] Diebenkorn.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah. Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And so that just gets me. You know, those things send me. And I was in D.C. looking at a friend's collection in Washington, and he had one of my animal vases, the Warthog, right in front of one of those Thiebaud paintings, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, wow.

DAN DAILEY: It was kind of an honor for me to have one of my iconic visual heroes right there in the same, you know—couple of inches away. So although the two have nothing to do with each other visually, it's kind of an influence. I mean, I've had this feeling of making landscapes for about 10 years, and I just have to get to it. Anyway, I like Thiebaud a lot. There's a ton of modernist work that I like and has been an influence, definitely.

TINA OLDKNOW: Such as? I mean, like postwar abstraction or—

DAN DAILEY: No. Well, I don't know who you would consider the modernist but—

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, there's so many. I'm just trying to figure out what—[laughs]—time of the century—who you were thinking about.

DAN DAILEY: Well, I'm not sure where to start or focus, but would you consider—I'm trying to think of some particular imagery. I don't know. Now I'm kind of thinking about Surrealism because for some reason I just can't get it out of my mind. I like [Salvador] Dali a lot, you know. In the '60s, he was derided, kind of put down by, especially, a lot of my teachers, because he was so commercial. And commercialism—

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, right. That has always been—

DAN DAILEY: —was definitely taboo. But I saw a Dali show in the Pompidou Center [Paris, France], where there were some huge number of paintings on two floors in that museum, and some were giant paintings.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: And it was overwhelming to imagine the productivity and the dedication to the various themes and the kind of wild, imaginative forays into every corner of his psyche. And then, just a few weeks ago, I saw the show at LACMA [Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA]. It's based on his films.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh.

DAN DAILEY: It was a good show at LACMA.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, excellent.

DAN DAILEY: The Dali show now. And some paintings and objects, like that lobster telephone. [They laugh.] But I don't know.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's nice that you said that, because there is a love of unusual juxtaposition of things in your work, but I wouldn't have traced it back, unless you had told me about that, to Surrealism, necessarily, but it's interesting.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, Surrealism definitely got me. I mean, I love [Rene] Magritte; I like [Henri] Rousseau, and I like some [Pablo] Picasso. I mean, I can not not respect Picasso. I have to say I, you know, took some real—I mean, I can get lost in looking at Picasso images, and I've seen some really good Picasso shows.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's good. I wanted to get—

DAN DAILEY: And [Vincent] van Gogh, especially because it's so darn, kind of, captivating. You know, to get into the look of the paintings. More than, you know, [Claude] Monet. I like Monet, but there's something—the real energy that's in a van Gogh, because he's trying to capture a feeling more than capture the—well, I guess you can say Monet captures feeling, definitely. It's just quiet.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

DAN DAILEY: It's kind of soft and beautiful and gentle by comparison.

TINA OLDKNOW: I wanted to ask you when you talked about the thrill of beauty, and I see that, kind of, in van Gogh's work, too, that thrill of beauty. It's almost physical.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, yeah, that's right. I agree. That's a good connection.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you want to talk about it a little bit—your feelings about beauty or creating beauty, or has that been a huge impulse for you?

DAN DAILEY: Well, a lot of my work is not so beautiful. Although I have deliberately tried to make it so, but I think I miss the mark fairly often. So it's a goal for me. Maybe that's what I'm trying to get at with these landscapes. I think some of my fabricated music pieces had a kind of strange beauty. But looking back over time, I mean, there are things that I've made, I think, that get there more than others. And a lot of times, there are odd combinations of form and not so much color. I think color, if anything, beautifies some of my strange forms.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] That's interesting.

DAN DAILEY: So I've managed to use color, both metal color and glass color, and painted color and so on, to beautify things that are otherwise pretty strange. So it's a little bit of deception there. You know, it's a way of bringing something to someone because there's an attraction, and then when you start to study it, it's something that maybe wouldn't be so attractive if it weren't made that way with those colors. I don't know.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's interesting to me.

DAN DAILEY: That's sort of an analysis, though, more than an explanation on the way I think. You know, I'm looking back. I'm not saying the way I made it at the time.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you often look back, or do pretty much just look forward?

DAN DAILEY: This book made me look back.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, that's what most artists say, and they were kind of shocked when they really look over their work carefully. Were you surprised in looking over the, kind of, larger body of your work? Did you make any discoveries?

DAN DAILEY: I can't say I made any great discoveries, but it does remind me that I haven't done a lot of things that I want to do.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, that's interesting.

DAN DAILEY: And, you know, now I'm 60. So what the hell am I going to do? I've got to get to work.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, you've been such a slouch so far. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, but it's so—I mean, it really makes me feel good to be making things. And I guess, because I'm so caught up in making and selling things to perpetuate my habit, that a lot of times I make things, and then they're done; they're photographed; they're delivered; they're sold. I never see them again.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And the time I really get to evaluate my work is in the photographer's studio, when I get to take the time to go and sit around and watch while he's setting up one of my pieces and photographing it. Then I can

really evaluate a little bit. But there's kind of a surge of energy while things are being made. You're all wrapped up and getting the details just right, and your head's a foot away from the object. There's no time for introspective thinking, really, and that book, you know, clearly offers that to me because as Joe was developing the graphic design and showing me the pages and making selections of images and eliminating this or that, you know, I didn't stand over him and say, I got to include this because I love it, or something like that. But looking at it really does make me think there are a lot of things I would like to get to that I haven't.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's a good place to be.

DAN DAILEY: You know, I've got so caught up in the vase. Why?

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: For so many years. What was I thinking?

TINA OLDKNOW: I guess that's the process. Something you had to work through. You loved it. What are your feelings about the vessel?

DAN DAILEY: I could make, you know, a thousand more, I'm sure—[laughs]—and be kind of happy doing it. But it doesn't excite me so much.

TINA OLDKNOW: I think we're going to go to our next disc because I really don't want to lose any of this, even though I think we have some more time. I'm going to stop us and put in a new disc.

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This is Tina Oldknow interviewing Dan Dailey at his studio in Kensington, New Hampshire, on January 21, 2008, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc number two.

We left off talking about beauty, talking about the vessel, and I wanted to come back a little bit to some of these questions that the Smithsonian has given us. It's fun to kind of wander off and then to come back and then to wander—[laughs]—off again.

DAN DAILEY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] I'm good at sidetracking. [They laugh.]

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, me too. This is really interestingly applicable to you. What is the role of the function of objects in your work - because you make both functional and nonfunctional things.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, you're right. It's interesting because not many of the functional objects that I've focused on are meant to be functional objects as my work of art, but I've adopted the format of a functional object. So, for instance, the vase—I mean, most of my vases were never meant to be used as vases. They were kind of a way of making an image of some sort or a sculpture. Like a lot of the Circus vases, I think, the vessel became in a certain way a pedestal for the figures that were surrounding it.

And with the lamps or with the other vases, they were more pictorial; the sides of the vessel became a place to make an image, make a picture. But with my lamps, I have made some deliberately functional lamps, especially chandeliers, and they're decorative. They're clearly decorated objects. You know, ornately made in most cases, many cases. Sometimes I pair them down, but then when it gets down to being just function - like recently I've made some lights that are floor lamps or, say, table lamps that were stripped of the sculptural embellishments. And those, I like them, but they don't have much, I don't know, verve or personality. I don't know, they're almost not me in a funny way. I don't feel as comfortable with them. I like them. They just don't have what I like in some of my work.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you think of your chandeliers that actually function, the ones that you like, the ones that are really expressive of you—and I'm thinking about that really great dining room commission you did, when all these parts kind of came together. It was kind of a [inaudible] kunst work, you know, like a—

DAN DAILEY: In Beverly Hills [CA], you mean?

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I think that was the piece, or that dining room where you—it's like you really kind of go into your world, and I love that. I just loved having that expression go beyond one object to be more of an environment. But do you feel differently about your chandeliers that function than you do about your vessels, for example, that don't?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I do. And functionality there, I mean, it's an assignment. You have to address it, and you have to make it function on multiple levels. So in that sense, maybe the earlier question about industrial design is coming out in my work. I have a lot of respect for and love for designing something. And a lot of my work is

design based, so underlying the sculptural object, there is a designed object, which hangs just right and delivers the light the way it's suppose to be delivered to the room or the space and it's fulfilling the assignment.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you almost see it as similar to the work you did for Daum or Steuben? Let's say Daum.

DAN DAILEY: Well, with Daum, lighting never got finished. We started some lighting projects, but the company changed hands twice.

TINA OLDKNOW: Because I was thinking about your—

DAN DAILEY: It interrupted my projects.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I was thinking about your sculptures too.

DAN DAILEY: But with my sculptures, those are a different kind of thing altogether. They're less about design. They're more of making a sculptural piece that was based on an assignment, but it was kind of making something I felt captured the, you know, the essence of the assignment. I don't know if I'm being clear about that.

TINA OLDKNOW: No, you are, but I guess my question is about the assignment.

DAN DAILEY: I mean, those were—in two cases, the sculptures that I made for editions at Daum—I made a table, a hippopotamus table and a pair of dancers. You know, I make the original model. They take molds from it and then cast an edition. And with the table, they had to do that in bronze and in glass and then put it together. So there were multiple trades involved and different shops and different locations in France. But the bulk of my edition work for Daum is those nudes, and they were deliberately made to have an Art Deco feel. The hair on just about every one of them is streamlined, almost like Egyptian. What's that famous basalt statue of an Egyptian queen with a very thin dress so that the body is revealed?

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, it's beautiful, yeah.

DAN DAILEY: And just traced those lines that kind of traced the forms.

TINA OLDKNOW: I want to say that's Hatshepsut, but I'm not sure. It is beautiful.

DAN DAILEY: I can never remember.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, or maybe the Old Kingdom.

DAN DAILEY: But I love those, and so that was clearly the inspiration for that series.

TINA OLDKNOW: Some of those Kingdom statues with the king and queen together, and she's wearing the very see-through [robe], yeah.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, yeah, and so, pretty interesting to make a see-through thing in basalt.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

[They laugh.]

DAN DAILEY: It's just so damned skilled and beautiful. You know, that's kind of a thrilling object.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, it is.

MR. DAILEY. Yeah, I love that Egyptian stuff. Anyway—

TINA OLDKNOW: We talked a little bit before about your interest in Egyptian and maybe some Mesopotamian. I remember you telling me that you liked the zigzag line because it was about movement.

DAN DAILEY: But the zigzag line, to me, was from Native American art—

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, Native American. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: —more. I mean, yeah, it's there in the Babylonian stuff, but I think of that as, I don't know, a refined, kind of stylistic symbolism that was used in weaving of different kinds and in pottery. It's pretty amazing stuff, the way they develop that visual language.

TINA OLDKNOW: So do you feel that you've been influenced visually by pottery and textiles?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah. Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: More than by painting, or maybe just equally?

DAN DAILEY: No, it's all a mix.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's all a mix. Yeah. Just things from here and there.

DAN DAILEY: It's all just—yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: But you do look at textiles you're interested in?

DAN DAILEY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

TINA OLDKNOW: Ancient pre-Colombian as well as other textiles? Or—

DAN DAILEY: My favorite textiles, I guess, are Navajo rugs.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I like Persian rugs, some more than others. I like Kazak rugs, you know, or what they call the Caucasian rugs. I like a lot of them, but those are my favorites, I suppose.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you collect any Navajo textiles?

DAN DAILEY: I have a couple of little Navajo rugs.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Do you collect at all?

DAN DAILEY: Not consciously. I don't pursue things, and I have never built up a deliberate collection of much of anything. And when I do, I mean, I have some collections that are put away. Things from salt and pepper shakers to - I collected red rubber for awhile. So red rubber would be all kinds of objects.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah.

DAN DAILEY: Erasers or the top of a crutch, you know, or the bottom of a crutch or—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] That's kind of random, Dan. I mean, how did you arrive at red rubber? [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: —silicone. The red rubber things for casting the ceramic nosecones of missiles—

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Right.

DAN DAILEY: —and nipples for feeding cows and nipples for feeding giraffes, and just different size rubber castings and so on. But the stuff deteriorates. It doesn't last.

TINA OLDKNOW: No, it doesn't.

DAN DAILEY: It was a collection that sort of fell apart, literally. I have a couple old cars. Three nice old cars.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, you drive those, so it's not like—

DAN DAILEY: No, but they're restored like show cars. They're all showroom-perfect cars. So I like to keep them just that way.

TINA OLDKNOW: Perfect.

DAN DAILEY: Like to keep them just that way, so it's a kind of a fussy collection. [Laughs.] I don't know. But I'm not a collector's collector, by any means. Most of the stuff I've collected is in boxes in the barn. I don't look at or think about it. I have a collection of toys that's in there. I should probably just give it away or sell it or something.

TINA OLDKNOW: It sounds like you were collecting things for specific projects or something that you were investigating. Is that when you do that?

DAN DAILEY: Well, you mean like Vitrolite [pigmented glass from the 1920s and '30s]? Something of that sort?

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, actually, I did want to ask you about your collection of Vitrolite. Do you still have your

collection of Vitrolite?

DAN DAILEY: Well, I've used a lot of it, but, yeah. I mean, I haven't avidly collected Vitrolite for a while.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] So how would you collect that after they've stopped making it? Would you go to construction sites?

DAN DAILEY: Well, there was a period of time when [wife] Linda [MacNeil] and I drove across the country, at least twice together in different vehicles, to go to Pilchuck once and then just to go across Canada to the West Coast and go camping and take a month. That was when I was teaching full-time, so I had those summer months off. It felt like, you know, my job was then, and my vacation was then, so we took off. And we would go to a place like Buffalo [NY] or, I don't know, Lincoln, Nebraska, and look in the Yellowpages and find glass companies and call them up and see how long they'd been in business.

And if they'd been in business since the '20s, we asked if we could come poke around in their back warehouse and see if they had any Vitrolite. And guys would say, oh, I've got some of that, yeah, come on over. And then, you know, I would find four sheets of black and a couple of sheets of maroon. Pretty big stuff. And I'd have them crate it and send it to me in Boston. I collected a lot of it that way. Got it all over the country. Some from San Diego [CA], some from Newark [NJ]. You know, just different places. And there were a lot people that had what I would call new-old stock. Still had the labels on it, still in cases, and I got it shipped to me.

And I've used it, but it's such a definitive palette, and it characterizes my work in a certain way, that I've tried to escape it. I've played it down for a long time. Now I've been using it again. I'm not quite sure how I'll continue to use it, but I haven't collected it. We looked into taking some Vitrolite off of a building in Concord, New Hampshire, and I had it down to, you know, getting the permits to put up scaffolding and get a crew and start removing it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: And then the woman that—her husband passed away, and she decided to restore the buildings instead of knock them down. And they were asking me for Vitrolite, and I didn't want to part with my black because it's a nice foil to all the other colors, you know—

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, you need that black.

DAN DAILEY: —and I like the black. So I didn't want to get rid of it.

Anyway, as far as collecting goes, I've tried to eliminate a bunch of clutter from my life, and, you know, for a while, I was just surrounded by—you haven't poked around the studio yet so—

TINA OLDKNOW: No, I haven't. I'm waiting. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: There's a lot of piles of accumulated things that I don't really look at or think about. It's probably time to just get rid of it.

TINA OLDKNOW: No, I've only just seen your beautiful house that is gorgeously installed, but sparingly, with your pieces. It looks really great. Your house is really beautiful. So I'll be interested to see your studio, the kind of things you have in there.

DAN DAILEY: It's weird to be surrounded constantly by all the stuff that you've made. I like other people's art, and I was talking about Thiebaud's paintings. I guess if I was going to buy something and be a collector, I'd buy a Thiebaud painting if I could afford it, but I can't, so I'm not.

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: I'm going to have sell my cars or something.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I think you'd have to make a compromise there of some sort.

DAN DAILEY: Anyway, I don't think I'm much of a collector. I don't feel the urge.

TINA OLDKNOW: And do you feel good about having your work all around you in your environment? I mean, does it help?

DAN DAILEY: It doesn't bother me, but I wish—I just wish it wasn't all my art and Linda's art, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, like to see other things sometimes.

DAN DAILEY: I mean, we have some of George Nicks's paintings. I like George's paintings.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I like those, too.

DAN DAILEY: And—I don't know. I just—

TINA OLDKNOW: For someone coming here, though, it's really a great opportunity to experience you in a larger way. So I think I really appreciate it, being able to come to your house and just seeing that. And I guess all of the artists I visit, to a certain extent, really, a lot of their work is around them all the time.

DAN DAILEY: It's what I have. I mean, if they weren't out in the house, they'd be in a box in the barn. Our archives is largely in the barn. You know, if it's not out on loan to some place, it's here in the barn.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. I would like to, again, change the conversation a little bit and talk more about the business of your art. Now, you are someone who has had a successful career. You can support yourself from your work, you and Linda both. You've supplemented it by teaching, but you said you certainly didn't rely on teaching to subsidize your object making. Is that correct?

DAN DAILEY: Correct.

TINA OLDKNOW: And that's not easy to do. There are certain people who manage to do it, and I think that everyone I've ever talked to does it in a different way. There's no certain steps to follow, you know. You kind of have to work it out for yourself. What's been your biggest challenge in terms of learning to live from your work and doing that?

DAN DAILEY: You mean financial challenge?

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Or just, I guess, survival.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, as I said before, I feel like I have a habit that needs to be paid for, so I've been kind of an addict to money. And every once in a while a big check comes in, and I've got a new dose, and I'm up, you know. [They laugh.] But I've always been a worker. Like I said, I had a job when I was 10 or something. Not a "job" job, but I knew the system of you work, you get paid, and I love to work.

So when I first took a teaching job at Mass Art—when I was in graduate school, I was working for an Australian television company making illustrations for commercials, through some funny connection. I forget what it was. And in undergraduate school, I had a job or two jobs or three jobs. I always had jobs. So it's just my habit, and I had my carpentry company in San Francisco and then in Philadelphia, and I had a couple of people working for me, friends, you know, who I would enlist.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you've always been doing different businesses and—

DAN DAILEY: We'd be building a porch or putting in a bathroom in an apartment in Philadelphia or, I don't know, painting a house or putting a roof on a place in San Francisco. You know, just stuff. I did it to make money, because I found it a lot easier to put an ad in the paper and get a few calls and go get the materials, and I can't remember what vehicle I used for that. You know, I've always had a car ever since I could drive, or a number of cars. So, I mean—

TINA OLDKNOW: I guess what I'm getting at is—

DAN DAILEY: —you build up work. So with my art, I think I sold my first piece as a sophomore, some ceramic mugs or something. And then I sold some cartoons to a couple of newspapers in Philadelphia. Small newspapers, you know, community newspapers or the Jewish Exponent or something like that. And then I sold some glass during my first year of blowing glass, as crude and weird as those pieces were.

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: And I managed to make some things that sort of look like something.

I remember this woman who was an older student, maybe she was three years older than the rest of us or something—she was married and back to school after a break. Lou Anne Kallener is her name. I haven't seen her since those days, but she asked me to make a trophy of breasts. So it's this vessel that kind of looked like a Fritz Dreisbach piece, you know. I don't know what she wanted it for, but it was a joke between her and her husband or something. I don't know. But that was a cool assignment, you know, and it was a sold piece.

And then I put pieces in—I never did craft shows. I had one craft sale experience in New Jersey somewhere with a bunch of my friends from the ceramic department at PCA. We went and each took a table and spread our stuff

out, you know, and waited for somebody to come along and buy it. I didn't like that experience. It was so demeaning and so, I don't know. It was just making product. It was about product, and I didn't see myself that way.

So I guess when I was in undergraduate school, I never developed a relationship with a gallery, but when I went away to graduate school, I left some things at a gallery in Philadelphia. And then when I moved back to the East Coast, I contacted the gallery and said, "Well," you know, "what's going on with my work?" They said they had lent a whole bunch of my ceramic mugs that I had made to a restaurant. Most of them were broken. [They laugh.] Or lost or something like that. And I never got a dime.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, my God. That's so bad.

DAN DAILEY: And later on, they apologized to me, but it was beyond the point of even wanting to have anything to do with them.

TINA OLDKNOW: No. Oh, my—

DAN DAILEY: And they're an established gallery now, but at the time it was a weird and disheartening experience. And then in graduate school, I started up a relationship with a gallery on Madison Avenue that also was in Greenwich, Connecticut. I forget how that started, but it was called the Elements Gallery, and the director and owner was a really nice lady, and we—

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you remember her name?

DAN DAILEY: No, I wish I could, but I can't. So that was interesting, and I was—

TINA OLDKNOW: Okay, well, that was a better experience, I hope.

DAN DAILEY: It was, yeah, and I had made some things that meant something to me. You know, some vessels and some—I think I had a couple of early sculptures in the mix.

TINA OLDKNOW: So this was 1970? You went to graduate school?

DAN DAILEY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah, I went in '70. Yeah, it was the fall of '70. So it was the end of '70, September '70. And then it probably didn't happen until '71 then, because I don't think I made anything worthwhile in that first semester that I would have sold. Maybe I did. Maybe a piece or two. I really don't remember all of what I made back then, but I was making these telephones. They were some of the first things I made, I'm pretty sure, and alarm clocks and tables and things of that sort. I believe I sold a couple of those in that gallery. They were kind of like still lifes or little [Claes] Oldenburgs, and I always liked Oldenburg, definitely a hero, Oldenburg and [Roy] Lichtenstein. More than other people at that period, they were influential on me.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, more than any other Pop artists.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah. Those guys especially. Then I met Theo Portnoy, who came through RISD one day and asked me if I wanted to show with her. And I jumped at the chance. She opened her gallery on 57th Street [New York City], and I ended up showing with her until '82, I think.

And in '83, we had a kind of falling out because she thought that I was taking work—you know, somebody would go into the gallery and see something like it and then not buy it from her and then call me up, and I would have it sent back to me and then sell it to them directly. I never did that. I wouldn't do that to Theo. She treated me like a son. You know, Theo and Cy, and she passed away now. I found that out recently.

But anyway, I mean, she was great to me, and I had a bunch of good shows with her. I showed with—Paul Marioni was one of the guys. Lucian Pompili. You know Lucian Pompili?

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-mm. [Negative.]

DAN DAILEY: He's from the Bay Area [San Francisco, CA], I'm pretty sure, but he ended up living in New York somehow. I haven't been in touch with him in a long time, and Tommy Simpson and—those were good days. So I had probably my first show where I sold some work, and it was clear that that could be a viable way of making a living to me and putting my energy into it more than the teaching. It made more sense to me. I was full-time teaching then, so I had to—you know, I just knew that I could back off from teaching and make more of that. And then at the time—

TINA OLDKNOW: Did Dale ever tell you—

DAN DAILEY: —I had started up my—in '77, I started my relationship with Daum, and I had some things selling,

and I was getting royalties. So I had another source of income and my teaching, even though I backed off, it was still a little bit of money trickling in. So that made a difference.

TINA OLDKNOW: Did Chihuly advise you when you were a student, all about, you know, how to slant or—

DAN DAILEY: Selling? No, I can remember—

TINA OLDKNOW: —take teaching jobs?

DAN DAILEY: —one of the earliest conversations I ever had with Dale about money. He was driving some beat-up van, and it was breaking down, and he was pissed off, and nothing was—you know, he was clearly aggravated by it. And I said, why don't you buy a new truck? And he said he didn't have the money. I said, well, geez, you know, like at the time, I had just gotten divorced for the second the time [Not correct. I was only married once at the time described here—DD], and I put it on my credit card.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I said, Dale, you know, just charge it. He got a new truck the next day or the next couple of days.

TINA OLDKNOW: You're the one who is responsible. [They laugh.]

DAN DAILEY: So, I don't know. I mean, I can't claim that kind of influence on Dale but—

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: —I remember that conversation pretty distinctly, and he had a new truck, and credit really was a good thing. You know, it was easy to get, and you could make something happen. If you had an idea and wanted to realize it, if you didn't have the dough, you could easily just charge it. You're not buying a product, you're investing in yourself, but you got to pay the interest if you can't pay it off.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's right, yeah.

DAN DAILEY: If you don't make a sale. If you don't get lucky. So it definitely puts you on an up and down, though, because you've got these swings of money and no money.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, which I think is typical of people who tend to work for themselves anyway.

DAN DAILEY: And I was sticking my neck out all over the place. But it became a lot more—I mean, as things started to sell for more money and as my own expenses increased - you know, I put my kids in private school, and then you had to come up with quite a bit of money every year to pay that.

TINA OLDKNOW: Not to mention college.

DAN DAILEY: And then seven years for Allie and five years for Owen at Cornell. But, I mean, Choate and St. Paul's [St. Paul's School, Concord, NH] were just as expensive. It was just kind of—well, I believe in education. You know, to me, [it] is the foundation for thinking and for making the most of your life. So it was never a question. It was just that you're going to have to pay for it somehow.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. It's just, you have to do it.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah. I had a bunch people ask me, why the hell did you want to spend so much money on school? You can get it for free. And these are successful people, you know, guys that had very good businesses and millions of dollars. ut I couldn't explain it to them. Well, I guess it was important to my parents, and it became important to me.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's right.

DAN DAILEY: So, anyway, that's another subject. But being able to make a living from my work—it just has kind of snowballed, and I've been pretty damn lucky. Lucky to have people that like it enough to lay down the dough, and then, as I said, it perpetuates more work.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] And so you kind of have always—it sounds like you've had good experiences with your dealers, for the most part, or would you say it's been a little bit up and down? [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: Well, it's a tricky subject. A lot of people can't understand why they would give up half the cost, or half the price, of something to a dealer. But, for instance, my dealer in New York has, you know, a $40,000-a-month rent. On top of that, there's insurance. It doesn't pay for the lights. It doesn't pay for the heat or the air

conditioning. It doesn't pay for publicity. It doesn't pay any salaries. It's just to be there. So the overhead is huge to be at 57th [Street] and Madison [Avenue].

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And the bank at the bottom of the building is paying a million dollars a month, one of the Citibank branches.

So when you think about who goes in there that would never come to my studio, some stranger from Israel or Germany or China is walking in and cold to my work, not part of the scene, doesn't know anything about the glass scene or what's developed in America over the past 40 years. You know, they just walk in, like it, buy it. That's because it's there, and that's what I'm giving up my percentage for. And they never get 50 percent anyway. They always discount it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: So there are ways of thinking about it that, you know, you can kind of soften the resentment for giving it up. Now, it's a little tough to swallow when somebody insists that they get a certain percentage and they haven't done anything for you.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: You know, they just think it's the way it's done. But I don't have a lot of dealers anymore. I had 12 at one time.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow, that's a lot.

DAN DAILEY: And I know people that have way more than that, but I don't make a lot of work.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

DAN DAILEY: So I have far less than that now, and I try to keep a personal relationship going with each of them. I don't like it. I don't want to be part of the pack. I don't want to be in a gallery that has 80 artists, although I probably am in a couple. And unless I feel like there's an understanding, like somebody could explain my work to a visitor, I'm really not that interested. So it's an emotional thing as well as a business thing.

TINA OLDKNOW: And what do you think about places like SOFA [Sculpture Objects & Functional Art, Chicago, IL]?

DAN DAILEY: Well, at the outset, I felt that the SOFA show was a pretty spectacular thing because of the evident work from so many places all at once in one place. I can remember going into the first SOFAs. Before it was called SOFA, it was called—I forget, New Art Forms or something like that.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, New Art Forms, that's correct.

DAN DAILEY: By Navy Pier in Chicago, and I used to go in there before they opened it up and photograph all the glass and then give a slideshow to my students the next week, or a couple weeks later, when I had the slides back. And it was a great cross section. You could really see tons of things from all kinds of people. I don't like the pressure that it puts on me, and I don't make new things for SOFA. If a dealer wants to take my work, they can take what they have in the gallery, and that's that. I mean, I don't want to make SOFA my focus.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And now there are three of them. Well, Palm Beach Three is kind of a SOFA.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And they're always asking me, send one new piece. You know, just one new piece or something like that. And I understand, and if I can accommodate, I probably will, if it works out. But they were asking me for new work for the Palm Beach Three last month, and I have a little show at Imago [Imago Galleries, Palm Desert, CA] in a month from now, and that's what I'm focusing on.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, right.

DAN DAILEY: I want it to look a certain way, be a certain body of work, feel a certain way, and that's what I'm thinking about. So it's a commercial show, but I try to do it with some integrity.

TINA OLDKNOW: Of course, you do something with it. I mean that you don't have that many opportunities, nor do you make enough work, to have a lot of shows all the time, and it's not just about putting out a new product.

DAN DAILEY: And that's why I want another museum show, too. I mean, the reason I want to do a museum show is because I want to show things that aren't for sale, and I want to put things together for a different reason than because they happen to be all done that day or that—you know, by that deadline. When I had that retrospective at the Smithsonian back in the '80s ["Dan Dailey: Simple Complexities in Drawings and Glass, 1972-1987." Rosenwald-Wolfe Gallery, Philadelphia College of Art, Philadelphia, PA, February 27 - March 30, 1987; Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, June 26 - October 25, 1987], it was such a cool thing to have somebody else's take on my work come out. You know, Eleni Cocordis did that. And to see—well, it was an attempt to try to understand my work, and by this curatorial attitude, it got into what I was trying to get at in my work.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh.

DAN DAILEY: And it was somebody else's perspective, you know, and I'm a guy that gives critiques, not gets critiques.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: Once a while somebody writes something, but it's pretty rare in our field and even then, you can't count on understanding. Not sympathy, not, you know, acquiescing fear of you, but understanding so that the critique could be pertinent—

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, right.

DAN DAILEY: —because it's easy to make a critique but unless it's really from a point of view of understanding, it's kind of pointless. So that's what I liked about having that kind of a show, with no commercial ties. I mean, somebody was saying to me the other day about museum exhibitions, that they were looking at a proposal for one and turned it down because many of the pieces in the show were for sale, which is kind of spooky. I was just reading—where the heck was I just reading it? Oh, in the—have you read NeoCraft [Dr. Sandra Alfoldy, ed. NSCAD University Press: Nova Scotia, 2007]?

TINA OLDKNOW: No, I have not.

DAN DAILEY: Because I had it on the plane the other day coming back from Florida, reading it, and there's a section—I think it's in NeoCraft or the other one. I'm reading two books now on the perspective on craft in America over the past 50 years, because of my lecture series I mentioned that I want to start.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, yeah. You talked about that.

DAN DAILEY: And they're talking about the Guggenheim's [Guggenheim Museum, New York City] exhibition of [Giorgio] Armani, and it got a great deal of criticism because of the commercial implications. And then the later show, which was the motorcycle show, but it was sponsored by Harley[-Davidson] or something, wasn't it?

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, the Guggenheim has its own model for exhibitions.

DAN DAILEY: [Laughs.]

TINA OLDKNOW: It doesn't go over well with a lot of museums.

DAN DAILEY: But they had their reasons, and it was clearly apparent, though, that while the things in the show were not for sale, this is good PR—

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, it's all about selling, yeah, yeah.

DAN DAILEY: —for the company, and the store is right down the street.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

DAN DAILEY: And they probably had some things in the gift shop.

TINA OLDKNOW: And that's the problem. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And so, anyway, I don't know how I got on that subject. But the thing about having a noncommercial show, to me, is it's an opportunity for some kind of introspective thinking and, kind of like that book, which was a retrospective of other sorts for me, gives you a chance to see where you've been and where

you might be.

TINA OLDKNOW: How have you seen the market for craft change? What have you noticed?

DAN DAILEY: Well, the big change that I've seen is that - because I have been able to get some pretty darn high prices for my work. I sold one piece, not a complex piece, but, you know, one of my wall pieces, for a quarter of a million. That's a lot of money.

TINA OLDKNOW: That's great. Congratulations.

DAN DAILEY: An awful lot of money—and that wouldn't have happened unless, first of all, the person is there with the wherewithal, but also with, you know, that person wasn't somebody unacquainted with the art world.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: They also have [Alexander] Calder and [Joan] Miró and a bunch of other works, so there's something going on that's different from when I started and—

TINA OLDKNOW: Would you just call that history? Like there's a history—[inaudible].

DAN DAILEY: Partly that, but I think that—well, this NeoCraft book that I mentioned, where they've been talking about the desire on the part of a lot of people who have entered the crafts, let's say, to be accepted in the so-called fine art world has engendered a kind of price envy, where people think that their work is just as good, and why should a painting get so much money and, you know, a vase not—or something of that sort.

So I think a lot of the collectors, they may be aware of that, but I think just that it's been around long enough, it's gotten enough respect and enough exposure that the collectors, in spite of any criticism, you know, any kind of written criticism, they respond more, in a way, from a gut level, and they see that this is a serious artist, who's devoted a great deal of time and energy and thought to the making of this body of work, not just one piece, and that it's something worth putting down the money for. And I'm not just talking about myself; I mean, I have to say I'm talking about myself, but, you know, I have a lot of friends who are able to get a darn good price for their work.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] That's right. And actually, I think this has also come from the artists. I don't know how much you work with your dealer on pricing, but I know that certain artists have been very bold in saying, you know, I am going to push the price of this up, and I do want to get this in spite of everyone saying you can't do that. They do, and that impulse, I think, is really important because it takes everything along with it, you know, when that starts happening. I think if people didn't attempt to really develop that, you still might have a market that was very similar to what it was like in the '80s.

DAN DAILEY: I agree, and I think people in glass have been far more aggressive than in other media.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I do too. I do too, definitely, and other craft associated with it, yeah.

DAN DAILEY: But the main thing about all that is that the collectors are there to back it up, and they're not—I don't know, they're not—all I can say is that there is a huge collection group that's based on glass collecting. But at the same time, there are a lot of people who don't collect glass, who don't even know all those glass collector people, and are also interested.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: They're also supporting us.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. And that's important. You know, I think that you want to have access to a larger community. Although, I have to say, a lot of what makes glass attractive to people is the community that comes with that, because it's a very tight community compared with other, you know, media-based work. I think there's a small, kind of rarified community in contemporary art, but nothing like what we have, where you know the collectors; they know you; there's a lot of kind of back and forth.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, you're right. You're right, and we spend time with collectors, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: That's one of the most fascinating things to me about the career that I've developed and Linda has developed, is that our relationships with collectors has been an extraordinary kind of richness that's added to our lives. And I'm not talking about money. I mean, we know brain surgeons, and we know property developers ,and we know just so many people who are interesting, successful, confident, experienced people in all walks of

life, from different countries and all over America, and it's going on and on. I mean, they're inventors and engineers and scientists and, you know, doctors and attorneys. They're just a lot of damn smart people.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you have people who collect a lot of your work?

DAN DAILEY: There are a few who have big collections of my work, yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: And you have fairly close, ongoing relationships, I would think, with those people.

DAN DAILEY: Not all of them. I mean, I know them, and I've socialized with them and, you know, been on their sailboats and in their houses and I've spent time with them. Well, I don't know if I should say names but—

TINA OLDKNOW: You don't have to.

DAN DAILEY: —but there are people who are probably your friends, too, who have significant collections of my work in Los Angeles [CA]. But only on the really early work, not the current work. Not to mean they wouldn't support the newer work but in different ways. By buying it and giving it away, for instance.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And then there are some people in Germany—two people in Germany, one in one business and one in another, that have quite a lot of my work. I mean, one guy has, I don't know, 34 lamps -

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: - in three different houses, and a number of other things as well. And, I don't know, there are people around in different parts of the country that have bodies of my work. Not that they have one of each, but they might have six pieces from one series, seven pieces from another, two from one series, and so what they can get.

TINA OLDKNOW: Does that surprise you that people might become so attached to your work that they would want to collect a lot of it, or do you—I wonder—I would assume that you like it. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: Well, see, I kind of—when somebody—yeah, I do like it, obviously. I mean, I love to get the dough, but besides that, I try to work with them to make sure that the collection is significant and representative, and I would encourage them to add to it in ways that expand it rather than repeat it, which might be to the detriment of a sale of a more expensive piece. If it's some odd little thing that, you know, I wouldn't charge them a lot of money for it, but it's kind of a missing piece of the puzzle, as far as I'm concerned.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: So I've done things like that.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you would offer that kind of guidance to certain people.

DAN DAILEY: Or offer up a piece from my archive that I really don't think I should get rid of, but on the other hand, they have such a great collection of my work. But unless they just put it all up for sale one day, I don't know what they'll do with it. And that's a funny thing. You can't control that.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, yeah. As soon as it leaves here - did you have to learn early on you just have to let go of it?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, it's not mine. And that's another thing about making things - I mean, I've never been that attached to what I make.

TINA OLDKNOW: Most artists aren't. I'm surprised. That surprises me. Of course, I'm a curator, and I love to collect things and preserve them. But, yeah, for them it's—what they get out of it is in the process of making it.

DAN DAILEY: The piece takes on a new life when it leaves your hands, especially when it becomes somebody else's. And it means something to them, and it's, you know, in their house, and they walk by it everyday and think about it, or it's in the corner of their eye. You know, just something. It's a part of their lives, not yours.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. It's funny how it can be the end of your experience with it and the beginning of someone else's. And that's nice.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, it's a good thing. But just to finish on the topic of making a living from your work, as I said earlier, I feel like I'm pretty damn lucky that so many people have liked it enough to support me. And I treat it

like a business, from, probably, working in factories. I've seen ways of archiving, ways of documenting, ways of taking advantage of opportunities or treating a situation or my commission work, for instance.

You know, in the approach to a commission and my dealings with clients, and incorporation of engineers and other experts when necessary to make something happen just the right way, and not compromising on any aspect of a project and treating it, you know, seriously, like a business. So that I'm punctual and reliable and honest in all those dealings. That sort of thing is—it's not part of my thinking as an artist, really; it's like another side of me, but it's a necessary side of me. I mean, I feel it. I suppose I could get along without it. I don't know. I think I'd be kind of—I'd have a much less predictable life if I slacked off on running my studio as a business.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you ever envision retiring from the selling part, kind of like Billy Morris has? He announced that he was retiring. I don't think he's retiring from making it. I think he's retiring from selling.

DAN DAILEY: That's an alien concept to me. I mean, I might as well just kick off.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: I'm never going to retire, and I'm not interested in lounging out or—

TINA OLDKNOW: You like to work.

DAN DAILEY: I love to work, and I have no dislike of meeting collectors and being involved in their lives. As I've said, I have friends who are collectors, and they became friends because they bought my work, and now I see them for other reasons, whether they buy it or not. But, no, I can't imagine stopping what I do. I feel lucky to do what I do, and I'm happy doing it. I might slow down a little bit for other reasons, you know, in order to—sometimes I feel like I need a sabbatical from who I am.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] I can easily understand that. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: And having—I think I have nine employees right now. You can't pull the rug out from under them. And even if I were to say, okay, you know, I'm going to sustain you for one year; I'll give you all a year's pay and, you know—

TINA OLDKNOW: See you later. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: —you can count on going somewhere else at the end of that year, or you've got a whole year to go travel around or look around. But whatever it is, I'm not going to do that. I just mean that I couldn't treat the people that work with me that way. So there is kind of a burden on me to—you know, that's a responsibility I took on when I asked them to help me with my work. I have to treat them with that kind of respect. So you have this responsibility, you know, you get this—

TINA OLDKNOW: If you could take a sabbatical from who you are, what would you do? Have you ever thought about what you would do? I mean, some people like Dick Marquis - and actually, Bill did this, too. Bill Morris took a year off from making things. You know, they just did not want to do that, and Dick, I think he traveled. He worked on cars. I mean, he did different things, but it was very helpful to him. He needed that rest.

DAN DAILEY: See, I get rest from focusing on one thing or another differently.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: So when I dropped vessel making—I have a few unfinished ones in there. I just can't seem to bring myself to get down to the drawings to start those last few pieces. But by shifting to another series and developing something new, or by going to France and staying in the factory for two weeks and working on another piece for Daum or by—you know, I'm going to do this thing at the Toledo Museum [Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH] in May and start a project there, where I'm just going to go to the museum, and they're going to give me a room to draw and think and study paintings and make something about landscape.

TINA OLDKNOW: Great. Excellent. That's fantastic.

DAN DAILEY: And then go back there in the fall and use their hot shop and do something about it, you know, and make a piece or two in response. As much as I can at their facility. But all that stuff is out of here. And that's another thing; I work in Seattle a month out of the year, so I'm away from here. I escape the momentum of my own place and my thinking fairly often through the variety of things that I do and it's kind of deliberately built up that way. So my work is in enough directions that it's a little bit refreshing to move from one thing to another.

TINA OLDKNOW: So an important aspect of your working environment is the ability to change venues from time to time, to vary. I mean, some people just - literally, they stay in their studios. That's where they are, and that's

where they feel comfortable. But it sounds like that you feel comfortable—it's kind of varying things a little bit.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I've always been able to kind of acclimate myself to a new situation quickly and be productive.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] What are some more of the aspects that you find essential for a good working environment? What do you feel that you require?

DAN DAILEY: Depends on the type of work. For instance, for my most creative thinking, I need silence and remove.

TINA OLDKNOW: And what?

DAN DAILEY: Remove. For instance—

TINA OLDKNOW: So you have to leave—

DAN DAILEY: —you know, for years, I was in the habit of going into the studio at 5 a.m., before anybody was awake, and working until seven. Just those two hours alone, no noise, no people. It would give me a lot of time to think about, what am I doing, you know? What am I going to make? How am I going to make it? Just figuring things out in my own way.

I've changed that because I do exercises now in that time because I felt like I was ignoring my body. So I needed to just do that, and that seems to be the time when I feel best doing it. Now I stay after everybody leaves. Quite often I'll work from five to eight or something. So it's a little different pattern, but I still have times of where it's quiet, and I'm alone in the studio, and I can just think and have nobody bother me.

Or I'll draw in a hotel room in Paris or something, you know, and just spend an hour or two with my sketchbook here or there. I take it with me all over the place. You know, most of the time it's in a hotel or in a friend's house or something.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you sketch in your studio?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: So when you're doing the working after hours, for example, is it mostly sketching?

DAN DAILEY: Not necessarily, but, yes, sometimes it's sketching in my sketchbook. Sometimes it's drawing on loose paper; sometimes it's thinking things out that I need to solve. You know, a mechanical problem.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] But you're careful not to let business creep into that time.

DAN DAILEY: Oh, yeah, I try not to. I try to compartmentalize that, and there's really—I've never had anybody working with me who can handle all of it. Maybe it's because I didn't want to let go, but I think it's more that a good deal of it is personal, and I don't want somebody deciding something for me that I don't agree with.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah.

DAN DAILEY: So I don't have a huge business, you know, and the people that help have very specific jobs, so I know what they're working on and how far along it is and, you know, how much I have to do versus what they have to do.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] When did you meet Linda?

DAN DAILEY: I met Linda in [September 1973—DD]. It was my very first year of teaching at Mass Art, and she was my student. I was teaching ceramics because there was no glass shop. I was in the middle of building it. So I taught a ceramics class, and she was a student in my class. And then—

TINA OLDKNOW: This was before she went to RISD or after?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, yeah. She was at Mass Art for one year, and she had been at PCA the year before. She took a leave from PCA and went to Mass Art and then was applying to RISD. And so I met her then, and then she went away to RISD for two years, When she was finishing RISD, she was seeing me a lot on the weekends, and we built a kind of small metal shop in the apartment that I had in Boston, and she would come there on the weekends. Quite often I'd go pick her up on Friday and take her back Sunday night, and, you know, we'd make things together. So I made glass stuff for her; she made metal stuff for me. Parts to objects, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] So that early piece our museum has, with the—it's that really nice, cylindrical purple vessel with the lid, and there's the ivory.

DAN DAILEY: Oh, yeah, right.

TINA OLDKNOW: —on either side with the metal. Did she make those metal fittings there? I think it's 1977.

DAN DAILEY: She might have. That has cast grapes that were made in a—

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, it does.

DAN DAILEY: I forget where we made those. Yeah, I'm sure Linda helped me with the gold, and she was really into ivory and ebony then, and so was I. We got it from the sculpture house. No, I guess we got the ivory from the [Botswana Game Industries—DD], where they had a managed park, and they wouldn't let—you know, they got the tusks from elephants that died or were poached and they got the ivory back or something like that.

TINA OLDKNOW: I know that she really uses more metal and glass now. Do you ever go back to those other materials and bring them in, or are you pretty much focused on metal?

DAN DAILEY: Metal?

TINA OLDKNOW: I'm thinking about ebony and ivory and so forth.

DAN DAILEY: Oh, yeah, I don't use too many other materials in my work. You're right, it's mostly metal and glass. Once in a while, I'll use wood. For instance, I'm making a stairway now for a house in Connecticut, and so I have some woodworkers that I like to work with, and they're going to make the actual stairs and risers and the handrail and make a beautiful thing that'll go along with the bronze and the glass and the stainless.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, that'll look great because it'll give it a nice warmth, I think.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, and it'll be incorporated with the feeling of the interior there.

TINA OLDKNOW: I really like seeing your work here in your house with all this wood around it, too. It looks really good. You know, it's just nice.

DAN DAILEY: Thanks. But I'm not a woodworker. You know, I've always—

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah. No, I know.

DAN DAILEY: I did make a couple of things out of wood, but seeing—well, the guys that I'm working with now, these two New Hampshire guys that are going to help me with the stairs, they make fine products. They make furniture, but they have done a lot of other things. They did the interior of that little bathroom under the stairs.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] I love that. That clock in there is—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, it's a cool clock.

TINA OLDKNOW: That is amazing. It's so you. You know, I love it. It's so Deco.

DAN DAILEY: [Laughs.] So you can see the influence, yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: First I looked at it, and I thought, did Dan make that—

DAN DAILEY: Even the numbers.

TINA OLDKNOW: —you know, because—and then I realized, no, that is period, you know.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, Waltham [Waltham Clock Company, Waltham, MA] is this well-known clock and watchmaker.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's great. It really does look like you. That frame, you know.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: That kind of inverted triangle and, you know, kind of things.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, the keystone.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's nice.

Do you see a lot of connections between your early work and your work now?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah. Although, I think I was pretty crude in the early days. I'm maybe a little too tight these days for my own liking. That's why I like the contrast between glassblowing - you can see, for instance, if you look at my abstract heads or some of the other—to some to degree, these individuals I've been making for the past couple of years - there's a looseness about hot glass that I like to preserve, so I don't want to make it just perfect. I kind of like it when the colors are a little bit, you know, obviously put on instead of just smooth and perfectly blending in. I'm not after type craftsmanship so much with those pieces, although I mother them like crazy with a diamond tool when I get them back and get everything just right and take off little things I don't like or imperfections and so on and do the acid polishing.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you do acid polishing here?

DAN DAILEY: No, I do that in West Virginia.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, so you do all your acid polishing there.

DAN DAILEY: That's a process I don't want to own.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, no.

DAN DAILEY: It's really deadly. So I treat it like a ritual, and we suit up in multiple-level rubber suits and have air supply helmets. And we dip in a really methodical way. You know, everything is carefully watched. It's in a very well-run factory that's now owned by a Swiss company, and they're really on the ball with every regulation. OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] is there regularly. EPA [Environmental Protection Agency] inspects it once a week or something. It's totally legal. You know, it's good.

So it's all the way in West Virginia, so it's a pain, but I've been doing it there now for more than 20 years. Not in the same factory. The original one was Fenton, and then the other one I went to burned down.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you have assistants from here that help you.

DAN DAILEY: I usually take two people from here, and then I have a guy, who was my student and is a long-time friend who now lives in Florida, who comes up. And then there's another guy who helps, Michael Schunke—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah, I know Michael.

DAN DAILEY: —who's from the Philadelphia area. There are a couple other people who have helped me over the years. But I try to keep it the same experienced people, and it's only for a day. Getting there takes awhile, but we—you know, to acid polish one of my big pieces takes 12 seconds, but to get it all there and to get it all—

TINA OLDKNOW: Unpacked and then repacked.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, and acclimated to the temperature and get the acid bath just right.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, right.

DAN DAILEY: You know, I have my own equipment in the factory, and they store it away. And they don't use my formula because mine is HF with sulfuric, and theirs has, I think, a slightly different mix. I don't know that they're using sulfuric. They do all kinds of technical things, where they check each piece with a meter, and it's got to reach certain specs for the industry and so on. But they set my equipment up and fill my formula in the tanks on a prescribed day, and then I have to hire a certain number of union guys from the factory to work with me.

TINA OLDKNOW: So how many pieces will you do in one bathing?

DAN DAILEY: That depends. I mean, I'd love to get as many as, say, 40 pieces at a time, and that's not finished objects. That's parts that then go together. But sometimes it's as few as 25, and sometimes it's maybe as many as 60, especially if we take Linda's work. They're tiny little pieces, and they've got to be inspected and rinsed, rubbed off with a toothbrush, and then checked, and maybe go back for one second or two seconds.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: That's pretty time-consuming. So I have to take an extra person with me just to do the monitoring of her work coming out of the acid room, and then under the lights and getting inspected and cleaned, and then maybe redone to, you know, a slight degree more of reflectivity.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you think that there is a lot of interaction between—do you believe that you're influenced by each others work at all?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, this summer we went to, I think, nine or 10 museums around the country. Remarking on things, observing things, you know, everything from the Shelburne Museum in [Shelburne] Vermont to Williamsburg [VA], where that big folk art collection is from the Rockefeller family, and then a lot of other things; buildings. You know, we went to Monticello [Charlottesville, VA], and we went to San Simeon [Hearst residence, CA—DD] and, you know, the Getty [Getty Villa, CA] in Malibu. I hadn't seen it since it was rebuilt. Oh, we were all over the place in lots of museums; Phillips Collection [Washington, DC], National Gallery of Art [Washington, DC]. So every time we got to a museum—we've done it ever since we've known each other, go to art museums, and we have favorites. The Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City] is really probably top of the list. The Louvre [Louvre Museum, Paris, France] is right up there, too. That's so fascinating.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's endless.

DAN DAILEY: Owen and I spent hours in the Egyptian section of the Louvre.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, it's incredible. An incredible collection.

DAN DAILEY: Do you know the Museum of the History of Lorraine, Musée de l'histoire de Lorraine, in Nancy [Musée Historique Lorrain, Nancy, France]?

TINA OLDKNOW: No, I don't, and I'd like to go there.

DAN DAILEY: It's down from Place Stanislas. They've moved it, and it's renovated. They kind of moved it. It's all redone in the same buildings, but it's a fascinating collection, and things that you would recognize are in that collection.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: But it's like a crossroads of Europe at a certain point in history and it's just—

TINA OLDKNOW: I know. The region is fascinating.

MR. DAILY: —terrific. George Nick ran through that museum looking for things that he'd recognize. He's kind of a funny observer. I don't know if you know his paintings or not, but he's—

TINA OLDKNOW: Who is this?

DAN DAILEY: George Nick. He's—

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, George Nick. Yes, you were talking about him, yeah.

DAN DAILEY: He's a Yale [University, New Haven, CT] guy and—

TINA OLDKNOW: N-I-C-K?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah. A painter that I have known from Mass Art, a colleague, but he came to Nancy with his wife one time, and we went through that museum. And instead of wandering through the museum contemplating each object and letting it kind of roll over you, George, somehow, had thought about it all in advance, knew what pieces he wanted to see. He'd see one, and then, you know, we'd all be looking—Assya, his wife, and Linda and I are walking around looking at things, and he's running to the next one and studying it for 10 minutes and then running to the next one and studying it. Just that kind of interested me. His way.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh, I think everyone has their own way of looking at things in museums.

DAN DAILEY: He had seen it in a book over and over again, and he wanted to see it for real and study the brushstrokes and see it in a different light.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, I think it's important to see things in person. They're so different, especially if you've only seen it in a book. I'm always surprised because things do not look at all like what they look like in photograph to me.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah. Yeah, you're right. So, I mean, there's something where Linda and I have a real commonality, our inspiration from museums. And for instance, shows by the Cooper-Hewitt [Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York City] and the Met of Lalique [glass] and Cartier [jewelry] were super influential on Linda, and

Mauboussin. And we've always loved Art Deco together for the same reasons, for the qualities and materials, for the contrast of materials, for the richness and the kind of luxurious quality and even the pursuit of, you know, of a kind of streamline beauty. So those things have been influential on us. And museums, really, are my main influence. Probably more than—I mean, obviously the things in the museums, not the institutions.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Oh, I understand what you're saying. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: But objects in museums have been my main kind of excitement. If I had to cite anything other than observing humanity, going to a museum has always been a thrill. Just it satisfies me deeply.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Well, I'm with you there. [Laughs.] It's funny, though, because a lot of artists—I mean, sometimes people tell me they really don't like to look at work because it interferes with what they're trying to see, you know, in terms of creating for their own work. But they don't want to look at other things, and I find that odd. But in a way I kind of—I guess I would—I really don't understand it, I don't think.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I don't understand it, because to me, it's sort of enriches your vocabulary. The more you can cram in, the more resources you have. It's like a continuing education.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. I think I'm going to stop us here because we are getting to our time limit on this tape.

[END OF TRACK AAA_dailey08_3327.]

This is Tina Oldknow interviewing Dan Dailey at his studio in Kensington, New Hampshire, on January 21, 2008, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc number three.

You know, I wanted to talk to you a little bit about education because you—even though it's not been kind of central in your career - you've done a lot of it, and I think that you [have] a lot of feelings about it or beliefs about education and a commitment to education. And what do you see as the place of universities in the American craft movement, specifically for artists working in craft associated materials like clay and fiber and wood?

DAN DAILEY: I think it's the primary influence on the movement that we've been participating in. Nothing influences in a more profound way, and the reason is because [of] those guys from the Bauhaus that came here that taught the school, and the school craftsmen in Rochester, and those people going out into their separate places and so on. And then the GI Bill that sent so many, mostly young men, back into education instead of into the trades, and many of them chose the route that they did. Wasn't [Peter] Voulkos part of that?

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And Bill Daley certainly was. A lot of guys like that, who are extremely influential in their careers through the university systems. They all had their connections. Some more tightly than others, but for many of us who went to art school in the '60s, where we could have chosen to work with paper or work with bronze or be a filmmaker and so on, chose to work in the traditional craft mediums because it was exciting. There was something going on that was new, even though it was ancient, and it seemed like it had endless possibilities, and it was all hands-on. It was all very involving, and there was a kind of a spark to it that didn't exist in the other departments at the college. For me, especially at Philadelphia College of Art, I thought it was the most dynamic department, and it attracted me. So—

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you think that's still the case?

DAN DAILEY: I can't say, because I've lost touch with so many of the programs that I used to be in touch with. I mean, when I was teaching full-time, especially when I was just building the department, and then even when I backed off to part-time, I tried to stay in touch with other programs and have joint shows with RISD or get the students together just for the heck of it, you know, to see that they knew each other and knew each others' work, and there was some exchange going on. The students in our program were then acquainted with a wider world and the fact that they had comrades and competition, you know, who were equally in pursuit of it just like them.

But I think these academic settings were important, because they weren't apprenticeship style. They were total freedom. Now, they were poor at teaching. I don't know any of them that are good at teaching technique. People might have learned a little bit, but I didn't learn anything. I learned something seat-of-the-pants or maybe, slightly, here and there by demos. But definitely in the time when I went to school, I didn't learn anything about glassblowing that was worth a damn until I went to Venini, and then somebody would take it away from me and do it right, show me, and then I had to practice it. I got a little better, but I was never that interested in being a glassblower. I mean, to do it for myself, yes, but to be a production guy, no. And to make it as perfectly as I want, I always turn it other people.

So I think the schools didn't focus on skill building as much as they focused on the development of the individual as a thinking artist. And that's where I think its most profound influence was or, hopefully, still is. I don't know.

TINA OLDKNOW: So, ideally, you would—I mean, the ideal kind of situation then might be to have kind of that art school education supplemented with programs like Pilchuck or intensive courses in skill building.

DAN DAILEY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] The advantage of the skill building is that, obviously, if you have the good vocabulary skills, then you can realize your ideas to a level of credibility. That, to me, is the real strength of making something well, that it gives the thing credibility. But I don't think that's really a part of education. That was part of my education, though. They jammed it down our throats. I mean, they would pick something that you made up, look at the bottom of it, look at the back of it, you know. I can remember a teacher saying to my good friend John Mead—you know, he picked up his piece at the critique, and he said, Mead, if this was the last thing you ever made in your life, would you want your mother to have it? [They laugh.] You know, and he would throw things on the floor, you know, and say, I didn't realize that was somebody's work. He was clearing off the counter, you know.

But they were hard on us because they were kind of, I think, close to the Bauhaus. Not directly, but their teachers were, and they—you know Richard Rhinehardt, the jeweler from Philadelphia?

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: He was that way. He was an army guy or an air force guy or something. He had a kind of military bearing, but he was just so committed to get it right and do a beautiful job. He was a strong teacher that way.

TINA OLDKNOW: Did you also teach that way? I mean, did you consciously have those kinds of principles?

DAN DAILEY: I did when I was full-time, yeah, and I tried to spend a great deal of time on exercises for people to get good at something. Like when I taught cold working, I would make sure that everybody practiced on every machine, knew how to work on the machine, knew how to replace the parts or adjust it. Could make a beveled edge, could drill a beautiful hole without chips and cracks and, you know, all the things that you want to be able to expect from yourself so you're not making a piece of junk. And like I said, I think something well made gains—the end product gains some credibility. It has a different presence, you know, when a stranger confronts it.

TINA OLDKNOW: It also wears well over time. I mean, it's important, and I think that there's maybe ideas, that some people think it's not as important, but I think it is important. It is really important for the object to be well made. I think that that's generally the case.

DAN DAILEY: See, I call that the '60s craft ethic. It's my own term for it, but I'm sure that many other people would describe a similar thing, who experienced education the way I did, and not necessarily at PCA. It could be at RIT [Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY]. It could be at CCAC or other schools in other places in those years. But I think there was, because of the dissemination of educators that went from a few key places out.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, like Wisconsin.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, Wisconsin. And, you know, when I went to CCAC, there was a cadre of teachers there who had similar kinds of education and who were interested in building a department and, you know, having great students and having shows of student work to help the students understand the whole thing, from conception to the execution of the piece, but to all the skills necessary to get to that point. And then the beautiful execution of a piece and the display of it and, you know, to see the start-to-finish process in its entirety. I think that's dissipated quite a bit, and I don't think people are as interested in finishing things well. Well, for a long time, anything that was—like my work - what I would call "slick," you know, in the making, there's kind of a disdain for that—

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, people didn't trust it or something.

DAN DAILEY: —because it didn't show the mark of the hand in the same kind of rough way that expressive work does, you know, and expressionistic things. And that definitely influenced another generation of students that I encountered in the '80s. Many of them were deliberately not going too far. You know, if a casting came out badly, they'd be, not like Marcel Duchamp, capitalizing on accident, but they would be more, you know, caught up in the beauty of the dripping edges and say, oh, I can't destroy that. It's precious, you know. So happenstance became a part of making, the accidental school of design. It really gained a lot of popularity, I'd say, in a certain period. I think it's slightly swinging back the other way, and there are other influences too. There are a great deal of influences now, especially the commercial ones. There's different pressure on students these days.

But the role of the colleges in the establishment of - not careers, because they really don't establish careers.

What they manage to do, I think, is get somebody to a point where they can see that if they follow certain procedures, they can realize their ideas and have it at a professional level. So there's a certain aspect of professionalism that they try to teach in every school. I remember trying to teach a class—

TINA OLDKNOW: Did you teach a professional practices class?

DAN DAILEY: Whose?

TINA OLDKNOW: A professional practices, so—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I did, but I taught that early on, and somebody else teaches that there still. But I wanted to teach a—because that class, as it is interpreted at Mass Art right now, is a resume-writing class, a grant-writing class. And I didn't think that that kind of self-promotion and free lunch, you know, should really be the basis of teaching. It raises different kinds of expectations. I proposed a class, which they didn't accept, called "How to Make a Living from Your Work." And they told me that I had to change the title, that I could teach the class because the material was fine, but the title, they didn't like. I never really got an answer. Well, at the time, maybe still, I was one of the only ones that wasn't full-time. I did make a living from my work, so I felt like I would be able to impart some particular knowledge.

TINA OLDKNOW: I think it would be very important. Sure.

DAN DAILEY: And I did. In the long run, what we covered—you know, I did cover resumes, but I said, well, bring the resume you wrote for the other class and let me read it. And what they were telling them to put on the resume, half the time, they would ignore what I would consider valuable things like, you know, what job did you have when you were 15 or, I don't know, just all kinds of things that come down to, are you a capable, flexible, competent person? A responsible person, or, you know, there are many things that describe you. So that, plus teaching them, and I would conjure up a commission so that people had to approach me like I was their client and give me a proposal. And the proposal had to include a number of things, including drawings and a model, full-size, of a certain chunk if it. If it was a 10-foot wide piece, they had to give me one-foot-square full-size of it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And I would show them, with names blanked out, contracts that I had had with municipalities, with big corporations, with individuals, so that they would have multiple levels of contracts as a format to keep in their records so that they could make their own at the time they needed to. And then we would go to a photographer and have their work shot, and they had to make a postcard out of one of their photographs, you know, as a calling card. Just various things that are kind of accepted now as fairly regular, but at the time, it was not what most people did.

So to get students working that way and thinking that way, my goal was just to help them to be prepared, when they left the school, to actually make a living—and I'm sure other schools had variation of that. I don't know, but I just can't imagine they didn't. So I think that part of education has influenced people, too.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you think that we are still in a glass—that the studio glass movement is still something that is alive? I mean, would you characterize the activity still as a movement?

DAN DAILEY: Well, you know, I don't think of the movement as an aesthetic movement, and I haven't. I've always felt that even though I was president of the Glass Arts Society and friends with teachers all over the country and teaching classes and Pilchuck and so on, that we were never joined by our commonality of, you know, pursuit of a kind of aesthetic ideal like the Surrealists or something.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Right.

DAN DAILEY: You know, where it's kind of one-upmanship.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: And I think that those schools acquainted students - they kind of shocked them out of complacency. You know, if one of my students from Boston went to Pilchuck and came back after a class, and they had learned a technique in a glass casting class or even a glassblowing class or something, and then they're in the shop doing it, and 10 other students see it, the information is filtered down. That's a very good thing. So it affected many people in that way.

I think the other thing it did was it clearly—you know, a lot of my students ended up in Seattle, and it clearly caused people to realize it's a great big world out there, and they could move all over the place and find opportunities to do what they wanted to do.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: So it's had that effect, and Pilchuck especially. I think the programs at Haystack or Penland or the other schools that have a glassblowing program—I don't know about the Corning School [Corning Studio of Glass, Corning, NY]. I mean, that's a much more recent development.

TINA OLDKNOW: It is. It's more recent. It's very much—

DAN DAILEY: But it's still technique based.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's completely technique based.

DAN DAILEY: So people are going there to learn a process and take it back home and practice it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, right, exactly.

DAN DAILEY: And so, that's good. I mean, it's a technical school. Pilchuck, I think, is a little bit less technically oriented because I don't think the teachers necessarily have a mandate to get information across, and many of them aren't teachers. Many of them are, you know, a lamp worker from Italy who knows how to make what they make, and they have a huge repertoire of skills, and they can make just about anything. But they're not a teacher. They don't have that experience to—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Well, I think all of these schools—

DAN DAILEY: —to lean on.

TINA OLDKNOW: —you know, you have this combination of people who know how to teach and then people who really aren't teachers but are just artists with a large skill set that they can communicate to students.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, so in that sense, it widens the students' world, too, that they get to meet these people and see that it comes from elsewhere. You know, it's not just their little world that generates it or a duplicate one from California.

I think the other thing that, as I mentioned before, since a lot of us pursued that kind of education as a choice, when we got to art school, we didn't know what we were going to do, and then that became the most interesting choice. Clearly many of these people studied art history and had friends who were painters and, you know, got to know the art world in a certain way. If they had come to it through a factory or through some non-academic means, they wouldn't bring the same concerns or the same goals with them. So that, I think, is a strong influence of the educational system on this movement.

TINA OLDKNOW: I wanted to talk to you a little about—you mentioned that you're thinking of beginning a new lecture series for your students at Mass Art. That you're going down—what is it, that you're going down to five days?

DAN DAILEY: I'm going to go to five, five visits a year.

TINA OLDKNOW: Five days a year? Yeah, and that you wanted to do a lecture series. That would be the way that you would organize that.

DAN DAILEY: I haven't figured out how I'm going to do it. It may come down to me lecturing, especially the first year, because I don't know how I can get it together. But I would almost prefer to do five good videos, where I'm interviewing a friend like you're interviewing me, to have a conversation about specific issues and edit it enough so that it can happen in an hour. You know, disseminate the guts of it and turn it into something that's a real usable thing for the students.

TINA OLDKNOW: And you have been interviewing people, is that—

DAN DAILEY: No, I'm starting.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, you're starting.

DAN DAILEY: I have three in my sights. I'm going to start with Bill Daley in the spring, and I don't know who I'm going to do first in glass. I'm inclined to do either Fritz or Dale. They would have a totally different take on it.

TINA OLDKNOW: It would be completely different—[laughs]—that's true.

DAN DAILEY: But I'm not sure that I want another person who is an educator like me.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

DAN DAILEY: So, I don't know. I haven't figured that one out yet. I did talk to Fritz about it the last time I was in Seattle, and he's enthusiastic. He said he would do it.

But my premise is that we've all been participating in a movement that I would call "materialism." It's every bit as much a movement as other artistic movements in past years have been, except that it's not an aesthetic movement. But because of the strong influence of materials and processes, it's affected a lot of us. It's brought us together in many ways, meaning we depend on each other for information and exchange and physical help and advice and also—just knowing about materials, because of the examples that are set by the constant development of new processes. So you have people doing things that weren't done before. Just nobody thought of it, or the materials weren't available, or the confluence of technological development and new ways of joining things or new ways of handling materials. All that stuff is related to the material and to process, and it's influenced our art.

So in that sense, what we've done doesn't necessarily come from tradition. It comes from a search. It comes from a kind of development of things that were just all happening at once. This jumble of activity has generated a whole new way of working with the material. I mean, I'd certainly think that in glass, what's gone on since 19—let's say, I don't know, 60, has to be considered historically as a kind of burst of creative and technological development, compared to ancient historical materials. I mean, if you look at the contemporary section of glass in a museum compared to the Egyptian stuff or the Bohemian stuff or the Art Nouveau stuff or the Art Deco period - anytime there was a strong burst of creativity in the history of glass - this has got to be one. And it's gone on now for more than—well, for 50 years anyway.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, I think that that's absolutely true, and I think that it—certain things continue it. For example, if you think of Harvey Littleton bringing kind of the furnace to the artist studio being - in terms of glass, [what] was an inaccessible material. Harvey then brought it to a certain group of artists, who started using it and working with it. It was still pretty inaccessible. Then it started becoming slightly more accessible. Now, in the last 10 years, it's even more accessible than ever, because there are studios for hire and glassblowers for hire, and you can hire hands to make your work, and all these different people can come in, really, for the first time and explore the material, if they want. And so, yes, in that sense it's been ongoing. I feel that there is less cohesion as a so-called movement because it's big. There's a lot of people working in glass now.

DAN DAILEY: That's right.

TINA OLDKNOW: But I think that you're right in terms of - you can think of it not so much as a studio glass movement rather than as one aspect of this "materialism." You know, this kind of movement. I think that's a very astute observation. I think that there's really something interesting there.

DAN DAILEY: Aesthetically what it's done - because there is a slight aesthetic commonality, and that has to do with function. Did you see Paul Smith's show called "Poetry of the Physical" ["Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical." American Craft Museum (since 2002, Museum of Arts and Design), New York, NY, October 1986 and traveling]?

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, sure. "Poetry of the Physical."

DAN DAILEY: Is that the one with the book? The most recent one? No, I'm thinking about two shows back—

TINA OLDKNOW: The "Poetry of the Physical" was in the '80s.

DAN DAILEY: —"Objects for Use" ["Objects for Use: Handmade by Design." 2000]. Was that what it was called?

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] "Objects for Use." Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I think it was still American Craft Museum when it was put on, but it might have been the Museum of Arts and Design.

TINA OLDKNOW: I'll check to see. Yeah, I'll check to see. I think it was—

DAN DAILEY: I mean, I participated in the name change enthusiastically so I should remember, but I don't.

But anyway, I liked that show, and I liked the variety of things that Paul chose and the numbers of people that he combined, and that shows clearly that it's not an aesthetic movement. To put a canoe maker, you know, with me—it's not aesthetic.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

DAN DAILEY: But the fact that people focus so much on functional objects, like the Cup Room at LACMA. All those amazing cups made by tons of artists, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, I think that's because of that one collection that they acquired, and I will have to look up the name of that collection, but this was a dealer who, she herself, created this collection of artists.

DAN DAILEY: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh, and then coerced people into making cups. [Laughs.]

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, that's right. That's what she did. And so she had this incredible collection that she then gave to the museum. So that's why they did that, because of her specific collection that they had gotten.

DAN DAILEY: Now, I've had people ask me to make teapots.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh, yeah. Teapot collectors would do that.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, including—well, not actually—Nan never did. She's got a pretty good collection of teapots, though.

TINA OLDKNOW: Who does?

DAN DAILEY: [Nanette L.] Nan Laitman.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: In any case, I think the functional aspect of it serving as a format for expression could be considered a common theme. Although there are many people who escape that, and maybe even never touched it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, a lot of people's work is absolutely nothing about function.

DAN DAILEY: Right. But in the training, for instance, in a glassblowing class, one of the first things that people make is a cylinder. I mean, that's fairly common, or you find endless, endless students trying to make an Italian goblet, you know, and learn that technique. Get good at this or that. So, in ceramics, they pretty much all either make a hand-built thing or a wheel-throwing thing at the beginning. That's part of a beginning ceramics class.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: There are probably similar things in weaving that I don't know about and so on. So, you know, in jewelry, they probably make a ring and a bracelet. I don't know. But those kinds of things in a certain way hold you back. On the other hand, they build a foundation, and they let you know where things were, and what your interpretation of an old idea might be. So, depending on your imagination, it could go anywhere. But I do think that that's the only common thread.

TINA OLDKNOW: You said something, that you participated enthusiastically in the name change of the Museum of Arts and Design. Do you want to just say a few things about that, because I know that a lot of people felt very strongly that the word "craft" should not have been abandoned.

DAN DAILEY: I know. I think it was sentimental thing, though. I was the only artist participating in that decision. Some were collectors, some were curators, but the plain fact is I think of craft as a verb, and it's a necessary thing. I mean, I like fine craft, and I do it, but I don't think that—I guess, the explanation [that] was given to maybe the press or inquiring parties, was that when the museum did some research, most people on the street—they had somebody standing out there interviewing people for a long time, and most people, the first thing they thought of was hobbies when they heard the word "craft," you know, and amateur stuff.

TINA OLDKNOW: What you could do with felt and sequins.

DAN DAILEY: And then where do you draw the line? Should the canoe maker be in the same show with somebody that considers themselves, you know, more like—

TINA OLDKNOW: A sculptor.

DAN DAILEY: —yeah, you know, more like Richard Serra than, you know, than the canoe maker.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, my belief is that part of the problem with our field is that we haven't been making those distinctions, that maybe we need to make them more, certainly, as distinctions are made all the time in painting and sculpture.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I agree. I'm not sure that there's so much—I don't know where the need arises, but, obviously, you know, for you as a curator and for me as an artist, we have our own reasons for those needs. And it's partly compartmentalizing in a certain way, I think, to get everything in its place as far as relationships go in the development of things and in the way things are done. But it's also, to me, of necessity making a kind of hierarchy, and perhaps it's a hierarchy depending on a person's personal taste. It pretty much has to be.

TINA OLDKNOW: I think that what you get are groups of people who end up thinking alike, maybe have related tastes, than making some sort of a more formal thing. But it's funny to me because I think that curators want to do one thing, and then artists—you know, it's so much easier for a curator if you fit into some sort of a category. And then for artists, I love to hear them all the time because it's like, oh, you know—I remember I was interviewing some ceramists who participated in the "Funk" show [University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, CA, April 18 - May 29, 1967] that Peter Selz did. And—

DAN DAILEY: Where was that?

TINA OLDKNOW: That was in Berkeley in like 1970, and it was—

DAN DAILEY: At UC Berkeley?

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, UC Berkeley. And I interviewed a couple of people, and they were like, well, I gave him a piece that I thought would be good for that show, but I was not a Funk artist, you know.

DAN DAILEY: [Laughs.]

TINA OLDKNOW: And these are all people who are kind of understood as being part of Funk, you know. And I thought, you just have to wonder after a while, how many of the Surrealists would have told you they weren't Surrealists? You know, I think that there would have been a lot, and so it's always entertaining to me—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, that could be. Well, there's a thing right there. I mean, the Funk artists and then like the Chicago Seven, you know, there's definitely a relationship there. But there wasn't a group of us in the East Coast that really got together and followed that sort of thing or worked in the same places.

TINA OLDKNOW: I mean, I think the small groups of artists that get together to explore something like Der Blaue Reiter, or you know, and things like that, those are real—those are meaningful groups, but these large kind of categories of, you know, Pop or Neo-Geo or Surrealism, they're invented, and a lot people just don't really—and I've noticed that lately there's even been no attempt to categorize that way. It's probably a good thing because I'm not sure that we need to be doing that, necessarily. It's just something I've been wondering about, and I get a big kick out the fact that every artist I talk to really just does not feel some sort of, you know, affiliation with one thing or another, which is one reason I like your "materialism" idea, because it's really not about, as you say, a certain belief system or a certain style or a certain aesthetic.

DAN DAILEY: But we really were inspired by materials and techniques, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, but I guess then I want to ask you, what artists aren't inspired by materials and techniques? I mean, if you're a sculptor working in stone, aren't you inspired by materials and techniques?

DAN DAILEY: Perhaps you gain a love for the stone and your tools and the process, and the whole thing kind of comes over you. And you're right, I mean, at a certain point it blends in. But as I said, in the '60s—or you pointed out that, you know, glass was not available to an individual until pretty recently because of Harvey's determination to build that program in Madison.

And I don't think ceramics was quite as open to just sort of—I mean, you could find examples. There are some outsiders and perhaps some ceramists from England or - I doubt if it'd be Japan, but even [Isamu] Noguchi explored it, you know. So I think in ceramics there are probably some very early examples of artists exploring clay and getting to know it as a sculptor more than as a maker of craft, of functional objects to serve a purpose or to, you know, kind of warm up the environment in a human way. Oh, and opposition to the industrial products that were available at the time.

So that really fits in with the '60s. You know, that lifestyle pursuit. I'm sure there are other things like that in the other mediums. Like if you look at Stanley Lechtzin's work or Olaf Skoogfors's work in jewelry, in the '60s, and their development of styles and processes with metals and metal-casting techniques and metal-forming techniques that were kind of out there. You know, they're alien to tradition, but they were also finely crafted and built on tradition. So they were exploring, and this has to do with the inspiration of materials and techniques that's quite different from the traditional ones like marble carving or bronze casting. And the bronze casting, you know, that's almost always an industrial technique. Giacometti didn't do his own. His brother did it.

TINA OLDKNOW: No, but there's also—

DAN DAILEY: And it was a small foundry and probably had a half a dozen people helping.

TINA OLDKNOW: But there's foundries now, as you know, you can go to as an artist and have your work fabricated there.

DAN DAILEY: I do. That's where I work in Monterrey [Mexico]; I mean, I've been through six or seven foundries, and I like that one the best so far. But the industry of it all removes you a step or two from the physical contact with the materials, and I think that was one of the big draws. And I'd say maybe, you know, even painting kind of—if you fall into the technical side of it. But painting immediately draws your attention to the image and the final result. Maybe it comes down to that, that the final result in the case of a painting comes down to image instead of object, and there's something there that—

TINA OLDKNOW: Or in instead of form or instead of material.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, it can still be a fantasy. You know, it's a finished thing, but it's still a total fantasy. You don't have to make anything. It's just a picture of it or even a picture of nothing. I think in a certain way the Abstract Expressionists probably came the closest to making the canvas the object, or people like Lucio Fontana, you know, with the sliced canvases and so on, which is Blaue Reiter isn't it? Group Zero, anyway.

And so it's not a clear cut thing. It's not as though you can make it black and white and just say, this was this way, and the crafts were this way, and they generated this or that. But I do think that this thing I'm calling "materialism" was born of the new-found enthusiasm in the 1950s and '60s for using the traditional crafts in a totally modern way, in a kind of free and open way.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, and this was happening at the same time that traditional crafts were being integrated into industry in Europe but were not in this country, which I find fascinating. For example, the artisans, you know, went from what they were doing into kind of pseudo-factory situations like the Venini, or the Scandinavians who would have factories, but artists are there working in them. Certainly the Czech model was interesting, with artists who had studios in the factories and were encouraged to design products as well as do, you know, one-off, unique pieces.

DAN DAILEY: Right.

TINA OLDKNOW: And lately, in the past, I don't know, five or six years, there's been a real upwelling, again, of the kind of grassroots crafts movement. This is manifesting itself in a variety of ways, like DIY, you know, do-it-yourself, or these new magazines of how people can make things themselves, which is really being interpreted as a direct reaction to the hyper-technological place we are in now as a society.

DAN DAILEY: I see. But this is bringing it into the realm of, say, I don't know, the home.

TINA OLDKNOW: The home into design. Actually, it's bringing craft much more into design than it's been before. And the ideas about craft being unique objects or eccentric objects or the handmade. Also, a lot of it is performative. They'll have the gorilla knitting projects or other things, so it's definitely—and it has all kinds of manifestations. It's really interesting. It's not really happening in glass, but I can see it's happening in other things. There's a lot of concern about the loss of the hand because of the incredible situation today with computers really doing so many things.

And the computer—I think a lot of people are thinking about the computer as an extension of the hand, and how does that work? Is it the same thing? And we were talking about the question of what impact has technology had in your work, and you said, well, technology has always had an impact on it ever since we started working with it.

DAN DAILEY: Right.

TINA OLDKNOW: And so that that's an ongoing thing. But there's this other kind of larger cultural situation happening now where there's, I think, anxiety about the loss of the handmade, much more than there's been for a while.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, that's interesting. I agree.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Do you see it at all with the students you've been talking to?

DAN DAILEY: I don't know if they necessarily come from a family tradition of that. You know, whether one of their parents might have done it, or their siblings might have done it in the house and got them going.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] This is kind of a new—

DAN DAILEY: But I can't really say I see that so much in my students. The one thing I see in my students is that they look to ready-made sources a lot more than I did, maybe because they're there, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I think so.

DAN DAILEY: So—

TINA OLDKNOW: You know, you don't have to build all your own equipment anymore, or you can order glass and buy it, you know. You still—I wonder how many artists, for example, would go through what you're going through with creating your own colors, using the standard colors—

DAN DAILEY: Well, that's a bit like developing your own ceramic glazes. I mean, you do glaze tests. When I was doing all those enamels, I had—I don't know if you noticed them in the studio, but there are hundreds of little dots of mixed color to get to the right dots that I put on all those vases. So they're all blends just to see how I could get a red to be more earthy or something like that. So I suppose that the availability of these kinds of things is maybe appealing to people who are feeling a little cramped because of the virtual world. You know, they need something they can touch and do.

TINA OLDKNOW: There's just a whole lot of people investigating that, which is really great.

DAN DAILEY: In glass you can see - I mean, Bullseye [Bullseye Glass Company, Portland, OR] produces all kinds of stuff for hobbyists.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, yeah. Oh, no, the hobby market. I'm thinking this is aside from the hobby market. This is actually younger artists who are exploring materials in a completely different way. And like I said, it's mostly not happening with glass but with other materials.

What do you think is the role of the specialized periodicals, for example, American Craft Magazine or American Ceramics or Metalsmith or Glass? We were talking about this earlier, and you said they really didn't play that much of a role in the development of you as an artist, except maybe that you sold things after they'd been in magazines.

DAN DAILEY: I don't think I've ever picked one of those magazines up and been inspired to go into my studio and make something. Certainly not the way it is when I come home from the day at the Met.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Right.

DAN DAILEY: I mean, it's kind of outrageous. I'm all fired up, and I have to get to my studio and make something, draw, and think, or go back to my room in New York, you know, and draw—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Is there any publication that does that—

DAN DAILEY: —and kind of capture these notions. But—

TINA OLDKNOW: —for you? Any periodical?

DAN DAILEY: Well, not that I can think of offhand.

TINA OLDKNOW: And like I said, sometimes nothing matches the experience of seeing something, an object, in person. You just have to see it in person. Like, you can look at pictures and stuff and be reminded, oh, yeah, that's really good. But I think that there's nothing like seeing things in person. Just like hearing music in person as oppose to a recording.

DAN DAILEY: I'd say the influence of those publications, first of all, has to do with communicating and disseminating information, and a lot of us have benefited in that way. You're informed about what's going on, whether you like it or not; there it is in front of you, and it's happening. And there's a show of this person's work happening here, and there's, you know, an article about someone's career, and you can see a range of their work on the pages. And all this stuff is good for us. I mean, it brings us attention. So more people are educated to what we've been doing and who we are and where it came from and how it all kind of relates or doesn't relate. You know, it's just this—there is quite a bit being published, I think. I don't know how many periodicals exist, but just in America, there have to be—

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, there's a lot.

DAN DAILEY: —a couple dozen, at least.

TINA OLDKNOW: I don't know that I would say that they're very uneven in quality, but there are a lot of publications. It seems like every special interest group has at least one magazine.

DAN DAILEY: So I think that that aspect of it, what I would call the educational aspect of it, not educational in the sense of going to school, but just to inform the public—

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, public education.

DAN DAILEY: —and inform the interested public, I guess, specifically about what's going on, that's an important thing for us, and we need that because it helps us to survive. It perpetuates our careers. And then when we get individual attention, or we advertise one of our pieces and it gets sold, that's a good thing, too. I mean, it's really good.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

What about some of the national organizations like NCECA [National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts] or Glass Arts Society? And I know you were involved with GAS. You were the president of GAS. What did you hope that GAS could do for you?

DAN DAILEY: Well, I didn't join it with any sense of what it might do for me. I joined it because—well, I suppose maybe it might have had something to do with my role as a teacher, because it was in those days - and I was teaching full-time then. So it was a valuable kind of resource for connecting all over the country with my colleagues who were building departments like I was. Marvin and Henry and let's see who else. Maybe Michael Taylor; I don't know, John Clark. You know, a lot of us were—yeah, Michael was, I think. No, he was in Tennessee then, I think. In any case, everybody had a kind of common concern about building it up for education, and it was about the students. It was never based on sales or collecting or—

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, like Joel Myers, too, probably.

DAN DAILEY: Well, Joel came from industry. He had come through academia originally, but at the time he was involved—I don't know, was he—

TINA OLDKNOW: I think he was at Normal then. He was at the University of Illinois at Normal teaching—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, he was already done at Blenko [Blenko Glass Company, Milton, WV].

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, he was done at Blenko early on.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah. So all those things, they really led to your—I don't know, for opportunities for your students, for the networking of the whole thing that was beginning to happen. It was about communicating more than anything, and I think in that sense, it's still a valuable resource that way for students. A lot of my students get really charged up when they go to one of those because they meet other students who are equally enthusiastic and engaged from all over the country and now out of the country.

So it's grown a whole lot, and it's become a good thing. And what they try and what they present and what they try to disseminate in those conferences is all quite good. You know, there's somebody teaching you how to build a furnace, or there's somebody talking about the latest development in this kind of heat control or glass technology, and I think that it's all a serious effort to reach a professional level on the part of people engaged and the use of the material.

TINA OLDKNOW: I wanted to just shift gears a little bit and talk about your work again. We've talked a little bit about glass as a material as a means of expression, and what are the strengths and limitations of that medium for you—and I also want to talk about illustration. You know, I always want to come back to that for you because I see so much of you there that is such a beginning. I guess what I want to ask you first is—we've talked about this a little bit - why do you want to be—why are you so attracted to making objects? Why isn't illustration enough?

DAN DAILEY: Oh, yeah. Well—

TINA OLDKNOW: It's a tough one. It's more—

DAN DAILEY: I don't know that I can answer. I guess I'm just not satisfied with my drawings, and I've been so captivated by object making that I never put the time into being better at drawing or painting. I made more pastels than I did paintings. And still, once in a while, I'll do—I make a lot of watercolors that are studies, and I draw everything I make. So I think it up and put it down in my sketchbooks and then develop it in my sketchbooks and then proceed to another level of drawing, depending on what the project is or what the object is or what I'm—because I try to see it from various views and understand it as a thing kind of in space before I

start making it or going to a particular material or process. But drawing is a way of visualizing for me, and once in a while, it's an end in itself. On the other hand, I see myself as an illustrator, even through my objects, and that's because I'm kind of an imagist. You know, I'm a pictorial guy. I like to—

TINA OLDKNOW: And you also talked about observing people. We were talking about social commentary, that maybe politics doesn't figure into your work, but you love observing people.

DAN DAILEY: That's right, I do. I like observing people. I like trying to capture some aspect of human nature in my work. I like to create something that has a mood or conveys an emotion or feeling. It's kind of sappy, but that's the way I am, very sentimentalist.

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.] You are?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I think so. Even when I'm cynical, I'm kind of sentimental. So I thrive on that and it's in everything I make.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you think that that—that's kind of sometimes what I see, too, in underground comics, is a kind of social observation but also sympathetic or, you know, more sentimental than cynical—

DAN DAILEY: [Laughs.]

TINA OLDKNOW: —and that's kind of interesting that you say that.

I also want to ask you about—I'm going to come back again to glass, but I also, before we forget, or before I forgot to ask you, you said that you were teaching film, and you were involved in film at some point.

DAN DAILEY: Well, filmmaking was one of my favorite classes that I took as a sophomore, I think. I can't remember for sure; it might have been junior, but I really think it was sophomore because by the time I was a junior, I was making some films. And in those days, you had to take one of the 16-millimeter cameras, you know, from the film department and go buy, you know, rolls of film and then make your film and go back, and we'd have a screening. And then once in a while you'd invent a soundtrack, so you'd have a tape recorder here, and the projector here, and try to sync it. I didn't get a camera with sound recording until later on when I met—my friend's brother was a CBS news guy, so he could take out the camera on the weekend, and we made some stuff with the Airflex.

But my films were pretty dumb. I don't think I ever made a good one. A friend of mine made some that I thought were pretty good, and I helped him with that. I was, you know, an actor for him or worked on the film in some way, depending on which film it was, and he didn't pursue it either. In the end, he was going to L.A. to go to director school, but he got totally wrapped up in doing portraits on the Boardwalk in Atlantic City [NJ], and then—

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, really? Wow.

DAN DAILEY: Then he did portraits on the sidewalks in San Francisco, and then he started the San Francisco Street Artist Guild, and then he moved to Hawaii. Various things happened to him, but he dropped film. Anyway, he and I were kind of filmmaking buddies, and he was a powerful influence on me as an undergraduate student. That's Dale Axelrod. Very cool friend. I see him once in a while. Just out of the blue we'll see each other.

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.] Well, where is he now, still on the street?

DAN DAILEY: He's still in San Francisco, but I haven't seen him now for 10 years, I think. I guess it's not that recent. At least 10 years, I guess.

Anyway, filmmaking for me was a fabulous medium because I like films, and I thought it had a great deal of potential to just play and then, at the same time, satisfy myself with the product that I could get. So one of the things that I realized early on was that I needed a team, and I didn't like having to compromise that way, because when you have other people helping you, you have to accept their level of skill, their level of interest, and, you know, their schedule and who knows what else. It was like having employees, and I pretty much gave it up because of that. I made them through my senior year, and, you know, I was kind of—not a film major, but it was kind of film minor, even though I was a ceramic and glass student.

TINA OLDKNOW: But with glass, were you doing it all yourself? I mean, isn't it similar?

DAN DAILEY: In those days, yeah. I mean, when you wanted to punty your piece, once in a while there should be somebody, but, you know, if you had the shop - we had a shop that was 10 feet by 10 feet in an old incinerator room. It was a stupid little place, but you could hang your piece up on a rack and then make a punty and then put it down, stick it on the bench, punty it, and then break it off, and then go back and reheat it. It was all just you and, like I said, nobody was teaching us.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: We watched Roland, and that's what Roland did. He was teaching us, but I'm really not respectful of him when I say that. He taught me a lot. He was a very good man to me. But when I looked in the books in the library and saw what people had made out of glass, historically, or what had gone one in Sweden five years before, I kept thinking, man, you know, people really know how to do stuff that we don't know. And when you try to make those things, try to blow those forms, and how do you keep this from falling apart or, you know, various technical things that you needed to see a demo to really get it. And that appealed to me at a certain point, but it faded. I just didn't want to pursue it that way, but filmmaking, in addition to the other things that I was doing, was a very fascinating medium. I just didn't like the teamwork aspect of it. And now, you know, I have a team.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: And ever since I've been involved with factories, I've worked with groups of people. So, I suppose, who knows?

TINA OLDKNOW: It's interesting to me because your work is so much about narrative and loving narrative. There's always narrative elements, and it is a lot about storytelling. So, it helps me understand your work to know that you also loved filmmaking and illustration, and those kinds of things all add to kind of understanding.

And I want to come back now to glass: what is it about the material that you find wonderful to work with, and what is it that you would hate about it?

DAN DAILEY: In retrospect, just one more thing about the filmmaking. I think if I had been more engaged in writing at the time, I might have pursued filmmaking because, as you've said, the narrative and the storytelling appealed to me a great deal. But I was the cartoonist for the school newspaper at PCA for a couple of years, and those stories are not very good. When I look back at them, they're pretty dumb stories. Every cartoon I made, it was a story, just, you know, sophomoric—

TINA OLDKNOW: So it wasn't the right vehicle for you then.

DAN DAILEY: —inane humor again. Yes, and so I think my objects were an opportunity, you know, to pursue a more kind of meaningful form of expression.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: With glass, the instant I started working with it, I was intrigued and couldn't quite forget it.

And then—I don't know exactly what made me want to go to graduate school but in any case, I applied, and Marvin accepted me to two places. And I was hot to go to California. It was a real Mecca at the time, you know. But the material in undergraduate school—the things I accomplished there is nothing I care to even see. I mean, it was worthless stuff that I made. And in fact, just about everything I made in undergraduate school, I don't have any real attachment to. It was all kind of getting somewhere, not accomplishing anything.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: In graduate school, I think I finally settled down - when I got it all out of my system and left that scene in San Francisco and moved back to Philadelphia and focused on working with Bill Daley, and then went to RISD and became, of necessity, you know, one of the teachers. And also, I didn't take any other classes, except illustration.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I was mainly there to seriously develop my work. So it was incumbent upon me to just do that. And I did it like crazy for those two years. And at that point, glass—you know, I was exploring glass of all kinds, not just glassblowing; I did sand-casting, but I didn't do lost-wax casting until I went to France.

TINA OLDKNOW: Was your work in graduate school also looking at things like Art Deco and [inaudible] -

DAN DAILEY: Oh, yeah, definitely.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you were really beginning to develop your style, your very characteristic style at that time.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I think so. Yeah, clearly I was—

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, what kept you with glass? I mean, what was it about glass that kind of kept you there?

DAN DAILEY: Other things just didn't pull me away. I guess that's the heart of it; I just didn't feel the tug from anything else as strongly. Just like I only applied to one college.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: Once I found glass, there was always something pretty darn interesting about it. My results were getting more and more satisfying, and I realized I could do it better if I tried it again. I made a series of lamps when I was in graduate school for my thesis, and they were quite varied. I don't like all of them in retrospect, but it really was kind of an eye-opener for me, that I could achieve a level of high quality in the objects that conveyed a sense that I was trying to convey. As I said before about the credibility of a well-crafted object, that appealed to me a lot, and so I wanted to keep on working with it and get better and get more acquainted with processes with glass.

Then Dale encouraged me to apply for a Fulbright grant, because he had done it, and RISD has a process, or did at the time, of vetting the students, you know. And so my application was reviewed by a team, and there was somebody writing, somebody in an Italian class that I always fell asleep in and totally flunked. [They laugh.] But she kindly wrote me a letter for the Fulbright committee. And I got that grant, and I went to Italy and worked at Venini. And there it was like a fantasy world. You know, just all those colors, all those skilled people, all the processes in that factory, kind of mind-blowing.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, at that time, certainly. I mean, you weren't using Kugler color or rods or anything like that in the States yet.

DAN DAILEY: Eighteen furnaces of color.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, amazing.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, just super, and there's—I may have told you this sometime or another, but I was making something one day, and this guy who loaded the annealing ovens, Umberto, came up to me—I think it was Umberto, but one of those guys, who I would think of as almost a janitor, you know. And he came up to me and said, "Dan, don't use that green." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "It's the wrong green"; you know, "Use this green." So he was critiquing my use of color, sense of color, and so I was thinking, you know, this is an uneducated guy. He's just sort of a factory man, not really acquainted with fine art. On the other hand, he had this conviction to come up to the American at the time in the factory and tell me that. So it just—you know, it became clear to me over time that in that society there were certain things that people felt and knew, just like cuisine or something, that—

TINA OLDKNOW: What was right and what was wrong.

DAN DAILEY: Or that their sense of it was kind of earthy and pure, you know, and really ingrained. So I gained a real appreciation for that aspect of Italian society. I think of it that way, and I feel it in various ways. Yeah, certainly in the cuisine but in couture and, you know, in architecture and in the making of a garden. There's a certain style and—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Approach.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, and there's a subtlety to a lot of it that escapes many, I don't know, many other cultures, as far as I'm concerned. It's my preference, I guess.

TINA OLDKNOW: What do you think is not so satisfying about glass? I noticed that you acid-polish almost everything.

DAN DAILEY: [They laugh.] Yeah, I'm not too keen on shiny stuff for certain reasons, but it has more to do with defining form. I mean, I do that to capture the light rather than reflect the light, and I like the sandblasted, acid-polished surface. That satin finish really allows the form to glow and to have the light within, because it's so light-dependent; I mean, it is light-dependent. The material is dead. But what was it - somebody was saying that the [Stanislav] Libenský pieces—yeah, Libenský was saying his pieces went to sleep, you know, when the lights went out.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Right, and they do go to sleep. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: So that aspect of it, to me, is greatly heightened when the glass surface is dulled down. And I like acid polishing. I'm totally hooked on it, you know. I've been doing it now since I don't know when. Like I first did it in about '82 or, no, earlier than that. So I can't remember when I first acid-polished my pieces, but I began doing it at least in the early '80s.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, I think you did. You started it in the early '80s.

DAN DAILEY: There's a vase series I made in '80 or '81 or '79; it was around then. Eric Hopkins did it for me at first. He just said, "Oh, I can do that." I think he was an MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, MA] student at the time, or Harvard [University, Cambridge, MA].

TINA OLDKNOW: What did he do? How did he do it?

DAN DAILEY: He had an apartment in Cambridge, and he had an extra apartment above his, and he turned the kitchen of that apartment into this little lab. He had several containers of the acid and the rinse bath and so on. And then, you know, once it's neutralized, as long as you have parts—but these days, I mean, it's probably parts per billion, I don't know. But as I understand it, it can be released into public waste water without any harm at all or into a stream, you know, and be—there are no heavy lead or materials or anything like that—heavy metals. It's just, it needs to be neutralized, so it's first in the limewater bath. Limestone in the water, and that's the first neutralizer, and then it's further neutralized with more of the same, and that's slowly released into a giant amount of water. So the amount of [hydrofluoric acid—DD] that's leaving the purification tanks is watered down more and more and more until it's so minute it's almost untraceable. But obviously, they have testing devices that can tell that it's at the acceptable levels to release it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: So in the factory where I work now, they have these tanks like you would see on the tops of a building in Manhattan, you know, that are just for introducing the two stages of that dilution after the first neutralizing inside the building.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And what Will Hopkins was doing was very similar but on a much, much smaller scale. I mean, he could only etch something this big.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: We have tanks now where we dip some of my biggest pieces you have a hard time getting your arms around. So—

TINA OLDKNOW: Any other qualities of the material that you're not wild about? Maybe the fact that it breaks, or does that not really—

DAN DAILEY: [Laughs.] It's a fickle medium. It doesn't behave, and it surprises you in a nasty way quite often.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Maybe that's what keeps you interested.

DAN DAILEY: I've lost so darn many pieces from making mistakes, you know, with adhesives, with compatibility, and sometimes for totally unknown reasons. But it's a learning process, and you do things that you expect are going to work because you've done it over and over again, and then some new thing is introduced, or your suppliers changed their source, or I don't know what. There are a lot of ways that you can make a mistake with the material. But I have to say, all those considered, it's still the most intriguing material I've ever touched. The results are just magical.

TINA OLDKNOW: Good.

DAN DAILEY: When you get glass working, it's just like nothing else.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] I think we have to stop here. We are coming to the end of our disk.

DAN DAILEY: Okay.

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TINA OLDKNOW: This is Tina Oldknow interviewing Dan Dailey at his studio in Kensington, New Hampshire, on January 21, 2008, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, disc number four.

I wanted to talk to you about this. You said in our last conversation—we've had some breaks here as we've been doing this—that you talked about playing with material, and one of the questions here that I'm interested in finding out with you is, is there an element of play in your process, or would you consider there's also an element of play in your finished works of art as well?

DAN DAILEY: I'm not quite sure I understand your question. You mean, do I allow the process to evolve and, say, change my thinking because I discover something, or something like that, or is it more the concept of the piece

changing to, you know, to—

TINA OLDKNOW: I guess not knowing what they mean by this, since this is not my question, I would think that maybe they mean, do you kind of allow yourself to go to different places during a process of making something? We talked about how you pretty much draw everything out in advance, but there is a sense—there must be some discovery, I think, that you were talking about, along the way as you're actually making it.

DAN DAILEY: For me, that happens mostly in the drawing process, and you'll find that my sketchbooks are maybe the most clear example of the kind of thinking you're describing, because I do play around in my sketchbook. Whatever idea comes to me, I put in it down, no matter what; just because; and I think they're worth recording, and quite often it's not linear. You know, there's a random thought, or something that affected me, or something I heard on the radio, or who knows what. But in that sense, yeah, I do allow myself—I'm quite open to receiving ideas at that stage of development. But once I've made my mind up about what I'm going to make—the only—I mean, it's not a sense of play while I'm making it. Definitely not. No, I'm very deliberate and linear in that respect. I usually know what I'm going to make before I ever start.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, but I think that you do manage to preserve a sense of kind of spontaneity in your work.

DAN DAILEY: Well, with the hot glass, certainly. And that's one of the reasons I like it, as I mentioned before. I like the looseness of the liquid material and the ways that it develops where I couldn't draw it. I couldn't think of that sort of liquid line or the way the flame blows the piece off from where I expected it to go, and you get this kind of natural development of texture and color and so on. So in that sense, I guess I do play with the hot glass.

TINA OLDKNOW: Years ago, I saw you working at Benny's. I just happened to be going by there by chance one day, and you were there, and he was very nice to let me in. I had my nephew with me, and I wanted him to see glassblowing or something like that, and it was great because you had your drawings up all over the wall, and you were working on something. And as finished as your drawings are, as clear as they are, I still couldn't imagine any of your pieces being made without you there. It struck me that, you know, I couldn't imagine you—and maybe you can—giving—like maybe you could to the same team you've worked with for years; maybe you could give them a drawing and then not be there. But I had this sense that you were very actively involved, even though the ideas were very—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I am, and there I do make some instant decisions that are based on what's happening. So there, I guess I play, yep. Coming around to it, I guess I agree that there is some openness, you know, to change and to the development in process of the hot material. I mean, it's details, though, or—it's not form. It's not concept at all. It's just a surface application or something of that sort.

TINA OLDKNOW: And so you think that - for example, your metal pieces, or your chandeliers are primarily metal and glass that are assembled—do you consider those to be tight in comparison to the hot glass pieces?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: You do?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I definitely do. They're born of a totally different interest, and they border on being design objects to me—

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, I see.

DAN DAILEY: —because of the development of the piece, the processes that I go through, the incorporation of the different group of people to realize the parts. Many of the chandeliers are not anything to do with hot glass. Well, they're slumped glass and cast glass, but it's all done here in kilns.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, and those are very different—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, they're quite different.

TINA OLDKNOW: —processes. Processes over which you have a lot of control.

DAN DAILEY: That's right.

TINA OLDKNOW: How has your working process changed over time?

DAN DAILEY: It's gotten more complicated. I've gotten much more dependent on a broad and diversified team of people to help me, and that comes down to the same guys I've been working with in Seattle for 20 years. The same key guys. I mean, there have been changes to the team, but, you know, Preston doesn't help us anymore because he's—

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Preston Singletary.

DAN DAILEY: —quite successful in his own work and too busy to help us. But he would. I mean, if I asked him, I bet you Preston would give me a day just because.

TINA OLDKNOW: Sure, he would. Yeah.

DAN DAILEY: I mean, he's such a sweet guy, and he's so good to me, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: So who are the people—

DAN DAILEY: And he did beautiful work for me.

TINA OLDKNOW: Who were the people who have been really blowing consistently for you over the last 20 years? Rich?

DAN DAILEY: Rich, Ben, and Dante. Robbie Miller just quit. He moved back to Vancouver [Canada]. When I say back, back to Canada.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah.

DAN DAILEY: And then, of the past five—well, Paul Cunningham, too.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: He's definitely a key figure. And then there's Michael Fox, who has been with us now for at least five years or six years.

TINA OLDKNOW: Michael Fox?

DAN DAILEY: Michael Fox, yeah. He's a New Yorker, but he went CCAC. He's been on the West Coast for quite a while. And who else? I feel like I'm forgetting some people. I mean, there are new people, you know, like Sam McMillen, I mentioned before. He's a relatively new guy on the team, and there's Sean O'Neil, who's another new guy. Great young guys who are building their own careers and put in a week for me when I'm there.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's a great thing for young artists to be able to do, because it's a way to earn some money, and you get, you know, blowing practice, and you're realizing some pretty big pieces and doing a lot. I would think that they all enjoy working on your projects.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, they say they like working with me, and they, you know—we all have a good friendship. It's a pleasure for me to be there with them, and there's a nice energy to the team when we're working.

TINA OLDKNOW: And then Steve said sometimes you make things at Mass Art.

DAN DAILEY: Well, what I would make at Mass Art is if I have something I really need a part for, and I just can't go to Seattle, and it doesn't make sense for me to ask Ben—to get somebody to do something quickly and interrupt his schedule because he's pretty scheduled out. You know, he rents his shop to several artists.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, I know he works with a lot of artists.

DAN DAILEY: And then Richie has days or weeks, and Dante has weeks, and Preston has time there, and Ben does, and Deborah does. So right there, the core people have used up most of the time on the calendar, and then Jenny and Sabrina are there, and I'm there. And they do work for a few people, otherwise, so—yeah, it's a diverse group.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

Let's talk about some of your commissions. The question here is, and they're interesting, what are your most important commissioned works? How did the commissions come about? Could you describe how they differ from your other work? Did the circumstances of the commission have an impact, and [what were] the difficulties or opportunities presented by commission? So this a really—

DAN DAILEY: Well, multiple question?

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, and I can remind you of a really wide-ranging discussion of commissions and how you kind of view them in the larger context of your work, you know, that you do for yourself, basically.

DAN DAILEY: Well, as far as significant commissions go, I mean, there are a few standout experiences for larger

pieces or objects that really kind of stretched me and made me address certain issues in the development of the piece and in the coordination of all the people involved and the aspects of, you know, fabrication and installation.

First of all, I had quite a few commissions that are for mostly lighting in people's houses, and that's been in Italy, in Switzerland, in France, as well as the United States and Bermuda and places where somebody knows my work. They know that I like to make lights, and they've asked me to make something specific for a house. And usually I have pictures of the place, or I've gone there. I've made some lights for a wine cellar in Holland. There are opportunities that come up here and there that are pretty intriguing for special lighting in general.

Anyway, in making those kinds of pieces, I have a developed a process where I begin with drawings. You know, I get a deposit to draw, and then I'm kind of drawing. I'm being paid to think. I report back to the client regularly with the development of the drawing and have regular discussions of the drawings as they develop.

TINA OLDKNOW: How long would this part of the process take?

DAN DAILEY: It depends on the project. It depends on how many drawings I make. But it's something I use in my big projects and my small projects. So if it's for a simpler job, I might only show somebody—oh, I don't know - half a dozen ideas. And in that I just—first of all, I'd be thinking about it in my sketchbook. I'll either go through my pile of books and copy ideas on the copier or copy pages on the copier and spread them all out in front of me and then start drawing from my own resources, or maybe I'll just start fresh and, you know, think about it that way.

Like this week I have to think of animals, so I'm going to look in my nature books for animals and think further than fish and birds and foxes and, I don't know, cats and lizards and turtles. Birds especially, I like, and I've made different kinds of birds in lights before, so I might focus on birds.

Anyway, it's for a chandelier in Manhattan that I have to make. So I'll go to the resources that I have right here before I leave this place and try to find it in a library or in a museum or something like that. Just to think about animals. And then I'll start drawing, and then I'll show them a selection of drawings. And for a small piece, it might be a few drawings, but for my—I've shown people as many as 50 drawings. For my Bombay glass, I did 101.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: So, tiny little drawings, but I blew them up on the copier and presented them all as single pages and kind of confused the hell out of them. [They laugh.] Backfires once in a while. But that's—

TINA OLDKNOW: Because we don't want a whole collection, we just want one. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: That's another story, yeah. So I kind of got ahead of myself there. As far as the individual commissions go, they're a very important part of what I do these days. I really enjoy it. I have at the moment, I think, 10 jobs like that. From a single sconce to a pair of candelabrums to a stairway in a house in Connecticut and a door on a house in Palm Desert [CA].

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you ever feel that you have too many commissions to do your other work? Do you ever find yourself in that place?

DAN DAILEY: I try to let my clients know that I need to keep on developing that other work because otherwise I'll just kind of wither, you know. I can't be bogged down in the business of doing commissions. Once it's conceptually over with, there's production time, and I can deal with that on my own. It's whether my crew can keep up with me and how much I have to sub out, meaning water-jet cutting and machine shop work and, I don't know, metal fabricators or plating. I don't know what, but there's a lot that I sub out because I don't want to own those processes, and we've developed relationships with a lot of people.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, it would make sense to do it that way. Just—

DAN DAILEY: To help us with bronze casting and all that.

So I can compartmentalize enough to keep on at least having one show a year or maybe two and still do commissions. Sometimes it's not so much of a percentage of my work. It just happens that I have a few right now. I get quite a few for me. But what I would call—those are generally smaller commissions, except for the door or the stairway that I have on my list right now, and I've made a number of them, as I've said. There have been some of those that, for me, are significant. Like I made another door on a house in Rancho Mirage [CA], which was a project. It was a challenge and a big door, you know, 16 feet high and weighs 1,200 pounds and so on.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: And then a stairway in a house in Switzerland. I had to go there five times and fit all the wood parts before bringing it back to Rhode Island and doing the castings and—

TINA OLDKNOW: What a shame. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: —making all these things. You know, sometimes they're complicated.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, do you ever have fun on these trips too?

DAN DAILEY: Oh, of course, yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: Good. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: No, my family would meet me there, and we'd go cruise around in Italy for a couple of weeks, you know, and there's always a really good restaurant and plenty of wine and new friends. As I've said, I've gotten to be friends with a lot of people who are quite interesting people. You know, one guy in Switzerland, I know he and his wife took care of—they met Allie at the plane and took her to that language camp in Montreux.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, uh-huh. [Affirmative.] That's so nice.

DAN DAILEY: They both went to MIT. He was an engineer for Ciba-Geigy for a time. Now he's either retired or with another firm, but a really smart couple. You know, both super people.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do they live in Geneva?

DAN DAILEY: They live in Binningen, near Bern or Basel, I forget which.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: So making commissions for houses has been significant, but aside from that, one of my first good-sized commissions was to make a piece in the Rainbow Room [restaurant, New York City]. That came from Henry Geldzahler, and he was charged by, I guess, David Rockefeller. I can't remember which Rockefeller.

TINA OLDKNOW: I can't remember either.

DAN DAILEY: He came to the opening of the Rainbow Room. We spoke briefly about the piece. But whoever it was was in charge of commissioning the project. So that was something that was a challenge, especially because it's such an iconic place. I love that building, and I really like the art in that building, and to have the opportunity to make something in there, in that particular place, was pretty cool.

So I deliberated a lot, and Milton Glaser and Hugh Hardy, who I worked with, especially Milton - I mean, he mentored me in that project because of his experience with restaurants especially. And I have to say Joe Baum, who became the real kind of—it was what they called B. E. Rock at the time. That was the name of their company.

Joe Baum was a restaurateur in New York. He built the original Windows on the World [New York City]. And then at some point, sold it or lost it and went to Rockefeller Center, and he got Rainbow. So he was already friends with Milton. I had known about Milton's work, but that's where I really met him and got to know him and became friends with him. And I would work in his office in Manhattan, you know, and bounce ideas off of him and show him my things, and he would do a little sketch. I mean, he's a real drawer. Super drawer. I don't know if you know him or not, but—

TINA OLDKNOW: I don't. I don't know him.

DAN DAILEY: What a gentleman. He's just such a powerful guy.

TINA OLDKNOW: You've done a lot of work—

DAN DAILEY: Super body of work. [Referring to Milton Glaser.—DD]

TINA OLDKNOW: —in New York City, though, haven't you? You know a lot of connections there.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: Would you say more so than in Boston?

DAN DAILEY: Oh, definitely, yeah. I mean, I've done commissions in Boston, but not a lot.

But then the execution of that piece, beyond the drawing stages, during the fabrication and during the model making, you know, then the fabrication, then the installation of it - all the experiences were learning experiences, and we dealt with so many different problems and had so many surprises. Like on the installation, you know, there was this frenzy of activity toward the end of the project, where I can remember getting off the freight elevator one morning or waiting for the freight elevator to come up—that's what it was, onto, I guess, 64 [64th floor] when the place was just still being finished.

But they had a deadline, and it had to be met. So the elevator door opened; there were two guys fighting. One guy was trying to stab the other guy with a screwdriver, and they thought—it was fighting over a tool or over something. I don't know what. Everybody's holding these two guys back. And just strange things, you know. You'd see somebody welding right next to somebody laying carpet.

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: I mean, two inches away from somebody laying carpet, and he's shielding his eyes from, you know, the torch. And then somebody else painting, you know, within a couple of feet, and all madly trying to finish this project. So that was quite an eye-opener.

I was working on my piece with one of the glaziers, a guy from New Jersey, and he was installing some of the parts. And so, I was moving some box around and some of the castings and getting it all just right, just the way I wanted it, and this guy came along, an electrician, a young black man, an electrician, and he said, you can't work on that. I said, what do you mean? He said, well, you're not union. Or he said, "Are you union?" I said, "No, I'm not union, but this is my piece, so I made this - " you know, "I'm putting it in." And he said, "You can't do that." I said, "Well, I'm doing it," you know. "You can't tell me." So he left, and the other guy stopped working. That's the union's steward. He can stop this whole job, you know. You know what you just did? So I went looking for the guy and found him up on a ladder working on the ceiling. And I said, "Sorry, sir. I didn't know," you know. He goes, "That's okay; you're not a threat to us." He said, "I realized, you're just an artist doing your work." So he was very cool about it. A real gentleman.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] That's good. That's nice.

DAN DAILEY: And wasn't insulted by me and just goes to show, if you speak to somebody face to face and they understand, you know, there's openness in that work.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: I found that working in factories. When I work with the trades, wherever I am, I try to get to know people. It's usually in my favor, and I enjoy it. I really enjoy working with groups like that.

So the Rainbow Room was a learning experience in that respect, in many respects, but working with people and getting the job done and going through the process of presenting an idea to client and contract writing on that project, too. Everything about it was a learning experience, and it served me pretty well over quite a long time now because I've done others. And then—

TINA OLDKNOW: When was that that you did that?

DAN DAILEY: In '87, was that.

TINA OLDKNOW: In '87. So when you go back there now, do you—

DAN DAILEY: Cipriani's [restaurant, New York City] got it, and I haven't been in the darn place since Cipriani got it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, really?

DAN DAILEY: And people tell me it's all blue now instead of multi-colored. I never liked what Fisher Morantz did with the lighting. That was out of my control. I was not part of that contract. I couldn't affect it and nobody would interfere with what Fisher Morantz wanted to do on my behalf. They wouldn't just let it be what I wanted it to be. It was part of the lighting scheme, and they were being paid millions to do that.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, yeah, I'm sure restaurant lighting—they've all got their own ideas about it.

DAN DAILEY: So I mean, the maitre'd could control the color of my piece from his stand, you know, dialing in early evening and late evening, late night or whatever it was. So it had a range of color that it could move through over the night.

TINA OLDKNOW: I see.

DAN DAILEY: But I think now it's all blue. Somebody told me. I should go up there, but everybody I've contacted, who is a personal friend of somebody in the Cipriani group that runs that place, it's never panned out. I've never gotten an appointment with the right person to do it. I've only been there once, to look at a repair, but I didn't meet anybody in the management. So I've got to pursue that. It's just too busy, I guess.

TINA OLDKNOW: I guess what I wanted to know was how would you feel about it, X number of years later? Good, or would you do things differently?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I would do something differently with that piece, I think. It has to do with lighting. It has to do with the scale of imagery and the clarity of the image from the distance and that kind of thing, because I was relatively new to the process at that time.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: To that type of glass casting.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, I'm sure you would do it very differently now.

DAN DAILEY: I would do it quite differently now. Anyway, Windows on the World was—let's see, '96, almost 10 years later.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, and what exactly did you do at Windows on the World?

DAN DAILEY: I had four sculptures in the Windows on the World restaurant, in their bar, which was called the Greatest Bar on Earth. That was also with Milton and Joe Baum, who moved back to Windows. And that was a very similar—you know, we were still screwing the covers on the bottoms of the sculptures, lying on the floor working with the fiber optics and so on, and there are people in tuxedos with their champagne, standing over us, looking down at us, saying, what are you guys lying on the floor for?

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Oh. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: And we went downstairs on the elevators into the Marriott and changed into our, you know, jackets and ties. We went back up to a 2,000-person, fabulous opening that lasted for hours.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow. Oh, that's fun.

DAN DAILEY: Food from all over the world and bands from all over the world. It was just a great experience. And then that project was pretty cool because when I went up into 107 [107th floor], to just see what the space was like the first time, just looking out over Manhattan and looking north, all those spires sticking up really got me going, and that's what I made my piece about. I didn't get to do everything I wanted to do, but I didn't want to compromise on the budget. If I wanted to give them more for their price, I suppose I could have made a better piece there, but they wanted me to come in at a certain number, and I was stubborn about it and gave them what I gave them.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, you have to protect yourself. You can't get involved with huge—you can't not make money on something like this. You have to have little bit over cost—[laughs]—I mean, my God.

DAN DAILEY: And restaurants are relatively impermanent too. I mean, the Rainbow Room is a little different, but with a restaurant, they have to change their décor every once in a while—

TINA OLDKNOW: That's true.

DAN DAILEY: —otherwise they're not fresh, if they're going to stay in business. Like I have some pieces that I think are pretty good lights at Restaurant Daniel on Park Avenue, 65th [Street], and I know Adam Tihany is doing the space over right now, or has been assigned to, but I don't think they've done any demolition yet. I saw Daniel in Palm Beach the other day, and we didn't talk about that. But he called me, and I wasn't here, and he was in Paris when I called him. I need to get in touch with him and figure out what's going on. I'd love to be involved in that somehow or at least have a say—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] That's Daniel Boulud.

DAN DAILEY: —in the way they place my lights again.

TINA OLDKNOW: Is that Daniel Boulud?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, he's a good guy.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah.

DAN DAILEY: He's really a great guy. I have a piece at the 92nd Street Y[MCA, New York City], which I think is kind of unfortunately placed. There was some misunderstanding between me and the director at the time. Apparently, there was somebody who was a benefactor who in his will stipulated that a work of art be put there, and through a selection process, they asked me to submit an idea or two. I did, and they gave me the project, and I like that place quite a bit. It's such a high-energy cultural icon of New York. I mean, it's great—

TINA OLDKNOW: And it's [got] really interesting art. You know, ongoing art interests and projects and things. Really interesting.

DAN DAILEY: It is, and I made a mural that I like quite a bit. It's at the—

TINA OLDKNOW: Vitrolite mural?

DAN DAILEY: No, a cast-glass mural like in the Rainbow Room and like the one in LACMA or in Vail [CO]. And that piece got put in storage right after I finished it because they decided - in the time it was being made, they decided to change the floor, change the walls and everything. So where I planned it to go, it didn't exist any more.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh.

DAN DAILEY: And I wasn't informed until it was well along. So it was a difficult situation.

TINA OLDKNOW: So what do you do in a situation like that? You just—

DAN DAILEY: I had a contract, and I held to my contract, and I did what I did. But I didn't have it in my contract that if they decided to get rid of the space where it's suppose to go - it never even occurred to me that that would happen.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Right. Do you have a clause in your contract now about things like that?

DAN DAILEY: No, I haven't had an occasion to use that type of contract again since then. Although I might put something like that in in the future if it comes up. But I think that is one of my significant commissions. The gates that I made for the Brothmans in their apartment in Manhattan—I guess that's an anonymous—I mean, they don't like their name mentioned.

TINA OLDKNOW: Okay.

DAN DAILEY: You know, Andy got killed and—

TINA OLDKNOW: I know.

DAN DAILEY: —what a sickening thing that was.

TINA OLDKNOW: February of two years ago or—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I guess so, but I've seen Charles multiple times since then. Yeah, you never get over something like that. Anyway, she was wonderful to me, Charles too, and it was a good relationship. They were very supportive of my work, and I made some gates for the entrance to their apartment—

TINA OLDKNOW: Nice.

DAN DAILEY: —on 65th Street. And there again, I showed them a lot of drawings. We quickly narrowed it down. They were very decisive. I don't like this. I like that. You know, these five are my favorite. I went from that to the development of, I think, three very definitive watercolor studies, renderings of the pair of gates, and they quickly chose the one. And then I made a full-size wooden model of it and placed it in the structure, and then we went ahead to work with steel fabricators to get a structure built in that would hold my gates and keep them square and not shift with the movements of the buildings or the movements of the other materials being used. And, you know, built the piece, complicated pair of gates that need hydraulic operators and have electronic security latches and push-button operation and so on.

TINA OLDKNOW: Did you just have all that work done, or did they have someone executing—

DAN DAILEY: No, Grace was their contractor, and they connected me with subs in the New York area who could

help me with various things that I didn't have experience with, like the hydraulic operators.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: No, I had used that before, I think, in the door at Rancho Mirage. I can't remember which came first, but they were related in some respect, with the frame work and the structural work necessary to prepare the space so that my piece would work properly.

TINA OLDKNOW: But the gates at Rancho Mirage were for another client.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, the Ostermans. Cydney and Bill Osterman. And that was with Olson Sundberg in Seattle and Terry Hunzinger, who was the interior designer. What was good about that project was that it was another one that stretched me, you know, the size of the piece, the significance of the piece in the architecture, because it's at the end of the entrance. Well, it's the entrance to the house, but it's also the end of an art gallery in the house. So it's like my piece in their gallery permanently—

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: —if you think of it a certain way. And then the quality of color and the texture and the—I really subdued the imagery in that piece—

TINA OLDKNOW: For Rancho Mirage.

DAN DAILEY: —in deference to the architect's aims.

TINA OLDKNOW: In Rancho Mirage?

DAN DAILEY: Yes.

TINA OLDKNOW: Because I was thinking about you, and I was thinking, well, you know, New York has a lot of really great Art Deco architecture, and I can see how you and your language would fit really well in New York City. And I'm wondering, does your—and you said you toned it down a little bit—was your approach slightly different for the desert? The California desert?

DAN DAILEY: Definitely. First of all, it has imagery, but it's imagery of clouds and imagery of the canyon walls and the kind of—you've been there I guess. Yeah, you've been in Joshua Tree [Joshua Tree National Park, Twentynine Palms, CA], and we talked about that.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, right.

DAN DAILEY: So if you think about the landscape and how there's a certain kind of rhythm to a rock hillside and that kind of rich brown tones and the way forms seem to overlap - when the sun's just right, there's such a strong shadowing in linear aspects.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, they're so flattened and crisp.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, and big rocks lying on each other with a big dark crease where they come together and that sort of thing. So I use that in my imagery, and I drew from it and thought about it a lot. It's quite abstract, but it's there. And then within it—I mean, when you first see it, that's what you see. But just like my Rainbow Room piece or other pieces that I've made, when you walk up close to it, there's another layer of imagery. And in the case of that door, it's kind of like a journey of life, and there are figures there, buildings there, trees there, certain things that you can start to notice, and they're not all that immediately evident.

Plus with that one, we had to cast the glass—well, I wanted to cast the glass in bigger panels, and I did it all at the Bullseye Factory in Portland, Oregon. And then shipped it all to Denver [CO], where my friend Steve DeVries and Jerry Fine, who had the Vitroform Company, laminated some other Bullseye glass pieces, some of their commercial glass, to my castings to make it pass California code.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh, yeah.

DAN DAILEY: So it's laminated safety glass.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh.

DAN DAILEY: But you can't really tell looking at it. It just is. And then the door is made of machined aluminum and painted with automobile paint. It had nine or 10 coats of paint by a super painter.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, wow.

DAN DAILEY: We had the piece on a big kind of spinning device in his paint shop up in Pioneertown [CA].

TINA OLDKNOW: Cool.

DAN DAILEY: So I got, you know, a terrific machinist and the painter and the people in Bullseye, everybody here that was working on it, and the people in Denver. There were just a lot of people involved in it. I had assistance putting it in. It was 120 degrees the days we were putting it in.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, God.

DAN DAILEY: It was in August. It was awful. You couldn't even put a tool down because it would be too hot to touch later. And we drank so much water. But it went in, and it looks like it belongs in the building because the colors are kind of muted, and the palette was well developed with the architects. It was a good project. A learning project.

My piece in the Providence Performing Arts Center [RI] was kind of a stretcher too. I don't know if you've seen pictures of that, but—

TINA OLDKNOW: I have not seen that.

DAN DAILEY: That place was built in 1928, and it never got a chandelier because of the stock market crash. So they asked me to make a chandelier. It came about—

TINA OLDKNOW: Let me ask her to turn down that, you know, because I think we're going to pick up—

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Okay. Sorry.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, so the piece at the Providence Performing Arts Center had to look like it belonged, and I've gained the habit of incorporating the opinions of the owners, or the significant players in a project, at the outset of my development of drawings and concepts for a project. So it's kind of a gilded palace, you know, and it's full. It's like a phantasmagoria of style.

TINA OLDKNOW: That must have just been perfect for you.

DAN DAILEY: Oh, no. It was a headache.

TINA OLDKNOW: Was it?

DAN DAILEY: It was just—I mean, walking in there—if it had been Art Deco, like you said, I would have been in my element. But this was kind of dripping with décor, you know, just coffered ceilings that are gilded with all these medallions and tons of casts.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, so it's kind of neo-Renaissance or something?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, tons of cast plaster, and then, you know, Greek revival style—

TINA OLDKNOW: Everything.

DAN DAILEY: —Coptic style.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] [Laughs.] I see.

DAN DAILEY: What they would call Oriental.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Moorish.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, and a little bit of everything. And then, you know, fancy carpets, fancy upholstery, fancy bronze castings and steel castings and—

TINA OLDKNOW: Kind of the San Simeon approach—[laughs]—which is a little bit of everything.

DAN DAILEY: Over the top. One of those theaters by Rausch and Rausch for transporting you to another place when you enter. So you're in a fantasy world. And so it was a challenge to try to make something that looked like it belonged, but they also wanted it to look like me.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: So I put together a committee. I talked to the owners and told them I wanted people to look at my drawings with me. And the president of RISD, Roger Mandle, who I had met in Toledo, was on the committee. He ended up to be quite influential, and his opinion was regarded by everyone as, you know, a very credible authority in a friendly—supportive of the project and a lover of that theater. And then the head of the Rhode Island Historical Society and the head of the RISD museum at the time, and then the architect who had overseen the renovation, because the place was totally renovated three years before, and it was totally back to what its original brilliance was.

TINA OLDKNOW: I see. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And then one or two of the owners and maybe one board member. There were a lot of people at the table when I showed my first round of drawings. I showed them 50 drawings, and I took each drawing and superimposed it onto a photograph of the space so that they could see the rough concept and the—

TINA OLDKNOW: Kind of a mock-up of it.

DAN DAILEY: —kind of what that would look like in the space.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right, nice.

DAN DAILEY: And then we quickly got it down to five or six favorites. I mean, it was easy for people to say—I forget who supervised it besides me, but I remember us people were raising their hands. Yeah, number 14, number six, number three, and so on. They were obviously the favorites of the group. And then I went back again with more fully developed drawings for my composites of three, based on those favorites, and then got it right down to one. So in three visits, I had it down to one.

TINA OLDKNOW: Excellent.

DAN DAILEY: And then I thought I should build a prototype, because the piece is 18 feet high and 14 or 15 feet wide.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh my God.

DAN DAILEY: And a lot of times I'll build a model and hang it in the space.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] For them or for you?

DAN DAILEY: No, for both. It gives the client a sense of what's happening and then a kind of a final chance to say, yeah, I think it's going to look great, or, oh, I think it's too big, or who knows what. But in this case, one of their set builders built a mock-up of my idea, full size, out of Styrofoam and plywood and paper. And they did it in a week, and they hung it in the space. And I went back for my final meeting of the final drawings with the board of trustees. I had to talk to the board of trustees and kind of convince them.

After the selection committee had narrowed it down with me to the final design, I went back and showed the board of trustees some of each of the phases of the design development that I had gone through. And prior to the meeting, I said to the director of the theater, you know, we're going to take them all in there and show them the prototype afterward. He says, "Oh, no, no, no. I don't want anybody to second-guess it," you know, maybe decide, you know, it needs to be wider or longer or taller or one of your other designs instead, or who knows what they're going to think? They're all going to have their fingers in the pie.

So they didn't want to tell them. And then right at the end of the meeting, one of the trustees, you know, they said, "Gee, it would be great to have a full-sized prototype hanging out there that we can all go see."

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: And I thought, does this guy know? I just said, "Yes, that's a great idea." And then the director of the theater quickly ended the meeting. Everybody left. They never even knew that thing was hanging there, but we got photographs of it.

We did make a couple little changes because it's always good to do a study model. It just, dimensionally, brings things into clarity, because a lot of times flattened-out things in a drawing—and I wasn't working with, you know, Rhino CAD or AutoCAD on that one. There were some parts of it we started with Rhino CAD as we developed them for the subs, for some of the fabricators we worked with.

But we had it built mostly in Chicago by a lamp company, a very capable lamp company that builds big things

for casinos.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do you need some water?

DAN DAILEY: Maybe in a minute.

TINA OLDKNOW: Okay.

DAN DAILEY: I don't know if water is going to help.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, okay. [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: Tea might.

TINA OLDKNOW: We're just doing a lot of talking.

DAN DAILEY: I've had so much water today.

In Salt Lake City [UT], we had a lot of acrylic done. Originally, I wanted to do it with glass cane. It would have been tons of cane, literally tons, and then glass hanging over people's heads 75 feet in the air.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, yeah. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: So I dropped that idea, and I kind of simulated the stacked cane look with acrylic, with this very good company in Salt Lake.

TINA OLDKNOW: So you're fine on using, when you need to, acrylic as opposed to glass. You don't feel—

DAN DAILEY: You can't tell the difference from that far away. It made a big difference to the safety and even the structure of the piece because it cut down on weight.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah.

DAN DAILEY: And then some people in, I don't know, Pawtucket [RI] or—yeah, I think it was Pawtucket - did some of the stainless-steel fabrication of the figures, because it had six figures holding the entrance and their heads having these light-up parts.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: And they're kind of hanging over these things I would call upside-down umbrellas, you know, that are—

TINA OLDKNOW: Is this the biggest piece you've ever made? It sounds like it.

DAN DAILEY: Well, if you think of it as a single object, yeah, but it's not the biggest conglomerate piece I've ever made. I've made pieces that had more elements and were more complex as projects, but that one was the largest single object I've ever made. It weighs 3,900 pounds, just about two tons, and it has 350 lights in it, I think.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow. Gosh.

DAN DAILEY: And some parts are LEDs, really brilliant LEDs. Like car-headlight bright—

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: —that are blue, and they're all in all the blown-glass parts. So they have a separately modulated dimming system.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, I want to go see that the next time I'm in Providence [RI]. It sounds amazing.

DAN DAILEY: I was afraid they'd have to build scaffolding to change the light bulbs to get up near it and reach in and everything. But the piece is so heavy, people climb on it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, you're kidding, really?

DAN DAILEY: Just put a ladder up against it and climb onto it and a person's weight doesn't really do much. It doesn't jump around or anything—

TINA OLDKNOW: Great.

DAN DAILEY: —because it weighs so much. It's kind of like a—

TINA OLDKNOW: - stable ship. [Laughs.] Like, finally.

DAN DAILEY: Anyway, it's there, and that was really a significant project for me too. But as I said, among other things that I've made, there are a bunch of things, like the stairway in Switzerland or the stairway in Aspen and, you know, 13 lamps for a house or, you know, a lot more in another house. Just these kind of things come along, and it's challenging.

TINA OLDKNOW: Have you ever done, like, a whole interior of a room?

DAN DAILEY: Well, the dining room in Beverly Hills was the only time I've ever been given that kind of assignment and freedom.

TINA OLDKNOW: And what did that involve?

DAN DAILEY: Well, it involved working with the architects to develop drawings that would fit their plan and then allow me to control the details like the wall surfaces, the floors, the ceiling. I couldn't change anything that was seen from the street, but I determined the doors and made some details. There's a transom over the windows that go out onto—the doors that go out to a balcony on Palm Drive. And then—

TINA OLDKNOW: Did you do the lights, and did you also do the furniture?

DAN DAILEY: I made a chandelier and sconces that are cast-bronze birds and slumped glass with some fabricated bronze details and so on. And then I made a table that goes at the end of the room that's like a big serving table. It's a big console.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] Like a sideboard?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, with a tightrope walker joining the two legs underneath it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And then we made the dining room table. We made parts of it, and then some woodworker made parts of it. And then the dining room chairs, there are 10 of those. And then I had them put in a terrazzo floor with 101 glass leaves embedded in it that go polished off flush with it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, wow.

DAN DAILEY: And then there's a wood rug. The oval of the table is the same oval in the floor and in the ceiling, so there are three ovals that are over each other. And then around the oval in the ceiling, there are lights that are shooting down at the table but not straight down. Your head won't cast a shadow on your plate, so it's coming from the side.

TINA OLDKNOW: That sounds amazing.

DAN DAILEY: So it was a complicated project, and a really interesting one, for terrific clients.

TINA OLDKNOW: What makes an interesting commission for you? Or are they all interesting?

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, I'd have to say they're all interesting but on different levels of challenge, and sometimes—like the stairway in Connecticut that I'm working on now, I've had a really hard time putting a price on some of the processes to let the clients know how much this thing is going to cost. I can't just ballpark it or throw a number out there. I want to show him clearly, on paper, what each—you know, I want to break it down into all its parts, which I've done. Identify the production cost of each part and show him why it cost what it's going to cost. I just feel the need to do that. It can't be like some of my—or like my speculative work, where I just put a piece out there with a number on it, and if the right person comes along and likes it, they buy it. Aside from what the dealer negotiates, you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: But in this case, it's not something like that. It's much more of a—it's almost like I'm an architect, that I need to work on a percentage basis determined by the costs of the other operations involved.

So we're going to have to do a bunch of it here. Like the bronze casting will be done in California, but we have to

get all that back as raw castings, not finished pieces, and do all the cutting and filing and sanding and prep for the glass castings that get embedded in the bronze castings, because it has nine foxes running up this kind of blowing-in-the-wind grass, and there's something like 160 grass stalks. And I think they're going to be bronze, although I've been leaning more towards aluminum, then having it nickel plated, because of the weight.

TINA OLDKNOW: Is this in a house where it's like a spiral staircase that you can really see?

DAN DAILEY: No, it's not a spiral staircase, but it's a staircase that goes around a circular wall and then the railing stops at a post but continues around to the front door as a curving balcony rail.

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Oh. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: And there's another railing on the other side of it that goes back to this side. So it's kind of a U-shaped entrance.

TINA OLDKNOW: Interesting. That sounds amazing.

DAN DAILEY: So we're still developing the cost study, and it took a while to get to that point. Well, I always trust my clients to be understanding of my schedule. There are times when I'm just pushed, and some of these things you can't speed up. We're not in production yet. We're still figuring the darn thing out. This was a complicated one. More than other times.

TINA OLDKNOW: Is this house already built?

DAN DAILEY: Oh, yeah, it's an existing house, and I've been to the house. They have a chandelier, and they have some sconces of mine, and they want—you know, we went through the drawing process, and we got it down to the drawings they like. They just want this to happen. But I've been so—I hate to say "busy" because, I mean, yeah, I'm always busy. But I've been so wrapped in my other projects and meeting other commitments that I just haven't been able to devote the necessary time to pinning down the details to make my final presentation before we start fabricating. And consequently, I've taken it well beyond the deposit stage. I mean, the money they gave me to draw, I've spent all that and then some, and I'm about to start the full-size model of one of the foxes and stalks. So when I make this next presentation, they can see and touch or look around from different sides, the 3-D thing. I don't think I need it to convince them. I need it to show them that it's that thought out.

TINA OLDKNOW: Do they come and visit your studio ever?

DAN DAILEY: They haven't yet, but they're welcome anytime. I mean, many people visit, especially while it's in progress.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: I mean, I could name other commissions but—

TINA OLDKNOW: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Yeah. No, I just—this is good.

DAN DAILEY: —I've been really lucky to get interesting things like that.

TINA OLDKNOW: The commissions are site-specific, and you work with a client who chooses an idea, but doesn't it kind of fall someplace between, kind of, the work you do for yourself and something you've done for design? I mean, isn't—

DAN DAILEY: Yeah.

TINA OLDKNOW: It's not really one or the other.

DAN DAILEY: I'm not sure what you mean by "for design."

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, for example, if you're working with—your work for Steuben or something where you have—you know, working to agree—

DAN DAILEY: Oh, an assignment of sorts.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, an assignment, because this isn't an assignment, but at the same time—

DAN DAILEY: Well, you're right. There is an element of that, and it's stronger in some projects than others. I can remember when I made the cast-glass windows for the Children's Hospital in Boston, working with Harry Ellenzweig Associates, the architects in Cambridge, and at one of our drawing critiques meetings - which was a

very lively discussion of about, I don't know, 30 drawings on the walls, all pastel developments of ideas - I covered all the walls up of a room, except for the window wall, and there were, I don't know, eight of us in there discussing it and people from the Children's Hospital and then the architects, and I was there.

And people were saying, well, what about this, you know? I like part of this and part of that and so on, and then Harry kind of interrupted me. He said, "Well, whose art is this? Is this art by committee?" And I didn't want to put Harry down or anything, but I sort of thrive on that. And my answer to him and, you know, sincerely so, was that everybody was looking at my ideas. All those ideas came out of my head, and it's fine by me to have people voice their opinions because it helps me to hone my thinking and understand what's going to be the most successful in the final piece. So to have that critique is a pretty fabulous thing, to me. I really enjoy it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Well, and it's not to a lot of people. I mean, a lot of people would not enjoy it.

DAN DAILEY: Oh, I remember I talked to Paul Marioni about it, and he says, "I show them one drawing."

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: You know, they get it, or they don't get it. But that's not me. I have scads of ideas, and I don't mind if somebody says, I don't like that one. You know, I really don't care. It's not a part of me.

TINA OLDKNOW: No, that's good. Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] Right.

DAN DAILEY: So, I mean, I won't show them totally off-the-wall stuff. I'm pretty deliberate when I think about it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Speaking of totally off the wall stuff, are there pages of your sketchbook that you wished did not exist? Do you edit them?

DAN DAILEY: [Laughs.] No. I might tear a page out of my sketchbook if I spilled ink all over it.

TINA OLDKNOW: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] But that's the only time, not because you didn't like something?

DAN DAILEY: No. I can't remember, but sometimes I'll just deliberately build on a drawing and kind of obfuscate something I didn't like. But it's through lines. So if you really studied some drawings in my book, you might find that there's a form I thought was too awkward. I mean, I can see my hand used to be a lot steadier.

TINA OLDKNOW: Oh, really?

DAN DAILEY: Like my daughter's hand is so damn steady. She has such a good ability to make a line and draw beautifully, like Al Hirschfeld, you know. I mean, she can put it down just super. But I can't do that any more. My hands got a little bit of quiver to it, and my lines are not as smooth as they were.

TINA OLDKNOW: Fluid. Uh-huh. [Affirmative.]

DAN DAILEY: You know, I'm pretty good but not as good as her. Anyway, when I look at my sketchbooks, I can find things that I maybe wasn't satisfied with and just kept drawing, turning it into some kind of a different drawing on the page.

TINA OLDKNOW: One of my favorite—probably the thing I liked the best about working on your book with Bill Warmus was looking through your sketchbooks. I enjoyed that so much.

DAN DAILEY: Oh, yeah. I sent you a whole pile of sketches, didn't I?

TINA OLDKNOW: Yeah, it was really great. I think you'd given Bill a set of copies or something like that.

DAN DAILEY: Yeah, somebody copied every one of my sketchbooks at the time.

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, it's amazing, and so I looked through them, and it was such a great privilege to do that. I thought, gosh, you know, I wish that these were—I think that other people would derive as much enjoyment as I did when looking through those because there are so many stories in there.

DAN DAILEY: Well, Joe wanted to make a book out of it.

TINA OLDKNOW: You should think about it.

DAN DAILEY: I don't know how you could, and I don't know who would ever buy it. I mean, part of that comes down to how much money do you want to spend, you know, making yourself happy?

TINA OLDKNOW: I don't know. I think people would be just enchanted.

DAN DAILEY: I've never had much of a market for my drawings. My dealers—

TINA OLDKNOW: Have they ever really tried to sell them?

DAN DAILEY: —don't enthusiastically show them, because I've had it said to me more than once that, you know, they work just as hard to sell a $2,000 thing as they do a $20,000 thing or $200,000 thing. It's still conversations. It's still phone calls. And you still have to pack it and ship it, so they'd rather spend their time on my expensive stuff. So my drawings, then, even my 3-D drawings, you know—have you seen any of those?

TINA OLDKNOW: No, I don't think so.

DAN DAILEY: There might be one or two around the studio. I've taken some of my drawings and turned them into constructions of wire. Like that bull that's there—

TINA OLDKNOW: Yes, I love that bull.

DAN DAILEY: It started out in a funny way, because I've supported the STOP CANCER auction in L.A. for a long time by giving them something, usually a drawing. And then they sent me a box—David Austin from the Imago Gallery sent me a box and apparently 50 artists had gotten a box, and we each were supposed to do something with it and send it back, and they would auction them off to a group to support the cancers. I forget what hospital it's associated with. Maybe it's not a specific hospital. They give it to where they think it's needed, but I know the money goes straight to the people that really need it.

So he called me on a Thursday and said, where's your box? You know, the box had been sitting there all summer, and I hadn't touched it. And he called me in the late afternoon, and the auction was on Saturday. So I just put together this thing out of brass wire. I made a bull like that bull on the wall in there, but it was only about that big, about 10 inches wide. It filled the box, and it was just a simple line drawing like that. And I painted the inside of the box white so it's like a page in my sketchbook. And I put this bull against this, but it was spaced out about three inches so that it cast a little shadow in there. And if you had it in the right light, the shadow would be gray, not competing with the blackness of the painted brass construction. So it was just a line interpretation of my drawing in thin brass rod.

And I sent it out there, and FedExed it to them, and they got it just in time, and they put it in the auction. They sold it for 10 grand. So it took me about, you know, four hours to fabricate in the evening and then another four hours to finish it and get it in a frame and get it all tight and pack it and ship it. So I did it all myself because we had other projects with deadlines, and I just had let this thing go. And then they called me up and told me and said, "Well, send us another one," you know.

TINA OLDKNOW: [Laughs.]

DAN DAILEY: And I did it again the next year for the next auction, and they sold that one, too, for the same amount. And then in my next show at Imago, I had something like 15 of them on the wall.

TINA OLDKNOW: Wow.

DAN DAILEY: But some are big. Some are as big as this table. And those, my other dealers haven't—even there, they didn't really sell, because my glass upstages it, and it's not seen in the same way. So it's been kind of received with curiosity and a certain amount of enthusiasm, but then it hasn't sold as well as my other work. So I know that you need to leave things out there and get people acquainted with them. Things happen that way. I mean, they have sold, just slow, and I can't gauge what I want to do totally on sales. I mean, I have to just do these things.

TINA OLDKNOW: Right.

DAN DAILEY: I put quite a bit of energy and money into it for about two years, and I haven't given up on it. But now I've started incorporating glass with some of those same things, and I'm doing something a little different with it. So I'm not sure where it'll go. I'm still working on it.

TINA OLDKNOW: I think this a good place to end because we are running out of time.

DAN DAILEY: Okay.

TINA OLDKNOW: Thank you, Dan.

DAN DAILEY: You're welcome.

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[END OF INTERVIEW.]