



**Artists Documentation Program  
Video Interview Transcript**

**NANCY REDDIN KIENHOLZ**

**OCTOBER 30, 1995**

**Interviewed by:**

**Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Founding Director,  
Artists Documentation Program,  
and Chief Conservator, The Menil Collection**

**Video: William Howze | Total Run Time: 01:15:05**

**Location: The Menil Collection**

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This interview is part of the Artists Documentation Program, a collaboration of the Menil Collection, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, Harvard Art Museums.

The Artists Documentation Program has been generously supported by  
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

## **About the Artists Documentation Program**

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, artists have experimented with an unprecedented range of new materials and technologies. The conceptual concerns underlying much of contemporary art render its conservation more complex than simply arresting physical change. As such, the artist's voice is essential to future conservation and presentation of his or her work.

In 1990, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant to the Menil Collection for Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, then Chief Conservator, to establish the Artists Documentation Program (ADP). Since that time, the ADP has recorded artists speaking candidly with conservators in front of their works. These engaging and informative interviews capture artists' attitudes toward the aging of their art and those aspects of its preservation that are of paramount importance to them.

The ADP has recorded interviews with such important artists as Frank Stella, Jasper Johns, and Cy Twombly. Originally designed for use by conservators and scholars at the Menil, the ADP has begun to appeal to a broader audience outside the Menil, and the collection has grown to include interviews from two partner institutions: the Whitney Museum of American Art and the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art, Harvard Art Museums. In 2009, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded a grant to the Menil Collection to establish the ADP Archive, formalizing the multi-institutional partnership and making ADP interviews more widely available to researchers.

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**[Speakers (in order of appearance): Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Founding Director, Artists Documentation Program and Chief Conservator, The Menil Collection; Nancy Reddin Kienholz, Artist and Wife of Ed Kienholz.]**

**[BEGIN RECORDING]**

**[00:00:34]**

CM-U: Today is October 30, 1995, and with me is Nancy Reddin Kienholz, who was not only married to Ed Kienholz but is a co-creator of his work since 1972. This is an interview in our series of the Mellon Artists Documentation Program.

CM-U: I think we are going to start with talking about the early work because this is – we are in the galleries of the Menil Collection on the occasion of the early Kienholz show [“Edward Kienholz, 1954-1962,” The Menil Collection, October 20, 1995-January 14, 1996], and then our conversation will move on to some of the later work. Okay?

**[00:01:16]**

CM-U: I guess I’d like to start with what I’ve read so much about, that when Ed was working on the really early work, in the fifties, he was using brooms instead of brushes, and that the paints were just industrial paints. Is that so?

Nancy Kienholz: Yes, that’s so. He couldn’t afford to buy any oil paints...

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: ...so he would get it out of garages and alleys. And so a lot of it is enamel rather than oil. You know, I don’t believe it’s acrylic. I think it’s, you know, oil enamel.

CM-U: Um-hum. Just kind of house...

Nancy Kienholz: House paint.

CM-U: And part of, I guess, in that same vein, was kind of just collecting objects to put into the works?

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, they are found objects. And depending on their age and what they were made of, depends on their state of repair.

CM-U: Uh-huh. In the early work [of Edward Kienholz] like certainly *John Doe*, [1959, The Menil Collection, Houston] and *Jane Doe*, [1960, Collection of Laura Lee Stearns], and even *Boy*, [*Son of John Doe*, 1961, Collection of John W. Kluge], and definitely the *Conversation Piece*, [1959, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Walter Hopps], I mean, there were actual mannequins that he bought, right?

Nancy Kienholz: This is true, yeah. There are mannequins. And of course they are – mannequins are all made differently, too, so you're not sure what you've got until you cut them open.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: Now they're all fiberglass, cloth.

CM-U: Where would he get them? Just around L.A. again?

Nancy Kienholz: Just around. Yeah. And you can buy 'em – I mean, they're in junk stores, they're – you know, a store goes out of business, and they sell all their mannequins. Mannequins are not that hard to find.

CM-U: Um-hum. Did he tend to sort of buy a whole supply? Or would he just have one – have an object in mind, a work in mind?

Nancy Kienholz: Both ways.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: He'd either go out looking for something specific, or he'd see something and say, "Oh, I might be able to use that." So it was always a store of – the same as there is now...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: ...things that you just *might* need.

CM-U: And were the mannequins used, usually? Old ones?

Nancy Kienholz: Yes. He wouldn't buy a new mannequin, ever.

CM-U: I mean, part of that, I suppose, is economic; but also just the interest. The way they age and...

Nancy Kienholz: The way they age. But mostly economic.

CM-U: Yes. Yeah. Well, that's certainly interesting. I mean, understandable.

**[00:03:28]**

CM-U: With *John Doe*, which is the piece that the Menil Collection bought in '86 – and I think I met you and Ed just before we bought this piece – the piece, the parts were a found mannequin that he cut...

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: ...and in the case of, uh, actually the penis on the back, he had – we had the metal tubing, but we didn't have the rubber mask. In fact, why don't I just go get that, and then we can just talk about it while I have it.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, the mask had just disintegrated, hadn't it?

CM-U: Right. The mask had completely disintegrated. This is the penis, and it sits in the drawer of *John Doe*. And when I first saw it, it was just without any rubber mask. And in the drawer was just powder.

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: And I guess that it had just been that way. I mean, I don't really remember the provenance of where this came from, but I – it had just sat in the drawer, I guess.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah. And probably it did – just went – yeah. Well, this may do the same, huh?

CM-U: Well, I remember when I – when you and Ed came, and I showed you this; and then he said, "No, it should have a rubber mask, and I'll take it back to L.A., and I'll get a rubber mask for it."

Nancy Kienholz: Well, he didn't actually. He went over to [Houston artist] Sharon Kopriva's studio, and she had it hanging on the wall, and he said, "Can I have that mask?"

CM-U: (laughs) But I didn't know that at the time.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah.

CM-U: And I remember – 'cause I don't think you had moved to Houston yet.

Nancy Kienholz: No, we hadn't.

CM-U: You were staying at one of the hotels.

Nancy Kienholz: Right. And – yeah, and she just had it hanging there. So it is just a cheap rubber Halloween mask.

CM-U: He brought me two of them.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: And Sharon says indeed they are both hers.

Nancy Kienholz: They are both hers.

CM-U: And the thought with the second one was that this one, of course, will also disintegrate, and we'll be left, probably, you know, with – although it's in museum conditions now.

Nancy Kienholz: It's in museum conditions now. This can be – it will be entirely – I think, make a big difference.

CM-U: Yeah. Hopefully. But, anyway, I remember him giving me the second one and saying, you know, "If this one disintegrates, then just fashion another one to go on this."

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: But when I've had discussions with art historians and panels about this whole issue, rubber is an issue that confronts us with lots of artists who work with found materials. And when I've been in a seminar or on a panel discussing

this, there is a contingent, a group of people who feel that what I should do is make a cast of it just the way he's done it, and then I'll always have it the way he – I can fashion the next one exactly the way he did it.

CM-U: But then there's another group of people who say, "Yeah, but this is about found objects, and it's about just having a mask, not something you create." What do you think?

Nancy Kienholz: Well, I think it could work both ways. I mean, if – but if you – I mean, if you had, you make a rubber mold, and then you pour rubber in the mold...

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: ...and then put it in there so it was exactly like that.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah. That would work. It would be a little tricky to do, but...

CM-U: It is. And I, I...

Nancy Kienholz: It would be a little tricky to get it in there.

CM-U: I guess my impression was that I would just...

Nancy Kienholz: I think that Ed – if Ed said to you, "Here's the other mask. Put the other mask back in it..."

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: ...I'd go for, "Here is the other mask. Put the other mask back in it."

CM-U: Right. And presumably you'll always be able to find something like that.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah. Well, I'd just take a photograph of it.

CM-U: Um-hum. Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: Myself. But I'd just take another mask and put it back in it, so I don't know what to tell you as a conservator.

CM-U: Well, that makes sense to me because there – we don't know about rubber.

Nancy Kienholz: We don't know about rubber.

CM-U: We don't know yet.

**[00:07:06]**

Nancy Kienholz: No, we're just finding out. Well, here in this exhibition, we've found out a lot about rubber from forty years ago.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: Which has been interesting.

CM-U: Yeah. Like which, like...

Nancy Kienholz: Well, like with *John – Boy, Son of John Doe*, and some of these doll heads that are starting to crack because they are not plastic, they're rubber. And rubber, like – you know, they'd say that they could never get rid of rubber tires. I'm not so sure, I guess. But I guess they start to crack, and then they harden, and would turn to powder.

CM-U: Well, do you think, I never – I mean, I assume that that's sort of – that would be acceptable, and that would be considered part of the aging process.

Nancy Kienholz: That's what I think.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: I wouldn't – one of the doll heads came out of the bottom of *Mother Sterling*. Say it finally just goes away. Disintegrates. I wouldn't go and find another doll head, I don't think – I mean, I really don't – to put in there unless it was making the whole thing fall down.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: Unless the others were coming out because of it. I would just figure that that doll head just didn't exist anymore unless it had to be there structurally.



CM-U: Can you think of other objects where that's happened? Where there have been missing parts that have just been left?

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, I think there's a lot of them that are missing parts, and that they, they just disappear. It's the same even with the – yeah. I suppose, like if you look at the Bible and *The Minister*...

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Nancy Kienholz: ...and you look at the aging of the pages...

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: ...where the page is opened, and the corner of that page is gone, I suppose you could have a paper conservator make that and put it in, but I just think it's part of the life of the piece. No, and I wouldn't.

**[00:08:50]**

Nancy Kienholz: And one thing that's true with the later works, and then these, too, is like – mostly with the later pieces, we were using polyester resin – when you put it on, brand new, it's clear. And as time goes by, it yellows. And actually the yellow is much prettier than the clear. And so it was always fun to wait, to watch it, because the piece got better when it yellowed. So I think it would be a terrible thing to take off the yellow and put it back to clear.

CM-U: It's interesting that you talk about that because that, in fact, has been an impulse of conservators in the past. I mean, we'd say, "The artist put on a clear varnish, and so, as the varnish began to yellow, it's something that we would consider changing."

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: To put on a clear varnish. Now this is different because it's more structural than...

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: ...maybe a coating would be. But I do also know of artists who have said, "No. I want it to yellow. And that is part of the..."

Nancy Kienholz: Absolutely it's part of the process. And it's actually – if you could yellow it when you put it on, if that were possible, you would. But you can't because it's – and also, with the resin, it reacts differently to different materials. If you put the resin on a photograph, it'll change yellow a lot faster than it will if you put it on metal.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: So it has to be the chemicals in the photographic paper or process that makes the resin itself yellow. Now these pieces here, like with *John Doe*, or whatever, that's orange shellac.

CM-U: Like on *Walter Hopps Hopps Hopps*? [1959, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Lannan Foundation]

Nancy Kienholz: Like on the *Walter Hopps Hopps Hopps*, yeah. That before – and we know that he would use the orange shellac to – maybe that's why, like the yellowing process – but to use the orange shellac to do the final painting process before he figured out polyester resin. Or maybe it was before there was polyester resin. I'm not sure when that was – came out. Are you?

CM-U: No, I'm not. And I, I, I do see – I did read something, which was a quote from Ed in 1977, talking about fiberglass, you know. And he said...

Nancy Kienholz: That's what he means.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: We always said "fiberglass."

CM-U: Uh-huh. But it's probably – it's actually polyester...

Nancy Kienholz: It's actually polyester resin.

CM-U: Okay.

Nancy Kienholz: We always said "fiberglass." I'm not sure why. He would do it all the time, and he wrote it, "fiberglass," and then, you know, Tom Price, our assistant, who is very pedantic, said, "polyester resin," which is true. It is. And I'm not sure why we always just said fiberglass.

CM-U: Um-hum. Okay. I don't know, but I am interested in...

Nancy Kienholz: I mean, it is the resin that you use if you are using fiberglass cloth.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: This is the resin that you use to put the cloth together. So I guess that's why I said fiberglass.

CM-U: Within the case of *Walter Hopps Hopps Hopps*, that was probably shellac back then.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah. Yeah.

CM-U: It was probably discolored already. I mean...

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, it was. It's orange shellac.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: Not clear shellac. He loved orange shellac.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: He used it all the time.

CM-U: And if he was buying older materials, or leftover materials, then it would have already aged anyway.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum. But orange shellac is – and it does turn dark, you know, rather quickly. When you first put it on, it looks pretty orange; but it doesn't stay that way very long. And even in the newer figures, they are – before they are – whatever is going to go on. Like, after making plaster casts and before putting whatever on the surface, they are always painted with orange shellac first to kind of stabilize the plaster so that it doesn't just absorb everything. It's like a sealer.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: See, if you're at home, and you've got a water spot you can't get rid of, paint it with shellac. And then paint over the top of it, and the water stain won't come out.

CM-U: Um-hum.

**[00:12:44]**

CM-U: In the early – like the fifties and early – well, I guess in the late fifties, *Jane Doe*, *John Doe*, *Boy*, there were mannequins. But then in the early sixties, like *The Birthday* [1964, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Germany] and *The Beanery*, [1965, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam] then we went to plaster casts, right?

Nancy Kienholz: *The Beanery*, I think, was the first one that was actual body cast. *The Birthday*, still mannequin.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And so the plaster casts are done...

CM-U: Why did he make that change, and then you stay with it...

Nancy Kienholz: Well, it was possible because you could – with a mannequin, you can't – it's very difficult to change the posture.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: And it's also very difficult to make a mannequin look real.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: They are what they are. They are mannequins, and they just – you know, they're stiff, and you can't change that posture. So unless that mannequin has the posture you want, you are kinda stuck with it.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: So by making the plaster casts, you can put a model in any position you want, and then make a cast of the body. And that's just done with Johnson and Johnson plaster bandages that – which are about to disappear, I guess, because now they are doing all of the – they are all using fiberglass...

CM-U: Bandages.

Nancy Kienholz: ...bandages now if you break an arm or something.

CM-U: Interesting.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, it is interesting because you have to buy them. And they are very moisture sensitive, so you can't buy too many. You can't keep them too long, even when they are packaged, because they are moisture sensitive and then the plaster will just – it's like you dip them in water, and they just whoo! just falls off. But you just use those bandages, and they're just cut in strips like this. And then you lay them on the body itself until you – you know, whatever you want, whether you want a hand or a whole body, until you make a cast. So they are made in – you can't go all the way around a leg because you couldn't get the person out; so you have to leave a space to take them out. So usually you do a front and a back, and then put them together.

**[00:14:51]**

Nancy Kienholz: But there's always an iron structure inside of them.

CM-U: So there's an armature inside of \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].

Nancy Kienholz: There's an armature inside of all of the figures.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And I used to tease him about the fact that the elbows – they were always the biggest elbows, and the biggest ankles, and I'd say, "There is a Kienholz elbow..."

(laughter)

Nancy Kienholz: ... And he'd say, "No, some dumb son of a bitch is gonna pick it up by the elbow, you know," so he would really make whatever – those things are very strong, so you'd start with a metal sculpture that would go through the shoes onto a base, and then all the way through the body. And – I mean, you wouldn't do each finger, but you would put like maybe a nail, you know, in the finger to just strengthen it, and then put plaster around it. And then we'd do gussets in certain areas like, you know, either wooden or card – mostly very thin wood gusset, like maybe at the waist, at the elbow, at the – whatever

the stress points are. And then put the two casts together, and then cover them again with plaster bandages to hold them. And then shellac.

CM-U: And then shellac is the next step?

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum. And then there would either be – depending on what you wanted; whether you wanted the figure to be really smooth, if you wanted it to be perfect. For a while, we were using just plaster of Paris, which you'd put on, and then smooth, and then sand it. And plaster of Paris is so hard, but it's miserable to work with. And then we started using what's called wallboard mud. I don't know what the proper name of it is. It's, if you put wallboard – yeah, wallboard in your house, and you tape it...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: ...and then you put this – it's like plaster – over the tape to...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: ...you know, to make it meld [sounds like]. Used that. It's a lot softer, and so you can put it on and smooth it and sand it like that.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: So it's either one of those two on top, if you were looking for a smooth surface. I think we switched to wallboard mud in – let's see, probably – you see, we were building, and I...

CM-U: He was using it for construction?

Nancy Kienholz: *I* was using it for construction. So I would guess it was probably, say, maybe '77, '78 that that took over from the plaster of Paris. But, you know, maybe '80. But I think late seventies. And that's pretty much been the norm since then.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And then, again, shellac on top of that. And then whatever paint or surface. But it seals it again, and then you go on with the next one. But all that shellac, yeah, which is a natural product, so it should be better than the others, I think. I don't know.

[00:17:52]

CM-U: And then after the paint, then this fiberglass, or the polyester resin.

Nancy Kienholz: Then the polyester resin, which – over the top. Which is more just like a painting gesture. It's also used, though, on all of the clothes – if the people are clothed, the polyester resin is put on in order to stiffen the fabric.

CM-U: And was that in order to get – hold a fold, or for preservation, are you thinking?

Nancy Kienholz: Well, actually it was both. I mean, we couldn't paint it. If you try and paint fabric without anything on it, you can't paint it.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: So you put the resin on it. It hardens. It's stiff enough. And then you can also manipulate the folds, you know, while it's drying.

CM-U: How long does it take to dry?

Nancy Kienholz: Not too long. Anywhere from – well, it's pretty much – you can't get it out of the can any more like, say, within, oh, tops, 20 minutes, but mostly less than that. Mostly about ten. And then it will take anywhere from two to 24 hours to set up, depending on – you hope it sets up – depending on how much catalyst you've put in it.

CM-U: You do the mixing yourself, then?

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, we did for years. But now actually we have a guy, Daryl Witcraft, who actually is trained. We haven't had any fires or smoking buckets since Daryl came to work for us. Ed was – well you know, he was one of those *sqrrrr* (makes squeezing gesture) just squeeze it in, but – so now we actually measure it.

CM-U: Did you have a particular brand that you used?

Nancy Kienholz: No. It's basically called clear-cast, though. There's different ones. Some of them are milky and they're not clear. So whatever it is, it is a clear-cast – I'm trying to – it's marine resin, basically.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And it's used in boat building. But there are different ones. There's clear, and then there's a – which is just a higher quality...

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Nancy Kienholz: ...than the milky one.

**[00:19:47]**

CM-U: I was interested, when we were working earlier last week together on *Boy*, where there was the tear in his swimming trunks, and how, with a little bit of heat, it really did begin to soften and become malleable where, you know, we could push it back into place.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, that was great. Well, explain how you did that, Carol.

CM-U: Well, it was – heating it gave us a little flexibility because it was quite rigid. In fact, there were places where areas had just actually broken off...

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: ...because of the rigidity.

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: And so, by heating it, it could soften back; and then I just used an adhesive, Beva 371, which is basically an ethylene vinyl acetate resin, that just seemed compatible enough to hold it. It took some manipulating, as you remember, when we had to hold and work, but it really seemed – and then it was so easily reversible with naphtha, which is nice. Where – I remember one time I had put a tab in behind to hold the joins. I didn't like the placement, and then I could just easily use a little naphtha, which seemed not to affect the polyester resin at all, of course...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...to remove it and do another. So that went...



Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, I thought that was better, that way, than the way that I've been doing it because...

CM-U: What were you doing?

Nancy Kienholz: Well, the same – I mean, basically the same thing, except that I would be using – again, I would just be using the polyester resin.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: So that I would, same, cut, you know, a piece of linen or cotton or whatever – you know, as close to the material that was used as possible, but mostly linen or cotton – and put it in the resin. And then, you know, stick it behind the hole, you know, to fill it. I'm thinking of like a hole more than a slit. In and behind. And then I would *trompe-l'oeil* in whatever the pattern was.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: But I thought that this was more controllable.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: Much more controllable than just the resin is.

CM-U: Right. You had more time...

Nancy Kienholz: You had more time with it...

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: ...and you could – and softening it. So you weren't working with such a stiff, brittle surface. That the heat made it much more malleable. No, no, I thought that was a much better way to do it.

CM-U: Well, we'll have to do more.

Nancy Kienholz: So I'm going to take that up.

CM-U: We'll do more of that.

Nancy Kienholz: We'll do more of that. When we hit New York, we're going to do more of that.

CM-U: Is that the standard kind of damage that you see on the works? I mean, the fabrics tear, or...

Nancy Kienholz: The fabrics tear. Well, sometimes, of course, it's misuse. Also, lots of times there is sun damage. People seem to put these things in the windows, and then the – then if it's hot; you know, you're in California or something – and it will actually – again, it will melt the fiberglass.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And then if the fiberglass \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible], then it becomes sticky. And then if it – you know, may – sometimes it will just – it will start to run again. It's very heat sensitive.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: Or sun sensitive. More than heat, sun sensitive.

CM-U: Um-hum.

**[00:22:53]**

CM-U: This might be a good time to talk about “The Art Show” [“Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz: The Art Show” (Traveling exhibition), Rice Museum, Rice University, Houston, November 17, 1984-January 13, 1985]. Because that's actually the very first time that I met you and Ed. It was before we owned *John Doe*. And my version of this story, which I love because it's my version (laughs)...

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: ...is that you were installing at the same time “Human Scale,” [“Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz: Human Scale” (Traveling exhibition), Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, November 17, 1984-January 13, 1985] I think, at the Contemporary Arts Museum [Houston].

Nancy Kienholz: We were.

CM-U: Isn't that right?

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: And then, per some arrangement – it must have involved Walter [Hopps, Founding Director, The Menil Collection] – “Art Show” was to come at Rice at the same time.

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: And “Art Show” had been stored somewhere else. Out of the country, even. Is that right?

Nancy Kienholz: What happened to it is – because it was just fine. And it was in Berlin or wherever it was. It was somewhere in Europe. And then [Braunstein Gallery owner] Ruthie Braunstein in San Francisco brought it to San Francisco to show in her gallery at the same time the *Human Scale* show was at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. So the shipper put the thing on a – you know, on a ship, in a container. And it's all crated. I mean, everything properly done in that way. But in order to save money, he had it offloaded, the container offloaded, and trucked across the Yucatan Peninsula in July.

CM-U: You mean he had it offloaded in Mexico?

Nancy Kienholz: Right. However it was coming through, the canals, or whatever. Offloaded, and trucked. So here it was in this, you know, regular container – big 40-foot truck container – across the Yucatan Peninsula in July, which was probably inside that container, who knows? You know, 150, 200 degrees, whatever it was. So when it arrived in San Francisco and we opened the crates, it was almost like it was oozing out of the crates. And I remember, like I remember, [model] Edie Rickey's boa was just – she had this feather boa on her, and it was just stuck here and I mean, everywhere. And on that piece there was like a – that's the only time we used it. We used like a rubber – I'm not sure; it was like a rubber that you could heat up. I think it's that same kind of stuff like if you dip your tools in, and the handles. You know, that kind of thing. Well, the rubber, in the heat, just sort of melted. So there we were with that piece in San Francisco, and putting up the *Human Scale*, and the only thing we did there, basically, is, you know, we got out the acetone, cleaned it up, touched it up as best as we could. And so there it was, all stuck together [sounds like]. And then I think we took it back to Idaho, restored it...

[00:25:34]

Nancy Kienholz: ....and then it came here. And one of the kids' hands was broken...

CM-U: When it came here – well, when I got called in, was that the fingers, two or three of the fingers on the small crouching boy...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...as I remember, were broken.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: And you and Ed were installing *Human Scale* at the Contemporary Arts Museum, and it was like down to the last wire because you both had to go somewhere else and then would be back to Houston just for the night of the opening.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: And so Marti Mayo [Director, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston] called me and said, “Could you come over? Because the artist has reconstructed the figures – fingers – but doesn’t have time to paint them.” And this is...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...this is where I come in, and this is the story I remember.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: And so I – no, I guess this would have been at Rice. I don’t know why she would have called me.

Nancy Kienholz: It was at Rice. Well, maybe because...

CM-U: He wanted to see me, maybe. That was it. I went over to CAM just to talk to you and Ed about this.

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: And I remember what he said to me, which was, he told me exactly what the colors were that he had used. And he said, you know, “Go out and buy those colors, and mix them up, and you’ll be able to match the skin tone perfectly. And then, um, “And I don’t – I’m not going to be able to see them until the night of the opening, and I don’t know you; but just try to make them look as best you can like the others. I am really stuck,” or to that effect. And he left.

CM-U: And I felt obliged to do it my way, which was using my materials...

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: ...that I thought fit within my conservation training...

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: ...dictates. And also – so anyway, I went ahead and painted them the way I would, and I painted in cracks, and I painted in dirt, and I painted in all of those things.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: And then of course I was very nervous that when he came back, I didn’t know what his reaction would be. And I remember it so well because I was so impressed with him. He – I was crouching around somewhere at the opening, just hoping when I saw him he’d think it was okay. And he came and found me, and he said he thought it was really good. He liked it. And he said – and this is the part that I’ve quoted him so much since – he said that he really liked the way I had painted it aged. Because if he had done it, he said, he would have been inclined to just paint it with the materials as he’d told me he’d done it – to begin with.

Nancy Kienholz: Right.

CM-U: And then he would have had the problem of those fingers not matching the other fingers.

Nancy Kienholz: The rest of it, yeah.

CM-U: And then you have the problem of one hand not matching the other hand. And then he went on about talking about how important it was to paint in the aging.

Nancy Kienholz: Absolutely. If you can, it is.

CM-U: If you can. Right.

Nancy Kienholz: If you can, absolutely. Yeah. 'Cause it would be. Because by then it was – let's see...

CM-U: That was in '84.

Nancy Kienholz: ...in '84, so – we finished it in '77, but we did figures, you know, along. And those were the kids.

CM-U: How many figures are in that?

Nancy Kienholz: I think there are 19.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: Seventeen or 19. A lot of them.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: And so those were done over from, say, '74 to '77, was the completion of it. And so they were also in different stages of completion when it was finished.

**[00:28:32]**

Nancy Kienholz: But that rubber that we put on, I believe, is all gone now. I think that we removed that, and it's back to the pretty much – they're rough. They're not smooth...

CM-U: Surfaces.

Nancy Kienholz: ...surfaces. They are pretty much back to the bandages and the – you know, and the shellac. And then the paint over. And the paint is oil paint. Pretty much. Winsor & Newton. Ed loved Winsor & Newton. So it's pretty much...

CM-U: So it's tube paint then with that?

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, yeah.

CM-U: So when did he switch from that – I mean, again, is that related to economics, when he switched from...

Nancy Kienholz: Sure. Well, he still would love to use enamel if he could. Any time he could.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: I mean, because of the way it would flow, and the way it would paint, and...

CM-U: It's enticing.

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, it is.

CM-U: And it's strong.

Nancy Kienholz: Uh-huh. So he would use that. But he also – we found that there was something with white paint. And I don't know when this started happening, but just white. I think they took lead out of white, or did something like that. Then all of a sudden the damn white, when you put on the resin, the white would turn to snakeskin. It would look just like a snakeskin, just tsch tsch tsch tsch (makes zig-zag motion with hand). And we were looking at something here. Isn't there one here that we were looking in that had that, that look? There is. There's one of the pieces here that we were looking at.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: And that's what I said, "Well it's white paint." It doesn't react to other colors of paint, but it reacts to white. But if you use, you know, really good, you know, white with, you know – good oil white – and let it dry properly, which is something, again, Ed couldn't stand.

CM-U: Well, it takes so long.

Nancy Kienholz: Right. Then it won't do that. But, yeah, he – well, it's just true. It does. It takes too long to dry to be able to actually finish it. So that, mmm – you know, sometimes the snake-skinning was okay. Other times it was, he had to take it off of – well, you know, everything off of the surface and start all over again.

**[00:30:41]**

CM-U: Let's talk a little bit about the paints that Ed used. I mean, what was his kind of characteristic palette? What sort of...

Nancy Kienholz: Well, his – he didn't use bright colors, and I sort of felt – I mean, I think, in the later years when he could buy oil paint, he would buy Winsor & Newton, and he would have – he could have lived with four colors. He would have had white, black, Van Dyck [alternately, Vandyke] brown, and yellow ochre, and that's it.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: That was Ed's – that's really Ed's palette. You know, occasionally he'd put in a little red, but those are really his colors. And he would use – and of course the orange shellac, which would, again – you know, if he could change the colors with the shellac. But that's pretty much it. And then he would mix them from there. He wasn't a bright – he didn't use bright colors, really. I mean, the reds, even the reds in the pieces aren't that bright red.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: In later years I was more interested in the – you know, I did the painting rather than him, and so I would use colors that he wouldn't normally use. But, for him, when he picked something up, and it was the same thing, if it – well, enamel, like if he bought enamels, it would be the same. He would go, and he would buy those same colors, except maybe he'd get what's called, in the enamel world, "dead grass green." You know, which is the same. You know, when he – and so all of the colors have that same tone to them. It's very – for him to have – occasionally you see a little blue, but not much blue. And blue is used very sparingly, very careful; where the other colors he would use in big panels.

CM-U: I remember when I was – after we bought *John Doe*, Walter [Hopps] asked me to restore it. And, you know, the usual kind of dusting and cleaning, that was part of it.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: But then there was a real issue about colors. And I didn't know if the colors had faded very much or not.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.



CM-U: And I guess it was a time – it must have been the time at which you came and he took the penis. I remember asking about that...

Nancy Kienholz: \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible]

CM-U: ...and he said, “No.” He said that he thought the colors were fine, that they weren’t that much brighter.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, that’s what I’m saying.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: He didn’t. No. And so sometimes when you see one that’s restored, and you look at it, and you go, “Wha!” You know, “Whoa, look at that color.” I mean, you know, and it just, you know. And to me, it’s like I don’t think it was that color.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: Just because of the way he was. You know, he liked that – I don’t know whether it was his period or what. He liked the muddy colors. He really did.

CM-U: Well...

Nancy Kienholz: And that’s what he used.

CM-U: Well, it may be related to his using, liking old things. Or aged, old materials.

Nancy Kienholz: This is true.

CM-U: Yeah. I mean, that was his aesthetic. That’s what he liked.

Nancy Kienholz: That was what he liked.

**[00:33:24]**

CM-U: Have you seen examples where restorations have been insensitive in that regard? In cleaning the objects too much, or...

Nancy Kienholz: Yes.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Nancy Kienholz: I've seen them where I think they've totally been repainted.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: And totally done. And, yeah, I've seen them when Ed's denied them. You know, "That's not my piece." Yeah.

CM-U: Really?

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, yeah. And because he – the aging process, if it ages naturally and it's not, you know, something that's been stuck on a garage shelf for years and – you know, had rats run over it, you know, and it has really gone to hell – but in a normal, you know, living situation, the aging process is a good thing on the work.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And the change of color. That's like Ed said, that he always talked about Rembrandt, and he said that he saw a Rembrandt show in – I think it was in Minneapolis, and in the forties – and went in, and evidently they had sent the Rembrandts over from the Rijksmuseum to some American museum that cleaned them. Like, cleaned the varnish. And then they packed them in excelsior, and then they shipped them off. And he said, so here are these Rembrandts with like little beards on them from, you know, the excelsior." And he said that the – he said it was right out of the tube.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: He said the paints, before the varnish, it was actually just whatever those colors were. And if you think about it, he used the same colors as Rembrandt, you know – which I hadn't thought about – but as a matter of fact, it's pretty much the same stuff, color-wise.

CM-U: But the new varnish had saturated them in a way that they were too bright and too lively.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: And that the colors weren't obscured. You know, the colors weren't melded. And it's just like the fiberglass. When it's clear, you are not positive. And that's why lots of times we keep it in the studio longer than you would think.

CM-U: The work itself?

Nancy Kienholz: The work itself. And wouldn't actually show it. We didn't exhibit that often anyhow, you know. It would be – more or less, you had a group of works that would actually be traveling for a period of time, but it was the same group of works. But in between that, it would be like once every five years or something that, you know, new works would be exhibited. And a lot of that had to do with the aging process. Leaving it in the studio. Letting it mellow. Letting it dry. Letting the fiberglass yellow. I mean, it was really part of the finishing of the work. Because you would be looking at it, and you'd think, "Well, I don't know." Because you'd have to imagine in your mind how that's going to change when that yellows. So, no, I would definitely not make a nice new clean fiberglass on anything.

**[00:36:10]**

CM-U: When that does happen, the artist really doesn't have – I mean, if the work is sold and owned by someone, the artist really didn't have much of a say? Has no authority?

Nancy Kienholz: No. No.

CM-U: Or didn't at that time anyway?

Nancy Kienholz: No. Well, you don't know. I mean, lots of collectors, you know...

CM-U: You can't say.

Nancy Kienholz: You can't say. I mean, lots of collectors, you know, if something happens, they call you immediately, and they say, "Oh, you know, my God, you know, something happened." Or the cleaning lady, you know, ran into it with a vacuum. Or whatever.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And then...

CM-U: Did you do a lot of your own restoration?

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, most of it.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And most of the time, you know, Ed was real good about it. Occasionally, you know, if he thought it had been abused, he'd be angry about it. You know, doing it. And Ed sometimes said, "The piece is destroyed."

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: But I think that was more because of – not that he *couldn't* fix it, but that he *wouldn't* fix it. That it, that it was – that it had come to such a state that the person that owned it didn't have the right to have it fixed.

CM-U: Um-hum. I understand. I do. Also – I mean, this is very true. This often happens, too. He's into a different kind of work...

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, it's hard.

CM-U: ...doing something completely different. It's very hard to go back...

Nancy Kienholz: It's very hard.

CM-U: ...into the older work.

Nancy Kienholz: I remember Walter [Hopps] told us years ago that – and he was right about it, too. Not that we ever did it, but we should keep a book. And in the book, when we do the pieces, write what we use. And so I kept that book for, you know, a year or something, and totally forgot about it. And then a piece came back from Japan. A piece called [Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz,] *The Model* [1984-85] They had just, oh, broken it. I mean, they'd put it – just put it in the – they didn't – they just *put it* in the crate. That was it. They didn't – I mean, they just stuck it there. You know what I mean? And it's a figure, you know, a full figure – it's a girl, who has her arm out like this. They just stuck it in the crate. And so she was doing that (waves arms in rocking motion) all way from, you know, Tokyo to Idaho, and just – you know, she was just ruined. But finally, luckily, the model was here. We kept trying to – we had to redo the one arm completely, and finally we found the model, you

know, from Berlin, you know. Flew her in, you know, and did the – did the damn...

CM-U: You had to recast...

Nancy Kienholz: We had to. Because one person arm, another person arm, it just didn't fit. And she's a real small person. And actually she was Ed's favorite model, because she is very tiny, but everything's in proportion.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: She's almost like a miniature person, you know. Wonderful model. Leslie Coulter [sounds like]. And she modeled for a lot of artists for a living, and so she could hold a stand. She'd come and you'd say, "Well, Leslie, can you stand like this?" And she'd plant her feet, and she'd just stand there. And Ed would say, "Well, don't you want me to make you a brace for your arm and..." You know, to hold. And, "No, no, it's fine." You know. And off we'd go with her. And – anyhow, I couldn't recreate the surface on the piece that I had painted on the piece in the first place. I mean, I just – and I kept fooling with it, and fooling with it. Fooling. So of course I just repainted it. Changed it.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: Because I couldn't do it. And then later I found this damned book that I had kept, and there that piece was in it. And it said, "You mix this with this and this, and this..."

**[00:39:27]**

Nancy Kienholz: 'Cause I was using – that particular piece had – some of them do have Zolatone on them.

CM-U: And what is Zolatone?

Nancy Kienholz: Zolatone is a paint. It's different types of paint that don't – I mean, like, if you open the can, it has all these flecks floating around, and they don't mix. And it's one of those things that's basically used – sprayed rather than painted – but on the bottom of boats, in cheap restrooms. You know the stuff. It's speckled.

CM-U: Yeah, I do. It's...

Nancy Kienholz: And it's a base of – oh, it's a horrible smell. It's the paint – the same base that they use on the mannequin paint. Oh, I've forgotten it. It's not acetone, and it's not turpentine. It's...

CM-U: Toluene or something like that?

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah. I'd have to look. But anyhow, it's that. And so when you – and so, if I had done it by mixing different Zolatones together to get the color that I wanted. And I actually wrote it down. But now she's a different color. And so you see, still even that didn't teach me a lesson. It's not like I've written anything down since then either. They are Zolatone. Any of them that look like stone...

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Nancy Kienholz: ...is actually Zolatone. And it's a mix of – I think it's an industrial – I mean, it's very common.

CM-U: And what was it about it that you liked? Why did you use it?

Nancy Kienholz: Well, it looks like stone. You can paint it, and you mix it up, and so instead of having to – like, say, if you want, you know, a figure to look like gray stone, well, you can paint it gray, and then you could go in and you could carefully, you know, put in all these little different dots like, say, you know, granite would have.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: Or you can mix up the Zolatone and paint it, and it will look like stone. So that's what I liked about it. Even though the smell – horrible stuff.

CM-U: So you used it on *The Model*? And you remember using it on...

Nancy Kienholz: We used it on *The Model*. Used it on *The Gray Window Becoming*. Used it on *Holdin' the Dog*. Quite a few of them. Yeah, and it looked like stone.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: It's Zolatone.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And you'd buy it – the names are like that. It'll say, you know, marble, or, you know, gray marble, or it'll say, you know, granite. No, it does. The names are that way, too, on the paint.

**[00:42:00]**

CM-U: So did you spend – you must have spent time then, always looking around in hardware stores or paint stores, if that was kind of a major...

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, yeah, absolutely. Oh, and I liked that, too.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And so, you know, I would buy that stuff. And I liked to, you know, to experiment with it, and so I would buy that. And then another surface that is – well, not too, but fairly common – that would be on – that's on *The Rhinestone Beaver Peepshow Triptych*, and *Jody, Jody, Jody*, and several of them. I'd have to think of the others. But it is actually sprayed lead.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: So this is a little more complicated. There's this – we have this machine that was made in Italy, and it was originally made for car repair. And so – like if you have a rusted out part of your, you know, your fender. So they made this machine. It has a little, you know, a little pot, and then it has a torch, and then it has a little nozzle. And so you hold it, and it has this thing that you hold your arm like this to keep it, so you don't...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: ...tip the hot lead. And you – and it works from a compressor, and you can spray the surface. Now you can spray it as thick or as thin as you want. Like, you can spray a feather, and that feather will be sprayed lead, and it was just beautiful. Or you can build it up. It's just – you know, it's just like – well, you could do a spray paint where you can just go in and you can come up. Now on the ones that are – oh, and there's a piece that Marilyn owns here; you should look at it, in the...

CM-U: Oh, *The Gossip*?

Nancy Kienholz: No, the...

CM-U: Oh, the little one?

Nancy Kienholz: [Edward and Nancy Kienholz,] *The Silver Buck. Briefly the Silver Buck.*  
[1980, Collection of Marilyn Oshman]

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Nancy Kienholz: It's in – she has it here. That figure is sprayed lead.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And the difference with that surface is – this is why you should look at it – that one is totally flat, now if you – color wise. It's matte. That one is just sprayed lead, and any place where it would have a shine to it is when the resin went over the top of it. Otherwise it is completely flat. And, as contrary to the *Peepshow*, which is – she's all shiny. Well, she's still sprayed lead, but then she was painted completely with the resin. So if you looked at the two, you wouldn't think they were the same surface, but they are.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And then *Jody, Jody, Jody*, you can see a combination of the two. But you should – yeah, you should look at that, at Marilyn's, to see...

CM-U: Now is that an American product, or is this something you got in Germany?

Nancy Kienholz: No, we got it – we got it in Germany, but it's actually an Italian machine. It was made – I don't know where he got the machine. I mean, we still have it. And I guess you could use it. You know, you have to heat the lead to whatever degree it takes to heat the lead...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: ...and you need, you know, a spray gun that can spray something of that consistency. And you can make it as fine or as thick as you want, hopefully. But, you know, it's one of those things. It's like any other spray thing. It start out, and then it goes pff pff pff pff (make sputtering sound). You know, you get that. But, no, it's not a – that's gonna be a restoration problem, I'm sure. But I'm sure there are more machines than that.



[00:45:07]

CM-U: So you really did do most of the painting, then? You did a lot of the painting.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: I would do the basic surface work, you know. Ed did – he didn't have patience for that.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: You know, he didn't like that. You see that with these old ones. You look at the back of – how – I was looking at the *Walter Hopps Hopps Hopps*, [1959] how the drawers were painted. Ed didn't have the patience for that. He painted it with (makes quick vertical and horizontal gestures in the air)...

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: ...that was it. He was done. You know, he didn't – and then with me, then he would get more particular. You know...

(laughter)

Nancy Kienholz: No, then it was a whole 'nother deal. He'd say, "Well, Nancy, can't you..." Like in *The Merry-Go-World*, in the little Chinese room, there's a brick wall. And he's – you know, there's a photograph of a brick wall and everything. And then we didn't have enough for the thing, so he said, "Well, can't you paint in the brick wall?" And I said, "I can't paint in the brick wall." And so then it was the same thing, you know. Now, all of a sudden, he's the critic, you know, like the brick wall isn't, you know, good enough – it's gotta be just so perfect. Whereas he – you know, nowhere imaginable would he ever paint in a brick wall. You know, he wouldn't do it.

CM-U: I did – we did notice, when we were working on *Jane Doe*, this wonderful – I mean, the other way of looking at that is the wonderful freedom of his painting...

Nancy Kienholz: Well, it is freedom.

CM-U: It is freedom because he's doing it so quickly. And what was really special about the three drawers, though, I thought, was the choice of color...

Nancy Kienholz: The choice of color...

CM-U: ...so beautiful.

Nancy Kienholz: ...and the choice of material. Now one thing about Ed, whatever it is, he may be – he was a fabulous craftsman, you know.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: And as he, you know, got older and had to restore some pieces, he got more and more and more and more careful on, you know, how they were done. But, I mean, he – it may look like things are kind of just falling off, but they're not.

CM-U: No.

Nancy Kienholz: I mean, everything is screwed, or nailed and glued. I mean, it's very purposefully put there.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And they are not – it's not going to fall off.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: I mean, whatever it is, he really was – he knew exactly what he was doing. I remember when we were in Ireland one time, and they were having trouble with a union. You know, not – I mean, I guess they only went to work or something after hours. The rest of the time it took – I think there were two electricians, and they were there for eight hours, an electrician and an assistant, putting two plugs on a cord, you know. And Ed just finally blew up, and he said, "Look," he said, "I could build this whole goddamned building, you know, so don't tell me how long it takes to put two things on a cord." And, as a matter of fact, he could.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: I mean, he could physically – he could build this (looks up). And so he – you know, as a craftsman, he was very, very good. But as his eyes went, and he, you know, had more problems – but so far as the surface is concerned, he wanted it to look that way. Otherwise he would have done it better.

CM-U: Um-hum.

**[00:47:56]**

CM-U: Let's talk a little bit about *Illegal Operation*, because we've looked at it together...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...and we've also just looked at it with Betty and Monte Factor, who own it.

Nancy Kienholz: Uh-huh.

CM-U: What sort of changes have you seen in that? Or what do you know about the condition history of that?

Nancy Kienholz: Well, I know that Ed replaced the lampshade...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: ...one time. And now...

CM-U: The Factors were the only owners of it, correct?

Nancy Kienholz: Yes.

CM-U: They bought it – it was '61, and they bought it...

Nancy Kienholz: They're the only owners. So they've had it all these years in their house.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And so he'd replaced the lampshade with a new one. And then when we were looking at this lampshade the other day, and the way that – the way that it was originally done – and it was a gesture thing. It's like that the lampshade isn't actually on the lamp as it should be. It's sort of just jammed over the top of

the lamp. So instead of going in a little screw like the lampshade would, this one is actually forced, you know, kind of sideways and taken as a gesture of, you know, turning it. And so that has broken the material again on the shade. It's kind of split farther...

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: ...because of the fiberglass making it so stiff. And we were trying to think that most lampshades are what? They are rayon, or they are...

CM-U: Right. Some sort of synthetic material.

Nancy Kienholz: ...synthetic material.

CM-U: Is that what happened to the first one? It just tore itself off the lamp?

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah. Yeah. It just finally just fell apart. But from the same place. So it's interesting that Ed didn't...

CM-U: Well, he must have wanted it that way. You know, he...

Nancy Kienholz: No, he wanted – no, he wanted the lampshade to be there.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: But he could have, as a matter of fact, if it had – you know, if he had cared to, he could have made it so it still looked that way, but it was – but he didn't. He just jammed it on there. And then he, you know, put his own hand in paint. And this would be the left hand. So he put his own hand in paint, and then took ahold of the lampshade so that – like you would be moving it. Or it's this way. Right? Yeah, it's this way. (holds hand, palm up, in air as if grasping an object)

CM-U: Right. It was that way...

Nancy Kienholz: That way.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: So that – yeah. Just as if...

CM-U: So like, whoever was doing the operation had to move the light.

Nancy Kienholz: Had to move the light.

CM-U: And had blood on the hand.

Nancy Kienholz: Had blood on the hand. Right. Which is, is also fading.

CM-U: It is, isn't it? It's not quite – maybe that's something we could enhance?

Nancy Kienholz: I think you should. And you did talk to, you know, Monte and Betty about that. And my way – you know, if I were doing it, I really would do it with just – I mean. And it wasn't red-red anyhow. It was that – again, this is Ed.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: So it isn't bright red. It's what he – you know, his vision of, you know, it's more muddy. And I would go in myself with a brush or a Q-tip, whatever. Just try it. You know, put those fingerprints back in. 'Cause it is an important part of it. But I wouldn't make it bright red. And then, on the – as you look at the piece on the left side, remember there's like a – it would be an old mattress cover...

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: ...that is start[ing] to...

CM-U: Oh, right.

Nancy Kienholz: ...remember...

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: ...to crack. That has to be – so you're just going to glue that back?

CM-U: Consolidate it...

Nancy Kienholz: Yes.

CM-U: I think that's just consolidating [sounds like].

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

**[00:51:06]**

CM-U: Yeah, I think so. There was something – oh, the other thing was a cigarette.

Nancy Kienholz: Cigarette. Yeah. Monte was worried about the cigarette.

CM-U: Right. With the ins – the – um, the ashes, the burnt ashes had fallen out...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...so that the cigarette began to look like just a cylinder.

Nancy Kienholz: But Ed used, you know, real cigarettes for years, and in ashtrays and stuff. Still did it in the ashtrays. But early on, just a cigarette. And he was a big smoker, you know. So am I. So there are always cigarettes. But then in later years, he would have – he would make – he would fill – he would take a cigarette, take the, you know, the tobacco out. Make a little tube of wood. Put it in. Put the tobacco back over the end of it.

CM-U: Oh.

Nancy Kienholz: See, this is the way. Like if you look at the cigarettes in *The Hoerengracht* – might be in *The Art Show*, too – but I bet they are all actually wood, and so then it would be a filling and then just a little...

CM-U: But the wrapper would be the paper?

Nancy Kienholz: It is.

CM-U: And then the filler would just be wood. And then just ashes on the end?

Nancy Kienholz: It would be the cigarette. You just take the tobacco out. You put a piece of wood in that's the proper size that would go in there, and then you would just tap the end in with a little – whereas, see, as this one is actual just a cigarette.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: Which has happened in several pieces, you know, just with years. Of course, you know, Ed would fix them. He'd smoke a cigarette, put it in an ashtray,

and you know, put the fiberglass on it, say, “That’s it.” You know. Which is true, you know, with...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: One of the pieces – I think it might have been that the Factors own – has an ashtray in it. Or Virginia Dwan. I forget. Anyhow, the cleaning lady very carefully just cleaned it all up, you know, and they were all fiberglassed inside the ashtray.

(laughter)

CM-U: Trying as hard as she could. [sounds like]

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, all nice and neat, you know. So, just smoke some more cigarettes, put them in, put the resin in, and it’s okay. But you know that kind of thing...

**[00:53:02]**

Nancy Kienholz: I don’t know. I mean, restoration is – you know, I think that you have a really good touch with it ’cause you don’t try and make it – you don’t try and make something from 1960 look like something from 1995; and I think this is a real important part of it. But I do think – you know, I mean, for me, the pieces, the way I care for pieces, you know, of ours, in our home environment is, I use a feather duster. That’s it. And that’s what I say, you know, to all the cleaning girls. “Don’t touch anything in the house anywhere with anything but a feather duster.” And that’s it.

CM-U: Well, you know, with older art, we’ve always accepted a certain patina.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: We *value* the patina...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...on metals and all materials. And even paint. And it seems unreasonable to me why people don’t expect the same to be happening to post-war American art.

Nancy Kienholz: Well, it should.

CM-U: I mean, why not?

Nancy Kienholz: It does.

CM-U: It does. And it does enhance it in a very beautiful way.

Nancy Kienholz: Well, it's interesting with the galvanized metal, the way that it'll change. And some of them – some of them – I don't know if there's a frame in here that – there is, because I was looking at it. One of the pieces has a galvanized metal frame on it. It's completely flat. I mean, it absolutely has just – I mean, there is no shine to it at all. It's totally just oxidized. And that's fine. But then there's other pieces that, well, you want it to have the metal look. You want it to have the shine. And what we found on that – and one thing about it, boy, it's terrible stuff in a way – if you put your hand – you pick up, or you have somebody moving a piece for you, and it's got a galvanized metal wall on it, and they don't have gloves on, and they pick it up, within – I don't know, within three months you can see it. Within six months, you have the complete handprint, the hand's etched right into the thing.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And we had one piece in Washington, D.C., one of the white easel pieces, and every time we set it up, I was cleaning this damn piece, and I couldn't – by cleaning it, what I do is use, you know, real like, well, like triple aught steel wool and Old English Furniture Oil.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: And if you leave that on the surface, it will take it away. I mean, if I could just leave a small film, and eventually – you know, first it will go from white to black, and then eventually you can wipe it off. And so pieces, we'd do that – when we'd leave the studio is we will do that and put the...

CM-U: Put the oil on and leave them, right.

Nancy Kienholz: Put the oil on them, you know. Wipe it off and leave them. And then it won't come back. But we had one piece in Washington, D.C., one of the white easels, that had a big, you know, four by eight foot panel covering the galvanized thing; and it had this damn – every time we saw it, it had this big white thing right in the middle of the panel. And I couldn't figure it out, and I kept cleaning it, you know, and this and...



Nancy Kienholz: And then we were somewhere. I don't know where we were. Washington, D.C. or something. And I was watching Ed set it up. And he picked it up, and he put it on his belly. And that's what it was.

(laughter)

Nancy Kienholz: It was his belly, you know! No, and then we all got hysterical 'cause now you could see it, you know. And there was a belly button on it. And he had a belly! So you know what I mean, he balanced it, and off he went! So it was so funny, 'cause he thought, "God, I can't imagine what that is."

CM-U: And he didn't like it. He didn't want it there.

Nancy Kienholz: No, he wanted it off. No. And we were taking it off, and cleaning it, and doing all this stuff, you know. And then it was like, "Oh, yeah. I wonder how come we didn't see that?" How funny.

CM-U: But that's true. It's part of the life of the studio. I always say, you know, the *studio state*, when the artist is still – I mean, not in this case, but the artist is still working with things.

**[00:56:44]**

CM-U: Some of the objects in this – I don't think I've ever talked to you about this, but some of the objects in this exhibition clearly at one time had sound.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: I'm thinking of [Edward Kienholz,] *Ida Franger*, [1960, Private Collection].

Nancy Kienholz: *Ida Franger*.

CM-U: And does not now. What...

Nancy Kienholz: The radio doesn't work?

CM-U: I don't know. It doesn't have the sound on, and I didn't know if that was because the radio didn't work; and if it didn't work, was that something that we should try to replace it with a radio that does work? Is it the inside of the radio that works, or – I mean, I understand...

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, with that one, you'd have to put – you'd have to go from underneath. But – well, see, now that one has an off and on.

CM-U: Oh, well maybe it is working then, and we don't have it on.

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, you just don't have it on.

CM-U: Why, for whatever reason, Walter chose not to, maybe. What would have been Ed's view on that, for a piece that had sound?

Nancy Kienholz: Okay. There's two ways of looking at it.

CM-U: And your own work that had sound...

Nancy Kienholz: Okay, there's two ways of looking at it. That now, you know, as things have progressed over the years, the *Ida Franger* is so small you'd have a hard time finding something that you could put inside. But like the old one like *Lt. Carter, A Bad Cop* [Edward Kienholz, *A Bad Cop (Lt. Carter)*, 1961, Collection of Reinhard Onnasch] has a radio in it.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: The one that Onnasch owns.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: Probably about the same time. And that radio just had like the police calls. That was important to that piece because of the police calls. But of course if you're – you have this piece in your home, that doesn't mean you want the rest of your life listening to police calls. And so as years went by, they turned into switches, and even some of them now have become electronic, or chips.

CM-U: Hmm.

Nancy Kienholz: You know, to do – like in [Edward and Nancy Kienholz,] *The Potlatch* [1988, Collection of Nancy Reddin Kienholz] has a drum sound, and that's done with chips. Don't ask me how. You know, you hire somebody to make a chip that makes a drum sound.

CM-U: But it would have been important to keep the sound, you think?

Nancy Kienholz: Absolutely. On that one, it is. Most of the ones with the switches, it is. The lights are always more important though. It's really important that the lights are on. I mean, that's something that definitely – because that's really part of the thing. They are more important. But, yeah, absolutely. But, you know, the lights really do have to be. And then the sound ones, of course, you know [Edward Kienholz,] *The Art Show* [1963-77, Collection of Klaus and Giselle Groenke], you have to have the sound on to – otherwise, it's just a dead space so the sound is very important to *The Art Show*, the overall sound of the gallery, you know, the room sound. It's definitely needed in that. And – let's see which other ones have a lot of sound in them. It's more lights than sound. But, no, we were talking about that for the installation in – well, see, [Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz,] *The Hoerengracht* [1984-88, Collection of Nancy Reddin Kienholz] has radio sounds again...

CM-U: Doesn't [Edward Kienholz,] *The Beanery*, [1965] have sound?

Nancy Kienholz: Yes, *Beanery* has sound. And then the – and it's important for the – yeah, because, yeah, it has like a, you know, jukebox sound.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: But if you – sure, if you walk in *The Beanery* and there's no sound like a bar, and there's no voices, it's – again, it's dead. The sound is very important in that situation. In, you know, *The Art Show* it's very important. In [Edward Kienholz,] *The Wait*, [1964-65, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York] the sound is the bird; or the life is the bird. It's very important that that's a live bird and not a stuffed bird, because that little jumping around parakeet, you know, has whatever life there is left, you know, for that woman. Yeah, you'd have to start really looking at all of them to see which – *The Hoerengracht*, it's important that the radios are playing. They are very low, but they are playing in different rooms of the girls as you walk along, that you can, you know, hear it changing; so you feel like you're going down a street.

CM-U: You know, I think it would be a very good and important effort to record those sounds. For the pieces of the – for example, with the Whitney, with so many pieces coming together. Because in my experience, and it hasn't been with the Kienholz, but it has been with Jean Tinguely, for example...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...whether old radios, or old motors, in the case of Tinguely...

Nancy Kienholz: This is true.

CM-U: ...that he used, when they break, we have no way of knowing what the speed should be. Because you can't go by the speed of the motor, the RPM, because it was an old motor to begin with, so it probably wasn't working at the speed that it was made for.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: And there is no way of knowing what originally it should have been.

Nancy Kienholz: Sure.

CM-U: And I'm thinking about these pieces in terms of the sound. When those radios are no longer able to be played...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...that you...

Nancy Kienholz: This is true.

CM-U: ...that we have some record of what that sound should be like.

Nancy Kienholz: Of what the sound should be. 'Cause, yeah, 'cause we've – yeah, this is true. Well, I know that [filmmaker] John Romeyn is going to come in and do a documentary of the installation and completion of the show at the Whitney, so I think...

CM-U: A video documentation?

Nancy Kienholz: Video documentation.

CM-U: Oh, good. Well, that would be very important that he do that.

Nancy Kienholz: So that he do that. And so I'll have to remember to say that to him.

CM-U: Because we can duplicate the sound. There's a little Tinguely radio sculpture that we have. And of course it wasn't working. And our electrician was able to get it going. You know, we were able to find parts, or rework it in some way.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: But you want to know what the sound was...

Nancy Kienholz: What the sound was. This is true.

CM-U: ...that he wanted to begin with. So I'm not saying that – modern technology will be able to duplicate it, probably. We just need to know what it was.

Nancy Kienholz: Right. Well, this is true. I know in the *Volksempfänger*, [series of works, 1975-77, named after a radio from Germany's National Socialist period], now I know they are all documented, which is interesting. Which is just the German again.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: \_\_\_\_\_ [name inaudible] insisted that – which song from, you know, which Wagner? Was it this? And it says – it's all written down.

CM-U: But is it recorded? I mean...

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, yeah. And it says who did it. No, it was uh...

CM-U: Oh I see, so you know who did it.

Nancy Kienholz: Not \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible], but you know, no, it says exactly from which record it was recorded. By which director. By which orchestra. By – no, completely.

**[01:02:23]**

CM-U: I just brought out a box of materials that you sent me from Berlin in '84. Or '85. This must have been after *The Art Show* was here.

Nancy Kienholz: This was after *The Art Show*.

CM-U: And I never really asked you what these were, and how they were used, and what they are.

Nancy Kienholz: Okay. Well, it says "Polyester Farbpaste," [in English, "color paste"] so what it is is, it's color to go – if you want to make the resin, polyester resin, a color;

and they have two kinds, there are opaque and there are transparent, and – I’d need my glasses to be able to read one to see which is which. But – so you add a very small amount. I mean, it’s amazing what this – it’s really strong. But like on *The Peepshow*, for example, on the back of her, she has like a shadow behind her that’s done in resin that is Prussian blue. So we put a little Prussian blue in the fiberglass and poured the shadow in. Now if that breaks, the only – you can’t – you, again, you have to put in the resin. And then these are always the – this is Voss Chemicals [Lehmann & Voss Co, Chemical Company, Hamburg], very well known in Germany. These are all from Germany, and these are colors that were put within the resin to be able to color the resin, or paint it.

CM-U: I see. This one, too.

Nancy Kienholz: You’re going to make me get my glasses. Yeah, they all are – they’re just different colors.

CM-U: That’s what they are. For \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible]. That’s what they say.

Nancy Kienholz: That’s what they are.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: And then these little ones. These may be the transparents, and these – I don’t know. One or the other on the whites ’cause there are more whites.

CM-U: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].

Nancy Kienholz: That would be the Prussian blue, I betcha.

CM-U: Yeah. \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible].

Nancy Kienholz: And, yeah. But you’d have to just – you can see it.

CM-U: Right. So these are the colorants.

Nancy Kienholz: These are all colors. That’s all they are is colors, and they go with – they sell [sounds like] black and yellow...

CM-U: Okay.

Nancy Kienholz: ...I can't imagine that's yellow. But that big, it must be white. But that's all they are is color within the resin.

CM-U: Okay. Well, I'm happy you sent me this assortment so I have them if anyone...

Nancy Kienholz: Well, you see, Ed wanted you to be the official Kienholz conservator, so he thought, well, you better have all that stuff.

CM-U: I'd better have the materials. Well, thank you. And I am happy to have them, because they will remain in the archive, and they will be here.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum. But, I mean, it's just astounding what they go – the first time you mix them, it's very – I mean, at least the opaques.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: I mean, the color is, it's amazing. God, you could paint the whole gallery.

CM-U: They go so far?

Nancy Kienholz: They go so far. Yeah.

**[01:04:51]**

CM-U: Of course the whole issue, which we keep coming back to, is that it's the aging and the darkening of the colors that's so important.

Nancy Kienholz: It is important, and should remain so. I mean, I wouldn't change it. I really wouldn't. I like it.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

Nancy Kienholz: I think that's the way it is. I mean, I don't change the ones that are in Idaho, at all.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: I mean, I could have redone *Mother Sterling*, or redone \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]. None of them.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: 'Cause I think it actually makes them more beautiful. And we all get old. I mean, it would be wonderful if we could keep the skin that we have at, you know, ten. But we don't. So we age, too. And I think that so does art, and I think it's okay. You know, unless it becomes a structural thing that you have to repair. And accidents do happen, so you do have to go back in, you know, sometimes. But I think you just try and maintain the integrity of the piece at this time. Not try and take it back to 1953.

CM-U: Um-hum. And you have, unfortunately, seen pieces that were kind of brought up to shine in their own time?

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum. Changed. Definitely. Yeah.

CM-U: Well, fortunately, in this exhibition, I think most everything thing looks quite aged.

Nancy Kienholz: I do, too. No, I think...

CM-U: And quite beautifully.

Nancy Kienholz: Quite beautifully. It does, yeah.

CM-U: Quite beautifully taken care of, which I think is not only a tribute to the work itself, but also, you know, the taste that was so well understood.

**[01:06:30]**

Nancy Kienholz: Well, yeah, and the thing is with Ed, if you really look at it, you know, this is true of any of the pieces. I mean, like if you have to fix something, or save, you know – if a figure – like if we look at *It Takes Two to Integrate*, if one of those started to lean, I mean, you just have to really take it down and look at the back, see how it was done. You know, it would be done very simply, and very clearly, you know; and the back of it will be – you know, you've probably got plywood inside the – you know, inside the back of the figure, which you put through the back with screws. And, I mean, it is – it takes a little investigation; but no, we've had to do that, too, when we've gone to, you know, even set up pieces, and you forget how they go together. And so it's like a puzzle, and you have to say, "Okay, now wait a minute." And then you just have to follow it from one to the other. It's very, very logical.

Nancy Reddin Kienholz Interview Transcript, Artists Documentation Program, The Menil Collection, 10/30/1995

Video: adp1995a\_kienholz\_001va.mp4 / Interview #: VI2000-020.1995a / TRT: 01:15:05

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- CM-U: Um-hum. I wonder if this filling in of the form with plywood is something he did from the very beginning, or something he did in response to what we've seen. And I'm thinking of [Edward Kienholz,] *Conversation Piece*, [1959, The Menil Collection, Houston, gift of Walter Hopps]...
- Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.
- CM-U: ...where the hollow of the body, the mannequin itself is caving in.
- Nancy Kienholz: Right.
- CM-U: You know, it's not...
- Nancy Kienholz: Well, this has become – and that's why I said, in the later figures there were gussets inside...
- CM-U: Uh-huh.
- Nancy Kienholz: ...you see, where, because of...
- CM-U: In response to that problem.
- Nancy Kienholz: ...in response to that. So instead of just having a metal frame just going up like that, there would be – there was a metal frame, but around the metal frame here would be, oh, like a metal gusset in here, and here, so that it gives it that extra strength so that it won't collapse with time.
- CM-U: And what would he use? Just a thin mount [sounds like]?
- Nancy Kienholz: Plywood.
- CM-U: Plywood? Oh, plywood gusset.
- Nancy Kienholz: Yeah.
- CM-U: Uh-huh.
- Nancy Kienholz: But the metal frame, and then a plywood gusset. And generally not a heavy plywood. It would be just like a, you know, quarter-inch plywood, or something. You know, just something to – and then bandages, and wrap it to the frame itself.

CM-U: That's something that we really need to do. Or, we've considered, with *Conversation Piece*.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: Unfortunately, it would have meant cutting out a big part of the board on the back that it's mounted to in order to just get to it.

Nancy Kienholz: To get to it. Right.

CM-U: But that's something that you think would be considered appropriate, if then it would just be cut out and then replaced, I guess. We build up the body, and then replace it.

Nancy Kienholz: Replace it. Well, I mean, if the piece is going to – well, you know, that's a big question. Again, I mean...

CM-U: Yeah, I mean that's intrusive.

Nancy Kienholz: ...should the piece totally disintegrate and disappear, you know, with time. I mean, is that where – Or should it remain? And if it is not possible for it to maintain, and it's important, you know, to keep it, then sometimes you have to do that. And that's what I'd do to it. I mean, I probably would go from the – you know, same thing. I would cut out the back, and then I'd look at, "Okay, now what is this made out of?"

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: If it is, in fact, fiberglass, then I would take the fiberglass cloth, you know, and actually, you know, build it, and stuff it, and this and that, and then bring it into the – you know, before I ever put the plywood inside. I would build up the entire – I would go to the toes, as far as I could get to it, you know. And then before I put it – you know, closed up the holes with the plywood again, you know, I would just keep – you know, go from as far as I could, all the way to here, and then close it back up.

CM-U: I see. Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: That's what I'd do with it.

CM-U: I think that's what's going to need to...

Nancy Kienholz: And I would put the same – I would put the same plywood that I cut out, back.

CM-U: Right. Same piece.

Nancy Kienholz: The same piece.

CM-U: So then you – and then just seal it so it wouldn't \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible].

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: I think that's what eventually is going to have to be done to that piece. We – it's owned by Walter, and we tried very hard to stabilize it for the exhibition because he wanted it. And it is wonderful here. It's not traveling, so...

Nancy Kienholz: Oh, it's not traveling?

CM-U: ...we don't have to worry about that.

Nancy Kienholz: So do that [sounds like].

**[01:10:25]**

Nancy Kienholz: And, I mean, again, you know, there's some of them that – we did that recently with a mannequin in Idaho, that we used. And she was – we came up in her, but she's standing. But she was an old one. I think it was like she was almost like the inside was like cardboard.

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: It was strange. I mean, it's wasn't horsehair, and it was – some of them are horsehair inside. It's interesting. They are all so different. With her, we actually – you couldn't do it with this one, but she's standing. We actually went through the – through from here (touches bottom of foot) up with a metal structure. And, because she is fixed to a base, you know – so we went this way up, and then filled her with the fiberglass [sounds like], same thing. And then cut a hole out of her back, you know, like this. Which we replaced...

CM-U: Um-hum.

Nancy Kienholz: ...you know. And then – you know, the same piece. And after we did all this, and then used the fiberglass cloth to strengthen her. But, no, that one – that’s what I’d do. And then you just have to say to yourself, when you’re doing one from the inside out, you’re not changing the surface.

CM-U: Right. Right. That’s what I would feel, you know. We did – a woman who worked here, Dee Ardrey [Mellon Conservation Fellow, The Menil Collection], did beautiful jobs as a general rule [sounds like] with the paint and the exterior...

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...but we really have to deal with the structural. So that’s all intact and preserved, but now they have to have a support from within.

Nancy Kienholz: Um-hum. Yeah, it’ll be the old sabre saw, you know. Rrrrrr.

CM-U: Well, I know. I said, “How are you going to do this without causing too much vibration on the piece?” But we’ll do it as best we can. I know, it’s a question. It’s always a question of (makes balancing gesture with hands)...

Nancy Kienholz: Well, I’m just saying the way we would – I’m telling you how we would. It would be the old sabre – you know, if this was in my studio, it’s going to be the sabre saw. Now here I would say that maybe you – you know, the electric one.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: But I would say that here it would probably be, you know, a keyhole saw. I mean, we’d just go in and just take it. But you want to replace it, so you’ve got to be...

CM-U: Right. Well, fortunately, what’s being taken out will never be visible. So, I mean, in the back.

Nancy Kienholz: Well right, but I mean, these carpenters, they can do it.

CM-U: Yeah.

Nancy Kienholz: It’s not like they can’t do that.

CM-U: No. No. You know, so much of what we've been talking about, and so much of what I find as the years progress in my profession, is, it's not a question of knowing how to do something. It's always a question of knowing what should be done.

Nancy Kienholz: What should be done.

CM-U: It's always a question of...

Nancy Kienholz: And where to stop.

CM-U: ...where the judgment – Right. How much should be done?

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah. I know, when we redid *The Beanery* at the – this was interesting. They decided, you know, the state, or the fire department, said, "You can't have that electricity there." You know, because it looks like it's all just hanging down, and it's real crummy. Well, that's the way the original *Beanery* is. So that is absolutely still there, but they rewired it 220, but didn't remove any of the original wiring. So it looks exactly the same, but actually they brought it up to code.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: You know. And it's like looking at – I mean, you certainly wouldn't want to turn on – I mean, plug in *History as an Afterthought* [the artist may be referring to *History as a Planter*, 1961] with that plug.

CM-U: Right.

Nancy Kienholz: I mean, it's the same thing. But I don't think it ever was. It isn't – I mean, where is the sound? Where is the light? Where is the thing? No, the lights are very important, and the light bulb, and the size is also very important, and that should probably be written on the back of every piece, you know. One 40-watt bulb, or...

CM-U: Um-hum. Yeah. Well, that's where photographs are important. And you do keep very good archives of photographs as far as I know [sounds like].

Nancy Kienholz: Yeah, I do.

CM-U: Well, this has been great, Nancy.

Nancy Kienholz: Well, thanks.

CM-U: Thank you. I really enjoyed working with you, and we still have more ahead of us.

Nancy Kienholz: We have more ahead (laughs) – And we'll do this after we come back from New York.

CM-U: Right. No, it's great.

Nancy Kienholz: Then we'll have a whole 'nother project.

CM-U: A whole other series.

Nancy Kienholz: Well, it's true because of – well, it could be 125 pieces.

CM-U: Um-hum. Thank you.

Nancy Kienholz: Thank you.

**[END RECORDING]**