



**Artists Documentation Program  
Video Interview Transcript**

**TIM HAWKINSON  
FEBRUARY 8, 2005**

**Interviewed by:**

**Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, Founding Director, Artists Documentation Program, and  
Associate Director for Conservation and Research, Whitney Museum of American Art;  
with Pia Gottschaller, Associate Conservator, Whitney Museum of American Art**

**Video: Robert Broadhurst | Total Run Time: 01:08:29**

**Location: Whitney Museum of American Art**

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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.

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## 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 Associate Director for Conservation and Research, Whitney Museum of American Art; Tim Hawkinson, Artist; Pia Gottschaller, Associate Conservator, Whitney Museum of American Art]**

**[BEGIN RECORDING]**

**[00:00:50]**

CM-U: First of all, I should say today is February 8, 2005.

T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.

CM-U: And we are here for your retrospective. And we just want to talk about works that you might particularly want to talk about, but our main interest is materials, and how they change...

T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.

CM-U: ...and how – what your take is on how they should look over time.

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

CM-U: Or what parts of something, the change would really cause the piece to end.

T. Hawkinson: Okay, good. That sounds good.

CM-U: And so we're willing to take your lead.

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

CM-U: Of course we have some questions, too. But, you know...

**[00:01:24]**

T. Hawkinson: Okay. So *Pentecost* [1999, Andrea Nasher Collection], material-wise, the figures are foam. Like a urethane foam. And then the skin is like an elastomeric paint, which is very – it remains very flexible. And it's meant to be used outdoors like a roofing, so it breathes and so forth. As far as the

figures, I don't know, I have this big bucket of touchup paint. We are just trying to keep the mars off of them and stuff. But it's the cardboard issue...

CM-U: So the pristine quality of them is of importance, right?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. I don't know if – there's a sort of built-in non-pristine quality. I mean, this...

T. Hawkinson: I started with a mold of – it was with the bath [sounds like]-generated contour process, so it was just kind of a basic figure. And then from that mold, cast these twelve figures. They were cast in the foam with a aluminum kind of armature that was – provided like an ability to bend them and hold that position.

CM-U: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: But then in other cases, especially over here, you can see, to get the arch in the back, I sliced it open and filled it with foam.

CM-U: I see.

T. Hawkinson: And then just retained the cuts in there.

CM-U: Have you had any particular problems specific to the piece?

T. Hawkinson: Not with the figures. The thing that changes with the – especially with the cardboard, is every time it's installed, the pick points change. We have these corrugated connectors, and they come in at different angles; so we are getting all these holes in the cardboard, which – they don't really bother me now, but I can see over time we might start patching...

CM-U: Yeah.

T. Hawkinson: ...just putting a piece of paper tape down. And I've got more of the same pastel that I used to create the rubbing pattern. I mean, if we need to, we can fill in with that.

CM-U: Of course there's a point at which they almost become an aesthetic part of it. They take on...

T. Hawkinson: The patches will become an aesthetic part of it.

- CM-U: Right.
- T. Hawkinson: It becomes like this carnival spectacle that's taken down and...
- CM-U: Which the holes can do, too. Yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. The holes do it, but there might be – there might come a point when we need to start patching holes. Now, it's okay.
- CM-U: Yeah, but these holes could be patched without having to actually put patches on them.
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. But I think I like my patch solution of a piece of tape that you see...
- CM-U: You like the idea of that?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. It's the history of it. So...
- CM-U: So the history of the aging and the life of it is kind of part of it. It's not kind of a precious, restored, so you don't see it...
- T. Hawkinson: No, that part of the history is good. I'm not sure what could occur that would be bad. Just like if – these are sonotubes, which are used in concrete construction...
- CM-U: Um-hum. Right.
- T. Hawkinson: ...so they're fairly durable. I mean, under these conditions, I think they'll survive.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: The corrugated pipes were made by just using kraft paper and water-based contact cement...
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: ...which is, I think, like a Neoprene based material. So it's laminated over a steel wire. And they've – this is from 1998, I think, which is...
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Ninety-eight.

T. Hawkinson: Ninety-eight, '99. And they still feel pretty rubbery and supple.

P. Gottschaller: Yes.

T. Hawkinson: But I'm not sure what's going to happen.

P. Gottschaller: Should they remain as flexible as they are now, or if they become \_\_\_\_\_  
[phrase inaudible] brittle over time, would that bother you?

T. Hawkinson: I'd like to – I'd prefer not to see them cracking and seeing black gapes, yeah.  
Okay, yeah.

**[00:05:33]**

P. Gottschaller: And on the label you also mention solenoids?

T. Hawkinson: Those are the mechanical parts, it's just a – it's like a magnetic – it's electromagnetic. It gets a pulse, and then there's a coil in there that magnetizes or something, that just causes that to tap. So it's just this little – well, it's not very – it's this in here. This little cylinder.

P. Gottschaller: Okay. I see.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah.

P. Gottschaller: And you also say “found computer programs.”

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, let's look at that.

P. Gottschaller: Where did you find it?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, I found it at a thrift store.

P. Gottschaller: And could you tell that it worked when you found it?

T. Hawkinson: Well, it's *Santa's Marching Band*. It's a Christmas ornament. It would be, uh, these red little cylinders...

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...would be the stands that a figure would be on, and it would be hitting different bells or something. So it would be playing music. So I'm just kind of using that program and reassigning it to this sort of atonal, random sound.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

(The group listens to sounds of the program playing.)

P. Gottschaller: That's great.

T. Hawkinson: This might burn out, and I have another kind of a similar thing to replace it.

CM-U: So it's not so much – it's not so important that you – that it be a found object that started, I mean, that initiated your interest in this?

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

CM-U: But if it breaks down, and you need to replace it, you're okay with...

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. This is always closed. This – turn off the camera! (laughs) No, we don't normally see this part.

CM-U: Right.

T. Hawkinson: That's the guts. It's this mysterious box, kind of.

CM-U: I see. But, you know what I'm saying, in the future...

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Uh-huh.

CM-U: ...in the future if we need to replace parts of it...

T. Hawkinson: If it breaks down, we can replace that.

CM-U: ...it didn't matter so much that it was a found object.

T. Hawkinson: Right.

CM-U: It's wonderful.

T. Hawkinson: Because it will still be a found object. We just don't tell anybody.

CM-U: It will just be a new – yeah. Right.

P. Gottschaller: (laughs)

CM-U: Where it was found is different.

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

CM-U: Right. Okay.

**[00:08:13]**

P. Gottschaller: And Tim we'll also follow your lead – but if you are interested, I would love to talk a little bit about the *Drain* piece over there [*Drain and Plug*, 1996, Collection of Duff Murphy and Janice Miyahara].

T. Hawkinson: I don't know what kind of photographs they are. I just, you know, went to a sixty-minute photo developer...

P. Gottschaller: (laughs) Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...whatever they use. And it's, you know, like sixty, thirty photos laminated together with probably white glue.

CM-U: Like Elmer's, for example?

P. Gottschaller: It's pretty dense [sounds like]...

T. Hawkinson: Probably. Yeah, really densely mounted it. So I just cut myself out of each layer, which was described by the different levels of bath water.

P. Gottschaller: Was it tinted bath water?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. You can see this – actually I had to do it in two sections 'cause I was too tall to do my whole body in the tub.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: So I did – the water was raising while I did my lower – the lower part of my body. And you can see in this last photograph the highest level of ink is up at the top level. And then to do my lower – I mean, my upper body, the water went down the drain, and you can see all the bath...



P. Gottschaller: Oh, yeah.

T. Hawkinson: ...rings as it went down. And that's why I'm dirty on my upper half and clean on my lower half.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Did it take you a long time to get the ink off your body?

T. Hawkinson: No. I used – the ink was like a black tempera paint.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: And I just covered myself with Vaseline to try and get that resist going so that it would – I would get a clean line.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

CM-U: Did it work?

T. Hawkinson: Somewhat, yeah. It was a mess, but...

(laughter)

P. Gottschaller: That's fascinating. So you cut out the part and then glued down the \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. And then I was left with all of this negative space, so I went ahead and...

P. Gottschaller: So technically you could fit it back in?

T. Hawkinson: No, because it's reversed. This isn't a mirror image.

P. Gottschaller: Oh, that's right. It's coming this way. Yes.

T. Hawkinson: Conceptually, you could. But in reality it wouldn't work.

P. Gottschaller: (laughs) And I assume that you always want it displayed that way without any Plexi covering over it?

T. Hawkinson: I prefer it that way, yeah. Just direct. And you can – Plexi, you always get a little reflection or distortion.

- CM-U: And in terms of spacing of the figure from the piece?
- T. Hawkinson: That just was a sight thing. It was an arbitrary, or an intuitive kind of distance I placed it that way. I don't have a measurement.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- P. Gottschaller: It feels like it might be your body's length almost. A little bit longer than that [sounds like].
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum. And we just had the body level by – it looks like he's a little taller. It was just kind of what looked right.
- CM-U: Yeah. And the lamination has stayed intact?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah, I don't see any problems with the lamination. I remember touching up a little bit with oil paint on the feet. I had to do – there were some problems.
- P. Gottschaller: That's great.
- T. Hawkinson: Okay?
- CM-U: Yes.
- P. Gottschaller: Good.
- [00:11:27]**
- T. Hawkinson: Do you want to – this elephant [*Elephant Skin #2*, 1999, Private Collection; courtesy Ace Gallery] – since we're in the room...
- CM-U: Yeah, let's take a look.
- T. Hawkinson: ...is urethane foam, it's the – the figures are soft. It's a sponge rubber urethane.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: It's flexible. This is – it's the Lynda Benglis urethane.
- P. Gottschaller: Uh-huh. And how did you start? Did you cut out a shape and then put the foam on top if it?

- T. Hawkinson: I think I outlined on my studio floor the elephant, and just started pouring...
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Directly on the floor?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Over it. Well, probably over a sheet of Visqueen [Polyethylene sheeting].
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: And...
- P. Gottschaller: And did you...
- T. Hawkinson: ...and then covered it with aluminum foil. Probably used the same contact, water-based contact adhesive to get the...
- P. Gottschaller: Uh-huh.
- T. Hawkinson: ...no, I think a lot of this is just the tape. A lot of this is foil tape. You can see the ridges...
- P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]...
- T. Hawkinson: ...yeah.
- P. Gottschaller: ...the width. Yeah. Uh-huh.
- T. Hawkinson: It might all – yeah, I think it's all foil tape which is used for duct work. It's like two inch wide. And actually, after we installed it, we sealed these seams. The whole piece folds up, but the trunk, the tail, and the four limbs fold under it just for getting it into a smaller crate.
- CM-U: Oh. Shipping? Yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: So now you can see the...
- CM-U: So when you install it, you take them out and then add more tape?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Just like an inch, and then score it. Now they look more like weld joints than...
- P. Gottschaller: (laughs) Yeah.

- T. Hawkinson: ...you can still see them, but I think they are softer.
- P. Gottschaller: And what interested you in the image of a flat elephant?
- T. Hawkinson: Well, I think the elephant was for scale. Something really large. And I use skin – there's this surface in a lot of my work. Depiction of this kind of skin, the envelope. And seeing solder spilled on my floor, it looks just like this, but on a smaller scale.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. It looks like it is very soft, but when you touch it...
- T. Hawkinson: It's rigid.
- CM-U: The reflectivity of the material, the metallic form, must have had an importance to you over just – because you could have just painted it.
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: You didn't have to...
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. It was important – it really describes all the wrinkles. You can see them much – they are defined much more clearly.
- CM-U: They actual are wrinkles \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum. There was an earlier elephant skin. The first one, a little smaller than this, was foamcore.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: You know, when you bend Foamcore, it gets a nice crease – a nice wrinkle. And that was covered with aluminum foil and then creased, and wadded up and wrinkled.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: I wanted to do the foam one just to get a little more dimension.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

**[00:14:20]**

- P. Gottschaller: Did you also like the idea of using aluminum tape because it wouldn't tarnish? It would always stay shiny and...
- T. Hawkinson: Oh, this – you know, I'd done a lot of aluminum foil pieces before this.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- CM-U: And have they tarnished?
- T. Hawkinson: Oh, no, they don't tarnish. I mean, they haven't, but they probably will, won't they?
- CM-U: What happens to them? How do they age?
- T. Hawkinson: Well, the aluminum foil is sealed, I think. It's the – you know, the Reynolds aluminum foil. It has some kind of seal on it.
- CM-U: Right. It seems to have.
- P. Gottschaller: Yeah? Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: I was going to talk about aluminum foil against foam.
- CM-U: Yeah. You see it here.
- T. Hawkinson: And it yellows where it's – a little there. But like on the edges, I think it's – I think it will be really nice when this darkens and yellows. And it's also in the *Überorgan* [2000, Commissioned by MASS MoCA], on – the tubes are all covered with aluminum foil, and then they are getting these mars...
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: ...in them. I don't like the really big mars, but there are little mars here and there which, I think, add to them, and give them – define the scale a little bit.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: And the physicality.
- P. Gottschaller: Yeah. And it also looks like the organ has, you know, a live presence [sounds like].

T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.

P. Gottschaller: And that's what I like about it. 'Cause we walked in and saw it. And it looks like, you know, a lot of people have touched it, or you have shown it in other places. And I know you have. And it's nice.

T. Hawkinson: So there's that kind of history.

CM-U: Yeah. You feel it, and it's good. I mean, if you feel okay about this.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, I'm okay with that.

CM-U: It really seems to augment what you're trying to think about in terms of skin, and volume.

T. Hawkinson: Well, yeah. And then when we set it up, I was working with the crew. They would always want to, like, tie a knot and then cut it off really short. And I just told them to let it drape because on that scale, any detail like that is just going to add to the effect and the presence of the hand. It's hard enough to get the presence of the hand in that scale, so we just work very sloppily.

P. Gottschaller: And you see how...

CM-U: No, I don't think so.

P. Gottschaller: It doesn't look that way. Because it looks very \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible]. So the trees and the...

T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.

P. Gottschaller: ...all the greenery.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, it worked well in that space.

CM-U: Yeah, it's real good. Really good.

P. Gottschaller: I think we're going to go this way.

(The group walks into an adjacent gallery and encounters a staff member engaged in installation.)

T. Hawkinson: We're in here.

Man: Well then, let me move first.

P. Gottschaller: Would you mind? I'm sorry.

Man: No no no. I'm sorry.

(background voices)

T. Hawkinson: Are you going to be doing anything in here?

Man: No, I'm going to work...

T. Hawkinson: Because I had one little project. I was wondering if we could – or, did you put more on this? You did...

Man: On that?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, just if you could boost...

Man: I'll try. I can't get in there to get up...

T. Hawkinson: Okay. I'll talk to you, maybe when you are ready to do that.

Man: Okay.

[Transcriptionist's note: There is background noise from equipment, making it difficult to understand the speakers.]

**[00:17:15]**

P. Gottschaller: Do you want to talk about this [*Reservoir*, 1993, Private collection; courtesy Ace Gallery] and explain to us how it was done?

T. Hawkinson: Um...

P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]. You know, for someone who hasn't seen it before, it's amazing to me that it will work. Usually, you see people buying [sounds like] layers of paint.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. So it was – the whole wall looked like this. It was just – well, first of all, we put down a string that's held down with drywall screws that

circumscribes the whole balloon. And that was just to kind of anchor it to the wall when it was inflated. We just rolled on latex. Latex rubber.

P. Gottschaller: So that would be regular latex or a special...

T. Hawkinson: Well, it's a very low-ammonia...

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...super dense, or condensed – I don't know – refined latex.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: Which – all latex falls apart so – they might have to come back in and add a little bit more. Especially up above, where it's stressed more.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: So we just applied maybe seven or eight layers, coats of this latex, and then...

P. Gottschaller: (laughs) Scary [sounds like].

T. Hawkinson: ...inflated. Introduced air.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: It's just – the air is from a little fan about three inches in diameter. And used that to get some air in there. Most of it was just peeling it away, and then once the air was allowed to fill it, it kind of stretches it. The PSI, pounds per square inch, takes over and stretches and takes that shape.

CM-U: What is it used for commercially?

T. Hawkinson: Mold-making.

CM-U: Uh-huh.

T. Hawkinson: But it's being phased out, and now they are just using silicone.

CM-U: Hmm. So that would be problematic for you in terms of trying to...

T. Hawkinson: It will probably always – I don't know.



- CM-U: They will always have some...
- T. Hawkinson: No, I'm never going to use it again. I mean, that's the last thing I'll ever do with latex.
- CM-U: Why is that?
- T. Hawkinson: 'Cause it just falls apart. I had to redo that [*Balloon Self-Portrait*, 1993 (refabricated 1996), Private collection; courtesy Ace Gallery], because the other ones from 1993, when we went to inflate them, were just – Eva Hesses, kind of.
- P. Gottschaller: (laughs)
- CM-U: Well, that's the problem.
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah.
- CM-U: Yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: So I did that and then, hot off the press, took it to a mold-maker, and we have a mold of that. And then we can either make a new – I just said I'll never make latex again, but we can make a latex one of him just for an exhibition copy.
- CM-U: Yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: Or we make a rigid one that looks just like that.
- P. Gottschaller: So for now you accept that it's changing color, but that it...
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah.
- P. Gottschaller: ...with the next version you prefer to maybe remain in that creamy color?
- T. Hawkinson: Well, this was a different kind of latex that I hadn't used before, and it was darker.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: But actually it looks more like the one that's in the catalogue. The one in the catalogue had aged a little bit before it was photographed.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum.

CM-U: How does it affect you, the different color?

T. Hawkinson: Different than this?

CM-U: No. As it ages, the color changing.

T. Hawkinson: It's just part of the material. I'm fine with that. I just would make it in something differently now, you know...

CM-U: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...with more education. Well, the problem is, you can't – I couldn't make it with, like, silicones – some other – since that piece is brushed directly on my body, I had to find something that was, you know, not going to poison me...

CM-U: And you used a release on your body?

T. Hawkinson: Nope. I just...

CM-U: Oh, you didn't? You just went for it?

T. Hawkinson: I just removed my hair.

CM-U: Hair, right. I remember reading about that, which made perfect sense. Okay.

**[00:21:08]**

P. Gottschaller: Now, one question that I have, Tim, about this piece, which is now very high up...

T. Hawkinson: Oh, it's *Chicken* [*Untitled (Chicken)*, 1986 (refabricated 1996), Private collection; courtesy Ace Gallery]. Um-hum.

P. Gottschaller: One complete chicken. How did you do it? Because it looks like you literally didn't make a single cut.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, there is a little cut, like, in its belly or something. Just to get the bones out. But I guess I deboned it while it was in the skin, and just took it out in pieces, trying to maintain the skin intact.

- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. And did you add anything to the skin to...
- T. Hawkinson: I varnished – I sealed it with a varnish, I think.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. So now it's going to be quite brittle?
- T. Hawkinson: It's not – it's somewhat brittle. Yeah, it still has some rigidity. Flexibility.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Do you want to talk about the wall history?
- T. Hawkinson: *Wall Chart of World History from Earliest Times to the Present* [1997, Private collection; courtesy Ace Gallery].
- P. Gottschaller: (laughs) That's a much more impressive title.
- T. Hawkinson: (laughs) It's – material-wise, yeah, I probably did a real “no no” using red felt markers. I am sure there are Sharpies, and I liked using the Rollerball pens.
- P. Gottschaller: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yes.
- T. Hawkinson: That's where you see these splatters.
- P. Gottschaller: Oh, yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: That's Rollerball ink.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: I don't think ballpoint pen worked at all because you had to have too much pressure, and it would – that's ballpoint, and it dries out really...
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: ...it just runs out of ink really quickly.
- P. Gottschaller: Okay. I think that also fades really quickly, so maybe that's not such a bad thing to not have used it.
- CM-U: So do you differentiate...
- T. Hawkinson: And then this is a china marker. I mean, it's that paper thing that you un...

- P. Gottschaller: Oh, yeah.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: Does that fade?
- P. Gottschaller: It has some wax in it. I think it's generally the pigments. But the ones – the pens that have liquids...
- T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.
- P. Gottschaller: ...ink in it, are even more likely to...
- T. Hawkinson: Prismacolor, I think.
- P. Gottschaller: Prismacolor? I don't know what that is.
- T. Hawkinson: You know, it's pencil. It's colored pencil.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: It's for artists to use.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- CM-U: Yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: So you'd think they would use something sensible.
- P. Gottschaller: Yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: But anyway, that's what that is.
- CM-U: So the different colors of the red are the different tools, the actual different reds [word inaudible] that you used?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Materials. Yeah.
- CM-U: It's not a change that you perceived in that.
- T. Hawkinson: This – I don't think this has faded.

- CM-U: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: This was red pencil, and it was just – it came out – it was a hard pencil lead. Not lead, but whatever.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: So I was just playing around in the studio. Put a pencil in my drill, and sort of drawing with that, developed a tool that allowed me to spin the pencil, but open and close the aperture of the spin, the diameter, so that I could make – you know, get from small to larger while it's spinning.
- P. Gottschaller: Uh-huh. So none of these are just done with your hands?
- T. Hawkinson: The only – the hand stuff is, then I went through and filled it in, and it really, you know, kind of described, isolated the worm [sounds like] structures. And that probably took longer than the actual – than the \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible].
- CM-U: When you did that, was it upright or flat?
- T. Hawkinson: I guess it was upright, just in, like, I had four or five feet of it visible at a time, and I scrolled it through.
- P. Gottschaller: And did you pretty much move across the paper?
- T. Hawkinson: No, I was going vertical. And so I had like this much, and, you know, so it was more like doing this thing – I never did anything all the way across at once. It was just in sections, and I would add to them.
- CM-U: When it was finished, did you find you had needed to go back in and – I know you did the interstices of the forms, but then was there other kind of reconstruction that you did when you were drawing [sounds like]?
- T. Hawkinson: I don't think so. The only thing might have been, when I started, I didn't really have this idea of it as a strip with corners. And maybe it was – I'm not sure where – I might have started at the other – I don't know where I started it.
- T. Hawkinson: (walks around drawing) Yeah, this might have been where it started, and I could have, like, filled this in, and then gone back in to give it – to fill in the edges.

- CM-U: So you had the paper on a roll, and \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]...
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: ...and then you roll it back up?
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: How big is your studio?
- T. Hawkinson: It's about six hundred square feet.
- CM-U: Uh-huh.
- T. Hawkinson: It's – Patty and I share this studio. We had lived there, and it's like sixteen hundred square feet, but then we had all this living space...
- CM-U: Right.
- T. Hawkinson: ...and we moved out but never reclaimed the living space for studio space. So it's storage, and we still have a relatively small space for working.
- CM-U: It's interesting. So when did you first see it totally unrolled?
- T. Hawkinson: I guess when it was shown at Ace Gallery in L.A. in 1998, I think.
- CM-U: Seven to '98, yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: Maybe '97. I think the show was '98.
- CM-U: Was it '98?
- T. Hawkinson: I think so.
- CM-U: That must have been a surprise. Not a surprise – a sensation, anyway, to see it...
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah, it was nice. Well, the surprise was how I hung it 'cause I figured I would just hang it on a wall.
- CM-U: Uh-huh.

T. Hawkinson: Just a strip. But then I didn't like that, and that's when I started – that's when I hung it in the space. Off the wall.

P. Gottschaller: It's wonderful.

CM-U: Yeah. It is.

T. Hawkinson: Okay.

**[00:27:15]**

T. Hawkinson: Umm.

P. Gottschaller: This [*H.M.S.O.*, 1995, Collection of Dean Valentine and Amy Adelson] looks like it's – took you a long time to make...

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. One thing I do is figure out shortcuts on how...

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...on, like knot tying and stuff like that. Like, I would make a whole extrusion of sails, like...

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...a thirty-foot long thing of – like this – and just cut it up into sections and tie them down.

P. Gottschaller: And then you put in these?

T. Hawkinson: And then I would – yeah, I would – I guess I would have to tie the diamond form down. The fan. But then I used some viscous – like contact cement or something, on like a cone, and just laid it down.

P. Gottschaller: Ah.

T. Hawkinson: And then painted it.

P. Gottschaller: That's extremely fragile. Almost like a spider's web. \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]

T. Hawkinson: That is – this is probably very fragile. I’m sure it’s that lacquer-based contact cement.

P. Gottschaller: Uh-huh.

T. Hawkinson: And the...

P. Gottschaller: Solvent-based.

T. Hawkinson: ...solvent. Probably the only thing that’s holding it together is the paint that I put down on it afterwards.

P. Gottschaller: How important is it for you that all of these, you know, cross ropes – whatever they are called – are perfect and not damaged and all there?

T. Hawkinson: Well...

P. Gottschaller: Is it important to read them as a grid, for instance?

T. Hawkinson: No. Because that’s what happens. Sort of after I made the first ship, which was *Das Tannenboot* [1994, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; gift of Eileen and Peter Norton 96.49], was a Christmas tree.

P. Gottschaller: Yeah.

T. Hawkinson: And I started...

P. Gottschaller: I think that’s in our collection, isn’t it?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Uh-huh. And I started collecting model ships like that. And they’re all falling apart. And they look really great with lines kind of drooping.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: They are fine. So I think that’s part of the piece.

**[00:29:18]**

P. Gottschaller: I thought that maybe you would want to talk about the skeletons [*Penitent*, 1994, Collection of PaceWildenstein].

T. Hawkinson: Oh. Uh-huh.



- P. Gottschaller: That's such a wonderful piece.
- T. Hawkinson: I'm going to shut this off, so...
- P. Gottschaller: Now on the label it says that these are, um, what is it?
- T. Hawkinson: Rawhide.
- P. Gottschaller: Rawhide dog chews. And I wondered what you added – for example, on the rib cage to make it come together. I mean, it's obviously wrapped around [sounds like].
- T. Hawkinson: It's all raw – I just soaked the rawhide to soften it – soaked it in water to soften it up, and reformed it...
- P. Gottschaller: Hmm.
- T. Hawkinson: ...to make the rib cage and the sternum and all of that. So it's all rawhide. I mean, all of the skeleton is rawhide.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. And they are just soaked [sounds like], and held together by wire...
- T. Hawkinson: Oh, and then it's all – I sort of looked at the way anatomical skeleton models, medical models, were hinged together; and they would make a hinge with wire.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: They'd wrap it, you know, to – so I just sort of mimicked that for all the hinge points. And also the way it, like, they would pin something right through the pelvis to get that joint in there.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: So the only thing they didn't do was use sheet metal or drywall screws to hold the tailbone in.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum.
- CM-U: How much time do you have to work with it after you've soaked it, and so it's pretty pliable? How long does it take to set?

- T. Hawkinson: I think I just let it dry overnight. I just...
- CM-U: Overnight.
- T. Hawkinson: ...you know, probably wrapped it with string to hold it in position, and then let it dry overnight.
- P. Gottschaller: I think this is a good example to start asking you about these electronic parts that many of these sculptures have. Who taught you how to make them? And what are sort of the guiding principles that all of them have? What would you say is common to all of them?
- T. Hawkinson: Well, I guess they are just pretty much all – well, they're not all sound-producing, but it's usually for production of some kind of sound. Some quality of sound. I mean there's *signature*, which doesn't – I mean, it makes the chop, but it's not essential to the piece. I didn't study any kind of engineering or electronics or anything like that, so it's all sort of intuitive and self-taught.
- P. Gottschaller: That's amazing.
- T. Hawkinson: I make a lot of mistakes in putting things together that shouldn't be, probably. So for somebody on your end of things, it would be really – I don't know how anybody would repair one of these. Something like this is pretty simple. It's just that there's an air pump, an aquarium air pump...
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: ...and a slide whistle. And a solenoid, which is just – I mean, we used in the *Pentecost* – it's just – that creates the motion for the slide whistle to drop down, up and down.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: And a cam, which is just a thing with little bumps on it to trigger the switch...
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: ...telling it when to whistle.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: The things that really complicated with, like *Drip* [2002, Ace Gallery] or *Überorgan* [2000, Commissioned by MASS MoCA], where I have to kind of sit there and analyze things for a while before I can remember what wire went where.

P. Gottschaller: Yeah. But I have noticed that in some of your work that includes an electronical part, that it looks like you really like the wires to be visible, and maybe...

T. Hawkinson: Well, just – yeah, that’s a good thing that’s common to them all is, like the wiring in *Organ*...

P. Gottschaller: Yeah.

T. Hawkinson: ...which I didn’t – I didn’t do the wiring, but I took my cues from that. And it’s the wiring that runs through the whole show. The electric grid. The power grid.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: So, yeah, there is – maybe it’s the knot tying that comes from the ship...

P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].

T. Hawkinson: ...\_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible]. So that is in common with those pieces.

**[00:33:46]**

P. Gottschaller: I have a question about *Spin Sink* [(1 Rev./100 Years), 1995, Private collection].

T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.

P. Gottschaller: And if you’ll forgive me, but I just am not able to really see how it works. I watched the little wheels turning, and then I can’t really see anything moving. Is...

T. Hawkinson: No, of course you can’t. There is – it does – most of them are labeled with their rate of rotation, 1.9 revolutions per day, uh...

P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]

- T. Hawkinson: What is this? Twenty-five revolutions per year.
- P. Gottschaller: Okay, so \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]
- T. Hawkinson: So, one revolution per year. Six revolutions per year. One revolution per eighty-three years, which we're just calling a hundred years because I think I put a slightly slower motor on it.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. (laughs)
- T. Hawkinson: But it – so when it's running, this rotation is so fast you can't see anything, and then at the other end, there's no motion either.
- CM-U: How do you know when it's malfunctioning?
- T. Hawkinson: Well, it's on a motion detector. Let's trigger this. Why isn't it going? Well, when it's not moving, like now, you can tell it's malfunctioning.
- CM-U: (laughs) I didn't know that [sounds like]. Right.
- T. Hawkinson: But...
- CM-U: It is. It's hard to know when it's not moving...
- P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]. Is this on a timer as well, Tim, or...
- T. Hawkinson: It's not on a timer. It's on a motion detector. But we'll have it, probably, wired directly.
- CM-U: No there.
- T. Hawkinson: I just have to switch this on [sounds like].
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: But so yeah, it this isn't turning.
- CM-U: I see, so if the smaller \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].
- P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].
- T. Hawkinson: But here you can sort of feel that.

- CM-U: Can you feel it?
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. What is this material?
- T. Hawkinson: Bondo [® Polyseter resin putty / Manufactured by 3M].
- P. Gottschaller: Oh, that's in automotive [sounds like]...
- CM-U: Automobile Bondo?
- T. Hawkinson: Bondo is an – that's the other thing that's in common with all of these works. Bondo.
- P. Gottschaller: (laughs) That index finger's also made from Bondo, isn't it?
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- P. Gottschaller: And why corduroy?
- T. Hawkinson: Umm...
- P. Gottschaller: Someone said that these are your clothes, but I have trouble imagining you wearing such large corduroy...
- T. Hawkinson: No. Yeah. I don't know where that came from, but it's just something that had a tooth, kind of, that would intermesh, that was easy to work with...
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: ...and since this is now 1.6 revolutions per hour, it's slow enough so there's not going to be enough wear and tear on the corduroy to really...
- P. Gottschaller: Stop it from transferring [sounds like].
- CM-U: Although there seems to be \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible], so one could imagine replacing that?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah.
- P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]
- CM-U: One could imagine replacing that?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, we could replace that. Or, if I had more time with it in my studio – I just kind of went over it before it was sent off – I might have replaced that with this ribbed, like, carpet runner sort of material. You've seen it? It has ridges in it.

CM-U: Oh, yeah, I know what you're talking about.

T. Hawkinson: Rubber and plastic. I might go to something like that.

CM-U: So it's not the corduroy per se that's so important to you? It's the ribs that you need to have the friction.

T. Hawkinson: Well, definitely corduroy in here. It has to be corduroy in here. But we could have – we don't have to go from aluminum right into corduroy.

CM-U: Okay.

T. Hawkinson: We could have some intermediary steps.

**[00:37:05]**

P. Gottschaller: Now \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible] aware that your parents ran an antique shop, and when I look at your art, it's not difficult to imagine that it maybe inspired you in terms of – you know, seeing old things...

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

P. Gottschaller: ...you know, things that people have decided that they wouldn't need anymore, and you then trying to find another purpose for them. Making them into something new. How important is it for you that you work with materials that may have had another life? Or is it more important that you just find them?

T. Hawkinson: It's more important that they just function. I can't look at a green or McMaster-Carr catalog and pick out the part. I don't know the specs on some things. So it's easier if it's something that's on the shelf. And usually things that are on the shelf, of this nature, of this mechanical nature, are in, like, a surplus store.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: So they've already been used.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. But do you try to avoid buying things that are new?

T. Hawkinson: I don't try to find things with a patina on them.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Yeah.

**[00:38:15]**

P. Gottschaller: That's a beautiful piece [*Organ*, 1997, Private collection; courtesy Ace Gallery].

T. Hawkinson: So, I didn't do anything except preserve this.

P. Gottschaller: So you took everything away from it...

T. Hawkinson: Off of it...

P. Gottschaller: ...except the wires?

T. Hawkinson: ...except the wiring.

P. Gottschaller: Wow.

T. Hawkinson: I might have coiffed them a little bit. Just like that. (bends wire) I like to keep things more or less perpendicular in here. The red wire – I think those were all for the keys of the organ. There were several banks of keys, you know.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Was it one of those electronic ones?

T. Hawkinson: Electronic – like a Wurlitzer kind of thing.

P. Gottschaller: Yeah.

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum. Yeah. That's her [sounds like].

P. Gottschaller: And the organ – or the theme of the organ comes back in your work, it seems.

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

P. Gottschaller: Whether it's *Überorgan*, or the inflation of things.

- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum. It's the musical organ and also the body organ.
- P. Gottschaller: That's beautiful. It almost looks like you are seeing something in flight, you know. It has the quality of something moving in front of your eye very quickly.
- T. Hawkinson: Hmm.
- CM-U: So these are the way the wires – you flayed out these wires to have these kind of projections into the space?
- T. Hawkinson: They were projecting to the – I think to the keys. The keys were out here, and I think they were more or less coming out.
- CM-U: Kind of to suggest that parallel, you mean? Like with the level [sounds like], uh-huh.
- T. Hawkinson: Well, it's just to give them their ultimate destination, which isn't along here. It's out...
- CM-U: Right.
- T. Hawkinson: They make their last turn.
- CM-U: I remember these so well. These old organs [sounds like].
- T. Hawkinson: I bet you never saw that part of it though.
- (laughter)
- CM-U: No, I never did!
- P. Gottschaller: No. (laughs)
- T. Hawkinson: Okay, this was in the thrift store that I go to, and it was twenty-five hundred dollars. And the back had fallen off, so I saw how beautiful it was. But I didn't want to spend that much money. And so then a few months later I saw it again, and it was like eighteen hundred dollars. And then twelve hundred. And a thousand. And then it, like, disappeared. And six months later I found it in the "as is" yard of the thrift store and offered them twenty bucks for it.

(laughter)



T. Hawkinson: Which was much better.

CM-U: And they were thrilled, I'm sure.

T. Hawkinson: They were glad to get rid of it.

CM-U: Yeah. And so aside from taking all the wood off – you must have had to manipulate these wires to get things off and to get them back in place.

T. Hawkinson: Uh, well, a little bit. I built an armature that followed, kind of the paths of the main arteries, and just wired – or, you know, I don't know, tied it onto the...

P. Gottschaller: Did you tie \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]

T. Hawkinson: I guess I wrapped – undid and wrapped the wire onto the armature. It's buried inside of it. And then I did – provided these kind of risers to keep it lifted and separated.

**[00:41:09]**

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. I think this will age really well.

CM-U: Yeah, I think it's wonderful. Yeah. Well, it's probably *already* aged very well.

P. Gottschaller: (laughs) That's true. Yeah.

CM-U: Which is interesting to think about – all the wires were protected, and now they are unprotected.

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

CM-U: So...

T. Hawkinson: They won't corrode. I mean, this – what looks like copper has already – it has some kind of shellac jacket insulation.

P. Gottschaller: Very good.

CM-U: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible] there's something that I wanting to ask you as we look at various things that – everything is pristine – you don't have dust – they are aged, but there is not dust or accumulations...

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

CM-U: ...and that – it strikes me that that’s probably something that you strive for, that they don’t look unkempt.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah.

CM-U: They can age...

T. Hawkinson: I prefer to keep them dusted, yeah.

CM-U: Pristine. Yeah. Well, you know, part of aging can be just letting them go.

T. Hawkinson: It’s – well, it’s not like – yeah, it’s not the rust and dust kind of California assemblage, the thing that I’m going for, it’s – yeah, I would – I guess I would prefer these soda bottles to stay clear and sparkling.

CM-U: Right. Good. Yeah.

T. Hawkinson: But they yellow in the sun. I guess they do yellow.

(group walks over to view another set of works)

**[00:42:41]**

CM-U: Well they [*Secret Sync*, 1996-2001] seem so inherently fragile [*Coke Clock*, 1996, Ace Gallery]. But you have them \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible] in various places, and you haven’t had any problems that you can think of?

T. Hawkinson: Well, no. This is probably the most fragile object [*Daisy Clock*, n.d., Private collection; courtesy Ace Gallery], because it is just the organic material that – I guess I reinforced the petals with – I’m not sure what the material is. It’s called GOOP [Amazing GOOP ®, Manufactured by Eclectic Products, Inc.]. It’s a rubbery, clear rubbery material. And I use GOOP a lot. It’s really...

CM-U: Because it remains flexible?

T. Hawkinson: It remains flexible, and it doesn’t seem to yellow.

CM-U: Huh.

T. Hawkinson: I used it a lot when I’m joining the plastic bottles together.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

CM-U: How is it spelled [sounds like].

T. Hawkinson: It's a solvent-based – Goop is G-O-O-P.

CM-U: Just as it sounds.

T. Hawkinson: And there's shoe Goop. Plumbers' Goop. I've been using the household Goop.

(laughter)

P. Gottschaller: Now in this case, for example [*Hairbrush Clock*, Collection of Eileen Harris-Norton and Peter Norton], if say, one of the hands got lost, would it be important – well, for one thing \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, but – no, it wouldn't be important that it be – yeah.

P. Gottschaller: It would make it a little bit easier, surely.

T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.

P. Gottschaller: Is this [*Finger Clock*, n.d., Ace Gallery] modeled on one of your fingers?

T. Hawkinson: It was from my finger, um-hum. I had accidentally cut my finger, and I made a mold of it when it was cut. And so that was an actual cut finger.

P. Gottschaller: But the suture is invented?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, I put in the suture.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. And what's the suture made of?

T. Hawkinson: Wire, I think.

P. Gottschaller: Is it?

CM-U: Um-hum.

- T. Hawkinson: And I had replaced it with – the hour hand has a thinner diameter, and I'm not happy with that. If I were to do it over, if I had time, then I would make that the same diameter as the minute hand suture.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- CM-U: You'd prefer to have the same narrower diameter?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah, it's – the same wider diameter.
- CM-U: Oh, you said a wider diameter? Okay. Um-hum.
- P. Gottschaller: Is that [*Toothpaste Clock*, n.d., Private collection; courtesy Ace Gallery] plaster?
- T. Hawkinson: Is it what?
- P. Gottschaller: Is that made from plaster?
- T. Hawkinson: It's caulking compound.
- P. Gottschaller: Caulking [sounds like]...
- T. Hawkinson: A latex caulking...
- P. Gottschaller: And it's a real toothpaste...
- T. Hawkinson: Toothpaste tube.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: So most of your shopping, in terms of materials, other than the found objects, is hardware...
- T. Hawkinson: It's pretty – hardware stores, or groceries. I mean, it's pretty standard.
- CM-U: Grocery store.
- T. Hawkinson: Whatever. Yeah. I guess so, yeah. Hardware store.

**[00:45:25]**

P. Gottschaller: I have one question regarding this piece, and then also your \_\_\_\_\_  
[word inaudible] piece. Did you make this shaped...

T. Hawkinson: The Plexiglas I just slumped, or you know, heated up and pushed through.

P. Gottschaller: Ahh. You can do that?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. And it's right at the point of breaking, you know, when it was being pushed...

CM-U: With – what was it pushed with?

T. Hawkinson: I think some little thing that size. And it just...

CM-U: And it doesn't stick to – I mean, it wasn't – it's soft, but it's not tacky?

T. Hawkinson: Well, this is heated up.

CM-U: Right.

T. Hawkinson: You know, and so it's malleable. And then I just pushed a stick into it.

CM-U: Yeah.

T. Hawkinson: Oh, and held it in a frame.

CM-U: Right.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: And...

CM-U: I guess I just thought that the heated Plex – I don't know; I thought it might be tacky in a way that it would hold onto your tool.

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum. Probably a piece of – like, I probably fronted it with a piece of glass or something to keep it really smooth.

CM-U: Oh. Um-hum.

- T. Hawkinson: And then obviously we have this fading problem with different *Life* logos that – I mean, I wouldn't go back. I don't think I can go back into it. It's just – that's what happened.
- CM-U: Why do you think just that one faded so much more than the others?
- T. Hawkinson: Umm...
- CM-U: Is there something about that particular color, maybe?
- T. Hawkinson: I guess so. And you can see...
- CM-U: Yeah.
- P. Gottschaller: Does it bother you, though? That it's \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].
- T. Hawkinson: No, I mean, it's just funny seeing one of my works look like an antique, or like something from so many years ago.
- CM-U: Well, what's interesting from our perspective is that, if you didn't know, if we weren't interviewing you, and we didn't see early photographs of it, I would think that was intentional.
- T. Hawkinson: I would think it was age. And it looks – I don't know...
- P. Gottschaller: I mean on could \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]
- T. Hawkinson: ...since it is *Life* logo, and that's always red, and...
- CM-U: Right. Yeah, and there is a bit of red...
- P. Gottschaller: The red paint.
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Right.
- P. Gottschaller: That would \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]. So do you think it was ever as red as the paint that's around it?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah, I'm sure it was that color. I'm not that sloppy.
- CM-U: All of them were that red.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Uh-huh.

P. Gottschaller: That's amazing.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Like that one is. They've all faded.

CM-U: That's really interesting, that they are changing differentially.

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum. 'Cause I got them from all different sources. One was from the magazine off of the newsstand. And then I had to find smaller ones, like – they have, like – there's a *Time/Life* cookbook series, I think one of them came from. And just maybe from magazine ads, you know. Finding just this shift in scale.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. So a lot of it is manipulated [sounds like].

T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.

**[00:48:00]**

CM-U: Is there anything you'd like to say about this piece [*Emoter*, 2002, Andrew Nasher Collection] particularly? About its history or...

T. Hawkinson: Uh...

CM-U: ...both its history of making and its history of exhibiting. How it's done.

T. Hawkinson: Well, when it was first exhibited, it started breaking down immediately. And the problem was, I guess, steel against steel. These different features are activated for the most part by a steel cable that runs through a tube, and that tube had been – I had lined the tube with a spring, thinking that – you know, modeling it after like a bicycle's brake cable, which is a spring with a cable running through it. But it started – the friction and the wear just started freezing them up, and everything was breaking down. So I replaced all of the tubes with Teflon. So it's still the steel cable, but now with Teflon tubes; and I haven't had any problems with it.

CM-U: When did you do that?

T. Hawkinson: A couple – a month into the biennial [2002 Biennial Exhibition, Whitney Museum of American Art, March 7-May 26, 2002], just previous to the last one. It was over the Easter...

- CM-U: That's what I remember. Another year when we'd come – so it was at that point you changed them out?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Just over like a couple of days. I just set up my laboratory on the third floor.
- P. Gottschaller: Now when something like that happens, do you sit down and do you yourself try to figure that out? Or do you sometimes ask someone other for advice?
- T. Hawkinson: I figured it out. Well, I asked people for advice. I didn't really get much help. I just kind of figured out a plan of attack at home, and gathered all of my materials and came out here prepared.
- CM-U: Has it been on display since then? Has it been on loan since then?
- T. Hawkinson: It was up at Ace Gallery in Los Angeles.
- CM-U: It was?
- T. Hawkinson: But, you know, just not very long.
- CM-U: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: But after that Easter repair session, I don't think it's had any problems. I'm pretty confident in it now. I shouldn't say that.
- CM-U: What's interesting to me is, in solving the problem, you were looking for a material that would not necessarily appear the same as what had been on it, but will correct the problem.
- T. Hawkinson: I just wanted it to work.
- CM-U: It just needed to work. And that seems to be your driving...
- T. Hawkinson: And it still looked basically the same. But in something like this, yeah, it's whatever works.
- P. Gottschaller: Would you ever be concerned about the photograph fading?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. I don't know. If it fades a lot, I think I'd be kind of sad. But I know it's going to change somewhat. It looks – it seems like it's a little redder than I remembered it.



P. Gottschaller: Hmm.

CM-U: It does, doesn't it?

P. Gottschaller: The \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].

T. Hawkinson: But why would that happen?

P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]

CM-U: It's so hard to know, though. I mean, the lighting is so different here in this installation than it was...

T. Hawkinson: Right.

CM-U: It's hard to really think about that. What we should do is take colorimeter readings on it.

P. Gottschaller: Yeah. We can.

CM-U: We can record...

T. Hawkinson: Oh. Uh-huh.

CM-U: ...its color, and then try to kind of test that over time.

P. Gottschaller: Yeah.

CM-U: Okay. Well, we're almost ready to finish. If there's anything particularly \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].

T. Hawkinson: Yeah.

**[00:51:33]**

P. Gottschaller: I would love to know how you made the bird and the egg [*Bird*, 1997, Andrea Nasher Collection / ].

T. Hawkinson: Oh.

P. Gottschaller: I really would.

- T. Hawkinson: The bird is just straight fingernail and nail clippings glued together with Super Glue.
- P. Gottschaller: Did you use Super Glue because that made it easier to get them to dry...
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah, it sets up pretty instantaneously.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: But on the feather – which you didn't want to talk about, but I'll tell you anyway...
- P. Gottschaller: No, no, I did, too.
- T. Hawkinson: ...I found that – now I don't remember what the ingredient in Super Glue is. It's got some exotic name. And I thought it was developed from crustaceans or something. From barnacles, that adhesion. I'm not certain. But if it is, this might make sense. When I would pull out my hair and just – you know, the root of the hair is a little moist. And to take the moisture off, the goop off of it. And I guess maybe it's the root endings, directly into the Super Glue, I found that that bond was much stronger than just a cut end of the hair.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: When pulled, the hair would break before the bond released.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: So I don't think other glues would have that kind of property.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: So I liked the way they held hair together, and they seemed to work pretty well with fingernails as well.
- P. Gottschaller: Yeah. Is the protective dome going to come back?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Don't worry about it. What we are doing is, we are painting it a brighter white behind the dome just to boost it a little bit.
- P. Gottschaller: Ah, good. It looks beautiful with the dome.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Just needs a little extra punch. So then the *Egg* [1997, Andrea Nasher Collection] is hair and fingernails ground up into powder and bonded together with Super Glue. And I made a wax egg and just painted it with this hair/nail/Super Glue medium, and then sanded it down and cracked it open and removed the wax.

P. Gottschaller: And how did you grind it down? With just a mortar?

T. Hawkinson: Mortar and pestle. Um-hum. I think so. No, I think I did that kind of cocaine/razor blade on glass thing. I think that's how I did it, actually.

P. Gottschaller: Yeah?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah.

P. Gottschaller: Uh-huh.

T. Hawkinson: 'Cause the mortar and pestle would just crush it. I don't think – I mean it would, like, release like something waxy in it. I don't think it worked.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: As I recall, I don't think that worked as well.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

(group moves to different area of exhibition)

**[00:54:17]**

P. Gottschaller: How did you do this [*Armor Ooze*, 1996, Collection of Eileen Harris-Norton and Peter Norton]?

T. Hawkinson: This kind of occurred in two stages. Initially, it was just this suit of armor made out of aluminum foil that would quiver in the slightest breeze, and it just became clear that it wouldn't have a very long life span in that condition. So – it just – it wasn't quite as interesting as I thought it would be. I ended up filling it with this expanding urethane foam. The spray insulation. And it filled the armor and started oozing out through the seams. And I was pleased with that. And went over all of the foam oozes with – it's an acrylic. I think it's for like decorating on textiles.

- CM-U: Hmm.
- T. Hawkinson: It comes in a – it's an acrylic in a bottle that you can just deposit this little bead...
- P. Gottschaller: Isn't it even called like liquid thread or something?
- T. Hawkinson: Something. It might be something like that. But anyway, just to draw this kind of chain link, chain mail, over him. And the only thing that's changing is, the urethane is turning brown; and I think that just sort of enhances the aluminum foil, and I like the way that looks. Because the aluminum foil doesn't change, but you can see that it's an older object.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- CM-U: In my experience with this, where we used this to give more body to a piece that an artist did in Houston, over time it also dries out...
- T. Hawkinson: Uh-huh.
- CM-U: ...this foam, and it can get kind of stiff.
- T. Hawkinson: It's...
- CM-U: You know, but in this case, that wouldn't necessarily be a negative, in the sense that...
- T. Hawkinson: Well, the brittle part might be a negative.
- CM-U: I mean, what's so wonderful is the sense of flow this has...
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: ...and so one wonders if that \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]...
- T. Hawkinson: I wonder if it's the same material that you used. Because when this sets up, it's quite rigid.
- CM-U: Rigid? Yeah.
- P. Gottschaller: Did you have any problem with the foam extending more than you thought it would...

- T. Hawkinson: And breaking the seams? I don't think so.
- CM-U: You did it in parts, I take it?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah, I guess so.
- P. Gottschaller: It's wonderful. So the...
- CM-U: It came to life under your own hand.
- P. Gottschaller: And there's no armature, then, on the inside?
- T. Hawkinson: I think there was a weakness in one of the legs, and I inserted a metal pin.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- T. Hawkinson: I don't see any evidence. I kind of remember having to do that, though.
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. And someone noticed, you said, that even here, where you've got the hinges, so you could \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]
- T. Hawkinson: Oh, right. It's all hinged together.
- P. Gottschaller: Yeah. \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible]. So if, just in case something broke off – say that came off...
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- P. Gottschaller: ...and it couldn't be reused. How would you feel if a conservator came and used a different material but would make it look exactly the same way?
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah, that would be fine.
- P. Gottschaller: I think it would be very difficult to use the same foam, but have it be of the same color?
- T. Hawkinson: See, you'd probably carve something and...
- P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.
- CM-U: Yeah.

T. Hawkinson: I wouldn't have a problem with that. Um, it might age differently, but...

P. Gottschaller: Yeah.

(group walks to different area of exhibition)

**[00:58:10]**

T. Hawkinson: And then there's *Web* [1998, Collection of Eileen Harris-Norton and Peter Norton].

P. Gottschaller: Yes.

T. Hawkinson: More hair and Super Glue.

P. Gottschaller: \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible] glued it to the wall, as well?

T. Hawkinson: No, it's tied, or – pinned to the wall, and tied to the wire.

P. Gottschaller: And what is the web itself made from?

T. Hawkinson: It's hair. Most of it. The web, the orb of the web is all my hair, and then the longer strands are a – I found a nylon that pretty much matched my hair.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Why did you think of making it?

T. Hawkinson: Because I did the bird, feather, and egg...

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...and that was just the natural next step.

P. Gottschaller: Hmm. That's good. I hope it never breaks.

(laughter)

**[00:59:00]**

CM-U: What I want to just go back and repeat is that this [*My Favorite Things*, 1993, Private collection; courtesy Ace Gallery] differs from the photograph when it was originally installed, because you had to replace some of these parts.

- T. Hawkinson: Right. The keys, the sound-producing elements kept breaking off, and so I reengineered a system where they could be replaced with spring steel, which is sort of readily available, and it's easier to tune just by releasing a couple of nuts and bolts to put a new piece of spring steel in there and make adjustments.
- CM-U: What's interesting from our perspective is that we are so trained to try to duplicate the appearance of something.
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: And we are so geared to going back often to the original photographs to see...
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah.
- CM-U: ...and what you're doing is, in order to make this function, which is your primary, I'm gathering...
- T. Hawkinson: Right.
- CM-U: ...from what you're saying, your primary concern...
- T. Hawkinson: In a case like this.
- CM-U: ...if you have to change the look of something, you would need to do that.
- T. Hawkinson: Right. And I'm not restricted by maintaining the formal appearance like you are. So I have the authority to...
- CM-U: Well, there. That's the operative word.
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah.
- CM-U: What happens when you are no longer able to do that?
- T. Hawkinson: Well, hopefully – I'm just trying to get the bugs worked out while I'm here, and then...
- CM-U: Okay. But you could imagine at some point, the most important thing here is for this to function.
- T. Hawkinson: Well, it has to kinda look like that.

- CM-U: Yeah. I know. But if different materials...
- T. Hawkinson: Are being used? Yeah. Well, yeah, it's pretty important that this look like a voodoo doll, and that – I mean, yeah, if you need to replace a screw or a pin with something that's not exactly that, but similar, then it's fine.
- CM-U: No, I understand what you're saying. It's just a very difficult problem...
- T. Hawkinson: Oh, well, yeah, it's a nightmare.
- CM-U: ...as you can well imagine. I mean, when you think of things like Tinguely's machines...
- T. Hawkinson: Right.
- CM-U: ...where the motors are no longer functioning. But the motor produced a certain sound, the old motor...
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: ...and if you replace it with a new motor, you don't get the sound. So you have these issues of the moving parts in an aesthetic piece...
- T. Hawkinson: I understand.
- CM-U: ...is something we like to think about with the artist.
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: Well, I think we're getting a very clear sense of that from you.
- T. Hawkinson: The whirring of the motor isn't important to me on this. Whatever extra thing that's contributing.
- CM-U: All right.

(voice in background)

[background discussion as they are walking]

**[01:01:52]**



P. Gottschaller: Maybe we'll do *Magdalen* [2003, Andrea Nasher Collection]. Don't you want to talk about *Magdalen* also?

[background discussion as they are walking]

T. Hawkinson: Donatello?

CM-U: Donatello *Magdalen*. I'd like...

T. Hawkinson: There's a white one called *Laocoon* [2004].

CM-U: Oh, really?

(laughter)

CM-U: Yeah.

P. Gottschaller: It's an amazing piece. How did you make it?

T. Hawkinson: I think I started with like a piece of steel netting – you know, a heavy kind of grid netting that I made the basic shrimp shape out of.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: The hull, and then started laminating materials onto that. A lot of the black is photo backdrop paper.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum. And do you like it for a particular reason?

T. Hawkinson: It's cheap, and it's long.

P. Gottschaller: Uh-huh.

T. Hawkinson: Its length and its crinkliness. I, again, used it with the contact adhesive to give it a sort of rubbery quality.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: Like on the *Pentecost*. And then there is – this is a nylon mesh, I think used in gardening or something. A netting. And then this is a sheet foam rubber, a neoprene foam rubber or something like that that I just was – I found in sheets and cut up. And I used a spray contact adhesive to stick them on and found

that they started lifting off. But then when I went over all of them, all of the seams with a heat gun and pressed them in...

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...it reactivated the contact adhesive and gave it a final bond, really.

CM-U: Well, I see in areas where you have pressure from a bend, that's going to be the most vulnerable part, I suppose.

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, that's okay. That's part of it. And it's built to fall apart, to be falling apart. To look like it's falling apart. That and *Root Ball*...

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: ...are always...

P. Gottschaller: Which you have just worked on. So it's \_\_\_\_\_ [phrase inaudible].

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. So I thought they would always have little bits of – pieces of them in the crate. Whenever it was opened, there would be some scraps in the crate to drive you crazy.

CM-U: But that's very much a part of the sense of it...

T. Hawkinson: That's part of the piece. Yeah.

P. Gottschaller: Are these the things that are used for holding cables together?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah. These were – I guess they were like – I probably used them – like, I tied pieces together.

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Um-hum.

T. Hawkinson: But then I snipped off the loose ends, and so I would have a bunch of these sitting on the floor and just recycled them to...

P. Gottschaller: Um-hum. Pipe cleaners?

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, pipe...

**[01:04:46]**

- CM-U: Did you make the piece and then think of the *Magdalene* [Donatello, *Magdalene Penitent*, c. 1453-55, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Florence], or is that something that inspired you? Inspired...
- T. Hawkinson: It was just beginning to resemble – especially in the tread pattern resembling her kind of matted hair.
- CM-U: Yeah. One of the things that I was telling Pia when I was looking through your catalogue is that the *Magdalene*, when I knew it as a young student, was polychrome.
- T. Hawkinson: No, really?
- CM-U: It was always considered a polychrome sculpture. And it wasn't until the flood in Florence in '66, when the baptistery was really flooded, and that's when the *Magdalene*...
- T. Hawkinson: It peeled off.
- CM-U: It peeled off, and we found gilding. And the polychrome for all those centuries had protected the gilding. That's why the gilding is in such remarkable condition. That very thin hair.
- T. Hawkinson: But – yeah. I just am remembering wood.
- CM-U: Well, it is. It's a wooden – you know, it's a wooden...
- T. Hawkinson: But I don't remember...
- CM-U: You don't remember the thin gilding – very thin?
- T. Hawkinson: I just remember it was so much smaller than I thought it would be.
- P. Gottschaller: How big is it?
- T. Hawkinson: Isn't it like that high or something (holds hand near his chin)?
- CM-U: Yeah.
- P. Gottschaller: Uh-huh. Okay. It does look large.
- T. Hawkinson: Just – yeah – larger. I mean, I thought it would be like this, you know. No.

(laughter)

CM-U: Well, what I was finding, too, is the delicacy of some of the parts – I thought, “Oh he’s really sensitive to that gilding,” and so on.

T. Hawkinson: Oh, the gilding? Yes. I know what you mean. The gilding, I remember it now.

CM-U: The gilding, yeah. You remember its hair is...

T. Hawkinson: I remember it now.

CM-U: ...kind of extraordinary. I think it’s a \_\_\_\_\_ [word inaudible]. I think it’s an amazing work. So is this, and it’s great.

P. Gottschaller: Now where is that tire image – how does that fit into this?

T. Hawkinson: Well, I just saw these beautiful, violently created objects along the freeways. Just something you observe going at sixty miles an hour and never are able to really examine on this kind of level. So I thought I’d have that opportunity.

P. Gottschaller: It’s actually something you don’t see in New York anymore. I lived in Texas, where I worked with Carol also, and there you see them on the highways, but I haven’t seen them in a while.

CM-U: I don’t think you can go fast enough in New York to blow a tire. The traffic is so...

T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.

CM-U: No, it’s true that you do see it, just scattered on the street.

P. Gottschaller: It’s almost like slightly scary, too, when you think that someone might have had an accident...

T. Hawkinson: Yeah, it looks really...

CM-U: Oh, it’s very...

T. Hawkinson: So, is that it?

P. Gottschaller: I guess. I have so many more questions, but I really think we should let you...

- CM-U: We should let you go back to work.
- T. Hawkinson: Okay.
- P. Gottschaller: Thank you so much.
- CM-U: Thank you.
- T. Hawkinson: Sure.
- P. Gottschaller: It was wonderful.
- CM-U: Thank you for spending time with us. It was really helpful.
- T. Hawkinson: Well, thank you for the – for preserving these.
- CM-U: And you should know we have this.
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah Great.
- CM-U: And so there will always be a record of some of your attitudes toward the preservation of these works...
- T. Hawkinson: That's great.
- CM-U: ...and that's the whole point.
- P. Gottschaller: Yeah.
- T. Hawkinson: Um-hum.
- CM-U: And maybe we'll do you again at another time, and your ideas may change a little...
- T. Hawkinson: Yeah. Okay.
- CM-U: Good. Thanks so much.
- T. Hawkinson: Sure. Thank you.
- P. Gottschaller: Good. Good luck with tonight [sounds like].

T. Hawkinson: Thanks.

P. Gottschaller: Thanks.

**[END RECORDING]**