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THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF ART

Volume Two

Appendix: containing the full transcripts of fifteen interviews with selected artists, craftsmen and designers.

Bibliography.

The Social Construction of Art

by

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submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Sept. 1976

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INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEWS

The following pages contain the full transcripts of fifteen interviews conducted during the latter part of 1974 and the early part of 1975 with a variety of artists, craftsmen and designers.

The interviews do not constitute in any sense a survey in a statistical sense. Rather I have selected for in-depth interviews a small number of people with differing work experiences. The interviews are prestructured in the sense that all interviewees are asked the same questions, the questions being designed to elicit information on the experience of working as artist, craftsman or designer, on the attitude to selling work, on the relationship between being artist, craftsman or designer and any other full or part-time employment, and on the interviewees attitudes to state patronage and other patronage.

The questions are designed to probe in certain areas the possible contradictory ways in which the experience of work and attitude towards work is expressed. Thus, for example, the quotations from Cezanne and Gropius employed in questions 14 and 16 respectively are presented as if incompatible. The opinions of both Cezanne and Gropius are of the sorts that are commonly admired and utilised in discussing art-work: the purpose, therefore, in presenting such positions as contradictory is to make less easy any obvious, quick, or 'off-the-tongue' answers, and force the interviewee back onto his or her own experiences.

It will further be noted that various topics introduced in early questions in a 'neutral' manner are returned to in later questions in a 'loaded' manner. Thus question 4 is returned to in questions 9 and 10, while questions 6 and 7 are returned to in a 'loaded' sense in question 11.

While the ways in which individual questions are phrased and basic themes pursued is important, however, the general purpose of the way in which the interviews were conducted was (a), to keep the interviewee talking about a

certain range of related issues; (b), to keep the interviewee talking from his/her own experience; (c), through the arrangement of questions to keep the interviewee mentally 'on edge' in the sense of he or she being unable to present a 'polished' and 'closed' account of being artist, craftsman or designer.

In certain cases I have introduced additional questions or pursued issues touched on in answers to the given questions. Where I have done so, however, I have attempted to keep such departures from the set pattern to the end of the interview. Within the answers to any individual question, however, I have interjected in order to produce clarification or further elaborations on particular points.

Questions were printed on individual cards. I read to the interviewee each question as it came up - he or she not having seen the questions previous to their being asked. The interviewee was not therefore able to see the whole set of questions until after the interview. Where the question was complex the printed card was given to the interviewee after having been read out loud.

In the text as reproduced on the following pages the letter Q denotes the question as read by myself: the letter A denotes the answer. Q2 denotes a 'follow-up' question where such a question is part of a multi-part question as written on the numbered cards: SQ denotes a follow-up question where this is an interjection on my part not written on the card. All questions as written on the cards are reproduced on the following pages in quotation marks, so as to differentiate them from any comments or asides I may have made.

Given that I am reproducing oral statements the punctuation system has had to be slightly modified to cope with the asides and the unfinished nature of some sentences. It is to be noted, therefore, that a series of closely typed dots (.....) indicates a sentence that trails off, or a pause, and not an omission in the transcript.

Where omissions do occur these are due to either outside interference dominating the recording or to the interviewee mumbling while collecting his/her thoughts. Such omissions in the text will be referred to in the text within square brackets - [----]/. Ordinary brackets (---) are to be read as part of the text.

I have expressed my gratitude to the interviewees in the acknowledgements prefacing volume one of this thesis. I wish here, however, to emphasise again my debt to those who so readily gave me their time and energy. Thirteen of the fifteen interviewees gave me their permission to cite their names in relation to the answers they gave: given, however, that the texts of these interviews are being presented in a form making them generally available for library research, I have decided to present all interviewees in an anonymous form. Many of the interview responses involve very personal statements, and given, as one interviewee pointed out, that talking about visual creativity can often sound or appear pretentious or self-centred, I felt that it was in order to omit personal names in a situation where the interviewees do not have the opportunity to edit their statements, or add further comments and explanations to them. As interviewee 13 noted, "artists on the whole are rather on a pedestal, and so exposed...". Their lives and experiences are subject to close scrutiny, and hence, as a result of the fact that they are studied in depth, while other workers and people are not, they may appear unusual, indulgent, or self-opinionated. Interviewee 9, for example, could be subject to many forms of mis-interpretation were individual statements by him taken out of the context of other replies. But, as he himself commented;

people attribute all kinds of states of mind to you,
- The Artist -, which are totally unreal. Basically
it's just the same as doing anything else, completely,
with one's whole being, rather than dabbling in some
way.

Interview One

Tottenham, London.

10, December, 1974.

Interviewee one is a potter, and a full time lecturer in a
College of Education.

INTERVIEW ONE

Tottenham, London.

10 December 1974

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Pottery, and secondary painting.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman, or designer? (of any combination of these?)"

A. Well,... Artist-Craftsman.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being Professional mean to you, as regards art, craft or design?" Or do you feel art is a profession?

A. I find I frequently use the word 'professional', in respect of art, and I think this means maintaining a consecutive thought process and continuous output.

SQ. You don't see in any sense the idea of professional as used with teachers, lawyers, doctors... um

A. No I don't think of it as in any social status sense.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite division of art; craft; design?"

A. Yes, I think that a lot of harm has been caused by making these rather arbitrary divisions between the three:... that each should naturally flow into the other. It makes for a self-consciousness; though surely [there is?] craft in what is called art, and art in what is called craft. And it's unfortunate that craft, in a sense, has a bad connotation.

SQ. Yes, and one notices how, in a way, craft itself is becoming a subsidiary category of art... whereas in a sense it seems to me the Art and Craft Movement was attempting to break away from 'art' as a sort of special, exclusive, thing; but now, as the word 'Artist-Craftsman' is used in the 'Crafts' magazine, the whole discussion of it.... it seems to me the craftsman is becoming very much the artist..... Do you think that's true?

A. Yes, I think this is happening inevitably in that, in spite of a rather self-conscious division between the two.

5.

Q. "What special function, if any, do you consider the Artist/- Craftsman/Designer to have?" - Artist-Craftsman in your case...

A. He certainly has a function, ... which is concerned fundamentally with functional objects. And therefore, he has a connection with society which is, in that respect, broader than the so-called 'Fine Artist'.

SQ. There you're talking of the Artist-Craftsman?

A. Yes.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a painter, sculptor/weaver/- designer etc.,?"

A. No.

Q2. "b). If not do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity as a painter, sculptor....?"

A. Yes I teach.

Q2. "If you undertake any other sort of work do you consider yourself primarily an Artist-Craftsman, or primarily a teacher?"

A. I think of myself as an Artist-Craftsman,... who teaches.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. I sell my work largely through retail sources.... contacts with buyers in shops.

Q2. "Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?"

A. I would wish that there were more satisfactory means of selling work, other than through the retail trade. This is particularly true of pottery - and indeed of all the crafts. That there is so little facility for exhibiting, and selling direct to the public.

SQ. Do you think that the Craft Council Index will make any headway on that?

A. I think it is an important move; I think it will do some good, though I don't know how many craftsmen will actually be approached through this index. I suspect not very many.

SQ. Do you feel that outlet through shops tends to force you into the 'arty-crafty' trade ... gift shops...?

A. There is a danger that you tend to supply what the buyer thinks the public will buy; this is a dangerous aspect.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. I think he has a right to be supported to practise his art; but whether he should expect to make a living by the sale of his art is a different matter.

SQ. You mean 'supported' in the sense that the Arts, Crafts Councils....

A. I think to some extent he should be supported by society, if he's going to remain a truly free artist.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier, or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist/craftsman/designer (as appropriate)?"

A. I think that there is always a feeling that I wish to be thought of primarily as artist, rather than craftsman; this must be part of the general attitude to functions... with somehow the implication that craft is uncreative.

SQ. So, in a sense, you say to me initially that you are an

artist-craftsman, because of what this implies between us about creating functional objects, but....

A. Yes. Yes. I mean I don't accept that I function in either of those ways that you've defined as the repetitious producer or the non-originator...

SQ. No. I was putting it in extremes....

A. Yes. Yes, and I don't really in fact define craftsmanship in either of those ways. That is, we must qualify it by saying 'creative craftsmanship'; because otherwise you are just a journeyman.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist, is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly designer conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object. Do you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. I would say that the artist-craftsman is essentially one who performs all the processes - designing and making.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money.' What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. I think it's extremely well organised for making money: I think it's doubtful what service it offers to art in general. The insistence on style and manner which so often occurs in galleries has a pernicious effect on the young artist, imposing a pressure on him to work in a certain manner, or

perhaps to sustain one phase of his development, because this appears to be popular. I think this is an injurious thing.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) a good idea?, (b) would improve the visual environment?"

A. Yes, I have thought often about this. And I don't think it will work in any self-conscious way; I think if the time is not ripe, and if this doesn't happen in a spontaneous organic way, then it doesn't produce anything of great interest, - it becomes stilted, and rather self-conscious. One often hears potters say, 'If only architects would employ potters', - for the architectural details; but on the whole, when it has occurred it hasn't been very successful.

SQ. The problem with the question, as I put it there, is that you are taking the people and putting them on as an over-lay.

A. Yes, I think so. It's a kind of embellishment, rather than part of the spirit of the whole thing. This is a danger.

SQ. Can you conceive of any way in which it could become part of the spirit of the whole thing?

A. No; not really.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?" - i.e. have you got any particular comment, rather than a total summary?

A. I think it a very healthy, very lively. Still, in a way, tending to remain non-plastic. I still think that this is the failing of English art.

SQ. Too much visual.

A. Yes, and still with this tendency to revert to literary themes.

14.

Q. A quote from Cezanne. "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality, which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'" What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is art for art's sake liberating? restricting?"

A. I think it's dangerous - if I may criticise the old gentleman - it's dangerous to suggest that there is.... it would be a mistake to finish, complete an idea and round off a statement. But we know, as artists, that to work on beyond the states of vital involvement will produce something that's dead. I of course quarrel with the idea that craftsmanship can be linked with vulgarity - there's no reason why it should be. There's no reason why a painting should be vulgar by being worked to a complicated conclusion.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Sigmund Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising or compensating for his psychosis.'" (a) Do you think this view has any general currency?

(b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. It's a view that I had taken really, before I knew his definition. I've always felt, on the whole, that art, to a great extent, is compensatory. That it is filling in for a certain deficiency in personality. No, I wouldn't certainly say that this is general, but I would say it's quite common. But I think the drive of the artist to work, is a drive towards completion of personality to a great extent. Therefore I would agree with that statement.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life.... Our ambition was to arouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself'

(a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design . . . is simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups?)"

A. I think that it was basically a mistake to say that art is, or must needs be, of the stuff of every-day life. I always maintain that art is really mystical and takes the place of magic, and I think in a way, the whole Bauhaus movement in that respect was a failure. It didn't achieve the integration it set out to achieve, and, in fact, really produced another rather precious, self-conscious design idiom. Undoubtedly it has made its mark and influenced, fairly profoundly, the nature of industrial design:- but,

I feel, basically in a rather superficial way.

SQ. It's altered the design, but not altered the practice.

A. Yes.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman, and designer in Britain?"

A. What: the three separately.

SQ. Well, whichever you like.

A. I think, with a few notable exceptions in time, it is as good as it has ever been. But still holding an inferior position compared with many other European countries. The fault is that English society still doesn't include the artist, or art. Not, as I say, that it must needs be an everyday activity; but the artist is not accepted as a member of society in the way that he is, say, in France: - 'Monsieur, vous avez travail bien', - when you come back with your canvas; the French think of art as work, whereas the Englishman doesn't; he thinks of it as indulgence.

SQ. So it's not in terms of the ability to support yourself as artist-craftsman, but in terms of how you're seen and treated....

A. Yes, acceptance in society;- with the ramifications. And I'm not sure that the artist and craftsman are necessarily worse off from the point of view of opportunities than in European countries, but I think that they're certainly less accepted.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. No, I think that after an attempt to produce a vocational approach to art teaching, which has really failed, because it is therefore training for a very uncertain occupation, the return to an emphasis on ideas and originality has made the whole aspect of art teaching very lightweight. It's insisted on originality of invention at all costs without managing to produce any sound basis for the student's development.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals, (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a large part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. No, I don't feel that their impact is very great on the creative process. Healthily I think the creative process goes on from the purely personal point of view.

SQ. What about their impact in terms of what we were saying before, - the artist not being treated as a man who does a job, who actually works? - That is in terms of people who aren't artist-craftsmen, their attitudes towards the.....

A. Yes, I think the art critic is obviously doing something to popularise art and to bring the discussion of art to the forefront, but, as I say, I don't see that it does, or indeed should, influence the way the artist works. I don't think it does influence the way the artist works very much, at the deepest level.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/craft/-design practice, and the intellectual discussion and theoris-

ation, as it takes place in, for instance; schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., press, radio, in other areas?"

A. I think the discussion of art and aesthetics can be an occupation and an entertainment in itself, and it's necessary that it go on.... The extent to which students are asked to theorise to a great extent depends on what their ultimate occupation will be. It's always necessary for those involved in the processes of art to have free discussion and range widely over all the machinations of art and artists. But, again, I contend that, for the artist himself, this is not a prime necessity. He can produce art in a vacuum.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a prerequisite for success or continuing success?"

A. Yes, this is really what I said earlier in answer to that other question.

22.

Q. "'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?" - a quote from a man called Allsopp.

A. It's true for me, and I think generally true.

SQ. It comes back to what you were saying about completion of the Self

A. Yes...

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment"

ment or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. One has to define 'skill', because it can imply a virtuosity in the widest sense, or it can apply merely to a sort of technical manipulation - though I don't think in art it's possible really to distinguish the part that the hand plays in a plastic art - obviously the hand is only at the command of the mind, but we tend to make those distinctions, and if we take the broadest definition then this is obviously an essential part: the skill of organisation of a canvas, the skill of the fall of a pot.... involves the whole being. Therefore, by that definition, I think skill is essential. ... What was the question? I've forgotten what the question was...

SQ. Would you distinguish skill from art?

A. NO I wouldn't distinguish them.

24.

Q. This is basically the same question, then; "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. Going back to the previous question; I think that the artist requires a certain personality, and this obviously can't be given to him. I think that a student can reach a fairly high level of achievement, but if he is a non-artist, his work will not be of any significance, or value.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. Broadly yes. Though I think they tend to remain too....

they tend to take an interest in too small a number of artists. They should range more freely, to cover a wider field.

SQ. I was reading a report by the Arts Council on the activities of CEMA - Committee for the Encouragement of Music and Arts - during the war, and, it spent several pages praising CEMA, outlining its activities in direct sponsorship, People's Exhibitions, factory performances, painting of the cafés and restaurants, and so forth, and then it went on to say it was continuing its activities; but it seemed to me to be almost completely reversing this: withdrawing from direct sponsorship, withdrawing from buying pictures at twenty quid flat rate, - taking as its function only to maintain standards in central areas. . . . to you feel this...?

A. Yes. I don't think this was the point of their formation anyway. I think the role was that they should range widely, and sponsor the little known, the unknown.

SQ. What they seemed to be arguing was that the state should not be involved directly, - but given their account of CEMA, all that they were saying about CEMA was that the state and direct sponsorship had been very effective; and then they said, 'Oh well, we've got to withdraw' - forgetting what they'd just said, and then going on to say that local authorities, industry, and the Arts Council via regional councils..... which in a sense comes down to the same thing...

A. Yes, yes. I think they're muddled in their intentions here. I don't think that there's any evidence that that sort of intervention was bad, or would be bad. It's obvious that the artist requires a patron, requires a sponsor, - he doesn't exist otherwise.

SQ. And there's never been freedom in the Arts anyway....

A. No. And, in a way, if the state were to free him from the strait-jacket of the galleries demands - this might well be a healthy thing.

Interview Two

Tottenham, London

10 December 1974

Interview two is with a painter and draughtsman who is also a full-time lecturer at a College of Education.

INTERVIEW TWO

Tottenham, London.

10 December 1974

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Drawing and Painting.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman, or designer? or any combination of these?"

A. An artist.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being Professional mean to you as regards being an artist?"

A. Well, I think that in the old sense a professional was somebody who was employed simply as an artist.... Today I regard it as being something rather different: it's more an attitude to work - a professional is somebody who will, for instance, get on with his work regardless of whether he feels like getting on with his work on a personal level. You know that he'll either work by the clock or he'll discipline himself to work, whether he's feeling low, or whether he's feeling depressed by his work.... he'll tend to plough on. And he'll also be somebody who is very single minded - particularly in the present time, where you've got so many other commitments for one to earn ones living, that one has in fact very little time to be an artist, and therefore, professional self discipline is all the more

important.

SQ. You don't see the term in any sense relating to the doctor, lawyer, teacher idea - the closed group, the....

A. I feel that if I had a lot of self-confidence I would regard myself as a professional; I don't think I've got enough self confidence, in a way, to..... adopt that kind of role. So, I'm not saying.... I think, for instance, someone like David Hockney might be regarded... for instance... you know, Picasso... would regard themselves as professional on a par, or even superior, to doctors, lawyers, etc. I don't tend to see myself in that light. I'm not even sure if I am a professional. I'd say I wasn't a professional....

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. In education? Or outside...

SQ. Well: first let's say in your practice as a painter..

A. No. I don't really - as I simply regard myself as a painter. I sometimes turn to the crafts with interest, and outbursts of enthusiasm; I might suddenly become a print-maker, or make films (which I have done - that sort of thing - over the years - or sculpting), but I've always eventually found myself frustrated by these other activities, so I always tend to come back to painting again. And I think my forays into other crafts are diminishing all the time - I do it less and less as life gets shorter, as it were, and time's running out. About the age of forty one becomes aware of this, and one feels that in order to achieve anything one's got to stick to one thing: and it is a question of achievement; obviously if one had plenty of lives - nine lives - one would be very happy to have one of them spent doing pottery, another one making films,..... but, as I've only got one I tend to stick to the - you know, as Mozart said, 'After the

first love, there is no other.'

SQ. And, in the end, you see painting as art, and these other activities as craft - not talking in the sense of a barrier between them, but as....

A. No. I've learnt an enormous amount: particularly from print-making, actually, and my painting has improved, I think, by my understanding of print making. In fact I also learnt the flute for two years, and I feel I learnt a lot about painting - about art really - by learning the flute. I mean I regard any other activity, other than painting, as being grist to one's mill.... Are you asking me whether I think that art, whether painting is superior or inferior to the other crafts?

SQ. No - what I'm getting at is the very idea of the division between things that are art, things that are craft, things that are design - three of which are bracketed, in terms of the state, under three different bodies,....

A. Yes, well I suppose, in a sense, I'm... I think that the crafts have less - they may have less.... they do have less content, psychological content, and emotional content, than painting. It's interesting that when people like Picasso spend quite a lot of their time in fields like pottery and print-making, one very often feels that they, as it were, indulge and enjoy these crafts because they are not feeling like producing Bernica at that particular time: they're at a loose end, in a sense; rather than stop work altogether, they'd much rather explore other fields...

5.

Q. "What special function, if any, do you consider the artist to have?" - or craftsman, or designer?

A. Well, I think the artist is concerned with vision, is concerned with ways of seeing; and he is concerned with the

whole problem of making a construction which is satisfying on an abstract and aesthetic level. Which is also about, stimulated by, some aspect of his visual experience - there's a kind of tension between what he's doing on the canvas, and what he's responded to: and, through this tension, he's trying to evolve a vision, really....., I don't know what other word to use. I think it's a vision that goes on inside the picture; whereas the designer is concerned with actually making the environment for people - to actually live in in one way and another. You don't live in a painting; you look at a painting. It really influences the way you see things afterwards, and while you're looking at the picture. So that the designer's gone outside the barrier of the picture, and he's creating the whole..... you could be regarded as in some way being equally important - people like the De Stijl artists regarded them as being more important. That doesn't answer the question about craft. I wouldn't really distinguish between the craftsman and the designer.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a painter?"

A. No.

Q2. "(b) If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity as a painter?"

A. Teaching.

Q2. "(c) If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily an artist, or primarily a teacher?"

A. That's a difficult one. I think I regard myself primarily as an artist - who teaches. But it's a more complicated subject than that. Because one is different people at different times. And if I am preparing a lecture, or a lesson, and when I'm actually involved in teaching, it's

my aim to be professional about it: just exactly as if I'm painting a picture it's my aim to be professional about it. And this enlarges what I was saying earlier about professionalism. Because one of the things I would like to add to that is that a professional is a person who does a job, whatever job he's doing, he does it to a very high standard. He knows he's not going to do it perfectly; he may be a very long way from it, but, he's trying all the time to do it so that it's done really well. And I would extend my ideas. I'm not just a professional when I'm painting: I certainly do adopt a professional attitude when I'm painting: but I try to make it that everything I do is at a professional level. If someone says to me, 'Well, could you decorate the hall?' - you know, the school hall or something, I would try and make a professional job of it. And so I adopt this attitude with whatever I'm doing. But I regard myself primarily as an artist, because that's the thing I'd really like to be doing. And that's the thing that I started doing.

SQ. And your teaching is basically a support for that?

A. That's how it began: yes it is, in that I wouldn't teach if I didn't have to...

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. None.

SQ. How do you sell?

A. Well, I sell quite casually. I have had exhibitions from time to time; so I mean, in that sense, it isn't none. But I haven't got any permanent or regular....

SQ. No: what I'm trying to get at is any form in which you sell....

A. Oh well: I sell casually. I mean, people come to the house, and they see something, and they like it, so they might buy it. It occasionally does happen. Other times, if I have a lot of paintings, which doesn't often happen, because I'm a very slow worker.... if I did get a lot together, well then I might think, 'Well, it's about time that I, sort of, made an effort'. Then I might contact a gallery and put on an exhibition. And I might sell a few at the exhibition. Quite often none.

Q2. "And would you wish this to be otherwise?"

A. No. I wouldn't wish it to be otherwise. I think if I was immensely productive, and I had a lot of work, then I would certainly wish to have an outlet for it. I think I'd wish to sell rather more in the way I do sell them - that is, that people come into the house: I wish that were more often. I wouldn't like to have a contract with a dealer, or anything like that. I'd dislike it, - I think.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Yes; yes. Definitely.

SQ. And would you see this in terms of selling on the open market, or.... being supported by the Arts Council...

A. Yes: I don't see why not. I think he's producing works which are either expressive, or beautiful, and why shouldn't he be paid for producing them? It depends what you mean by 'having a right'. I don't think that society should be bound to pay him; he might be producing rubbish. But, if he can sell more or if he can get support from the Arts Council, then he has a perfect right to.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly, among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist?"

A. Well, I think to a certain extent this is just a matter of labels. And so people might wish to reverse the labels, and, like Schwitters suddenly started calling it 'Merz' instead of Art, and so people said, 'Do you call that art?', and he said, 'No, I don't call that art: I call it Merz.' I suppose socially speaking I'm affected by being an artist, in the sense that I think some of the people I meet are, perhaps, slightly curious about me because I am an artist: they might sort of say, 'Oh you're lucky. How lovely for you - you have a day a week which you can set aside for your painting, and how marvellously relaxing it must be...' Or..., you know, they have all sorts of attitudes to one, because they know one is an artist. And these, on the whole, I think, work slightly in one's favour, in the sense...(sometimes it can be very irritating)... but, quite often, one gets a kind of gratuitous respect from some people. They regard you as being slightly magical, when one is in fact not any more magical than they are. I think possibly it's rather unfair that somebody who is a (if this is true)... a craftsman doesn't feel that he gets enough status in comparison to a painter. I'm not sure that this is really so. I mean, if you say....: if I was a potter it would be the same, and people would say, 'Oh! Marvellous! He puts his hands in the clay...' And so, it isn't a thing, anyway, that terribly bothers me. It does sometimes irritate me.

SQ. No. It seems to be more among the craftsmen, in the sense that the potter, as a potter, having to repeat a line, becomes a ceramic artist, and starts producing non-functional abstract stuff. Or a tapestry company I saw up at Edinburgh where he was saying how important it was to be 'artist' rather than craftsman, because as craftsman he was brought, say, a small Ivon Hitchen, and told to blow it up to thirty feet by fifteen feet: and it's designed in painting, in miniature. And, he says, you know, once he's an artist, people start saying, 'Will you design me something' - such and such a size, in your own medium.

A. Yes, yes. I see. I don't see how this affects me, really. I suppose, to draw a parallel with the craftsman, that's why I avoid galleries on the whole: I wouldn't like to be under contract, or anything like that. It would mean there would be pressures on me to produce the same kind of work, you know - "We like this style, why don't you go on working in that way'.... this kind of thing. So, by avoiding any kind of - by in fact not having to earn my living at it I'm much freer.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly designer conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object; would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. Can you just read that last little bit - the bit about the designer, again.../reads written question/.

I do think that the problem with being called an artist, 'a term relating to genius, super-humanness' etc; I think this is a pressure. I think, if one is an artist, one

is, like the painter or sculptor, one does tend, all the time, to compare one's own work with the work of the greatest productions in that idiom. So one bears an enormous burden which I think possibly the craftsman doesn't: he could: if the craftsman was continually looking at Sung pottery, then he'd be in a similar dilemma. But for some reason he (in my observation) doesn't. I do find this a very great pressure - that all the time I can't get away from Cezanne or Matisse, or whoever it is. And the feeling that one's got to strive for something which is way beyond oneself. I suppose it's taken me years and years, (and I'm still doing it) to try and accept one's own limitations and be oneself. And, at the same time, the idea of accepting one's limitations is appalling. Well, one should be striving beyond one's limitations. And also the factor of the shortage of time. I know that one cannot, in fact, do as well as one could otherwise do if one had more time. So all the time one's learning to, sort of, ... to be in a way 'minor'. And so there's a sense of failure which is built into the whole thing right from the beginning: - as if one's wrestling with a kind of impossible task in which everything is stacked against one. And, because the terms that one's set oneself in the first place are impossible. In this sense the idea of being a craftsman is a very appealing one to me. Because one thinks immediately of William Morris - you know, working away at one's curtain designs or tapestry, or whatever it is. And O.K., if one's going to be a professional, one's going to produce a very high standard of work; but somehow one doesn't have to compare it with..... one's not expected to be a genius. Now I wouldn't for one moment countenance the idea of being a genius: I don't think I am; or super-human, or.... But, in a sense, one is continually comparing oneself to the genius. And I think this really makes it much more difficult to be creative; that one's creativity is often blocked by acute self-criticism.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd, of Marlborough Fine Art, is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. They've got a perfect right to buy and sell - as any other businessman has. I have, in my time, felt bitter about this kind of thing, but, really, on a rational plane, they're entitled to buy and sell. Where I think the situation is extremely unhealthy is that there is just no outlet, or very little outlet, for work. You know, there are lots of really good people around in this country, and in other countries, no doubt, who are working seriously, who make a lot of personal sacrifices, who produce really good work: and they cannot sell it, or they cannot exhibit it - show it. They're not being employed by society in any way - and they're very talented people. Immensely talented people. Produce masses of work which just lies around in their studios. Or, even if it's exhibited (it isn't always) it just goes back into their studios again. I think this is very very sad, you know, that we have this situation..... which is a kind of top-heavy - the market for the known, established stuff, which goes at inflated prices, - and people like the Marlborough gallery at one end, and there's very little inbetween. It's unhealthy. I think it's much more healthy in Ireland, as far as I can make out - or has been, in Dublin.

SQ. What do they do there?

A. There does seem to be more scope for exhibitions, at which reasonably priced works are sold. Because there seem to be more people who are prepared to spend forty, or a hundred, or two hundred pounds on a picture. It's a shame there aren't more people like that around who are willing to spend, say, up to a thousand pounds on a picture. It seems that the collectors are few and far between. And they like.... they're also concerned with investment - as far as one understands it anyway. I must say I'm pretty ignorant

about that world of buying and selling: I don't really know much about it.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) a good idea? (b) would improve the visual environment?"

A. I certainly think it's a good idea. I don't think it would necessarily improve the visual environment, unless it was done in the right way. And the question is basically, what is the right way. And it does raise the whole question of 'taste', and who's going to decide who is going to be employed, and for what. If this sort of thing was done more, it would raise a mass of problems. You've always got to run the risk of what, I think, is called 'committee-art', where a committee of twenty people decide what artist is going to be employed - and immediately you get the lowest common denominator. Whereas if you had one autocrat who said, 'I will have this here, and that there', then you might get some ghastly mistakes, but you might also get some absolutely fabulous results. So, the first part of the question is, Yes! I think it would be a very good thing; I think all these talented painters and designers and sculptors and so on should be used - or tapestry people, or whoever it is, much more by architects, and patrons of architects. One cannot say if it would improve the environment: but it obviously did in Florence.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?" - very generally, or any particular aspect?

A. Well, I think that it's not very exciting. I think it's divided. Having discussed already the fact that there is very little outlet, and also that architects and their patrons are not....., and this is obviously one of the things that would improve life a lot. But, I think there are lots of other reasons. Like....., if in a compact society - if you're in a city like London, for instance, where you have artists living closely to one another, where they can meet, and ideas can be generated - I think that could produce something very exciting. But I think that what has happened in fact is that artists in a way are scattered across a huge area. I mean, I know several artists in Hertfordshire, near where I live: but very few of those artists do I really have much in common with. And we all live - what,.... three... five... ten... miles away from each other. The artists I know whose work I learn from, and who - perhaps they learn from me - unfortunately live miles away, and I don't often see them. There's a lack of a sense of community, really, between artists. But, if one goes to that exhibition at the Hayward (of British Painting), I thought that was a pretty sort of vacuous exhibition, and, if that's what British painting is at the moment, I think it's pretty limited. And in fact I think it's just the kind of painting that should be used (those kind of artists who produce those very large decorative canvasses) should be used by architects. Because they could make a marvellous contribution to the environment: as designers, really, rather than what I would call the other sort of painter. And yet I know lots and lots of painters who do not get their work exhibited in the Hayward Gallery for some reason. The problem is a lot of them are having to teach to earn a living, and they haven't got time to produce a substantial amount of a high enough standard to establish a reputation of any sort.

14.

Q. A quote from Cezanne: "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality, which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment

of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'

(a) What is your reaction to these views, (b) Is art for art's sake liberating? restrictive?"

A. Well: I think when he said this he was referring, in fact, to the highly finished productions of the French Salon of that period. And I think he was also thinking in terms of his art being concerned with problem-solving - to use his jargon. And he did regard his painting as always a problem: having started with his motif, he then had to work out the structure. And, I suppose he was aware that there could be a stage in the painting where, instead of responding and inventing and responding and inventing, constructing, as it were, he could suddenly just finish the picture off. And the riposte there - I mean Picasso said this much more simply, which is, 'To finish a picture is to kill it'. And Cezanne had the attitude of, you know, 'take your time'. I think he was searching for some kind of perfection, but he wasn't going to take any short cuts. He'd rather leave the picture unfinished and unresolved and imperfect, than to just sort of botch it up at the end.

SQ. What about the historical consequences of these sorts of ideas?

A. It does mean, in fact, that the artist in the particular role..... clearly a patron who is not prepared to wait twentyfive years, or something, is a hindrance to him. So he's in a very different kind of... there's old Michaelangelo being brought to deadlines by a Pope, or Medici, or somebody, and working under enormous pressure: and Cezanne is saying in effect I suppose that he won't have any truck with that kind of pressure, and he will take his time. So he regards it more like a university research student - who also might be under pressure of a deadline.... he might also, actually, have to have his scheme passed by somebody; by his tutor. But, nevertheless, not so much a student, then, but a professor

in a university, or a lecturer who has time for his research is probably fairly free to do any kind of research that interests him. And he takes as long as he likes about it. There's no-one to, sort of..... So that 'Art for Art's Sake'; 'Research for Research's Sake'; it does raise all kinds of problems I think. Because a person who's free has got many more choices to make - the responsibility to make the choices rests with him. If you decide to give something up, and start something else, or he puts down red, or can change his mind and make it blue.... Whereas, in the Renaissance, it might be necessary for him to have a gold background, or a white background, and that would be symbolically very very important, and he knew he'd have to do it that way. So he's got tremendous freedom, which can also mean that it's going to take him much longer, if he's serious, to do anything.... No! Not necessarily. Not necessarily: there was Picasso: worked very very rapidly, and with great decisiveness. But, it puts the responsibility of making choices right the way down the line - as to whether he's going to get up that morning - at every level he's got to make his own personal choices: and this is a huge responsibility, I think - to learn how to cope with this freedom. Obviously it's not healthy for everybody to be in this position. It seems to me that one could crack up - become a complete sort of neurotic, and go in a mental asylum. But, I suppose most people have some kind of self-protection, so most people are in this role: they invent their own rules. If there aren't any rules given by society, they invent their own. And they say, 'Well, I'm going to paint this picture, say, purely in blues.'; or, 'I'm going to...' - they programme themselves, really. It's like an a-priori truth: they know there's no real reason for doing this, but they say, well, 'Because I've got to have some sort of structure, I'll take this one. Let us go from this point as an a-priori truth, and let's see what I can do with it'. And, I suppose that's the way to do it; to make your own rules. But, then you've got to make the right rules. So, is it liberating? No. Well.... it is liberating, but I mean, what does freedom mean? Perhaps you only have freedom

by making rules. Does that answer that fully enough?

SQ. Yes, yes. And if the choice is there... this sort of freedom of the freedom to make your own rules, or, on the other hand, working for somebody else, would you prefer the former, making your own rules....

A. Yes. I have, actually, undertaken commissions, and I did one very recently - a very difficult one - a painting of an inside of a cathedral. And I enjoyed it to some extent, because it was a great relief, in a way, to sort of know that (having agreed to do it, mark you - I was quite free to turn it down; having agreed to do it), that there is somebody to tell you what to do. At the same time.... to a certain extent I became involved, you know, on a personal level. But, in the end, it was the sense of a dead-line which spoilt it for me. If I'd been told, 'Look; take as long as you like; I want a perfect job; I'll pay you really well;' - you know, a thousand pounds, or two thousand pounds; 'And you can take just as long as you like, and this is what we want; we want this particular subject to hang in such and such a place' - then I would say, 'Fine'. And I think I really would make a good job of it, and I would get personally involved in it, and it would become as meaningful as my own work; it would be my own work, really. I think it was just this feeling that...., that - first of all, I forget how much it was; I think it was about a hundred pounds plus expenses, and so I did have this feeling, I must admit, that, after a few weeks, that I began to think, 'God; I'm only being paid, you know, less than the dustman.' And this made me feel that, you know, 'O.K. If I'm really interested in this subject then I don't mind being paid a pittance for it'. But then I had the feeling - 'Well, it's not actually what I would have chosen to paint.' And so I tended to rush it a bit after a while - not at first -, but, eventually, I thought, I must just see this thing through and make a good job of it, and cut my losses. It wasn't as good a painting as I would otherwise, perhaps, have made. But I finished it, and so the thing, in the end, became a dead bore.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for, his psychosis'. (a) do you think this view has any general currency. (b) do you think this view has any validity?"

A. What is a psychotic?

SQ. A form of mental disturbance...

A. Yes...

SQ. I can't specify it more...

A. Yes. A general term for mental derangement. I don't think this view has general currency beyond the fact, the joke; 'He's an artist: he must be mad.' I don't really find in my experience that many people have this view. I suppose these jokes are there for some reason - so there is a case for saying that it has some kind of general validity. But I don't think that most people really think that artists are mad. Now as to whether artists have.... I think there's no doubt about it that there are many many artists who have no trace of psychosis. And I wouldn't like to say that it's the bad ones who have no psychosis, and the good ones who have; I think that's too generalising. It doesn't mean anything. I think it's possible, though, that quite a lot of people who become artists may well do so because they wish to run away from reality. Or not so much 'run away' from it, but, they've got an ambivalent relationship with reality - and it depends what we mean by reality. And we could say, for the sake of the argument, there could be two sorts of reality; one was the reality of earning a living, and taking part in society, the same as everyone else, and the fear that all young people have, probably, that they're not going to cope, as adults, when they are children. It may well be that the art thing is a kind of way out for them, because

they know that there isn't really such a profession as art. Or there is, but, you know, it's a sort of rather strange one that's on the borderlines of the world of work. Then there's also the picture or sculpture, or whatever one's making, is a world on its own which one can live in and dream in. But there is another form of reality, it seems to me, which we could say was the hard reality of the visual world: you know the sort of... [bangs on the table]..this!, sort of thing. Which, when you think about it, babies have to grapple with a whole mass of visual sensations so that they're put in place, and understood. And, I suppose that what a lot of people do is to build up a kind of protective barrier between themselves and the physical presence of things. And so it may be that some artists are involved with art because it's their way of coping, really - not so much running away from - coping with the visual world, rather than rejecting it and sealing it off and becoming unreceptive. They wish to remain fully perceptive. But they wish to put it into some kind of order - all the chaotic appearances. And I wouldn't say that was psychotic. It certainly is using art to become normal: perhaps to cure oneself of potential psychosis.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual, nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his otherworldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the

Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus, or any other persons/groups)?"

A. Yeah. Nice one. First of all I think that Gropius was writing this partly because he was aware of the division between the crafts and industrial design, and the fine arts. And what he was proposing was to break down these barriers, and, he was saying in effect that the fine artist is cut off from real life; industrial design is in a terrible plight, and the kind of industrial design produced is ghastly; there's no-one capable of teaching industrial design, and so on. So that he was trying to break down these barriers. I think, in a sense, he fulfilled a function - well he certainly did. I don't like the phrase, 'Art for Art's Sake': I think it's an over-simplification. And I think... it's perfectly.... who's Gropius to say that some painter, you know, painting away by himself producing paintings that nobody wants... who's he to say that that is not (a) to do with the stuff of life, and, (b) that it doesn't make some contribution afterwards. So I think he's just totally up the spout there, really. Like Milton - what did he say?... 'They also serve, not only stand and wait'. That's really what I mean. So, I don't like the term 'Art for Art's Sake' because I don't really know what it means. But I do think Gropius did a jolly good job in training industrial designers and effecting a complete revolution in art education. Now as far as Bauhaus's intentions are concerned, I think that it had to be a rigorous functional rethinking of design; I can see why it had to be the way it was. Like all good things, it's got debased. And so, in many ways, I think you could easily point to many good influences that the Bauhaus has had on the environment, but I suppose you could equally point to many bad and monotonous boring buildings and spaces and objects that have been produced as a result of the Bauhaus influence. But I would think on the whole, certainly in the field of industrial design, of commodity products, I think it's had a very (in the long run) a very good effect. I think on architecture Gropius has had, unfortunately - I'm not criticising his own architecture so much; I admire the Bauhaus building

enormously - but I think he's had a very bad effect. Because he's been misunderstood. I think in a sense exactly as Le Corbusier has been misunderstood. But I think some of Le Corbusier's ideas were downright bad, and had an absolutely horrible effect on our cities. You didn't ask me about Corbusier, but, you know, it's a similar character. But, I mean, the whole problem of environment and design is tied up with so many factors beyond Gropius or the designer or the art school influence. I mean, obviously your sociological structure, infrastructure, or whatever....

SQ. In a way, the thing about the Bauhaus, as I would see it, is that, whereas its design has had dramatic consequences, his intentions, in the sense of how design-art was to be produced, were rapidly forgotten, and that split-off, seems to me one of the ways....

A. You mean, yes...

SQ. In a sense, what we're left with from him is 'Design for Design's Sake', rather than the whole conception of bringing in artists into the school, craftsmen into the school, designers working within the factory, working through the whole design process, and.....

A. Yes, this is true; this is true.

SQ. You bring up the sociological; it's the very sociological side of it that died most quickly. We can now walk out and look round the college at the desks, tables, and there's his designs; but there's not his.....

A. Yes. Yes, of course in that sense the Bauhaus was a failure. Though he did succeed in some senses; it did create people - a new kind of person who had technological knowledge and also who had an artistic training as a designer. I suppose, in that sense, there wasn't anybody like that before. And they did create people of that nature. But, what he's up against is society; he can't change society -

just as William Morris couldn't change society.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?"

A. Well, I've dealt with the artist's position, have I not? Well; I like the statement of Nervi which is that... he said, you know, if you take a building, a piece of architecture, fifty per cent of the praise, and the blame, must go on the patron - not on the architect. Because the architect is, to an incredible extent, conditioned by financial arrangements and the demands and the taste of the patron. So, what little I know about industrial designers and architects is that they are amazingly divided in the work they do. They very rarely are responsible for the design of a whole object - all too often they design a bit of it. And somebody else designs another bit, and the whole thing's a collection of bits: particularly in motor-car design, for instance, where.... where literally the door panels are designed by a team of designers in a competitive spirit, and the panel boarding by another team of designers. In fact the responsibility for the design often seems to rest on the corporation as a whole - its committees, directors, coming in and altering things and taking committee decisions. And of course the market research has to be done to find out what will sell, and what won't sell. So I think, really, the designer's role - he's really just a... often a very frustrated tool, just carrying out what he's told to do. And he has very little choice in anything. So I'm rather sorry for a designer: I wouldn't like to be one. Craftsmen - do you mean by a craftsman the kind of potter, weaver...?

SQ. Yes.

A. Well they're up against it because they're really competing with industrial objects which are manufactured so

much more cheaply. And so that they've really got to produce work the quality of which - the essence of it is; I suppose, that it's handmade, human or custom-built. You know, individuality has got to go into their work, to make it viable. Because people are going to have to spend more on one of their products, than they would on something from Woolworths. And so that.... I think I'd much rather be a craftsman than a designer. They're in the same boat as William Morris, really: they are going to produce goods which, if they're going to give themselves a fair price, they're going to price themselves out of a market. So, all the time, they're probably selling things at a ridiculously low price, in order to try and sell them at all.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. Yes, I think on the whole; I think we should keep our art schools and not close them all down. I understand from the little I know about them that there's a big room for improvement on all the design side - and there's a genuine problem here; that you get teachers in from industry, and they become out of date, so the students are all learning things which are out of date. And I think there's a genuine problem, just as we have in colleges of education, that you're trying to train people to be designers, but they're not in a design situation. They are in a hypothetical situation; and so the students are often, in a way, bored, because they're having to do hypothetical work, and which they know is not genuinely engaged for society, and, very often, is not relevant anyway. So, I think there's an endless problem there. And, I think the way round it, if there is any way round it, is to bring in many more people from industry to teach the students on a kind of rotation basis. They should be let off industry for a while - for a year or two years - and then go back into industry again.

A kind of circulation process - in fact we could follow the Bauhaus really.... and students going into industry. So, I think in that sense, the art school structure should be broken down - not destroyed - but opened out, and linked with industry much more - with commerce, and whatever it is.... On the fine art side I think one important thing to remember is that the art schools do provide patronage, virtually, for a large number of teachers. It gives them time to do their own work. One of the worrying things about the art schools going into the polytechnics is that they may lose some of that research time - and so it's a loss. I think it very much depends upon the different art schools; I don't think one can make a blanket statement about the fine art departments. I think where the fine art departments are producing encouraging students, or developing a school of decorative painting - what I would call decorative painting; they may not - minimal painting, or optical painting, abstract painting.... then I think that it would be a very good idea if they did a similar kind of thing to what I was proposing for the industrial design departments. That is, they should attempt to link up with schools of architecture, and with architects - with R.I.B.A., and so on. And try and get an outlet for students' work, or put students in contact with jobs. How this can be done I've no idea. But there may be other art schools where their aim is not to produce decorative painters, or sculptors - and I think this is perfectly justified.... why not? Why shouldn't they be free to paint in any way they like. After all, little enough is done for the arts anyway....

SQ. You want to go on now with these? We've got six more questions...

A. What time is it?

SQ. Five past twelve.

A. Yes. Let's go on.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?" - that is, among non-artists...

A. Yes; I think it does. It certainly does; yes. I think there's no doubt about it that Mr Average Man, if he exists - the man on the Clapham Omnibus - has got a different idea about art than he had twenty years ago, than the same man would have had twenty years ago. And I've discovered this myself in being in the field of adult education. But it's a slow business. It doesn't happen suddenly. The first thing is that anything that occurs.... there's a reaction against it - 'Ooh! Is that art! What rubbish!' - you know. And, later on, people come round to it. The point is often made that the artists are in a kind of enclave, you know, and they're cut off from life - doing their own thing which is avant garde: and this is the point that Gropius was making, really.... and there they are in a world of their own. But in fact, eventually, it does sort of seep through, - and certainly painters have had an enormous influence on designers over the last sixty or seventy years - ever since Cubism. Gropius himself was influenced by Cubism, surely. So, I think that the influence is there. I think also, the fact is that in our present society most artists are involved with society at the level of teachers. And therefore they are having a big influence through education.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/-craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation as it takes place in, for instance, schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., press, radio, in other areas?"

A. I think that over the last ten years.... I think the trend has been towards more and more discussion, theorisation, more and more verbalisation. This is partly coming from

internally - I think it is coming from within really - that, increasingly, teachers have got together and said, 'Really, our students are not articulate enough, and it's important that they should be articulate, and what are we going to do about it? They mustn't be able to just make; they must be able to conceptualise verbally' So, undoubtedly there's been a swing from the kind of 'Let them do what they want and it's more important to be a practising artist'. Often the practising artist is inarticulate. That was a kind of fashionable thing to think, in a way, or to act out. You got students, I remember, at art school, who acted out being inarticulate. They felt that it was important to be inarticulate. The more inarticulate the better they would be as practising artists. I think we have particularly changed our views about this. The trend is undoubtedly towards conceptualising verbally much more. And, on the whole, I must say, I'm in favour of this: because I think the relation between the physical activity of making something and the verbal conceptualising is a very interesting one. It doesn't mean to say there isn't such a thing as thinking in terms of colour. But I think the verbalisations one's made about colour prior to that.... it's very important. It helps one to be intelligent about it. As far as T.V., the press, radio - I'm afraid I don't really know. I haven't got a T.V., set, and I don't.....

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. Yes. Well, I do. In my experience they do. I have shown my work to dealers and I have experienced that kind of pressure.

22.

Q. This is a quote from Bruce Allsopp; "Art is something

which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or, is it true for you?"

A. It is for me. Obviously it's not true for everybody. I think some people make art which has very little personal qualities in it.... that I can see, anyway.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. I think skill can become separate from art. It depends really.... I mean, it does if you think it does. This again, I think, is semantic: it's a semantic problem. You could say art is skill. Art is art.... making an artefact. And to make an artefact which is worth looking at is therefore - by its very nature - is going to have skill in it.

SQ. In a sense, what I'm getting at, is... Do you see anything beyond what you could basically teach me?

A. Oh yes, I do...

SQ. If you do, is this something peculiar to art, or is it something that a good doctor, a good tennis player...

A. No, I think its something to do with the feeling, and experience, and this is the one thing the art teacher cannot teach. In the final analysis the person who's doing it has got to experience something, and they've got to put something down - a statement.....

/At this point the tape finished, having run its full sixty minutes. Question 24 had in effect been included within the follow up questions to question 23, while question 25, concerning the activities of the Arts Council, Crafts Advisory Committee, and Design Council, produced an answer to the effect that he was not sufficiently conversant with their activities to be able to comment./

Interview Three

Tottenham

10 December 1974

Interview three is with an artist-craftswoman whose special field is embroidery. At the time of interviewing she was a full-time lecturer in a college of education.

INTERVIEW THREE

Tottenham.

10 December 1974

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc.)?"

A. What goes under the name of embroidery, I suppose.... But embroidery's very difficult to be accurate about, because I don't necessarily mean stitching by that: I also mean knotting, and peculiar experiments with fabric that the traditional embroiderer would say, 'This is not embroidery...'

SQ. So you're very much ranging into what's often exhibited under the name of tapestry... would you say?

A. To a certain extent, in the fact that it's wall hanging, and I think of my work rather as being Fine Art rather than as domestic things to sit upon: I think of it as something to hang upon a wall, rather than to keep a teapot warm. So, I think I probably have a fine art bias in the work that I do, and I think I deliberately encourage that in my students.

2.

Q. This follows on from that: "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman, or designer? Or any combination of these?"

A. I suppose an artist-craftsman, because if I have an idea I would rather carry it out. On the other hand, I'm not sure at what point you say this differs from the designer; is a designer somebody who has an idea and makes it manifest.

through a medium, because if that's your definition, Nich, of what a designer is, I would say I'm a designer. I have an idea; I make it manifest through a particular medium that is possibly peculiar to me. So I think I am probably giving you rather an ambiguous answer to that.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being Professional mean to you as regards art, craft or design?"

A. Being professional would mean that I would prefer to do something technically as well as possible, and not make it... home-made. I draw a distinction between that which is 'hand-made', and that which is 'home-made', which I think often people don't. I think there's an enormous distinction. I think being professional would mean that I could do something... If I carry out a panel, which might be as a result of a commission, or might be as a result of an idea of my own, I should like to carry it out as well as I possibly could, without any outside interference, and satisfy myself as to the end result. I think I'd probably interpret professional on that term as far as my work - my own personal work - went. I have a commission at the moment which I have not completed, and about which I feel guilty that I've not completed. This is for somebody who's exceedingly ill, and I jolly well ought to get a move on and do that before I do anything else, for fear that the person for whom it is going to be made may die before I complete it. But I just can't do something quickly for that person; I ought to do something which is me, and which is as well as I could possibly do: and, I am afraid, if she dies before I complete it to my satisfaction she does.... although it may sound really ruthless, this may happen, I think.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. Well I'm used to the idea that if you have an idea you get a move on and you carry it out. I notice around me an idea that if you make something it's sufficient; whether you've thought about it may be another matter. That is my utterly personal opinion; it isn't personally a problem to me, because I can't see how you can think of doing something unless you think about it, draw it, work it out, complete it - whether you're tapestry weaving, painting, sewing, or anything else. I think a difficulty you might experience is explaining to somebody outside the visual field what you were attempting to do; that's the only difficulty I would experience: of having to sit back and think hard comparisons to make with another field, like the law, or medicine, or some other aspect one isn't in oneself.

SQ. You're describing very much the William Morris/Bauhaus attitude...

A. Yes, one does get involved in that for teaching for B.Ed...

SQ. A total involvement in the conception and execution of something....

A. Yes; very much of Morris's idea of, if you want or are going to do something you should jolly well be able to do it yourself - you shouldn't direct people unless you can do it yourself. I think he took this rather to an exaggerated extent, because he tried so many fields, did he not? I mean to be dyer, fabric printer, weaver, tapestry, architect, - absolutely everybody else under the sun.... I mean you can't learn all these trades; you can't be proficient in all of these things. I tend to stick at what is called embroidery, which a lot of other people would not say was strictly speaking.....

5.

Q. "What special function (if any) do you consider the artist/craftsman/designer to have?"

A. In society, or in the visual arts?

SQ. Either, or both.

A. I think the only special function somebody has is that if you have an idea you should be able to carry it out: I don't think it's sufficient to have an idea, and not be able to carry it out. I don't think it's sufficient to have that manual dexterity, without having the ideas that precede it. And I think that an awful lot of craftsmanship, from the nineteenth century upwards has suffered from the idea that that which is made by hand is automatically superior to that which is made by machine. And I'm really agin this concept..., but I find it quite difficult to explain to students. This label, 'hand-made', with rapturous admiration, which you see in so many shops, has been absorbed by students, and it's quite hard to explain that, in actual fact, unless you had thought about it by brain, it doesn't necessarily matter that it was made by hand. I find this quite difficult to get over to people.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as an embroiderer?"

A. No: off my activities as a senior lecturer.

Q2. "If not, do you undertake any other sort of work?"

Yes, we've answered that... "(c) If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily as an artist/craftsman/designer, or primarily as a teacher?"

A. I think I separate the roles: but I think one is necessary to the other. I think that if you're teaching at the level at which I happen to be teaching, or the level at which your father is teaching, that you should be artist/designer/craftsman - whatever terminology you prefer to use. Because, unless you are, I don't see that you have very much to give to students. I think that you can get by with not being a practitioner if you're teaching a younger

age group. I think not among teaching 18 year olds plus. I think that you should be able to do both. It's probably an unresolved harmony, but you should, I think, attempt (this is a counsel of perfection) you should attempt to be able to do both. Because I teach, I should perform: because I perform, I should teach. It does tie up, I think.

SQ. And you see this being equal: not in the sense that you would prefer to be a full-time embroiderer, but, teach in order to be an embroiderer but at the same time enjoy teaching....

A. That's a difficult problem, because I happen to be living with somebody to whom I'm not married, and I have taken a job on which salary I know very well I couldn't afford to live if I weren't living with Nick, and so it is faintly, I suppose, begging the question. And I would have to continue with this particular job if I wasn't living with somebody who had a super large house who said to me, 'you can have this room as a sewing room; this is your room; you do what you like in it; I want you to do your own work'....., and I'm very lucky. I don't think many women are in that position. I think it's odd, in a way, that you happen to have asked me that.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. With....?

SQ. Galleries, patrons, customers... anybody who you...

A. Very casual; very casual. Oxford City and County were my last commission-patrons - Oxford City and County Museum: they bought my last panel: they've booked another one. Not a contractual relationship, but one's work is known, and therefore people know where to come. I'm

written to at All Saints, and I shall take great pains when I leave to write to the person who last bought my panels, saying, 'Hey: I've left All Saints, and I am now working at home: If you should want to get in touch with me, my address now is....' ...I don't have a contractual....

SQ. "Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?" -
Would you prefer any other...

A. I think not. It allows me to be independent: it allows me to experiment, and it allows me to do what I want to do, and, if somebody happens to buy it, then that is simply lovely; it's an extra bonus to have one's work bought, when one wanted to do it anyway.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Not if it means he's sponging on the rest of society: no, certainly not. I think too many people feel that. I don't see that he should think himself so superior to the medical man, to the accountant, to the chimney sweep, to the grocer:... and I think the arts have suffered from this greatly. There has been this elevated 'I am superior to the rest of you and that's why I'm owed a living': and I think the artist has in fact suffered greatly because of his relations with the public....., he's absorbed this idea - the artist thinks he's superior...

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional

object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist', has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist/craftsman/designer (as appropriate)?"

A. No. It just makes me laugh heartily, because I can't see why, if you're a potter, you can't accept the fact you are making things to put liquid in - basically - or, possibly food in (it isn't necessarily liquid). No, I think people sometimes throw themselves into a great aesthetic tiz. I don't mind doing a panel to hang upon a wall; I don't feel offended if somebody - architect friends who recently said, 'Would you make me a patchwork cushion cover'... I think you should turn your hand to both. It doesn't personally worry me, but I observe it worries other people... if that's any answer to your question...

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist, is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly, designer conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object; Would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. One does worry about the term craftsman, because one is going back to the idea of that which is made by hand being superior, whether any thought went into it or not. I think I probably do prefer the term 'designer'. When I was, a long time ago, a member of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (as it was then called), I remember Charles Gibb Smith, who I think is now one of the emeritus professors at the V & A, begging the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society to change its name.... All the elderly

members sucked their teeth with horror, and said, 'How dreadful: this is William Morris's concept, and we couldn't possibly get away from it'. And he tore his remaining hairs, and said, 'Now I do wish to God you would think, and you are in the twentieth century, and this word has overtones which you don't seem to be aware of'.... I think the word designer does give one the idea that you've thought of something, and you've made it. And 'Craftsman' does give you the idea that you may have made something beautifully, but you might not be responsible for thinking about it. Is that O.K?

SQ. Yes.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd, of Marlborough Fine Art, is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. Well, I know insufficiently about it, Nich, to give you a truthful answer. I just have occasionally friends who go to Sotheby's and bid. I saw on Sunday a particularly enchanting water colour of a dandelion on somebody's wall, and said, 'Whose is that?', falling upon it. And she said, 'In fact it's Samuel Palmer: I went by accident to Sotheby's, and was taking a friend's drawing which was alleged to be Blake, and nobody was sure if it was Blake or not, and saw this and thought the bidding was started at a ridiculously low figure - something like thirty pounds, and thought, I'm not sitting here and watching a Samuel Palmer go for thirty pounds:' she bid for it, and, I think, got it for under sixty. I think the art market is pretty cleverly organised, and, if people don't make use of the organisation, it's probably their own..... possibly their own fault. On the other hand, a week ago, I went to a sale of drawings by somebody whom I've given a commission, and he had said that he couldn't finish the portrait

because he was organising a sale of his own drawings. And he'd given us an invitation card, and we went. I bought a water-colour drawing for twenty pounds, which I thought was an enchanting drawing. And, when I saw him the next week and said, 'John, did you do well?' he said cheerfully, 'Yes, I made nine hundred pounds' - which was so much better than any sum I had ever made showing in a London gallery.' And I was slightly shaken to think that a Kent country village painter could make nine hundred pounds under a week.... which is so much more than anything he'd thought by forking out for overheads, catalogues - all the other things which go with having a London exhibition. I can't see, other than by people selling directly, the artist selling directly to a patron, that this can be overcome. Because if you're going to have a middle man, then the middle man is going to take his cut for printing, and for heating and lighting. That's the only experience I've had of knowing friends who've been involved in it.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/-designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) a good idea, (b) would improve the visual environment?"

A. No, I don't. Because I think there would be a fair amount of graft involved, and people getting their friends in who'd been at school, or school with their wives: I can't see that this is necessarily, in itself.... that it would be a good thing. I can see that if artists and designers were possibly more into the public eye than they are, it might be a good thing. But I don't necessarily feel that particular method.

SQ. It's like pasting on top of the situation, rather than...

A. I think so; yes.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?" - or any particular aspect?

A. The particular aspect that I'm involved in? You mean in embroidery? Because I can only really speak about embroidery thoroughly, I suppose.

SQ. Yes.

A. Well, there are sufficient educational authorities and private people around who are interested in purchasing, as far as I can see, - and I'd obviously like to sell more of my own work: it's my own fault that I don't sew rapidly enough to do so. I feel that if there's any fault, it's possibly on my side, the production side, rather than the purchasing side - I think....

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cezanne: "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'" What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. No, I think art for art's sake can be very stultifying, in fact; and I think that art for art's sake is an Art Nouveau concept anyway, isn't it; it's a comparatively recent concept in the history of art; how recent is it? Nineteenth century..., late nineteenth century onwards. And you could argue (you'd probably be shot down, but you could argue), that all the best art has been produced under patronage of the church or under the patronage of individuals who knew what they wanted. And I think that the art for art's sake can be very stultifying concept to work for...

I don't do it... I don't think, for myself,... I mean, if you said, 'Who made a greater contribution to the modern movement, the Arts and Crafts Movement, or Art Nouveau?', I would probably say that Arts and Crafts, in a sense, had: because the Art Nouveau was a very much art for art's sake....

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for, his psychosis.' (a), Do you think this view has any general currency? (b), Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. I would have thought it had general currency, Yes. I thought probably Herbert Read might be on the mark in that. I think the artist, very often, by the fact that he's an artist, does mean that he's psychotic, he's neurotic, peculiar and marked out from society in some way. Because nobody would be an artist unless they were slightly off-beam. And so might nobody really be a poet, Nich, or a writer, unless they had some form of neurosis that drove them on to do what they do. 'General currency' possibly amongst the very literate. I would say that on the whole the general public would have no concept of what you meant; it would really be the educated public.

SQ. I was thinking, in some sense, also of the way you talk to somebody about art - a typical 'man in the street'; it's Van Gogh and Picasso,..... Van Gogh cuts his ear off, and Picasso does incomprehensible things.....

A. Well, you think of all those famous films that have been made about in recent years; they're all the people who most...

SQ. Ken Russel very much....

A. Absolutely. The publicly battiest, weren't they. They were Van Gogh, who cut off his ear; Cezanne, um..., No. Who am I thinking of? Van Gogh; Toulouse Lautrec; Van Gogh,... and who's the man who went to the South Seas... Gauguin. All those people who threw conventions overboard. And all the films have been made about them - that's what the twentieth century thinks of as an artist - that is, totally irresponsible. It's a public image that has generally spread. Jean Renoir's film about his father is really rather scarcely regarded, isn't it?

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his otherworldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material mind of the businessman. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: 'business as an end in itself!.' (s) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups?)"

A. I thought Gropius had done more than perhaps anybody in making the artist and industry come together and work as a team, and that almost all examples of art and industry probably did stem from this relationship. I thought he was one of the classic people who didn't go for the art for art's sake attitude, that arose in the nineteenth century. You wouldn't have got him running... selling in a big shop in Paris, would you? I would have thought one would have agreed with Gropius. But I think Gropius was a double thinker in many ways; a tremendous P.R.O. man.

17

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?" - in a sense you answered that when you talked about the arts....

A. Well it probably could be improved upon, I would have thought. But, on the other hand, it may be the fault of the producer rather than the fault of the consumer. I'm not disposed to say that nobody wants to buy, or that people are not interested, because on the whole I find if one did agreeable and amusing and interesting and unusual things people said, 'Oh, where can I get that', or, 'Could you do one for me?' - I think one just can't stitch fast enough: I can only speak from my own aspect of a craft, but, probably, if one did more more people would buy. On the other hand an awful lot of shops do a great disservice to various crafts...., like the unspeakable examples of macramé, for instance, that you see in Heals - dreadful knotted jock-strap type of things that you want to take out and burn; I don't see that that helps very much. I would have said the present position could be improved. I am not absolutely certain it's necessarily the consumer's fault. Perhaps if all the producers banded together.... perhaps if the V & A idea of showing what can be done under the heading of craft really takes off.... that may be one of the best things that's started in this century. On the other hand it may be an expensive joke. I don't know if one can tell for a year or so.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. It's a very long time since I was in one. I don't really feel.... I'm not on the examining board; I'm not on the Somerson Committee. I would say it was rather

like the curate's egg joke in Punch in the nineteenth century - parts that are excellent (some art schools are frightfully good), and some art schools that you feel should be closed down and send their staff elsewhere. Hideously varied.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. No.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/-craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation as it takes place in, for instance; schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., press, radio, in other areas?"

A. I would suspect that there's not a great deal of relationship, but not teaching in an art school myself, I'd feel slightly unhappy making any accurate comment on that. I think you'd have to ask someone like Constance Howard to get a really accurate answer.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. I suppose I read Edward Lucy Smith whose writing appears to me more intelligent than most - possibly Nigel Gosling.... but I would think no.

22.

Q. This is a quote from Bruce Allsopp...

A. From?

SQ. Bruce Allsopp; he's an architect and painter who also wrote... "Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. I think one stitches a panel because one wants to tremendously; and if somebody else comes and says, 'Hooray, how marvellous, I'll buy that', you think how marvellous to have had one's work bought. I think, speaking for myself, that's a truthful answer. It is a bonus when somebody actually shells out good money to purchase something that you have done because you wanted to do it in the first place. On the other hand, I'm always very overcome to be given a commission because the commission has been based on people's knowledge of your previous work. And they obviously don't go and ask you to do something unless they've seen something you've done before - or something which your students have done.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. I think there are some arts which you might be able to practice without acquiring manual dexterity. In my particular field I think you probably wouldn't get very far without the acquisition of manual dexterity; it would be very obvious in stitchery that you could or couldn't sew. And, as far as the method of application of paint to canvas is concerned, you could quite probably fling

paint on, bicycle over it, etc., and your manual dexterity as far as the application of paint might not matter. As far as threads and fabric and embroidery or tapestry weaving's concerned I would have thought your manual dexterity should be at an equivalent level to your.... to your designing level - to be successful. I don't think you can unravel, unpick, and mess about with threads and fabrics and get an interesting result; I think it just looks unpicked. While of no doubt you can get turps and unpick a painting, that might somehow look interesting, but not unpicked.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. I think you can learn to be an artist; you can learn to draw, but possibly not beyond a certain level. Because if you put your mind to it (I can see it as an intellectual activity), if you put your mind to wanting to achieve something I think you can achieve it, whether it's in the field of engineering or visual work, or whether it's cooking or gardening: but you might not be able to get beyond a certain point - to which other people would say, 'This person can do so much, but is not really capable of any further progression'. I know I can teach my third years to pass the certificate at either distinction, moderate or pass level,.... but I doubt whether any of them will go on to do anything further than that. I know I can teach to a particular level: they can accomplish work to a particular level. I think you can teach people, Nich, yes. Provided they're willing to be taught - to a certain level. There are certain conditions to saying 'yes, you can teach them'.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. Well, not being a present member of any of them, because I was so enraged by the way things were run when I was last a member, I'm probably giving a biased answer. It had occurred to me that I should become a member of something like the Crafts Council - at the time I left I thought that their subscription was unnecessarily high for the service offered, and the work was very mediocre. And I agreed with Charles Gibb Smith; he was falling about with laughter at this nineteenth century concept of the craftsman, and doing things by hand, and trotting up to meetings with bare legs and hand-woven skirts and flat sandals, which appeared to me to be neither professional nor artistic or anything else, but just plain peculiar and unproductive. And so I'm not really a.... although I'm a practising embroiderer, in the sense that I do my own work, I don't belong to a professional or craftsmanship body, at the moment. I think it's my fault, possibly, rather than theirs, because I should jolly well have found out who I thought was most forward looking. But I can remember thinking, 'This is absurd; I'm damned if I'm going to pay...' whatever amount of guineas it was, you know. I won't do this. There must be something one should belong to. I'm not absolutely certain I've found it, and I honestly don't research to discover what I ought to belong to.

SQ. How does the Crafts Council operate, then? You can become a member of it....?

A. Well, I was put up for membership of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, which now, years later, on Charles Gibb Smith's recommendation, did change its name to the Society of Designer-Craftsmen. But I'm not a member of that at the moment. And I think I probably ought to be. I believe the way to become a member is to put up certain

examples of work which you have done, and it's looked at by a Council....

SQ. So it's a....

A. It's a selection by people who exist already...

SQ. It's the Arts and Crafts Exhibition....

A. Who changed their name...

SQ. That you were a member of...

A. Yes, I was, yes.

SQ. And what do you think of the Government Craft Councils craft index?

A. I think the idea is rather an agreeable one. I'm not absolutely convinced from what I've seen that it's existing on a high enough standard. I think there's still this grotty arty-crafty bare-foot sandal hand-woven-skirt attitude behind this, and in some of the work. I find some quite sharp witted third years, whom I have sent to these exhibitions, come back saying, 'Well really! If that's what's going to be shown in the V & A, our work's just as good'. And, when you see the catalogue, you've got to agree that, yes; some of the better third year's work could quite easily be exhibited.

SQ. Do you think this is inherent in the idea of having an Arts and Crafts Council separate?

A. Do I think?.... sorry Nich....

SQ. Do you think this sort of parochialism, or handicraft side of craft, is, perhaps, perpetuated by having a....

A. I think it will never die because there are enough women who want to do things, unfortunately. Who just want to make things without any real thought. I'm afraid that the existence of towns-womens' guilds and womens' institutes, and thinks like that, where they lovingly encourage their members, from the most nicest possible reasons.... I think there'll always be an interest in crafts and the do-it-yourself kind of things; I don't think it necessarily means that the standard of the crafts is in any way going to be raised. I think there's still this 'Made By Hand' label - filled with breathless admiration, as I said earlier: I think it'll take a long time to get rid of.

Interview Four

Reading

12 December 1974

Interview four is with a painter and engraver who is also involved in photography. He taught at the time of interviewing at a secondary school near Reading.

INTERVIEW FOUR

Reading

12 December 1974

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Yes, mainly painting and engraving. With photography as well.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer? or any combination of these?"

A. Complete across-the-board; all three, really. No tendency to specialise in any way.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you, as regards art, craft or design? Do you feel that art is a profession?"

A. I'd like to tie it up with teaching, to emphasise the community aspect of it. But, otherwise, definitely professional. Not in the sense of a paid thing, necessarily, but something that one follows a line through life.

SQ. You don't see it as professional in the sense that people talk of doctors, lawyers, teachers, and so on, where they usually mean having gone through certain training,...

A. ...become a certain sort of person... there's a sort of bias about that...

SQ. Usually involving a sort of status...

A. Status, yes. Yes, that tends to overweigh other ways of looking at it...

SQ. Yes. All the people I've interviewed so far have said, in a sense, what you've just said; defining it in terms of following a consecutive line....

A. Consecutive line... which is what a doctor would do in fact if he wasn't...

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. Problems?

SQ. Problems in the sense of the existence of these three categories as separate categories...

A. Yes: which... Yes, with something like painting you can become bogged down in the craft of it, and therefore become more of a civil servant of painting, rather than being undecipherable; but that's purely for oneself to discover. These divisions are just made by people having to choose one aspect or other of their own ability and intention.

5.

Q. "What special function do you consider the artist/craftsman/designer to have?"

A. I think teaching should be a big part of it. In any respect that you should... it shouldn't be just a matter of following the profession and doing things, and then selling or showing the results, but participating socially, in a way, and, er... what was it?

SQ. Special function.

A. Special function.

SQ. Do you consider the...

A. Yeah. That's right. That's within society, isn't it. By that teaching show others - try to knock down this status that art has had.... this ivory tower syndrome.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a painter/sculptor/-weaver/designer/etcetera?"

A. You could say really definitely not - 'living' in the sense of 'making a living'?

Q2. Yes. Well, "(b) If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity as a painter, weaver, etc.,?"

A. Yes, I teach.

SQ. You teach in a secondary school?

A. Yes. Yes, mainly because... sheer enjoyment (if you choose your school carefully.)

S2. "(c) If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily an artist/craftsman/-designer, or primarily a teacher?"

A. Yeah; primarily the artist-craftsman-designer. Multifactotum is the word, isn't it.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. So far very little.

SQ. You sell through personal contacts?

A. Yes; basically that.

Q2. "(b) Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?"

A. Sometimes, yes; sometimes, no. At the moment no. I wouldn't wish it to be otherwise.

SQ. One of the things that other people I've interviewed have seemed to imply is that they're very glad that they're teaching, because this enables them to do what sort of work they want, and sell on a casual basis or have the occasional exhibition.... in a way, the way that they'd prefer it; do you feel that about it?

A. Yes; you could be right... they could be right on that....

SQ. Would you prefer to be able to have regular exhibitions, or do you prefer the freedom given to you by having another job, so that you don't get dictated to, in a sense?

A. Yes, you don't get dictated to. No. If you wish to work by having exhibitions, you are really under the thumb of a gallery director, who would wish you to be his own personal property. No..., it's not a freedom really; it tends to make you slightly dilettante - in other words you're not endeavouring because you have to.

SQ. You being a teacher...

A. That's right, yes. Although it releases you from the

embarrassing aspect of financial things, which.... you're either a juggler with money or you're not: no half way. And also, with a teacher as well you become what you've been through most of your life; you become part of a system, and therefore it's nice and cosy to be detached from last part of sentence indecipherable.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Every right.

SQ. And if you put this into effect would you like to see this taken up in terms of Arts Council patronage, support in the way you're being supported as an art teacher, or by selling...?

A. Yes, provided you support yourself by doing something that is reasonably connected in the practice of that with what you're really like to be doing. I don't know.... Arts Council things - more for communal activities; not just for individuals. It's a community thing for communal activity.

SQ. If the Arts Council were to say to you, 'We'll give you a couple of thousand a year to paint pictures as long as you send us what you produce, when you produce, every six months for an exhibition'.... would that...?

A. Well, what's the difference between that and, say, some gallery owner doing that? I mean you feel...

SQ. Well, if the Arts Council were to do that, they'd be saying, 'We'll take you on as a painter; we'll take what you paint; we'll take your pace of production; we won't require that you sell it; we'll pay you the wages to produce it - and we'll take on the distribution, and give it you back if we don't sell it'.

A. Yes, so there's no criterion to choose the person...

SQ. Obviously there would be criterion, in the sense that some committee's going to do that... I'm just trying to get at in what sense you think an artist should be....

A. Yes, well there you're going to be at the whims of a certain committee though, aren't you. And, I'd perhaps rather have a gallery owner to that; at least you know that the policy of a gallery.... and it's not something a bit vague. No, I still think Arts Council activities for support, for room, edifices of theatres - the more participatory arts; rather than the individual.

SQ. The Crafts Council now seems to take on a lot of direct individual support.

A. Yes, that's where I think you start getting your divisions between Arts and Crafts: crafts are being pushed out by the obvious means, really. Whereas the artist is an artist, whatever the state of the world. A craftsman depends on the sale of his goods, because he fulfills a certain need; and that sort of need has become less and less. He's just not able to make a living - so he must be subsidised.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer), and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term artist has been noted. Do you experience any problems associated with being artist/-craftsman/designer?"

A. I think it's what we've been hinting at just now:- these sort of seasonal fluctuations... I don't think I can give anything too illuminatory on that bit. Because not being fanatically bound up with one of these things to make a living.... I don't think I could give a fair answer to that.

SQ. I was at a tapestry weaving company recently - and that traditionally a craft. And he was saying how important it is to become 'artist' in a public sense, because previously, (and still at the time I was there), people would bring a small painting to him and say 'Blow this design up to thirty feet by fifteen feet' - and it's a painting, and it's very small, and blow it up: and so it's not in that medium, and not of that size. But, when he becomes artist, then somebody says, 'Do me a tapestry of such and such a size and of such and such a theme;' he designs it; he makes it; and he knows the medium. It seems to be the craft people who are much more affected by this. But then, I've talked to painters who've felt this need to say, 'I'm just a man doing a job'.

A. Yeah; it's impossible to explain, because it's so emotional really.

SQ. Or this peculiar position of potters, some of whom call themselves ceramic artists, and then produce objects that you can't put water in.

A. Or anything really....

SQ. Or the man on the market stall who's a potter and trying to make a name for himself, and ends up putting little rings around it with his fingers when he's finished the smooth pot - just to show that it's hand-made.

10.

Question ten, again dealing with definitions of artist,

craftsman and designer was omitted on the grounds that the questions had already been fully covered without yielding much in the form of fruitful replies./

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the art market."

A. I was looking at Esquire Magazine yesterday; that's changed incredibly - I used to think that was a sort of Dolly Bird magazine. And there was one article with an illustration which showed you such a wealth of what are called in American, 'art talent' - such a collection of beings as you've never seen in one photograph before: Rosenquist and Andy Warhol, Mary Rivers,.... quite a collection: and, of course, sitting up the front was this Beckstein, or Whatstein, or whatever..., and there you are; it's the entrepreneur. And I think to react against it would be just a sort of token action really. A dealer's a dealer; it doesn't matter what it is; if you're a dealer you deal in it. A painting's just the same as a potted fruit or a box of chocolates; it's a commodity that people want, and it's the job of the painter to concern himself with the painting. This is probably why we talk about the teacher being insulated from the business side, because each is a full-time job in itself.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artist/craftsmen/-designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) a good idea; (b) would improve the visual environment?"

A. Why can't the architects do it? I think architects should be broad enough in their training and scope to bring this in. It's like the story of one chap makes a cup, another chap paints a design on it, and the two of them work in two different workshops, and the cups come in, and paints a design on it, and that design has been concocted by a chap in a third room who's just working on a piece of paper. Or even the cup itself has been designed by somebody somewhere else. Must get back to the universal man, somehow. But that's impossible in a way.

SQ. That's in a way what I was trying to get at in the earlier question on the tripartite division of art, craft and design. That the man who makes it, the man who designs it - two different people, and the artist is something else again. And the artist, in a sense, is the 'fine' artist, and the craftsman is the....

A. Technique, yes.

SQ. The sort of thing Morris was trying to get against - react against.

A. Yes, function and form. Because it went so much downhill with Gothicism, just being an icing on the box. A gothic building is a box, but then, when Morris was around, the boxes were starting to be made of steel frames with dressings on them, and the dressings were the Gothic decorations. Morris was trying to get back to the material. The material emphasises the construction, and therefore the construction is....., truth and beauty?...

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. They're blessedly chaotic. There's so many well-founded schemes that founder just because of the English

outlook. Wild enthusiasm for two weeks, and then it all just subsides, and something else takes their interest. As soon as you pick on something, you forget the rest, so, all in all, I think it's healthy - it's changing, and yet, what has gone before isn't swept away.

SQ. The thing you mentioned about 'English attitude'; do you think it's different abroad? Because one of the people I interviewed a couple of days back was saying that, if you're working in France, and you come back with your sketch book, or whatever, they'll say, 'Have you been working well?',.... they treat you as if you've done a job - done something, and as if it was a reasonable thing to do. Do you think there's any difference between England and other countries.

A. I've not really had the broad enough experience of continental countries - but, I think there is a difference.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cezanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired, is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.' (a) What is your reaction to these views; (b) Is 'Art for Art's Sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. It's very refreshing to hear that, and then to see his work. That really describes his total work, whatever it is - because otherwise you can't describe it at all; just look at it; it's terrific. But, what was the second part?

SQ. Do you think that 'Art for Art's Sake' is liberating, or restrictive. This is in the sense that, whereas his views... - he's reacting against (perhaps) French Salon

art, meticulousness - he's part of a movement reacting against that in what seemed a valid way, but which, at the same time, has in a sense now got embodied into 'Art for Art's Sake'; do you think this has had any bad consequences?

A. No bad consequences, really; no. It's had bad consequences for people who've been led up the garden path about what painting's all about. Who says a painting's finished? You see something in it; you've got to communicate what you've seen in it to somebody else, and the only way you can communicate is essentially with words. As soon as you start doing that the painting gets left behind - you know, it's passed onto another plane. This 'Art for Art's Sake...', well, it's just a lifetime of experience; you can't do anything else other than encourage people to /indecipherable word/ about it. It's very frustrating with adults.

SQ. Have you taught adults?

A. You can feel their enthusiasm to begin with, and then you can feel it just - because of themselves - just disappearing. And, when you feel it disappearing, you almost can't talk to them. They see the possibilities, yet they're not prepared to wait, and become aware of something that will happen; it's always got to be something that has happened.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Sigmund Freud; "There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for his psychosis.' Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. I always quote this thing that Eric Gill said, that every artist isn't a special kind of person, but every person is a special kind of artist. And within the head of everybody is a mirror of every possible form of being - and the mirror reflects what's shone upon it.

SQ. Do you think it's got any general currency, in the sense that, do you think....

A. I don't hold with that sort of reasoning; you know, currency is either up there or down there, and...

SQ. One of the things someone brought up the other day was.... Ken Russel makes films about certain people, and the popularity of Van Gogh as a painter, you know, reproduced in mass print productions, and Picasso as the only name a lot of people know about as what modern art is, and incomprehensible 'What's it mean?' - do you think there's any link between this idea of the artist being psychotic and those sorts of productions?

A. I think there's probably more the psychosis in the spectator, because, Van Gogh's symbolism...., did you ever read that thing discusses sexual symbolism in his paintings? He always painted his name on vases, vases being a female symbol, and so on....

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake',

and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from; business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/-groups)?"

A. I absolutely agree with him, but it's a vain hope. Just by being in contact with people you see that it's idealistic; it's something to be aimed for, but something that is impossible to achieve. I think mainly because the artistic vision is so disconnected by the way the world is construed in its economical aspect; it's just an adjunct; it's just a decoration, in fact. You know; Victorian art symbolised the whole outlook of art that developed since then, and just hasn't been shaken off. The decoration is something to be hung around a form, but the forms got to interlock with all the other forms. So, it's the Western way of life is.... just looks upon art as a decoration. Which brings out the Eastern - art being essential; essential in the sense of essence, rather than necessary. It's essential, being, which is what Gropius says; integral - part of life. It's there, and it's got to come out.

SQ. We just hang it in a frame, or....

A. Hang it in a frame...

SQ. ...or put it in a classical door...

A. Or just paste it on a wall.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?"

A. Enjoyable, really. The English outlook is vaguely sympathetic to anything that is considered, in the English outlook, as eccentric, and... is mildly tolerated - and, England being swallowed up in the whole Western way of life, anything to do with aesthetics is considered mildly eccentric. It just goes on, with these little undercurrents happen, and flourish... just like the undergrowth in an English wood.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. Well, what is happening in the art schools now? It's all B.A. Fine Art - just because you'll get more money when you get a job because you've got a B.A..../indecipherable sentence./

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e., those who talk about and analyse rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. Yes, yes, terrifically. Chaps like Nicolas Pevsner and so on do wonders. But those are few and far between; well.... successful artists are few and far between. It's a way of life; it's an art in itself. And he is absolutely the Picasso of the theorists. In a way his range of thinking of his experience is just like Picasso, in relating completely disparate things. Yes, I think very valid.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between

art/craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for instance, schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., press, radio, in other areas?"

A. I'm always one who's agin intellectual discussion, especially as far as education is concerned, because I feel that you learn by doing. And, as long as you do umpteen things, and you have somebody who is..., I won't say skilled, but, sympathetic in what you're trying to do. Maybe that's where Pevsner comes in again. Then... so much the better; to reduce it to words is a different language. You can pull the euphoria up by careful use of words, but..... People can come and you can lecture them and say, 'How wonderful; how marvellous', and then half an hour afterwards it's all evaporated. Whereas, to become bogged down with the physical problems of things, and to work your way through them, is the best thing.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. I think perhaps books as well; the published books. No I can't really say.... No, I just don't know, at all..... or do you recognise a style more because a critic talked about it?

22.

Q. This is a quote from a man called Bruce Allsopp; "'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living' Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. I think it would be something that one sells to earn

a living. If you make it very subjective, then it's not really done to make a living. Unless, of course, one just struck a wavelength, or a critic, at the appropriate moment....

SQ. Or got big enough to dictate rather than be....

A. Yes, but I was trying to think before you got big enough. How did you get big?

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. I'd distinguish very little between them. Taking the tennis one, then, it's the ability to use a situation by thought of the moment, and I would say that was true of an artist-technician-COM- craftsman doing something for for a living. The emphasis will be on speed. Not on slickness, but on speed. You will perhaps discover, just by a coincidence of thought....

SQ. It follows from what you were saying about Eric Gill....

A. That's right, yeah. Yes, art isn't just necessarily making an object - artefact -; it's combining a series of ideas. Whether it's an idea of form, or an idea of ideas.

24.

Q. The same thing a different way round, in a sense; "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. During the last five years, or so, I've worked from one to the other. I said to begin with that one could take anybody, and make an artist of them to some extent. But, as I've been getting older and wiser, I'm beginning to think more and more that one must have a certain innate unconscious talent to be able to get any sort of spontaneous enjoyment from it. O.K., you can be cool and calculating for so long, but then you've got to stop, and enjoy something that happens without you really being conscious of it - the subconscious is in control. It's all a question of being aware of the subconscious. Well, you find people who have the talent seem to be aware of the subconscious - although they don't realise it at the time.

SQ. Would you.... well. I know that I think that myself. I know that in people I meet I differentiate between those people that I think have got aptitude, discrimination - any awareness of that sort of thing. And, I talk to some people, and I won't contradict them when they talk about their house and how they decorate it, but, I feel that they are operating with certain concepts of what a house should look like, whether it's the red roof and the bright door, or the gay interior with gayness being somehow gayness, and not....

A.that being the operative factor...

SQ. But, at the same time, I think it's possibly the way they've been made; the way they've been brought up....

A. It's a very conscious process...

SQ. ...and, somehow, when they think about art, or painting a picture, they're segmenting it off very totally from everything else they do; art is that picture on the wall, and everything else they do - how they make the bed, or how they paint the room... - is separated from that.

A. Yes, well, as I say, each is a conscious process; but they're only aware of what they're conscious of.

SQ. I feel that the person who I would accept as having some sort of awareness as an artist or craftsman is somebody who doesn't operate with these segmented....

A. Yes, willing to take a shot in the dark - not hide-bound. Yes, to take somebody who's thirteen or fourteen, whose last concern is whether somebody's conscious or unconscious, will just spontaneously do something, which they know is satisfying to themselves, and pleases others. They don't know why it satisfies them - it's pleasant or whatever - they just know it is: just seems to be. But, again, these people seem to know how to do a job properly, and how to do it well, in a craftsmanlike way.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities.?"

A. I'm not really too sure of them. I'm all for these little.... such as the V & A craft shop - gets these things on to the general view much more. From what I've come across, I am.... books giving you directories of where craftsmen are found, and so on...

Interview Five

Reading

12 December 1974

Interview five is with a fabric designer. Having worked full-time in a factory situation, she was, at the time of being interviewed, a part-time designer working through an agent, and also a part-time museum worker.

INTERVIEW FIVE

Reading

12 December 1974

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etcetera, etcetera,)"

A. Fabric designing.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman, or designer? Or any combination of these?"

A. I think just a designer.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you?"

A. I think it's the fact that you can produce something which starts off with your own idea, but can eventually be manufactured. It ceases to be purely 'a beautiful thing'; it can be useful, as well.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. I should think the commercial aspect of designing separates it from just about everything else, at some point or other. Because you start off being very inspired, and then, suddenly, you come down to this little tiny idea which will be mass produced or whatever, and, possibly, in my case, I never really see my designs finished

in any shape or form. Once I've painted up the design, which can be perhaps six inches square, that is the last I see of it. So I don't even have the satisfaction of seeing colour weaves, or even a piece of fabric, ever. You know, with this particular sort of person I'm working for.

SQ. And that six inch square; is that then blown up into something larger?

A. Not for knitted fabric. That six inch square represents, literally, a six inch square in the finished fabric. At about the same scale. But, if it was printed, then it would be very much bigger.

5.

Q. "What special function, if any, do you consider the designer to have?" - in relation to art and craft, or in relation to society?

A. Well, I always have this feeling that I'm not going to give up entirely, and just be commercial. I always want to satisfy myself at some point; usually from the beginning if possible. It doesn't always work out like that. Not to lose your basic ideal, if possible. Perhaps I'm lucky, in a way, because I work at home, and therefore I don't have someone coming along and saying 'Could you change that', or 'You know, somebody would like that, but you should do it such-and-such a way.' So it's my own idea, the whole way through, but I still have to keep the thought at the back of my mind that it's got to satisfy so many other people as well.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a designer?"

A. Partly, I would say.

Q2. "(b) If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity as a designer?"

A. It's at the museum, I suppose. But that's merely an interest. But, in some ways, it can influence the fabric designing, because of things in the museum - patchwork, embroidery, and just the objects generally can spark off an idea. But it's just interest really.

Q2. "If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily as an artist/craftsman/designer, or primarily as a museum worker?"

A. No; it would still be as a designer. Or around the word designer. For instance, I've done some embroidery - so it's still built around being a designer. I think even if I painted as well it would still be a 'designed' painting - it wouldn't be just a painting; so I'm stuck with that.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons or customers?"

A. With Mrs. *--* it's being paid for a certain amount of work produced in a day. It's usually for the knitted fabric designs - ordinary dress-work: it's three designs a day, and they would be something like six, or eight, or perhaps ten, inches square, depending on which machine you're designing for. If it's mens wear, which is a much smaller pattery (about four by four), she does expect about four of those a day. But those are usually drawn up on graph paper, so it's a much greater strain on your eyes, and it's far slower - you really need to do two of those a day..... So, it's being paid for a certain number of designs a day.

SQ. And you do primarily for clothing, rather than....

A. It's nearly always for dress fabric - hardly any furnishings or...

Q2. "(b) Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?"

A. Yes. I'd like greater freedom on the number of designs I produce, and also greater freedom of the amount of time. You know, I'd like to spend a whole week just working on one idea, instead of thinking of my idea and then having to stick to it, and know that next day I've got to work on three designs. You can cheat by working on perhaps one design, or two designs, in one day, and making up the next day, but they'll always suffer in the end because your last ideas have..... you just do them quickly.

SQ. And do all these get taken up?

A. Yes. She will take all your designs, and pay for them. But that doesn't necessarily mean that she'll sell them to a customer; they just go into the collection - the main collection, which she shows the customers.

SQ. So, she acts as an intermediary...

A. Yes. She's an agent really.

SQ. She's an agent who sells them to people who produce the clothes.

A. That's either at the studio, or she will go to a trade fair, or visit firms - she does visit firms sometimes.

SQ. And do you know how many get taken up?

A. I'm thinking of Interstoff, at Frankfurt - the main one. I think they sold about forty or fifty this time. That's from several hundred. But, at a time like this, when it's not a very good selling time, when people are not buying..... it's quite good.

SQ. Interstoff?

A. Interstoff. Yes. That's an international fabric fair; I think there is a definite set exhibition site now - I think there used to be just a temporary thing, but now they've made a whole building of it, and they have trade fairs and all sorts.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. I don't think a designer would - a fabric designer wouldn't. I think you could, if you were a weaver - and maybe if you... well, it's still the same sort of area, tapestries; because there's not such pressure on you. If you're a weaver, with just your loom and your wool, and you can bring out your own range of fabrics. But, when it's something like designing knitted fabrics, or print, where there's some sort of end product in view - I can't see you..../last half sentence trails away/

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist', has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist/craftsman/designer (as appropriate)?"

A. It's never been my experience to be known as craftsman. Usually (this is going back to my last job, which was

connected with a factory, so therefore I could see my fabrics being produced - see the end product, and I perhaps knew who bought them), you are never thought of as someone who is inspired. I mean, if you told someone that you needed inspiration before you could produce anymore ideas, it would get a kind of gentle laugh - they just don't believe it. I remember once bringing in some flowers, some real flowers, to draw with, because I thought by that I'd perhaps have an idea come out of it, and, it was unheard of. To sit there drawing flowers, - there was no connection between that and rolls of fabric at the other end of the room. I think mainly because perhaps not just in the knitting industry, but I suppose it's less so in the print, most of the people who work in the firm are technicians. They have a technical training, and not an artistic training. And the mind is just divided. And I've also worked for someone who was known as a design co-ordinator, which meant that he chose the designs, brought in designs from other people, chose colours for the fabrics, and would also put the final range together. And he was just a technician; he had no idea - no artistic training whatsoever. He would ask my opinion, but, really, my opinion was there, and he would be the one who would have the last word. So, I think there's just a division between two sets of people in the firm - if you actually work in a firm. You can experience it as well, for instance, if I wasn't working for this agent, but I put my own collection of fabrics together, and carried them around and sold them to people. I would still be up against this. Many of the people running the firms are unable to see, for instance, a six inch square - they can't visualise this as a yardage of fabric - totally unable to visualise anything.

10.

/omitted/

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money.' What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?" - that may not be relevant to you....

A. It could be to buying fabric designs...

SQ. It certainly is in terms of what you've just been talking about...

A. For instance, with prints.... Yes, if you have a name, you can sell them for an incredible amount - just an ordinary knitwear design. I used to know someone who lived in the south of France, but he always sold his designs to this one knitwear.... And, because he was who he was, he was able to sell a whole collection every time, without any question, for an enormous price - and they would always be the same sort of design. We had drawers full - you could always trace back his past collection - it was always the same. But, just because he was revered, in a way, as someone who understood how to design for knitted fabrics, it was O.K.... just any sort of design at all would be perfectly alright.

SQ. And he always marketed them?

A. Yes, always.

SQ. So, in a sense, he's in the same position as a successful artist who can sell anything he does.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/desig-

ners by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) a good idea?, (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

*. It would be a wonderful idea, but a terrible waste of time. Perhaps I only speak about Reading. I think to bring an artist of any kind into Reading, and ask them to improve the town, would be suicide for them. I mean, it would crush their spirit, if they had any.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. Stagnant, possibly. That is, speaking from just an outsider. If I bring it back to my own level of fabrics, I think it's also stagnant - very much so, absolutely. Because, although there are lots of students producing lots of designs at the end of their last year at college, it's still a kind of process - they're churning out things which have been done over and over and over and over.... it may need something wonderful to happen, and a sort of new beginning - I can't think what it would be, or how it would happen, but it's ground to a terrible sort of halt. Fashion has, anyway, so fabrics are bound to.

SQ. One of the things that surprised me this summer, when me and Jane were looking for a wedding dress and various things, was that every shop we went into had flower patterns, and all the sorts of varieties of linear and curving and colour monochrome patterns that had been around three or what-not years ago seem to have completely gone. Not only was it flower patterns, but it was not even a stylised use of flowers - a rather poor representation of them...

A. Sort of 'seed-packet' flower patterns. You are

always told, if you put a collection of designs together, that flowers will always sell.

SQ. Well, we've got no choice, really.

A. Yes, that's exactly it.

SQ. One shop in ten had something different in one dress.

A. Yes...

SQ. Is that what you mean about stagnation?

A. Completely. Because before there would be a trend (to use this awful word) which means that next season, whenever that might be (it might be a year hence, or perhaps even two years hence, because people produce fabrics that far in advance), there might be a feeling for traditional florals, or it might be geometrics, it might be small patterns, it might be large painterly splash sort of patterns, and that guideline's completely gone. So everyone's at sea - if they don't have little feelers out of their own. And very few people have, because they tend to work in their little isolated area; they do receive messages occasionally, and they read magazines, and they should know what's going to happen, but there isn't anything that is going to happen, anymore. It's just a big whirlpool, with everything going round in it. And all these sort of flowery things are just the stale bits going on to make people think that there is something still to buy.

SQ. I felt that there was no relationship there between the designs I saw in the shops, and anything that was going on, say, in painting, or other fields of design, which had been very apparent in the mid-sixties.

A. Oh it's completely lost now; unhinged.

SQ. Have you any idea why this has happened?

A. Because in the 'sixties there was a progression; Mary Quant started off, and a marvellous batch of designers came out of the Royal College, all in one sort of lump, and they have tended to become the established designers now. Therefore they're not really producing exciting new ideas; they're - I wouldn't say sitting on their laurels and producing things which will make money - but all the excitement's gone; there's no marvellous new designer.... Ossie Clark is now, sort of, from the 'sixties. He's still producing things, but it's not that impact that it had at the very beginning. And there just isn't anyone - that I can think of - either here or in France.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cezanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'" (a) What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. I think I agree about the craftsman bit - you just want to produce one perfect 'whatever', and that's it. I don't think I'm like that at all. I always hate - usually it takes a few days - I always hate the things that I've just produced. I wouldn't say that I look forward to the next week so that I can produce something else, because I don't know if I'll be able to, but, maybe it'll be better, and it'll please me for a while. But then, I'll just hate those, too, eventually. If someone brought in a whole lot of designs that led back for, maybe, two or three years, that were mine - I would just not

want to see them at all. Maybe that's just because..../a few words indecipherable/. Fabric is something you wear today, and next week you might just want to get rid of it. So the attitude to fabric is something quite different I think to.... If I'd wove a piece of fabric, I'd have much more feeling for it, because I would have actually put it together; that would be the craftsman kind of.... - this perfect wool, beautifully spun, and the way it was woven, was finished - the whole process is yours. I think that has a lot to do with it. Being able to start it, to work on it - actually use your hands like a potter producing a pot. But not fabric designing, really. You're just putting an image on paper, which is neither a painting, nor a piece of fabric. Just an impression that you get....

SQ. And do you feel detached from it, also, in the sense that you've got no control over the piece of clothing ultimately?

A. Oh, completely. Because I may, for instance, say it will be red, white and blue - and it may be on the finished drawing - but, by the time the manufacturer has bought it, and he's thought about it in relation to all his other fabrics produced for that season, it may turn out to be brown, orange and red. It will change so many times; quite often designers have been so infuriated - especially if they have a name which they feel should be protected at all costs. They just don't recognise their fabrics when they're produced. There's a marvellous phrase which always comes out in books on fabric designing - or at least working for yourself -, 'You must follow your design through'; absolutely impossible. Because it can take years. Someone may buy it this year, and not use it for a couple of years because it may be slightly traditional, and so it's not going to date too much - or he'd recolour

it..... so you could really lose track of it very very quickly. Probably not produced at all; they may find something better - they don't mind if they've spent twenty pounds on your piece of paper. It's nothing compared with the over-all cost of the.....

SQ. So all you've got control of is the actual linear design - not the clothing and not the colours...

A. No control over anything at all, yes, apart from the actual basic design. That's it. Yes.

15.

Q. This is a quote from Herbert Read, summarising Sigmund Freud: "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising or compensating for his psychosis.' (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. I think people can hide away under a convenient title. I know of other people who're quite happy, as long as they're designing something; just that process of sitting down, painting on a piece of paper, is all that they want. They don't mind if it's going off - doesn't appear tomorrow, next week..../indecipherable finishing remark/

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other-worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday

world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from; business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (By the Bauhaus or any other persons/-groups)?"

A. I believe in the influence of the Bauhaus, but, I think it's ended. I think it ended rather a long time ago. Sort of weird imitations took over after that.... There's a painter, and his wife was a weaver... they were members of the Bauhaus.... But I do believe that they should be part of the living world, and not something hidden away on the side. I think of William Morris, because somehow that got through to being every-day, and still something that he wanted to do and that he liked in the end; but then, that influence has also been dragged down and cheapened. Very much so. I can't quite bring the two together.

SQ. One of the things that, I suppose, both Morris and the Bauhaus were after was that a person like yourself would be designing, and in control of the making, and the putting into effect of the whole thing...

A. And it's never really been like that at all. For anyone.

SQ. I think that's something that Morris came to realise very much after the 1880's; that what he was advocating couldn't come into effect in the social situation he was part of.

A. He would have to take control of everything - dictatorship of everyone's taste...

SQ. It's one of the reasons he became a socialist and began to become a lot more politically involved in... as he said, if he continued as he was, he was designing things that were too expensive, and were only for the rich.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman, and designer in Britain?" - in a sense you've covered a lot of that....

A. Yes, I have really - sort of hopelessness...

SQ. Yes.

A. Mainly because there is no feeling of newness coming. Maybe it's the whole situation - people's feelings about the world in general at the moment. It always affects fashion, in some weird and wonderful way. Either makes it very dull, or makes it very outrageous and stupid. I think of the fashion at the end of the - hot at the end of the..., during, the war. You know France... carried on in the most crazy ridiculous way; there was a war, and people were wearing - they didn't have fabric, but they'd make outrageous shapes; circus figures all over clothes. And little buttons like clowns and crazy hats. There was a sort of gaiety defying all the sort of austerity. But now we've got sort of austerity matching austerity. Unadventurousness, as well now; because in the 'sixties people were willing to attempt absolutely anything. Mary Quant, looking back on, is very difficult to judge, but it was not outrageous; it was just something so new - and not just the sort of things she produced, but her organisation. That she could get so many people together to work - fabric manufacturers, designers - and gradually growing... this great

empire. I don't think that will ever happen again. Because now fabric is so expensive that you have to make everything either very classic, so that it will last, and the cuts good and the fabrics marvellous quality, because you're paying this ridiculous amount for it, or you have to make a much cheaper garment and use less fabric but still give the impression that there's a lot in it. So, a kind of hopelessness.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. I think, during four years there, I did; but now I'm becoming more and more anti-art-school, just from my own experience. Because I did go back and teach at the same art-school a few years later, and, inbetween, I had a job which was designing for a firm, and I went back to talk to and help people who would be, eventually, designers in the same situation. And they were still very much wrapped up in their own ideas, and it was probably their final year, which meant they should be thinking a little about what would happen to them. And they seemed so unaware of it all - unaware their ideas would be crushed the minute they arrived on a monday morning. They would have very little freedom - there's so much freedom in art college; even if you're given a project you're allowed to go away and work on it and come up with the end product in the end; also their lack of understanding of time. On a normal working day you have to produce something - usually by a deadline of some sort; when you work on a project in an art college you can have weeks to do it - maybe work in your own time as well - no sense of urgency... somehow slow. That comes as a terrible shock - it did to me - that you can't sit around for about three hours and say, 'I'm being inspired'; the machines are churning round on one side, and people are wondering where you'll

fit in. So, No; I'm very disillusioned with art-colleges at the moment. Perhaps they'll change; perhaps they could be reorganised. Past reorganisations have weakened them; we did N.D.D., which was this chronic two years of doing everything, and then two very short years of specialising for whatever it was you wanted to do at the end; for instance, two years of weaving; two years of fabric designing; two years of painting, etc.... and then changing to the Dip.A.D., which was a pre-diploma year, and then three years. Somehow that sounded marvellous, when it came into being; but, really, giving you perhaps three years slowed up the process - one had a chance to go to sleep somewhere in the middle.

SQ. Anything about the present merger into the Poly system, and the introduction of B.A.'s....?

A. Not really. I suppose Leicester was the only experience I had, and that was very limited. Just visiting, to see end of term shows rather than being there to see what happened. I must say that college seemed to be geared up to industry - if you have to be - on the textile side. Because they're surrounded by it; that's a great disadvantage with a lot of them. We were at Winchester, which is way down at the bottom of Hampshire, and the Industrial Midlands, or London.... light years away really. Although we had visits from lecturers, and also went on visits, and also did industrial practice in the holiday, it was still, somehow, this gap - you go back to Winchester with the fields and the trees - you forget about the machines you've just been looking at.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. I think it irritates to a great extent. I can't think of any definite examples at the moment; but it definitely, I would say, irritates.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/-craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for instance, schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., press, radio, - in other areas?"

A. Do you mean if they're connected in any way - if they influence each other?...

SQ. Either in terms of helpful connection, or, you know, in terms of just the balance. There's been a lot of talk in the educational press about, say, in art schools increasing academicisation - introducing exams, or pre-entry qualifications: emphasis on being literate.

A. This awful question of whether you're a genius, or whether you've passed so many 'O'levels. We know someone who's been very successful in a commercial way - illustrating - who went along to Winchester I think about two years before we started, and had absolutely no qualifications at all: it was the time when you came from school and brought all the work you did along with you that was fine. And that's how he managed to be there - perfectly capable of drawing the most wonderful work on his first day. I also know some people from my own year who, probably, had all the right qualifications, but were unable to express themselves artistically - and probably didn't when they left. It was just another extension of school in a strange way. And then there's the ridiculous level of people who - I don't think it happens any longer - of girls who use the art

college as a finishing school. It was just four years of marvellous fun - you did something, but you didn't really take it seriously, and then vanished to do something totally different. I don't think there should be a great emphasis on how many exams you pass, or whatever you do before you actually arrive; I think it's important what you do when you're there. You change so much; how can you be a nine 'O' Levels one day, and then.... you change so much in four years.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success or continuing success?"

A. Well, if I think about it in terms of fabric.... There's one person who's been going for years and years and years, and is quite well known when we were at college - Pat Albeck - who produces the same sort of style, no matter what she does: a lot of furnishing designs, but you can always tell a Pat Albeck design... And then I think of someone like Dandra Rhodes; you'd just never be able not to recognise one of her designs. So, if you have a style, yes. But you can also be tied up in your own small web, really, because you have to somehow change slightly, at some point, otherwise people say, 'Oh. We've seen something like that before'. You've got to change slightly. I think in the case of somebody like Sandra Rhodes you have to have customers who can pay you fantastic prices, and then, everything you do is assured of a market, just as a status symbol. /indecipherable sentence/

22.

Q. This is a quote from a man called Bruce Allsopp.
"Art is something which is part of the artists self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. I think I've changed. I think perhaps that was me, but the things I produce now are not, really, me. And that's because I've got to produce... I've got this pressure; I know I've got to produce a certain number this week; so I've changed. I'm now a person who produces things I don't particularly like. Only in that field of fabric designing. If it was something like embroidery, or weaving, then it would be much more me. I wouldn't be so separated from it.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. That's very difficult, because I've known people who are not at all skilled, but they produce something. And in the case of fabrics, someone will buy it. So I think that's a law unto itself, that question. Maybe if it was a painter, or a potter, or something else, maybe it would be quite different.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. You have to have something, somewhere, that I don't think you could learn. You can learn to be... perhaps

you can learn to be skillful. You do have to have something - maybe just a feeling; I don't know. It may not be a marvellous picture coming out every time you touch pencil to picture.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design councils carry out their activities?"

A. That's changing; well, it is for fabric. People like the Design Centre have run shows, or given space to students to have shows, which are very good, because it takes them out of the college environment, and puts them on a much more commercial level. Factories will know the Design Centre; they won't know Winchester Art College quite so well. It forms a centre, a gathering point, for the... Also there's the Crafts Council... I was reading something the other day... they will help, for instance, weavers; especially they will actually give them a certain amount of money which will give them a sabbatical year, and I think that's marvellous. I think lots more should be done. Because otherwise you have this pressure on you to produce something to sell. You've got to earn your living... you've got to produce this week.... It would be marvellous if people could sit back and have a chance to think about it a bit more. I don't think you could do that with fabric designing - just sit back and think about it; I think you could travel a bit more. You must get around and see things, because you tend to become very.... based in one place. Because, when you're at college you go on visits, and it's all organised, and you can't really miss out if you're there; but once you're on your own it's a great effort to carry on working and also find time to rush around and look at exhibitions, for instance.

I'm lucky, because I work just these two days or three days, so, as a holiday, I've got the rest of the week to.... And I think with the Crafts Council, they've got an index of craftsmen, so that means that many many more people can find out about indecipherable half sentence. It would be lovely to have money, so that you can just reorganise yourself. Especially if you did weaving, because that's very difficult, very slow, time consuming - all your equipment to start with. I just need paints, paper, and a few brushes. So, I don't think they're doing too badly just now.....

Interview Six

Cambridge

28th December 1974

Interview six is with a painter. She does some part-time teaching, but a private income enables her to be largely independent of teaching or regular sales of work.

INTERVIEW SIX

Cambridge

28 December 1974

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. I would say painting now...

SQ. Painting. You do less prints than you used to do?

Yes.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer? Or any combination of these?"

A. I think artist.

SQ. What do you think of print-making then?

A. Oh, I think of print-making as an artist's activity too. I think I would try not to separate the two too much. I mean when they're good they're so.... I think the trouble with the labelling 'artist', 'craftsman' - it seems to become a matter of quality. But then I think 'craftsman' is different to the technical thing.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you as regards art, craft or design? Do you feel art is a profession?"

A. That's a very difficult one; it's more a way of life. It's a matter of priorities, I think. If you build your

life round it, which I suppose I have done, that is what I would call professional, I think.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. You mean from my point of view do I separate them out when I'm working?

SQ. Do you feel there are any problems in the fact that people see these three activities/persons as different? Do you feel that design is a different thing from art? That craft is a different thing from art? What you were talking about earlier; qualitative differences?

A. I suppose I don't really; but I certainly think.... that's being a bit idealistic about it, because I think people do separate them out very much, particularly in their reaction to it. I mean they will quite happily say whether they like or dislike a thing that's specifically a more craftsmanship thing: I mean, there's so much handmade jewellery now, and they go and select quite happily without having to feel the need for a professional judgement behind them; but I think they're quite different when they come to judge paintings of any sort, really. They seem to want to be told; they can't trust their own judgement. I think that's the sort of hierarchy that's built up around art, with the galleries and the names and the money that's involved really.

5.

Q. "What special function, if any, do you consider the artist, craftsman or designer to have?"

A. Yes, well for a long time I really rather wondered;

I thought it's probably self-indulgent. But I begin to think it has really more and more importance, as so much of.... well, as the world gets smaller and the individual's voice seems to count for less, I think the personal statement in art is very important. I think those who have.... people like Vasarely who are a little bit God-like about it and impose very much a kind of environment through their work - I think this is very valid, but, from my point of view, you know, all I can be is make an individual statement. So I think that's where one's importance lies. It's very small; but it's a kind of leaven in the lump.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a painter?"

A. No; not entirely.

Q2. "(b) If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity as a painter?"

A. Well, yes; I do some teaching, but I'm very fortunate in having a private income.

Q2. "(c) If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily an artist/craftsman/-designer, or primarily a teacher?"

A. Well, I've always (apart from the first two years of teaching), I've always been part-time, and I think I've always considered myself as an artist, rather than as a teacher.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. None, really.

SQ. How do you sell your work?

A. Well mostly, I suppose, from my studio now. I'm very bad on this bit; I haven't pursued it at all. I've seen very few galleries. One hesitates to get involved even, I think, because the ones that are going to push you are going to bleed you as well. I get this feeling - that it can be very stultifying. I mean that's why I think I'm terribly lucky that I've got the freedom to do my own work without having the pressure to sell every bit of it. I certainly need to sell - just a matter of confidence.

Q2. "Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?" - this situation?

A. No. I think it would be more stimulating if I sold a bit more; yes, it could well be improved on, I think.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Oh yes.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer), and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen,

reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist, craftsman or designer (as appropriate)?"

A. Well, I would have thought this first statement about the potters and weavers is more a social thing that's happened; that as those crafts have died, more or less, from their utilitarian point of view, so they've come back in a slightly different way. They're not absolutely essential to everyday living, so they've got this special quality. And I think probably the painters.... maybe it's because what you might call the 'craftsmen' say this, that the painters and sculptors think again, and consider themselves as craftsmen. Again, I think it's a matter of justifying your existence, probably, that the artist has this, sort of, both elite and..... and only a small area in society is interested in supporting - so it makes it a bit more down to earth... calling himself 'craftsman'. But, then again, I think the approach to painting has changed a lot. I mean it's not just a mad sort of intuitive or expressional sort of splurge; there's a lot of thought behind it, and people think, 'Well, what is a painting; how is it made; what is it made up of?', and this implies a whole sort of craftsmanship behind it, really: all the technique.... it's absolutely essential.

16.

Q. "The problem with being called artist, is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly 'designer' conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object; Do you agree? Have you any comment?" - perhaps you've commented on it already?

A. Yes....

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. Well, I think he speaks truth. I think it's silly to think that it's ever been anything else. I mean I don't think galleries have ever been enlightened patrons of the arts; I think you do get this feeling because there's this marvellous bit where they do have galleries where you are free to come and go... They're dealers, really, aren't they.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists, craftsmen and designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) A good idea? (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. Oh, certainly. I think it would take a long time to establish the.... to get it going. I mean it would be a very new thing. The artist (in England certainly) has never been used in this way - I don't think. I think it's crazy really, that a visual expert is never involved in any of these local planning things - never seems to be.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?" - your own field, or your own work, or town... whatever?

A. Well, it's so small in Cambridge; I think it's always been a difficult place - it's misleading, I think, Universities. I don't think it's changed very much, and I think it's probably.... I think it's more in danger now than it was. I mean I'm sure - did you see those articles of Patrick Heron recently in the Guardian... he wrote three. It was rather flogging his particular bit, but they were interesting things he said, and I think this business that artists get employed in a part time capacity in art schools led to a tremendous flowering - riches - and that seems to be on the way out; they won't have part time people. I think that's a great pity, and also the art schools themselves seem to be less and less 'fine art', as you might say. It's all much more 'functional', I suppose. More 'designer', really; the designers are coming into their own very.....

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cézanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes any work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wider'. (a) What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. What a marvellous quotation. I know what he means. This is the researcher, isn't it, really. You go on and on and on. There's a marvellous quote of Rod /? Taylor which I learnt last summer, and it says 'The perfection of the thing is its legend'.... but then he is talking about something that's completely tied up, and I think a perfection isn't necessarily a dead end; there's always a way through. It's when things are in total harmony.... 'Art for art's

sake?!... I think the further you go into something the more liberating it is. Simply because you begin to understand more and more, and it kind of relates to things outside that particular understanding. No: I think it's liberating, rather than restrictive.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising or compensating for his psychosis.'" (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. Oh dear; that's a difficult one. I'm never quite sure what psychotic means; is it the same thing as neurotic?

SQ. More extreme...

A. I think that the.... I think possibly you could say that man is.... I mean he could be said to be psychotic, and the artist has the good fortune to be able to work it out. But the area in which he works can be a very dangerous area. One tends to think, 'Oh, they're digging at the artist'; but.... I suppose because he's on this sort of.... or can be on this fairly exposed area of being, or, you know, trying to be the creative... I mean this business about creativity anyway.... so that he's obviously of interest to psychologists. Because the whole thing's much more open. I don't honestly know about any general currency; I just wouldn't know.

SQ. You've never experienced it in relation to yourself?

A. No, I haven't. No. I don't think people think I'm mad.

SQ. Not in terms of, 'You're special; you have some peculiar inspiration or insight'?

A. I suppose a little bit. One can get away with wearing, say, odd clothes. I mean I can wander down the street in my dirty old shirt and I don't think people would take much notice, and I assume this is because they know that I'm a painter. To that extent I think so.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'. (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed over, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups)?"

A. Well, I've just said that I agree with 'art for art's sake', haven't I. Well... taking '(b)', - it does seem extraordinary.... I thought that exhibition of the Bauhaus quite recently was fantastic. But it seemed incredible... it seemed to have had very little overt effect. But maybe it was much more underground... I suppose probably... it probably happened in areas where..... I think perhaps it didn't affect the fine art areas so much - possibly in the design areas more.... apart from the fact that Klee worked there... two unintelligible statements/...

I think the design area is much more closely related to everyday life, isn't it....

SQ. But, in a sense, that's not what he intended...

A. No.

SQ. He was hoping not to turn Cambridge city centre into a Bauhaus design centre, but, rather to abolish art, design, craft as....

A. To make a total; a whole... yes.

SQ. He's ended up with Bauhaus furniture, office-blocks, desks, but a failure to put into effect the new ideas on practice - artists to work with industry.

A. Yes...

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?"

A. I think it's very dicey in the present economic state. I don't know. I think there are far more openings. An awful lot of people are setting up on their own bit. When you think of the number of potters - particularly potters I think - who set up their own studios and seem to be able to make a living. I don't think it's changed very much; I don't think there's very much more interest. I always think it's strange that for all the art inschools children never seem to have that much more interest in.... well, in the delight in looking at paintings. Whereas I remember when I was teaching in London, and French children used to come in the summer as a sort of 'au pair' thing - I mean 'swapping' - and, although I don't think they had any practical lessons in art in their school, and yet their

appreciation and the delight they got from looking at paintings was far in advance of or far richer than most of the English children. It seems to be a different area; it's strange.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. I know very little about them. They've changed such a lot, I think, recently. I think they're very much in the doldrums, really; they seem to have been mostly absorbed into the polytechnics, and I think it'll probably take some time to see how good that is. Whether they're going to benefit enormously, or be swamped by their lost autonomy.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e., those who talk about and analyse rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. Oh I think they do. I think they do control public feeling, but I don't know that they always get it right. I've just been reading a fascinating book by Biedermann /? called the New Cézanne in which he says he's gone back to what Cézanne actually said and wrote down, and complains that so much was interpreted by critics, and wrongly interpreted. And this fed back to artists, and a whole lot of painting that came out was divorced from what Cézanne had originally said. And this is fascinating, but of course he, at the same time, puts his own interpretation on it. But it brings that home, I think.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/-craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for instance, schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., press, radio, or in other areas?"

A. I don't think I come across it very much. I think there could be much more on telly, really, considering one is looking at the thing. But I'm not very good on that one.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. Yes, I think this does happen; you get the figuratives 'in' or the figuratives 'out', and all abstract now, and... I think this does happen. I think it happens very quickly too. You get people establishing a reputation very very quickly; I suppose it remains to be seen whether they can sustain it; whether they themselves are good enough to work through their success, in a way, and carry on in their own exploration. I think it has a frightening influence, really.

22.

Q. "This is a quote from a man called Bruce Allsopp; 'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. I think that is true for me; yes. I think that ties up with thinking that the validity of an artist is to make

an individual statement. But one's tremendously influenced by what you seek out and what you know and what you see. But, one hopes in the end that it, sort of, goes through the sieve and comes out as something that you believe in, really.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment, or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? And, if so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. By skill do you mean technique? Would you say that was the same.... yes, you say it; call it technical accomplishment. I think it's terribly important; I don't think it is initially, but I think - and this is where I've been having long long talks in Singapore with these people trying to.... you know, I've been doing this craft examining out there, and they have this incredible, marvellous, craftsmanship, traditionally: well, I mean the Chinese do; Singapore hasn't really much cultural background anyway. And all the time I was up against this idea of children's ideas, freedom of ideas.... but to them, unless it was tied up with a skill and technical perfection they found it difficult to see its validity, I think. But I think that, in the end, technique is terribly important. I always think of it as... I think the idea for me.... your ideas change, they grow as your technical knowledge grows, and the technical knowledge is always just behind the idea. It seems to me to be that way round. If the technique is.... you can get work where the technique is superb, but the idea is dead as a dough-nut, and that's where it just goes wrong. I think in a way - I mean what makes Rembrand so great? You know, his understanding of brushwork, of how you put the paint on, just puts him, as you say, in a top class..... as a tennis

player. I think it's a very important area. Without it: you can't really work on that bit of.... which to me is terribly important... which is, sort of, the intuition - of knowing without having to build up the knowledge to make the sum, and say, 'Well, it's this, this, this, and this; therefore, I do that': but you just know it instinctively. And I don't think..... you don't know it instinctively until you've worked for a very long time, and explored different areas, and it becomes a part of your knowledge which you just draw on in an intuitive sense; not in any sense..., well, not logical, really. Not necessarily logical.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. I think you need less talent than most people think. But I think it's interesting. I mean, if you look at Cézanne's early work, or Matisse, or somebody, they are not that good. Most of Cézanne's are not that good; very tortuous; he obviously found great difficulties in doing it. But I don't think anybody could teach you; I think you've got to want to learn, probably.

SQ. It comes back in a way to the previous question, a different way round. Do you think if Tom, Dick, or Harry, off the street, want to learn to paint - he's got the motivation - can you then teach him?

A. Oh yes; yes. I think you can.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. I'm always, sort of, expostulating about what the Arts Council does; it's the only one I have any... the slightest knowledge of. It always again.... it seems to be so, sort of, élitist. Opera gets it all. There was - I think it was last year - you could get a refund through the Eastern Arts Region, if you had a group of people going to the theatre, but you couldn't get it for the pantomime. You know, it seems to me, if it's theatre - pantomime is a marvellous kind of theatre. Probably the first one a lot of kids see. But there's a... I suppose artistic snobbery that.... But how you dispose of money that is allocated, you know, as the Arts Council grant, and they can give all these bursaries - I think it's terribly difficult.

Interview Seven

Waterbeach, Cambs.

29 December 1974

Interview seven is with a painter and draughtsman.
During most of her life she has been a teacher, and still
taught a class of adults each week.

INTERVIEW SEVEN

Waterbeach, Cambs.

29 December 1974.

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Painter and draughtsman.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer? Or any combination of these?"

A. An Artist.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you, as regards art?"

A. As opposed to amateur you mean?

SQ. Do you feel art is a profession?

A. Yes, I do. And my definition of it would be -
A professional artist is a person who puts it first.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite division of art; craft; design?"

A. That's a difficult one, isn't it. Read it again.

SQ. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. At the present time?

SQ. Yes.

A. Well, I suppose the artist has begun to think of himself as a rather special and separate person from ordinary life and ordinary people, more than the designer or the craftsman. I think in many cases there's less connection between.... people think of an artist as something rather special. But I don't feel that in my own work at all, because that.... my attitude is not like that.

5.

Q. "What special function, if any, do you consider the artist/craftsman/designer to have?"

A. Creating the environment is the designer's job, and should be the craftsman's and the artist's as well, I suppose.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a painter and draughtsman?"

A. No, I don't live off it entirely, but I couldn't do without selling.

Q2. "(b) If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity?"

A. I've been a teacher until the last ten years or so, teaching art, and I still teach a group of adults once a week.

Q2. "(c) If you undertake any other sort of work, do you

consider yourself primarily an artist/craftsman, or primarily a teacher?"

A. I think the two things go together; I don't think of them separately.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. I exhibit; I haven't got an agent. I exhibit in galleries, and therefore pay the usual percentage on sales. I do sell from the studio too, but I've never had a contract with one particular gallery like lots of people do. I used to show in London, but, since times have changed, and my work is representational, I haven't bothered. I've shown locally - mostly. But I sell quite well: I don't know if that's part of the question. I like selling to ordinary people - I don't put very high prices. And ordinary people like my pictures. For example, I've just had an exhibition at Ely, at that place which is also a restaurant, and two of the waitresses have bought pictures - for sums like thirty pounds. And that sort of sale always pleases me very much.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Certainly.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the

primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist', has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist?"

A. No, is the answer to the last part of that question, I think. I'm interested in - well, still, this isn't a conversation; I'm supposed to answer the questions, aren't I. I'm interested in your saying that the artists - some artists - think of themselves as craftsmen. I know the thing very well about the craftsmen thinking of themselves as artists - artist-potters, and people like Peter Collingwood, Alec Pearson, and doing tapestries and things like that, departing from the traditional forms of picture making and so on, and agree with it. I think there are some like that who are artists, and some who are craftsmen. I can't see anything against that. But I don't understand what you mean by saying that some artists like to think - now call themselves craftsmen.

SQ. That much less, I think, than with the crafts; in some ways just the down-to-earth attitude, 'I'm doing a job' is really more what....

A. Yes, certainly. Yes, well I think in that case you might put me in that department. Because I... you see this sort of thing which expresses for me my own attitude is something which Sickert said, which I'm never quite sure if I get right, which is, 'The artist paints because he must, because visual impressions enchant him, and he wishes to record those impressions and pass them on to others.' The communication part of it is important to me.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly designer conjures up an image of an activity separated from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object. Would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. Can I read it?..... I think sometimes artist, as I've said.... I think that sometimes people use that expression with a sort of reverence, but I don't agree a bit that craftsmen has overtones of parochialism and rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture. I mean craftsman can be a tremendous compliment; you say someone is a marvellous craftsman - for example a cabinet maker, or any craft. I don't agree with that. I see what you mean about the crafty-wafty holiday trinket manufacture thing, but there is something else which is much more important. And the designer; I suppose it may conjure up that image, but, I don't think it should. I mean, in a sense, you could say that an architect is a designer, and he doesn't actually build the house.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art, is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money.' What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. I think it's disgusting. I don't know what else to say about that. There are some honest dealers, and very useful they are to artists - we couldn't do without them. But that sort of attitude is sickening.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/-designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) a good idea? (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. I think both; I think it would be a good idea, and I think it would improve the visual environment - as long as they chose the right people. That's what they did in America in the thirties isn't it?

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. Well, when you say 'the arts', I always tend to think of my own - painting - and in Cambridge we have some very very good patrons, just at the moment. It's very much alive. And our group, 'The Cambridge Society of Painters and Sculptors', sold better this year (rather suprisingly) than it ever has, I think. So that we have a very good lot of backers and patrons in this small place, which really is rather suprising. About the arts in Britain I would find it much more difficult to answer. I think there are some good ones, but I think there is a lot of nonsense. Of course there was that whole series of articles of Patrick Heron's about how the whole thing started here, and I don't really quite know - I thought they were very interesting articles, but I don't know quite the answer to that. I find that a difficult one.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cézanne; "I must go on working, but not in order to obtain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplish-

ment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser' (a) What is your reaction to these views?

(b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. Let me read it..... I think it's marvellous, like most things Cezanne said, really - especially the last bit. Because, after all, that is finishing, isn't it?.... 'except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser', and this is a thing which one sees in so many exhibitions, for example, these tremendously finished things; and then you go and see the work of a master, and you see that where he stopped is truer and wiser than it would have been if he had polished it all up. So that I react very favourably to those views. But, is art for art's sake liberating, restrictive? What you're talking about is that Cézanne was saying that to him he worked art for art's sake? Do you?

SQ. Well, what I'm talking about in the second part really is what those views, and others like them, mean now. What has really happened to an art for art's sake movement which started as a reaction against utilitarianism, or the top end of the Royal Academy....

A. Well, liberating.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising what he thinks the views of Freud are. "There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising or compensating for his psychosis'. (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. I shouldn't have thought it had any general currency - I don't think people think artists are psychotic. I suppose, in a sense, though, everybody is psychotic. And I suppose artists have found a way of liberating themselves from that: perhaps rather more successfully than people who don't express themselves in any way.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'Artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life?' (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (By the Bauhaus or any other persons/-groups?)"

A. I do agree with Gropius in saying that; yes. Well, the Bauhaus had to stop too soon, really, didn't it, to realise the things it might have realised. I think it has happened - at Peterlee, you know, that new estate that Victor Pasmore and people had to do with. Not that I've seen it, but the idea was there; it was put into practice; that artists should taken an active part in the creation of this little environment (part of society). I think that I'm a little confused by the expression 'art for art's sake', because in the last question I think I said that I believed in that, so that I don't connect it with the philosophy of business as an end in itself. I mean much more what Cézanne said. That do?

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist in Britain?"

A. I think it's better than it was. Certainly better than it was when I was young. If you mean from a practical sort of earning your living point of view.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. No. Not at the moment. I think they're in a muddle.

SQ. From what they teach? How they teach?

A. I don't think they know what they're doing, really. I think all these committees and things have messed them up, so that you can't make a statement about the art school (perhaps you never could) - about what its role is. I mean they're all so different. There are some that are good, and some which are not. I think, for example, the Royal College in recent years has had quite an influence on design - dress design and all kinds of design - and there've been some very inventive teachers. Whether the Slade has had much influence I don't know. Not very much perhaps, although it has produced some good painters.

SQ. What do you think is happening with a lot of art schools being amalgamated into polytechnics?

A. I don't like it. I've been dead against it. I taught in one. It was Chelsea that was part of the Polytechnic in the old days. It was just a few rooms at the top called the 'art-part'. I know there are arguments for it - it probably prevents the separation of art students

from other students, and brings them into touch with other sides of student education, which is good. But I'm afraid I don't like the vastness of such places really.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting an particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. When you say 'publicly', you mean among ordinary people?

SQ. Yes.

A. No, I don't think it does. I don't think they read them. You mean critics and people like that - or people like Herbert Read or...

SQ. Critics, television, educators, teachers, - whatever way it comes across into usage, or forms conceptions. You could put the question one way as 'What does Kenneth Clark mean?'

A. Yes, quite. Yes. Well, that is education, isn't it. And I think in that sense, yes; it does. But there's something about the term 'art-intellectuals' which immediately antagonises me, and I think of some of the critics who write such nonsense. But of course Kenneth Clark is an art-intellectual, and I think that series did have an enormous effect on people.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/craft/-design practice and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for instance, schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., press, radio, or in other areas?"

A. The relation between the practice and the theory - the talk?

SQ. Yes.

A. Well, in education particularly colleges of education, I think there's now far far too much talk. I think it's to a certain extent in art schools too. In a way there's no need to paint a picture at all. Which is nonsense.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style or mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. I think with some artists this happens - that they have a success with a particular style, and, then, go on copying themselves. Soon the work becomes dead. You see, to take an example, what used to be called the 'Kitchen Sink Group' - John Bratby, I think he's an example of that - whereas Smith, he has gone on to change his style, and I think it is much the best of them now. I think Middleditch - I used to love his work in those days, but I haven't seen any that I thought so much of lately. So I think sometimes the fact that they're praised for something does prevent their development in some cases.

22.

Q. "'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living.'" (Bruce Allsopp) "Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. It's not true for me: it's perfectly true that it's part of the artist's self, as he is. But what I love is to sell that; to be able to stick to painting that, and to sell it.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? And, if so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. I would distinguish skill from art, I think. You can have a picture or a piece of sculpture which is tremendously skilled in a technical and, possibly, realistic way: but certainly uninteresting, or even vulgar, from the point of view of aesthetic merit. I don't really see the connection between that and the tennis playing thing - the more skilled a tennis player is, the better. Surely? Aesthetic qualities... in a sense come in, because of the beauty of movement and so on... style... but that is skill, in that connection too.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. I think you must have a certain level of pre-existing talent. But I think there are lots of people who have it and never realise it.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. No. I don't know so much about the Craft and Design organisations, but the one I think of at once is the Arts Council. And I think they give far too great a proportion of money to opera, and perhaps the theatre, and not nearly enough to the visual arts. And I don't know that they always back the right people. But they have done some

marvellous exhibitions. I have a particular grudge against them because they wouldn't give enough money for 'Pictures for Schools', which was my own particular interest.

SQ. Were you concerned at all with the activities of CEMA during the war?

A. Only to the extent that I was teaching in a school which was evacuated and we used to have their exhibitions and their guide lecturers, and I used to contribute to the exhibitions, and felt that it supplied something extremely good. A war situation like that does somehow turn people towards the arts. And they did a great deal of good.

Interview Eight

Cambridge

29 December 1974

Interviewee eight is a full-time tapestry weaver and painter. At the time of interviewing he had recently given up a job running a department of art in a London college.

Note: At various points throughout the transcript interruptions by taxi radios' are referred to. The interference referred to was caused by the firm's central transmitter located in a nearby basement. The transmissions interfered with equipment through which I was boosting the sound-level of the interview in order to make clearer a somewhat muffled recording.

INTERVIEW EIGHT

Cambridge.

29 December 1974

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Painting, and designing and weaving tapestries.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer, or any combination of these?"

A. Well, on the whole, I would prefer to refer to myself.... it's very difficult that: I would think of the two activities - painting and designing and weaving tapestries - and refer to these specifically. Because I wouldn't like to put myself into the category of artist, and I wouldn't feel I could put myself in the category of craftsman. There are definition problems - explanations of what these words mean. So I think it's much more to the point to say I paint, and design and weave tapestries.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you, as regards art, craft or design?"

A. Well, it's becoming for me a profession; I think what I've done so far.... I've thought of it in terms of an activity, though I suppose I've thought of myself as being a professional artist, compared with quite a number of people for whom art is basically a hobby.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; and design?"

A. Yes, I think so. I think the problem is that one has tended to think, during one's education, as it were,... one has tended to think of art as being, somehow, a superior activity, and craft has been relegated to something inferior, and design has come somewhere inbetween. And I think this creates a lot of problems, because so many people now are working across these rather more traditional areas. Are you thinking of this also in terms of financial divisions? Working divisions? Or in terms of superiority?

SQ. Largely in terms of superiority, I suppose. In terms of how people react to your work according to...

A. Yes, I think people... the way people react... they're inclined to take you more seriously if you say you're an artist. If you say you're a craftsman, they tend to feel you are belittling yourself. If you say you're a designer this is respectable enough now, because this is a well paid profession which has established itself. But 'artist' and 'craftsman': this is an uncomfortable division, and it seems to me that the, sort of, relative position of artist and craftsman tends to remain in most people's minds: I suppose to some extent it remains in mine if I'm not careful. I think there is a..., you know, I think I may still have a tendency to think of the craftsmanship, or, somehow, the work, as being somehow technical, and art as what is being achieved by using techniques: and, if I'm a good craftsman, then it'll be a well made job, but this is not necessarily to do with the art. In my own mind I really want to drop these two categories, because I think these things go hand in hand now. If I were given the choice now of whether I was an artist or a craftsman, I would probably say I was a craftsman.

On the other hand I would probably say I was a designer. Because this embraces both. But then it doesn't necessarily embrace the making, because, if you're a designer you're often producing ideas for somebody else to carry out.

5.

Q. "What special function (if any) do you consider the artist/craftsman/designer to have?"

A. Well, one function is to make the visual side of things work. I think that you make.... if you think of what you make as going somewhere - I mean, I think of this as being 'somewhere' where it's going to make the..... visually more pleasant: also, where, in addition to making the surroundings more pleasant there is going to be some sort of meaning in terms of the colour or form or what have you, which can be shared by other people who happen to be in this particular situation. I find that if I go into somebody's house, for example, and they have paintings and sculpture and pottery - and things around like that - I feel then that all the artists and craftsmen (or whatever you like to call them) have got this social function in that they make my life more interesting. This happens not only in interiors, but in exteriors - or: certainly could do; so that I think that this is an immensely important social function. I don't think it works as well as it could do. I don't see that the work of these artists, craftsmen, designers, is being used to its full social development.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a painter/weaver?"

A. No.

Q2. "If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity as a painter, weaver?"

A. Well, I have for, I suppose, twentyseven years undertaken full-time art-teaching. Having just given that up I can't pretend that I'm now 'living off' my art. In the last year I might have made.... well, certainly made several hundred pounds, and I've always made money out of it. If my wife were not working now, or if we had not got some money put away, you know, to make ourselves independent - If I hadn't made myself independent through using somebody else's income, and using a certain amount of capital, from other sources, then I wouldn't be able to say now I'm a full-time painter or weaver.

Q2. "When you undertook teaching-work, did you consider yourself primarily an artist-craftsman-designer, or primarily a teacher?"

A. I've always experienced a tension between the two. At the beginning of my career I remember being much more aware of this tension than during the middle part of it; I felt really that I was having to teach, and, while I quite enjoyed it, I felt this was, to some extent at any rate, robbing me of the possibility of being a painter. Later on in my career there were periods when I had balance; I enjoyed a good deal of the professional work, you know, involved in teaching where it seemed to be directly concerned with working out visual ideas - less concerned with administration. And now finally I've made the break away from teaching, because I began to feel that the field of education I was in - this would now apply to schools if I had to go back into schools - but, the field of education I'm in, College of Education work, has become so ludicrously anti-education that it had become, for me, anti-art; and I had to think that as a painter or a weaver I could no longer exist within the system..... I seem to have lost the thread of that; can you just repeat the question.

SQ. Whether you considered yourself primarily a teacher or primarily an artist-craftsman.

A. Oh well. I think the direct answer to that really is, that, if I had to put one and two, then I have always considered myself primarily as a painter, and secondarily as a teacher; while always feeling it necessary, having taken a teaching commitment, to do that as well as possible; to relate the one activity to the other. But always the other comes first.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. None whatever....

SQ. In other words, how do you sell your work?

A. Well, I have sold my work in recent years through local connections; I've had several one-man shows of painting; I've exhibited in mixed exhibitions, and I'm a member of a group - a professional group - made up of people who are largely self-employed as painters or what-not... teachers, who exhibit once a year. And most of my selling has been made through the connections made through that exhibition. There are a number of patrons in the area, and this is a well-known group in the area, and some of the patrons are reasonably well heeled, and I have worked through it.

Q2. "Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?"

A. You mean would I....?

SQ. Would you prefer to sell any other way?

A. Yes, I would prefer to sell in a situation where it

was understood that certain people made certain things, and there was a much wider use of what I should have to call agents - people who know about art and about marketing, and are in touch with a much wider..... gallery facilities. But I would like to work through a middle man; somebody who would come to my studio and see what I'm doing and act as my agent; take his cut so that we could both live from it. This would relieve me of the worry of taking my work round to, say, particularly the London galleries where, for a start, you're sure that nobody's going to do much about it; and, even if they do do much about it, the waiting period becomes so long that it becomes ludicrous. Certainly my tapestry I would prefer to sell through an agent. He'd relieve me of all this bother, and he knows about prices. But this could only be in a situation where people were much more inclined to buy original work. Also work could be sold at reasonable prices. You wouldn't be trying for a super life with a Rolls Royce, but just a reasonable professional wage for whatever you do.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. I don't know about right; I think perhaps.... I don't think he has a right to make a living - I think as an artist you make something and try to sell it. Instead of saying you have a right to sell it, you could say the conditions of selling are not as good as they should be. The arrangements for seeing and selling are not as good as they should be. I don't think I have a right to sell; I don't feel, for instance, that the state should pay me a wage, and then take everything automatically. It's a very difficult kind of question.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist/craftsman/designer (as appropriate)?"

A. Yes; I think these problems have arisen out of my experience in art education - having been head of an art department in a college of education. I've been responsible for arranging the work for pottery, textiles, printers, weavers, print-makers....., what else?....., sculptors, I've noticed a tendency among the painters for them to feel that they were the superior people, somehow: that what they were doing was feeding directly into everything else. For example, all students we decided at one point are to draw much more; this is taken by the painters to feel that they are really doing more 'fine art'; I don't feel that this is really the right approach to it. I think it's far better, in that sort of situation, to drop the idea that this is an 'art' activity - this drawing - and that you then go on and become a craftsman later, and that you've learnt somehow through the fine arts how to express your ideas. I think this is making a division between - an artificial division - that you are expressing two kinds of ideas- one through fine art and one through your medium, and, if you're a painter, that this is a better medium and that somehow your able to express your ideas more effectively. I think this is supported by examiners, very often, in the art educational system - very many of which have been brought up to accept the idea that fine art is a superior activity (fine art being painting and

sculpture.) I've felt it necessary to work against this, particularly in recent years, and particularly since I've begun to use another medium which, in the eyes of many, would be a craft medium rather than an art medium. I think there wants to be a levelling up; I can see the problem that a potter who has made useful articles realises that if he can make art objects - non-functional pieces of pottery- he will be taken seriously by painters and sculptors, and will be taken more seriously by the patrons of painters and sculptors; by gallery dealers; by people who are selling his pottery. But I think this tendency is a wrong one. I am much more in sympathy with those painters and sculptors who want to call themselves craftsmen, as a distinct reaction to this over-emphasis on fine art. I don't think it follows that, for example, by making a pot which is useful you are doing something which is less..... you're working at a lower level than somebody who is producing a pot which is basically a piece of sculpture. I think also there have been reasons for this; I think the so-called craftsmen have been fighting back in the only way they could, because as different materials have been spread much more widely across the whole art field, those who have been relegated to the level of craftsmen, and have got interested in using a medium were doing the only thing they could do in producing what other people would accept as works of art. And, also perhaps, in the field of craft, there has been so much arty-crafty work round that those who felt they were doing something more interesting have been driven to associate themselves much more with those who call themselves artists.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly 'designer' conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of

effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object; Would you agree? Have you any comment?"
You've really already covered that....

A. Yes, I was going to say that...

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art, is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. Well, I feel in this country it's a restricting kind of organisation. The number of galleries.... the number is small, because not enough people are prepared to buy things. But the over-heads for a gallery are pretty high, so it's difficult to keep going. There are a number of other galleries that keep coming up and folding up, trying to bring art to a different section of the public from the normal private gallery goers who might be going there to collect or invest. I think the idea of creating a..... creating artificially, highly successful number of artists, in order that they should be there for people to have a sound investment in - I don't like this. I think the idea, somehow, is that a very small number of galleries should have a very small number of artists who are selling at very high prices: this is wrong. On the other hand, still, a lot of well known artists are still spending some days teaching; I don't know whether they do this because they like the idea of teaching, but I would have thought they did it because they needed some extra money. But, even with places like the Marlborough gallery, and so on, it's not offering a good income for enough people.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/-designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) A good idea; (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. On what basis?

SQ. Permanently.

A. You mean somebody would be fully employed by the local authority. I think there are dangers in that. I think the dangers in that are the wrong people would get the job, and, that once having got the job, they would function like the city architect, the planner, the city housing inspector - they would produce rather mediocre work. So that the kind of decoration that went on would be as dull as the civic buildings that are going on. You'd have a new kind of civil servant artist. I think it's got certain attractions, if you could think that, you know, I myself might be employed on that basis. You would then say, well, alright. It depends entirely on how it's organised. If they said, for instance, 'Alright, you can still work in your studio, making these hangings, and, while you will have to discuss with architects and planners the themes and colours, you will be given a good deal of freedom, and also your work will be subject to reasonable scrutiny and criticism, so that you can't just take this as an easy kind of office job'. The danger is that it might destroy people. You know, at the present state of affairs, I don't think there's enough vital interest in civic affairs to make it really work. I know I was reading recently some painters and others rejected the idea of applying for bursaries or grants on the grounds that they're competing against each other in a strange sort of field in order to get money out of the state; and they have rejected this, and said, 'Look, I prefer to be left in my studio to sink or

swim.' And many of the good artists might react against this kind of system - they might feel as uneasy as many art teachers feel in the educational system, because they are working for the wrong people. You'd have to have the direction of this sort of system in the hands of really understanding and sympathetic people, who really have know-how, and understand the business of making things. Whether the system were adopted, and potters and weavers and painters and all sorts of designers were employed by the local authority..... whether the top boss would be an artist or an arts administrator, or what..... How do you see that? In what situation..... I think this question needs opening up and defining more.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. I think the recent revival of what are called the crafts has been interesting - I see hopeful signs in this. I think there seem at the moment to be more people who are existing - living - or largely living, off the things they make; not living terribly well off them, but living off them. I think this is a good thing. What I don't like about the present state there is that the means of publicising these activities are divided into three; I think it quite wrong that there are Arts, Crafts and Design Councils. I don't know what you'd call it, but I think.... call it visual arts, or what you like - but I think there ought to be one way of operating these things; it's quite wrong that the Arts Council has one address and the Crafts Council another address. And this is a division where there shouldn't be a division.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cézanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'" (a) What is your reaction to these views; (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. Yes, I think he's using the word 'craftsman' here in this traditional way....; /interference from taxi radio prevents transcription of about two sentences./....He's meaning that, unfortunately, people only respect a certain kind of finish: this they associate with being a good craftsman, and I agree with what he is saying there, that a finished perfection is not the sort of thing to look for - it's the balance of the idea and the means of making. I can't really see that this is connected with 'art for art's sake'; I mean, 'the pleasure of making it truer and wiser' - this is something that really ought to go on in the mind of somebody who is trying to make something that people will like, and..../further taxi interference/: the one doesn't exclude the other. I think in the present situation the idea of 'art for art's sake' is not a liberating idea. I think looking back to when Cézanne was working, yes; I think it was a reaction against academic painting; the painter is then in a situation where he sees art for art's sake as a necessary way of survival. I think at the present time the idea of making something for the sake of making something is not a very satisfying concept. Because it means then that you have to have, as Cézanne had, a means to support yourself, and, while that may be alright, it seems somehow at the present time to be not a liberating idea. Because it doesn't seem reasonable that you should be in a position where you are only able to make something because you have money coming in from some other source. Therefore it's more liberating

to think that you can be making something 'truer and wiser', but, at the same time, in a different sort of context where you're making it in order to fit it into a situation where it's going to be appreciated and where it's going to give a reasonable form of remuneration.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Freud: "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for, his psychosis'.

(a) Do you think this view has any general currency?

(b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. I wouldn't have thought it had general currency; I wouldn't really think it has validity. It's the sort of view you'd expect to see trotted out in support of particular thinkers, doing what they like and art for art's sake, and, somehow, through their art unknotting all the knots in their personality. I think I would feel now that many people... that we're all in the same boat in a way - it may be a right view of the artist, but it may also be a right view of most people. So it really doesn't have any validity for an artist. But I've no information on that; I don't know. I don't know if there's been any work done on that showing that artists are more psychotic than other people. I mean it's certainly true that in making something you are able as a painter to use your work in, somehow, a therapeutic sense - being able to cope with tensions and problems and neurosis.../taxi radio interruption for half sentence/.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his otherworldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life.' (b) Do you think any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups)?"

A. I agree with the statement that artistic design is part of life. I think, if it's been realised, it's only been realised by a few people. I don't see any evidence in building and design that goes on - apart from the, kind of rectangular quality of building..../indecipherable half-sentence/. I don't think it's affected it in the way that Gropius really wanted. I think on a small scale it has done, in the hands of the architects and planners who have been affected by the ideas of the Bauhaus: this can have an effect. It depends on, you know, the attitude of the chief designer, or the architect, or the planner in control of a certain situation as to whether this whole thing could work in a particular situation.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?"

A. I think I answered this earlier when I said I deplored the division which is really a government choice, where we

have three groups of people - three councils.... I think the present position of the.... I don't know enough about the designer; I mean I know there are many frustrated designers.../taxi radio obliterates sentence/. I don't know enough about designers' work to know if the kind of things that used to be carried out, which again grew from the Bauhaus, are carried out any longer, where the designer was part of a team which co-operated with each other all the way through. I don't know. The present position of the artist is that very few are able to live from their work; a large number depend on teaching. I think it's deplorable that, because of the situation those who depend on part-time teaching are losing it because of the move towards large polytechnics where members of polytechnics should be full-time staff, which has not been fully carried out yet. But I think there's a danger of the artist, who was helped to live by his teaching,... is going to have to find his money elsewhere.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. Well, it depends on which art school you're talking about; this is a highly individual matter. I think that it's unfortunate that art schools have been made parts of polytechnics and been pulled into the large institutions. Because this puts them at the mercy of one man, who becomes increasingly a well paid office-boy, and who may or may not have an interest in the arts. If he's got an interest in the arts, then he may be able to produce a highly successful art school as part of a polytechnic. If he's not, or he's purely an administrator or /indecipherable phrase/, then he may not be able to understand the requirements of an art school. I think another thing with the art school...., the final and the higher grade trained artists tend to be in the hands of the Royal College and the Slade School. I've been out of this system long enough

not to be able to answer any more on that.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. I think they've been having a rather good run in recent years. And, if I take my own field of teacher training (colleges of education), and this includes the art school teacher training departments, I think there has been an over-emphasis on an intellectual approach to art, which has been pushed by - I suppose originally by people like Pasmore and Hamilton up in Newcastle..., by the whole basic design system of training students: I think books like Dick Field's 'Changes in Art Education' and the sort of stuff that came out of London University Institute of Education (the art department there) have tended to make it seem that, somehow, in order to be doing your work successfully as an artist you have to be able to verbalise; you have to be producing concepts of what you are doing; you have to be an intellectual before you start with art. And I think this is wrong. I am not denying verbal analysis of what has been completed as important: it may not be important to an individual artist. I instinctively react very very strongly against this. I do this partly because I've been a victim of a situation in a college of education where you were expected not only to teach what you know about, but to engage in more intellectual theorising about art. Not just teaching art history, but theorising about art: I think it's quite nice to sit down and talk about it - to discuss it from time to time; but, when it begins to be written into examination papers, then..... And I am certainly against the idea that an artist should be verbally articulate.... I am really against the idea that an art teacher should be verbally articulate.... I think that's pushing it a bit far, but

I'm highly prejudiced about it, with some justification. I don't think, looking back on my career, that the work of students taught by a verbally articulate person is any better than the work done by students who were taught by somebody who could hardly explain what he was doing, to himself or to anybody else. I think verbalisation is best left to other people, although there are some artists who do it extremely well: fine. But why everybody should be able to do it I don't know.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for instance, schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., press, radio, or any other areas?"

A. I think, to quote Dick Field's book, 'Changes in Art Education', he makes the point there that you want far more discussion about art; he is not saying that it is more important than the practical work, though in effect I think it has done. I don't think it has gone across in many of the schools. From what one hears, in many of the art schools, I don't think either many of the students or the staff have a great deal of time for people whose job it is to theorise, unless they are showing a fundamental sympathy and understanding for the importance of the practical work. T.V.,..., I don't know what's on T.V., because I haven't got one. In the press I think I prefer the kind of critic like Stephen Bone who used to write for the Manchester Guardian many years ago, who was, you know, quite a mediocre practising artist, and covered the exhibitions in such a way that you - he could express his understanding of and his sympathy for and his criticisms of artists: who inaudible phrase/, and he covered a great deal of ground. Too much writing about art in the press is just a verbalisation; it doesn't really inform you..... You don't get much coverage from radio.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. Yes, I think this is awfully difficult. I think there is a sense in which you feel you are working outside 'style'; I've often had a feeling that I ought not to be doing something that I would like to do, because this is producing something that is not sufficiently 'mine', and easily recognised as 'my style'. I know that there have been cases where a gallery said to an artist, 'Do fifty of these', and there are plenty of cases where a well known artist cannot now work outside the style, or the format, as it were - the package that he produces - because he would lose the support of the gallery and the custom. I think that's a bad thing. But I think it very understandable, in a way. There's also a great difficulty you have in coping with your own work; you are aware that....., I'm aware that I can chase all kinds of imagery; I know how difficult it is to produce work in which I've done something which I feel is right. So I feel there's a tension between, on the one hand knowing that you are expected to do work which is yours, and, on the other, knowing how difficult it is to do work which is yours. I think in some ways you're always having to trim off the edges which belong to a lot of people's work to distinguish which of those are ones that you need. There's a kind of inner need to be able to recognise your work, and to be able to say to others, 'Look, you can recognise this is mine.' The point at which you step over into imitation of yourself, rather than a continuation of your own development is a difficult one. . I think certain pressures may make many people step over that line, so that they are imitating themselves. There may be nothing particularly wrong in this. Well, I think there is something wrong in it; it's very difficult. This again is where you

go back into the problem of this idea of artist and craftsman; craftsman in the old sense can imitate himself and imitate others and get away with it. Artist is expected to....

22.

Q. This is a quote from Bruce Allsopp; "'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. Say that again, would you? Or let me read it.....
I think this kind of thing worries me, a lot. I mean I would agree that 'art is something which is part of the artist's self', but, at the same time, I would say that in the right conditions, the artist produces work to earn a living. I think a tension has been created between the two. I think.... I would not differentiate between them; I don't want to differentiate them. I really think, to go back to the previous question, you said, 'Would you like to be employed, or could artists be employed'; it may be a very helpful thing - looking back to that question - because there is a certain danger in saying 'art is part of the artist's self, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. I don't see why both aren't true. I would like to work in a situation in which both were possible. This means that I'm having then to work for educated people - town councillors, city councillors, who are educated people; not just bloody business men. Therefore I would say that somehow in the present situation what Allsopp says may be true, but I don't wish this to be true for me. I don't see why I must go against myself - be going against myself - if I am to sell. This happens to be because I know that my work tends to appeal to people, and I know that in the eyes of some other artists this they may hold against me; I get that sense sometimes. People in the group - 'Ah yes; people like this sort of stuff; it's rather romantic and they like colours and

so on'. Therefore I'd like to feel that both parts... when I'm selling to earn a living.... when are you being true to yourself. Nobody can really know, can they? I mean, you know when you've done something which is good, and I'm always very very happy to sell to someone something which I know is good, you know. Where, alright, I've been true to myself, but it's also a tremendous kick to sell it. I feel it's necessary to have patrons; it's always been necessary.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment, or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional.?"

A. It's difficult to say with tennis, because I think the skills are very different skills there; these are competitive skills.../half sentence obliterated by taxi transmission/. I think you can distinguish skill from art; I think if I look at this tapestry that's going up, someone can produce a very - probably a more skilled version of this; somebody who is a highly skilled weaver who may not be able to design. But again, I would not... in the sense of distinguishing skill from art I would say they go hand in hand a lot of the time. Difficult to define. So yes; but I'm not altogether happy in distinguishing skill from art.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. Well, I would say most people have a pre-existing

talent. Most people I've met in education - most children; most adults, you know, who really thought they had very little - have, through teaching, through understanding teaching, produced things which are evidence that it can be taught. It depends, you know, on what you mean by teaching. It means creating a certain kind of situation and understanding how it develops; not just, say, learning how to use a pencil or observe something. All these things can be taught; I think most people can be taught to draw; that is, look at something to get down the shapes that correspond. Most people can then be taught the possibilities of using these shapes to create other shapes. Once you get invention - a sort of individual imaginative use of information, and how to get it down with a pencil or pen or something - I suppose you could say, 'This is art'. Yes. I've heard teachers say that there are people who are absolutely visually illiterate; I don't think I've met one. I don't think I've ever had a student or a pupil...../gap while tape turned over/....

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Craft and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. Well, I suppose I've said I'm not, haven't I, previously. But, let's say, looking at that now - accepting the fact that they are in three parts. I would think it's an awful pity that, for instance, the Arts Council spent so much of its money in keeping up, say, one opera house; it's spending so much, say, on one National Theatre that it's cutting back its activity in the provinces. So I'm not happy with that. There is, a sense.... a sort of elitist feeling about the Arts Council. I suspect, again without evidence, that this is coming into the craft council. I also suspect that these organisations are in the hands of arts administrators; I think there's a new profession of arts administrators springing up who really won't, somehow, be getting down

to the job of spreading the thing as much as possible - getting it into as many homes as possible, to ordinary people. You know the sort of stuff you mentioned before about the craftsman trying to become artist; this is again creating an élitist view of art. I know that my stuff sells in this sort of élitist sense; I'm not happy with that. And therefore I'm not happy with, certainly, the way the Arts Council's going. I think the Crafts Council has given a lot of money away, and this is largely due, I think, to Eccles, who got a lot of money to spend for the Crafts Council when it was started up. And I think they gave a lot away to establish people all over the country in ordinary situations; that is a good thing. But I think also they should be pressing the educational side, in the sense that they're getting the propaganda across - they're trying to create the kind of market in which ordinary people (meaning somebody who's earning two thousand a year; eighteen hundred a year) is prepared to go out and buy something from the man who's making it. So, no; I'm not satisfied with what they're doing at all.

Interview Nine

Oakingham, Cambs.

30th December 1974

Interview nine is with a painter and print-maker who, while being primarily a full-time artist, has also taken a variety of other jobs to support himself. At the time of interviewing this included one evening class a week teaching art.

INTERVIEW NINE

Oakingham, Cambs.

30th December 1974

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Painting and print-making.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer? Or any combination of these?"

A. Artist.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you, as regards art, craft or design?"

A. Doing it full time.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art, craft and design?"

A. No, I think it's a traditional division between levels of consciousness, really. The artist is always more in touch with his times, really, I think. He should be a combination of all three; should be a universal man, really.

SQ. The artist...?

A. Yes.

5.

Q. "What special function (if any) do you consider the artist to have?"

A. To blaze a light, I think. As I said in the last question, to be in tune with his times, and to reflect those times. Pushing the form of creativity further.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a painter? "

A. Barely; sort of on the edge.

Q2. "(b) If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity as a painter/print-maker?"

A. All kinds of things, unfortunately. I have bouts of doing things like decorating, and I teach a bit as well - one evening class a week.

Q2. "(c) If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily an artist, or primarily a teacher/decorator?"

A. Primarily an artist.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. Totally chaotic. I have a number of people round the country who have different kinds of situations - small galleries or individual people who just happen to have some of my prints and sell them occasionally. And, I suppose, mostly privately - myself. Exhibitions, I

suppose: three or four exhibitions a year in the last few years.

SQ. You have them all over the country?

A. Yes.

Q2. "Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?"

A. Only expanded in the same sort of direction - to cover a bigger area.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Yes. Completely. Absolutely.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term artist has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist?"

A. Yes; people attribute all kinds of states of mind to you - the artist - which are totally unreal. Basically it's just the same as doing anything else, completely, with one's whole being, rather than dabbling in some way.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough-workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly designer conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object. Would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. Well, I think the craftsman really is very much more integrated into the social structure, social fabric - our culture, really. He is much more understood; the artist has been mis-interpreted all over the place. Whereas there was an age when the artist fitted into that structure equally. I, sort of, yearn for that kind of structure, where the artist was integrated - possibly at a privileged level. I think a true artist has, as you say, genius, and can show people a lot of things.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art, is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money.' What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. It's a joke really. It's totally chaotic, and just concerned, seemingly, with preserving the status quo as regards who is to be seen. It seems too fickle; hang on to a particular artist, build them up - rather like the pop industry now - and push a particular individual; and, as soon as he's reached the top, pull him down again. There's a lot of room for improvement there.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/-designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate

and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be, (a) A good idea? (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. I'm not sure, really, that it would be a good idea on a permanent basis, because you'd tend to get back to the artist limiting his experience. It'd be better for him to exist on a sort of free-lance system - competition for particular designs..... and it should be judged. And what's the question '(b)'?

SQ. Would it improve the visual environment?

A. Yeah; well that would depend so much on the administration. So one would have to have very sensitive people in the position of making decisions as to what exactly was used. I'm not sure that I see a solution of integrating the artist, actually. I think it's got to be more subtle.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. I don't really see as much as I should, I suppose. It's hard to tell, actually. Perhaps if one was in London one would see a bit more. But I am not sure that would give you a true idea of what was going on in Britain in the arts. Amongst people that I know, and whose work I respect there's some amazing things happening.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cezanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment

of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'

(a) What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?

A. To me the creative process is just such an extraordinary and mysterious thing that, you know, it has to be that unfolding, changing, process which is the centre of the whole thing; and therefore I'd go on with what Cezanne says there as regards achieving anything finished.

In my own work, you know, I find it very difficult to arrive at a finished object. It makes an artificial break, in a way; the beginning of a work, and finishing, and starting another. It would be almost more real to have a continuous strip which grew. Somehow it comes back to this problem of integrating it into one's way of life. One's whole life becomes artistic rather than, you know, one's painting: you know this painting being the art, and cooking a meal or making a bed not being art - or doing any craft.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for, his psychosis.'" (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. I manage to put up a pretty good front of being a fairly stable personality, but, maybe, in the work (particularly in more direct work), I know I'm, sort of,

reaching down into hidden depths, if you like, of unconscious; which is a part of what I'm working at anyway. But, I think, to return to the idea of a real artist - if you like, an ideal artist - he has to undergo changes within himself - transformations of his personality - in order to experience fully where he is.... the real.... in order to know the real he must know the unreal. So, I can think of some historical figures all through history of art, who've been in touch with something way beyond the immediate external world. These are the things that, maybe, throw people's sanity into doubt - to go beyond the normal view of the world.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (By the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups)?"

A. That's a very complex question. No, I don't think so. If it had it would show; if it had been achieved somewhere it would seem to be a good example to work from. I don't think it has. In spite of the ideals. And, anyway, I'm not sure that that's the function..... No, I think it's a much more personal thing; it hasn't got a lot to do with, you know, broad ideas of..... you know,

generalisations as regards how people would behave, and how people should behave. You know, fitting people into this particular kind of design, I see the thing evolving in a much more fluid way; the structure should change according to what people are in it, rather than what..... sort of super-imposing one man's vision on the whole town, for example, and expecting people to, sort of, live to it. It's a sort of power-domination thing coming through.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman, and designer in Britain?"

A. I think I've really answered that question....

SQ. Yes, I think you have.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. No. Hopelessly unsatisfactory. For a start there's the selection business which selects still, as far as I know, people of a certain number of academic qualifications in preference to anybody who doesn't have those, which has got obviously nothing to do with.... Then there's this problem of generalisation of structure, which individuals go into, and they're expected to fit into: it is my experience of art school that the order leaves very little room for movement, despite it's pretensions. Maybe things have changed there; I don't know. Then there's very little preparation for working alone after you leave the place - kind of cushioning between the two states. You know, you are there, protected by a system with a grant, which gives you enough to live on

at least (I don't object to the grant; that's fine), but that's just how it turns out, that a lot of people aren't strong enough when they leave the place to, kind of continue working the way they'd like to. A lot of compromises involved: which may be a good way of filtering out some of the elements anyway, but.... it's an artificial kind of..... whole set of people who tend to win in their own - whatever thing they went into.... So it'll be the people with the heaviest foot, almost, who manage to get on after they leave. That's talking about the fine arts, more than the design part of art school.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e., those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. Well, the administrators seem to get more and more money - institutions like the Arts Council get an enormous sum of money every year, and I don't know what proportion of that goes on purely administration, but, quite a large proportion, I would say. These people obviously influence, because they have money to help artists survive - what is seen, and what isn't. But, whether they're really qualified to have that position or not is another question. That position could be taken by artists themselves on a short term basis, or part-time, or something. So that they could introduce a bit of subtlety into the situation.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art, craft and design practice, and intellectual theorisation and discussion as it takes place in, for instance, schools; art schools; higher education; T.V.; press; radio; or any other areas;?"

A. Well, I can only speak from the few people that I know, because I'm not very much in touch with the art school situation, and don't read a lot of magazines or reviews, or anything, really. So my own life seems to be reasonably together in the two aspects.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. Yes, I think I've answered that one before. Yes, definitely.

22.

Q. "Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. Yes, it's true for me. It's what I do, anyway. It's a continuing process I'm into right now, which is a sort of exploration of a particular area which I've confined myself to.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. No, I think the artist should turn out the craftsman....
be a craftsman as well.

24.

Q. This is the question a different way round; "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. I think an artist can develop from a very rude, sort of, basic ability. Something can spring from.... really from practice. Perhaps an awakening can take place - bring about a creative out-pouring in the process of doing..... anything, really.

25.

Q. Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. Not too happy, really. Well, I've had experience myself of trying to get grants from organisations; in one case successful, and in one case I was... you know. When you've been led up the garden path, being encouraged to think they are prepared to give you some money, or working towards that situation, and, several months later you get a short letter saying 'No'. It was 'cut-backs' in that particular instance, but it leaves me to feel slightly dissatisfied with them.

Interview Ten

London

18 March 1975

Interview ten is with a painter and sculptor who also does some teaching in art colleges.

INTERVIEW TEN

London

18 March 1975

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Painting and sculpture.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer? Or any combination of these?"

A. Artist.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you as regards art? Do you feel art is a profession?"

A. Only in one sense, I suppose, am I really a professional, because, for the most part, my income comes from teaching: at the same time I couldn't survive without the occasional sale as well. But then we get into a further question, which is, 'Does professional mean really living off work that you do, or is it a state of mind, or an attitude to it?' I don't know; it's a difficult question, that. That's not really an answer is it?

SQ. Oh it is sufficient: I only want you to answer from your experience of it, rather than to try and intellectualise what you might say in writing an article....

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; and design?"

A. Problems?

SQ. Problems in the categorisation of the three as different.... separate...

A. Of what kinds?

SQ. Do you feel it's a legitimate separation?

A. Arts, crafts and what? Design?

SQ. Design.

A. Yes, I think it is a legitimate.... yeah. I would agree with that.

5.

Q. "What special function (if any) do you consider the artist to have?"

A. Gosh. Special function... In relation to what?

SQ. In relation to anything. Do you feel your job as an artist..... Would you feel it necessary to justify it?

A. That doesn't seem to me to be the same question at all.....

SQ. Do you feel he plays a role in society, if you want to put it that way..... you don't have to answer the question...

A. I find it almost impossible to answer that. I mean I see it as being something that I do, but, whether it plays a role in society I don't know. I'll answer

that at some length, actually, because it's a very interesting point, because I had a show in... at the Redfern Gallery, which I gave you the catalogue of, at the end of last November. And, in fact in terms of sales I sold very very few things out of it. So it was from my point of view financially a terrific loss. In fact I ended up in debt because of it. But, in fact, I was very aware that I, in having this show, had activated a whole number of, kind of, professions and jobs; all of these people had in fact made money out of my activity except for me. I mean, it involved.... the involvement was, apart from timber and porters and the material aspect of it, there was the frame-maker; there was the photographer, there was the advertising, then there was the critics who wrote reviews of the show; there was the gallery - you know, maybe it attracted people into it because of my show; there were the printers that were involved in printing the catalogue; all of these people seemed to me to be directly involved with the things that I had instigated, and I was the one that actually did not make any money out of it - if you see what I mean. Everybody seemed to benefit out of it except me, financially. I mean I obviously had the pleasure of having the show in public, and having my work shown, and contributing that much to the arts scene, or intellectual scene, or, you know, 'What's on in London' scene.

6.

Q. "(a) Do you live off your activity as a painter/-sculptor?"

A. Partly.

Q2. "(b) If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity as a painter/sculptor?"

A. Yes, teaching.

Q2. "(c) If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily an artist, or primarily a teacher?"

A. Primarily an artist.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. I'm associated with the Redfern, but I'm not under contract. I mean they would see me as being in their stable, as it were, but I'm not under any legal obligation at all.

SQ. So you have regular exhibitions with them.

A. Yes.

SQ. But neither of you have an obligation.

A. No.

Q2. "(b) Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?"

A. No, I don't think so; I think it's fine.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Yes... 'right': My goodness! Why not?

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer), and the primacy of the aesthetic object rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness, or sacredness, apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist, craftsman or designer?"

A. Any.....what? Problems?

SQ. Problems.

A. I mean I've not noted this tendency that you've first spoken of at all - the second one. I mean the first one is certainly true; there are many people involved with pottery, for example, that prefer not to think of themselves as tea-pot makers. But,... what was the second bit?.... There was a third question, was there?

SQ. No; just two statements...

A. I mean, it seems to me that one of the important things about painting or sculpture is that it isn't functional in that sense.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly designer conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object. Would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. Well, I don't think the term relates to genius or super-humanness at all. Nor do I think that the term 'craftsman' has overtones of parochialism, let alone rough-workmanship; that would seem to me to be the opposite of what craftsmen were about. Certainly I do connect the word craftsman with holiday-trinket manufacture. 'Designer'; yes, I mean I have got a comment, because I saw the other day a book of designs by an American graphic designer called Milton Glazer, and his work seemed to me to be the most appalling sort of travesty of.... really things that happened in the first place in painting; and his whole skill was being able to, sort of, spoof certain artists. He had this fantastic kind of facility and was able to make drawings in the manner of various people - Picasso being one, but, there were lots of others as well; even old masters. And his work was, you know, of a terrifically high quality. I mean he was a fantastically skilful guy, and yet, what he was doing was, I thought, absolutely appalling. Because it was so good that it was almost like the real thing - you know, it was almost like..... It wasn't forgery, but it was very close to the actual artist; you could hardly tell the difference. And his work always appears, I think, in very high class glossy magazines, like Playboy, and that kind of thing; so they were very chic. Yet I think they were the most appalling kind of travesty and plagiarism that I think I'd ever seen. It'd be better, I think, if they were very bad designs; if they were very badly done. But in fact they were so almost there that I thought it was just awful. Because it's somehow working in the manner of somebody else, and yet not understanding the source, really, that it had come from, or the original meaning of the thing. It was simply being used as something stylistic; simply as a veneer. Without any of the effort of original creation, or original, sort of, forming of style. You know how long that could take - discovering your own identity as an artist. This guy was like a bloody magpie.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd, of Marlborough Fine Art, is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the art market."

A. I think it's on the whole pretty appalling, but Lloyd is at least frank on that score. One of the aspects that I feel is that it becomes increasingly clear that dealers are interested only in feathering their own nest, and they all do as little as they possibly can to promote, say, younger artists, or people that are coming freshly into the field. And in England in particular a great disservice has been done by the dealers, who are in a sense parasitic on artist's work and yet on the other hand do very very little to, sort of, encourage younger artists. I mean I think I've been lucky, and I think several other people have been lucky in terms of the particular time that they went into it: because it's going to become increasingly harder, because I think the gallery scene in London is, if anything, getting smaller and smaller. I think there's going to be less and less possibilities, and, if you wanted to know what was happening in English art you..... it would be impossible to find that out from a visit to the London galleries. Three quarters of your information would have to come from other sources. There's a long story of neglect, so that an extremely good sculptor, like Derek Woodham, in the early sixties, mid-sixties, was compelled to emigrate because there was absolutely.... nobody would show his work.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists, craftsmen and designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be,
(a) A good idea; (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. I think it would be a good idea, but I don't think it would necessarily improve the visual environment. You get the problems..... public sculpture has been disastrous in almost every case in England that I've seen: I've not seen a single one that's worked. And the problem is that the sculptures are always applied later, like a kind of brooch onto a dress; there's no connection with what has happened before, and the artist is simply thrown into the situation of having to design a jewel to put into a particular site. If he was involved earlier on in the designing of the buildings, maybe that would be better. But it's extremely unlikely to happen under present circumstances.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. I think there was a terrific boom in the 'sixties, which is, sort of, tailing off. And I have a feeling that what is happening in England now is a sort of quietening down and a sort of dampening down, both of ideas and of possibilities. And it seems to go along with sort of shrinking possibilities of exposure, galleries, and... and also what has happened to art schools themselves - their integration with the polytechnics.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cézanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'" (a) What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. I like Cézanne's statement very much; I think that's splendid. 'Art for art's sake'; yes. I think I'm all for it, actually. I think it would be liberating. I mean it obviously couldn't be restrictive. It could only be liberating. But one can see that there would be a problem in that the artist often feels very isolated from his public; from the public, shall we say. But the alternative of 'art for craft's sake' would seem to me not helpful in this sense. I think the public need the arts to be free and need them to be liberating and need them to be non-functional and need them to be irrational, or whatever.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for, his psychosis.'" (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. Oh yes; I would think so. I don't know if it has general currency; I would think so. I've never been sure quite what psychotic meant. It means psychologically disturbed in fact - does it? In some way?

SQ. Yes.

A. Yes, I think that would be true. I think I would agree with this.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . .

Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his otherworldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/-groups?)"

A. That's rather a long question, actually, that covers a very interesting area. I mean, I think that all you can say about this is that that is very much what the Bauhaus was about, and it seems now, in a way, a very old fashioned attitude. One hates terms like 'artistic design is simply an integral part of the stuff of life'. No; I don't agree at all, but I think that..... I know very well what this comes out of. And it was a very nice idea at the time. I think that.... I think that probably the artist is the kind of person who's perhaps not necessarily very good at design. I think there are a large number of artists who couldn't possibly be good designers. I mean, imagine somebody like Rothko, say, who is an extremely important artist, not being able to think in terms of designing something. And there's also the problem of..... design, say.... a well designed building, say, may involve a sense of harmony, or may involve..... one may need to make a balanced design; one may want to make something that is to do with (I'm repeating myself a bit here) to do with harmony and balance, whereas the artist is not necessarily involved in that. He may want to make something which is intentionally unbalanced,

or out of control, or something like that. I think the importance of painting or sculpture is that it doesn't have to be well designed.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?" - which you've in some ways covered.

A. Yes, I suppose I have. I don't know anything about craftsmen at all. I mean I think the artist will be in an increasingly vulnerable situation, actually, because there are shrinking possibilities of livelihood; polytechnics are cutting down their, sort of, teaching, in terms of hours and people. So I think there'll be less opportunity than there has been. I don't know if that answers it?

SQ. Do you think if the art colleges hadn't gone into the polytechnics it could have been different?

A. Yes. I think it probably would. Well, you see what has happened is that..... do you want me to answer that on the tape?

SQ. Well, in a minute..... Oh. Here it is.....

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. Well, in my time what has happened is that the Dip.A.D., came into existence and, with it, came the move towards modern art in art schools. When I was at art school it was very traditional and relatively very academic. So we spent most of the time 'life drawing' and 'life painting',

and doing figure compositions and things like that. Whereas when the Dip.A.D., came in it revolutionised the art schools, because it brought in modern art with a great sweep, and caused, by the sort of liberation of it, a terrific upsurge to work. And I think the things were, in fact, very very exciting for quite a long while. And then in this decade, in the 'seventies, there's come about a change... a terrific change of mood has happened in art, in painting, which I think the art schools could easily survive. But, what has happened at the same time has been, quite by chance, (I don't think the two things are in any way related), the need felt in government circles to integrate all further education under one wing, so that the art schools have been compelled to join polytechnics, and become faculties of art and design. And this happened when the art schools were at their.... did not feel sufficiently confident about themselves, or were sufficiently angry about the thing to fight. If it had happened, say, ten years earlier, it would have been a different story. But it's happened quite by chance to have hit them when they're in the process of forming to what they were when I was at school, which is, I think, on the whole sad. Much less interesting because it will mean a staff almost entirely of full-timers who are just with you all the time, so we've much less of, say, visiting staff: and so I think the whole thing can only get duller, actually.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e., those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. It certainly does, even more so in..... I was going to say even more so in America than here, but.... certainly than aspects of it here. I mean the obvious person that comes to mind is Clement Greenberg /?/ whose influence on

American painting and on the galleries has been absolutely colossal. He's the sort of Ruskin of our time, as it were. In England I suppose less so, but I think it happens to a certain extent.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for instance; schools; art schools; higher education; T.V.; press; and any other areas?"

A. Ratio. You asking me about the ratio?

SQ. The balance between....

A. I don't know how to answer this one, actually. I think I'd like to pass on that if I may.

SQ. What about..... One of the things that seems to be said about art schools at the present is, in a way in conjunction with them being absorbed into polytechs, and calling the Dip.A.D., an M.A.,

A. B.A.

SQ. B.A., and the requirement of certain 'O' and 'A' level entry, and so forth, is that there is an increasing emphasis on the intellectual side, or at least some semblance of the intellectual side....

A. No I don't think so..../phone rings; brief interruption./

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. Yes, I think it does. I think that's true. I think that's absolutely true.

22.

Q. This is a quote from Bruce Allsopp; "'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. I don't think it is necessarily part of the artist's self. I think it's some..... It may come from a source like that, but it becomes an object, it becomes a painting, it becomes a sculpture, which is something which is apart from himself. Whether he sells it or not seems to me not very much to do with it. That's a sort of separate activity. Though you could relate back to the previous question, and say there are other factors which affect what the artist does.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment, or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. That's a very interesting question, actually. Oh, I see, there's a distinction between averagely skilled tennis player and the ability of a top class professional. That's important, is it?

SQ. Well, answer the first part, and we'll see about the second part...

A. Well, what you're really doing in this question is to use the word 'art' in a slightly peculiar way, I think. 'Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment'; would you distinguish the skill from the art? The answer to that is obviously 'Yes'. But, at the same time, the art depends on the skill. So, 'would you see this as a different level of distinction....'; again there's this assumption that all art is more or less the same kind of thing, or more or less at the same kind of standard, which it isn't necessarily. Because you get painting, say, on all levels of skill and accomplishment, and inventiveness, and so on. And you sometimes get the things out of balance, like a terrific amount of skill for very little ideas or talent, or a lot of ideas and talent, and not really very much skill. So that things are always in variable ratios to one another, I think.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. Oh, God. It's almost impossible to answer that. I would be inclined to think that anyone can learn to be an artist, actually, and that pre-existing talent could even be a disadvantage.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. I only know about the Art; I don't know about the Design. I think in fact the Arts Council is doing in England a perfectly good job. I get slightly alarmed

sometimes at the size of the operation - it goes almost into a 'state control' of the arts. But, I think on the whole it's been rather good. The great danger, I see, is of a completely artificially stimulated art situation, which I think you tend to have in Holland, where the prospects are so good for the artist that it seems almost too good. You know, the county, or the town, will buy a certain percentage of their work everywhere, which, in a way, puts them in a slightly unreal situation. Market pressures may not be all that life's about, but, at the same time, one has a slight horror of the sort of green house situation where you're pampered, and there are terrible dangers that low standards may be maintained when a little frost may do them good - if you see what I mean.

Interview Eleven

Cambridge

29 March 1975

Interview eleven is with an 'artist-teacher'. As an artist he works mainly with 'low-relief sculpture'; as a teacher he lectures in art at a college of education.

INTERVIEW ELEVEN

Cambridge

29 March 1975

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. I have to put sculpture, I suppose. It's low-relief sculpture, certainly. Although I work in clay as well, in a more ceramic sense, in teaching; my own personal work relates much more positively to sculpture.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman, or designer? or any combination of these?"

A. I think the only appellation I would cover is that of artist-teacher.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you as regards art, craft or design?"

A. I think, for me, being professional is rather a contradiction in terms. Professional for most people relates to payment; for me I think the term professional relates much more to one's own integrity. And here I mean almost ruthless honesty with oneself; not being tempted to make compromises to satisfy other people either in terms of money, or in terms of pleasing or satisfying them.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. Any problems?

SQ. Do you experience any?

A. I don't. In the ceramics area I claim to be teaching not craft-pottery, but teaching using clay in a more creative sense. So there are no problems there as far as I am concerned. Not for me.

5.

Q. "What special function (if any) do you consider the artist to have?"

A. Special function in relation to what?

SQ. However you take it: in relation to society, or, do you perceive yourself, in a way, as part of something else? Or, what do you feel you give?

6.

Q. Do you live off your activity as a sculptor?"

A. No, I live off my teaching. I make some money; yes, sure; but I live off my teaching.

Q2. "If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily an artist or primarily a teacher?"

A. I don't know. If I did know, I would resolve some things for myself. I think that.... I certainly enjoy teaching - it relates very much to my work as an artist. I think the ideal situation would be if one could more

genuinely run the two in tandem, and have a part-time job rather than a full-time job. And then devote more selfishly, more time to one's own activities. I think this would..... in a sense help the teaching as well. I've been lucky, or unlucky - I'm not quite sure which - in that I've always been head of department somewhere; I came straight from college to a head of department's job - and so, in a sense, I've seen my function as being not only the teaching, but making things possible, so that the activity of teaching is part of it; the activity of being an artist is part of it; and the activity of being a catalyst is very important for me. Which I regard most highly I don't know.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. No contractual relations at all.

SQ. You sell through?

A. I sell through exhibitions; I sell privately.

Q2. "Would you wish this to be otherwise?"

A. No.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. A right. Of course he has a right. As I said before, I think they're really rather selfish people. We're lucky if we can exist in society. If society will

tolerate us, they'll have to tolerate our selfishness. So 'right' seems to me to be rather conceited - heavy-handed. We'd hope for, but don't necessarily regard it as, a right.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsman, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term artist has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist or craftsman (as appropriate)?"

A. No, I don't think so.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist, is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly 'designer' conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object. Would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. Can I look at that card for a moment, because there are one or two assumptions in it..... 'artist' - 'in the extreme'; yes. It does in the extreme relate to genius, super-humanness. Qualities of that, I think, impinge upon one's activity as an artist. 'The problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism' and 'rough workmanship'; no; I wouldn't agree with

that. Craftsmanship is part of being an artist. It's a sense of understanding of one's material - using one's materials, indeed, being able to abuse one's materials. Craftsman..... a good artist is a damn good craftsman. I don't necessarily think the reverse is true. Designer.... I don't know whether I agree with that, actually. 'abstracted from the full range of activity necessary in the production of an object'; I think it's a specific effort, a specific involvement 'necessary for the production of an object'.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. I think the artist has got a choice. If you want to be promoted in this sort of way by this sort of green grocer, then that's your choice. I think dealers are green grocers; green grocers who are dealing in things called pictures. It must be difficult for someone who is very good as an artist who isn't making any compromises at all in the sense of doing anything other than.... can't think of the word. And so they make other sorts of compromises....

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists, craftsmen and designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be (a) a good idea; (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. I have some sympathy with this question, but I.... at the same time I find myself pulled apart by it. I think, in a sense, some artists who have a sine cure tend to lose their edge - tend to be more prepared to make the wrong sorts of.... what I would regard as the wrong sorts of compromises. If they're employed directly by city councils, then they're answerable to city councils very directly. The only thing I can draw upon from my own experience here is doing a job for a church, which was a large roundel ceramic to go on the outside of a church in Newcastle. And I was conned into it, initially; in fact I knew I was being conned into it. It was a friend of a friend sort of thing. I was very unhappy about it - particularly as an atheist. But I was given a free hand. And then, after I'd agreed to do it, the free hand began to dissolve, and they asked for drawings which would give them some indication of the sorts of things I was thinking of - which, at first sight, seemed reasonable I suppose. So, I was reasonable and gave them some drawings. And they picked on samples and said, Yes; that was nice; that's the sort of thing they want. And it went on from there, and the free hand eventually completely disappeared, and I was being dictated to very precisely about what they wanted - how they wanted it. And it finished up with them effectively beginning to do my design for me. And, in the end, I made the compromise. I said, 'Well; O.K., that's what you want; you can have it.' I did it; went away, and gratefully forgot about it. I think that sort of situation, where an artist is employed directly by the city council, would certainly be a very great danger. Would it improve the visual environment? I think it would; certainly I think an informed opinion in city councils wouldn't do anything but good. How much good is another matter.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. I think times are hard. People aren't buying. There isn't the work around for an artist that there was three or four years ago. To be specific, and quote a friend of mine; his earnings (and he's someone who was functioning very much as an artist) his earnings from his work have gone down from nearly three thousand pounds a year to currently under six hundred pounds a year. I think that's a reflection of, sort of, the economic conditions. That's the economic side of it. The Arts Council... tries hard in, I think, a very difficult situation. The trouble is, with the Arts Council, and I suspect it's not so much a criticism of the Arts Council as a criticism of human beings, it tends to function very much on the traditional old-boy net; it's a different net from the public-school net, but it functions on a pretty clear network.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cézanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'" (a) What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. I think 'art for art's sake' must be liberating. 'Must' because it gives it the freedom and independence. What is my reaction to these views? Well, yes; Cézanne had a lot to say which was very good, and that's, I think, very relevant. It's in the context also of his period - a carry over from early nineteenth century French art and attitude to finish - is perfectly understandable and explicable. 'I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser'; yes, sure.

15.

Q. "There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for, his psychosis'. (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. Something's happened to Freud in the interim here, I think. Psychotic. My understanding of the word psychotic leads me to think of deliriums of grandeur. I said to you before that artists when they start to write or talk about their work tend to sound presumptuous. One of the reasons, I think, for this, is that we are playing someone else's game, in a sense. Our game is nothing to do with words, basically. When we get onto the unfamiliar in the sense of verbal language, we perhaps over-compensate a little bit. Maybe that's what the compensation is. I think inevitably the artist has got to..... is, by implication at least (not has got to) is by implication someone who is different; that doesn't make him better than or worse than; he is different from. If one is different from, then, I think, when viewed by other people any statements that you make tend to be regarded differently, again. Part of the business of being an artist is your seeing life, the world, or visual experience, in a particular way, which is in some way different, or, in some way personal. I think the view that the public has of the artist conditions this as well, in that the public always, these days, are terrified of being made a fool of, made to look stupid; they can't comprehend what's going on in the world of art, and so they, in a sense, are anxious to get back at the artist in some small way or other. And I think it's perfectly understandable - indeed, to be expected. And so, when an artist starts writing things and saying things, if the public or a critic can get hold of it and make it look

stupid,.... well, they're quite at liberty to do so. And I think artists sometimes use words very differently from other people. They depend upon the same sort of things in language - spoken language - as they do in visual language; and the nuances are often personal, almost private, and relate to previous experiences. So perhaps their use of language is slightly different from some who would use the language with greater precision, but not necessarily greater expressive powers.

16.

Q. "Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and, at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups?)"

A. That's quite a mouthful, isn't it?

SQ. Yes.

A. I don't agree with a lot of what Gropius has to say. I think that artistic design has qualities which are dependent upon intellect, and so it.... artistic design can be described as an intellectual affair. It is also material in the design sense, and, it's also an integral part of the stuff of life. With regard to the Bauhaus

and their ambition to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities - that's what I think design is about. It's developing an attitude in someone with aesthetic understanding which can enable him to make the necessary compromises for commercial purposes. I think it was diametrically in opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', but I think that design, in this sense, is inevitably going to have to make compromises which 'art for art's sake' doesn't have to make. 'Have any of the Bauhaus intentions been realised?'.....oh, any of the intentions expressed here. It's not had a great effect on design for a long time now; perhaps that was because they did other things than what they stated was their intention here.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist in Britain?"

A. Present position.... I think there are more galleries around nowadays. They're having a hard time - a lean time; that's not so good. I think London is so much centre of the art world in both a commercial sense and an exhibition sense that some things have happened there which I think could spread outside - to places like Cambridge. Just taking mundane things like studios; studios are damn hard to find, if you take Cambridge as in some ways a typical, and, in some ways, quite untypical city outside the metropolis: you just can't seem to get a studio. I gave up and I now use a studio in college. I think that if Eastern Arts did a bit more about them they would try and do the same sort of job that Space have done in London - finding studios and persuading owners of derelict warehouses to let artists use the accomodation. The present state of the arts, or situation that the artists find themselves in..... In a sense they haven't anything

to complain about, really; we are the lice of the world; we live off the backs.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. No. At least yes; the role is alright. I think the political manoeuvrings that are affecting the art schools are not. The function they have to perform as art educators is fine. I think that what's happening, particularly recently, is that they are uncomfortable, almost anachronistic structures which administratively have been untidy. And so a political decision has been made to tidy them up, and they've been tidied up. Administratively that may be fine; I'm not very sure of the effect that that will have on the way in which they can fulfil their role. I'm frankly rather concerned, but, we'll have to wait and see.

SQ. Do you see any pressure towards the academic increasing through the polytechnics?

A. There was a big move after the war to try and persuade the public that the separation of housing units was bad, and, sort of intellectually, one went along with the notion that the dustman should live next door to the doctor who would live next door to the garage mechanic who should live next door to the busdriver who should live next door to the lawyer. And, for all sorts of political reasons one tends to have, I think with me, a certain sympathy with this notion. But, it didn't work. And it didn't work because people are different. They function in different ways; they think in different ways; they talk in different ways, and they have different sorts of interests and friends. What's happening with the polytechnic's developments seems to me almost an extension

of that. The notion that all learning should go on in one great monolithic structure seems fine. All these young people are all thirsty and yearning for greater understanding and more and more experience of the academic. And so what you do is you put them all together and say, 'There you are; you're all together; you're going to learn a lot from one another'. And, sometimes some people do. But I..... the fact that there are such things as specialisms - the fact that there are things you go to university to read, special subjects - is something which has emerged over a great length of time. And one of the reasons that they've been able to develop is because of their very specialism. I'm not advocating the break up of all the polytechnics into mini art schools and mini schools of philosophy and so on, but, I think that the art school can, in a sense, benefit from this very isolation from other..... Although where I think the art schools have lost out is that they haven't realised quite the breadth of their own study and brought in people like philosophers to teach alongside artists. There's been some attempt at it, but I'm not very convinced by what I've seen of the attempts - sort of an attempt to give the artist a bit of 'culture', poor ignorant bugger that he is; he should be made to read Shakespeare, or whatever! That's wrong, I'm convinced. O.K., sure. I think there are things that are relevant to artists, but the way is not to put him in a large complex and say, 'There you are! It's all around you; go and drink!' So the art school..... but, as always, one talks about The art school, and there are many art schools - some of them very good, and some of them absolutely diabolical. And one generalises so much; but, then again, one generalises about 'The Polytechnic'; there are good and bad. As always these are dependent on the men who actually function and make them.... make them run. Like a school; the school my kids go to is as good as the headmaster; or as good as the headmaster can make it for his staff.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. Yes, I think they do. Kandinsky had the nice theory (he had this great hang-up about triangles.... read a lot of Kandinsky in our course, you see - anyone who'll speak about the ethereal perfume of a triangle is perhaps rather suspect), but, I think one of the things he said which is relevant is, to paraphrase it; The development of art is rather like a triangle, the apex of which is being pushed up by discoveries of artists now involved in the process, and that man breaking new ground has with him other men who are engaged on similar sorts of work, and they can understand the nature of, or the value of, the discovery; and then you go down through progressive layers of experience and understanding..... So you do need people who are able to lead others to a better understanding. I don't know if you've ever had the experience of being in a gallery, and seeing someone give a lecture. It's incredible; they collect a whole host of people who are really nothing to do with the lecture. They may start giving a lecture to ten students or ten people, and finish up giving a lecture to fifty. So people do like others to help them understand and to respond to work. A very small thing... we were in the National Gallery (I've got two daughters), and they asked me something about materials, and so, very quickly, I started to talk to them, and I forget what was being said, but I then took them and showed them a tempera painting, and a fresco, and early Flemish, and Venetian - and it was done very quietly, me just talking to my kids. But, when I got to the third gallery, I realised there were about eight people all standing around behind listening to me talk to my young children. And I think people like to know - want to know - more; and so people who

can help the public to understand.... O.K., some will get it wrong; a lot will get it wrong. But at least I think they're doing some promotion. And they're helping the public; they may be helping the artist. Obviously some writers there are... particular things which interest them. Just look at the effect of Ruskin. Enormous effect. You could say that he destroyed Turner in a sense. I'm not very sure that he did, but one could certainly argue that. But I think he helped to promote a particular conception of art. In some ways he may be regarded as having been misguided. I don't think I would like to stand up and be brave enough to say that it was an evil influence, or a wrong influence. He made a contribution to the understanding of a lot of people; I think he also may have helped artists. Then what was true then is true now. It seems to me almost behind this question, again... this thing I mentioned earlier; the fear that people have of being conned by modern art. And, at the same time, they like to understand; they like to know that they're not being conned or they like to know that there is a big come-on. And so the role of the critic - the serious critic - is important.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for instance, schools, art schools, higher education, T.V., Press, radio, or any other areas?"

A. I think there are two almost contradictory responses that this question elicits from me. There is so much pretentious verbiage coming from the States about art, and a lot of other things - rather a publish or perish syndrome. But, I think that there is an intellectual aspect to the process of art. It is refined by discussion.

I think the discussion that goes on between artists is the most helpful thing for artists. I know several people whose work I don't like, but whose opinions I respect. But I listen to them more than I listen to the opinion of the mythical man-in-the-street. The function of the discussion in the schools and the art schools and higher education is one of, I think, broadly understanding, of developing an attitude or approach which will be helpful - will expand their horizon - will help them. But the T.V.,... The press; yes; the specialist press; sure. Again one knows magazines you wouldn't give a light for an opinion from them. Whereas others with critics one respects, and high quality reviews and serious reviews that one takes a great deal of note of. But the press generally is again in a compromised situation. It's trying to sell newspapers first. If there happens to be a bit of information or cultural levelling that's almost a by-product in their terms. About television, I always find myself very distressed by the banality of much that goes out about the arts. It makes me worried a great deal about the rest of television. Anyone who knows anything about a particular subject under discussion always seems to be up in arms about it; says, 'How trite! How wrong!', or 'How dangerous to put that over in that way.' But, again, that.... they're more interested in ratings, often, than the quality of what they're.....

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. I don't think they... either the critics or the art market necessarily force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression. There are examples of this occurring; I can think of one particular artist who

took some work along to his gallery, and they said, 'That's no good; we can't sell that; your work's always in triangles; go back and do some more triangles, quick.' And he went back and did some more triangles. There was an example of the art market encouraging adherence to a particular style and mode of expression; it did not force it though; the artist could have said, 'Get stuffed!' It may have been a pre-requisite of continuing success for that particular artist. I think there's another factor here which is more important than this, and that is that any period has focussed upon particular problems. And they have focussed upon them in particular ways. So there tends to be a generality of appearance to the work of any period. O.K., there are rogues. There are rogue-artists who break this, and, William Blake doesn't fit in well. But he wouldn't fit in well anywhere. And that is right, and, I'm sure, proper..... But I don't think one can be critical of artists for being children of their own time, period, or culture. All of these things affect the format of a work, and the change tends to be rather slow - very seldom enormously dramatic. So that the work that appears at any one time almost looks as though it's been confined within particular boundaries. Indeed it has, but they're not the boundaries set up by the critics or the art market. They're the boundaries set up by the things which are beyond the control of the artist.

22.

Q. This is a quote from Bruce Allsopp; "'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living.' Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. Certainly art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is; it's also, possibly, something which he sells to earn a living. I don't sell to earn a living - this is the compromise thing. I think all work in some sense of the artist is part of himself.

I know I'm as guilty as anyone of saying that my work is not autobiographical. It's not autobiographical, necessarily, in the simple sense; it is in an absolute truer sense in being a reflection of what you are as a person; what you're about - the emotional facts which are affecting you as a human being.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment, or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. I think certainly any activity one engages in, as an artist, requires skill; but the skill that's being used for particular purposes..... which not necessarily relates to the skill itself. If it were, I think, that element which was skill would be given greater prominence than other factors in the work. I think, you know, there are things about artists..... I think superficially one responds to the skill of a tennis player and a top class professional, but there's all sorts of reasons why that breaks down. I think there are, as always, a fair number of us around who, without any sense of being world shattering or even important are the equivalent of a reasonably skilled tennis player. There are others around - a great army..... but I don't think that can be sustained. The relationship between technical expertise and a work of art is sometimes over-stated. I'll leave it at that if I may.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent."

A. I think we all have as human beings qualities which the world labels as being artistic. Education can certainly help the development of these. I think that is for the benefit of the person, rather than anybody else. It doesn't necessarily make them into artists. A lot of nonsense, I think, is talked about art - the usual nonsense, you know, you're either born with it or you're not. There are all sorts of things which affect this. The sort of things I'm talking about here are experiences, opportunities. There's this great myth about the artist being an inarticulate idiot; I haven't known an artist who's been an inarticulate idiot. Sometimes some of them put up the pretence, but I'm sure this is a defence. I remember teaching when I first came out of college, where, at a particular school I had a lot of admiration for the work of one particular kid. He was very special; he had considerable manual dexterity. But he was also a difficult child; a child who had problems with reading and numeracy. And I made a lot of enquiries about this particular child throughout the school, and I then went back to his junior school and talked to the teachers who taught him there; and exactly the same thing came up. If you take it chronologically, right from the junior school, he'd been a difficult kid; he had had problems with reading; he'd had problems with counting - mathematics - with organising abstract thought processes. But he liked to draw. So, when things looked like they were going to be difficult for this child, the teacher would say, 'That's alright Peter; you sit and go and draw that'. And when he was writing, 'Well, don't bother to write the story; just write a few words, and draw the picture.' He was going through a particular phase of being disruptive in a class, and so the teacher discovered that the solution to this was to say to the child, 'Go and paint that picture you were telling us about', so he'd go and paint his picture. So, he comes to the secondary school, and he, by this stage had had

more experience of drawing and painting than most of the kids in the school; much more. And it was something that he was successful at; so he liked it, and so he spent more time at home drawing and painting. So, by the time he got to secondary school the actual experience he had had was enormous in terms of manipulating materials. And then he got to secondary school and something very similar happened, and they encouraged him because they liked to see him succeeding in something. And so you've got to the state when this boy was about fifteen, and he was a very good artist they all said; but he had much more chance; much more time. I think that any child given that sort of background and experience would have developed enormously - many of them probably a great deal more. So that I think that some of the reasons for this assumption that you've either got it or you haven't relate to a particular education and emotional background of a child.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. It's almost an impossible job they have to do. I'm never quite sure who they're operating for. The artists - many of them tend to be convinced that they're operating for their benefit; the public suspect that this is true and want to change the way they operate, for the benefit of the mythical man-in-the-street. If that could be resolved I think they could do a very much better job, either for the public or for the artist. There's this uneasy marriage which exists at the moment. Perhaps there's a need for two Arts Councils, in a sense; one which is promoting the artists, supporting them, and another one which is doing a particular job of putting things before the public for other reasons than for the benefit of the artist. I mean if you look at the Royal Academy

I suppose it's doing this; I don't have a lot of time for the Royal Academy, but the Turner exhibition - that was an operation which was for the benefit of the public; I would like to think that the Royal Academy summer exhibition worked for the benefit of the artist; I suspect it is. There are two very distinct different functions that are being promoted by the Royal Academy. The Arts Council, in a sense, tries to do both those things at once, and I think they make a hash of it because of that. If the two things could be separated more precisely, then I think they could operate much more successfully.

Interview Twelve

Fulbourne, Cambs.

29 March 1975

Interview twelve is with a print-maker and draughtsman, who also does some water colour work and wood engraving. At the time of being interviewed he was teaching three days a week, with some night-class teaching in winters.

INTERVIEW TWELVE

Fulbourne, Cambs.

29 March 1975

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity? (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Well, I'm a print-maker, mainly - print-maker and draughtsman I would describe myself as; but I do also do water-colours, and occasionally break out into wood engraving.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer? Or any combination of these?"

A. Quite difficult. I think artist, but craftsman in that I handle all my own printing.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you? as regards art or craft? Do you feel art is a profession?"

A. Yes I do. In the strict sense I regard it as meaning that I try to make a living at it, and I think it also imposes certain professional standards on one, below which one tries not to sink.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art, craft and design?"

A. Yes that's difficult. Design in what sense - in what terms? Because it's a very wide....

SQ. There are courses in design: there are people who are textile designers.... designers of furniture, or whatever.... while craftsman includes the sort of things promoted by the Crafts Council... and there is artist. Do you feel these are divisions which shouldn't be there, or which hamper you....?

A. Well, what I feel I think is that anybody who sets out to be a designer ought to have the same basic training, perhaps, that an artist has; particularly I think it's a visual training, and needs a great deal of visual awareness, and then he has to be aware of materials and their potentialities, and it would probably be quite a good thing if he started on a fairly broad basis - say at art school in his last years - and then went on to specialise in his particular field, be it furniture, or ceramics, or whatever. But I'm sure you ought to start with a broad artistic education. A broad aesthetic education. Because in my own work I always find that one part of it illuminates another part; if I'm for instance doing a wood engraving it will probably tell me something about lithography later on; if I'm doing a lithograph it will help me with a drawing. And so on. And so, in a wider field, I think you ought to find that any visual education that craftsman/designer can pick up is going to be useful to him somewhere.

5.

Q. "What special function (if any) do you consider the artist and craftsman to have?"

A. Well, I think to make the world a more livable place to be in. In a sense once you've earned your daily bread you can then go on and make the world better looking, if you like.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as an engraver, print-maker?"

A. Partly. I'm doing three days a week teaching now and two evening classes over the winter. So that my teaching is three fifths of full-time - three days a week. The rest of my time is free-lancing, and this year in fact my sales, before tax, have actually topped five hundred pounds for the first time over some years. And I'm hoping to build that up so that gradually I can kick the teaching ladder from under me - but that's for the future. It depends on the economic climate.

Q2. So question '(c)' you've answered; "If you undertake any other sort of work do you consider yourself primarily an artist/craftsman, or primarily a teacher?"

A. Well, I would like to say that I'm half and half, but, to be strictly honest I'm three fifths teaching and two fifths free lancing. But then take into account holidays of course.

SQ. B ut you'd prefer to be a full time....

A. Oh, if I could, like a shot, yes. Teaching wouldn't see me for the dust.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries, patrons, customers?"

A. With galleries my work usually goes to them 'sale or return', and they take between 25 per cent and thirtythree and a third; it's more usually thirtythree and a third. With clients they come to me privately, and, to some extent, I temper the wind to the shorn lamb: if they look as if they're impoverished I let them have the print at cost price, as it were, and, if they're not impoverished I stick on the retail price, so that I get the lot.

Q2. "Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?"

A. No, I don't think so; I think it's fairly satisfactory. A firm in Leicester, a few weeks ago, did buy some prints outright, which was very nice for me, but it seems to me that the sale or return basis works quite satisfactorily.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Certainly.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist/craftsman?"

A. Well, here I think I like to please my customer, shall we say, and please myself. Now, take an example: I have a design to do for a label for a collection, which was to be a little oval design of lettering with a design in the middle; the collection was actually of things called 'drainers', which are rather obscure. They're ceramic inserts to meat dishes to let the gravy go through. And I thought at first that this was quite crazy, but seeing all these drainers on the wall, I realised that they're really very beautiful. And I quite saw why the collection was made. Now the problem there for me was that the person who commissioned the design had a very clear idea of what they wanted, and it was not the design that I wanted. But I felt myself that it was my job to offer alternative designs, and then fall in with their wishes and make the most of it; make the best of it; do as good a design as I could under those circumstances - something that I wouldn't be ashamed of showing afterwards. I think I succeeded in that, but this problem can arise, and you've just got to use tact and a little know-how.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly 'designer' conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object; would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. Well, let me speak here as a lithographer. My own feeling about it is that I start, say, as an artist, in that I get a particular idea that I want to put across;

I get that sorted out to the stage of doing a working drawing, and then the craftsman takes over, because lithography demands a very good standard of craftsmanship if you're to get a finished product that is any good at all; and I don't find a clash, because I find that the craftsmanship involved has a feedback to the artist's problem: in other words, it modifies what you know you can do, and what you want to do to the extent that I think it absolutely essential that the artist should also be the printer, the lithographer. I can't see that people who are painters, say, or draughtsmen, or whatever, who are commissioned to do a lithograph, and get somebody else to do the lithography for them, are doing any good at all. They are simply doing damage to print-making.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art, is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money.' What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. Well, I think that's fair enough; he's got his rent to pay, and his overheads. Yes, I think it is simply a hard headed fact of life, and the artist has to face up to it. The world doesn't owe him a living; why should it? But it's a bit rough on him sometimes.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/-designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings would be, (a) a good idea, (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. I think it would be a very good idea, and, by the time the various committees had sat on it I doubt if it would improve the visual environment. But, if you

had a happy working partnership it would be fine, of course.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. My own quite strong feeling is that the English are jolly lucky to get the artists they do, in fact - I don't think they deserve them very often. Witness the enormous queues you find for an exhibition by Van Gogh or Turner, or whoever, but, when it comes to the living artist they are as frightened as anything; because they haven't the courage of their convictions to buy what they like, and, what is worse, they don't know what they like. Well, they know what they like, but, it's rather the other way round..... they like what they know. It's jockeying them on from that position that is so tedious.

14.

Q. A quote from Cézanne. "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'" (a) What is your reaction to these views. (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. Oh, well. The views are very sound indeed. Yes, you've got to go on having this exploring, searching for something. Once you are satisfied with what you've done, unless you know it's a stage towards getting better, you've had it - you might as well pack in. Yes, I think he's right; it's the (sort of) finite, finished perfection - you ought never to say that; if you get to

the stage where you think, 'Gosh, that's marvellous', then you really are in danger.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for, his psychosis.' (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. Well, can you define psychosis first...?

SQ. A vague and loosely used term for mental derangement.

A. 'Mental derangement'... Well, I think, in a sense, an artist is round the bend or he wouldn't do it. But.... Yes, I think there is something in this... It can be a compensation for something. I feel rather like Henry Moore over this; that I don't want to be investigated too deeply, or I should stop. If I knew what made me tick....

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life... . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from:

business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups)?"

A. I agree with him very much. But, whether in fact his ideals have been realised I would be much more hesitant in saying. I think there've been some excellent shots at it, but I think we've a long way to go before that's looked on as a workable philosophy - a philosophy that's taken for granted.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist and craftsman in Britain?"

A. Well, the immediate position is rather shaky, of course - we've got roaring inflation so that for everybody self-employed the prospect is a bit gloomy. But, let's assume that there isn't inflation, or that the thing has stabilised; then I think it's quite hopeful in many ways, because I think there's a very great interest in art and craft. And I think it is possible to sell good stuff. But I don't think it's easy at the moment, and I don't think it will be easy for quite a time.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. Well, I'm not really competent to say about many of them. I think, immediately after the war, when I finished my training, the training I had at Chelsea was very satisfactory: I look back on it with a great deal of grateful-

ness. It was an extremely sound training, and has been enormously useful to me. I think some of the capers that art schools got up to in the 'fifties and 'sixties were probably rather more questionable, and some art schools are certainly very good now. I think, for example, the local one here is extremely sound on the graphics side and has a very high standard. I always look at its exhibitions and come away with my tail between my legs when I think of the competition that's coming up, because it is extremely good. But I think it's a very difficult training to give anybody, in a way; it ought to be widely based, and I think that there has been much too much throwing away the baby with the bath water, as it were. Not enough good solid slog and grammar, shall we say. Not enough insistence on good draughtsmanship, as an example. But I think probably the signs are that that is changing and that people are coming back to a more soundly based (sort of) traditional outlook.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. Well, I often take in art reviews from the magazines to the English department at school as an example of how not to write English, because they are so dreadful. No I'm firmly of the opinion that people who produce art (painters and draughtsmen and printers and people) are competent to write about it, and very few others are. I know only two or three critics whose work I value at all; the rest nowhere.

A. And do you think the rest do any damage, or are just so much....

A. No I don't think they do any damage, because people

who know anything about art don't take any notice, and people who don't know anything about art don't take any notice either.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art, craft and design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for instance, schools; art schools; higher education; T.V.; press; radio; or any other areas?"

A. Well, I think schools are pretty sound on the whole, within limits. I think, for instance, in Cambridge and Cambridgeshire, the standard is pretty high; they do produce good work. It very much depends on individual teachers, - in schools particularly. Curiously there has been discussion in the Arts Review this week about the lack of coverage on T.V., and radio of the visual arts. And I think this is very true. They deal very much with books and literature - generally, plays, and ballet, for example... opera; but it is true that the visual arts don't get very much of a showing. I think, somehow, people are still rather frightened.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. Yes, very much; they do. There's this dreadful tendency of only seeing the fashionable, and not recognising excellence over a wide field. This I do think is serious, because, if you're on the bandwagon and producing whatever's acceptable you're away; and if you're ploughing your own particular furrow, and sticking to what you want to do and

what you know is right for you..... if it doesn't happen to coincide with that, you've had it. I don't say that this happens on a local level, but, if you come to something like the John Moore's Liverpool Competition, or the Arts Council, and some of the more high powered exhibitions, you might just as well not bother to send in if you are not sending in the type of stuff that they look at; however good it is they are not interested.

22.

Q. This is Bruce Allsopp; " 'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. Yes, it is in that even if I couldn't make a living at it I should still have the twitch, and still be doing it. It's something that you have to do; it's compulsive. And one is really, I suppose, most oneself and most happy in a way when one is working. So one would go on and one must make a living at it or not. Indeed, I have done for the last twentyfive years.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment, or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. Well, skill is only part of art. I think you can, in a sense..... if you can quote Thornton Wilder when he was speaking of letters in 'The Bridge of San Luis Rey', (that was written from South America) he said that

'Style is only the faintly contemptible vessel in which the bitter liquid of the truth is conveyed.' Well, 'skill', alright, conveys what you want to say, but it isn't what you want to say in itself. It's a necessary part. And, if you get to the stage where skill is everything, then your work is going to be very empty. Now, John Farley, a wood engraver (I think it was... yes, I'm almost sure), had a very interesting little graph going across a page in a book that he wrote, which showed the artist's aesthetic development, if you like, (not a word I like particularly)... the artist's aesthetic development was one line of the graph, which went up and then tailed off to a level, while his skill of hand stayed level and then rose fairly sharply to a point where the two lines co-incided; and at that point the artist was doing really good work. Then his manual skill graph went on up, whereas his artistic awareness stayed fairly level for a bit, and then he was producing slick and rather nasty work, until his aesthetic awareness caught up again, and then he was one stage further up as a better artist, and again producing good work, because his skill and his vision matched. And I think this is very true; that you can get caught either way. You have a lot to say and you haven't the skill to say it, or you have so much skill and nothing to say. And it's only when they co-incide that you're alright. And, with any luck, you go on getting better up the page with your graph.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. You must have the particular lunacy that drives you on to do it; in other words you must find that the visual is your best way of expressing yourself. You can, I think, teach anybody to draw. I do believe this, and I've had it recently confirmed in a book by a draughtsman

whose approach to it seemed to me to be very very sound. Given the willing adult who is game to take you on as a bet, if you like, I think I could guarantee that I could teach him to draw pretty well. But it wouldn't make an artist of him. It might; it might trigger off hidden depths - who knows? But I think you've got to have this particular thing that makes you want to express yourself visually rather than by singing or dancing or whatever.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. Not very; I think the Arts Council is a bit of a joke, honestly. But I'm not really competent to talk on the others; I don't really know.

Interview Thirteen

Cambridge

31 March 1975

Interview thirteen is with a designer. She weaves her designs on the hand-loom for mass-production on the power loom. She had done some teaching, though not from financial necessity, but rather as a result of feeling, after many years experience as a designer, that she had something she wished to teach.

INTERVIEW THIRTEEN

Cambridge

31 March 1975

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. It's only weaving.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer? or any combination of these?"

A. I think I would call myself a designer, although I use the craft as the basis; but my craft is limited within the possibilities of what can be done on the power-loom. Because I design for mass production on the hand-loom.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you, as regards design and craft?"

A. Well, first of all it is a full time occupation. I've often wondered where the dividing line lies. I think that it is one's main.... it is one's life. It is for me absolutely. You know, there is nothing else. I paint in my spare time, and that isn't professional; that is amateur. But I think to be professional you have standards - you have responsibility towards your profession - and it is a complete and absolute full-time occupation.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. I think design is different from art in so far that it is interdependent; it is done for a specific purpose, whereas art is not. It is applied art - if one wants to use that word. But, I think design is a much better word. It is a very disciplined form of activity, because you have to work within the limitations of your tools, and you also have to be very aware of the end use that you are working for. You can't just let your, sort of, 'creative' mind go: you have to think whether this is going to..... whether the fabric you've designed is... will do all the things it is expected to do - that it will wear; that it will hang as a curtain ought to hang. Or, that it will cut into the kind of dress that is in fashion. You design your fabrics for a certain use - for a certain fashion, for a certain purpose, for a certain.... disciplines. Whereas an artist has none of this to consider. There are really restraints in the, sort of, 'design world'. There are always restraints in the design activity..... I prefer to call it a discipline.

5.

Q. "What special function do you consider the artist, craftsman or designer to have?" - you've partly answered that.....

A. ' have up to a point; I think it's terribly important that a craftsman can develop ideas out of the craft and put it into mass production, because you can work quite independently, and away from all the machinery; you are not tied down by the technicians; you can do your prototypes, and then say..... but you've got to know the machines you work for, otherwise it's useless. But, if you understand the machines you can do your prototypes; you can even sell from your prototype, and it is worked or

designed within the scope of the machinery which you..... which will produce it. It is also much cheaper, and it allows much greater freedom. I have designed straight onto the power loom, and I've always found it very frustrating, because I had to explain to others what I wanted to do, because I couldn't do it by myself without having to say to somebody else, 'Change that colour; I don't like that red; I want to use a different one.' And eventually, after half a dozen changes, the weaver will get tired, and look at you in despair, and think, 'Does she want yet another change?'. Whereas you might work for hours until it's absolutely perfect, by yourself, and then, for mass production, present the finished solution.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a weaver?"

A. Yes, yes I do; as a designer.

[I omitted to ask questions 6(b) and 6(c) concerning whether or not the interviewee undertook any other sort of work to support her activity as a weaver, and whether she considered herself primarily as a weaver/designer, or primarily as.....etc. She mentioned after the interview, however, that she had done some teaching, but not from necessity, but because, after an extensive period as a weaver/designer, she felt she had something she wanted to teach. Teaching, for her, therefore followed from her work as a designer. The following information is from a published source:

A talented craftsman-weaver, she came to England from Zürich in 1932. She has for a generation had an influential relationship with industry, as an advisor to the Welsh textile mills for the Rural Industries Bureau before the war, then as a designer for Helios and more recently for Tamesa; Also as a teacher at the Central School of Arts and Crafts, Hornsey, and the Royal College of Art./

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. Well, for a long time I was an employed designer - you know, attached to one firm. And this, I think, is particularly important in weaving, where each firm has a, sort of, limited range of fabrics; works with a limited number of machines; with a limited number of yarns; and is really geared to a certain type of production - say furnishing fabrics. And you get much better response if you work in the factory, because you then know the people. You also have to supervise every stage; you know, they are not allowed to change the colour, or they are not allowed to change the yarn. If you work as a free-lance person, and you sell your designs, they can do anything they like, and your.... in the end you are absolutely shocked what comes out; and I've always maintained that, to be a really successful designer, in constructive fabrics, particularly weaving, one should be in the firm, and check all the colours as they come from the dye house - see all the yarns and ensure that it is up to the standard that you really expect it to be.

Q2. "Would you wish to work in any other way?"

A. I don't think so. Well, the last four years I've been working at home - weaving the prototypes here, and then send them to the wholesale - I only work for one firm, and they have several firms working for them, so it goes to one or the other. But I couldn't do that if I hadn't got nearly forty years experience behind me.

8.

Question 8 omitted as being not relevant/.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist, craftsman or designer?"

A. Well, in my case I'm absolutely, you know, industrial designer, and I would not pretend to be anything else, even if I do occasionally a 'one-off' thing - but that is sort of a sideline as far as I am concerned.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly 'designer' conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object; would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. I think that the first part of your question is irrelevant as far as I am concerned. The second question is irrelevant in the sense that the designing of fabrics - a woven fabrics - is not a surface decoration; it is a construction of a technical problem; it is not styling; it's much more than that. You've got to know the yarn; you've got to know your..... the reaction of them; you've got to know the dyeing; you've got to know the machine. You have to think, in a way, in three or four..... or

approach the angle from three or four different angles, at one and the same time. You know, you've got to know what materials are available, and, at the very same time, you've got to know what it is to be used for; whether it is to have washing tests, or fire-proofing, or.... you know... whatever. What machinery will be available.... you even have to consider the price: you have to consider the weight; you have to consider the construction according to what it is going to be used for. And, in the end, it is an aesthetic judgement as well.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd, of Marlborough Fine Art, is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money.' What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. Well, it isn't relevant to me at all, and I think it's very sad that it has become that - you know - that it is, in a way, a sort of financial gamble. There's a very nice story, which always has pleased me. One of the big London art dealers sold some paintings which were fakes, and then they wrote round to all their clients, and said they were very sorry; they had sold them fakes, and they would refund them and have them back. And one chap wrote and said, 'I'm very sorry; I bought that painting because I liked it, and I don't want the money back; I want that painting.' And I think this is the sensible attitude. I think people who collect paintings for the sake of investment are probably doing the painting or the painters a great deal of harm.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen and designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with

architects on new buildings, would be (a) a good idea?
 (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. I don't think it would be a good thing to employ them on a permanent basis. I think it's a very good thing if local authorities see if they can spare the money to add some artistic, sort of.... something... walls, you know, whatever it is - whether it's a mural or a piece of sculpture, or anything; I think that's a very good thing. But, to have somebody permanently employed would, I think, be too narrow minded. You've got to be able to call people in from a much wider field.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. Well, I haven't really been to many exhibitions, since I don't teach regularly any more. It seems to me on the whole, on the fine arts side, there's a rather a stagnation. I think there's a lot happening in industrial design. A great many of my students have got jobs - in fact all of them, in one firm or another, as designers, or free-lance designers, and go abroad all over the world. And there is a suprising, you know, number of..... compared with when I started, when really you could count them on the fingers of two hands, the number has increased incredibly, and the number of designers now working is very large. And I think there's much more happening in that field than there is in the fine art field. But that may be my own feeling. You see, I think this wish to be original and to be different can be very deadening and very - not at all constructive for real creativity. Because it's just trying to find a way of making yourself interesting. But I suppose that's always happening, and, of your own time you always see everything - it hasn't been sorted out yet. I think in the craft world, or in the design

world, it is a very different thing.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cézanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'

(a) What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. I think, you know, a really able artist won't even think about these things. We were talking about David Hockney the other day, and somebody was asking him all sorts of questions, and he said, 'Well, I just like painting'. You know; as simple as that. 'I just paint'; and he's a jolly good painter.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read claiming to summarise Sigmund Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising or compensating for his psychosis.' (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. Is it possible to generalise on this, I wonder? You know you find in all walks of life psychotic conditions. Most painters you find very very normal people. Take Braque; I mean he was first a house painter, and then he went on to paint pictures, and he just painted all his life: and I don't think he was a psychological problem. I don't think, for instance, Henry Moore is;

but you have others who..... they are psychotic, but.... Don't you think that artists, on the whole, are rather on a pedestal, and so exposed; and so these things are noticed much more? But, when you really come down to looking at the every-day man-in-the-street you find a lot of different types, and I think you..... I don't know. I have a feeling that it is because they get named - they are regarded as individual - all this becomes rather over-exposed and over-discussed.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups?)"

A. His basic thinking, I think, was right. One shouldn't really be conscious; you know, art should be something one lives with. All the things one lives with should be beautiful, you know; one's pots and pans: paintings are only incidental, aren't they? And this is why I'm dead against all the 'individual', you know, 'arty-craft' - ceramics which pretend to be pottery, or pottery which pretends to be sculpture, and weaving which pretends to be tapestry and painting - which is really

just very pretty craft-work. And to do something which is just beautiful in itself, and very humble, is to me much more important; much more satisfying. And I regret the tendency of everybody trying to put the stamp of their own individuality. You see I think the Japanese, because this does not exist - the Japanese never signs his work at all; and that's why it's so good: because they don't think of it as a work of art: it is just the best possible pot they can make, or the best possible fabric, or whatever - best possible fan, you know; whatever they do. If one could develop - I hate to say 'go back to that'; I always think one must go forward; but, to have that simplicity of mind again. And I think Gropius had that idea, but it didn't work at the Bauhaus. The second part of your question; can you read that again...?

Q2. "Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions have been realised, by the Bauhaus, or any other group?"

A. I think very little. And you see, what they did by way of industrial design; for instance, their book of wall papers wasn't very good at all. I mean, there were odd things like the Breuer chair, which is still a classic; there were a few things.... and that was Bauhaus stuff. The students who worked afterwards; I think very few had..... probably it's because it had such a short life.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?"

A. I think on the whole he's gained a tremendous lot of recognition. And I think the best people do get the recognition they deserve. And also, the whole world is open for them, because their reputation is very good; and I think designers, although British people don't think so (but I know this) on the continent are very highly

regarded; and our schools are very highly regarded.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. Well, how many art schools are there?

SQ. The ones that you've had experience of?

A. Some are better than others. A school is as good as its staff is. And a school may be very good in one department, and not so good in another. I often regret that the old N.D.D., wasn't, sort of, re-thought and developed; that the whole thing was sort of swept over-board and the Dip.A.D., took its place. Because I think the Dip.A.D., has given slightly the wrong impression and has forced industrial designing to the, sort of, fine art area. And personally I don't mind - I go to the Tech. here and look at student's work who are interested in textiles and tell them what they ought to do, and which college to apply to, and I always say it doesn't matter whether you go to a vocational college or a Dip.A.D., college. If it's a good course, and a good portfolio, nobody will ever ask what.../indecipherable last half sentence/. It's only if you later on wanted to teach that it matters whether you have the Dip.A.D., but otherwise it doesn't matter. And a lot of the best people have come from quite minor colleges. You know, they've had it in them, and so.... And I think, on the whole, training is so terribly long - if they go on to the Royal College, you know, seven years some have; it is a terribly long time.

SQ. Seven years altogether at the Royal College?

A. No; if you have a foundation course of two years, you do Dip.A.D., for three years, and you do two or three

years at the R.C.A., then that's seven or eight years. Which is incredibly long, and I don't think it's necessary.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e., those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. I think it depends on the standard..... The person I think.... Herbert Read, for instance, probably was quite an influence on people's thinking here. But you get others who do an awful lot of spouting which is meaningless. So it's the quality of....

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art, craft and design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for example, schools; art schools; higher education?"

A. I don't know.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. I think it's only the mediocre people who are affected by that. I think the ones who have really got it, and will probably become the classics..../indecipherable/.

22.

Q. "Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is this true for you?"

A. Well, I'm not an artist; I'm a designer. I think I would go on designing whether I earn a living or not, because I like it, and I would always make things, and I would always make my own - you know, I have done ever since I was quite small; I would never follow anybody else's pattern; I would invent my own. I think very often people start with having to earn their living, and, eventually, they get so completely absorbed in it that it's less important.

23.

24. Both omitted as they focus on the concept of the artist.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. Oh dear! Sometimes I am and sometimes I'm not. Personally I'm a cat that walks alone, and I'm not involved in the activities of the Design Council, nor the Arts and Crafts.... I think they have done probably quite a bit of introducing design consciousness amongst a wider lot of people. I was once in one of the New Towns on the outskirts of London - it was Harlow actually; no, Stevenage - and the standards of the things in the shops was appalling, and they were all young families, you know, living there. And yet there wasn't a decent chair or a decent piece of furniture anywhere. And I thought of, well; what does the Design Council do in the Haymarket; it ought to be in towns like that and really show.... And it would get probably much more amongst the largest number of people.

But it's very difficult to know where, you know, where their activity begins and where it ends.

SQ. Were you anything to do with the Council for the Encouragement of Music and Art during the war.

A. No, I didn't. I was working in a factory up in Lancashire.

SQ. Did you see any of CEMA's activities?

A. I did see a bit, and it was, in fact, very impressive, what they did. You know, they had- I always remember.... I lived during the war..... I worked in a factory in Bolton, and I was also very active in.... I played violin in those days, and used to see a lot of friends who did music. And I met the young man who played in the Hallé Orchestra, and he said he'd like to go to the local art gallery where there was an exhibition of modern paintings, and, I said, 'I'll meet you there on Saturday afternoon.' And so I started talking to him about the paintings, and, within about ten minutes I had about twenty people, and I was there all afternoon and had an enormous audience, you know; and I felt how much people wanted to be taught about these things, and have paintings explained. It became very interesting, and, you know, they just followed round, picture to picture. And I think from that point of view they lost out that they didn't have guides with the exhibition and there would be guide-lectures. But it opened a great many people's eyes to art and to music in areas where it hadn't been before.

SQ. I get the impression, from reading the Arts Council's own account of CEMA, that CEMA was much more outward going, whereas the Arts Council attempted to pull things back to London and concentrate on some idea of standards, rather than just pushing it out to villages, towns,

and telling the artists, craftsmen and designers to get on with it; we'll help you.

A. It probably was much more alive in those days, and, as you say, quite rightly, it did go right out into smaller towns and villages and brought things which hadn't been there - hardly at all. Except, of course, there are many many more galleries now, and craft shops, and things; some are good, and some are not so good. But there are more galleries up and down the country, I'm sure. And I'm sure that's the war-time activities which have started that. But I would agree with you; it had a much wider terms of reference than the Arts Council. You see the Arts Council gives very little money to smaller galleries. You know, the largest whack goes to the Royal Opera House, and establishments and.... I suppose it's very very difficult to decide who deserves.....

Interview Fourteen

Great Missenden, High Wycombe

13 April 1975

Interview fourteen is with an artist-craftsman. She works as a silver-smith, undertakes some teaching, and runs the family's house and garden.

INTERVIEW FOURTEEN

Gt. Missenden, High Wycombe

13 April 1975

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, engraver, etc., etc.,)?"

A. Nowadays silver-smithing; previous to that painting in relation to textures; and, before that, sculpture.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer?"

A. An artist-craftsman, and designer as part of that. That is, I design but I execute my designs.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you as regards art, craft or design?"

A. It means I get paid for something that I've made, instead of it lying around.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; and design?"

A. Yes, because if you, as I do, feel it necessary to sell something in order to feel, I suppose, part of society, then sometimes you're in a dichotomy, in that you may be wanting to make something which you know is, almost

inevitably, unsalable; so, you work on that, and then you have a feeling of guilt because you ought to be doing something useful. So, yes, I feel a certain dichotomy.

5.

Q. "What special function (if any) do you feel the artist/craftsman/designer to have?"

A. Various. Particularly that if you have an individual working in.... with possibly very simple medium; I mean I, personally, am rather interested in working with what would be considered often to be waste; I like the idea of making something new out of what might be considered to be rubbish; that is a use to society in that it presents something in a new way; so you look afresh at everything about you because you see..... If I make something beautiful out of what others consider to be waste, then, perhaps, they look at their environment in a slightly different way.

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as...?"

A. No. No, I couldn't possibly do it if I wasn't.... at least I don't know; I haven't been in a position to have to try. I've been a protected female.

Q2. "(b) If not, do you undertake any other sort of work to support your activity?"

A. Yes, I teach part-time.

Q2. "(c). If you undertake any other sort of work, do you consider yourself primarily an artist/craftsman/-designer, or primarily a teacher?"

A. No, I don't consider myself primarily either, because the whole activity of living involves running a house, and a home, and gardening, and growing vegetables, and making things, and teaching - they're all entirely locked together. Can't really separate one from the other. I would ideally like to have them even more locked together, really. I don't think you can live properly if you live in a very separate way. And I believe that, if life is to be really meaningful, then all activities which you indulge in, whether you are cooking a meal or making something are important. They're all an important part of the whole business of being alive. So I don't consider them separate, at all.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. Well, I'm not very good about going around and trying to sell things; so I put off doing this till the week after next, always; and I have been selling things through individuals. This isn't really very satisfactory, because it means you don't get any added, sort of, 'name; but one does actually sell things that way without having to go in to be slapped in the face by somebody who says, 'I don't like your work at all'. Though I think this is actually rather weak; one probably should go out. Actually I'm getting sufficiently confident in what I've been making so that I'd just about be prepared to go out, but, I still haven't done it. Until I've done it, I can't actually say, 'This is what I do', because I haven't. But I have in fact been selling as much as I've been able to produce: but, through individuals then leading on to other individuals.

Q2. "Would you wish this to be otherwise?"

A. Yes. I would. Because I think if one displays one's work in a..... Well, it's very difficult, because I think you've got so much of a fashion - somebody happens to have a friend who has a friend who writes a note in a paper who becomes fashionable, and it doesn't really mean anything. But, on the other hand, I would quite like to be open to open criticism, if you like, and not just selling to people who say, 'Isn't that lovely'.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. I certainly think he has a right to be. I wouldn't regard 'right' as a very good word. I think it's very difficult for an artist to make a living as an artist. If he can produce work which satisfies him, and also pleases other people..... splendid.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist/-craftsman/designer?"

A. Well no; I don't personally, because I think that if you make an object, then the craftsmanship inevitably comes into it. I don't..... If you just design an object and other people make it, then obviously this is a completely different thing, and I think in that case it can often

be very unfair when the craftsman who's made it gets insufficient applause for the work that he's done; and it's very easy, on the whole, to design a thing once you have got cottoned on to what people like, or have developed a bit of a style. It's very easy to design something, but it's only when you actually make it that you come up against the faults in your design: where the designer is, in a way, cheating with what the material itself is capable of doing.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly 'designer' conjures up an idea of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object. Would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. Well, I wouldn't agree with the definition of a craftsman, actually; I think that's the definition of an arty-craftsman. Because basically anybody who is a craftsman, whether he is a blacksmith or a carpenter, the meaning of the term is that he does know how to handle the material he's involved with, and handles it with skill and love. 'Designer' is, I think, surely a very modern term; it must be, because in the past anybody who designed something also made it. Once you have a designer who designs something and is not involved with making it, you will come, I would think, upon the great difficulty that he may not be a practical designer. I mean, if a designer becomes a designer after he's been a craftsman, fine; but I don't quite accept the definition of artist either. Surely an artist is somebody who's working in a medium which he feels he has to work in in order to express things he believes to be very important.

If he's not doing that, then he's not really an artist.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the art market?"

A. Well, fair enough; I suppose it does exist in order to make people who do it money. I think it's not a very..... I think it's rather sad - a rather sad situation. But I haven't been involved in it enough to know that anything I was to say mightn't just appear like sour grapes because I wasn't involved in it. You get the impression that it is primarily to make money. Some people who've been taken up and helped have been genuinely good, but, there have obviously been some who've been taken up who've just been, sort of, phoney, and caught in with the fashion of the particular minute. And then, I suppose, in the long run it doesn't do anybody any good, but a few people have made some money inbetween, and I suppose as long as you've got enough moderately idiotic people who are going to spend money in this way..... I don't think it's really anything to do with.... it is bound to be something to do with art in that people are very affected by are they to make any money; so, I suppose my feeling on the whole is that it's a rather sad comment on the society we live in that things are only valued when they are going to make anybody some money or not.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists/craftsmen/-designers by city councils on a permanent basis to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with

architects on new buildings, would be (a) A good idea?
 (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. Well, I think it would be a good idea if it did improve the visual environment. I think there's always a certain risk in once you make anybody a civil servant then their job becomes safe. There's the risk that they then may only do things which they're sure are safe, so they may not be very adventurous. But, on the other hand, I'm sure it's better to have such people linked with the city council, than not to have them. Where was it? Somewhere recently I was listening to a radio programme where they introduced on this basis, and they'd obviously had a very beneficial effect on the visual environment, in that they were trying terribly hard to make people aware; make people object if they didn't like what happened to them - street signs or shop fronts. So, Yes. I think it's better to have somebody than not, so long as you can somehow not get them too stuck in so they stay there for fortyfive years.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. Well, I think we're a bit..... there's a great divorce between what are called the arts and what most of the population are aware of. There seems to be a coterie of people who are 'in' and they know what's going on and nobody else does. That's a bit of a shame, because really art ought to be involved with everyday existence. There isn't really much money available for.... particularly drama and theatre and things, and they need support. And there's an awful lot of fearful nonsense, just on the basis that anything that is new is.... must be better than something else. So I suppose I don't think

that it's frightfully healthy. But I don't think it necessarily..... I mean, it changes all the time. As long as people go on actually managing to do things, then I think you have the possibility of change - although I don't think the media have helped frightfully. If you're taking 'art' to cover a very wide field, and I mean to cover also 'thought', I don't think the cultural picture that emerges from the telly as an influence is a very good one. But, if you draw art down to what happens in galleries, it isn't really relevant to life..... you could go on for hours.

14.

Q. This is a quote from Cézanne; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser.'" (a) What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. Well, take the last bit first. It's obviously liberating in one sense for the artist, because he's therefore wholly concerned with that which he's doing. Whether it also is restricting, because external discipline is perhaps easier to work for than internal discipline I don't know. It's very arguable. As far as working only.... what's the last bit of the other one again? Whether work is finished?...../reads the question/. Yes, well I think I agree with him, actually. I mean, 'I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser' I would agree with. You go on, or you should go on with something as long as the

going on with it is meaningful. But, as soon as it stops being meaningful, and becomes only...because it doesn't look as finished as somebody else's then it's obviously a nonsense. So what he's referring to as 'finish' is in fact that which is accepted by a previous generation as 'finish', but not what involves the person.... I mean if you're working in order..... an artist is working in order to, in a sense, find something out, then he can go on until the moment when it is no longer meaningful to go on, then he stops. But, 'art for art's sake' is a very loaded phrase, isn't it. It doesn't somehow, in a way, mean anything. At least to me it doesn't. It's a phrase really. What is the 'art's sake'? The sake of going on? The sake of the work you're producing? Or the sake of doing the work? So I don't know. Again, one could go on saying things, but I'm not sure if they'd be any more meaningful.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising his own version of Sigmund Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising or compensating for his psychosis.'" (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. I should think it probably has general currency among many people, but I doubt that it has among many artists. Has it any validity? Well, in so far as any of us try, in life, to find those things to do which enable us to stay sane, yes; it probably has validity. But you could equally well say; if you were to take all butchers throughout the world from China to Britain they'd all have certain qualities in common; that also might be so. So it probably has validity, but I don't know if it has any relevance.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said, 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . . . Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups?)"

A. Yes, I would agree with Gropius' statement, ideally. I don't know that this is what happens; this is what should happen. I think some of the Bauhaus.... yes. I think there's been.... not very much; I think a certain amount in furniture design. Some in the house - the way people think about rooms and space. I think it's gone right through into affecting council house design; public building; not necessarily with a complete understanding of what the Bauhaus was doing. Some of the spirit has got very lost on the way.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?"

A. Well, again, if somebody gets themselves in the right place. I mean, with dress design, for instance, student competitions, and some people are very good

at putting themselves forward..... they get picked up. But I don't think it relates necessarily very much to quality. I think there's a tendency for people who are perhaps a little bit brash, perhaps also lucky, to get picked up, and I suspect a lot of good ideas from possibly rather more shy people may fall by the wayside. If you go to student's exhibitions at colleges you'll see one or two names that you'll see again in a few years time, but they're by no means necessarily the ones who were outstanding for originality in the exhibition; but they've probably either been lucky or pushed themselves in the right places. I think in order to "succeed" (in inverted commas), now, an artist has to have..... I mean if he is interested in success and living by what he is doing he has to have other qualities than artistic integrity and talent. He's got to be a very good P.R. man.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?"

A. No, not very. For instance I gather that all art students now have to have at least one or two 'A' levels to get into art school, and I don't think the ability to pass exams necessarily relates to artistic talent. I think there are fringe characters who may have considerable abilities in some directions, and who just can't pass exams. I think the cutting down artist-teachers (part-time staff) is a great pity. Practising artists brought a great deal, because they're working in a field and they're involved; for them no longer to be teaching is, I think, a great shame. And I think the whole fashion thing is a pity, in that in somewhere like the Royal College there tends to be not as much just 'getting on with it'; I think there could be a great deal more; there's a lot of 'We must deal with whatever the latest fashion is' -

whether it's playing around with electric lights or entrails, or whatever it may be at a particular time. And I think it's a pity that they're being so linked with polytechnics anyway. That you've got to make it all come within a formal structure which I don't think relates necessarily at all to whether somebody's going to be a good artist, craftsman or designer. Obviously it's much easier to teach a craftsman a craft, because they can learn that and know what they're learning; to teach somebody who's hoping to be a creative artist is very..... is a quite different thing. And therefore I think it's a pity we don't have some relating to the way in which, perhaps, the sort of Renaissance artist worked in a studio, and learned the craft while seeing the way somebody else worked. Much more one-to-one basis; you have this a certain amount in sculpture. But, I think it must be very difficult for a student now because he doesn't have to do a formal grounding, so he's got to think that he must express himself right from the very start. He's not allowed just to find out about himself through working in a fairly set and ordinary way. So, no; I don't think it's very satisfactory.

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publically?"

A. I would say, Yes; it plays a part; whether it plays a particularly desirable part is another matter. If somebody writes and states and says on television and radio..... well, I suppose Patrick Procter's dead-pan, grand piano, or whatever it may be, are absolutely splendid, and people will say, 'Oh, they're absolutely splendid; it must be us who's at fault, because I don't see anything particularly.....', so, yes; they do play a part.

But I'm a little suspect as to whether..... whether it's a very useful part..... whether it's a very honest part. I'm sure some of them try very hard to be honest, but it must be very difficult. You know, if somebody's selling well, he must have got something, so we ought to write well about them - so I don't feel they're very honest, though probably try to be.

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/-craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation as it takes place in, for instance, schools; art schools; higher education; T.V.; press; radio; or any other areas?"

A. I'm not quite sure I've grasped the question.
Ratio?

SQ. The balance between talking about and actually doing....

A. Oh, I see.

SQ. The extent to which you think there is too little or too much talking; too little or too much doing....

A. In schools I wouldn't have thought there was much talking: I would have thought the emphasis was on doing. I don't know about universities; perhaps the emphasis is there more on talking about rather than doing. But, I would have thought that in schools and in art schools they don't listen very much to what people are talking about. I don't think they probably even care. So I would have said the emphasis was on doing, which I think is just as well.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. Yes, I'm sure they do. They change it pretty swiftly, of course, when the market gets a..... doesn't go on responding. And I think there are probably some who try very hard not to be affected by fashion. But it must be very difficult when you're living in that world, and if 99 per cent of the people you come across are saying, 'That style is absolutely splendid'. When everything moved from Hard Edge Abstraction to.... if somebody didn't paint like Jackson Pollock there wasn't any point in being there, and then you suddenly get a great shift. The shift hasn't happened/~~started~~ with your critics: no; but its acceptance will have been led by or helped by or pushed by fashion. I don't see how you can avoid this though. If you've got mass circulation papers, and you've got the media talking about these things, it's bound to happen that way - unless you return to a sort of patronage.

22.

Q. Bruce Allsopp has said, "'Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living'. Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. Well, it must be true, if it's art. If somebody makes something not purely in order to sell it then it may be done with artistry, but it's quite different if he actually makes it because he has to make it. I don't know; personally I suffer from lack of self-confidence, because if I do something which pleases me I require the boosting up of somebody saying 'I like that; I would like to have it.' But that's just my inadequacy; it's not necessarily that somebody can't continue for the

whole of their life in producing things which nobody else, maybe, likes.... and then doubtless a few..... maybe nobody ever will like them. But, now and again, after a period of time, people will say 'How absolutely splendid those were'. They will appreciate their quality. But then that - if somebody is like that, then I think they are a very genuine and strong person, strong artist, who has sufficient faith in his own validity that he can continue to do that which nobody else approves of; or he just doesn't require help and approval. Most of us are weaker.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment, or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? And, if so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. No, I don't think the two things are quite the same, because.... somebody can be an extremely good craftsman, and not at all a good artist; and somebody can be a good artist and a lousy craftsman. But you can't be a good tennis player and a bad tennis player at the same time. A tennis player only has one form of skill. But you.... obviously somebody may have a brilliance on top of that. If you have a craftsman he may be absolutely brilliantly admirable, but have no..... The result is unsatisfactory because he has no soul - nothing to say, or something.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. Well, obviously you can learn to be some sort of craftsman, but previous remarks would all apply. No, I

think you have to have a certain pre-requisite of talent. Because otherwise you wouldn't go on doing it for one thing; because it's rather hard work. It's also usually fairly lonely work.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. Well, I've really been involved as a consumer only looking at things. I suppose recently there seems to be a slight confusion in that the..... as far as certain things the Design Council is concerned, they don't seem to have any categories by which they work anymore; so it's really..... you see something's got a Design Council award, and it could be for anything really. So I suppose they don't seem frightfully relevant. I think they were better soon after the origin of the Council of Design Awards, because they did relate to specific categories, and so you could weigh things up, one against another, and say, why they have awarded that particular object, and not another. But now it's spread over every field, and it seems pretty arbitrary really.

Interview Fifteen

Great Missenden, High Wycombe

13 April 1975

Interview fifteen is with a film-maker.

INTERVIEW FIFTEEN

Gt. Missenden, High Wycombe.

13 April 1975

1.

Q. "What are your main fields of activity (painter, sculptor, weaver, film-maker, etc.,)?"

A. Well, film-making.

SQ. You produce, direct, write...?

A. Yes. Well, it rather goes in the opposite order.

2.

Q. "Would you call yourself an artist, craftsman or designer? or any combination of these?"

A. Yes; I'd call myself an artist-craftsman; yes.

3.

Q. "What does the idea of being professional mean to you as regards art-craft?"

A. Well it means..... Well, I have two immediate responses to that: one is you're obviously working for a pre-determined market, being professional, and there's actually somebody willing to pay you for it; secondly, of course, I have an immediate reaction, and that is that we professionals do things well, and amateurs do things badly.

4.

Q. "Do you experience or feel there are any problems in the tripartite divisions of art; craft; design?"

A. Do I?.... Do I what? Sorry? Do I feel..... any problems.....

SQ. In dividing the world up in that way....

A. Oh, I see. Yes, I would say so as regards film-making; undoubtedly. Because I think a lot of the work that I do I would consider as craft, in that one is working on a given project for a given aim in view, where you are trying to make the best article - the best film - you can, within those confines. But, at the same time, I would have thought parts of it would qualify as.... would qualify for the designation 'art'. And design: well, I think as regards a film the whole film is design anyway. So....

5.

Q. "What special function, if any, do you consider the artist/craftsman/designer to have?"

A. What special function?..... Well, yes. He has to make a coherent whole out of what he is doing. If I could put it very briefly.....

6.

Q. "Do you live off your activity as a film-maker?"

A. Yes.

SQ. So you don't undertake any other sort of work to support that?

A. No.

7.

Q. "What sort of financial or contractual relationship do you have with galleries/patrons/customers?"

A. Well, in the sorts of films that I make - and I think it goes for the vast majority of people - you have to..... you are either contracted to make a film about a specific subject, so they are the client, they are the patron; and then that goes also for a feature film in the story-film world, where you have to.... where you may have the idea, but you still have to get the vast backing required for it, so that I would have said that, except for a small field of film-making..... But, if you are asking me, we very rarely make films without having that pre-determination either in the commercial field or from a patron or from a sponsor. The cost is so high that it's..... we have risked our money once, and the commercial returns were negligible.

Q2. "Would you wish this relationship to be otherwise?"

A. Yes; yes, I would indeed. Do you want me to expand on that?

SQ. Yes..

A. Well, at the moment there are several outlets for film-making in this country, but the only..... only two categories; one is the sponsored film for a client, which can be a government organisation, or an educational organisation, or a capitalist organisation - various things like that - or they can be for the commercial cinema, which again is for a pre-determined product; or they can be for television, which is again wanting a pre-determined product. The only field where you can work for yourself is if you manage to get backing from one or two of the funds which are available for making films, such as the Film Institute fund, or the Arts Council fund. But,

again, both of these are extremely limited for what they will put up the money for. So that, in fact, there is no organisation which exists which will support making films which are in any way experimental on a larger scale, which I would like to see.

8.

Q. "Do you think an artist has a right to make a living as artist?"

A. Yes.

SQ. And, following up what you were just talking about, do you think it reasonable that a government would support you, or some body would support you, in producing the sort of films you want to make?

A. Yes.

SQ. Would you see this as simply giving you the freedom to experiment, or would you see this as putting the film experts in control of film production?

A. Well, I think it's two ways. I think it's.... It would be very easy to become self-indulgent, and I wouldn't have any wish to do that: I don't think there's much point in trying to make something which doesn't communicate. I just think that the brakes that have been put on communication by the commercial system and the sponsored system are too strong. But, nevertheless, I think that if you get down to what you might term freedom, you should still have enough self-discipline not to be just self-indulgent.

9.

Q. "A tendency has been noted for some potters, weavers, etc., to insist on themselves being artists, rather than craftsmen, with all that this implies in terms of independence as creator (not copier or repetitious producer) and the primacy of the aesthetic object, rather than the functional object. Similarly among some painters and sculptors, a shift towards calling themselves craftsmen, reacting against some of the specialness or sacredness apparent in public use of the term 'artist' has been noted. Do you experience any problems connected with being artist/-craftsman/designer (as appropriate)?"

A. Well, I haven't found that particular problem in my field. I think, in film, 'artist' is a word that's given to you, rather than that you would take it for yourself.

10.

Q. "The problem with being called artist is that, in the extreme, the term relates to genius, super-humanness; the problem with being called craftsman is that it has overtones of parochialism, rough workmanship, holiday trinket manufacture; similarly 'designer' conjures up an image of an activity abstracted from the full range of effort and involvement necessary in the production of an object; Would you agree? Have you any comment?"

A. Well, I would agree to some extent with those. I don't know that 'artist' always necessarily conjures up the idea of 'genius': I would have thought that was pretty well gone by the board in general parlance today. Artists are becoming very much more accepted as part and parcel of society. And also very highly criticised by most people; I don't think they are regarded as genius's.

SQ. Why did you say in film that 'artist' is something given to you, rather than you taking it?

A. Well, I think if you said, 'I am a film artist', in the ambience of film-making, that would be considered pretentious. And, I suppose..... But, if you make a film which is judged in a certain way, then someone will say, 'He is a film artist'. I'd be happy to reach that position. But I think....

SQ. Do you think this term is used in relation to how you put a film together, or rather, what sort of film you make? For instance, you could say somebody like Ken Russell is catering for what would appear to be something which says, 'I'm making art'; whereas if you are making a documentary, however well put together, however you use your effects, the dialogue, whatever, you are not in the same way saying it is art; you're making a superb documentary, rather than an art-film? Is that true?

A. No, I don't think there's any strict..... there's any strict dividing line on it. You mustn't ask me to say what I think about the attitude of Ken Russell anyway. That may be his view of himself.... But.... I don't know... Would rather say, someone like Felini, or someone like that..... But I wouldn't say this, because at certain times in certain documentaries one can do a sequence which I would say was art. I would say from time to time, and, in a sense, one has a greater purity of approach, in a way, in documentary. I'm not saying one is better than the other, or.... it just happens to be the field that I'm working in mostly. But mainly, of course, the commercial film is even less artistic, to my way of thinking, than documentary. From time to time, of course, you do get greater freedom in it.

11.

Q. "Frank Lloyd of Marlborough Fine Art is reported to have said, 'Remember, I don't collect pictures, I collect money'. What do you feel about the organisation of the

art market?"

A. Well, I don't know enough about the organisation of the painting/sculpture market, but, of course, exactly the same..... that filled me with horror, that remark. But of course the whole of the commercial film world is based on exactly that. This is the thing that's held back the development of the cinema - in the West anyway. I mean you only..... It's been extremely fortuitous and extremely.... partly luck and partly sheer will that's enabled one or two people to break through and do individual films; but by and large they're just calculated films to make money.

12.

Q. "Do you think the employment of artists, craftsmen and designers by city councils on a permanent basis, to decorate and adorn public buildings and places, and to work with architects on new buildings, would be, (a) a good idea; (b) Would improve the visual environment?"

A. Well, if you think of artists merely as people who adorn other things then I think it's going to be doomed to failure. I think they've got to play an integrated role right from the beginning to have any effect; and then obviously it depends on their quality. I would have thought the idea was quite a good one, but it would take a lot of working out.

13.

Q. "What do you think of the present state of the arts in Britain?"

A. Well, fragmented, I would say, in a word. Certainly in general I would say that. There don't seem to be any

coherent movements that one can hold on to - that the public can hold on to. You have a number of individuals that are making missed word in one or two directions.

SQ. Do you think that's any different from the picture between 'sixtyfive and 'sixtyeight? Do you think there's a greater lack of coherence than there was then? Would you have answered this question differently?"

A. I think there was a different feeling in the 'sixties, because everyone had a vague sort of optimism, which is lacking now; and whatever they did they were confident about. I think generally there's a general lack of confidence - but that's more a social question, I think, possibly, than an artistic one. In the film field, of course, there's very little creative work going on, I would say, of any significance in Britain in films. And I certainly think if you judge..... well, such a lot of output of film is on television, and very little of that has any creativity in it at all. Its best work is in the factual or documentary field, on social questions, it seems to me.

14.

Q. Cézanne said; "'I must go on working, but not in order to attain a finished perfection, which is so much sought after by imbeciles. And this quality which is commonly so much admired is nothing but the accomplishment of a craftsman, and makes my work produced in that way inartistic and vulgar. I must not try to finish anything except for the pleasure of making it truer and wiser."
(a) What is your reaction to these views? (b) Is 'art for art's sake' liberating? restrictive?"

A. Yes, I agree with him, and, in..... and I touched for the 'art for art's sake' thing earlier on, when you asked me ; would I like complete freedom; and I said; well, if one did get complete freedom one should have one's

own self discipline. And I think that there's one great thing about a film which is that it has to be finished, because it costs so much money; somebody wants to see the result sometime. There's always a deadline, and you always have to put out a film with imperfections in it, in the end; or, what you regard as imperfections. So I think it has a great..... there comes a time when you say, 'That's the best we can do in that circumstance'. And that's it. And to that extent I think the discipline of film is a good one.

15.

Q. This is Herbert Read summarising his idea of Sigmund Freud; "'There is little doubt that, in some sense or other, the artist is always to be regarded as psychotic. He may not be manifestly psychotic; he may rather be a psychotic type who has found some way of disguising, or compensating for, his psychosis.'" (a) Do you think this view has any general currency? (b) Do you think this view has any validity?"

A. I would say Yes to both of them. It's..... I think because to be a creator in any way you have to stand outside, and have to feel outside the general established order of things; or vice versa; if you stand outside you see things possibly more clearly, and therefore the fact of being..... I don't know whether psychotic.... I take it to mean 'not a normally balanced average citizen'. Therefore it's clear that an artist must be this type to be able to see anything at all clearly; (a) to see it, and (b) to be able to express it.

16.

Q. "Gropius has said; 'Our guiding principle was that artistic design is neither an intellectual nor a material affair, but simply an integral part of the stuff of life. . .

Our ambition was to rouse the creative artist from his other worldliness and reintegrate him into the workaday world of realities; and at the same time to broaden and humanise the rigid, almost exclusively material, mind of the business man. Thus our informing conception of the basic unity of all design in relation to life was in diametrical opposition to that of 'art for art's sake', and to the even more dangerous philosophy it sprang from: business as an end in itself.' (a) Do you agree with Gropius in saying that 'artistic design is . . . simply an integral part of the stuff of life'? (b) Do you think that any of the Bauhaus intentions, as expressed above, have been realised? (by the Bauhaus or any other persons/groups)?"

A. I agree with the first statement. From what I know of what the Bauhaus did, I think some of the things they achieved, and some of them, to me, were almost exactly the..... nowadays some of them look grotesque. And some of them were very successful - some of their simplicities and curves and shapes which they managed to..... but some things look awful. But again it seems to me a question of taste; or of social conditions of the time. But I think undoubtedly, by the way they propagandered, and so on, they did have a positive over-all effect.

17.

Q. "What do you think of the present position of the artist, craftsman and designer in Britain?"

A. I wouldn't know enough about the other media, to really comment on that; I don't..... I think they, as I say..... it's a fragmented world to me, and they're all trying to.... it's up to the individual to make a mark for himself somewhere.

18.

Q. "Do you consider the role of the art schools to be satisfactory?" Do you have film schools?

A. Yes, you do. And you have film departments attached to a great many art schools now. From my limited experience of them, I think..... I don't know quite what they are setting out to do. They don't set out to do what in my estimation is what a film school should do. They set out to train people in the techniques of film making, it seems to me, so that they can go and, say, teach audio-visual courses, and that sort of thing. And go into other professions; or give them a bit of background of film so that they understand a bit of background of film. So, to me, they're very limited. Also they lack discipline. I have worked with a few of them, and one of the things you've got to do when making a film..... film-making is a social business; you have a group of people; necessarily a group of people, working together, making a film. And discipline is an essential part of this. Say, time-keeping; starting at the right time in the morning, and working on it. But I've actually been with people from the Royal College where the director hasn't turned up till mid-day, and people are hanging around waiting for him, and he said he didn't feel like it. This to me is what I would call 'un-professional'; this to me is the difference between amateur and professional. And he had people from acting school hanging around, and had his other colleagues hanging around, and nothing gets done; so the whole project gets frittered away. And I would say that film-making has this central discipline about it; there's a discipline about film making - whatever kind of film-making. And art schools don't seem to me to have engendered this at all. That's a very quick summary; there's a lot more to be said. I can go on for hours on that one. But you possibly don't want it here....

SQ. Not when I have to transcribe it all....

19.

Q. "Do you consider that the industry of art-intellectuals (i.e. those who talk about and analyse, rather than make) plays a part in promoting any particular conception of art and artists publicly?"

A. Do you mean critics, writers?

SQ. Critics, writers, educators, commentators, interpreters, museum selectors, national film institutes.....

A. I would say rarely; very rarely. Once, many years ago, I started out to write a book on film critics, and I came to the conclusion that a very very small proportion of film critics have any knowledge of film; they don't have any creative attitude to it, anyway. So that, how can you expect them to have any idea as to which way it should go? If they did, they'd be a producer, or.... But, you do have a few, a very few; but, generally you find they've moved into film production. You had such a movement, for instance, in France with the Nouvelle Vogue; they all started as critics and got taken up; so in that respect, yes; they did have an effect. But I think very few pure writers have much effect; not in pure film making. If you.....well, I'm trying to think, at the moment, about anybody in this country who's had a real... I think anybody who's had any effect has been a film maker, and writing about..... The documentary movement - - it started in the thirties - all the boys who started the documentary movement were writers, and they were cineasts; they believed in film. They wrote about it a lot, and I think therefore their writing had a great effect on the start of British documentary, for example. That's another example. But I can't think of anything that's going on at the minute, where anything has any direction....

20.

Q. "What do you think of the present ratio between art/-craft/design practice, and intellectual discussion and theorisation, as it takes place in, for example, schools; art schools; higher education; T.V.; press; radio; or other areas?"

A. I wouldn't know in schools, of course, or anything like that. I don't think..... well, it seems to me there's virtually none on T.V., as far as I can see. You get a little of it in some of the arts features programmes, but they don't very much get down to the fundamental problems.

SQ. And what do you think of..... What I'm really trying to get at in that question..... What do you think of the whole difference and balance between thinking and talking about, as opposed to actually doing it?

A. Well, of course if one's talking of the media, then one's only aware of the talking about it. So I would find it difficult to answer that question. My impression is that a hell of a lot more people now are doing things, and doing things for their own satisfaction; there seems to me a tremendous movement of art and craft among a much wider part of the population. And this doesn't seem to be catered for in the media. And in fact when I was working for the B.B.C., a couple of years ago I put up an idea for such a thing, but it never got made. They're not terribly keen on it.

21.

Q. "Do you feel that in any way the art market and the professional critic tend to force adherence to a particular style and mode of expression as a pre-requisite for success, or continuing success?"

A. I wouldn't..... well; think the sort of thing I was talking about before, where they want an artist to go on repeating what he's done before, so that's safe. That is an obvious feature that goes on. But, as regards film, I would say 'Yes'; that's a hundred per cent true. This is where they come unstuck. Once they get an idea that works they want another film that works in the same way. This comes all the way back to the whole question of experimentation and development.

22.

Q. This is Bruce Allsopp; "Art is something which is part of the artist's self, as he is, and not something which he sells to earn a living.' Is this true? Or is it true for you?"

A. Well it's not true for me, no. What talent I have I sell to earn a living.

23.

Q. "Most art requires a certain level of technical accomplishment, or skill. Would you distinguish skill from art? If so, would you see this as a different level of distinction than that, for example, between an averagely skilled tennis player, and the ability of a top class professional?"

A. Oh. That's a difficult one. Yes, I would see a difference, yes. Because I think art is the thing over and above the skill.

24.

Q. "Can I learn to be an artist, or must I have a certain level of pre-existing talent?"

A. Well; I think you can learn a skill.

25.

Q. "Are you happy with the ways in which the Arts, Crafts and Design Councils carry out their activities?"

A. No. They seem to me to be loaded committees with all the wrong sorts of people on them. I don't quite know how I'd reform it, but something..... they do seem to be full of establishment do-gooders, rather than creative people. This is not entirely true. But... You do get the exceptions..... But.... so you get exactly what you were talking about now; you get repeated things, or you get the whole desire.... just promoting to the masses, the widest audience, the established forms of art - the accepted form. Again, this is not absolutely true, but there is a general tendency that way; a much greater tendency that way than the other.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Bibliography

This bibliography is divided into three parts. The first part contains books, reports and articles excluding 19th century government reports and papers, and excluding articles and news reports from newspapers. The second part contains selected news reports and articles appearing between 1972 and August 1976: the reports and articles cited range from short news items to full-page, or double-page, articles. This second part of the bibliography is organised by date within five subject-headings.

The third section of the bibliography lists relevant 19th century government reports and papers.

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SECTION B

Newspaper Articles and Reports

This, the second of the three sections of the bibliography, will be divided into five parts, namely:

1. The Arts Council and State Involvement in the Arts.
- 2.. Art Education.
3. Crafts and matters relating to the crafts.
4. Miscellaneous.
5. The Art Market and Art as Investment.

In Each Section entries will be arranged chronologically. The title of the article or report will be placed within single quotation marks.

The following abbreviations will be used:
G = Guardian: T = Times: THES = Times Higher Educational Supplement. Other newspapers will be cited in full. The newspaper title (abbreviated or full) will appear in brackets after the title of the piece cited, and the name of the author (where given).

1. The Arts Council and State Involvement in the Arts.

- 9 February 1974: 'Striking a Fair Balance for the Arts'. (T. 3rd Leader).
- 20 May 1974: 'Minister Wants Shake Up at Arts Council to Make it More Representative'. Kenneth Gosling. (T).

- 17 November 1974 'Double Our Money'. Norman St. John Stevas. (Sunday Times).
- 28 November 1974 'Arts Need Extra £6½m Government Aid'. (Evening Standard, London).
- 29 November 1974 'Inflation Threatens to Destroy Arts Council Achievements'. Kenneth Gosling. (T).
- 1 December 1974 'Paying for the Arts'. (Sunday Times, Leader).
- 27 December 1974 'Who Will Take Responsibility for Our Art Treasures?'. Hugh Leggart. (T).
- 29 January 1975 'The Case for Art in a Cold Climate'. Jennie Lee. (T).
- 3 March 1975 'Power Feud in Arts Council.' Nicholas de Jongh. (G).
- 4 March 1975 'National Theatre Asks for More'. Nicholas de Jongh. (G).
- 5 March 1975 'A Straitening for the Arts'. (G. Leader).
- 9 March 1975 'Half a Mile Down: Britain's Most Unusual Face Worker'. (Sunday Times).
- 9 March 1975 'Scottish Ventures'. (Sunday Times).
- 23 March 1975 'The Eye of the Beholder'. Marina Vaizey. (Sunday Times).
- 23 March 1975 'Follow that Guide'. David Piper. (Sunday Times).
- 23 March 1975 'Requiem for British Theatre'. J.W. Lambert. (Sunday Times).
- 25 March 1975 'Photographs and People'. Paul Overy. (T).
- 5 April 1975 'A Museum Crisis'. Letter from Denis Mahon. (T).
- 14 April 1975 'Frame Up'. Letter from Hugh Leggart. (G).
- 19 April 1975 'Nationalised Industries to be Asked to Aid Arts'. (T).
- 23 April 1975 'Fading Prints?'. Caroline Tisdall. (G)

- 23 May 1975 'Art and Wealth Tax'. Letter from Peter Grunebaum. (T).
- 2 June 1975 On state grants for local museums and galleries. Two letters from Prof. John Hale, and Francis Cheetham. (T).
- 29 June 1975 'Clear Thinking and Culture Shock'. Interview with Roy Shaw. (Sunday Times).
- 12 July 1975 'Art for the Country's Sake'. Philip Howard. (T)
- 14 July 1975 'Museum Liaison Meeting'. (T).
- 15 July 1975 'Museums and Galleries Commission too Aristocratic, Minister says'. (T).
- 18 July 1975 'Temples of the Muses Also Need Money'. John Pope-Hennessy. (THES).
- 23 July 1975 'A Labour Charter for Arts'. (G).
- 5 August 1975 'Collectors Time in the Market'. Geraldine Norman. (T).
- 24 August 1975 'In Glass Cages . . . the Mistakes of Museums'. J. Warren. (Sunday Times).
- 2 September 1975 'Labour Plea for £250m a year on Arts'. Kenneth Gosling. (T).
- 2 September 1975 'Paying for People's Art'. Nicholas de Jongh. (G).
- 9 September 1975 'Arts Council Leader Sees Way to Greater Knowledge'. Kenneth Gosling. (T).
- 10 September 1975 'Wealth Tax and The Living Artist'. Letter from Robert Adams and 32 others. (T).
- 11 September 1975 'Wealth Tax and the Living Artist'. Letter from Hugh Jenkins, Minister for Arts. (T).
- 12 September 1975 'Art and Wealth Tax'. Letter from John Gainsborough, editor of 'Arts Review'. (T).

- 12 September 1975 'First Labour Steps to a New Arts Ministry'. (THES).
- 18 September 1975 'Spending on Arts: "not appreciated"'. (T).
- 19 September 1975 'Artists and Wealth Tax'. Letter from G. Pilkington, Chairman of the Society of London Art Dealers. (T).
- 26 September 1975 'Arts For All'. Letter from Prof. John Blacking. (THES).
- 24 October 1975 'Money for Provincial Art'. Letter from Secretary Museums Association. (T).
- 27 October 1975 'Saving the Arts From Men With Cultural Malnutrition'. Andrew Faulds. (T).
- 10 November 1975 'Wealth Tax and the Living Artist'. Letter from G.R. Strauss. M.P. (T).
- 12 November 1975 'Wealth Tax and the Living Artist'. Letter from Denis Mahon. (T).
- 13 November 1975 'Arts Council Warning of Extravagance'. (T).
- 16 November 1975 'Cut-Price Masterpiece Nearly Got Away'. Colin Simpson. (Sunday Times).
- 17 November 1975 'Wealth Tax on Living Artists'. Letters from G. Pilkington, F.E. McWilliams, and Jack Beal. (T).
- 28 November 1975 'Between People and their Pleasures'. F. Gibb interviews Roy Shaw. (THES).
- 9 December 1975 'Arts Council is given £2.3m Extra'. (T).
- 29 December 1975 'Wealth Tax on Works of Art'. Letter from Denis Mahon. (T).
- 30 December 1975 'The Art of Work'. Letter from Hugh Jenkins, Minister for Arts. (T).
- 23 January 1976 'Support for the Crafts'. Letter from Hugh Jenkins, Minister for Arts. (T).

- 23 January 1976 'The Film Industry'. Letter from Clive Exton. (T).
- 31 January 1976 'Ireland "should increase arts spending"'. (T).
- 9 February 1976 'Surrealist Art Collection May Go'. Kenneth Gosling. (T).
- 14 February 1976 'Government to Help Industry Sponsor Arts'. (T).
- 15 February 1976 'The Tate Drops a Costly Brick'. Colin Simpson. (Sunday Times).
- 21 February 1976 'A Brick is a Rose is a Primrose'. (T. 3rd Leader).
- 2 March 1976 'Cake and T.V. "no advance on bread and circusses"'. (T).
- 23 March 1976 'Rolling Grant Urged for Arts Council'. (T).
- 4 May 1976 'Arts Take A Gamble on Maggie'. John Ezard. (G).
- 6 May 1976 'Ethnic Minority Art Groups "need aid"'. Kenneth Gosling. (T).
- 7 May 1976 'Art Keeps the Flag Flying'. Stephen Bann. (THES).
- 24 June 1976 'Council in the Air'. Hugh Jenkins, the ex-Minister for Arts. (G).
- 26 June 1976 'I am Worried About Roy Shaw'. Stanley Reynolds. (G).
- 28 June 1976 'Giving them the Money: Now the Arts Council Decides'. Lord Gibson Profile, by Brian Connel. (T).
- 2 July 1976 'Education Vital to the Salvation of the Arts'. (Cambridge Evening News).
- 31 July 1976 'TUC Report Calls for Special Arts Budget and Ministry'. Keith Harper. (G).

- 17 August 1976 'Young Artists' Extra-Mural Activities'. (G).
 18 August 1976 'Body Politics'. R.McDowell. (G).

2. Art Education

- 24 April 1974 'Artists and Academic Ability'. 3 letters. (T).
 26 April 1974 'Design Course Approved'. (THES).
 26 April 1974 'Shrinking Art Education'. (THES, leader).
 3 May 1974 'Gann Report Proposals on Art Courses Welcomed'. Annabel Ferriman. (THES).
 3 May 1974 'No Change in Art and Design Entry Qualifications'. (THES).
 4 October 1974 'Art Education's Artisans'. Clive Ashwin. (THES).
 4 October 1974 'Art Colleges get Pat on Back from their Graduates'. F.Gibb. (THES).
 1 December 1974 'Three Professors off the Peg'. (Sunday Times, in the 'look' section).
 20 May 1975 'Art, College, and Studio'. Robert Beard. (G).
 8 June 1975 'Art Colleges - in Danger of Strangulation'. Noel Machin. (Sunday Times).
 5 December 1975 'Hockney Says Art History Courses Waste of Time'. (THES).
 12 December 1975 'Art For Society's Sake'. Cornford, C. (THES).
 26 December 1975 'Unqualified Art Students Preferred'.

- 10 February 1976 'Ken Rowat on the Threat of Respectability Hanging Over New Degree Courses in Art.' (G).
- 16 July 1976 'Proposed Art Validation Body Rejected'. (THES).

3. Crafts and Matters Relating to the Crafts.

- 16 January 1975 'Crafts Show Place'. Richard Carr. (G).
- 18 February 1975 'Criteria for Crafts' Prudence Glynn. (T).
- 3 May 1975 'A Young Man's Fancy Turns Towards the Old Crafts'. (T).
- 20 May 1975 'Hazel Shaw Meets an Embroidery Expert'. (G).
- 19 September 1975 'Crafts are Anything But Arty For the Housewife in China'. David Bonavia. (T).
- 23 December 1975 'Great British Design No.1.', and 'The Art of Work'. both by Prudence Glynn. (T).

4. Miscellaneous.

- 15 March 1972 'How the Nineteenth Century Responded to the Magic of Photography'. Guy Brett. (T).
- 17 May 1973 'Pompeii's Fascination Recaptured in Essen'. (The German Tribune).
- 18 January 1974 'Keep the A's out of Art'. A. Wordsworth. (THES).
- 16 November 1974 'Indisputably the First Landscape Painter in Europe'. About Turner. 2 pages. (T).

- 22 November 1974 'Union Chairman'. On Astms and Design Council. (Reading Chronicle).
- 4 April 1975 'Coalface Countess'. Stephen Dixon. (G).
- 15 April 1975 '95 per cent of People in this Country are not Interested in the Visual Arts'. About David Rodgers of Wolverhampton Museum. (G).
- 23 April 1975 'Moore Trouble in Store'. G.Parry. (G).
- 23 April 1975 'Show Bigness. Richard Rond.(G).
- 21 May 1975 'Art in Country Houses'. Letter from Lord Clifford of Chudleigh. (T).
- 22 May 1975 'Art in Country Houses.' Letter from John Morley. (T).
- 27 May 1975 'More by Invitation than by Command'. Prudence Glynn. (T).
- 1 July 1975 'Festivals Still Sing a Song of Expansion'. Klaus Geitel et.al. (T).
- 2 July 1975 'Museum of the Year is Out of Doors'. Philip Howard. (T).
- 16 July 1975 'Remember the Dinosaurs, Museum Officials Warned'. Kenneth Gosling. (T).
- 16 July 1975 'Sponsored Film - Britain's Quietly Successful Cottage Industry'. E.Smart. (T).
- 21 July 1975 'Police Recover 3,000 Works of Art From Homes'. (T).
- 5 August 1975 'Aware and Absent'. Paul Overy on the Political Art Exhibitions. (T).
- 11 September 1975 'Archive Conservationists Seek Status'. A.Osman. (T).

- 19 December 1975 'Honesty lies in the Lens of the Camera'. Duff.E. (THES).
- 8 March 1976 'British Art Today'. Letter from President of Royal Academy. (T).
- 10 March 1976 'Turner Finds a Home'. (T. 3rd Leader.).
- 29 March 1976 'Sir Jack Lyons: Heart for Art's Sake'. Brian Connell. (T).
- 19 April 1976 'Keeping Private Galleries Afloat in Inflationary Seas'. Philip Howard. (T).
- 23 April 1976 'An Illustrated Guide to Old Books'. Dan Jackson. (Cambridge Evening News).
- 5 May 1976 'The Times Diary: Questions on the Nature of Art'. (T).
- 9 May 1976 'Look and See'. Suzi Gablik. (Sunday Times).
- 17 May 1976 'A Poet in Light'. A.Day. (Cambridge Evening News).
- 17 May 1976 'Group's First Fitzwilliam Exhibition'. (Cambridge Evening News).
- 23 June 1976 'Pottery Museum Captures National Honours'. Philip Howard. (T).

5. The Art Market and Art as Investment.

- 30 December 1973 'The Million Dollar Art Wrangle'. Peter Deeley. (Observer).
- 6 April 1974 'Season of Modern Picture Sales Draws to a Close'. G.Norman. (T).
- 6 April 1974 'Sotheby's - New Masters of the Art World'. G Norman. (T).
- 7 June 1974 'Antiques'. (T).
- 2 August 1974 'The Year Investors Turned the Art Market Upside Down'. G.Norman. (T).

- 4 October 1974 'Collecting, German Style'. (Times Literary Supplement).
- 30 December 1974 'He excreted, collected the result, had it canned into small tins...etc'. Michael Kustow. (G).
- 10 May 1975 'Why a Wealth Tax Could Bring Private Art Collections into the Open'. Peter Fuller. (T).
- 22 March 1975 'Middle East Money Sought for Art Scheme'. G.Norman. (T).
- 27 April 1975 'An Artistic Eye for a Profit.' S.Williams. (Sunday Times).
- 26 June 1975 'Wealth Tax Fears for British Heritage of Art and Culture'. and, 'Top Industrialists to Take Part in Art Sponsorship'. (T).
- 12 June 1975 'Wealth Tax on Art'. Letter by Peter Fuller. (T).
- 3 July 1975 '£210,000 for Monet Painting, £170,000 for Braque'. G.Norman. (T).
- 30 July 1975 'Jenkins Calms the Art World Fury'. Interview with Nicholas de Jongh.(G).
- 30 July 1975 'The Picture that Stopped a Cheque'. Michael De-la-Noy. (G).
- 5 August 1975 'Antique Trade Disappointing'. D.Wintersgill. (G).
- 12 August 1975 'Auctioneers' Plans Anger Art Dealers'. (T).
- 23 August 1975 'Art Dealers Threaten Action on Auctioneers' Premium.' (T).
- 24 August 1975 'Stealing Works of Art: the Ethics of Acquisition'. William Mostyn-Owen. (Sunday Times).
- 14 September 1975 'Capital Returns'. H.Brandon. (Sunday Times).

- 8 January 1976 'London Art Market'. Letter from George Levy, president of British Antique Dealers Association. (T).
- 12 January 1976 'London Art Market'. 2 letters, from Denis Mahon and Geraldine Norman. (T).
- 18 January 1976 'Everyone Gangs up on the 10% Art Auctioneers'. Colin Simpson. (Sunday Times).
- 1 February 1976 'The Politics of the Underground Art Business. by A.Terry and R. Ainsztein. (Sunday Times).
- 7 February 1976 'Going Back to the Middle Ages to Revive the International Art Market'. G.Norman. (T).
- 14 February 1976 'Auction Premium "may have been essential"'. G.Norman. (T).
- 22 February 1976 'The Art Game'. Bruce Page et al. (Sunday Times).
- 17 March 1976 'Caroline Tisdall examines the "sale art" conspiracy, which has resulted in a baffled public and a discouraged avant garde". (G).
- 5 April 1976 'Faking Antiques on an Astronomical Scale'. G.Norman. (T).
- 23 April 1976 'Byron Poem Sets Modern Manuscript Auction Record'. G.Norman. (T).
- 19 June 1976 'In the Artists' Quarter'. B.Hillier. (T).
- 19 June 1976 'Turner Painting Sold for Record £374,000 will stay in Britain'. G.Norman. (T).
- 11 August 1976 'Dealer Calls for Palmer Investigation'. (T).
- 11 August 1976 'How the Art World Can Easily be Fooled into Buying and Selling Fakes'. G.Norman. (T).
- 12 August 1976 'Art World Seeks Fakes Inquiry'. Robert Parker. (T).

15 August 1976

'Broad Canvas of Tom Keating Dip AD (failed)'. Stephen Fay. (Sunday Times).

SECTION C19th Century Government Reports and Papers

The references are organised chronologically. On the left appears the original reference: on the right either the abbreviated or the full title.

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|------|----------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1834 | (559) | VII | Intoxication Among Working Classes: Select Committee. (J.S.Buckingham). |
| 1834 | (404) | XLI | "Conditions on which apartments at Somerset House were bestowed on the Royal Academy: Period for which granted." |
| 1835 | (598) | V | |
| 1836 | (568) | IX | Select Committee on Art.
"appointed to inquire into the best means of extending a knowledge of the arts and of the principles of design among the people (especially the manufacturing population of the country); also to inquire into the constitution, management, and effects of institutions connected with the arts..." |
| 1836 | (in 568) | IX | Royal Academy Misc.
"Number of Exhibitors: Works of art exhibited: Number of Professor's Lectures required; and number which have been delivered by each Professor". |
| 1840 | (98) | XXIX | "Reports made by Mr Dyce, consequent to his journey on an inquiry into the state of schools of design in Prussia, Bavaria and France." |
| 1841 | (416) | VI | Select Committee on National Munuments.
Appointed to inquire into the present state of the "national monuments and works of art in Westminster Abbey, in St. Paul's Cathedral, and in other public edifices; to |

consider the best means for their protection, and for affording facilities to the public for their inspection, as a means of moral and intellectual improvement for the people".

- 1841 (423) VI Select Committee on Fine Arts.
 "appointed to take into consideration the promotion of the fine arts of this country in connexion with the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament."
- 1841 (65) XIII School of Design
 "Report to the President of the Board of Trade by the Provisional Council of the School of Design."
- 1842 (412) XXV Royal Commission on the Fine Arts.
 "appointed by Your Majesty for the purpose of inquiring whether advantage might not be taken of the rebuilding of Your Majesty's Palace at Westminster . . . for the purpose of promoting and encouraging the fine arts in Your Majesty's United Kingdom, and in what manner an object of so much importance might be most effectually promoted."

NOTE. 12 further reports were presented by the Commissioners until 1863, when the Commission was wound up, due to the death of Prince Albert. The references for the 12 reports are as follows:

- 1842 (412) XXV (1st report).
 1843 (499) XXIX
 1844 (585) XXXI
 1845 (671) XXVII
 1846 (685) XXIV
 1846 (749) XXIV
 1847 (862) XXXIII
 1849 (1009) XXII
 1850 (1180) XXIII
 1854
 1858
 1861
 1863

- 1842
1843 (454) XXIX School of Design Report.
"Report of the Council of the School of Design, 1842, 1843."
- 1843
1844 (566) XXXI Third Report of the Council of the School of Design.
1845 (654) XXVII 4th report
1846 (730) XXIV 5th report
- 1845 (612) VII Select Committee on Art Unions.
"appointed to consider the objects, results, and present position of Art Unions: how far they are affected by existing laws, and what are the most expedient and practicable means to place them on a safe and permanent basis, and to render them most subservient to the improvement and diffusion of art through the different classes of the community."
- 1847 (850) LXII School of Design.
"Report of the Special Committee of the Council of the Government School of Design, appointed to Report to the Board of Trade measures for carrying out the recommendations of the foregoing report" (the foregoing being the school of design reports).
- 1848 (720) XVI Select Committee on Works of Art.
"appointed to consider the best mode of providing additional room for works of art given to the public or purchased by means of parliamentary grants."
- 1849 (576) XVIII Schools of Design.
Report from the Select Committee on the Schools of Design.
- 1850 (730) XLII Schools of Design
"Reports on the state of the Head or Provincial Schools made to the Board of Trade since August 1849."

- 1850 (612) XV Select Committee on the National Gallery.
 "appointed to consider the present accomodation afforded by the National Gallery, and the best means of preserving and extending to the Public the works of art given to the Nation or purchased by parliamentary grants."
- 1850 (731) XLII
 1851 (1423) XLIII Design Schools.
 "Reports exhibiting the state and progress of the Head and Branch Schools of Design during the last twelve months."
- 1851 (642) XXII Report by Lord's Commissions of her Majesty's Treasury on the Site for the National Gallery.
- 1853 (867) XXXV Select Committee on National Gallery.
 appointed "to inquire into the management of the National Gallery: also to consider in what mode the collective monuments of antiquity and fine art possessed by the Nation may be most securely preserved, judiciously augmented and advantageously exhibited to the public."
- 1857 (2261) XXIV Site for National Gallery, Royal Commission.
 appointed by Her Majesty, "to determine the site of the new National Gallery, and to report on the desirableness of combining with it the fine art and archaeological collections of the British Museum."
- 1863 (3205) XXVII
 1863 (3205-1) XXVII
 1864 (3332) XIX Royal Academy, position in relation to fine arts. Royal Commission.
 appointed to "inquire into the present position of the Royal Academy in relation to the Fine Arts, and into the circumstances and conditions under which it

occupies a portion of the National Gallery, and to suggest such measures as may be required to render it more useful in promoting art and in improving and developing public taste."

- 1864 (466) XII Select Committee on Schools of Art.
 "appointed to inquire into the constitution and working and into the success of the schools of art wholly or partially supported by Government grants, or otherwise assisted by the Government, and into the system upon which the sums granted by parliament for the promotion of National Education in art are distributed and administered."
- 1866 (332) VII Select Committee on Art Union Laws.
 "to inquire into the operation of the art union laws."
- 1867 (433) X Select Committee on the Paris Exhibition.
 "to consider and report on the advisability of making purchases from the Paris exhibition for the benefit of the schools of science and art in the United Kingdom."