

Regional Oral History Office  
The Bancroft Library

University of California  
Berkeley, California

SFMOMA 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

KATHERINE HOLLAND

SFMOMA Staff, 1967–1970; 1974–1985

Curatorial Assistant, 1967—1970

Research Associate, 1974—1978

Research/Collections Director, 1979—1981

Research/Collections and Registration Director, 1981—1985

Interview conducted by  
Jess Rigelhaupt  
in 2007

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**Interview #1: August 7, 2007**

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Rigelhaupt: I'd like to ask you if you could describe your first visit to SFMOMA.

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Holland: I came to San Francisco from Oberlin [College], where I was in graduate school. I really wanted to work in the museum field so I went to the museum the first time just to check it out and see what it was like. I was working in Gump's at the time, just to get started. I thought it was a really interesting place. It was very odd, in that first time I went there was in '66. You entered on the McAllister Street side. You went up this little elevator, with an elevator operator. The one I remember most was Ed, who was the elevator operator, who would sometimes stop the elevator in between floors and pray. That was interesting.

So then you went up the elevator, and you came out into the bookshop. Then you came into these wonderful spaces, with very tall ceilings and lots of light. It was very impressive to me. It was very classical, in ways: the veterans had the first three floors, and then the museum had the fourth floor.

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But I was called by Annaliese Hoyer, who then was the librarian and the curator of prints. She called me up and asked me if I would be interested in being a curatorial assistant. I thought, oh, this is just *wonderful!* This is going to be great! So I started working in February of 1967. At that time, Jerry Nordland had just come as director, from the Washington Gallery of Modern Art. I'm going to go by office, because that's the way I remember them. So Jerry Nordland's office was at the front, nearest the bookshop. Then came the library and Annaliese Hoyer's office. Then came John Humphrey, who was the curator [of painting, sculpture, and photography]. Then came a double office. I was on one end, and the registrar was at the other end. Then came Julius Wasserstein, who was the head of installation. Then there was a big office with Cliff Peterson, who was the controller, and Flora Faulk, who was his assistant. On the other side, there was the Women's Board office—Gerta Dorfner was sort of the manager of that. The education department was in a big classroom down the hallway. It was a pretty small staff. There was a staff room. Bob Whyte was head of education, and he had a really wonderful assistant named Suzanne, and I can not, for the life of me, remember what Suzanne's last name was [Sparks]. Then there was a volunteer coordinator. I think that's about it, at the time. But I have to say—A couple of months later, Suzanne Foley arrived. She was first [a] registrar, because Hayward King had just left before I came; then she took over for Annaliese Hoyer as a curator, when Annaliese retired. I have to say, it was the most wonderful group of people. But when you're just starting out, you're so impressed with everyone. I became very close to John Humphrey, who was a dear, dear man, who really taught me about appreciating art, and the inner qualities of art. That was very important to me.

01-00:04:54 So I started out as a curatorial assistant. We were doing exhibitions like—there was a David Simpson, was one of the first ones we did. Gene Davis, the Washington color painter, the stripe painter, Gene Davis, who Jerry Nordland was really interested in. But we didn't do that many publications. So the exhibitions would come and go. We did a lot—I mean a lot—of exhibitions. But there weren't as many publications. As time went on, we did more and more publications. So am I digressing enough? Too much? No. Okay. So anyway, that's what the museum was like when I started out.

01-00:05:46 So Suzanne became curator. There were some changes. Jerry Nordland had certain artists that he was particularly interested in. Diebenkorn was definitely one of them. Ray Parker, Philip Pavia, Al Held. We had an Al Held exhibition, with this painting that must have been fifty feet long. I got my picture in *Newsweek*, as human scale. I was this little dwarf on one end of this painting. My mother couldn't believe it. I guess the thing was, everybody worked really, really hard, and made very little money. But there was a strong sense of camaraderie, particularly Sue Foley and Julius and John and me. We'd go out to lunch together, we'd go to openings together, we'd just have a lot of fun. There was a great feeling about it.

Rigelhaupt: When you made that distinction with publications and exhibitions, was I correct to hear that doing fewer publications allowed you to do more exhibitions?

01-00:07:13 Holland: No. It's just that we didn't do publications. In many ways, that was really too bad. John did a series of exhibitions called "Arts of San Francisco." It had David Gilhooly in it and Stephen Kallenbach, and it had Joseph Tanous, and it had Fritz Rauh. But we never did a catalogue. So I noticed in the listing of the exhibitions that there's "Arts of San Francisco," but it doesn't say anything about who was in it. That's really too bad. Then John did two other exhibitions: "On Looking Back," [1968] which was about Bay Area art from 1945, from the [San Francisco] Art Institute years, with Clyfford Still and Mark Rothko and people, up to I think '62. Then he did another one called "Just Yesterday," [1969] which was a real survey of what had gone on in the Bay Area for the past, by that time, it was like eight years. They were wonderful exhibitions. But if only there had been catalogues, it would have been really, really special. We did do some catalogues. The Gene Davis show had a catalogue. We did a Nathan Oliveira exhibition of prints and drawings that has a catalogue. Al Held had a catalogue. So there were some. But when you look at the list of how many exhibitions were put on, there aren't as many documents as there should have been, probably. But we were a little thin on the staffing level.

Rigelhaupt: Well, how were the decisions made about which exhibitions to make a catalogue for and which didn't get a catalogue?

01-00:09:05

Holland:

It had to do with funding, certainly. Jerry was big on publications; John, less so. He didn't really like to write much. He liked the experiential part of exhibitions, but he wasn't much of a writer. So that was not something that was of great importance to him. Annaliese Hoyer did some small catalogues, one of Sam Francis, where he made sort of original prints for the cover, which is wonderful. She did a Leonard Edmondson show that had a little catalogue. Ynez Johnson too, I think had a little catalogue. But if you look at the number of exhibitions that went on, there were not many catalogues. We got much better at it as we went along.

Rigelhaupt:

So you began as a curatorial assistant?

01-00:10:15

Holland:

I began as a curatorial assistant.

Rigelhaupt:

What did you see as some of your primary goals as you began your position?

01-00:10:24

Holland:

Well, I was really still in the learning stages. It was interesting because I hadn't finished graduate school, I'd just been in graduate school one year. I'd graduated from Pomona with a B.A. in art history, and then went to Oberlin. Got tired of Ohio. Although they had a wonderful department, actually, a wonderful department. So I really wanted to just keep learning. I had always thought I'd go back and get my Ph.D. and teach. But I really enjoyed what I was doing, so I just—I kept feeling that I was learning more and more. Then just a few months—couple months, actually—after I arrived, Suzanne Foley came from the Walker Art Center. So she brought a lot of "this is the way it's done" sort of knowledge. I think things took a real leap forward, in terms of professionalism and such. Jerry Nordland, too, because he had a broad background in the Washington Gallery of Modern Art. He'd done a lot of writing in Los Angeles. So he had a lot of experience, as well. So it just felt like we were making progress, you know? But we weren't—[sighs] We weren't there yet.

Rigelhaupt:

Trying to think back to as you first began working at SFMOMA, what were your impressions about the museum and its stature, compared to other museums in the U. S.?

01-00:12:15

Holland:

I think there was a real feeling we were somewhat isolated. At the time, we were doing—it wasn't yet the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, it was the San Francisco Museum of Art. The [California Palace of the] Legion [of Honor] was doing French art, and the [M. H.] de Young [Memorial Museum] was really doing traditional art, nineteenth century and before that. So we had a real sense of bringing contemporary art to the area. But in terms of—at the beginning, anyway—in terms of setting up connections with, say, Los Angeles or New York—the Washington Gallery of Modern Art was not a big

institution, so it took us a while. But we brought in a lot of exhibitions from the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Certainly, the Machine show [“The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Era,” 1969], Pontus Hultén’s show. I’d have to look. Sidney Janis exhibition came in the—We did a lot of photography shows, but we brought a lot of them in from the George Eastman House in upstate New York. But I don’t—Well, Jerry Nordland certainly had connections, but mostly with Washington and with L. A. Suzanne had connections. She’d gone to—I want to say Radcliffe, but that may be wrong. She’d worked at the Museum of Contemporary Art, or the Contemporary Art Institute in Boston. She’d worked at the Walker, and the Walker had a wonderful reputation. So there were those connections. John Humphrey was not interested in that at all. He was interested in photography, and he was interested in [bay] area artists, but he didn’t care if we made a huge name for ourselves or made ourselves right up there with the Museum of Modern Art. That wasn’t of interest to him. So I think at the beginning, it felt pretty—I don’t want to say second class, but it felt like it could only go up, in terms of what the possibilities were. There was certainly a community that was interested in twentieth-century art. But it hadn’t yet formed itself. The people who were active were like the Haases and people who had been connected with the Stein family, Harriet Lane Levy—these were donors. It was [Henri] Matisse and it was [Pablo] Picasso and it was fauve era. So there wasn’t that much interest at that point, in the late sixties, in what was the cutting-edge of contemporary art. That changed, as it went along.

Rigelhaupt:

So your sense of the museum being isolated as you began, did that allow it to work with more local artists and focus on contemporary art? Or was that a hindrance?

01-00:16:04

Holland:

I think that traditionally, the feeling has been, in the Bay Area art community, that the museum did not do enough. That’s always been the way. Even when they were doing more, it was not ever enough. There was a good gallery scene going on, with Hansen Gallery (later the Hansen Fuller Gallery), the Quay Gallery, and the Dilexi. So there was a lot going on. But the museum had other—it wasn’t going to be just the museum of Bay Area artists. That was not what it wanted to do. I think Jerry Nordland was interested in having it broader than just Bay region arts.

01-00:17:13

It was usually in the summertime when we did Bay region exhibitions. They were wonderful. A lot of good people. [Robert] Arneson, [David] Gilhooly, people of that nature. I was there from February of ’67. I left in April of 1970. Because my husband and I had planned to go around the world, and then he was in an accident and we had to put it off. I was gone for two years. During that time—Before I left, Jerry Nordland had pretty much figured that he wanted to renovate the galleries. They really needed renovation. The lighting wasn’t all that great, except in the big galleries. Pieces were exhibited in the corridors. People were always unhappy if their work was put in the corridors,

because it had an ad hoc feel to it. That's where we used to put small-scale pieces. He had figured out that he wanted to renovate the galleries. The veterans had relinquished the third floor, so the offices moved downstairs. The only thing that was still on the fourth floor that wasn't a gallery was a boardroom and a café, which is where the library had been before. Everything else moved downstairs. The bookstore moved to the ground floor. You could then—and this is by '72—you could then enter on Van Ness [Avenue], through the big doors. They had more than one elevator. Still had elevator operators, but they had more than one. So that was a big step forward.

Rigelhaupt:

So you were there from '67 to '70, and you came back in '72?

01-00:19:35

Holland:

'67 to '70. Came back in '72, in late '72, we got back. By that time, Jerry Nordland had left. Because he left, basically, when the renovation was done. They were looking for a director. And Mike McCone was the acting director, the associate director or acting director at the time. Then the staff had changed. Sue Foley was still there, Anne Munroe was there, Julius was certainly there. They had a PR person, Jeanne Collins, who was great. Oh, I forgot to mention Mary Miles Ryan, who was the PR person in the early years. She was hilarious. I came back, and I was floating. I worked as Mike's secretary for a little while, and then I worked as the Women's Board manager for a little while. But I helped Sue Foley with exhibitions, and I helped—Karen [Tsujimoto] was there, I think she wasn't a curator yet. I started doing research. We did a lot of research about the photography collection. I worked on an exhibition called "Women of Photography," with Margery Mann and John Humphrey doing those together [1975]. We documented the photography collection. That was really good and really interesting. I think I was called a research associate. So I would sort of float around, doing research for people. I did an exhibition of photographs by Julia Hoffman. That was in '77.

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Then we got the idea that—The museum had traditionally been oriented towards exhibitions, and it never researched in taking care of the permanent collection adequately. By that time, there was a conservation laboratory, so we could work on that, in terms of the physical aspects of the pieces. But we wanted to put together the background information about the individual pieces. I was really interested in collectors, how a permanent collection is formed, particularly when the museum does not have very much money to purchase, so that you're dependent on who the collectors are in the area, or connected with the director or whatever, as far as how the collection is formed. It makes for a sort of unusual collection. Now it's much, much, much, much better. But at the time, they had little almost vignettes. You had Matisse's *Girl with Green Eyes*, and portraits of Michael and Sarah Stein, and you had some fauves, a [André] Derain, some [Georges] Braques. So early periods. Then you had a smattering of things. But it wasn't like a fully formed collection. That was something that was discussed a lot, was whether or not

you want to be a small museum that has these special areas, or do you want to be able to show the whole spectrum of what's happened in twentieth-century art? But you can't show the whole spectrum if you don't have the money to buy them. So that was always something; they tried to plug holes here and there.

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It's interesting, because it wasn't until later, when people like Hunk and Moo Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Harry W. Anderson, gave a Jasper Johns, a [Robert] Rauschenberg, that these holes began to be plugged and things really took off. But we did do exhibitions. Henry [Hopkins] came at the beginning of '74. Now, he was L. A. Well, he had been director of the Fort Worth Art Museum before that, but he was basically based in L. A. He had a lot of ties to L. A., was at UCLA, and worked at the Los Angeles County Museum for several years. So he brought in that whole L. A. connection. Then things began really hopping. He was a great educator and a really good writer. I'm not sure he was that enthusiastic about fundraising. The things were changing where, if you were going to take a leap to the next step, to the next level, you really needed to have a different physical plant. Building a building then was a huge deal. Now people seem to do it a lot. So I'm not sure that was Henry's strength. But he was, he *is*, a wonderful guy. I mean, a wonderful guy. The neat thing about Henry was that if you went to him with an idea, he'd say, "Sure. If you can find the money, great."

01-00:26:20

So we had this idea about doing the permanent collection. A department just focused on the permanent collection. He said, "Great. If you can find the money." So Mike McCone helped us find—We got an NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] grant. We wrote a grant, and we got money from the Cowell Foundation. We set up the research collections department, just putting together all the information about the collections in one place. When the registrar, Susan King, left, I took over the registration department, too. Then we were the research collections and registration department, at the Cowell Research Center. So we zeroed in on the individual pieces. Which was wonderful. We were so fortunate. Actually, it worked out great. But our goal was to publish a catalogue, a big catalogue. We photographed everything in the painting and sculpture collection. We had a lot of people from UC Berkeley working with us on the project. Gee, at one point we had, I think, twelve people. It was really big. When you think that that's about how many people there were on the whole staff in 1967. The whole thing just grew and grew. I was the director, and then Garner Muller was the associate director for the research collections section. And Laura Sueoka worked with us, as well. Then on the registration side, it was Deborah Lehane, Deborah Neese, I can't remember if she'd gotten married. So anyway, Deborah Neese or Deborah Lehane, same person. Pam Pack. Another time it was Carol Rosset doing the registration part. So we worked together as a team. I also oversaw the matting department and the framing department. We had a lot of people. They were really special. But it was good that we had good funding, because that allowed us to—But we had people from UC Berkeley. Diana du Pont, who's now at

the Santa Barbara Museum [of Art]; Liz Armstrong, I think she's at the Walker Art Museum or Orange County Museum now; Rebecca Solnit, who's an amazing writer. She publishes a lot. But we had all kinds of other people who were very talented. Oh, I know, Steven High, who came to us from Antioch, as sort of an intern. He's now director of the Nevada Museum of Art in Reno. So it was a wonderful time and a lot of wonderful resources.

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It was also very stressful. Because we were always under such pressure. It's interesting to me, because people talk about working in museums as if you sit in your chair and you say, "That one's good, and that one not good, and that one's good, and that one's not good." Lots of deadlines, lots of stress. You're always looking for funding. Everybody has a different idea for where you're going. It makes for a very exciting atmosphere, but one can get burned out pretty easily.

Rigelhaupt:

You mentioned funding. When you came on in '67, what were the streams of funding for the museum?

01-00:30:37

Holland:

Well, there were people, like Elise Haas, Mrs. Walter Haas, Sr., and later, Evie and Walter Haas, Jr., who had traditionally given money. In terms of purchasing, there were some funds like—My personal favorite was the Albert M. Bender Fund, or the Albert M. Bender Bequest Fund. But another whole subject, is Albert M. Bender, one of my favorites. There wasn't much money, to be perfectly honest with you. There were memberships, certainly. There were admissions, certainly. But in terms of large influxes of money, or even smallish influxes of money, there wasn't a lot. It had been traditionally under funded. George Culler was there before Jerry Nordland. I think during that period, the funding situation was particularly dire. So Jerry had to rebuild. Then Henry brought in energy and new people and such, so that helped considerably. But I'm not aware of other funds, other than for accessions. Because there were traditional funds for accessions. The Women's Board brought in money. First the Membership Activities Board brought in some money. The board. The board certainly contributed. But there wasn't a lot. It was interesting, too, that it wasn't until Henry was here that they actually had budgets. I don't remember, when Jerry Nordland was around, ever seeing a budget and being told—it was always, "Yes, you have some money," or "No, you don't have money." But in terms of running a department and looking at spreadsheets—Of course, they didn't really have spreadsheets then, either. But it wasn't that way. It was sort of, "Okay, you're going to do this show. Okay, we'll give you a certain amount to do it." But there wasn't a sense of the whole. Or at least not that I was part of. Later on, it got much more sophisticated, and you knew exactly how much you had, what the budget was for your department and you knew—you could track it and all that sort of thing. But at the beginning, it was very ad hoc. Very ad hoc. Just either you could do it, or you couldn't do it.

Rigelhaupt: Did it stay that way till Henry came onboard?

01-00:34:00

Holland: Let me think about that a minute. In the beginning, our controller was Clifford Peterson. He was the type of person who would say—I'd go in and say, "Now, Clifford, I need a pen." Clifford would say, "Kathy, didn't I give you a pen two weeks ago?" It was that sort of thing. So you always were aware, acutely aware, of how tight everything was. You'd work. Like I would give tours on Sundays, give little lectures. There wasn't anything like comp time or anything, you just worked and worked and worked. Later on, you got comp time, and that was wonderful, because you actually got compensated for all the extra things you did. Well, not completely compensated, but better. Better. But I just have to say that from my perspective in 1967—the difference between 1967 and when I left in '85 was just like night and day. You could have as many pens as you wanted to. You couldn't have other things, but there was a big shift upward, in terms of funding and such. It was always tight. No matter what, it was always tight.

Rigelhaupt: You mentioned the Albert Bender Fund.

01-00:35:50

Holland: I never knew Albert Bender; he died in '42, I believe [d. 1941]. But he was this wonderful fellow who gave—He just loved to collect, and he loved to give things away. He was the son of an Irish rabbi, came to San Francisco and did very well. Well, not hugely well, but pretty well, in the insurance business. He loved to collect. He loved books and he loved music, and he especially loved art. The library at the Art Institute has an Albert Bender [gift]; Stanford [University] has an Albert Bender collection; Mills [College] has an Albert Bender collection; California Historical Society has an Albert Bender collection—because he'd buy these things and then just give them away. I think there are over 1,400 pieces at the museum that came from Albert Bender. Then when he died, he left money. So then it continued to percolate, and they bought things with it. So the credit line would be "Albert M. Bender Collection, Bender Fund purchase," or "Bender Bequest purchase." There were several variations on that credit line. He brought Diego Rivera to San Francisco. So the big *Flower Carrier* came from him, Diego Rivera. It was painted for Albert Bender by Diego Rivera. The Frida Kahlo they have of Diego Rivera and Frida Kahlo together, that's really important, that was from him. Lots of Diego Rivera. Lots of Diego Rivera drawings. [José Clemente] Orozco. He was really into the Mexicans, Mexican art. So he was just a really fascinating person. He was also interested in local artists, particularly Joseph Raphael, who was an early California impressionist. But anyway, at one point, I thought I'd write a book about him because I thought he was so neat. But I don't think that many people would be as interested in him as I am.

01-00:38:20

There were other people, individuals early on. Because Grace McCann Morley was the first director. Now, she had contacts back east. Peggy

Guggenheim and Alfred Barr at the Museum of Modern Art. She was there between 1935 and 1958, I believe. They had a Clyfford Still show, they bought the [Jackson] Pollock. The early Clyfford Still that they have was a gift of Peggy Guggenheim. So at that time, there were more connections. But I think it had sort of a fallow period.

Rigelhaupt:

What did you hear about Grace McCann Morley when you came onboard?

01-00:39:27

Holland:

She was one of the most energetic people ever. John Humphrey worked with her. He would tell how they'd have to spend all night putting up an exhibition because Grace Morley would not stop until everything was just perfect. She was really interested in contemporary art. In Mark Rothko, as I say Clyfford Still, [Arshile] Gorky. She, and there was a woman at the Legion of Honor during the war years, Jermayne MacAgy. Her husband Douglas MacAgy was at the California School of Fine Arts—San Francisco Art Institute. Those three really energized—They were part of that whole mix of what was going on at the Art Institute, with Still as a teacher, and Rothko and such. So she was, I think, very forceful. I don't know why she left, but she'd been there for a long time. '58, '35, so twenty-three years. She went to India, where she ran the museums of India. It was really interesting. They had hoped, in 1985—Let me think if this is right. I think so. That they had hoped that she would come back and be there for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the museum. But she passed away just before. She left an incredible legacy. A lot of the pieces that are in the collection were directly through her contacts. I don't know anything about George Culler. He was there for a while, but I guess it wasn't a time of real dynamics.

Rigelhaupt:

Did you hear about what Grace McCann Morley's collecting strategies were?

01-00:42:03

Holland:

I don't think there was a strategy. There may have been, but I don't know what it was. I think it was just the energy of all that was going on. She tried to get pieces where she could. Now you have goals and objectives and you have strategies and all that sort of thing. I never got the feeling—She wanted to bring sort of a whole panoply of art to San Francisco, so she laid the groundwork at the beginning, when the museum first opened. Then she moved more into contemporary art because that's what she thought was the museum's place within the institutions in the area. But in terms of a strategy, per se, I think if you look at some of the correspondence, some of the old correspondence, it was sort of like, what's around? What can we get? What can we afford to get, in terms of exhibitions? Then they would try to buy things out of exhibitions. But as to there being an actual strategy, not that I know of. Or not that I can see, per se, in collecting, because it was so much different.

Rigelhaupt: Well, in thinking about the gifts that were given and the pieces that were purchased—as you said, getting what you can get—what were some of the gems, in your mind, that you saw, as part of the permanent collection when you came on in '67?

01-00:44:23

Holland: Well, certainly *Girl with Green Eyes*. That came from Harriet Lane Levy. There were a group of people who visited Paris and knew Gertrude Stein and Leo Stein and Sarah and Michael Stein. Harriet Lane Levy was one of those. She came back, and then when she passed away, her collection came to the museum. *Girl with Green Eyes* is part of that. Certainly, Paul Klee's *Nearly Hit*, the one with the little arrow on the top of his head, is quite wonderful. Certainly, the Diego Rivera that Albert Bender got. What's interesting to me, anyway, is that when I was in the third grade in Seattle, there was a reproduction of that painting [*The Flower Carrier*] hanging in my classroom. So when I got to the museum, I was like, *whoa!* This is where this is, this is amazing. The Jackson Pollock *Guardians of the Secret* is really good. When I came, they had already traded the Mark Rothko, *Slow Swirl by the Edge of the Sea*, for a later piece. That was an unfortunate thing that happened, and everybody agrees it was not a good idea. Because the artist took it back and then wouldn't give it back again when everyone realized what an important painting it was. I think it's ended up in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Let's see, what else did I really like? Well, there's a wonderful Matisse sculpture called *The Slave*.

But those are early pieces. Early pieces. See, I was in the time where it was Pop Art—Claes Oldenburg, Jim Dine, Andy Warhol, Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns; they didn't have any of that. They were a little behind the times, in terms of that arena of collecting. They had some beautiful [Richard] Diebenkorns. Or they have some beautiful Diebenkorns. *Cityscape I, Berkeley '57*. Then later on, they got *Ocean Park* series to go with it. But a lot of the people that they showed—I wasn't from the area, so I didn't know Nathan Oliveira, or even Diebenkorn, when I started out. A lot of the things that they showed were like Philip Pavia, Raymond Parker, Leon Polk Smith, who are interesting artists, there's no doubt about it, but they aren't crucial to the telling of—You know, if you don't have very many pieces, it's pretty obvious what the holes are, if at that point, you don't have a Johns or you don't have a Rauschenberg or any of those things. So that had to be built, really. But it was the early pieces that they were best known for.

Rigelhaupt: When you came on in '67, the museum had already split from the San Francisco Art Institute?

01-00:48:18

Holland: Oh, yeah.

Rigelhaupt: Did you still have some of the juried exhibitions of young artists? Or was it more through the SECA [Society for the Encouragement of Contemporary Art] program?

01:00:48:30

Holland: I think that they had just ended the Art Association annuals, Art Institute annuals. I know there were a lot of leftover paintings from these things, because people would be only too enthusiastic to present their work for judgment, but weren't so excited about picking it up afterwards, if they weren't part of the exhibition. We did do one exhibition in 1968 called "Untitled 1968\*." As I recall, that was somehow related to the Art Institute, to the tradition. But as far as having Art Association annuals, for a while, they'd have two annuals a year. I mean in the early days. Sometimes they'd have paintings and sculpture in one, and then watercolors and prints in another, or drawings and prints in another. But they didn't have that when I was [there]. They did have that Arts of San Francisco that I had mentioned earlier. But it wasn't connected with the Art Institute, that I recall.

Rigelhaupt: So in 1975, you became a research associate. How did your day-to-day activities and your work at the museum change with your new position?

01:00:50:17

Holland: I worked a lot with John Humphrey. It was at the end, before he retired. I sort of floated. One thing in '75 that I was specifically working on was the bicentennial exhibition, "Painting and Sculpture in California, the Modern Era." That came out in '76. I worked on that a lot, and did research for it. That was mostly what I did. I sat in the back of the library and worked on that. I wasn't working full-time. I was also working for Madeleine Haas Russell, and for a short period of time, for the Walnut Creek Art Center. It wasn't really till '79 that things codified, and we got the NEA grant and we got the Cowell Foundation grant, where we set up the department. Then it was definitely just permanent collection, although we'd help out on exhibitions if they needed it. Because we were on one side of the building, and the curatorial staff was on the other side of the building, there was not as much communication—except for lunch. Always had lunch. I just did research for whoever needed it. But it was a good year. I spent over a year working on "Painting and Sculpture, the California Modern Era." That was mostly Henry's. And Walter Hopps worked on it, Jan Butterfield worked on it. It wasn't as intense as the permanent collection catalogue. Because there were so many more irons in the fire, so to speak.

Rigelhaupt: How was that exhibition received?

01:00:52:50

Holland: It was received pretty well. There wasn't overwhelming acclaim. As I recall, we didn't put an index in the catalogue, which—I don't know how that happened, but we didn't, and people were distressed about it. I have the catalogue. It was an interesting show. But I don't know if you can really win

with an exhibition like that, in terms of acclaim, because everybody has their own opinion as to what's important and what's not important. So I think that colors how it's received. It was a little spotty, I thought. But I didn't pick the pieces, so it wasn't my thing. But it was good. It was good to have it in the bicentennial year. It was good to have a California exhibition, because people really, really wanted to have something along those lines. It brought up areas that don't usually get covered. But particularly in Northern California, with people like Helen Lundeberg and Lorser Feitelson from Los Angeles, and Agnes Pelton from Palm Springs, a sort of fantastic, surreal artist. So there were some really interesting little areas that people had not been aware of. But I think there was a feeling that it could have been a little stronger. I don't know, it's hard to tell.

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Rigelhaupt: I wanted to ask you a little bit about your impressions of the Women's Board, because from my understanding, they were very active in running the museum. What were your impressions of the activities of the Women's Board when you came onboard?

02-00:00:21

Holland: Well, they were very strong willed ladies. There were two boards; there was the Women's Board and the Membership Activities Board. Membership Activities Board tended to be younger; the Women's Board tended to be older, more socially oriented. They put on balls and things of that nature, social events that would be fundraisers. But they had some quite wonderful people on the Women's Board. I'd have to refresh my memory as to exactly who, other than Mrs. Walter Haas, Sr., Mrs. Walter Haas, Jr., Harriet Henderson. Margie Boyd was active in the Activities Board. But then the Women's Board morphed into the Modern Art Council, so that it became not just women. Oh, Mary Keesling was on the Women's Board. People who had social standing of a high aspect. But it was somewhat, I want to say insular. They picked their own people.

The board of trustees was the same way; they picked their own people. So it wasn't till later that it got opened up. Also, you didn't have to give money. It was nice if you did, but you didn't have to; that wasn't a prerequisite for membership. Both boards, it was hard for them to ask for money at that time. It's not like that anymore at all. That's a big thing; to raise money is a big cachet. But in terms of day-to-day, I honestly don't know how instrumental they were. Later on, when we had the research collections and registration department, we used to have Christmas parties. A bunch of them would come, bring things. It was very pleasant. Evie Haas used to give me Christmas presents. It was very sweet. Elise Haas actually once gave me an eyeglass case that she had needlepointed herself. I think they thought of us, the staff, as being sort of—It had a proprietary feeling about it. You didn't get the feeling that they thought we were great professionals, just that we were there doing

these fun things, putting on exhibitions and such. But there were some very nice people, and they were supportive, there's no doubt about it. Gay Bradley was another one who was very active. But I never got the sense that they called the shots, the Women's Board. Although they may have on other—I don't know if Jerry Nordland thought that they did. I don't know about Henry, either. I thought that the board of trustees had more of a say.

Rigelhaupt:

In your recollection, were there people, either from the Women's Board or the board of trustees that were particularly generous with donations, either particular pieces of art or towards the purchase of art?

02-00:04:43

Holland:

Well, certainly, Elise Haas and then the Haas Juniors. Madeleine Haas Russell gave money, quite a bit of money. The Crockers, Mrs. Henry Potter. Helen Crocker, who was Helen Crocker Russell, was very generous. The Walkers, through the T. B. Walker Fund. So that's Brooks Walker and Marjorie Walker's mother. I'm probably leaving out the biggest one, but I can't think who it was. William Matson Roth was head of the board for quite a while. After that, I think Eugene Trefethen. But I didn't go to board meetings. We just did the minutes for the board, from the accessions committee.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, what were some of the accessions committee meetings? What were they like? What was talked about?

02-00:06:14

Holland:

Well, everybody had their own opinions. When I first came, I'm trying to even think if there was an accessions committee. There were accessions, but I don't think there was an accessions committee. Later on, there definitely was an accessions committee, there was no doubt about that. We would do the minutes and sometimes we would say, "A lively discussion ensued." That meant they argued. But they generally had very strong opinions. Byron Meyer was one of the people on there. Mary Keesling was on. Again, Gay Bradley, Evie Haas. Then later, Don Fisher. I'm trying to think if Frank Hamilton was on for a while. I think he was. He and Mason Wells donated several things to the museum.

02-00:07:29

But going back to the Women's Board for a second, I don't think that they gave their money just into the general operating funds, the general operating budget. They bought specific pieces for the museum. I'm quite sure that the director had input, but it was definitely "Gift of the Women's Board." But that happens a lot. That happens often. I'm trying to think if they funded exhibitions. They may have, but I'm not sure about that.

02-00:08:23

But the accessions committee, especially after Van Deren Coke came. Van Deren Coke came, I think, in 1979. He was a pretty dynamic guy. He was great. He really changed the direction of the photography collection, because John Humphrey had been traditionally the one in charge of photography. He

did a wonderful job, but he wasn't really knowledgeable about international photography, whereas Van Deren Coke was. He was really into German photography and surrealist photography and Hungarian photography, and he really revitalized that. He always had wonderful pieces that he brought to the accessions committee, and people would get really jazzed about it, they'd get very excited about it.

I guess the problem was not so much when curators would present suggestions for purchases, but when it was a sensitive gift, where you had something that maybe wasn't really up to what the standards should be, but it was someone who either had the potential for giving more, or more of interest. You get into these sort of sensitive areas, as to how much do you accept that isn't really up to snuff? Especially year-end gifts. Oh, my God. At the end of every year, I don't know, people would look at their tax returns or see what their tax situation was, and they'd give us lots of things. There wasn't really an accessions committee meeting to deal with that, you just sort of accepted them. So a lot of things came in that way, and not necessarily the best things. The problem was there was always a storage shortage. So if you accept this big steel thing that may not be that great, you have to take care of it; it's your responsibility. That's your *raison d'être*. So that was a little uncomfortable. But we didn't get many things early on, in terms of numbers. But then later on, the numbers went up and up and up. The quality, generally speaking, went up and up, too. Because when you get better things, it brings it out; better quality pieces coming up for consideration.

Rigelhaupt:

When did you start to see the upturn in the quality and the number of pieces being donated?

02-00:11:48

Holland:

Henry got there in '74. So I would say '75, '76, things really started to accelerate. Then when Van came, that accelerated even more. George Neubert was there, I think it was in the early eighties. He came from the Oakland Museum [of California] and then went to—wait, wait, wait. San Antonio, no. Oh, Sheldon Memorial Art museum [Gallery] in Lincoln, Nebraska. But we used to tease him, because he bought a couple of absolutely wonderful pieces of sculpture, but they were always like nineteen inches tall. So he had a really good eye. He had a really good eye. But when you had people who were more professional, I guess you'd say, then it inspires more gifting. Better gifting.

Rigelhaupt:

Did you get a sense that Henry and the curators were educating the board of trustees?

02-00:13:20

Holland:

I think so. I definitely think so. There was more communication; Henry would go take them on trips—or some of them, anyway, not all of them. Henry was a great educator. He was really good at that. He was really good. But I don't think Henry liked to twist arms. I didn't know Jack Lane, but I understand that

he was much better at arm twisting or encouraging participation. He brought that up to another level. Because with Collectors Forum and such, they'd go out and they'd buy big paintings and bring them back. That would be great. We didn't have that as much. Certainly, not with Jerry Nordland. When he left, a group of them gave a big *Ocean Park* Diebenkorn in his honor. I think it was the Lands, Hunter and Susan Land, and some other people.

Rigelhaupt: So how much did the staff grow from '67 to the late seventies?

02-00:14:42

Holland: A lot. I don't know numbers. Because when I said to you at the beginning about who was there, I don't think there were more than fifteen people. Then it grew a lot. Because there would be fifteen people just in the curatorial section. Julius always had three guys. But it started out, there was just one person. Well, a curator of prints and drawings, a curator of everything else, and one curatorial assistant. By the late seventies, there were one, two, three curators, and each one had an assistant. Then there was an associate director for development. Because originally, when Jerry was there, we didn't have a development person. It wasn't until Henry came that we had a development person. That makes a big difference, in terms of fundraising. The staff grew and grew. Then the conservation lab, there were another four or five people in the conservation lab. Plus a matter, plus a framer, et cetera, et cetera. It just really took off.

Rigelhaupt: Well, could you talk about how the conservation department started?

02-00:16:36

Holland: Well, I wasn't there when the conservation laboratory started. I certainly recommend you talk to Jim Bernstein. But Elise Haas felt really strongly about it, and she was the one that funded it. Because it's the Elise Stern Haas Conservation Laboratory. They had wonderful people. Inge-Lise Eckmann, who's now married to Jack Lane, and Jim Bernstein were the co-directors. They were both from Cooperstown, from the conservation program there, so really well trained. There was lots of work to do, because the collection—Originally, the collection, the paintings were in one storage area, stacked. Then they put in racks. That worked better; they more than doubled [storage space]. But then they had to do offsite storage, as well. But that's the thing about when your accessions numbers go up, you have got to do something with them. We also had a paper, photography and flat print storage area on the third floor, off the library, that we never had before. Everything was just in boxes.

Rigelhaupt: Was there a unionization campaign while you were working there?

02-00:18:14

Holland: Let me think about that. We went on strike once. I'm trying to think of when it was, when I had a small child. Gosh. Mike was there. Jeanne Collins was there. You know, I can't think of exactly when that was. Probably '77. Yeah,

'77. Late '77, or maybe '78, that we went on strike. But I think we were already unionized. As a matter of fact, now that I think about it, we did vote—and it was almost unanimous—about striking. That was sad. It was pretty acrimonious. But there was a different feeling. Whenever any institution grows, things are constantly changing. The personnel changes, the personalities change, there's a different dynamic. If you loved it the way it was in the beginning, you're going to have a harder time with it as it changes. Because when it started out, everybody was really close. Then you get bigger, you don't have that anymore.

Rigelhaupt:

So how did your job change? Day-to-day, different dynamics, maybe, with curators and directors when you became the director of research collections and the registration director.

02-00:20:15

Holland:

I wasn't as close to the curators, in part, because I was working on completely different projects. Much closer with conservation, because we were all working on the permanent collection. Certainly, the curators and we shared information. If they were going to do an exhibition from the collection, then we would pull together all the material for them and such. But part of it, just because of physical distance, you just weren't as close as you used to be. I was part of the senior management, so we'd get together to plan what exhibitions would be on, and when and such, so I was part of that. That's always been an interesting process. Julius would make this long paper chart, with all the galleries color coded, and then we would sort of figure out what went where and what we could tuck in where. But I had great respect for Suzanne Foley. I'm trying to think of when she left. I'd say, around '78.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, did she do "Space, Time, Sound" in '79?

02-00:22:08

Holland:

Then '79. But right around there. Because I think that was about when she was leaving. Too bad you couldn't talk to her, but she's passed away. Very sad.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, could you say more about some of her important exhibitions and some of her work that she did in the years you were there?

02-00:22:29

Holland:

She was wonderful at ceramics. So she did the Joseph Monsen Collection ceramics show. She did a Richard Shaw, Robert Hudson exhibition. She was really interested in the whole ceramics scene, and that was a big deal in the Bay Area. She was interested in conceptual art, so she did several exhibitions of that nature. She was a great person, a really good writer. She could be prickly, so I think that the board didn't have as good a relationship with her as they could have. That was not the easiest situation. Karen [Tsujimoto] came in—let me think about this—must be '72, probably around '72. She was great. But she's the person that everybody loves. So I think it was a little easier for

her, just because of her personality. She started out as a curatorial assistant, and then worked her way up. She did some wonderful shows—Precisionists, Wayne Thiebaud. She's very, very thorough. George Neubert was there for a while, not a long time. Then just before I left, Graham Beal came. I liked him a lot, but I was leaving and he was staying. He'd just gotten there, so I don't really know.

We had *The Dinner Party*. Ha! I'd forgotten about that. You know Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party*, that's now at the Brooklyn Museum? That was the most amazing thing. It was this *huge* installation in the rotunda. People would line up out the door, down the street. It was amazing and brought in a whole new audience that the museum had not really tapped before. So that was interesting. You'd have conceptual art, and then you had Judy Chicago, and then you had the Precisionists or [Charles] Sheeler or Thiebaud. It just became incrementally more professional and more interesting and more varied.

Rigelhaupt:

I'm trying to think about the late seventies and if there were exhibitions, along with *The Dinner Party*, that you thought were particularly strong, innovative.

02-00:26:39

Holland:

There was a wonderful George Segal exhibition, but that came from the Walker Art Center. Let's see. [pause] Sue did another one, "Northern California Clay Roots: Sculpture Now," that was in '79. Oh, Philip Guston. Absolutely, the Philip Guston show. That was wonderful. Did that with Henry and Karen. [pause] Synchronism. Oh, then we had a Jasper Johns show. That came from someplace else, but it was a big Jasper Johns show. We had a big Rauschenberg show. Those were really great. Those were really, really interesting exhibitions; and because they were big and had really excellent documentation, I think they had a big effect on the community. It's interesting. I haven't talked to artists recently who have said, "Oh, I saw that Jasper Johns show, and then it just triggered something in me," the way artists talked about Clyfford Still and Rothko in the forties. Or certainly, Jackson Pollock, the same way, had a big effect on the artists in the community. I think by the seventies, artists were looking outside the community for inspiration. In a way, originally, we were the only game in town, in terms of a museum of modern art. But later on, people went to New York all the time, people went to Berlin all the time; there were a lot of crosscurrents. So it wasn't like you felt if the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art didn't provide it, you wouldn't get it at all. A lot of artists moved to New York. A lot didn't feel that the commercial atmosphere was as positive here as it would be in New York. Then a lot went and came back. There were little clusters. Like at UC Davis—[Robert] Arneson and Gilhooley and Steven De Staebler. Then that whole Bruce Nauman—Well, Steve Kallenbach was part of that, as well. I think we just became more and more professional. It took a big leap when we moved to the new building, because that was a whole other thing.

Rigelhaupt: Well, part of my asking about the late seventies was, from my understanding of the art market, it was not particularly strong. Therefore, artists had opportunities to do a lot of conceptual art and different things that might not have sold so well, because things weren't going to sell anyway. I'm wondering if that, besides the "Space, Time, Sound" show, did that shape any of the exhibitions, or the feeling of what was going to be exhibited at the museum?

02-00:30:57

Holland: Well, Howard Fried. We know we had a Howard Fried show that did installation. But I think it was more that Sue Foley was interested in installations. Henry—and actually, his then wife, Jan Butterfield—were interested in Robert Irwin and some of the Southern California people like Maria Nordman, and they did installations. But those were pretty commercially viable. "Space, Time, Sound," was the one where the catalogue came out really late. It was a documentation of the actual installation, so you couldn't do it ahead of time, because you didn't know what you had. Sue was really interested in that, in conceptual art. I can't say that I think that Henry was that big on it. Karen? No. Sue was really the one that liked it. I think that that was a hard sell. Maybe not for the community at large or the artist community at large, but for the trustees and the people who were financially supporting the museum.

Rigelhaupt: How would you describe the formation of the collection and research department? That was in 1979?

02-00:32:59

Holland: '79. Research collections started in '79. I had worked with Garna Muller. She'd been a volunteer. So we'd gotten together and started working on it. Then we got money, just on the premise that somebody needed to do something about the permanent collection. At first, it was just gathering information, just going through old files and putting together that sort of thing, provenance and exhibition history and such. It just was a lot of grunt work. Then we had always wanted to publish. So Henry, actually, put us together with Hudson Hills Press. Then when the registrar—I think I said that before—that when the registrar left, the registration came in with us, as well. I think it worked really well. I could see towards the end of it, though, that people like Phyllis Wattis, who was a big supporter in the later years, not early on, looked upon it as a stand-alone project. That once you published the catalogue, well, you're done. Then it would all go back to the way it was before. I didn't know. When we published the catalogue, it was at a period when Henry was losing power. You could just tell how the shift was going. Don Fisher and people like him were really active. They were people that had a different way of dealing with things. They were self-made individuals who were used to having control. So you could just see the shift, not in power, exactly, but authority, in many ways. And it didn't feel like everybody was moving on the same path. I could see that it didn't look like they were going to continue our

department. I didn't want to be a curator; that wasn't of interest to me. I like research, and I like documentation. So it was just one of those things where you see the changed shifts, and there it is, and time to go do something else—which is what I did. But Mrs. Wattis really, in terms of support, was really, really important, especially during Henry's time. I don't believe she was so much when Jerry Nordland was there.

Rigelhaupt:

So the research department didn't work that much with the curators, except on specific exhibitions, if they were going to pull stuff from the permanent collection?

02-00:36:30

Holland:

Yes. We worked with them, but not really, really closely, because they were doing exhibitions. Unless they were doing an exhibition that was drawn from the permanent collection, they had their own directions. So we were fairly autonomous.

Rigelhaupt:

At one point, it was listed as the Cowell Research Department. You said that was because the Cowell Foundation had given—was it for a number of years, or a set amount of money? Or how did that work?

02-00:37:07

Holland:

I think they gave us, I want to say, \$500,000. That partly was for building out the space, because there was a big room on the north side of the third floor, and we took it over. Then we had ongoing NEA grants. So each year, I'd put in another application for an NEA grant. But the space actually was called the Cowell Research Center. Mike, Michael McCone was the one that put that project together. He was good at that, very good.

Rigelhaupt:

You mentioned doing the research for the accessions committee. Did you get a sense of what the goals for accessions—and deaccessions, for that matter—say, if you could compare the seventies and the eighties?

02-00:38:40

Holland:

Well—[pause] The goals. One thing, as I said before, Van Deren Coke was there, and so the photography became a very important, important part. They made some big purchases—the Philip Gustons. Everything was getting bigger. I think that really was an incentive to get a new building, because it's hard to install a great big painting on a smallish wall. Then there was the Clyfford Still gift, and that took up a whole gallery. That was really interesting, because it was given with the proviso that his work would always be on view, in its own gallery. When it wasn't—which happened occasionally—the phones would start ringing. People would say, "Where are the Clyfford Stills?" We'd say, "Oh, no, right now; it's just temporarily down." But you knew it was interested parties. That was a big swatch of space for one artist, important as he is. But you don't have that much room, so it cuts down on your flexibility considerably.

Rigelhaupt: Did you change anything with the cataloging systems, and the way and which there had been archive sheets in binders?

02-00:40:31

Holland: We did the archive sheets and the binders. Then it went onto computers. But it was at this time when word processing was just coming in, and we looked into putting it all on computers. But computers were just coming into being utilized, and they were still somewhat cumbersome. Gee, I hadn't thought about that for a long time, how much computerization there was. I think we did have it on computer, but not a whole lot of information. Tried to keep that clean, and then the archive sheets were the backup. They have probably changed that now, I have no idea. But it was really a tracking thing. Oh, that was another thing that we did. There were locations. Nobody ever knew where anything was, because when we started out, it was just like, "Well, I think it is downstairs in stack C," or something. There were some racks originally, but they'd outgrown them fairly rapidly, and so they stacked the works up. So we did location systems. We did a whole system on the sculpture. Had its own sculpture area, and we took photographs of pieces that were then boxed and stored. We did earthquake prevention systems, especially for the things that were fragile. So we just tried to make the whole collection—because it was growing so fast—make it all accessible, and document it. Say if we acquired a painting by an artist, then we'd send out a sheet that asked for the exact materials involved. In case we ever have to do conservation work on it. "What exhibitions do you know that it's been shown in? What were your thoughts when you were creating this?", et cetera, et cetera. We tried to get as much information from the artist.

Rigelhaupt: Do you have a sense of why the department ended, in 1985?

02-00:43:33

Holland: I don't know what's happened to it; I have no idea. I have an amazing capacity for once I have made up my mind to leave something behind, I leave it behind and move on. I assume it's that they thought it was a project, and the catalogue was finished, so that's that. I don't know. I just was going to leave and—I know Garna stayed on for a while. Laura Sueko, who was a wonderful person in our department, stayed on. But then I think registration split off again. But I left—I can't remember when Karen left; after I did, but not a whole lot. Mike McCone left. You know, it's just one of those things, that you get to a certain point and it's time to do something different.

Rigelhaupt: So was the department leading up the catalogue for the fiftieth anniversary?  
So those two things were connected to one another.

02-00:44:55

Holland: Yes.

Rigelhaupt: Well, switching to the catalogue, so it was a culmination of efforts from the research department.

02-00:45:04

Holland: Right.

Rigelhaupt:

Why was it only painting and sculpture?

02-00:45:10

Holland: We wanted to show those collections in their entirety. We wanted to illustrate everything in those collections. To try and do that for all the works on paper and the photographs—Now, the photographs, we had already documented. Several of us worked on that in the seventies, in the later seventies. They were their own little arena. We documented everything as it came into the collection, no matter what it was. But the decision was made that it was just going to be painting and sculpture. Henry wanted big color illustrations, which is great. We'd *still* be working on it, if prints and photographs had been included. I'm trying to think as to how the decision was made. It was just like, well, this is a doable. Because it would be completely different now. What would be illustrated would be completely different, because there have been so many additions. But this seemed doable. We worked with a publisher and Henry. But Henry really set the format, set the tone for the format. There had been a catalogue of the collection of photography at the Sheldon Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska, that had little pictures of everything. We thought that was a really great idea, because it makes it so much easier when a curator is looking for something, if you have it all there, as opposed to just part of it. A lot of catalogues are just sort of highlights of the collection. We wanted it to be as inclusive as possible, but within a rather specific range; to wit, painting and sculpture.

Rigelhaupt:

How was the budget developed for the printing and for the work going into the catalogue?

02-00:47:54

Holland: We put together a budget when we did the grant applications to the NEA and to the Cowell Foundation. Then we co-published with the Hudson Hills Press. So we developed a budget using their numbers, as well. Because it was pretty separate from everything else.

Rigelhaupt:

Was there a relationship with donors or the accessions committee that had an impact on which pieces were highlighted, got full color?

02-00:48:39

Holland: Henry decided that. We made recommendations. I think there are fifty in there. That's what he wanted. They go historically. We had to cut it off at a certain point, because you had to have all the material and the photographs to the publisher a year in advance. We didn't realize how big it was going to be until time was getting short. So there was a lot of stress. A lot of stress. I wrote most of it. I think I wrote half of the entries, and the introduction, the sort of history of the museum. Then Garna mostly wrote on ceramics. Laura Sueoka wrote on some, and then Diana Du Pont wrote a lot on earlier pieces.

Rigelhaupt: How was the decision made about which of you were going to write on which artist or area?

02-00:50:04

Holland: Well, it had to do with expertise. It also had to do with who could write faster. We worked together. We had meeting after meeting after meeting. Everybody had their own sphere of interest. I like the Matisses and such, and Diana liked the more Germanic pieces. So we just divided it up by what we thought was best. Henry read them all. They went through an editing process, back and forth and back and forth. One thing we left out of the budget was FedEx money. That turned out to be quite a healthy chunk, because everything was FedExed. We were always, last minute, running down to the FedEx place. But I was pleased with how it turned out. I think Henry was pleased with how it turned out. I wrote a little article then for a museum studies journal about how to write a permanent collection catalogue, that set out how we did it.

Rigelhaupt: Were there any pieces of history or new things you learned about the museum as you were researching and writing the introduction, that surprised you or were particularly interesting?

02-00:51:53

Holland: Well, there are some pieces that I just love. I mean, I just love them. Like the portraits of Sarah and Michael Stein, that whole story about the Steins, and Gertrude Stein and Leo Stein, and the connection with the local Jewish community. How so many of those pieces that belonged to Sarah and Michael Stein were dispersed in the Bay Area when they had—not Sarah and Michael, but their offspring—had some financial problems, and they sold these pieces to Elise Haas and Madeleine Haas Russell and the Fleishhackers—at good prices. So that was an interesting story, because it really connects up with the community, as opposed to something where it's a big Ellsworth Kelly that is a beautiful painting, but doesn't have a story. You know what I mean? It doesn't connect up any further.

Rigelhaupt: Were there any compromises going in? That people had wanted to put in the catalogue, and as it grew, you just couldn't fit it in, or—?

02-00:53:44

Holland: You mean in terms of the illustrations or what was highlighted? Compromises. Well, as I said, Henry made the decisions as to what the pieces were. Sometime I'd think, well, I'd rather have something else. But we tried to make it a well-balanced reflection of the strengths of the collection. I think what would be really nice would be to write something about the whole collecting community in the Bay Area. I always thought that would be—I mean, Albert Bender is certainly part of that, and the Haases, et cetera, et cetera, the Sterns, Slosses. So I wish that it had more of that content in it. But that wasn't the topic. The topic was the history of the museum, and the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary. When you look at the earlier catalogue that was published—I think we put that together in '70. So that's only fifteen

years, you go from that little publication to that great big book, with the history. That's quite a bit. But now it's been twenty-two years. I don't know if they're planning to do another catalogue. I know they have done other sort of highlights of, particularly having to do with the new building.

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Rigelhaupt: I wanted to ask you about your impression of the curatorial mandate from Henry Hopkins and how he balanced the connections with local artists and the arts community in the Bay Area, California art, and then even national, international art.

03-00:00:36

Holland: Well, certainly there was more emphasis on Los Angeles than had been before. And he had really strong ties to other museums. So the exhibitions we got, the quality was so much higher—going back to that Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg and such. My feeling is that probably the really local people weren't as well represented. Partly because John was gone. Sue was doing things that had to do with ceramics and conceptual, but a lot of people got left behind, I think. So it was a stronger museum in terms of the overall picture; but in terms of numbers and quality of local people, there wasn't so much. I mean, there was Diebenkorn, but Diebenkorn had already moved long ago, to Santa Monica, to Ocean Park. They did [Peter] Voulkos, but that wasn't really during Henry's tenure, that was during Jerry's. Hassel Smith, they did a Hassel Smith show. Roy De Forest, they did a nice Roy De Forest show. They did an Oliveira show. They did a [William] Wiley show, but I think they brought it in from the Walker. So definitely with the SECA Awards, that was up and coming people. But my impression was that there weren't as many, in terms of as many local people being exhibited as there were Southern California or New York.

But I think at that time, a lot of people on the board or people on the accessions weren't interested in local people. If they found something that they liked by a local person, they generally bought it in New York. Because travel was so much easier. People went to New York on a frequent basis. So there was more interest. Or even then going into the Germans and such. Interest was a lot more spread out. I think that therefore, there wasn't as much time or money spent on local people. That's just my impression. But as I said before, the Bay Area artists have always felt they have been shortchanged. They did a Thiebaud show. That's good, but there wasn't a lot of ferreting out new and interesting people because often the new and interesting people usually would have gone to New York. It isn't that they didn't have shows of local people, just not so much, and not as emphasized, I guess I would say, as other aspects.

Rigelhaupt: What was your impression of the relationship between the museum and the galleries?

03-00:05:29

Holland:

Well, in Jerry's time, I don't remember there being a close relationship, but the rest of us got out pretty much. The big ones, the galleries then—Hansen, Hansen Fuller, Dilexi, the Quay Gallery, Ruth Braunstein's Quay Gallery, John Berggruen. Hansen Fuller isn't in existence. Dilexi was gone early on. I think that Henry was closer to the galleries than Jerry was. But Henry just got out more. He was more of a social being. But as far as, was there one gallery that we purchased things from, or one that a preponderance of purchases were made? No.

Rigelhaupt:

Well, I have heard that part of the expansion of the art market and the rise in prices during the early eighties was connected to galleries. I'm curious to know your impression of how that affected what was going on at the museum, or if you saw an effect.

03-00:07:28

Holland:

You mean local galleries?

Rigelhaupt:

Probably local, but also thinking of L. A. and New York.

03-00:07:35

Holland:

I think more L. A. and New York. I think when prices began to rise, the people with money got more interested in it. All of a sudden there was money. But there was a certain cachet of going someplace else to buy things. In terms of Collectors Forum or Modern Art Council or what have you, there was a certain with-it-ness to go to New York, or farther, to Europe. I can't say that I think that the galleries were doing really, really well. I mean, there are a lot of galleries. But I didn't see that John Berggruen's gallery was the mix of it, although John Berggruen had European ties, and New York ties, as well. That was probably the one that most people knew because he had the big names, the big local names—Oliveira, and Diebenkorn and such. But it's just one of those things of where you have more money, and then you get to know people who have more money, that you really like, then you want to hang with them, you know? SECA does its own thing. I think they generally try and purchase something out of the SECA show, but I don't think it's all the time.

Rigelhaupt:

What's your impression of why Henry Hopkins's tenure came to an end?

03-00:10:06

Holland:

It would just be conjecture on my part, but I think people got anxious for change, anxious for a new building. You could just sense the changing relationship and the fact that there were bigger movers and shakers coming onto the board. I don't know. Henry never said it, but I don't think that was his thing, getting a new building. I'm sure he would have loved to have a new building, but I don't know if that was really what he wanted to do. I wouldn't say he lost interest, exactly. At a certain point, you feel like it's just enough, and it's time for everything to change. He went back to teaching, and L. A., and the Wight Gallery, and then the [Armand] Hammer Museum. But I think

he really enjoyed the teaching part most. Because even the Hammer Museum is now—I think it's Ann Philbin who's their director. She's doing great things, amazing things. It was very nice when Henry was there, but it didn't have that burst of enthusiasm that a new person coming in has. So I think people want something different. If they're not happy with how it is, then they want something different *now*.

Rigelhaupt: What do you recall about the sale of Latin American paintings and prints at Sotheby's in 1981?

03-00:12:17

Holland: Oh, the [Emilio] Pettoruti? Oh, 1971.

Rigelhaupt: No, no, '81.

03-00:12:23

Holland: Oh, '81. That's the Pettoruti.

Rigelhaupt: No, is it the name I'm not familiar with, or—?

03-00:12:40

Holland: Probably. He was a Latin American cubist. Sold for a lot. If I'm thinking of the same thing. Sotheby's.

Rigelhaupt: Was it a deaccession sale?

03-00:12:53

Holland: I can show you the painting. As to whether there were other things, I believe a [Rufino] Tamayo went, too.

Rigelhaupt: There were definitely a few things that were sold.

03-00:13:12

Holland: But at Sotheby's? I think it's Christie's, but maybe that's later. I remember Henry saying that—I hope I have my timeframe right—that Pettoruti was the only cubist painting we had, and it was Latin American. You couldn't really tell the story. It didn't really tell the story of cubism. We went through periods where we'd deaccession things. They deaccessioned some Bernard Buffets. But the board was careful about putting the money back into buying something else.. But the Pettoruti, I remember Henry calling me at home and saying, "Oh, my God, you'll never believe." We got a huge amount for it. He was just beside himself; he thought it was so wonderful. We didn't actually show that painting very much. Always showed the Diego Rivera and the Frida Kahlo and [David Alfaro] Siqueiros. But as I recall, he just didn't feel that painting made sense in terms of the rest of the collection and that we could do something better with the money. I never liked the deaccessioning process. There are certain rules that you follow for deaccessioning. Because one thing, if you bought something with money from a gift, we would transfer the credit line over. So it would be like, "Purchased through," the original credit line. As

I recall, we usually contacted people, let them know what we were doing, and then told them where and when the auction was taking place, if they wanted to buy it back. Some people would say, "Well, just give it back." Well, you can't do that, because the donor would have already taken his tax write-off. You want to keep things in the community, if it's important to the community. But I don't think it was felt that that particular painting was crucial. But it's touchy, deaccessioning. It's touchy. You can make big mistakes. In my opinion, that wasn't a big mistake, but somebody else might feel differently.

Rigelhaupt: Did you do research that influenced which pieces were sold?

03-00:16:30

Holland: Well, we certainly researched the provenance and such. But in terms of what was decided on, that was really Henry.

Rigelhaupt: Was the sale considered a success?

03-00:16:50

Holland: I think so. I hadn't thought about deaccessioning for such a long time. Yes, it was considered a success. Do you have a particular reason for asking?

Rigelhaupt: I think I was going through some of the files. It struck me as something that you might have done research to decide which pieces may or may not have been part, so I thought it was something to ask you about.

03-00:17:37

Holland: As I recall, we sold the Pettoruti cubist painting that was not felt to be germane to the collection, and a Tamayo called *The Butterfly Chasers*. There may have been other prints that I don't remember. But Albert Bender had given a lot of Latin American prints. Not Diego Rivera. Not Diego Rivera, as I recall.

Rigelhaupt: Now, you had already left before Jack Lane came on board. Did you hear from folks and other people you had previously worked with at the museum, what some of the changes were that took place when he came onboard?

03-00:18:50

Holland: Well, he was a completely different personality. He was a lot—I guess I'd say directed. He really put his sights on the new building. So again, whenever you have a big change at the top, there are other changes down below. I think some people just thought he was wonderful, and some people were less enthusiastic. Henry was a very kind, nice person, and interesting, but he was so nice that I think any other change, to someone who's maybe not—I'm not saying Jack Lane was not nice, but just that it's a different personality and I think a little blunter. So that works for some people, and it doesn't work for other people.

- Rigelhaupt: You had a sense that Jack Lane was brought onboard focused on the development of the new building.
- 03-00:20:18 Holland: That was my sense of things. But I was gone by then.
- Rigelhaupt: Well, what do you think of the new building?
- 03-00:20:29 Holland: I think it's architecturally interesting from the outside. I find the interior spaces a little uncomfortable. I find it difficult to figure out, especially with a photography show, with those rounded walls, what the flow of the exhibition is. It's one of those, to me, architecture as sculpture, where the architect has made such a strong statement as architecture, as opposed to a great place to hang art. There's certain museums that I just think work wonderfully, in Houston, the de Menil Collection that Renzo Piano designed. It's one of those places where the whole thing just flows. It really feels good. But then I have problems with the new de Young, too, because I think it's a really interesting design on the exterior; and then the interior, I think is confusing and cluttered and such. But that's just my opinion. It was certainly an energizing event for San Francisco. They certainly bring in a lot of people. But that's a big, big change from the old building, and how much it costs to run it, in the new building. Because in the old building, the outlay was not so much. The staff gets bigger, you have whole lots of new expenses. It makes it difficult. Especially when you have this wonderful excitement at the beginning, and then you have to deal with, how do you pay for it all? Which a lot of museums have that find themselves with these new museums. I *like* it; I don't love it, but I like it.
- Rigelhaupt: Well, during your tenure at SFMOMA, do you think the museum was perceived as unorthodox, or more part of the establishment?
- 03-00:23:09 Holland: I don't think it was conceived as unorthodox! If there were controversies, they were pretty small. A Robert Arneson ceramic toilet with turds in the bottom, that was a big deal. I would hardly call that unorthodox. Because the people, especially when I first started working there, the people that were supporters were longtime museum supporters.
- Rigelhaupt: Can you remember any exhibitions that you thought were ahead of the curve, as far as accepting a new artist or a new artistic direction? Maybe not in comparison to galleries, but other museums.
- 03-00:24:17 Holland: Other museums? Well, I think some of Van Deren Coke's exhibitions were on the cutting edge of photography. Partly because when John Humphrey worked on the photography collection, he had Aaron Siskind, Minor White, Edward Weston, Ansel Adams—the sort of big old guns. Van really opened up a

whole new realm of possibilities in terms of photography. I thought that was really cutting edge. I guess Sue's "Space" show was. But I think even by the time she did it, conceptual art was historical, it wasn't breaking new ground. It was reporting on what had happened, still. Later on in the new building programs became a lot more progressive. San Francisco is not exactly the most progressive—in terms of art. When I started out in '67, it was a backwater, I'd have to say. It felt pretty safe. Nothing amazing. So no, I wouldn't call them unorthodox. Would you called them unorthodox? No. Well, I wouldn't call them unorthodox. I like things a little more on the edge. I like the Dia Foundation, I like Dia Beacon and Marfa [Judd Foundation]. We went to the *Lightning Field*. That sort of thing is interesting to me.

Rigelhaupt: Did the museum increase its ability to reach out to other communities that were part of San Francisco? In the sense, I know in the early seventies, through the M. I. X. Program and some of the work Rolando Castellón was doing, what were your impressions of some of that?

03-00:27:27

Holland: Oh, it was wonderful. I thought that was really, really worthwhile doing. But it petered out. For a long time, a lot of discussion centered around, what are our audiences? How do we serve our audiences? I don't know if I ever felt that they had completely come to grips with it successfully, because there were these little things. Rolando did wonderful things. They'd show Betye Saar, Marie Calloway-Johnson exhibitions, black artists. But they always seemed to be sort of not part of the whole mix of things, not integrated into the programming. More just, *yipes*, we better—Here's an audience, and we need to speak to it. So they would, but then they'd move on with what they were doing before. That was my sense, anyway. But they always had the Diego Rivera up, and Frida Kahlo.

Rigelhaupt: Did the museum do a better job bringing in more consistently, women artists?

03-00:29:04

Holland: Well, certainly, more than when I started there. Oh, definitely! Henry was much better about that than Jerry was. But then that was the times. Women artists were starting to say, like Guerrilla Girls and such, "Well, excuse me, but where are we in all of this?" So I would say that that just had to do with the general direction of art. There certainly are a lot more women artists, *wonderful*, absolutely wonderful women artists. But it was just slowly. You know, *Dinner Party*, and slowly moved on from there.

Rigelhaupt: So it became more of a part of the consistent exhibitions.

03-00:29:55

Holland: You'd have a lot more women artists in group exhibitions. You'd have Georgia O'Keeffe, of course, but I think more women were included, just in the natural tapestry of the programming, as opposed to black artists. Although

they have Raymond Saunders. They do have some, but it doesn't ever feel like it's completely part of the mix.

Rigelhaupt: Kind of added on, more than—

03-00:30:31

Holland: Or reactive, as opposed to proactive.

Rigelhaupt: So how would you define the museum right now, as it approaches its seventy-fifth anniversary?

03-00:30:46

Holland: Well, I think they have some absolutely wonderful exhibitions. We're members, and we go as often as we can. I think it's really important to the community. I don't have a sense of Neal Benezra, as to what a leader he is. It certainly is a whole different kettle of fish. I think it could be more exciting. There are always a lot of people in there. Programs, you know. There have exhibitions that I just thought were incredible. Eva Hesse. To me, that was just an absolutely glorious exhibition, just touched the heart. But then others are okay. Sometimes I will have seen an exhibition someplace else, and felt that the installation was more sensitively done here. Or it might just have to do with the amount of space [we] had, or how the space was configured. I did not like the Matthew—[pause] Who does the films?

Rigelhaupt: Matthew Barney?

03-00:32:30

Holland: Matthew Barney. I didn't like that show at all. Sometimes I like his things. Sometimes I think there's a lot of me, me, ego—particularly males, if you ask me—stuff going on there. But that's part of what's happening in art, generally speaking. I think they do a good job. It'll be interesting to see how their relationship with the de Young settles out because now that's a real competitor. For money and for people. How that will go, I don't know. But it's certainly different than it used to be, when everybody had their own little place and your own little set of people.

Rigelhaupt: How did your work at SFMOMA impact what you did after you left?

03-00:33:44

Holland: Well, I learned a lot. I found I really like to do documentation, I found I was interested in collections. Knew I wasn't particularly interested in exhibitions. I also didn't want to work for a nonprofit again, because one of the reasons I left was because not just your physicalness, but all your emotional energy was going into the museum. I had a family, and I needed to get my priorities in order. So I worked at the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco for fifteen years, seventeen years, with their collection, which is West Coast. I thoroughly enjoyed that. That was great, it was fun. But it was the same thing; I left in 2002 because whereas when I'd gotten there, they'd been very

supportive of the art program, the people changed. The positions changed. So the people that had been supportive were no longer there, and you had several people from the Midwest, Oklahoma, who wanted to have cowboys and Indians. So then you say, "Well, that's just a change of direction." So move on. But I will say, the other thing is that my time at the museum was incredible, in terms of the relationships I made. Karen Tsujimoto, Laura Sueoka, Mike McCone, Garna, we're still really close friends. If John were around and Julius were around, we'd all be great friends. They were just very special people who taught me a lot, a lot about art, and about how to treat people. They were just good. So I think that's probably the most important thing for me.

Rigelhaupt: Where would you like to see the museum at its hundredth anniversary?

03-00:36:11

Holland: Wow, another twenty-five years. Well, more innovative, I think. I'd like them to reconfigure those galleries. But they're going to go through several stages, you know? They don't make the decisions by themselves. A lot of it is dictated by how the art market goes, how the galleries are going, what the financial picture looks like generally speaking, what the stock market is doing. All that has to be in the mix, and that determines. Because it's wonderful to say, "Well, I think they should be more innovative," but if they are more innovative and nobody comes and nobody wants to support them, then what's the point? I like what they're doing with videos, and I have always loved the photography. I think Sandra Phillips does a wonderful job with photography. They bring in a lot of exhibitions from outside, which is good. But I'd like to see them more innovative. Maybe they'll get a new building. I don't know.

[End of Interview]

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