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Picture to Picture: An Oral History with Photographer-Teacher Norman Locks

Interviewed and Edited by Irene Reti

Santa Cruz

University of California, Santa Cruz

University Library

2018

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Interview History

Norman Locks was born in San Jose, California in 1947, but grew up primarily in San Francisco, where he attended Lowell High School. His father, Seymour Locks, was a well-known abstract painter and assemblage sculptor who taught at San Francisco State University for thirty-seven years. The San Francisco art scene [Beatnik, Abstract Expressionism, and Bay Area Figurative] shaped Norman's early life. In this oral history conducted in March 2016 he recalled, "For me, a second generation artist, the artist was kind of normalized...I never had to question the nature of: do I want to be an artist, or what does it mean to be an artist? All of that was in my upbringing." One of Norman's strongest recollections is of the light shows his father organized in the attic of their home, where the musician Stanley Shaft would play the trumpet and members from the Anna Halprin group would come to the house and dance.

These synchronicities of history placed Norman Locks in the Bay Area just as the West Coast Photography scene was blossoming. As a teenager, he took summer session courses at San Francisco State from Jack Welpott, who was drawn to California by the work of Edward Weston. When he was eighteen years old, he met Monterey photographer Wynn Bullock at a lecture at the San Francisco Art Institute. Bullock invited Norman to visit his home in Monterey and show him his

photographs. During those years, Locks' parents also took him camping in the Sierra Nevada and to other favorite locations in the coastal ranges of California, awakening in Norman a deep and lifelong love for the landscapes of his home state.

Norman studied at the San Francisco Art Institute, where he earned a BFA in photography, and then attended graduate school at San Francisco State, where he earned his MA. His career as a photography teacher began early, as he taught art classes for the De Young Museum as a teenager, and then summer session courses and then graduate courses at San Francisco State together with Jack Welpott.

While in graduate school, Locks married and started a family at age twenty. He worked full time as a custodian while carrying a full-time course load. At this point, Locks focused his lens on family and domestic landscapes. In his oral history, Locks describes the fusion of influences upon his photographic work.

After graduating from the San Francisco Art Institute, Locks was hired to direct the Ansel Adams Workshops in Yosemite Valley and Carmel, California. There he coordinated eleven to fifteen workshops a year, bringing in luminary photographers such as Imogen Cunningham, Robert Heinecken, Judy Dater, Minor White, and Linda Connor, as well as then-emerging photographers such as Jerry Uelsmann and Lewis Baltz. One of the richest contributions of this oral history is Locks' detailed recollections of those workshops, as well as his reflections on the culture of West Coast photography from the 1970s to the present day. This narrative also delves both deeply and broadly into Locks' philosophy and thoughts on his own practice of photography.

Locks' oral history also records the evolution of photographic education at the college level. In 1978, Locks came to UC Santa Cruz at a time when there were only four FTE's in photography in the entire University of California system. He was hired by College Five Provost Pavel Machotka to teach six photography courses a year for aesthetic studies, an innovative interdisciplinary major affiliated with College Five [now Porter College] that wove together the study of the psychology of creativity, art history, art criticism, philosophy and the hands-on mastery of the art of creative writing, film, photography, sculpture, and other modalities. Locks also managed the darkroom for aesthetic studies.

In 1980, aesthetic studies was disbanded as part of Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer's reorganization of the college system, which eliminated most of UC Santa Cruz's college-based majors. At that point, Locks was hired as a lecturer in the art department. He struggled with the marginal position of a lecturer until 1990, when he was promoted to a tenure-track position in the art department. Even though aesthetic studies was disbanded, Locks continued in UCSC's interdisciplinary tradition, especially in his collaborations with Ken Norris and Roger Luckenbach on the Natural History Field Quarter, and by taking his photography students on field trips to UC Natural Reserve locations in the Mojave Desert and in Big Sur.

Locks chaired UC Santa Cruz's art department twice. The final section of the oral history focuses on key developments in the art department's history over the past several decades, covering hirings, the expansion of physical facilities, and the founding of new academic pathways within the curriculum, such as the digital arts and media program.

I conducted these interviews with Norman Locks in a conference room at McHenry Library on March 2, 16, and 30th, 2016. The transcript was returned to Locks for his editing. Copies of this volume are on deposit in Special Collections and in the circulating stacks at the UCSC Library, as well as on the library's website. The Regional History Project is supported administratively by Teresa Mora, Interim Head of Special Collections and Archives, and University Librarian, Elizabeth Cowell.

—Irene Reti, Director, Regional History Project, University Library

University of California, Santa Cruz

March 1, 2018

Early Life: the San Francisco Art Scene of the 1950s and 1960s

Reti: Today is March 2, 2016. This is Irene Reti. I'm here today with Professor Norman Locks and we are starting the oral history that we are doing together. We're here at McHenry Library on the UCSC campus in the Gloria Anzaldúa Study Room. So, Norman, let's start with where and when you were born.

Locks: I was born in San Jose, California in 1947, and my extended family was all in San Jose, the family that I knew was in San Jose—my mother's sister, her parent; my father's family was there. But we moved from there the same year, from San Jose to San Francisco. So, while I was born in San Jose, I was really a San Franciscan and raised in San Francisco. I lived a year in one house and then moved into the house that I lived in for eighteen to twenty years, at various times.

My father went to San Francisco to teach at San Francisco State University. He was a professor and hired to teach abstract painting. He had been a watercolorist in San Jose as a boy. He was sort of like the black sheep of the family. He had his first watercolors of San Jose, then after high school went to San Jose State, served in the army, and then out of the army went back and got his master's degree at Stanford in painting.

Reti: What's your father's name?

Locks: Seymour Locks. He taught thirty-seven years at San Francisco State. He was in the Bay Area, really known now, in retrospect, as a teacher, although he had a show—sculpture and painting—with William Wiley in 1955. At that point he had

moved from painting to sculpture. He was an assemblage sculptor in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The late forties, early fifties in the Bay Area was a really interesting time. It was the Beatnik era of San Francisco, Abstract Expressionism, Bay Area Figurative, the emergence of the Assemblage ideas within sculpture. So the house was always also full of graduate students, art parties. The San Francisco scene in relationship to an educational environment was predominant all the way through my youth.

And my own orientation to photo [photography] was kind of through that. We grew up kind of middle class, lower-middle class, but for me, a second-generation artist, the artist was kind of normalized. I never had to make a transition. I never had to question the nature of: do I want to be an artist, or what does it mean to be an artist? All of that was in my upbringing. Where was the painting studio in the house? Where was the sculpture studio in the house? And then later: where was the darkroom in the house?

Reti: Was that *your* darkroom?

Locks: I had a darkroom. So the transition for me to photo was—and my mom had studied photo at San Francisco State—but for me it was that they hired somebody. In 1959, they hired Jack Welpott to come from Indiana, studying with Henry Holmes Smith. He came from Indiana, West, idolizing Edward Weston. I was thirteen at the time, in 1959. I started to babysit for him. He taught me the rudiments of photo. I experienced his darkroom. He was the one that taught me. Then when I was

fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen I took adult summer session courses in photo at San Francisco State. So my orientation was as a teenager. It was kind of like my identity, where I felt good, as opposed to junior high and high school, where I really didn't fit into that community very well. The art community was this thing that I did on the side that I understood.

And then out of high school my grades wouldn't get me into a state university, so I continued to study with Jack Welpott and kind of hung out with his graduate students who were at San Francisco State, and going on field trips weekly and photographing with him. Then that body of work I submitted to the San Francisco Art Institute and got a scholarship at the Art Institute. So my college came directly out of working with photo. The Art Institute was a four-year training.

Early Mentors and Influences

Reti: Okay, so I want to slow you down. There is so much richness there, my goodness. So first of all, tell me about your memories of Jack Welpott when you were a teenager. What we he like?

Locks: Well, one of the things is my mom initiated even early on a kind of outdoors life. From the time I was seven months, we camped every summer. My outdoor life really started in '47, camping behind a general store—they didn't have campgrounds so much in '47. So there was an outdoor life.

Reti: In the Sierras? Or in the Bay Area, or everywhere?

Locks: Well, if it was during the year we would go to Memorial State Park, or we'd go to a variety of close-by parks for a weekend. The first [longer] trips were to the Feather River County. I don't know the years exactly, but Shasta, Lassen, Sequoia, Yosemite, Bass Lake, Nevada City, the Yuba River. So in general it was throughout California, primarily. There was about a four to five-week—my father taught summer session and then when he was out of summer session, August is when we went camping. So there was always that outdoor life.

So too, when Jack came from Indiana, he really wanted to go to all of the places where Edward Weston had photographed, or to places like that. So the weekends then, were oftentimes going to beaches. For him, it was a huge transition to go from a flatland in the middle of the United States to the coastal ranges of California, going on windy roads from San Francisco to Stinson Beach, or going down south over Devil's Slide and so forth. Weekends oftentimes the faculty families, or the faculty groups would—and particularly Jack, but there were several—would go off and take picnics and see those particular areas.

Jack and my father were very close as faculty members. My remembrance of him was as a teacher from very early on, coaching me privately: first in a darkroom in the kitchen; to a darkroom built at the bottom of the stairs in the basement; and then a larger eight-by-eight foot darkroom in the basement.

Reti: At your house?

Locks: At my house. So I always had—from the time that I was fourteen, fifteen, I had my own darkroom—all the way through college. And then after marriage, we'd move into a place and I'd build a darkroom. And then I'd move into another place and I'd build a darkroom.

The foundation of that was through Jack. There was a period when I was at the Art Institute when I didn't see him very much. But after the Art Institute, I went back to San Francisco State for my master's degree and then I worked with him again. So that was a different kind of formative period.

Reti: So in your teenage years, what did he teach you about photography, beyond the darkroom?

Locks: Mostly he was a very familiar person and he was a very warm person. His teaching was gentle and more by association. Some of the best teachers I've had have [taught] by observation, by looking, by working [together]. He did teach me the technique, but mostly he put the cameras in my hand. One of my first cameras was a 4x5 view camera. He gave me the camera body and then another faculty member gave me the lens for the camera body. So right from the beginning, I had an association with a large format camera. I had a 35-millimeter at the same time. But the 4x5 was the camera that I used seriously. When I was fourteen and I took the class at San Francisco State, we were doing a project on the farmer's market in San Francisco. We got up at four [a.m.] and we went down to the farmer's market to see the activity of all of the produce coming into the city. Most of the early work was project-based. It was farmer's market—and then obviously the beaches when we

went to the beaches—but the farmer's market. And then the next year was Gate Five in Sausalito.

Reti: What's Gate Five?

Locks: Gate Five is an artist's community. It was a docking area for houseboats in Sausalito. The project for the class was really Sausalito, but I was working around Gate Five. And then the third year was the California Coast south of San Francisco. At sixteen I had a driver's license, so at sixteen I would leave the city and go south and photograph.

So there was [Welpott's] warmth but at the same time there was formal training: how do you use a 4x5; how do you use the light meter; the zone system.

Reti: He was teaching you the zone system?

Locks: Yes, I knew it at fourteen.

Reti: Wow.

Locks: It was kind of informal. I didn't think about it very much. It's very difficult for me know how to teach, in a way. Where do I start teaching or what do I teach? Because my pre-training before school—by the time I was eighteen I really understood what I was doing photographically. All of that other stuff from fourteen and eighteen was vicarious. You take on this understanding. So how did I learn? How did I learn what I learned? It was just very natural. When did I learn the zone system? How did I learn the zone system?

And then even out of college—my first job out of college was to direct the photo workshops for Ansel [Adams]. Then the zone system was second nature and some of those workshops dealt directly with technical information, certainly not all of them. They were mostly about philosophical and psychological kinds of issues and understandings. But certainly at that point, the technique was not the thing that I was trying to understand. I was really trying to advance my ideas about photography.

Reti: What would you say compelled you about photography, back when you started?

Locks: I think that that's a difficult question because certainly painting was around me and sculpture was around me. Maybe it was the romance of Edward Weston. I found [out] later he was not really an enviable person, in some ways. But the romance of being a young adolescent and the idea of being able to have my studio out of doors. I think a lot of it was being able to look at the world and to be outdoors. To be able to travel.

But even when I went to the beaches, it was to do these still lives. It was really encapsulated into what was photographable within a field. I mean, I completely understood what photography did. So they were photographs of the world, but they were really still lives; they were really rock formations. Even at sixteen, I would drive down to Pebble Beach by Pescadero, where Wynn Bullock worked, or Jack worked. I'd photograph rocks. I'd photograph rock forms. So my early training was really formalist.

Henri Cartier Bresson's work was published at the time. Compared to today, there was very little to draw on. But Cartier Bresson certainly was there. *Life* magazine was there in the fifties. There were the images, certainly.

I was attracted to landscape environments, but the topics of the farmer's market or Sausalito were social documentation. I would say that there was in San Francisco, and certainly when I was at the Art Institute, kind of equal participation with landscape and social documentation. There was a lot of social documentation. But it had gotten very cliché in a way: the bums on the street, documenting everyday issues of being poor or whatever. And to a certain degree, it was at a turning point. All of a sudden we were beginning to move away from the cliché of that kind of documentation to something other. It's interesting, because now we're in a period where there's a kind of a merger between conceptual thought and social awareness, and interest in collaboration between the arts and social issues again. But in 1964, '65, '66, there was a move away. I personally was not that interested in social issues at that particular time.

Reti: Did you meet Edward Weston?

Locks: I didn't. No, he died in 1958. I didn't have a chance to meet him. Mentors early on—one of my mentors was a photographer, Clarence John Laughlin. Clarence John was a New Orleans photographer who was relatively poor but he was fascinated by Victorian architecture. He would repeatedly come to San Francisco to photograph Victorian architecture. When he came he always called my father to do a lecture. He would come to the house and my dad would invite the students from the

school to come to the house for time with Clarence John. That was probably [when I was] fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, eighteen. Through that adolescent period there was Clarence John. There were times when he'd come out and we'd go photographing with a 4x5—experiences of walking down California Street and downtown with him wandering and weaving through traffic with his 4x5 view camera.

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: Or going to the Belmont Mansion with him, to photograph the Belmont Mansion. He was one mentor. He was an intellectual, certainly an intellectual. He was interested in literature and literary ideas and went off into literary narratives about what he was doing. But he wasn't really a teacher, per se. But we photographed side-by-side when I was an adolescent.

The other person who was a mentor was Wynn Bullock, who was a California-based, Monterey-based photographer, highly intellectual, really interested in philosophical ideas. So it was kind of a break from Ansel [Adams], in a way. Ansel was not really an intellectual, or did not like to think of himself as an intellectual. Minor White was. Wynn Bullock was. But I met Wynn. Wynn knew my father, but I met Wynn at a lecture at the San Francisco Art Institute when I was eighteen, just before I started to go to school there. I introduced myself after the lecture and invited myself to visit him at Monterey. He gave me permission to call him and come down. So, other than Jack, one of the first people to accept me or to talk to me as a teacher was Wynn Bullock. I would go down to his home and show him work in Monterey.

And then there was the San Francisco Art Institute. There were a lot of Bay Area artists who my father was affiliated with: Roy De Forrest, who was at [UC] Davis, and Bruce Conner, a major sculptor, was a graduate student of my father's. And actually, when I met my future wife, Susan, who was the daughter of Don Weygandt. Don Weygandt was on the faculty here, but Don had been a teacher of Bruce Conner's in Boulder, Colorado. And he came from Boulder to San Francisco. So later, when Bruce Conner finished his degree and was going to go down to Mexico, there was a party at my parents' house. And Susan came to the house because of the affiliation with Bruce Conner. The association was kind of a normal thing. Graduate students were always at the house, or art parties were in and around the house. Artists were around the house. It was a normal level of activity.

Reti: How common was it at that time for someone who was an adolescent to be that serious about photography? Were you the only one that you knew?

Locks: Certainly, of my friends. We didn't study art in school. I think that was a bias of my father's. He didn't want us to be affiliated with how to draw. He was an Abstract Expressionist and assemblage sculptor, so he didn't have much faith in high school teaching.

Reti: You went to Lowell High School?

Locks: I went to Lowell, yes, Herbert Hoover and then Lowell. But I was in the band. When I was in grammar school, one of my father's night school students, Stanley Shaft, Stanley taught music at Polytechnic High School. Poly no longer exists. Poly

was right by Keyser Stadium, right between the avenues and Haight Ashbury. My wife had gone to Polytechnic. He taught music at Poly and then was studying art also. He told my parents that we needed to study music, so my brother, my sister, and I all picked instruments to play. I picked the saxophone. My brother played the flute. Later my brother also played piano and the saxophone. So from the time I was in the fourth or fifth grade in grammar school, I started playing the saxophone. I played through junior high, with a little bit of oboe also in junior high. And then played the saxophone in the band. So my community at school, particularly in high school, was the community in and around the band. We played at games and there was a marching band. We also had a little jazz group and we played jazz in high school. So, while I was not in art per se, probably the music did that.

Stanley also would come to the house in the evenings periodically when I was ten or eleven and I was studying the saxophone. He would come and we would do light shows in the attic. My dad had an opaque projector, so he would set up the opaque projector in the attic and work with gels and liquid and project. And Stanley would play the trumpet and improv in relationship to the music.

Reti: Wow!

Locks: And then, on occasion, dance members from the Anna Halprin group in San Francisco would come to the house and dance. So there'd be this thing going on in the attic. This was really normal, normal activity at the house. It would happen periodically.

The rock groups of the mid-sixties, when the Fillmore or the Avalon opened up for bands in ’64, ’65, ’66, they were using light shows a lot, projections. And there were art teachers at the Art Institute who would do art shows and invite bands to come in and play. My first painting teacher at the San Francisco Art Institute was the drummer for Big Brother and the Holding Company, Dave Getz. And there was a lot of association in the arts between music and arts. And a lot of the members, like now here, a lot of the students are members of emerging—they all have their bands and they play. Well, that was the condition then in ’64, ’65, ’66 in San Francisco.

But I don’t know where my father got interested in the projection of light.

Reti: And how would you do that projection? I’m not familiar with this art form. How do you project light?

Locks: Okay, the opaque projector was a way of showing artwork, where you put a piece of artwork on a glass and then there’s a camera lens that picks it up and then throws it out. Well, instead of putting a piece of paper on the glass he’d put a tray of water. And then in the tray of water he would drop food coloring or theatrical gels, and put the gels in there. So he would work abstractly with light and color and put that up on the projector and project that onto a sheet in the attic. The musician or the dancer would work in relationship to the projections. It was basically kind of creating and playing with—it was not unlike, in a way, the formation of some of the work that Wynn Bullock did—

Reti: I was just thinking about that.

Locks: Wynn did a body of work. He did the dye transfer work of the color light pieces but he had worked with Fred Padula. Fred was a film and art major at San Francisco State. Fred was really good friends with Wynn and helped Wynn with that particular project. That was probably ’63-’64. It could be a little bit later, but it was during that period. It was Fred Padula who did the art film on Wynn Bullock and Imogen Cunningham in the sixties. There were very few art films at that time. The first time I saw Eugène Atget’s film [was] around that time, 1964? I must have seen it during one of the summer sessions because I saw it before I went to the Art Institute. It was certainly before graduate school. The films that were around at that particular time were of Wynn or Imogen or Atget.

Reti: So it’s my understanding that you would have been part of the first generation of college students who could focus on photography in art school. Is that true?

Locks: Well, I would say that the emergence of that came in the fifties. There were key people. Henry Holmes Smith in Indiana was certainly one; Charles Schwartz in Iowa; Nathan Lyons in New York. Rochester was emerging and so people like Jerry Uelsmann studied with Henry Holmes Smith, and Jack [Welpott], and Betty Hahn. The three of them—Betty Hahn later taught at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Uelsmann went to RIT and studied with a group of people there. And the historian Carl Chiarenza, Robert Heinecken. Peter Bunnell. They were all there at that same time. Robert Heinecken later was in the service and then he ended up at UCLA in printmaking, and printmaking to art. Robert Heinecken was one of my

influential mentors when I was directing workshops in Yosemite. I did about eight or nine workshops with him and other people. He was a formative educator.

Ultimately, the University of California and Stanford stole faculty from the art schools. When I was choosing to go to graduate school, I said, well, why don't I have a degree from the University of California? Well, the University of California didn't have photo. The best school in California was San Francisco State, for photo. That was one of my choices. San Francisco Art Institute had just started the same year, in 1965. Linda Connor was there and they started a graduate program at San Francisco Art Institute in '65, but I thought it was premature to go there, so I chose to go to San Francisco State. When I was there at San Francisco State I was disenchanted after the first semester, and I dropped out.

During that time, I was looking at other schools and I was accepted into the University of New Mexico, which had a very good program at that time. Yale had a really good program. I was accepted into Albuquerque but I also had a young family. I was married at twenty and had a child at twenty. So the mergers in my work, which we'll talk about later, were: Abstract Expressionism; a kind of orientation, a kind of interest in art from a very early age; the still life and that association between painting and photo; landscape and my orientation as a child camping.

But I was a father at twenty and so the domestic life of making a living, studying and going to school, and family were central. So even my early training in photo from twenty on included photographs of the children, and photographs of the family, and photographs of the domestic, and photographs of still life, and photographs of

landscape. They've always been embedded, and they're embedded by circumstance. So I teach according to the embeddedness of circumstance upon students. I mean, students come in with a set of experiences and I always want to be aware of what are the circumstances that students are involved in.

So if we're talking about early influences then, and maybe precociousness in relationship to art—yes, I was deciding on photo from a very early age. I wanted to be a teacher from a very early age. But I was also a father at twenty. So in a way, too, when I am thinking about the advancement [of my career] from the age of twenty, I was juggling raising a family, trying to advance a career in photo, having to make a living. So the relationship between family and research was embedded. But the questions about time, in terms of devoting time to my career, were always affected by these circumstances of being a young parent. Even at twenty as an undergraduate—for two years as an undergraduate I was a parent and then two years of graduate school. So it was kind of dense at that time.

Reti: Dense?

Locks: Dense in the sense of starting a life early. I always felt kind of young and immature and youthful, and at the same time I was taking on these responsibilities of being involved with adults in relationship to photo and really wanting to study photo, going to school. But then becoming a parent and—

Reti: And what about the larger world? You were talking before about your father and the Beats. During this period, we have the Vietnam War. The antiwar movement starts to emerge.

Locks: Right.

Reti: How much was that affecting your life when you were a college student?

Locks: I would say that that was significant. The Art Institute was a very liberal institution and so we were involved in all of that. Yes, we could go back to the formativeness of that period: the Beatles in 1963, Bob Dylan, the assassination of John F. Kennedy. I was in a civics class in high school when he was assassinated and school was let out. And then later Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. It was a horrible time and we were very aware of it. The San Francisco Art Institute had its own truck and the band for the marches in San Francisco in 1964, '65, '66. There's a photograph I have of myself in 1965 on the Wally Hendricks band from the San Francisco Art Institute at one of the demonstrations of 100,000 people. It's really hard for me to relate to the demonstrations that are going down now because they're too civil. This idea of demonstrations and civility doesn't make real sense to me. I mean, I don't feel like having damage or anything, but at the same time there's a kind of a passion and people are upset, but they are asked to be kind of pseudo upset.

So at that particular time there were a lot of demonstrations. In 1966, there was an armed forces march in San Francisco against the war. In the armed forces there

were four servicemen, one from each branch, who led the march in uniform. They were all court martialed. The person in the air force was my cousin and he was court martialed. He was studying—he wanted to be a pilot. His father was an air force pilot and he was going to be an air force pilot but he was court martialed and sent to Denver to serve out his time in the military, sort of at a desk.

Prior to that, in high school one of my closest friends was a member of the Presbyterian Church, and so I would participate in the Presbyterian Church with him in either the basketball league, but also in '63 – '64 in a lot of the civil rights marches. The civil rights marches of the early sixties [influenced] first Kennedy and then Johnson really picked up the mantle. There were Presbyterian conferences on racial inequality that I participated in in high school.

Then the Vietnam War kind of put a quash on that, and the demonstrations on civil rights really didn't continue because the energy was put towards [opposing] the war. And then it moved in the mid-1970s to feminism, and women's equality became the primary social concern, basically because you're working with 50 percent of the population and it's time to figure out where we are going to go with this particular issue.

I think one of the disappointments for me is questions of civil rights from the sixties. We never got back to that. We never finished that. We never ended up confronting the questions of racism, particularly at that point for African Americans. So yes, what you're mentioning is this particular aspect which was really important. At that point Bob Dylan was core. I saw Bob Dylan in his folk-singing days with Joan Baez. I

saw them sing together in Berkeley. And then the other singers of that particular time.

So there was a lot of that. And the Art Institute was central to that.

Reti: How did photography tie into those social movements? Were you doing documentary work on any of the movements?

Locks: No, I was never interested in documentary work at that particular time. We were at the marches. The impact of 100,000 people at a march in San Francisco was much more effective than being a photographer taking a photograph. And I've always had a question about social work in art because unless it really hit mainstream it was too slow. The understanding of what were doing, or the process of what we were doing, or getting what we were doing into the media was too slow. I'm not sure now whether we use the Internet enough because it would seem to me that the greatest vehicle for civil disobedience or civil action would be through the populace of the Internet because newspapers and TV stations are heavily controlled.

At the same time, I certainly feel very strongly that the arts have a role now in relationship to social action. But personally, having been in art so long, I know my own development is so slow as an artist, that I don't know how effective it is in the short term. I think in the long term I would say all of my current work is socially motivated, or has a kind of social interaction in relationship to human intervention, in relationship to landscape.

Reti: I can see that.

Locks: So I would have to say that I am a social person and that my work is involved in social critique and in social discourse. But at the same time, it's a long-term discourse. It's not a short-term discourse. Our department is very strongly socially motivated. My work is socially motivated. But I don't feel myself ever to be an activist, by personality. I don't really feel myself to be an extrovert.

Maybe the contradiction is that: does one have to be an extrovert in the classroom? I don't feel like an extrovert. At the same time, I do have to go into the classroom and assume a kind of mentor capability. I need to lecture. I need to do these things. Maybe it's more of an out-of-body thing, do you know? I wouldn't be a good person to act. I'm not an actor.

Reti: So you mean to be an activist, one has to be an extrovert.

Locks: I think—well, I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong. But at the same time, it would help to be an extrovert. It would be helpful to be secure. It would be helpful to be—I think one of my weaknesses is my fear of things. I'm always working against my fears. It's difficult to be an artist and to be afraid. I think one of the greatest impediments that we have for success is fear. And I'm certainly one that is constantly battling that.

Reti: (sighs) Me too.

Locks: And at the same time, there's a comfort level. I grew up in classrooms. I was very familiar with my father's classrooms, with Jack Welpott's classrooms. I taught art classes at the De Young Museum at fourteen, fifteen. Then Jack Welpott got a gig

during the summer when I was twenty. He had said that he was going to teach summer session at San Francisco State. But he wanted to go to Europe. And so he hired me to teach summer session at San Francisco State. So my first college teaching experience was, at twenty, teaching summer session at San Francisco State. Later, I taught grad school with Jack. The graduate students would receive credit for the course towards graduation. So I TA'd courses with Jack. And then there was the workshop. Early on, I was interested in teaching. But I never saw that as formidable. They were all seminars. I was not doing a large lecture. I'm doing a class of twenty-two people, in most cases. I was not afraid of talking to twenty-two people.

Reti: Some people certainly would be. But that was very familiar to you, from an early age.

Locks: Mm, hmm.

Reti: So teaching photography—this is a theme we'll keep returning to at different parts of your life—but at that point in your life did you think that you could teach photographic vision? What were you teaching your students?

Locks: (sighs) I was really disappointed in the dogmatic nature of photo in relationship to technique. I was interested in liberating photo from technique. Even now some of the best artists who come into the photo classrooms have a fear of the technique. So there's a contradiction between the personality that would be interested in photo from an artistic point of view and the personality that would take photo, or resist photo, because of the technique. So while I'm a really good

technician, I'm hesitant to put preference on technique over idea. I think that social documentation was limiting to me as an idea. The idea of technique was limiting to me. A lot of education in photo came out of the military, and a lot of people who were teaching photo were trained on the 4x5 in military in the forties and fifties. So there was a very strong kind of technical bent to it. The differences between say—even in the sixties at the Art Institute you'd walk into the cafeteria and the photographers would be at one table talking about their cameras and lenses—

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: —and the painters were talking about a march, or an event, or a film, or an art idea. So there was a separation between what photo was and what the other arts were. There was always this debate. The debate was: was photo an art form? Which was from the 19th century. It never has been resolved. It exists today. When I was hired [at UCSC], there were art faculty that didn't want photo. When I started teaching here as a lecturer in '78, there were four FTE's in photo in the University of California system.

Reti: (whistles)

Locks: And if you look at Stanford, they chose not to have photo. If you look at Berkeley, they chose not to have photo. UCLA had photo in Robert Heinecken. But Robert Heinecken was hired to teach printmaking and he moved from printmaking to photo. So that was one of the positions. Another position was at [UC] Davis, Harvey Himelfarb, who was a historian and a photographer from San Francisco

State. Harvey had studied with Jack Welpott at San Francisco State. So they moved to photo early on. Some of the schools had lecturers: UC San Diego had a lecturer. UC Riverside had a lecturer. But for the most part, there were very few FTE's. Even here, I was a lecturer for twelve years, primarily because in any of the moves that the art department had made to legitimize the position with an FTE, the upper administration considered it an applied [art] and the University of California, Santa Cruz was a non-applied school. Dance had some problems in terms of it because it was applied. And photo in art was considered an applied craft. And ceramics was an applied craft.

So even though I was hired—it was College Five, Porter College that wanted photo. They wanted it in relationship to aesthetic studies. But they didn't have the biases in relationship to art because they had had Bruce Banger; Al Johnson was teaching ceramics and pottery, pottery within the aesthetic studies major. And I was hired to teach photo. I had a predecessor, Ken Ruth, who was teaching some classes in photo prior to myself. Film was being taught prior to myself.

Aesthetic Studies at UC Santa Cruz

Reti: And that was all through aesthetic studies.

Locks: It was in aesthetic studies.

Reti: Well, okay since we're diving into this, I think we should just go for it. We can backtrack later to talking more about your years as a graduate student. So who actually recruited you to teach for aesthetic studies at College Five?

Locks: Well Pavel, Pavel Machotka.[1] I wouldn't say he recruited me. I met him because I saw the ad for the position. In 1978, I saw the ad. I had taught a singular class in 1977 here. So I knew about the program. I also knew about the program because Don Weygandt's my father-in-law. But I wasn't applying through the art department. I was applying through College Five. So I applied for the position to teach photo courses. They were looking for somebody to teach; Ken Ruth was here at the time. So I applied for that position. They had a number of courses. I think originally they were thinking of eight courses.

Reti: In photography.

Locks: Yes. They wanted to expand the photo [track] within aesthetic studies. I applied for the position and then Pavel called me in for the interview. On that committee were members of the art department. Kay Metz and Fred Hunnicut were on the committee. Eli Hollander from film was teaching film classes in the aesthetic studies major. Roger Anderson in chemistry was on the committee. And then John Solomon was around. John was assistant to the provost. And Pavel was the provost.

So they offered me the position. Originally they offered me five courses. I didn't think I could afford five courses. I asked for six and they gave me six. So my first year, in fall of 1978, was teaching six courses for the aesthetics studies major. Ken was kept on to teach three. But then Ken was upset and he left. He wanted to

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[1] See Irene Reti, Interviewer and Editor, *Founding the Aesthetic Studies Major at UC Santa Cruz: An Oral History with Professor Pavel Machotka* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 2016). Available in full text at https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/founding-the-aesthetic-studies-major-at-uc-santa-cruz-an-oral-history-with-professor-pavel

maintain control over the area, which I completely understood. But a couple of weeks before the quarter started in the fall he left for England.

So I came on. I taught a history of photo course and then five studio courses in the aesthetic studies major. I was asked to run the darkroom, so I was the tech for the photo area as well. I did the ordering for the darkroom.

Reti: Wow.

Locks: And then I was asked to do the hiring to make up for Ken's courses. So then I researched and hired the people to teach the other courses. I was thirty-one. I had come from the Ansel Adams Photography Workshops. I had that experience behind me. But I came in cold, in a way, to this system. I came in and had then six classes, managed the darkroom and was paid 74 percent. I was paid to teach six classes at three thousand dollars a quarter. And that's why I needed six classes. I needed eighteen thousand dollars a year because I had a wife and two children. So when I came in, those were the conditions, and they said, "Well, what do you want to teach and when do you want to teach it?"

So it was basically within the structure of the aesthetic studies major. It was really, "Okay, you're in charge of photo." Photo didn't exist within the art department. I was teaching within College Five, although it was art students who came into my classes.

Reti: Because the art board didn't have photography.

Locks: No, they didn't. They weren't interested in it. I think that Fred was interested in it. I think Kay Metz was always interested in in it. Patrick Aherne was always interested in photo. But Jasper Rose didn't like photo particularly, although he and I got along fine. Hardy Hanson was not a fan of photo as an art form. He thought it was mechanical reproduction. But that was immaterial because I was within the aesthetic studies major. So I taught history and I taught those courses.

And then they disbanded [aesthetic studies]. I came in the fall of 1978 but by 1980 was the reorganization, and at that particular time then I was serving a lot of the art students. The art department decided to adopt me into the art department as a lecturer. So I came as a lecturer into the art department. They housed me. They eliminated the pottery, the ceramics, because Fred Hunnicut was teaching ceramics sculpture and there was a kind of duplication of effort. They maintained the pottery workshop at Cowell, the pottery studio. But they didn't keep the program as it existed within the aesthetic studies major.

Reti: Backing up just a little bit, how did you feel about the aesthetic studies major when you came?

Locks: Well, I was in it for a year and a half. Philosophically, it made sense to me. My students were aesthetic studies majors. And in the end, the faculty who were around who were still involved in the aesthetic studies major were David Cope and myself. And David Cope and I agreed to grandfather out the aesthetic studies students. So we continued to work with those majors until they all graduated. It was mostly David and I who did that. Theoretically, you would think, two years and they'd be

grandfathered out. But at that particular time students were staying five and six and seven years. So sometimes it took us another maybe four or five years. There still are (laughs) aesthetic studies majors who didn't finish who are out in the world.

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: Even ten years ago Jude Pipes would say, "Okay, what about this person who wants to come back and finish their degree? They were in aesthetic studies." So these things did linger.

Photography is a natural in relationship to aesthetic studies. And that's why, as I said, it's really hard for me to understand the school not accepting art in relationship to social activities, because art is by nature a social activity.

Reti: Why is photography a natural for aesthetic studies?

Locks: Well, because photographers are always looking at the world. We picture the world. We picture engagement. Everything that a photographer does is, by nature, a document. How do you remove the referential nature of a photograph? You can't really take a photograph of anything without having some kind of understanding of what it is you're looking at. It is interdisciplinary by nature. If I'm in Yosemite and I'm photographing, or I'm traveling to take photographs, I'm passing through this land and I'm looking at this land. I'm looking at it socially. And so, the idea of the picture is the idea of picturing, or looking at, or absorbing, or internalizing that which is seen. Now, it can be viewed completely formally. But certainly in relationship to the aesthetic studies major—the aesthetic studies major was an

interdisciplinary program that looked at the circumstances in the intertwining of art in relationship to both aesthetics and the world. Othmar Tobisch taught form and ideas for the art department. *Visual Patterns in Nature*.

Reti: He was a geologist.

Locks: He was a geologist. And then Pavel was teaching the Cezanne course early on. So to segregate the arts from social activity, or from interdisciplinary activity, seems false. And yet, at the same time it is true that we're approaching these things as artists. We're not approaching them as scientists. I'm not trying to say that I understand nature [as] a scientist. But I certainly understand nature as an artist. I've been in nature all of my life. And so the questions of how do humans relate to that, as a humanist are very important to me, and what we do as humans.

So, say for example, I'm interested in the differences between going to AT&T Ballpark and a kind of human construction for the viewing of something. What is the difference between a baseball park and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, where we're taught and given a human perspective in terms of how to look at that life? We're still talking about a human construction. It might be the closest human construction that we have for looking at the sea for the population, but at the same time it is a human construction. Well, artists are interested in that. I'm not interested in, necessarily, the particular science of it, but as a humanist I'm interested in the construction of that place. I mean, I'm a member. I love that place. I like going to that place. I like the interchange in that place. But it still is a human construction. But where do we slice the line? You go to that place to look at the sea, or look at the closest thing that we

can to the sea. And then we go into the cafeteria and they're serving fish. That's a contradiction to me. I've been a vegetarian for fifty years. So as a vegetarian for fifty years, I'm going into this place, and on the one hand they're talking about the problems ecologically of fish and poisons and mercury, and what fish to eat, and what fish not to eat, and the growing of fish and all of that. And then they're serving it. So to me that is—where do you slice it as a human?

Reti: Yes.

Locks: The questions of the natural environment, questions of aesthetics, have always been with me. I was a vegetarian at eighteen. I was a vegetarian when I was at the Art Institute. I was a conscientious objector during the Vietnam War.

Reti: I was wondering about that because you were certainly draft age.

Locks: I was draft age. But I also had a student deferment. The problem came because when we had a child I dropped out of school so my wife could finish school. And when I dropped out of school and I was working nights and then taking care of our child, so [my wife] could finish school, because I dropped out I lost my student deferment. So there was a moment when I was twenty when I was draftable and I was called up for a physical in Oakland. It was at a time when other students were going to extraordinary measures to get out of the war. I had listed myself as a conscientious objector but it didn't mean that they weren't going to have me come in. I was going to school forty hours a week and I was working forty hours a week, so—

Reti: You were going to school and working forty hours a week.

Locks: I was working forty hours a week as a janitor. I worked nights and went to school during the day. The first time they called me for a physical I was underweight. I was 118 pounds and five foot eleven, which was a pound underweight. They asked me if I wanted to serve, and I said no, and they gave me a deferment. They called me back three months later and I was six feet and 115 pounds. That was my service. So no, I was a conscientious objector and I didn't serve.

At that particular time, you couldn't not be involved. The Art Institute was a very political place. There were times when we thought everybody in the world was a liberal because it was our natural activity. We were in this bubble: politics and art.

So the question of the university's move toward interdisciplinarity in recent years—my whole feeling is that in a way that the [explicit] call to that seemed absurd because we were by nature involved in these things. We're not going to *not* be artists. Our role is as artists. We're going to look at things as artists. We're not going to look at them through a microscope in the same way they might in the sciences.

The UC Natural Reserve System

Ken Norris's work with the Natural Reserve System was very important to me. What he was teaching was taking the classroom into an observable space for being able to look at it. Well, I believed in that. In 1985, I'd been here for about seven years, and I had a student who was a triple major. He was here for seven years. He was a triple

major in film, art, and environmental studies. So he was working with this faculty member, Roger Luckenbach. Roger was a great person. Roger and Richard invited me to tag along, periodically. So I would go to the Reserves with the bird class, or with an ecology class, either to Santa Cruz Island, or to the Mojave, to the Bunny Club.[2]

Reti: Did you go on the Natural History Field Quarter?

Locks: I hitchhiked during the Field Quarter to specific places. Roger did a bird class. I was at the Mojave during one of his bird classes and I was kind of auditing that class on the side. I was interested in natural sciences. I was interested in knowing other stories about what I was looking at.

Roger was really influential for me. In 1985 we were at Santa Cruz Island and the Santa Cruz Island was used as a cattle ranch, part of it was a cattle ranch. So we'd go off in a truck and we'd all go to this area where we were looking for fossils and other things. We were in this river bed area and I found a bone, a jawbone of a cow. You know, my upbringing with Edward Weston and photographing dead things and bones, and aesthetics and form—

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: And so it was like, oh, cool, I found this thing. I really love this thing. I'm going to take this back and photograph it. So I found this jawbone and I went over to

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[2] The Bunny Club was a cabin built of found materials by Ken Norris and his brother Robert in the Sweeney Granite Mountains.

Roger and I showed him the jawbone. And Roger said, "Oh, that cow died of cancer, or probably died of cancer."

Reti: He could just tell by looking at the bone.

Locks: At the decay around the jaw. He saw the decay; I saw the form. One of the reasons I wanted to be on that [trip] with him is that what I saw is different from what he saw. And we would never be able to have a communication unless we could share what we see. So if you're talking about aesthetic studies, I understood the aesthetics. But I didn't understand what I was looking at, other than aesthetics. The reason why scientists and artists need to work together is that we're going to see different things. We have a such a bureaucratic situation that it is very difficult, in practice, to be able to do that. Scientists sometimes see artists as secondary figures within an academic environment. And yet we really need to work together on some of the social and aesthetic questions.

My role in relationship to aesthetics is the same as a writer's interest in aesthetics. Aesthetics is the vehicle by which we tell a story, and we figure out the best way to tell a story. The question of form is simply a vehicle. If we don't have a story, the form isn't going to do us any good. But the relationship of storytelling really has to be understanding the medium that we work with in order to tell that story more clearly. The focus is on what is it that we're looking at in the world. Certainly, the aesthetics is there. For example, we have aesthetics in relationship to architecture. Most people who are architects, or interior designers, or landscape gardeners, or fabric designers—they all studied art. They couldn't get where they were going

without studying art. It simply is in an applied form. But the artist is interested—again—going back to aesthetic studies—they're interested in the aesthetics as a vehicle for telling the story, in the same way that a writer would use words. William Faulkner, working from the vernacular of the South, in order to tell the story of the South—you wouldn't correct his grammar because that led to the authenticity. Artists have to understand the authenticity of themselves, and the authenticity of the ideas that they're involved in, and that the form is embedded in that, in relationship to telling a story.

But oftentimes, we separate technique from idea. The technique is part of the formal understanding of a medium in order to tell a story. The completeness is the relationship of the technique, or the medium, to our autobiography. Who are we? What is the story that we can tell? And then the document: what is the thing that are is in the world? The photo is a perfect triad of those elements. We have to study and know; we have to know the medium; we have to know who we are. We have to know where we're from. And then we have to understand the thing that we're looking at.

And if I don't work with Roger Luckenbach in the Santa Cruz Island, then it lessens my ability to understand what it is I'm looking at. That happened because I was in the field, because I picked up a bone. So one of the reasons why I take my classes out to the field, to the UC Reserve System, is because I need to get them out of the classroom, looking at the thing with them, so that we can have common experience in relationship to a place.

But it's not just nature. When we go to the Mojave Desert we're not just looking at the natural environment. We're looking at mining; we're looking at the dunes; and we're looking for snakes. We're finding metal shards and looking at the ranch. The Mojave Reserve was a ranch also. You're looking at ranch artifacts. You're looking at petroglyphs. You're looking at the mining that's going on. You're looking at the waste. We're making trips down to abandoned buildings. We're going down to Joshua Tree National Park. We're looking at the culture of an environment. The Mojave Desert Reserve is right in the middle of a very rich cultural environment, of which the students know very little. They've never been to the desert before. So the Natural Reserve System is a location that allows us to put ourselves in the center of a set of experiences that are vital in the total teaching experience. We take different cameras. We take films.

But it's really culture that's the thing that they're encountering. There was a period when we'd drive over to the Colorado River and we'd go swimming. Or we'd go to Las Vegas, and the kids wanted to spend the night in Las Vegas. And so some pulled off and went to Las Vegas. So it's culture. Artists, photographers—photographers primarily—are interested in the bigger picture rather than simply the natural history. You're in a kind of a natural history environment, but the natural history is mining and ranching and gambling and recluses. You can have meth labs. I mean, what is it that we are encountering when we move through those places?

Reti: So you still take classes in more recent years—

Locks: Every quarter. Well, the last few years I've done it every quarter.

Reti: Wow, that's amazing.

Locks: They're extracurricular right now. I used to do it in relationship to a course. And now what I'll do is I'll break away for a day from a class to take a weekend. So two and a half weeks ago we were at McLaughlin Reserve up by Lake Berryessa, north of Lake Berryessa. Next quarter we're going to the Mojave. Fall quarter I was at Big Sur, Big Creek. The same last year.

So the students look forward to that. Right now I'm taking primarily painters, printmakers, and photographers. But anyone in the department who wants to go can go. The winter quarter is rough, but I took nine or ten people. Next quarter will be tricky because it's sort of a rite of passage for the photo area, so there will be maybe eighteen people going to the Mojave. It's a rich area. There's so much out there.

So if we go back to the aesthetic studies major, it's almost like well, duh. If we're a liberal arts school, students have to take these different things because they need that level of experience. If it were literature we'd need to study people. It's a whole picture. So the aesthetic studies major was very natural to me, but just because they don't have the major doesn't mean that it doesn't continue. I didn't need the major in order to teach that way.

Reti: So you kept teaching pretty consistently in the same way after aesthetic studies was discontinued.

Locks: The same way. And then also because David Cope and I would grandfather that out. So we were continuing to teach aesthetic studies major students. But then in the art department—the hardest thing there was that each year maybe I'd get a one-year contract; maybe I'd get a two-year contract. They'd say, well, you can't teach longer than this. Then they'd say, well, we're renewing it. At first you couldn't teach more than four years; then it wasn't any more than six years. So the first six years were rocky because I didn't have any sense of whether I was going to be able to continue here. Every couple of years it was one thing or another. And then it was the eye of the needle.

Finally, after twelve years—and it was because of Victor Burgin coming. Victor Burgin came to teach within art history. And if you had a PhD-caliber person teaching photo history but you didn't accept photography as a legitimate field in art, there was a bit of a contradiction. It was while Chancellor Pister was here that the photo position was approved. I applied for that position and at that point I became a professor. I was an assistant professor II. I had been making more money as a lecturer at that particular time. I had taught twelve years. I got nine years credit for my twelve years of service and took a three thousand dollar pay cut to go on ladder. But that's where it began. That was about 1990. I went on ladder in 1999. And then from there then I started to move up as an associate professor. I had tenure. Eduardo Carrillo was the chair when I got tenure. And then, as an associate professor, I chaired for six years. My first two terms as chair was for six years. And then recently I chaired again for three years. So in all of that, it was a lecturer for

twelve years, an assistant professor working my way up, and now chairing a total of nine years.

Reti: We'll talk more about the chairing later in the oral history.

Tracking Back to Graduate School

Locks: So let's talk some more about pre-UCSC.

Grad school was difficult. I graduated from the Art Institute in January and started at San Francisco State in February of the same year. And it was horrible. I had a really hard time adjusting from one school, which was very loose, to a school that was more structured. Also, I didn't really affiliate very well with the students. I had a family and it was really difficult. So we moved out of the city. I dropped out. I quit school after the first semester. And then we came down to Santa Cruz in 1970.

I knew of UC Santa Cruz because I had a friend at the Art Institute whose brother was going here in '65. So I knew of the school since '65. Then Don [Weygandt] started here in '68. But we moved down here in '70 to get out of the city. My first job was on the campus. I was the photography assistant for Alan Donaldson in the Photo Lab in the Communications Building in 1970-71. I was here for six months and was laid off as an employee because of the budget. They didn't have the budget to keep me full time. Then I started to work off campus, first at Lenz Arts in the early days, and then Webber's Photo Shops. I worked at Webber's for a couple of years and then I said, okay this is crazy. I really missed school. I missed bulletin boards. I missed

what was going on. So I called San Francisco State and said, "Help, I need to get back into school." So I went back to school.

Reti: But you were still living here?

Locks: I was living here. For a year I commuted to school there. Finally, Jack [Welpott] said, "You're not doing enough work if you expect to graduate on time." I said, "Well, I can't afford to stay late, longer. This is all I can afford." But we worked out an arrangement where I moved back to the city. I moved into my parents' house with my family and I apprenticed with Jack one day a week. I went out to his house and worked for him. And I concentrated on my studies. During that time was when he introduced me to the workshops. During that time too we went down and met Ansel at his house and we met Brett Weston at his house, spent the night at Brett Weston's house. So at that point I was really getting back into photo in the school.

Directing the Ansel Adams Photography Workshops

And then also during that last semester Jack took me up to Yosemite to assist in a workshop that he and Judy Dater and Paul Caponigro and Ted Orland were teaching. The Ansel Adams Workshops in Yosemite were expanding. So Jack took me as an assistant. It was an April workshop. I worked for a week as an intern, as an assistant. And then after that—

Reti: Wait, I'm going to stop you. So what does it mean to be an assistant in a workshop like that?

Locks: The way the workshops were structured and the way that I worked them as a director was—there might have been thirty-six students. So you take your thirty-six students and you'd break them into four—A, B, C, D—four groups of nine. As an assistant, I was assigned to one of those groups. So my job was intervention between the workshop organization and the group. I was a facilitator within the group. I would get them from one place to another place. I would have informal sessions with them. I would report if there were any problems within that particular group.

There were four groups but we had the same experiences, just at different times. So the job was to coordinate the intertwining of these four groups, so that they all got to see Paul; they all got to see Judy; they all got to see Jack; they all got to do all of these things. We'd meet in the morning and we'd have a session in the morning from 9:00-12:00. And then we'd have lunch and then a session from 2:00-5:00. And then we'd eat together. And then we'd have a lecture in the evening from 7:00-10:00. And then we'd go to the bar, and we'd have a drink together. And then we'd go back to rooms, and we'd look at work, and then we'd shut down around 2:00. And then we'd get up the next morning to have breakfast together at 7:00. We'd do this for seven days. The assistant's role was to participate. So that was my orientation to a structure.

I got my degree in June and I was signed up to teach a summer session. I taught a summer session by myself. Then Ansel invited me to be an assistant for the summer session. This was not with Jack and Judy and Paul, but with Ansel and a cadre of

people, although Ralph Putzger was at San Francisco State. One of my teachers at San Francisco State was involved in the workshops. So it was a group of people that Ansel was comfortable working with, although also notables. Later I would work with people like Yousef Karsh and Arnold Newman during the workshops, and Henry Holmes Smith. People would come out to that workshop who were important figures. And in terms of the collection [at UCSC Library Special Collections], Al Weber, who is in the collection here, Pirkle Jones, who is in the collection here, were teaching at the June workshop. So I went back and I taught that. And then I taught my summer session.

And then during the summer I was planning my career. I was saying, okay, I'm going to send out my resume. I sent a copy to the Ansel Adams Workshop, and I said, "If you have need for me in any capacity, I'd be happy to do this because it's a really unique and important learning experience." I sent that resume off and Bill Turnage, who was Ansel's business manager, called me in August and asked if I would come up and interview. I went up and interviewed and they gave me the director's job. So I became the director of the Ansel Adams Workshops, because they had a plan to teach eleven workshops the following year.

Reti: This would have been in the mid-seventies?

Locks: '73. So in '73 they needed a director. They handed me a piece of paper and on the piece of paper was eleven workshops. The first one, for example, was a Women in Photography workshop with Sheri Heiser and Judy Dater, Jack Welpott, Ellen

Land-Weber. It was coming up. But when they handed me the paper, they hadn't contracted it.

Reti: Oh, my God.

Locks: So, my job was to contract it. I had to come in and contract it and publicize it and then to structure it. Imogen Cunningham was supposed to be at the women's workshop. They handed me eleven workshops that needed designing.

Reti: (whistles)

Locks: So right out of school I went up there and I did eleven workshops the first year, fifteen workshops the next year, of the type that I described. The first year we did three back-to-back. We did Ansel's June workshop; it ended. I had a day off and then we did a seven-day backpack. And then I got back, and I had a day, and then we did a twelve-day bookmaking workshop.

Reti: You were running a whole school.

Locks: I had a part-time assistant and then Bill Turnage, who was my boss. Two of the workshops were with Ansel, but otherwise— The first year they handed me the piece of paper: this is what we are going to do. I started in September and I worked with the women's workshop and there was a little bit of trouble with that. But then the next one was a December workshop and they brought Robert Heinecken, Carl Chiarenza, and Jerry Uelsmann to do a workshop. The three of them had gone to graduate school together, so they were really good buddies from the early days. So it

was kind of re-envisioning them coming back together to do a workshop. That was a really important workshop. That was when I started going to the Society for Photographic Education conferences. I went back to Rochester because Jerry, Carl, and Robert were going to be there and I didn't know them. I hadn't met them and so I went back to meet them before they came out to the workshop.

So in general we were really putting together these megalithic workshops. We did the Nude in the Landscape workshop, which was with Eikoh Hosoe from Japan, Lucien Clergue from France, Imogen Cunningham from the United States, Jack Welpott, Judy Dater, Robert Heinecken. It was a seven-day workshop with all of them.

Reti: Where did you stay?

Locks: Students stayed in the Yosemite Lodge or they camped. Either camping or in the lodge, or Curry Village. They would stay there. And we used the Yosemite Valley schoolhouse. They had a K-8 schoolhouse. Our meetings were at the schoolhouse or out in the field. So we'd go out in the field.

Reti: So how would you work with the long shadow of Ansel Adams? Yosemite is so—perhaps now even more than so when you were teaching in the 1970s—but so hard to photograph in any kind of fresh way.

Locks: Yes. Well, that was one of the reasons I took the job, was for the shadow. I wanted to know whether one could do anything new in that situation. But as it turned out I was working so much and working so hard. And while I was

experimenting with nature, I really didn't know what to do. That's when I did the *Familiar Subjects* work. What was so bizarre was I had six years of college, and then during the June workshop in '74 this fellow, Rogier Gregoire, came out from Polaroid as a Polaroid rep. Ansel would order whatever he wanted. Polaroid gave the workshops whatever Ansel wanted because they were really good friends. So, we got Polaroid materials—but also the June workshop, that one particular workshop they also sent out a technician. In this case, it was actually a vice president that came out. It was Rogier Gregoire. He brought out two Alpha SX-70 cameras with him and thirty packs of film. He and I shot that in two days. So I got addicted to the SX-70 in the Yosemite Workshops. It was ironic because here I was with the training that I had from prior and I was using an instamatic camera in an Ansel Adams workshop. But it became my primary photographic tool for four years. I worked from '74 to '78 exclusively with the SX-70. *Familiar Subjects* was published in 1978[3] and it was with that work that I got this job here at UCSC. It was because of the publication of that book and the nature of that work. But I started that work with the Ansel Adams workshops.

Reti: So you really never got to explore that question of the shadow.

Locks: No.

Reti: But you sort of answered it another way.

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[3] *Familiar Subjects: Polaroid SX-70 Impressions* (Harper and Row, 1978).

Locks: I might have answered it. I went back to it later. But I was finding places in that environment. I certainly wanted to be in that environment. Also, it's important to note, too, that Ansel is kind of a mixed figure in art circles because he was not necessarily recognized always by artists. He was recognized by the public. And one was either an Ansel Adams fan or an Edward Weston fan. I was brought up through Edward Weston and so I was really dubious of Ansel, even when I started working there. But he became a really important figure in my development. I was wrong. Do you know? Sometimes you say there's this guy out there who's really, really important and you don't give them enough credit. He was an amazing figure. In many ways there's kind of an association (he was a Pisces) between his temperament and my own temperament. In the end, I think we were alike in some ways.

Reti: How so?

Locks: I don't know how to describe it except that there's a kind of clumsiness or clunkiness. On the one hand, his work is really dramatic but I really see a kind of formal clunkiness to it too. And I feel sometimes that clunkiness in my own work. But also, he was a romantic. After doing the workshops he called me because he needed me to help him with a portfolio and I went down to help. I sometimes drove him crazy in the darkroom because I was asking questions about Uelsmann or other people and wanting his opinion on things. At a certain point he'd want to drop that. He didn't want to talk about it beyond a certain point.

No, Ansel was really important. But by the time I was working with Ansel, I had had this other mentoring through my youth. He was a giant figure in the end, but not necessarily a giant figure in the beginning. The reason I want to talk about it is the workshops were much more vital to my experience than my graduate education. When I was able to be in the workshops, working with the people that I worked with in the workshops, that was a phenomenal learning experience. I worked with everyone I wanted to work with. My first experience with professional art photo was with *Aperture* magazine. There was an issue in 1965 that had Clarence John Laughlin, Wynn Bullock, and Frederick Sommer that was called the phantasts.[4] So the second year I designed a workshop that was with them, plus Linda Connor from the San Francisco Art Institute, and I invited my dad up too, and he worked for free just as a participant. We had thirty-six students and these four major artists. Linda Connor has become, in my mind, one of the most important contemporary twentieth or twenty-first century artists of our time. I would say that the mantle of Imogen Cunningham's presence in San Francisco was taken up by Linda Connor. Linda Connor is one of the major contemporary artists.

Reti: So there *were* women around. Because sometimes the story gets told that landscape photography, in particular, is the province of men.

Locks: Yeah. I think that as humans we've been really conservative and bad. So that you get someone like Linda Connor, Judy Dater, Ellen Land-Weber, Sheri Heiser. We

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[4] See "The eyes of three phantasts: Laughlin, Sommer, Bullock." In *Apertur*e, vol. IX, no. 3, 1961. pp. 96-123.

pick a half dozen women and then we use them again and again. It's not unlike the director of a gallery sometimes, or a museum. They find out what's going on publicly and they pick from a pool of the same people. We're not very creative oftentimes and we don't really credit emerging artists.

They came to Yosemite. Judy was a little bit of a landscape photographer but she was really a portrait artist. Yousef Karsh came to Yosemite to teach a workshop, or Arnold Newman, and they were portrait artists.

Reti: It wasn't all landscape anyway.

Locks: Yeah, so we weren't really only concentrating on the landscape. Ralph Gibson came out from New York City. Or Gary Winogrand. Basically that period, certainly in relationship to the people that I worked with in Yosemite, Carmel, Tucson—being able to work with people while they were living. Minor White. Emmet Galen, who taught at Princeton. Peter Bunnell. There were a number of Eastern artists that were out of Chicago. Barbara Crane—really interesting and strong. Joyce Numonis out of Chicago.

Actually Imogen Cunningham invited herself to the nude workshop. We had this thing planned and it was really Bill Turnage who got the list: "This is what we want to do. This is your piece of paper. Go hire these people." And so we started to publicize it. Imogen was good friends with Jack and Judy. She sent me a letter and said, "Why wasn't I invited to this workshop?" Who do you think invented the Nude in the Landscape in the first place, right?"

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: (laughs) She was photographing her husband at Mt. Rainier in 1902. Imogen was saying, "Come on now!" (laughs) So Jack and Judy brought her up to that workshop.

Reti: And you hadn't invited her because she was such a big name that you thought she wouldn't come?

Locks: No, we just didn't think of her. And she was 90, 91. You know. It wasn't so much me, because at that point I was an employee who was handed this piece of paper. Of course I said, "Well, yeah. Of course, come. We'd love to have you."

And the first workshop was supposed to be with her but the women's workshop, the snafu in that was—and talk about feminism. I wasn't there yet. They had designed this workshop trying to be hip: Women and Photography. But then when I got there they said, "Okay, now set this up." Jack was the token male. But he came with Judy, Judy Dater, Sheri Heiser, and Ellen Land-Weber. And Imogen was supposed to come. But all of the students had corresponded with Janet Roper. Janet Roper was Bill Turnage's assistant who was doing some of the arrangement for the workshop. And the women students—there were eighteen women students; no men in the class. So eighteen women came for the workshop. And first of all, Janet was in the background as an assistant. I had just been hired as the director. So I was a male director stepping in. And Imogen Cunningham had called the day before. She had fallen and chipped a bone in her back and so she wasn't there.

Reti: Oh, god.

Locks: So I didn't have Imogen. Janet Roper became a secondary figure. I was the director of this workshop. So the women in the workshop were just a little bit put off, right?

Reti: You really walked into a difficult situation.

Locks: (laughs) And to a certain degree, in terms of feminism, there's always been, in any movement, a kind of tokenism. It's not authentic. People don't really go out of their way, economically, to make concessions. It takes time. So I had to dig my way out of that hole. Jack and Judy and I were pretty close. Judy was my first model and I had run around with her when I was eighteen and she was a graduate student at San Francisco State. I got along with Ellen and Sheri too. So I had help. But at the same time, I had to convince the students that what we were trying to do was authentic. It was real. We were concerned. It was a really good workshop in the end. But in any situation in terms of teaching, if you're doing a good job it's an uphill battle trying to do new things all the time.

So that was my first workshop as the director. The second one was the one with Jerry Uelsmann and Heinecken. And then Jerry came back another time later. Heinecken, of course, was habitual. I kept having Robert Heinecken come because he was a major educator and an important artist.

I had done forty workshops by the time I came here. If there was somebody really notable in the field, I wanted to work with them.

Reti: How would you assess those workshops in terms of the history of photography?

Locks: Well, the people that we were having come were both the history and the emerging artists. Someone like Lewis Baltz was 32. He was only a year and a half older than I. He was a teacher. We had him come the second year. Right after the Irvine industrial parks he did a couple of workshops.[5]

Reti: So that's interesting. You're located in Yosemite, which is the site of iconic pristine landscape photography, modernism. And there you are working with New Topographics photographers.

Locks: Yeah, but Lewis Baltz came to a Carmel workshop. The first workshop he came to was an Ansel Adams workshop in Carmel. And then later I did an Ansel Adams Workshop in San Francisco with Lewis. It was Lewis and John Upton, who wrote the Upton and Upton book. And W. Eugene Smith. So I really worked with Lewis in this kind of more suburban and urban—well, Carmel is a rural town—but Carmel and San Francisco.

Reti: But still. I find that really interesting.

Locks: Well, we were interested in contemporary art. It wasn't Ansel that was running those. I mean, it was under Ansel's name. But Ansel was known for the

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[5] See Lewis Baltz, *The New Industrial Parks Near Irvine, California*, 1974.

highest quality in art and people came to them because they knew they could trust it.

Reti: And so, do you know how he felt about these very different kinds of landscape photography, such as the New Topographics.

Locks: He wouldn't allow something that he didn't want to happen. The thing with his communication with Bill Turnage is that they wanted the best. Who were the most important emerging [photographers], as well as photographers like Yousef Karsh and Arnold Newman and Minor White? I mean, those people were of stature and had been doing this for a very long time. But the emerging artists like Lewis Baltz or Jerry Uelsmann were really important to Ansel. He really liked Uelsmann in particular, because Uelsmann was a great technician, and Ansel really respected that.

Working for Ansel Adams

But we make mistakes. I made that mistake with Ansel. We make the mistake that this is a fogey. This is a person who doesn't have the foresight to appreciate something. After the workshops I was living in Santa Cruz with my family. I was kind of between jobs. Ansel needed help at the studio. So he called me and said, "Listen, I need an assistant because I want to work seven days a week and my assistant can only work five." So I said, "Okay, I'll come and work." I did that because when I was doing the workshops I only saw Ansel two or three times a year. I was running the program and when I saw Ansel, he was like a movie star. So I was saying, okay, who

is Ansel? So the reason for working for Ansel was that I wanted to know him in a way that was more familial, or in real life.

So he called me and he was working on Portfolio Seven and he needed help. And he was working on the Southwest book, and he was working on the rewriting of the Basic Photo series. He was busy. He'd get up at 8:30 in the morning and then he'd go into the darkroom and he'd work until noon. And then he'd go in the office and he'd work until five. This was seven days a week. When I was working for him I was his secondary assistant. Alan Ross was working there. Ansel would go in and get everything set up first and then he would do all of his preliminary printing. But then he would have an assistant there in front of the chemicals. And he'd make all of the exposures ahead of time. Or he'd start ahead of time. We'd be in the darkroom together. If it was Alan or it was me, Ansel would be at the enlarger. He would have gone ahead and made an exposure for twenty prints, for example, and I'd stand in front of the developer and Ansel would come up beside me and he'd drop six, 16x20 inch prints in. And then I would work with the prints. I would go from there to the stop bath, to the fixer, to the water, and so forth. We'd work all morning together. Then we'd soak the prints over lunch, have lunch either with Ansel and the family, or Alan and I would go out and we'd get lunch together and come back. And in the afternoon, then, we washed and selenium-toned and put them on the racks. And then I dry-mounted the whole portfolio. So my role in there was backup. I did all the dry mounting and when Alan wasn't there I was in the darkroom with Ansel.

But I was working on the SX-70 work at that time. Everyone in the household knew my work. But I was afraid to show Ansel.

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: What is Ansel's view of this work? I was embarrassed. I wasn't sure. It's that snobby: I'm too arty. Or, I'm too young, or who knows? Something. So I hadn't showed Ansel.

Finally, it got to the point where Ansel confronted me. He said, "Listen, I hear you're doing this work in SX-70." He was the only one that hadn't seen it. He said, "Okay, bring it in." I was afraid of this face off. So I brought a case of these matted SX-70 prints. And I showed him the work. I went into work the next day and he had typed up a letter of introduction to John Szarkowski and to Weston Neff. John Szarkowski at the Museum of Modern Art and Weston Neff at the Metropolitan.

Reti: Whoa! Good God.

Locks: Just introducing me to say that I'm doing interesting work and that it would be worth their while to take a look at it.

Reti: Were you blown away?

Locks: Yeah. Yeah (laughs) because—it makes me cry, cry because of the fear that we have. Somebody like that we think of historically and not in relationship to their expertise. We don't give people credit. I was really upset with myself for the lack of credit. So that goes back to the question of: how did he deal with Heinecken; how

did he deal with Lewis Baltz? He was a kind of father figure of photo. And as such, he wanted to see photography progress.

In the end he would have converted to digital. Ansel was a technician. He was the first on his block to have a microwave. I mean, he loved technology. He loved nuclear power. [That was the] irony in relationship to Ansel as a conservator and conservationist. But he loved science. But at the same time, he was king of the mountain and he wasn't willing to give up being king of the mountain in the darkroom to start over again in terms of technology. He didn't have time in his life to switch. But if he were born now—

Reti: Right, because digital was really just starting when Ansel was in his last years.

Locks: Really in its infancy. So. But he gave his archives to the University of Arizona and his negatives with the understanding that graduate students would be able to work with those negatives. He saw the negative as score. He was trained as a musician. He was concert quality. At twenty he was a concert quality pianist. And he saw the equivalence between the score in music and the negative, that there were multiple interpretations. He really had hoped at some point—and he writes about this—that his negatives would be used in a creative way by graduate students.

Reti: And have they been?

Locks: No.

Ansel also included two of my photographs in the Basic Photo series polaroid book. He really always put his money where his mouth was. I have two prints in that particular book.

Other Mentors and Colleagues

Reti: And did your work end up going to John Szarkowski or Weston Neff?

Locks: No, I made trips back there, yet I didn't really use the letter. I looked for shows. I knew Ralph Gibson. I had met Ralph. I was back in New York and I saw Andre Kertesz when I was in New York. Ralph and I shared a cab. He asked me if I had my taken my work around and if I had tried this gallery. I said, no, I hadn't been in that gallery. And so Ralph said, "Well, come on." So he took me into OK Harris in New York, which was a really good art gallery, mostly for painting and sculpture. So he took me into OK Harris, and OK Harris didn't have anything, but Ivan Karp took me around the corner to another gallery that he was part owner of, and they were doing an SX-70 show. They couldn't use it right then but Ralph connected me with the gallery, and he connected me with another gallery in New York City, where I did get a show. I came back West and a week later Ivan Karp called me and he said, "I had a cancellation. Can you bring that work and glass on the plane and install the show?"

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: So two weeks later I flew back to New York and hung a show at OK Harris. And that was the thing about the workshops with Ralph Gibson, is that Ralph

became a mentor in his understanding of that place. Both places that he recommended I did get shows at. That was out of the workshops. Ralph was one of my mentors. Heinecken. Dave Bohn. Dave Bohn was an outdoors person. I did a number of workshops with Dave. Dave Bohn wrote the Glacier Bay book.[6]

Reti: I was just going to say, "He's the Alaska photographer." I know that book.

Locks: Glacier Bay. Katmai National Park. When I met him, he had just finished walking across Glacier Bay with a ninety-pound pack. He had been working on that book. That first year in '74 he was a member of the June workshop with Ansel. He was a member of the backpacking workshop, so I went seven days backpacking with Dave. Then he was a member of the bookmaking workshop because he was a bookmaker. He had worked with Roger Minick to do a book on the Delta West, the *Delta West* book.[7]

Reti: Yes. And he had a publishing company.

Locks: Scrimshaw Press. So Dave Bohn worked with Scrimshaw and he had done *Delta West*, and he had done a number of books at that time. He did the Katmai National Park book.[8] He became the owner of the Darius Kinsey Archive. He was a Western photographer, Oregon, Washington, of logging camps and railroad yards.

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[6] David Bohn, *Glacier Bay: The Land and the Silence*, (Sierra Club Books, 1967).
[7] *Delta West: The Land and People of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta: Photographs by Roger Minick (Historical Essay by Dave Bohn),* Scrimshaw Press, 1969.
[8] *Rambles Through an Alaskan Wild: Katmai and the Valley of the Smokes* (Capra Press, 1979).

Darius was an amazing, amazing figure in the history of the American West. So a Darius Kinsey book.[9]

Dave came to the bookmaking workshop. So I worked with him for thirty-two days straight, between the June backpacking, Ansel's workshop, and the bookmaking. The bookmaking workshop was with a couple of designers from San Francisco**:** Dugald Stermer and G. D. Smith, and then Ralph Gibson, Dave Bohn, George Tais. Ansel made an appearance for a couple of days. So, we discussed bookmaking for two weeks.

Reti: Did the students make a photography book?

Locks: We talked about the design of books but we didn't make one. We talked in and around making them. We talked about the work that they brought in relationship to a bookmaking workshop. We had designers, artists, photographers, publishers—both G. Dean Smith and Dugald Stermer were really typeface guys. They really loved publishing and design. Dave Bohn worked both ways.

And Ralph was the founder of Lustrum Press in New York. Lustrum Press published his early work. Three artists—Larry Clark, and Ralph Gibson, and Neal Slavin founded Lustrum Press really to self-publish their own books. The first one of Ralph's was *Somnambulist.* And then Larry Clark's *Tulsa*, which is a really important book. Larry Clark later went on to become a filmmaker and worked with child abuse, and children and drugs. Neal Slavin was a commercial artist in New York City.

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[9] Dave Bohn and Rodolfo Petschek, *Kinsey Photographer* (Black Dog & Leventhal, 1995).

Ralph kept Lustrum Press himself after the other two dropped out. And he published a darkroom book: *Darkroom 1* and *Darkroom 2*. He published *Deja Vu* and several other books. So when he came out to Yosemite, he was really familiar with the business of a publishing company, an artist's publishing company. This was in 1974. So it was kind of early on for book publishing by artists.

Reti: The Sierra Club books were already going.

Locks: The Sierra Club books were going. The Glacier Bay book became a Sierra Club book. It was already there. So Dave was affiliated with that, with David Brower. Dave had gone from the coffee table book to that other period.

The early seventies was that formative period. For example, color. We did a color workshop in 1975. Well, the first color exhibition of color photographs was at the Museum of Modern Art in 1975, with a William Eggleston show. They had never had a one-person show in color in the museum because it was not part of the academy. That's that thing of: is photo art? It was too close to illustration. There were artists like Eliot Porter, but Eliot Porter was an outsider, an outlier. He was a doctor. He didn't really affiliate with—certainly the coffee table books that David Brower published on conservation—*The Place No One Knew* was a really important book.

Reti: Absolutely.

Locks: And Philip Hyde, for example, too, the coffee table books. But in 1975, before the Eggleston show, we saw the emergence of that and we did a color and photography workshop with a couple of color printers, Philip Hyde (who is in the

collection here at Special Collections), Philip was there.) We talked about the artist as color printer. Philip didn't do his color printing at that time. He started doing dye transfer printing after that workshop.

In 1975, all of a sudden color got into academic education. Some schools, like San Francisco State—when I was at San Francisco State there was a photographer, Don Worth. Don Worth was a color photographer. He was teaching color photography at San Francisco State. That was one of the reasons why I went there, was that it was a really academic environment, a liberal arts school that was embedded in photo and it was a really dynamic school. San Francisco State was teaching color in the mid-sixties, even though it didn't become popular until 1975. And then all of a sudden—the history of color, if historians mark it—we can talk about color photographers prior to that, but that show in the Museum of Modern Art was the key turning point.

So in relationship to Ansel and those workshops, and the role of those workshops in relationship to the women's workshop, the color workshop—we were really interested in contemporary issues and not just Ansel's view.

Reti: That's great. Well, I think I'm going to stop you for today.

Locks: Okay.

Teaching Photography

Reti: Today is March 16, 2016. This is Irene Reti and I'm here with Norman Locks for our second session in the oral history we are doing together. We are now in the

new Podcasting Recording room in the basement of McHenry Library. So Norman, let's start with finishing up a story that we were talking about last time, about the bone that you found.

Locks: We were on Santa Cruz Island. It was either a bird class or a field quarter. I went to Santa Cruz Island in both circumstances with Roger Luckenbach. Roger was teaching both for environmental studies and the natural sciences. He taught seventeen different course titles as a lecturer here, from herpetology, to marine biology, and then birding, and the field quarter and so forth.

Roger and I were about the same age and so we really had a good relationship with one another. We shared a student. There was a student, Richard Barr, who was a triple major in film, environmental studies, and art. Film at that time was in theater arts, but it was film and environmental studies. So Richard connected me to Roger and then I got invited to kind of hitchhike on these.

But anyway, the story that we started [last session] was that I found this jawbone, which I had presumed was from a cow because Santa Cruz Island at that time was partially owned by a cattle rancher. So I found this jawbone and I took it to Roger, and I was just showing it to him, and he said, "Oh, that cow probably died of cancer." Well, there's an aesthetic from the fifties, and probably longer—and later questions of beauty and violence and so forth—where we were looking at essential form. Edward Weston was one of the people that I was brought up on in terms of photography. So I was really enamored with this thing and was going to collect it and take a photograph of it. I showed it to Roger and Roger said, "Oh, that cow

probably died of cancer." All of a sudden the jawbone became this hot potato. Suddenly because of new information, I couldn't attach it to my earlier thinking in terms of the romance of form. Now I would probably look at it and say, okay, I want to go in and photograph thinking about cancer and thinking about those things, and detaching it from its original thing to see whether photo can communicate some of that other knowledge.

I work in the landscape a lot and one of the most difficult things is to photograph landscape for its either biodiversity, or—say there's an earthquake fault and how do you show that there's this earthquake fault? What does the landscape look like? A geologist, an anthropologist, or different specialized people would be able to recognize what was particular about a landscape, but a layperson or a person in the arts wouldn't. And so, who are we communicating to?

Anyway (laughs) I kind of dropped the cow bone. The thing that I took away from that, which was really important to me, was how necessary it is for me to be out there with a scientist, because we learn, and as we advance in learning we learn more and more specialized information having to do with our own fields of study. But then we really miss opportunities for expanding our understanding of things. People look at things very differently. A photographer working on the street [is] able to cognitively understand and have a vision for flat form, have a vision for all of the opportunities, or signs and symbols that are out there, and what those signs and symbols might mean. But a photographer in that situation might look it very differently than an anthropologist. And if we're able to talk to one another, we

would be much more able to then say, "Well, what do you see?" "What do you see?" We are trained, and our brains are trained to find pattern and signs that are out there that signify meaning, meaning oftentimes [only] within our own specialized field, or in relationship to how we want to organize thoughts and ideas.

That trip with Roger was in 1985. I was thinking about this relative to the aesthetic studies major, when I was teaching originally for College Five. So Roger in 1985 was really important, that interchange, and kind of opened up the thought that we really needed to think differently and work with other fields, the need for interdisciplinarity.

I did my undergraduate [years] at the San Francisco Art Institute. It was an accredited art school, so it had all of the humanities courses. But you couldn't compare those humanities courses to what we would have at the university. So one of the things was being here for the first five years and knowing immediately that the opportunities for students in a liberal arts education were so much better, in my mind, if one could do it. I mean, there are a lot of people who wouldn't fit into a university campus, but would fit best in (and I might have been one of those) in an art school. But opportunities are here for the material and the content that we use in all art courses. The art department now is wanting to be very interdisciplinary, dealing with the humanities and the sciences. The university is a great place for that because we have the leading specialists in all fields.

Throughout my career in teaching there have been moments like the one with Roger that were key, and that generally involved an enlightening story. So that in terms of,

especially photo, which deals, not always, but often with the world as its stage or as its studio—we really need to know more. A third of our students have always been double majors and now even more so. A lot in psychology, anthropology, feminist studies, art history—pretty much every field—biology, marine biology. There was a really terrific student last year in marine biology who was working photographing underwater, and now she's been an intern and a lab person for the sciences, working in marine biology. So these things happen and they're really, really important.

Reti: What do you think that you as a photographer, an artist, have to offer someone like Roger Luckenbach, or another scientist? How does that cross-fertilization work?

Locks: That's a tricky question because oftentimes it's one way. Even in the aesthetic studies major, scientists were always coming into the art classes and talking to us. But very rarely are artists invited into those other places. I've lectured in creative writing courses. Former students here in creative writing and literature have invited me to show portfolios and talk about project and the relationship of process. And I'm always needing to build comparisons in process: how do we work as artists; what do artists think; how do they think; what are they looking at? And how do we work? How do we gather information? What is the research process? What is research in art? We have to constantly do that.

I was just talking, for example, to a student yesterday in a crit, his final crit. He's a double major in history and in art, and in photo. And he's from San Bernardino, in Southern California. He just fell in love with San Francisco, and in particular,

Chinatown. This is the first quarter that I've worked with him, this past quarter. He's going into my advanced class. But when an artist or a photographer is working in a certain area, the first thing is the visual information is just so overwhelming, and especially for him. He was just enchanted, moving from a kind of desert, inland, open, sparse town, to then finding one of the densest areas of San Francisco. The sense of color and ceremony and work and density was really striking to him. So he spent all of this past quarter photographing in Chinatown. We met up as a class partially too, for the Chinese New Year's parade in Chinatown, about ten students. We ran into Eddie in San Francisco at the parade. He was photographing.

After a quarter of finding out what kinds of things he's attracted to—and a lot of it has to do with the questions of density and visual notation and multicultural—from questions of the Chinese script signage, lots of people, graffiti—graffiti on trucks; graffiti on walls. English. The newness of cars. New buildings against old buildings. And Chinese-designed buildings compared to older, post-Victorian buildings, to skyscrapers. In a way [he is] building a collage photographically of the information that is in that scene, and then trying to encapsulate all of that, to see the unity of those things. But I just found yesterday that he was a history major. I'm always looking for an avenue to kind of check in, okay, what kinds of research can he do, is he capable of, does he want to do, which would feed into his work? What kinds of historical libraries, what kinds of places can he go to in San Francisco that would give him more understanding of that place, the history of that place, the location of that? And maybe some of the peripheral—

So that to a certain degree, one of the things in terms of teaching, is first of all to find out how their work references their life, and references their histories and society. And then in what ways can that work be enhanced by a variety of kinds of research. Or paralleling. You were asking, what is the relationship of a scientist to art?

Reti: Yes.

Locks: But say, looking at the students' in relationship—they might have a gaming background. They might have a long history of watching movies or films. What is their visual notation, history? For example, I think there are a lot of parallels between art and athletics, the calisthenics. It's like music. It's the calisthenics of practice. How does a professional athlete prepare their body, or train their body, or work? And what's the relationship between the joy of doing the thing and the calisthenics for the thing? How do pianists have to practice? What are the scales? And then in art, what are the scales? What do we have to do? How do we prepare ourselves to be prepared to go out and make photographs?

Reti: Time is such a key part of the practice, the agility of being ready for that moment when you make the photograph.

Locks: That's right. Yes. You make your equipment invisible. So if you are photographing people, you don't want to be aware of your camera. You don't want to be thinking about what you're doing. You want to have your attention on what you're seeing. So that would be true especially—say, walking in Chinatown, where you've got a thousand things in front of you that are all interchanged and moving,

how do you select what is it that you're referencing? The preparation for that is a lot of shooting, a lot of practice. How do you get things in the photograph? How do you get things out of the photograph? How do you distill that? A lot of the reading of that is a kind of cognitive training. So in relationship to the scientist—one way right there is that in photography when you're going on to the street and you're looking at moving things in relationship to one another, how do we know the rightness of how things are? We train ourselves constantly by photographing and observing, and photographing and observing the photograph. We are doing this constantly, over and over again, and kind of weeding, saying, okay, I have to be careful of this, or I have to be careful of this, or this is interfering, or I don't want this information, or I need more of this information.

Just like birding, it's the templates. We're looking for pattern. It's brain pattern recognition. You are out there looking at a scene. And just like you're not aware of your camera, you're not aware, in a way, of how you've trained your brain to be able to recognize things within the set of parameters you're interested in. And then if I talk to someone like Roger and he throws a wrench into that, then I have to throw that into the work, distill that, and then go out and include that information in my knowledge in order to rethink how I want to approach a certain thing.

I'm interested in poetry and the kinds of collages and the construction that I'm making in photo. I'm interested, when we are putting a photograph together, in thinking about the photograph as kind of like a stanza, and then adding another photograph, which is another stanza. Or there's a line, a photograph as a line. How

do you get from one line to another line? And how large is that gap and what does that gap do? And how do you move from one thought to another thought? And how wide can you make that gap, where you're trying to shift from one interpretation or meaning, and then going to another one, which in a sense skews that interpretation and meaning and begins to go a different direction. And then how does our brain function in relationship to making those gaps?

Now, oftentimes we don't always write that out. We do it analytically. We study the work and we kind of move the images along, but it's sort of like working in a foreign language. The photo is a piece of foreign language. It is the answer. I'm thinking this thing and I'm working toward an idea. The photograph is an answer to that question. It doesn't fully answer it. It's only a moment in time in relationship to that answer.

So in a way, one of the things that we have to do—and I noticed your question [on the topic outline] about evaluations and writing [narrative] evaluations—and I want to talk about that a little bit and how difficult it is. We're working in a verbal language or a written language. The written language is king, really. So we go from the written language, but we learn how to do this other skill, and this other skill is its own language. We have theorists and so forth who then interpret the overview of how people are developing ideas. But at the same time, the artist is following the track of this other language and what that language is doing. They're not always the translators of that information. We watch it, and we're aware of it, and we know the content of our ideas. And we move the ideas around and we're able to articulate

those ideas. But not all of us are writers. We're already following something that's there that we already understand, which was a problem for me in writing the evaluations.

When I'm thinking about students I'm thinking about the whole student. I'm thinking about the world of that student and the world of that student's work. It's not quantitative. We don't give them tests. They don't pass these things. There are no midterms. They have photographs. They have photographs every week and then at the end we're looking at a portfolio. So when we're talking about the behavior, or the work that the student did, it represents a world. Then in order to write about that we have to have skill as writers to be able to translate what it is they did philosophically within their work back into a narrative that relates to something that's important in art. When you have sixty students a quarter, it's really difficult to do that.

Reti: So would you say that you prefer just giving them a grade?

Locks: I don't like grades either. (laughs)

Reti: (laughter)

Locks: We have a week now in this break [spring quarter break]. A week to ten days when we're done. We haven't assessed the work and we haven't turned in our grades. But we have a week to ten days. Well, when I was writing evaluations, it would take me the week to ten days to write the evaluations. And when I'm thinking about my family—okay my family wants to get up and go somewhere and I say,

"Well, no. I have to do these evaluations." And then if I'm not very good at it, it's a burden.

That being said, students love evaluations. They're so important because it gives them a fuller sense of how they behaved. They love it. I understand the importance of it in relation to graduate schools and other things. In art, the grad school has to match up a grade point average to see whether the student is qualified to enter. But when you're going into the art department, it's 90 percent based on their work, and their statement. The grade point average is not that important. If your work doesn't immediately show that you have skills related to what it is they are wanting to teach, then you're not going to get into the school. So the evaluations don't help very much. Letters of recommendation do. So if there's a criterion, the first criteria is the work itself. I've mostly taught undergraduates, so if they're applying to graduate school, then the graduate school professors are going to trump undergraduate-ness. They say, "Well, we have the skill to be able to tell whether this person—" They don't even want us to tell them how good the work is. They want us to tell them what quality the student is. How good is the student? Is the student going to be a disciplinary problem? How is the student with their peers? What is their work ethic? How do they work? What did they do when they were there? So the letters, in many cases, are a kind of confirmation, as much as anything. The first thing they do when they're looking at it is they're looking at a kind of slide screening, or digital screening now, of the work. And there's a group of people in the room and they're just kind of going off of the work. And then they'll say, "Okay, well, how are their letters?"

Reti: At this point, do students still have the option of getting an evaluation?

Locks: They could, I guess.

Reti: Do they ask for them?

Locks: No.

Reti: Very few students actually ask for them at this point.

Locks: But yesterday, Monday and Tuesday, I had a half-hour appointment with every one of my students. I'd much rather talk to them. What would they prefer? I understand the need for closure. So everyone has an option and I set up half-hour appointments with everybody, and we look at the work, and we talk about what they did during the quarter. I advise them at that time for classes that they might be interested in, and where they might go, and if they don't meet the requirements what they can do in order to do that. So they are fully advised. I feel that it's important because I'm very abstract in general and I'm abstract in class. And a lot of times their critiques are with their peers. So at the end I really feel like a meeting, or giving them the option of a meeting— So I met with something like thirty-two students in the last two days.

Most of my skills are verbal, and verbal translation. And in classrooms, our recognition of work is verbal, verbal communication off of the work, a lot of critiques. Depending on the student, I concentrate on different things. Sometimes they don't need me to concentrate on the work, but they need other kinds of

advising. It always has to do with what's next. Just like in any field—what is the evolution of our work? So we set up: okay what do they do? What are you interested in now? Where do you think you would go next? And then we talk about the next step in the process. So if it's a beginning student, what options—okay, now you need to expand, increase the amount of work that you're doing. Ten weeks is so short. So it's oftentimes goal-based, how much can you do in a quarter? What would be best for a student to do in a quarter? I always like to know how long they have before they graduate. That's a lot of it. If they're going to graduate next quarter, then we'll have one set of goals. If they're going to graduate at the end of fall, that's another set of goals. If they're really doing well and they're not going to graduate until next June, a year from now, then it's great. Then we can plot out a different strategy for experimentation and research. Somebody who has three quarters has more time for research, to experiment more, and to try different things.

The verbal is much more interesting to me than the written. I understand the need for the student to know and I'm interested in their well being. So I'll talk to them. And for me, to talk to them for half an hour—if I spend a half an hour with all of my students at the end of the quarter, after I've already talked to them during the quarter individually—I do this at the midterm too—I talk to all of them at midterm individually—at the end, then they have a clear understanding of what I think, whether it's important or not.

I talk to them for half an hour. In order to comprehensively think about what it is they did during the quarter and talk about their work, it would take me an hour,

hour and a half maybe, to process an evaluation. So I'd much rather—I'm always willing to sit down and talk to a student because it's much easier for me to do.

The Impact of Digital Photography on Teaching

Reti: I see. Has the introduction of digital photography changed how you teach?

Locks: Well, it's changed it a lot, both personally and in relationship to teaching. We still do analog and digital. Photography when I got here was thought of as an applied field and we always had to battle that. But at the same time, art is not interested in the applied. We're interested in the development of the individual and the ability to make works of art. Yet we have a responsibility to meet the students' needs in terms of what it is they want to do and where it is they want to go. So there's always applied-ness in a class. Most teaching in the arts is individualized. The expression of any individual is going to be totally different than the expression of any other individual. It's a luxury we have here, as opposed to in a community college. We can assess a student and have them skip something that doesn't seem really relevant. We're not processing everyone through exactly with the same information all of the time.

There are students in photo who don't want to do digital. They only want to do analog. Well, for the most part that would be irresponsible too, because one of the differences about the world is that 90 percent of photo in the world is digital. But the 10 percent that is not digital, is analog, is art. And so still a major amount of the masters working in art are hybridized between analog and digital. And so a student

is much better off when they're working both, and they have an understanding of both analog and digital. It was very difficult with digital because there's the world's perception of digital, and certainly from a research technological point—yes, that was a place where we were going to go. But at the same time, you mentioned time, and time in relationship to photographs. The time-based elements of photo—and say we take a master like Henri Cartier-Bresson from the forties, fifties, and sixties—Cartier-Bresson and his Decisive Moment. [10]

Reti: Yes.

Locks: Well, for fifteen years the digital cameras couldn't make a decisive photograph because there was always a delay. And so there was no stop action. There was no precision. When an artist is working with milliseconds, then digital couldn't perform to that. Technologists thought artists were crazy because we wanted to stay with analog. But we didn't see the analog cameras doing what we needed them to do. The elements were issues of control. We can take back that control now because we have better digital cameras. But the issues of instantaneous exposures and time, questions of focus—most digital cameras are autofocus with some manual override of that, but the manual does not have the sophistication that the auto does. So there were a lot of things where we're trying to, in a specialized way, work with gaining control so that we can direct the equipment. Artists, nobody wants to be directed by the object that we're using. A tool is meant to be used in a

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[10]See http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2014/dec/23/henri-cartier-bresson-the-decisive-moment-reissued-photography

way that is directed and controlled by the user. A lot of digital cameras initially, and even later and now, point and shoots and so forth, take control. So the artist in responding to that will say, okay, it's taking this control and I'm going to use that lack of control to do this. A lot of it is accommodating those things. You'll find in a photo class people are using iPhones, and they're using point and shoots. They're working with underwater point and shoots. They're working with digital cameras. They're working with analog cameras.

So you find now that the vocabulary of what it is you're doing is much more complicated because we're dealing with: what is the intention. What does it mean to use an iPhone? What does that photo mean? And how are you using that? In a sense, the industry was doing a bait and switch. They were saying, okay, we're going to take out this analog, and we're going to put in this digital and the digital is going to look just like this analog, and you won't know the difference, right? But artists were saying, "Well, that's not true."

Still, now the image quality that you get with digital—and I have to qualify this—all my work is digital now, so I'm not drumming (laughs) for analog, or for history, or for anything like that. But at the same time, there was a schism and there is a schism in relationship to analog and digital and what it can do.

But we do have to teach and we do have to ask those questions about—say, when you are using an iPhone do you think differently? Even so, just going back historically, someone like W. Eugene Smith, one of the major documentary photographers, would oftentimes go into a shooting situation with five cameras

around his neck. Two would be color and three would be black and white. And the two in color would have two different lenses. And the three black and white would have different lenses. And they were different manufacturers so he could tell the difference. He had Leicas and Nikons. (laughs) So he knew when he grabbed it, if he grabbed the telephoto color, his brain would function one way. And then if he picked up the 35 mm Leica black and white, his brain would function a different way. So when we pick up a camera, if we've done this for years, we pick up a camera and there is this relationship where we begin to see within a framework of that camera, that train of thought, that philosophical—the set of histories.

Oftentimes I'll change cameras just to change the framework. Because one of the things is that you get bored. Or you reach an impasse. You don't know where to go. What is the next step? I don't have any new information. I need to do more research. I need to give myself more time. Where can I go with the landscape idea? This 4x5 is too formal. I'm looking at it through a window, and then I have a window-view landscape, and I don't want a window view. I want to be in the middle of the landscape.

The Shifting Nature of Landscape Photography

So there're all of these strategies that we constantly are adjusting to in terms of our understanding, our growth, and new interests, and social culture. How Ansel approached Yosemite or the natural landscape was really important at that point. It was the illusion of it and the realism of it. The realism and the incredible abstraction

and drama of it was really important to draw attention to landscape. It needed to be dramatic. We needed to show the culture the importance and the beauty of land.

We're in a much different place now. We have our national parks. We have cordoned off these places. We have a different need now. What does a landscape photographer do now? New Topographics was a break, was one major break in the way that we look at landscape. But now if we're thinking about interdisciplinarity and sustainability, we need to look at wetlands, and we need to look at deserts, and we need to look at global change, and we need to look at waste material in the Pacific Ocean. We need to draw attention to other kinds of cultural patterns.

Ansel's last major images were taken in the late fifties. Horizontal Aspens, Northern New Mexico is a 1958 photograph. Okay, name a dozen really important Ansel Adams photographs after 1958. Well, Ansel was fifty-six in 1958. In a way, what he had turned his attention to was the reorganizing and the printing of his work. And it was work of a period. It was the forties and the fifties, when the majority of his work was made. His early work was influenced by the photo-secessionists and the soft-focus imagery of the turn of the century. Stieglitz and Weston and Imogen Cunningham—they were all working in that way and at that time.

Then he shifted in the thirties. So the thirties and the forties was really when he did major amount of his work. So if we look at that and then we look at the importance of Ansel in the seventies, eighties, and nineties—by the seventies, eighties and nineties he was already a historical figure relative to our culture.

So in some ways artists are always working ahead of their time and these things kind of move. But many of our students are not interested in Ansel because they are not interested in that dramatic, romantic view and there are so many people who work in that vision that it's inundated the field and it's boring. Well, the New Topographics was boring initially too. (laughs) A lot of people didn't like that work either. And certainly when you put a Robert Adams photograph next to Ansel Adams.

Reti: (laughs) I was just thinking of that.

Locks: And I love the namesake thing. It is a phenomenal difference and for many just too great a break. I think that Lewis Baltz's work was a little easier because it was dealing more with architecture and the emergence of architecture out of the ground. If you take the Irvine Industrial Parks, and you go from there to the Park City, Utah, or you look at the San Quentin Point work, where you have the combination of nature and trash and the melding of that—he's really interested in the surface of the earth and what's growing out of that. And that comes from his history. He grew up in Newport Beach when it was rolling hills. In his early childhood he saw the development of Newport Beach in tract homes and industrial parks and that sort of thing. So he was really attracted to that. And his training at Claremont was with minimalist painters, so a lot of his orientation was that there wasn't enough intellectual discourse within the photographic medium. He was working with the painters at Claremont. The Irvine Industrial Park book was published pretty quickly after graduating with his master's at Claremont.

Reti: Have you photographed the landscape of UCSC much, or do your students focus on that?

Locks: Some students do. We use the reserves a lot.

Reti: But how about the central campus.

Locks: The campus itself? I haven't too much. I've done a tiny bit. I think—yeah (sighs) I don't know, I hate the expression of, now we're going to go out into the real world. Well, for someone who's been here for thirty-five years, this is the real world.

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: So I don't want to say this isn't the real world. But I really want to photograph in the library now.

Reti: Why?

Locks: It's like parking lots. There's a certain kind of organization and order and study and information and book spines and stacks—the geometrics and the geometry of it. There is just something for me. The interdisciplinarity of it. It's a housing of information, but all of the information within the housing is invisible. All of the information in the library is invisible, in the books, or in the computers, or in the films, or whatever is housed here. Special Collections. So nothing is visible, theoretically. I would be interested in what does that crust look like? So in relationship to the housing, can one say that all of the information is hidden? And then if you say, okay, all of it is in the books or whatever, so what information is in

existence? I'm just talking off the top of my head. I don't know what I would do exactly. I would have to explore it. But that would be one thing to think about, okay, people are here, and they've got their notebooks, and they've got their binders, and they've got their books, and they're in front of a computer. There's just something interesting in a kind of social behavior within the environment.

You could say that libraries are human constructions. I would be as interested in this as the aquarium in Monterey, which is a filter; it's a human-constructed filter about how to look at information. You could say that about a ballpark. You have crowds of people coming in. What is that institution? Disneyland—what is that institution? We build these monumental edifices and the unifying thing is that they're human constructions about knowledge and event. And then, what is the event that's taking place in there? And besides the event that's there, what is the social interchange? And all of those things are big enough to be called landscapes. So what is the landscape of a library? What does that look like? What is the landscape of the Aquarium? What is the landscape of a ballpark? And then, who is engaging that? What makes those places important? What goes on in those places? How specialized are they? What groups of people go there? What groups of people go to the Aquarium, as opposed to the ballpark, as opposed to the library? Who makes up the audience of those places? I'm interested in how humans engage. Most of my current landscape explores the sociology of the relationship between humans and nature. How do we engage that? I don't do it in a quantitative way.

All fields have evolved. I would be interested in talking to an anthropologist and a sociologist. Mostly we do that in committees. When I was on the Committee on Committees, you are talking to people from all disciplines. That is almost more valuable to me than talking to my art faculty because I'm more likely to engage in something that I don't know and a perspective that I don't know. If we bitch and moan within our own departments, it's because we don't know that there's bitching and moaning going on in all departments, and being on COC and being able to see those kinds of comparisons—

So I would see the library as a human construction holding a vast amount of information and knowledge being held for a specialized group of people. It has a landscape form to it. It is a living organism. And I'm interested in the interrelationship of people to that landscape.

So one of the things that we make a mistake about in terms of what is landscape—we use it now in words like, what is the landscape of politics now? Landscape is an abstract. It has to do with the contextual relationship that embodies an environment. So as a landscape photographer—whether I'm in my home, which is a domestic environment, the Aquarium, or a school, or the research centers—I'm interested in the contextual relationship of information between sometimes people—and that might be related to some of Robert Adams. All of Robert Adams' work has an interface with people in a very subtle way. Mine is a little bit more gross than that and it's more colorful. But it's more poetic and abstract, and it's not singular. And the interpretation might vary.

Reti: Because you have all of these different images.

Locks: I have multiple images and multiple images in relationship. And I'm setting up my own framing for these ideas. So I'm making this work which is really a contextual frame for a set of questions. A certain set of photographs can engage a certain set of questions, and then I do another one that engages another set of questions. But all of them are hybridized off of either domestic questions having to do with land use—questions of people and nature, cities, urban environments, suburban environments—looking at how those areas differ from one another, how we engage that?

Reti: I've been pondering the difference between landscape photography and nature photography?

Locks: Yes, well, first of all you would have to define who you are talking to and define the words. Landscape is not confined to nature, although people interpret it that way.

Reti: I have heard it both ways, yes.

Locks: So when I say that I'm doing a *Special Topics: Landscape* class, the intent of the class is to diversify people's thinking about the philosophy of landscape, so that people are not afraid of the idea of landscape. If they assign landscape to nature, or to Ansel, they say, "Well, I'm not interested in landscape." But if they're not interested in landscape, they're not interested in the neighborhood that they grew up in. They grew up as an individual in place and time and they hold the place. They

hold a place in a home; they hold a place on a street. They move from place to place. It can be graphed and it's there. They get here and they don't know what to do because this place is not their home place and they're not acculturated to it.

Landscape and place, or a sense of place in relationship to people's identity and who they are is a really complicated thing. I teach the class in order to get people a little bit more used to thinking about: okay, then what you really need to do is to look at landscape in San Francisco. Or you need to go look at landscape at one of the UC Reserves. What is it that you have affinity for?

I've made photographs in both places and I've found that formally, in terms of ways that photographs are constructed, say a photograph in Market Street in San Francisco and a photograph from Desolation Wilderness—I'm putting them together and I'm looking at the architecture—trees, to granite, to water is very similar to asphalt, to buildings, to buses, cars, and people. You can take that and you can shape it. What's the difference then, architecturally, between when we're in the wilderness and when we're in the city? It is circumstances, karma, choice. I'm interested in those choices. I grew up in San Francisco with camping for five to six weeks every summer in the wilderness. And for many years, I avoided the in between. Then I felt like I had to make that up. I had to photograph in the rural. That's when I started to connect my interest in the relationship to the migration of people and the domestic in all of those areas, but the land use and relationship to the closest thing we can get to wilderness. I haven't really been in any true wilderness environments, although there are aspects of Yosemite that are pretty

violently wild, like Tenaya Canyon is a really spooky place. If you're alone down in Tenaya Canyon the sounds—there's an energy there that's pretty wild.

Nature then might be more specific to illustration, people doing studies of things that are within their own framework of nature. What is nature? The question is oftentimes drawing lines, and oftentimes artists don't like answering questions. We're really much better at asking questions. If you're standing in the Aquarium, are you looking at nature? The question is really a philosophical one. Once you take the fish out of the water and you put them in a tank, is it any longer nature? Or is it a model, the closest model we can get to studying nature, for the layperson? If you're a scientist, you might be doing cellular research on animals outside of the marine environment. But if you're an observational scientist, you'd much rather observe the animal or the fish in its natural habitat. The quandary is what do we learn in a lab, as opposed what do we learn through observation and study in a natural habitat. And when we tag a bird do we affect their behavior? What is the closest way we could get to these things?

Landscape, I think, now for me is a contextual word. Looking at a space. A stage play is a landscape. You could say that a stage play is architected and what goes on in that is a contextual relationship of objects and people who are performing. You take a dresser drawer out and put in something else and it's going to change the context.

In terms of landscape, that's what I'm interested in. We could go back historically: where did that begin [in my life]? It might have begun in my home, looking at Abstract Expressionism. But then as a teenager, working with my father on

assemblage sculpture, he would be building this thing and he'd put in an object, and we'd sit around. I was maybe fifteen to seventeen and we'd put in an object and we'd say, "Okay, what does that mean in that space?" And what does it do? And what is the timing of that? Then we'd take out that object and then we'd put in another object and say, "Okay, how does the sculpture change? What does it mean now? What does this object do? What do you want it to do? This piece brings in more sound." So right away, I think, as an adolescent teenager I was trained in a studio analytically.

Reti: Now I'm seeing the connection between your father's work and your more recent work.

Locks: That's right. So it's hard for me not to see a relationship between sculpture and photo. Well, one's three-dimensional and one's two dimensional, but in general, they're both assemblages. Photo is an artificial construction. We use it in a representational sense and it's very functional that way. Yet at the same time, it depends on the skill, and what it is that the artist or photographer wants to do in terms of directing the organization of that information. It's no different from a journalist. What information are we wanting to show and how are we showing that?

Probably the most credible magazine for photography is *National Geographic*. But it's the most simple form of communication. And it is the least contextual use of photography that one could imagine. It's generally very object-centric. It's very much illustrative of the article. It doesn't give you any conflicting information. It only gives you a piece of information relative to what something looks like relative

to the article. So you can take a thing like that, that is really esteemed—and a lot of students come in and say, "I really want to be a *National Geographic* photographer"—but they don't really know what it means. "Oh, I want to go to an Ansel Adams workshop now." Well, what value would an Ansel Adams workshop be now?

We're in a research institution and so we're both pushed and driven individually toward—okay, where are we now? What's going on now? What are we looking at? What are we looking at now in relationship to history? How do we need to be looking at this now? I think that landscape and land use is really important. The questions about land use all have to do with the interface with people. If we didn't have an interface with people, we wouldn't have a land problem. Everything is in relationship; all of the decisions are being made by economy and people and not necessarily on the land itself. One of things that I find really interesting is that interface. How do we engage that? What does the land look like?

We need to pay more attention to deserts because they're incredible habitats. Yet if you take the [UC] Natural Reserve System, and I talked to the managers about this too—one-third of California is desert. But there are only two Natural Reserves that are on desert habitat.

Reti: That's ironic, given the fact that Ken Norris was the founder of the Natural Reserve System and he began his career as a desert herpetologist.

Locks: Right. And that's the main one, the Mojave Reserve. But there are only a couple. The NRS runs anywhere from kind of urban environments to coastal environments. Now, too scientists like Barry Sinervo use the reserves a lot with his PhD students—a lot of the indicators for global warming are reptiles. There's a lot of research that can be done in relationship to amphibians and reptiles—frogs and lizards. It all has to do with, too, our brain temperament. What does our brain look like? I don't have the patience to deal with information on that level, the patience to study a lizard.

Reti: Oh, that kind of nature photography.

Locks: In nature photography, or in relationship to the scientists. I always was interested in nature. As a child, some of the first books I collected were nature books. And being out with someone like Roger, but photographers in general—photographers historically are very knowledgeable about the environments that they're in. Someone like Philip Hyde—just driving around with Philip Hyde and the amount of knowledge that he had. There's another fellow, Steve Crouch. Steve's [work] might be in the library [Special Collections] too.

Reti: Yes, it is.

Locks: Steve and I had a great time on a number of occasions. I loved driving around with him because his knowledge of wildflowers and birds was incredible. I met Steve in the Yosemite workshop, Ansel's June workshop, where some of his cronies, the people that he really respected—Al Weber, and Steve Crouch, Dave Bohn. Pirkle

Jones too sometimes. That crew. Steve and I did an Eastern Sierra workshop together. We went to Mono Lake and to Glass Mountain. I'd be off in his van driving around with him and stopping to photograph wildflowers. He was one of those people—talk about nature photographers—he was a specialist: "Oh, I don't have a photograph of that flower." We'd pull off the side of the road and we'd set up and photograph that.

Philip and I did a backpacking workshop together, but then later just the two of us did a seven-day High Sierra Camp photographic trip. We started at Tuolumne Meadows, and we hiked in to Vogelsang, and made a tour of the High Sierra Camps on the south side of Yosemite, photographing. We would leapfrog one another. We'd be kind of walking together but we both had our 4x5 view cameras. He would see something and stop and go off that way. And then I'd go off this way. Then I'd stop and then he'd pass me. Then we'd stop and snack together. He was maybe thirty years older than I. Seeing a seventy-two year old just [makes zooming sound] flying through the wilderness. He was with his wife and she was flying through the wilderness too.

Reti: And at that time were you doing more traditional landscape photography?

Locks: Yeah, you could call it that. I was doing black and white. We got our trip paid for by the Yosemite Association. They offered to comp us to do some work. I made 150 photographs in black and white, 4x5 for the Association. And then I worked 4x5 color for myself. Theoretically it was pseudo-traditional. I mean, I guess it would be regarded as that. But it was within the work that I was doing in Chaos and Random

Order. So the 4x5 pieces—on my website in the section on Chaos and Random Order—there are probably a couple of photographs in that that I did with Philip. What I was looking at was crisis, human crisis, and where do we seek answers to human crisis? What is the relationship between documentation and autobiography in photography and in art? At that particular time, I was dealing with some irreconcilable kinds of family circumstances that I didn't know how to deal with. There was no answer. And so where I went was to nature. I was looking at crisis and chaos and brambles. What is a bramble? What is this thicket? What is the relationship in nature that was happening? That work was a kind of a metaphorical study of personal issues in relationship to the structure of landscape, particularly in a kind of internal way, the internals of nature, trying to understand it, which is impossible. There's a kind of density and busyness in that work.

If you were to say, what is the outcome—one of the outcomes was that the disorder, or the seeming disorder, is natural. If you look at it and then apply how we try to control our lives and our environments, I realize that the breakdown in an environment was because the environment was trying to control things in a way that was not natural. So it was a lot of letting go. If you walk into a thicket, it's natural for things to live and die in overcrowding, or lack of water, or climate— At the same time, there's always a scientific structure that we can name, that's causing change in those areas. But one can look at one's life in a more natural way.

One of the reasons for talking to other people in other fields is that I'm really disturbed sometimes about how we use words. "Chaos." Well, chaos to a scientist

has a very specific construction and meaning. And yet, for me the idea of chaos—nature isn't random and it isn't chaotic. We know that. And yet we use that word because of the seeming disorder of it. I took the parallel of the seeming disorder to say, okay, that seeming disorder is not disorder. That seeming disorder is natural. Then what is it that we're trying to do in our lives?

Reti: I see.

Locks: So it was a project—a lot of it was backpacking. The scope of that was in several places—Big Creek Reserve, and then the California coast north of Santa Cruz. And Desolation Wilderness. It was from 1985 to 1990, roughly. And Great Basin National Park. And the Yosemite backcountry, Really specific places and places where I could go, where there were less people. It was landscape. It was still contextual.

Great Basin National Park is an incredible place for its biodiversity. It has the only inland glacier in the continental United States. It's on the edge of Nevada facing Utah. It's a kind of open bowl. You look out from the national park facing Utah. There's no Nevada left there. But the park is in Nevada. But it has this inland glacier. There are only two major bristlecone pine forests: the White Mountains and [Great Basin National Park]. The bristlecone pines are up to 5000 years old. So it has the glacier. It has the pines. And wherever you have the glacial runoff, you have a riparian environment. So you have cottonwood, aspen, monkshood, all of your lilies. It is this rich, gorgeous. You will be following the riparian creek runoff from the

glacier, and on your left hand side is the creek, and on the right hand side is a hill going away. And it's all sage and Mountain Mahogany and desert habitat.

So you have these pathways that break those two environments. I found that to be really, really important about that place, something that I was really intrigued by. It's like McLaughlin Reserve, which is up above Davis, above Lake Berryessa. It is on an earthquake fault, and you have the uplift meeting the continental plate. So you have certain botanical plants on one side and other botanical structures on the other side. And you can actually walk the pathway on the faultline between where you have your gray pine and shrub on the uplift, and you have your oak and grasslands on your left. You walk through these and it's really phenomenal to think of those kinds of spaces.

But you photograph it, and the people who would understand what it is you are photographing would have to be the people who would recognize the difference. We don't read photographs with that kind of specificity. In fact, people are very sloppy about reading images for information. By reputation, Dorothea Lange was probably one of the most incredible people for reading images. She could look at a photograph of the interior of a room in the thirties, forties and she could tell you how many people lived in the building, what their economic level was. She would read the artifacts as an anthropologist and be able to tell you what was going on.

Reti: Did you ever meet her?

Locks: No, I didn't know her. I talked to Ralph Gibson about her. Ralph Gibson studied with Robert Frank. I never met Robert either, or if I did it was really brief. Ralph studied with Robert Frank and Dorothea Lange. In the early days, Robert Frank had a show here. Philip Brookman was the first curator for the Sesnon Gallery and he now is at the Corcoran. He's a Robert Frank scholar and probably one of the foremost Robert Frank scholars in the country. But Philip had a show of Robert Frank's here in the early days. It was probably the early eighties, '81-'82.

Reti: I didn't know that. And then you've been involved with the Sesnon Gallery as well.

Locks: Yes, from the beginning, really, since I got here. I had a one-person show there in '82. But I curated two shows for the Sesnon.

Reti: What were those?

Locks: One was "Out of Context," a show talking about the loss of meaning in a photograph when taken out of context. It was a fifty-person show of one photograph each, addressing the difficulty assessing idea and content based on one photograph. And the other one was a mixed media show, a show of divergent disciplinary approaches to photo. Hand-painting, black and white, color, sculptural—a variety of different techniques based on ideas. Again, even in that day, which was before digital, I was really interested in the variations of content and idea and the menus of ideas within photography. As a teacher, I wanted students to be able to see that diversity, to see that art and photo was a vocabulary and not an idea. And what was

the range of that vocabulary for expressing a variety of ideas? Certain vocabulary is better for expressing certain ideas than others. So both of them were instructional exhibitions. And that was when I was also teaching five and six classes and running the darkroom. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) Those were the early days.

Locks: Yeah.

Reti: So I want to backtrack to a question that I didn't have the chance to ask you before.

Locks: Okay, can we take a short break?

Reti: Sure.

Photography and Spirituality

Reti: We're back for part two and today is March 16, 2016. I'm with Norman Locks. So what I wanted to backtrack to is the whole question of photography as spiritual unification or seeing. I know that some of your mentors, like Jack Welpott—I came across a video interview with him where he talked about photography as spiritual unification, "a way of stripping things away, trying to reach enlightenment."[11]

Locks: Mm, hmm.

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[11] See https://vimeo.com/81952231 Also see http://photography.org/interview/jack-welpott/

Reti: And I know Harry Callahan, and of course Minor White, said similar things about photography and spirituality.

Locks: We'd have to go to Minor White.

Reti: And we haven't talked about Minor White, so maybe we should start with Minor White.

Locks: I only had one opportunity to meet with Minor and that was when we were doing a workshop in Tucson. Ansel and the University of Arizona had just opened up a center. The center started with Ansel's work and then we were bringing together the foremost educators. Minor White would have to be considered probably one of a couple of the most important landscape [photography] educators in the country, and maybe the foremost. The East Coast had their own educators; the West Coast had theirs. Probably Walker Evans and Minor White were the two. Then you could throw in Emmet Gowin or a couple of others. Nathan Lyons.

Minor White was very interested in Eastern philosophical thought. That was clear. It might have been also one of the contrasting points to Ansel because Ansel was definitely not interested in Eastern thought or spirituality. He was interested in the relationship of music to photography. Music was his god, probably. The higher power was music for Ansel, whereas Minor White was interested in Eastern thought. I didn't have much engagement with him, but I do show his work a lot in classes regularly, Minor White's, because of the metaphysical nature of the work. His work is much more transformative. Where Ansel was working with the clarity of the

drama of the situation, Minor was always looking at the elements of nature transforming. So he'll have a branch or bush, but it has this highlight coming out, like flames.

Reti: Yes.

Locks: So when you're looking at it, you're looking at it not for what it is, but for what it becomes, a more mystical, metaphorical, transcendence in relationship to earth, fire, water, air. Looking at the core. The cliché that he always used to say and talk about in readings and so forth was, "In landscape photography when you're going out, sit and sit quietly and observe the rock and then wait for the rock to move halfway toward you. And then move halfway toward the rock." So it was always an engagement, where he was looking for the thing photographed to speak to him and to give him some indication of where to begin. He didn't go charging in just kind of looking. It was a more meditative relationship that he had. That's my understanding. And this is from afar. So that's what distinguishes the importance of his work from the importance of Ansel's work, or Edward Weston's. The three of them were the top tier of people who were engaged in landscape at the time.

In terms of Jack Welpott, Jack Welpott and I were really close. Jack took me on when I was thirteen and was a mentor throughout. And in the end we apparently shared vocabulary, or I absorbed his vocabulary. He was an incredible teacher. He was very gracious, very open, very friendly, very easy to approach. He knew the field really well. He knew what he was doing really well. But we didn't talk about spirituality. That might have been later. That might have been after—

When I photographed with him with our families, outings, we would take photographs at the beaches at the outings. Then I went out with his classes and I TA'd with him. And then I learned with him, and I apprenticed with him, and I worked in the darkroom with him. But we really didn't talk too much about that. One of the things about having learned so early is that it's made me question: how does one teach? I started so young. How do students absorb technique and in what way? Mine was so gradual, over a long period of time. I was using advanced techniques at fourteen and fifteen.

But one of the things too that I think about a lot, about Jack and some of the other influences, in looking back—and I've worked with these major artists and people of that period—but I was still a child. So it's a child's view. As much as we would say that I was mature, or I understood the field, or that I was articulate, it's a given, to a certain degree. But on the other hand, my father's relationship to Bruce Conner was not my relationship to Bruce Conner, nor did I know what they really talked about, or what was really going on. And that might have been true of Jack. Although I knew Jack, and I was taking my students to see Jack in San Francisco in the eighties, when he lived in the Mission District, we didn't talk about questions of being an adult and philosophy. We talked about photo.

I worked with Bob Heinecken a lot, not like Jack, but I did about eight or nine workshops with Bob Heinecken. But we never talked about art. We never talked about photo. We played poker together and played pool together and we taught together. What was important in learning with him was the strategies of an event.

What are the strategies of playing poker? What are the strategies of playing pool? What is the risk involved? What's the process involved? It was more behavioral and tactical. He was a retired lieutenant major in the Marines and he was a fighter pilot during the Korean War. So a lot of his background and his interest in art was strategic.

So my relationships with different artists were very different. What I got from Heinecken was different than what I got from Paul Caponigro, Ralph Gibson, or Jack. Jack was more like a father figure. Paul Caponigro took on that role some too. He was a kind of a father figure.

But Jack and I didn't talk about spirituality. For me, I really separate them. Spiritual practice is spiritual practice.

Reti: So it has nothing to do with your photography, or very little.

Locks: (pauses) Very little. But you'd have to say—that's a hard question because I don't—my artwork is not my god and it's not my spiritual practice. But at the same time, who I am spiritually is the person that makes photographs. When I'm thinking about what am I doing on Earth, as a kind of spiritual idea, then certainly when I'm looking at myself and my placement, that might be a landscape idea. I can't separate who I am from what I do, but I don't have an expectation that my art *is* the process by which I am moving spiritually. I would say that maybe in relationship to practices—just like in a spiritual practice, where you are doing labor, where you are doing spiritual service to the Lord, or whatever, I would say that work could be

regarded as service. It could be related to meditation. But it isn't meditation. It isn't a spiritual practice.

So it's connected by personality, but it's not connected by process, other than tangentially. I didn't think about Jack in that way particularly. Minor was the person—if I were to say that there was a person who was really connected spiritually—it would have been Minor White. Paul Caponigro a little bit too. I think that he had a kind of inner peace, where photography was the most peaceful thing and the most studious thing that he could do. If it is great to be a photographer, it's the most important thing that I can do if I have to be on this planet. It was the thing that kept him safe and sane. He also was a concert pianist. He was an incredible pianist. When he stayed in Yosemite, he would go into Ansel's house, and Ansel had a piano in the Yosemite house. And Paul would play the piano. So he was a pianist.

A number of artists—Oliver Galiani was another. Oliver was a Bay Area artist, large format, an incredible technician. He was originally a violinist and lost his hearing for a time. And when he lost his hearing, he moved into photography and didn't really go back. I did a zone system workshop with Al Weber and Oliver Galiani.

I'm trying to think of others who were spiritual, or connected spirituality [with photography]. I guess Paul and Minor, but Paul studied with Minor at MIT, or back East somewhere. I'm not sure where Paul went to school but Minor taught at MIT so I assume that Paul knew him from there.

Yes, it's interesting—that would have to be something that I'd think about and research, that idea of religion and spirituality among artists. It's kind of curious in terms of higher education, the university. When I got here in '78, we started to move much more into a quantitative form. The evidences of the sixties and the seventies started to disappear in the eighties.

Reti: You're thinking in terms of spirituality.

Locks: Well, in spirituality—although religious studies was here from the beginning, at Merrill College. But in classes we stopped talking about God and we stopped talking about what one's religion was. And there was a lot more politically correct stuff. We stopped talking about ghosts and the occult.

Reti: Kirlian photography.

Locks: Kirlian photography. Things that were not quantitative. I think we're moving back into a time now where some of that stuff is opening up again. There's a little bit more engagement; students are more engaged or wanting to be more engaged in that. Sometimes when we're talking about an idea, sometimes students will attribute what they're making and the ideas they're making to their responses to their religious upbringing. And they are a little bit more forthcoming about their religion or their politics. But this is a fairly liberal environment, so you don't hear people coming out as conservatives very much. I don't know very many Republican students. (laughs)

Reti: (laughs) Right. Unfortunately talking about religion has become kind of the province of conservatives. And of course we're in a secular, public university and you have to be careful about creating an environment that's safe for everybody.

Locks: Exactly. Yes.

And I'd have to say that my classes in the last four years have been some of the most dynamic classes I've had for the diversity in the classes. People are out and open and you have people of multiple races. Probably the worst statistic is that there are so few males in classes in the arts sometimes. It's getting better now.

Reti: Even in photography?

Locks: Yes. In photography. Photography has been, over the last ten years, has been 70 to 80 to 90 percent women. It might be because we don't teach it in a technical way. So it isn't like problems in engineering or problems in other area. Even though photo is technical, there are a lot of women in printmaking, which is fairly technical, and in photo.

But there's so much gender diversity, in terms of gay and trans now, that the quality of education, and the sharing of information among students, and the acceptance of others is incredibly high in classes. It's really enriching. It helps people recognize their experiences more clearly in relationship to the artwork that they're making. So where somebody is saying, "Well, I'm from San Diego." But San Diego is anywhere from Chula Vista to Encinitas. A person whose experience is in Chula Vista is going to be very different from someone from Encinitas or La Jolla. The expression and the

stories that people have to tell and the kinds of understanding that they have would be very different.

Early on [UCSC] seemed to be very homogenous. Everybody came from the same place and everybody had the same experiences. Now it's obvious that that's not true. And if that's not true, then we have different stories to tell. It's much easier to tell people that they can make different work. You can have a classroom where (it makes it harder to teach) students are working on twenty, twenty-five different ideas based on the experiences or the expressions that they find to be the most important. So you have a lot of variation in idea and in technique, and people are working with everything from an iPhone to a 4x5 view camera, and people are working in black and white, and color, and they're working in analog, and they're working in digital, and they're working in mixed media, and they're crossing over between photography and printmaking. So the range of both experiences in a classroom and the materials that people are using is pretty dramatic, and the openness and support for one another is really high.

But there still are things within the university that we don't talk about so clearly, the non-quantitative things, like ghosts. But students like ghost stories. How many horror films do students see? All of that stuff is out there. What doesn't get discussed in a university is sometimes troubling because we're supposed to be a place of learning and discourse.

Reti: Well, it's interesting, I just recently read a book on Ansel Adams that was all about him being a theosophist.[12]

Locks: Oh! That would be interesting.

Reti: It challenges this whole notion that Ansel Adams wasn't spiritual. It is quite an academic study.

Locks: Yeah. I would be curious to know, too, when that was. When he would be talking theosophy.

Reti: I think earlier in his life.

Locks: Yes, and I didn't meet him until he was in his late sixties. So I don't know, just because somebody doesn't talk about something doesn't mean it's not there. People have long lives.

Showing in Japan and the Czech Republic

Reti: Okay, well tell me about the shows you had overseas.

Locks: Well, they are kind of brief. I hope there are more. I think the work that I'm doing now is my strongest work. I would like to show in Japan more. There's a woman, Barbara Benish, who has been teaching for us. And Barbara Benish has a gallery in the Czech Republic. There is a community there outside of Prague. Barbara was the one who actually connected our faculty there. I think Lewis Watts

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[12] Anne Hammond, *Ansel Adams: Divine Performance* (Yale University Press, 2002).

has had a show there, at that gallery. Jennifer Parker has had a show at the gallery. And I've had a show. So there are two sides to this. One is that we really want to have an international reputation. But in a certain way, everything is kind of by contact.

But the work that I'm working on now is the work that I showed in the Czech Republic, and it's the work that I'm most interested in. This work has been shown individually, mostly regionally, but it's the work that's been shown in Japan, too. It is the work that I want to show. The Czech show was really important to me. It was about four or five years ago. I sent a dozen pieces back there, so it was a fairly major showing of that work.

And not a lot of discourse came [out of the show]—because I didn't go over there at the time. I was in the middle of some things. But that gallery in the Czech Republic is fostering a lot of interchange, a lot of international work, mostly because of Barbara. Barbara spends her time between there and here. She's living here now and her daughter is over here. Her daughter had a class with me just a year ago. She's working on social ecological issues. She's leading a restoration project connecting science and art on the Seacliff cement ship. She's working on a project trying to develop an interpretation center that connects art and science at that state park.

The first show that was in Japan was at Tokyo University and that was by invitation of Eikoh Hosoe. Eikoh had been here. Eikoh came over for a Nude in the Landscape workshop when I met him. He did a couple of workshops, one in Yosemite and one in Carmel. Ansel did two workshops a year, one in Yosemite and one in Carmel. And

then in and around that we did another ten or so workshops each year. So Eikoh came to Yosemite. I guess that the information about him came through Jack. The Nude in the Landscape workshop was Jack Welpott and Judy Dater, Eikoh Hosoe from Japan, Lucien Clergue from France, Robert Heinecken from UCLA, Imogen Cunningham from San Francisco, Wynn Bullock.

Reti: Oh, my gosh.

Locks: I was the director of the workshop and we had thirty-six students and that number of faculty, and then twelve models. So that was when I met Eikoh and he saw my work at that particular time. The next year he was at the Carmel workshop and after the Carmel workshop he invited me to show work in Japan. They bought ten pieces for the Tokyo Museum and showed that work.

Reti: Excellent. So now those are in the permanent collection at the Tokyo Museum.

Locks: Yes, it's part of that collection. So it's interesting too, if someone buys work, like my work was in the Graham Nash collection but now that collection is at the University of Arizona at the Center for Creative Photography. Bob Heinecken had a piece and that piece is in the Center. So sometimes they kind of migrate that way.

But I'm not a very public figure. My reputation is mostly as an educator, kind of a hard-working researcher-educator. I see that changing more. I'm in a kind of a lull, because right now with this particular work I'm working to organize it for sending out. So that was the first show in Japan, with Eikoh. And then the other show was an

exchange show that Jamin Lee set up. That show was with the new work as well, large panoramic landscapes in a group show.

Reti: I've only seen those on the website. So, when you say large, how large are we talking about?

Locks: For frame size? 22x60, 22x70.

Reti: Wow. Okay.

Locks: They're going to be in the faculty show next month. The show will be in two parts. It will be a group faculty show. I'm showing a series on a monitor in the Sesnon Gallery, with another framed piece. It will be a large piece. Because the parts in those things are really small. You don't really get a full sense. It has to be a fairly large monitor. And then the Blitzer Gallery on the Westside of Santa Cruz is going to show half of the show. So I'll have three or four pieces in the Blitzer Gallery in the original size.

Reti: I want to go look at those.

More on Teaching at the Natural Reserve System

Reti: Today is March 30, 2016. This is Irene Reti and I'm here with Norman Locks for our third session of the oral history that we're doing together. We're here at McHenry Library. So Norman, we talked a little bit in the last two interviews about how you've taken advantage of the resources of the UC Natural Reserve System in

your teaching. I know we talked about Big Creek and about the Mojave Reserve. And you had some more to say about the Natural Reserve System.

Locks: Right, maybe just to kind of fill in. My first encounters were with the environmental studies faculty, Roger Luckenbach, a lecturer, in principal, where we shared students. We've always shared students. The art department has always a good percentage of double majors, and the double majors run throughout the university. Right now, for example this quarter, in a class of twenty-five, at least twelve to thirteen students are double majors. And this is in an advanced photo class, students who are in their junior, senior year. One of the things that might indicate—and then I'll get back to the Reserves—but what it indicates is that the arts are really interested in content and information, and that it really is helpful to us as an art department, to be in a liberal arts institution so that students are studying multiple things and bringing that knowledge as a source of information to the nature of the work that they're doing.

So in terms of say, what is the relationship between form, autobiography, and content in relationship to work? The artist always has to weave those elements together. Content comes from many sources. Our social relationship to the world is, by nature, autobiographical. Everything is by nature autobiographical, to a degree, because everything is coming from our perception and perspective on the world. So there is a kind of natural bias and prejudice that comes from that in terms of editing and building and construction.

And then, obviously, just like in any field, there is a vocabulary of that field. Within the vocabulary of that field, there are formal elements. Those formal elements start with the choice of camera. Or analog or digital. The minute you make any kind of decision whatsoever, you're going to have that have an effect on the way something looks, if it has to do with how it looks, it has to do with the vocabulary of how it tells the story. So the formal elements are quite complex. And then how the formal elements work in relationship to autobiography, voice—you could say that the vocabulary—like in writing, like a Southern writer like Faulkner will have a vocabulary that creates an authenticity of location. Well, artists have to deal with a similar kind of understanding of formalism to obtain an authenticity in relationship to how we tell a story visually. So the form, the autobiography, the authenticity. And then in relationship to the content, all of those things get mixed together.

Well, one of the things for a photographer in particular is that our studio is often the world. We are out there. This is in general. There are many, many artists in photo who work in studio environments and do constructive work, [or] in the same way as a painter or a sculptor, they make a sculpture to be photographed. So the medium is quite broad. But for the most part, photographers work in the world. From that point of view, the relationship between the photographer and where we photograph and how we build that relationship is critical.

And there are several problems about being in a university and teaching classes, because from a photographic point of view, the classroom is an artificial environment. If we're talking about work, we can bring work into and talk about its

referential nature in relationship to the world, and we perceive exhibitions in that way. But the problems of photographing are out in the world. So there is a kind of naturalness about being outside. So in many cases, field trips are really important in terms of addressing some of the formal elements—in relationship to lighting, and exposure, and the relationship of form and technique. But also in terms of place—where are we? What kinds of places are we dealing with? Are we on an urban street? What is the speed and the rate and the content and the multiplicity of content on an urban street, as opposed to what is the speed of hanging in the desert, where there is a different kind of isolation, a different kind of notation, a different kind of pace?

So in relationship to the field work, the UC Reserves work really well on a number of levels. One, it's observational-based. Ken Norris and his brother Bob, who started the Reserve system in the Mojave Desert were, in their own way, doing something that brought the relationship between observational sciences and classroom sciences, lab sciences, together.[13] And for the arts I find, especially for photo, that that is really important. So over the years I've taken trips with students in that environment.

In many cases, we take students to San Francisco. All our classes take students to the Bay Area in order to see exhibitions. Because in Santa Cruz we're not going to find

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[13] *See Kenneth S. Norris: Naturalist, Cetologist, Conservationist, 1924-1998* (Regional History Project, UCSC Library, 1999). http://escholarship.org/uc/item/5kf1t3wg Also see the Kenneth Norris archive at the UCSC Library for more history on the Natural Reserve System. http://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8pc36x7/

original work—we could come to the library and make an appointment and see what's here. But in relationship to current issues in art—what are we mimicking when we're making something? Are we mimicking something from a slide? Are we mimicking something from a book? Are we mimicking something from an exhibition in Santa Cruz on First Fridays? Or are we going to San Francisco and looking at a more international set of works? We can't tell students just to go do that because they don't always want to listen to that and they won't think that it's necessarily important to do that. And so oftentimes, once a quarter or whatever we are taking field trips to San Francisco to go to exhibitions, so that they can see what original work looks like. Slides were inferior to work. Digital is even maybe more inferior in certain ways, although it's more convenient. Books are lacking in relationship to size and all of that. So field trips to San Francisco or Stanford—it depends upon what field in art.

So going back to the Reserve system, one of the things is, how do you survive as an artist once you graduate? What is the problem of teaching in relationship to perseverance and working the long haul? One of the problems in terms of our teaching is we're trying to 1) get the teaching out of the classroom; 2) not have it be confined to the time limit of a class. And as it is, our classes are three hours, roughly, which doesn't fit the kind of social structure of the university. So if we are wanting to serve on committees, and I teach Tuesday, Thursdays and I'm here Tuesday, Thursdays—I'm here all day because I have two, three-hour classes and it doesn't really fit into having an hour here, an hour there to do other things.

So they are three-hour classes. But even three hours—if a student is going into the cellar digital lab, or they're going into the darkroom, you need three hours as a minimum. But it could go into four, five, six, seven hours in order to do one's coursework. And beginning and intermediate-level students think they're working on assignments for faculty and for an agenda that's on the syllabus curriculum. But in fact, in relationship to the world at large, we have to wean them of that notion. We have to get them to think about what is it that is core and central to their own research, what is it that's on their mind, and to think outside of those three-hour limitations. So we're constantly trying to figure out ways to say, okay, take advantage of breaks. I advised all of my students individually to go and work over the spring break in preparation for spring quarter because there are fewer distractions. This is something that they're going to do. If they're graduating in June and they're used to being told what to do, then what are they going to do in July? Are they going to continue to do this? How do we get students into the habit of—this is their research; this is what they do. This is what they want to do. This is how they're going to proceed, if they're going to have any success.

And so what the Reserve system does—for example, I have a trip planned for this month for April 28 to May 2. It's not a three-hour session. We're talking about three days. In order to get anything done in a natural research mode as an undergraduate, it means being together for a period of time to do that kind of work, to build a habit. Photographers do road trips. Photographers spend time out camping, driving, staying in motels—whatever they need to do in order to stay. So we'll go to the natural reserve in April, to the Mojave Desert. The Mojave is really good in the

spring and in the fall. But in the spring there is a combination of the wildflowers, a lot of bird activity. The Mojave Reserve is set within the national monument of the Mojave Desert. So it's a reserve within a reserve. And then there's the Kelso Dunes, and the Kelso Dunes are a really important environment. Historically, it's a ranching environment, so there're are a lot of old relics of ranching and mining. So we will use the reserve as a home base, but do road trips around: Kelso Dunes, checking out mining environments; and the former ranch on the reserve. We'll make a trip south through Amboy, the craters. And we'll go down to Twenty-Nine Palms and into Joshua Tree National Park and then back.

So we're looking at a terrain that's quite large, probably a radius around the reserve of about an hour and a half, and exploring a variety of types of environments, socially, from that area, over a three-day period. It gives the students a chance to do enough work, to be in that environment, to be surprised by the liveliness of a desert environment. Students are mostly shocked by how much life there is in the desert. While we're there, we'll also talk to the reserve managers, who are both PhDs in botany. One of the managers does all of the registration for the reserve. She's a botanist and works on the reserve, but she's also the resident botanist for Joshua Tree National Park. So there are so many reasons why being out in the world is really important, from an educational perspective, for what we do.

Photography and Research

Reti: So when you said, "The students are learning to do research," I found that really interesting. It's an interesting way to look at photography, as a kind of research. Can you say more about that?

Locks: Well, research in art and in photo takes a number of forms. We have a history of photo or a history of art. And we have to research, or think about, and read in relationship to where we are at right now. If we are looking at Ansel Adams photographs and we're going to make a trip to Yosemite or the Eastern Sierra—as artists or as photographers, we're going to make these trips—well, if I'm going to go to Yosemite and I have a history with Ansel's work, I want to know what was relevant for Ansel making the work he did in 1940 and 1944; 1948. So that there's a correlation, it might be an algebraic correlation between Ansel's art work in 1948, as opposed to Yosemite now, in 2016. Ansel's work—historically there was a correlation. There was a cultural understanding and the artist was doing something by making that work. It could be that early in his career he was trying to foster an appreciation for the national parks, the expansion of national parks, the protection of land. There was a kind of drama to his work. There was a sense of excitement in that work that drew dramatic attention to the reason why we might save that. He was working with David Brower and the Sierra Club and so forth. So there was a correlation in terms of what kind of work was made at a certain time.

Right now, we don't need to protect our national parks. We need to protect other things. So if we're thinking about a photographer in relationship to environment: in

terms of global warming, in relationship to saving wetlands, the importance of the desert: what is relevant and what is important for an artist to be doing? That involves a certain amount of reading and thought in terms of research. We're not operating in a vacuum. We're operating with a culture.

And then when I'm teaching students I have to say, "Okay, you are not me. I'm behaving historically on a lineage of ideas that I've always been involved in. But you are the people who have to come up with your own understanding. What is relevant now? What are you needing to learn? What is it you're needing to do? When you're out in the landscape, what does that mean?"

Reti: So do you think that the camera is a tool of research?

Locks: Yes—[that first idea] is a more historical understanding of research. But the camera is a tool of research also because it's trial and error. We have to program our brain to understand the way that the camera is perceiving the landscape and what kinds of formal, mediumistic things the camera does. How does it alter the reality of a thing? The world is the world and the camera is going to give a slice of that, based on its capabilities. We're going to get this thing that is less-than. We're getting something that is an imitation of, or a documentation of, that is still going to be less-than. So the artist's responsibility is to find out how it changes *that*. What does it do to *that*? What does it do to that if we're using digital? What does it do to that if we're using analog? What does it do to that if we're using black and white? What does it do to that if we're using color? So there are all of these incredible number of variables

in relationship to the translation of our experience of *that* to a piece of paper, or on the web, or whatever we're turning that thing into.

So the research is what happens when we engage that thing with a camera. So we've got to go out: we shoot; we come back to the lab. We process that information. We enter it into our computers, or we enter it into our darkrooms, or whatever. And we study that material to find out: what does it do? And then we say, okay, now I have to go back again and rework that because it didn't come out the way that I wanted because I couldn't predict how the camera was going to relate to that place.

"I'm only going to go to Europe once. I'm going to take these photographs." Well, no research works that way. You have to implant in the student that if they're going to take a trip to Death Valley, then it's going to mean that they may as well plan two trips to Death Valley, because it's going to take two, three, or four trips to Death Valley.

If you're photographing people—another form of research too, would be someone like Mary Ellen Mark, who recently passed away—a great documentary photographer. Well, Mary Ellen Mark, in a project, for example, that was at the Sesnon [Gallery], the Falkland Road work, a brothel district in India, in Mumbai—she was there for three months without bringing out her camera.

Reti: Oh, I see.

Locks: So one of the parts of research is to stay in a place and understand the place, understand the people, talk to the people, understand what is the dynamic of that

place before you start engaging. There's a lot of misunderstanding about what is research in relationship to art? Well, there is historical research. There is practical, technical, and translation research. There is physical, emotional research, in terms of doing things over and over and over again. If I'm taking you to the desert for the first time, there's a certain kind of excitement and enthusiasm that comes from seeing something fresh and new. And when they go back, it's going to be something different. So how are you going to deal with that kind of difference? Sometimes when I'm there for the first time there's a shotgun approach. I don't really understand what I can contribute in an expression. I'm encountering this for the first time. I don't have any way of adding to it. So a lot of times I'll just shoot a lot of different things.

So do we start with a concept? For me, I start with work. So I'll go out, I'll plan a trip, and I'll go out and I'll work and I'll just gather data. I'll just make a lot of photographs. I'll bring those back and then I will analyze the data. What's there? What's potentially there? What is it that I'm seeing? What's the relationship between what I'm seeing here, as opposed to what I experienced in the desert? And then from that, I can build some hypothetical, conceptual frameworks. And then I'll go back again and photograph it, directing a little bit more towards things that I think are viable. I bring that back and then I'll analyze that.

Photography is picture to picture. You make a picture. You experience that. You make another picture. You make another picture; you make another picture. Because you are dealing with the simultaneous. It's really good for simultaneous

thinkers, who see the thing all at once. Unlike, say, a painting, or a drawing, where it's additive, where you make a mark, and you see that mark and you make another mark responsive to that mark—we see a thousand marks simultaneously. So you have to train your cognitive brain when you are in, say San Francisco and you've got this busy intersection, and you've got to have an understanding of *everything* that's going on simultaneously. So research would be to go photograph, bring that back, look at it—what is it that you want? What is it that you don't want? What are you're getting in there?

A lot of times you make photographs that are not successful because you haven't trained yourself to figure out how to keep things in that you want in and get things out that you don't want there. Because you don't have an eraser, so you are seeing everything finished. We have to train ourselves to be perceptive. If we were thinking about a musical score—well you're organizing a musical score simultaneously and you've got to see all the notes at once. At first, when we're looking at the world: "Oh, I didn't see that telephone pole. Oh, I didn't see that car." The camera is very pragmatic. It's just going to give you what's in front of it. And if we don't know, or aren't perceptive enough cognitively to be able to read within a split second what's there, then we're going to get all of this stuff that is unaccounted for. So there is a lot of training in that.

One could also design a program around allowing for all of that stuff to get in there. In Robert Adams' work, for example, or Lewis Baltz's work—what they were trying to do was do was leave everything alone and try not to edit. Robert Adams was

saying, okay, we're going to be really stuck in relationship to our personal definitions of beauty if we start only looking at pristine environments, because the pristine environment is disappearing, and we have to build another aesthetic in and around human involvement with location and place and landscape. So he started to allow for all of those things—the telephone poles, the tire tracks, all of that stuff—in a very kind of passive-looking image. It was saying, okay, I am just going to let the camera make this picture. And obviously that's false. It's false in the sense that he's pretending (laughs) to let the camera do that.

Reti: It's constructed.

Locks: It's constructed. It really is an illusion. But it is changing the way that we think about what's beautiful and the question of aesthetics. So that would be another relationship to research, the New Topographics of the seventies and eighties, the idea of okay, we culturally at this moment in time are at a point where we have to rethink our understanding of aesthetics and what is beautiful. The idea of the Ansel Adams drama—and the two programs were so different—Ansel's dramatic Expressionistic, almost Rachmaninoff landscapes—as opposed to Robert Adams' or Lewis Baltz's almost austere, Minimalist approach to looking at land. And where are we now? How do we need to look at [land now]?

And to a certain degree, we see the way we see. So if we intellectually are thinking about where we need to go and what it is we need to work on, the research is getting us from where we are now to where we will want to be. For example, my son

ran a marathon. If I said, "That really is cool. I want to run a marathon." But if I've never run before, I can't go out and run a marathon."

Reti: No. (laughs)

Locks: I can intellectualize running a marathon. But the practicality in relationship to research would be: Okay, now I have to find out how do I do that. And what do I need to do in order to do that? What is the training in order to do that? How long does that training take, to be able to do that?

So in terms of a picture-to-picture-to-picture notion of research and development of an idea, it is a question of working our way to where we want to be. It's a gradual process. It's probably like any project—like losing weight. It's a long haul. It's perseverance. How long are you working on these ideas; how do those ideas evolve? And then, as we make work we're constantly looking at that work. So for me, it's work, analyzing, concept. Work, analyzing, concept. And then at a certain point, theory comes in when you are looking at the work in the context of the social structure of a medium in relationship to the world.

So over a period of time—how does my work relate say, to the New Topographics, just as a point of reference that's historical now. The theorists, the historian, the writer who coined *New Topographics* was the person who looked at the contextual framework of a number of photographers who seemed to be on track to do a certain thing. And from a theoretical perspective, *New Topographics* became a coined word that created a framework for a philosophical set of ideas within the medium. So the

theoretical for me would be: how does my work then fit into the historical framework of art or culture?

Reti: So, can I follow up on that, since we're there?

Locks: Um. Yeah, a little bit. It's really difficult too, because I'm speaking from my perspective and an art historian would look at it very differently.

Locks Discusses his Photographic Work

Reti: Sure, but it would be good to know where you see your work fitting in, just from your perspective.

Locks: Right. From an art historical point of view one of my favorite photographers and one of the influential ones for me in the sixties, when I was in school, was André Kertész. And André Kertész, a Hungarian who lived in Paris and then later in New York City— Kertész started photographing in 1914, right around the First World War in Hungary and in Europe. So he had his Hungarian work. He had his Paris work, working in and around the artists of the twenties, thirties, forties. And then when he moved to New York, his New York work. Well, if you're looking at it strictly historically, he became an influence in the sixties. Historically, Kertész began to be known and to have influence in the sixties and seventies. The first book I saw of his work was probably around 1966, '67. So when does somebody have an impact?

From that point of view, if I were to be literal about my own work, I don't know that I have reached the impact that I expect or would want. All of the faculty in the

university are working really hard. The question that the university always looks at is the response to work, response to research. So the Kertész model is that there was response to his work in the sixties. Based on that response, he became a really important artist of that particular period. One of the structures of the university is by measuring response to [a faculty member's] work, they are saying, okay at what point theoretically do they have an effect on the cultural range of idea? From that point of view, I think that one of the problems in art—it's like even in the sixties, talking to a painter they said, "I can't wait until I'm fifty or sixty because then I'll know how to paint." I think we're in a time where everything is so sped up, and yet at the same time the development of maturity in relationship to the arts is historically very slow.

I think that I'm still formulating an individual identity. It seems that I'm really, really, really slow at this. (laughs) It isn't that all along the way that there isn't important work. I would say, also, I like working in a kind of vacuum. I like working separate from the trends, or the ideas that are kind of going on naturally. I also get bored, and so I'll do a project for a period of years, and then find out, okay, I don't have anything to add to this. I need to stop for a while. Then I'll pick up a different kind of camera, and I'll work with a different mode of operation, and then go back to working, analyzing, conceptualizing, and building a new body of work. So if you look at my website, there are these different bodies of work that in some ways don't look like one another. But in general, the kinds of notations, the things that I'm really interested in are the ones that are autobiographically historical, that are affected by taking on visual problems over time. So at first it would be growing up in an

Abstract Expressionist household, being around San Francisco at a particular time. At twenty, having a child and being married. Having a domestic life. Trying to work and go to school. Finishing my degrees. Doing all of this.

So, if you look at my SX 70 work, which is my first mature body of work out of graduate school, which strangely enough coincided with the Ansel Adams workshops—that work was a combination of Abstract Expressionism, still life influence, domestic and family orientation, photographic representation and formalism. It was this kind of collage. It felt like the first body of work that, in a sense, didn't have a singular subject matter, but had multiple subject matter, but unified the style within which I work. So [I did that body of work] when my children were young.

And then as they were getting older I moved into other things, where I was more working on my own again, like the Random Order and Chaos landscape work. The domestic didn't figure very much into that work, other than metaphorically, in terms of certain questions I had about a crisis in my own life. That was more metaphorical but it had to do with landscape.

But then when my grandchildren were born and they started to play around with the i-Zone camera, another Polaroid camera, then I went back into a body of work that had to do with domestic issues, Abstract Expressionism, Impressionism, still life. And digital. The question there was more like: what do you get when you cross this and this?

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: So it was: what do you get when you cross a toy analog camera that costs twenty dollars with five thousand dollars' worth of digital equipment? So you make this i-Zone photograph, which is the size of a thirty-five millimeter. You scan that. You blow it up. And you reprint it onto another piece of paper. The outcome was a very Impressionist image. Well, it is unforeseen how one would make that transition and end up going back to—and [Pierre] Bonnard is having this show in the Legion of Honor right now—get back to an image that is representative of someone like Bonnard, or some of the post-Impressionists.

So that body of work, then, was like the SX 70 work in that it dealt with all subject matter: landscape to portraits to domestic. Going in, there were unknown qualities. It's assessing what those qualities are and building upon those things. So it was a very specific body of work. But it was very much like the SX 70 work. The thematic structure originally was one in which I would go from one way of working to another, and I would kind of rotate: this is landscape; this is domestic still life; this is something else. I would go around in a circle between domestic, landscape, and still life, and kind of work those things and spiral forward. Well, the SX 70 integrated that and then the iZone integrated it more.

And the work I am doing right now, the constructions, the collage, the panoramas, is doing that within what I think is the contextual landscape. So the landscape is more philosophical thought than anything else. It is a way of looking at the world, and building narrative, and building a story. The story is a more poetic story, where you

have things that are not necessarily thought to go together, but wrapping those things together by understanding the nature of a contextual landscape, where you are using the frame and the space of a panorama to put multiple photographs to build an individual story.

And that story, then, is dealing with some of those same things: Abstract Expressionism, Realism—that's where the Abstract Realism comes in. My DNA, which is Abstract Expressionist, is mixed with the photo, which tends to be representational and realist, combined with the idea of historical notions in painting and other arts, the domestic environments of my family—first my children and then grandchildren. Right now the work that I'm doing is getting to a little bit more subtle, and more involved, and in deeper relationship to those things than I was able to achieve with the SX 70 or with the iZone images. So now they're actually of scale, and I can put things in and take things out, or build a landscape that has to do with my questions about humans' social relationship with nature, with landscape. What's the relationship between a domestic landscape, something within our own environment, what we build within our own environment—as opposed to an exterior or outdoor landscape? What do rural environments look like? What do more wilderness-looking landscapes look like? How do those interface with one another?

Reti: How did you come up with the idea of doing these giant panoramas?

Locks: [pause] I was on sabbatical and I had been really unsuccessful in thinking about digital photography. I was raised with so much analog. The iZone work was

the first work that I did that was analog-to-digital interface. I started with this romantic analog of polaroid and converting it to digital. But I had bought at that time several digital cameras and was totally unsatisfied with them. I didn't know emotionally how to deal with them. One, they weren't very instantaneous. They weren't critically sharp in certain ways. So it was very difficult.

During the sabbatical I was thinking, okay, I need to rethink digital and do digital on its own terms. I'm not going to use a traditional camera. I started to use a higher end Canon video camera. So I got a video camera, and during my break I just spent my time making short videos, ten, fifteen-second pieces. So you buy a one-hour tape, and then within that one hour I had so many clips that were ten seconds long. Then I would take those clips and I would pull frames out of the clips. And out of the frames of the clips I would reconstruct a landscape. So it started with video. When I came back to work, I had fifty hours worth of ten-second intervals. (laughs)

Reti: Fascinating.

Locks: So the nightmare was, how do you catalog? How do you deal with all of that stuff? I had gotten the prototype, in terms of rebuilding images, and then what happened within those. It was very low resolution, similar to the iZone work. So I was saying, okay, I'm not going to be satisfied by high res digital, so I may as well work with low res digital, right?

Reti: I see.

Locks: So then from there I said, I can't catalog this. This is too difficult with a full schedule of teaching and administrating. What I'm going to do is just go to a low res point and shoot camera. So I went to the Sony Point and Shoot, underwater, shock resistant, very simple camera and used it as a hunter gatherer, in a similar way that I was using the video camera. I would just kind of hunt and peck and grab these things, and then go through those things, and then from those images, either in a sequential manner, like the video, building a landscape. But then I kind of moved more poetically, where I put photographs together that were not of the similar sequence, but of different sequences. Say, six months ago I was in a place and I collected these photographs, and three months ago I'd collect these things. And I'd find that my brain would just find those images that related to one another, in one way or another out of time and out of place. I found that in some ways time was irrelevant, in terms of when it was taken. Place was irrelevant, in relationship to where it was taken. And finding that my brain could sort things, so that poetically I'd have parts of a piece but then I'd have to wait until I found another piece that would fit that.

So it kind of grew in a vicarious way, from the digital video, in terms of building a more strict panoramic idea—to one that became more poetic. And then a combination of panoramic, where it was sequential *or* poetic. One of the things in working that way, it's complex enough for my brain to play with. It is infinite in the number of stories and thoughts. It's evolving. So I'm able, because of the myriad possibilities, the project can evolve as I evolve, or it evolves me and I kind of direct

it. It's a very organic process. I've been doing these now for about seven years. And I'm not getting tired of it. It can incorporate whatever I'm doing.

A lot of my work is socially motivated, or has to do with the relationship between humans and nature, which also goes back to the UC Reserves. So if we were going to flip back, it's sort of self-serving also. By taking lots of people out into the desert, then I have lots of subjects to photograph, engaged with that place. So over the years, I have twenty-five years of photographs of the Mojave Reserve. They are kind of sporadic. I'm there for a few days at a time, over a long period of time. So it's not a huge amount of work. But I always enjoy it.

And the places that I've worked are the Sierra, the desert, and the coastal landscape, moving through those places. Desolation Wilderness and Yosemite, for the Sierra. Great Basin National Park. And then the Western United States, the Southwest a little bit, as I get down there. The California Coast. So the UC Reserve system plays into that. Now I have a place that I can go and stay in Twenty-Nine Palms, outside of Joshua Tree. I have a place up by Lassen that I can visit and stay at. My research is really road trips throughout California and the Western United States.

And then contextually, in relationship to the field—I'm not sure yet theoretically how [I] fits in. [Perhaps the] New Topographics philosophically. Lewis Baltz was probably one of the smartest artists that I've known. He was really important to me as a friend and as a mentor-colleague. He evolved and emerged almost immediately. I don't think there's any accounting for that. Out of graduate school, he immediately had an affect on the culture of art and photo. As opposed to Kertész, who waited fifty

years. Or myself. I'm not sure how I fit, entirely. The things that I'm making often come from dissatisfaction: where do we need to be going? What is it that we're making? What is we can say that's new about the landscape? How would one design a unity in our lives? So much of our lives are compartmentalized. We come. We teach. I have my art life. I have my university life. I have my family life. How do we make sense of those things as a single thing, rather than as separate things?

Reti: So your panorama is a way of putting them together.

Locks: My panorama is a way of, not creating the separation of things, but seeing them as singular in relationship to the world, or in relationship to any kinds of notions that I have about what we're doing as people on the planet. It's an integrative system. My book *Familiar Subjects* was about things that are close to us. Even in graduate school, my thesis was based on multiple subject matter. I've never felt that I wanted to do a project that was based on a kind of singular subject matter.

Reti: This gets back to these themes of interdisciplinarity that we've been touching on—

Locks: That's right, yes.

Reti: —throughout this oral history.

Locks: Right. That's been there forever. I guess one of the reasons why I wanted to go into teaching is I didn't like the way that it was taught. It was either taught by subject matter and thematically, or it was taught technically. My training in painting,

or in art, was more idea-based, interdisciplinary-based, and painters don't talk about subject matter very much. We could even see it at the Art Institute when I was a student, where you'd have your photographers sitting at a table talking about their cameras and lenses and technique. And you'd have your painters talking about a concert that they went to: an experience, an idea.

I've always found that the concentration on idea was more important than the concentration on technique. I'm suspicious, maybe, of digital arts and new media, is that it's too singular. I mean, it's still about technique. As an artist, I wouldn't want to make it that specific. Yes, I would say I'm a digital artist, but I'm not a conceptual digital artist, in a pure sense, do you know? Nor do I really want to concentrate on the ideas that are digital, but on the ideas that are human and having to do with my experiences in the world and what it is I'm perceiving. That doesn't mean that can't happen within that other framework. It's just not a framework I'm entirely comfortable with.

Chairing the Art Department at UC Santa Cruz

Reti: Okay. Well, thank you. I think it's really great to have your thoughts about your work and how it's evolved. I guess now we should turn to talking about UCSC life. I know you've worn so many different hats. And you've done a lot of administrative work here as well. You, for example, were chair of the art board twice?

Locks: Twice, yes. Nine years total.

Reti: So talk to me about that. What were some of the key developments during that time, some of the challenges?

Locks: First the art board had a really poor external review in 1990, that was ultimately thrown out. And then that was followed by a series of budget cuts. And [because of] those cuts, the university then at that time in the mid-1990s offered two opportunities for faculty to retire early. In that retirement, we lost all but four continuing faculty: one new faculty, a chair, Joyce Brodsky, and two very, very new faculty. So we were kind of decimated and we lost our mentor base. The philosophical direction of the department came to an end and we had to redefine ourselves.

Reti: What do you mean by a mentor base? I'm not following that.

Locks: Well, talking personally, for example, someone like Don Weygandt, who actually retired in 1990—he was my first painting teacher at San Francisco State. These were the people who taught me how to teach. These were the people that I taught with for ten, twelve years. I'd worked with these people and they were the emotional directors of what was the art department. And they all retired. All of them. The people who were doing any of the chairing retired. So what was left was a person in sculpture, two people in painting, one theoretician, two very new sculpture and media faculty—E.G. Crichton and Beth Stephens, who had just been hired. They'd been there for maybe one or two years. And then myself. We were the faculty.

At that particular time, for continuity we had a lot of lecturers. And it was lecturers by necessity because we were still offering eighty or ninety courses a year. But we were doing it on a shoestring, and smoke and mirrors and illusion, in a way. Everybody was gone and retired by 1995. Joyce Brodsky was chair and came on in 1993 or 1994. And then Frank Galuszka, a new faculty in painting, had come on. Frank chaired after Joyce for two years. We didn't make any appointments during those years. During Joyce's chairing, she brought in E.G. and Beth. I was on the committee for both of those searches.

So when I came on in 1998, we had a skeletal program and our job was to rebuild and to establish a direction: where we were going to go and who was going to do that. Joyce had finished chairing; Jenny McDade was the most senior, but Jenny, for health reasons, wasn't going to chair. She was instrumental in the curriculum. She was great in terms of the curricular design of the program.

So basically I came on for a three-year term. But at the end of three years there was no one to pass it to. No one had--

Reti: Gosh.

Locks: And I was an associate professor. In 1990, I had been here for twelve years and I came on ladder. By 1998, I was chair of the department. I was tenured but just at the associate level.

During the budget cuts of the early 1990s, the art department had a 100,000 dollar budget cut. We had a fifth-year program in art, just like they had a fifth-year in

theater arts. We had a post-bac degree program that helped us get our students into graduate programs. Well, the budget cut for the art department was 100,000 dollars. And we had to give up a 100,000 dollars of our budget. So the people who were chairing the department at the time thought, okay, this is an easy thing [to cut]. We want a graduate program, ultimately. The fifth-year program isn't a real graduate program. It costs us $100,000 to do the fifth-year program. Let's just get rid of it and we'll bring an MFA program.

Well, we gave it up. It was one of the mistakes—thinking about the short-term rather than the long term. This satisfies this [cut] now. It was an easy way. It was an easy solution. We got rid of that. And it solved that. But we got rid of our post-bac degree. By the time I was chairing we wanted an MFA program. We were wanting to hire. How do we hire? What are we going to say we're wanting to do? We don't have an MFA program. A lot of people are looking for MFA programs. It's very expensive moving here. They need a house and they need a studio. And so the biggest problems that I had were in hiring. We were only given assistant professors. I was an associate professor. I didn't have much clout. We could hire assistant professors. And what I needed to research was: how do we retain these people? What do we need for them? My mentors, the faculty that were here, bought houses for 25K to 40K with studio environments. So all of our space of the art department was devoted to classrooms because they already had their studios.

Reti: They had their studios at home.

Locks: They didn't need a studio on campus. They didn't need a lab. So when I came in, we had this buildout. We had all of the space, based on our enrollments, that we were going to get, and it had all been devoted to student studios and student environments. But in order to hire people, we needed to be able to offer faculty places to work. Because how do you have a 500K mortgage and have a place to work? And so there was a critical factor of: how do we hire, who do we hire, and what are the logistics of that? For the idea of an MFA program in the future, we needed faculty first, but you're hiring assistant professors. You're going to get your faculty base but you're not going to get your experiential base. They're going to be too raw, and you can't have an MFA program because they're too raw, and you don't have the critical relationship to the world.

During that six years I hired seven faculty.

Reti: Oh, my gosh.

Locks: So my job there was hiring the faculty, getting faculty there, filling out the faculty, dropping some of our lecturer base, and securing either temporary or permanent faculty studios.

Reti: Was Baskin Studios a faculty space?

Locks: Baskin Studios came in 1985. So we already had those. But there were several buildout periods. For example, in the late eighties and early nineties there were several buildings that were built. Originally all of the classrooms for photo were at Porter. We had darkrooms in the basement of B dorm, old bathrooms

converted. And offices and classrooms were over there. And then somewhere around 1990 we hired our first tech for photo. Prior to 1990 I was teaching first six, and then five classes, tech-ing the area—running the darkroom and doing the ordering. In 1990, we hired our first tech for the area. And then as we hired that person, we were completing a building at Baskin. So the photo building that's on the property at Baskin, which is the darkroom classroom, was built around 1990. Katie Perry was the person who came on as the tech to initiate the outfitting of that building.

But along the same time as we did that, then we did Building H, which was the sculpture studio. The H Building is an upstairs-downstairs offices and sculpture environment. And then Ed Houghton directed another buildout program, where we got three new painting studios over a period of time, and two other sculpture studios, and the metal shop. We had the foundry also. So during that period of time there was a series of buildouts.

That suited us for a while. But then photography was growing in terms of its popularity and there were several things that we didn't have space for, based on our size. The DARC building, the Digital Arts and New Media building, was for Ed Houghton originally a buildout building. The state would only build one building, and the one building would be for the division, to encase all of the things that had not been completed. They didn't want a building in theater, a building in music, a building in art and film. So they said, okay, we're going to give you this one building. And that was the DARC building.

It was also the housing of the DANM program, the Digital Arts and New Media program, which was being formulated at the same time. And so, in that building, the music department got some space; art got space; and theater got space. Everyone got additional space. It was mostly directed toward digital, which also led to digital arts and new media. Photo traded the darkrooms at Porter—because they were renovating—we traded that space for additional space in DARC, but we had huge enrollments and we had earned more space for classrooms. So photo has significant space—we have a digital lab and we have a classroom in DARC. We got a premier drawing studio in that building. We have office space and the buildout of our faculty studios in our building.

Reti: I'm not familiar with this term *buildout.*

Locks: From a state's perspective on what a division is entitled to, *buildout* means this finishes all of the building that you're going to have.

Reti: Oh, I see. Thank you.

Locks: "There's not going to be any more. You keep saying 'you need, this, this, and this. All of the areas need this and this.' We're going to put it all together in this one building. That's going to do it."

So the first chairing experience was building faculty, overseeing any of the buildings that needed to be resolved. It was meetings [about] a potential museum, working with Carolyn Dean (Lindy Dean), who was chairing at the same time.

Reti: So that was going on even back then.[14]

Locks: Yes, we were talking about the museum in 1998, 1999, 2000. That's where those discussions started, was then. And DANM at the same time. I was on the committees and in the chairs' meetings we were talking about the museum idea. The Sesnon Gallery already existed but we were wanting something larger. We were wanting a museum in the arts.

Reti: I see.

Locks: That's been on the table for a very long time. And then there were certain people, like Jim Bierman and David Jones were very instrumental in a lot of the early curricular issues in relationship to the DANM program. Keith Muscutt probably was the pioneer for that. Ed Houghton was phenomenal. He doesn't always get a lot of credit, but if you look at what he's done over the years—Ed Houghton didn't necessarily pioneer the ideas, but he allowed everything to happen. He didn't get in people's way. He would make sure things made sense. And in some ways he was conservative. But on the other hand, if you look at the amount of building that he did, and the amount of growth during his fifteen years, it was pretty phenomenal. And he was a hands-off person. He allowed for the administrators under him and the chairs to direct their program. He never vetoed any of our ideas in relationship to who we wanted to hire. He might not have liked our ideas but he didn't block them. That six years was pretty dense, the levels of activity during that time.

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[14] See http://ias.ucsc.edu/building

Prior to that was when I did a lot of college service. As a lecturer, my relationship to Porter College was much greater than later, when I became chair. Even as chair, I did some service at Porter. But from 1978 to 1990, my work with Pavel Machotka; the initiating of the faculty gallery, working with Pavel, with the faculty gallery; curating two shows at the Sesnon Gallery; working on the executive committee; working on the grants committee at Porter College, working with, first Pavel, then later Kathy Foley. The other thing in relationship in relationship to Kathy was the Arts Bridge program, during that same time.

Reti: What was the Arts Bridge program?

Foley: The Arts Bridge program was a program that placed arts division students in the secondary school system and allowed for the students to collaborate with grammar school teachers in disadvantaged schools in the Watsonville-Santa Cruz area, and teach art classes—art, music and a variety of things. Kathy was strongly involved in that. It still exists but it's really cut back now. It almost disappeared. It was a pretty good-sized program. The Arts Bridge was run on the campus by Kathy, as provost of Porter College. So it also had an affiliation with Porter College.

So the early days was Porter. That's where I really worked. Later, when I became chair, a lot of my duties moved. I was on the Committee on Teaching when I was a lecturer. But then as chair, that's pretty much what I did. I still taught four or five classes a year, so I still had a pretty good teaching load, plus chairing, plus doing my creative work.

The second time I chaired was when David Yager came on. I was on the hiring committee for David Yager for two years—the first year as a member of the committee; the second year as chair of the committee—for the dean search.

Reti: It was a two-year search?

Locks: It was a two-year search. Then when he got here, DARC [the Digital Arts Research Center] opened at the same time. The workload for opening DARC was horrendous. It was really difficult. It was also when we were cutting our budget. It was a horrible time. We cut a couple hundred thousand dollars out of our budget. We lost multiple FTE positions. We cut our classes from almost a hundred classes a year, down to the sixty classes a year.

Reti: And of course the university is so much bigger in terms of enrollments than when you had eighty classes a year.

Locks: That's right. And then what was difficult also is that it really changed the dynamic because where the cuts could come from, for the most part, was where there was soft money. Where there was soft money, was staff and lecturers. So we cut our lecturer program to pieces. And the problem was that all of our lecturers were in our healthy areas. We had tremendous enrollments in photo, printmaking, and painting. And that's where our lecturer base was. So on the positive side, it stabilized and equalized all of the areas within the arts. But it decimated photo, painting, and printmaking. We've re-hired for printmaking. Printmaking is really

going to be healthy now. Painting is down to one full-time faculty. Photography is down to one full-time faculty.

Reti: And that's you?

Locks: That's me. And then we have one, part-time lecturer who kind of fills in.

Reti: What about Lewis Watts?

Locks: Lew retired. We were two—Lew Watts and I. But Lew retired two years ago. He's here now this quarter, rehired for a quarter. We're hiring, and hopefully we'll have a new person in the fall. But then I'm going to retire.

So if you're looking at the state of California and arts education in the primary and secondary school system, it's terrible. The budget cuts have been in music and arts. But if anyone's getting any training, they're getting training in painting and photo, primarily. People's backgrounds, often if there is any experience in art, is in painting and photo. So it's very difficult, because if people are coming in in that direction and you don't have any classes in that area, it makes it problematic.

One of the valuable things about being chair, is that as chair it's the only opportunity that you have to have enough information to be able to make decisions. Oftentimes, we have a lot of opinions and I'm really careful about my opinions. On the one hand, I have opinions. But at the same time, I don't have the information. When you are chair, you are looking at how you solve a problem. But you're given a lot of data to work with those problems. You're working with other chairs; you're working with

the dean; you're working with your staff—with our advisor, with our department manager. So nothing is done in a vacuum and you're looking at these figures all of the time. So it's really easy to stay on point. It's not easy, necessarily, to solve those problems. But at the same time, it's gratifying because you don't feel like you're in the dark. But the cost of not being in the dark is that you're spending an awful lot of time on administration and less time on your research. Your research is impacted by the amount of administrative work. The art department has always taught, for many, many years, five classes a year. Now it's four and a half classes per year.

Reti: You mean that is the course load for each faculty member.

Locks: Yes. We have four classes one year, and five classes the other year. So the arts department and theater arts are four and a half courses. Film and digital media is four. That's more consistent with the rest of the university. Four is normal. Then you have some of your sciences, where, depending upon the research projects and grants [the course load] might be three, three and a half, two and a half. But for the most part, in humanities and social sciences it's four. The art department teaches five. When I was chairing, I was teaching at least three courses a year, plus chairing.

Reti: Why is the course load higher for the art department?

Locks: We get different answers. We don't have a graduate program, is one of the major reasons. We have a program on the table now, and once we do that— But it makes it very difficult because we've lost faculty to art history; we've lost faculty to

film and digital media, because they would go from five classes to four classes by changing departments.

Reti: Ah. So we're seeing the growth of digital media as the same time as the contraction of the traditional art department.

Locks: Yes. On the other hand, we do have an MFA on the table and we are vital. If you are thinking about abstract thought, the arts are one of the only making programs on the campus that deal with abstract thought. We make things. The way we process ideas is by making things. We teach people to make things, and we teach people to intellectualize and to work with intellectual thought in relationship to the process of making, and the relationship of observation to making, and conceptual training to making. The arts division in general—when you are talking about music, or film, or visual arts—we're makers.

So the last experience of chairing was not very gratifying because I did all of the cutting. Now we're trying to do some repairing. But something like the gaming program, which is very sexy and kind of coming in—we were asked if we wanted to have gaming in the art department. We agreed and we worked with our staff to begin a gaming program and to hire a person. We hired a person. The dean couldn't hire a person. They had to be hired from within a department. And we agreed to do that. Before leaving, David Yager took the gaming program out of the department and put it within the division. So the work that we had done in collaboration, or what we thought was collaboration, for a gaming program that affiliated with the engineering program, is now no longer in the art department. The gaming program

is going to take the space from the art department and then become a department of its own within the division. And that's all up in the air. So it's really fragile. It was very difficult. I started that process with David Yager, the idea of the games. We interviewed one person first. We had agreed to do that when I was chair. That didn't go through and then we hired somebody under Jennifer Parker, our current chair.

Logically, when you're looking at it from the outside, gaming is a huge idea and it would grow very slowly in an art department. We have all of these needs in the art department and we're only going to get a certain number of FTE over the next number of years. Well, gaming is going to have immediate enrollment issues. And it's collaborating with engineering, which is in an incredible growth pattern in relationship to gaming. So gaming would be hamstrung in the art department because it couldn't grow. It would have to grow consistent with the art department. Originally, for example, film in theater arts was hamstrung by theater arts. The minute it was taken out of theater arts, it could grow. Art history within the art department was hamstrung by the art department. It wasn't fulfilling the needs of the art department. But it was not an intellectual endeavor in itself. It couldn't really become a theoretical or intellectual program in the highest research level. But when it became its own program and department, it grew. So in a way I understand that gaming would not grow within the art department.

It is disappointing because what I'm looking at in relationship to the nature of art, and art in relationship to having a family, and looking at my grandkids, and looking at what constitutes art, and where people are getting their information—young

people are getting their information through film and media, social media, gaming. It is a different source of information. They're coming into the arts with that kind of background. Graphic novels. That's another one. I thought that the art department needed to reflect new directions in the culture, and that included gaming, and it includes graphic novels, and sequential drawing. But not so much in only an applied way. The work of art, especially at an undergraduate level, is not pragmatic and applied. You find arts throughout the world—in auto design, in fabric design, in architecture, and in advertising. So you can't separate the wall patterns, questions of aesthetics, questions of color, landscape gardening, landscapers. Where is the base? Undergraduate art students are the students who go into architecture. They're the ones who are going into interior design. They're the ones who are going into community design. They're going into civic planning. The undergraduate arts are the base training for anything that has to do with aesthetic architectural design.

A Case for Art Education at a Research University

My former photography students are in music, and in performance, in theater, film, arts, curating. Because art is an abstract. It's about creativity. It's about imagination. And it's about applying ideas to making something. So they end up everywhere. In city planning. Students who graduated from UCLA in city planning. Multiple students in architecture. The arts are a root form for things aesthetic. Since we're not an MFA program, we can't point to our MFA. We have students graduating from graduate programs in art every year, from around the country. But at the same time, it's not the only field that students go into.

Reti: You're making a case for why we need art in a university.

Locks: Yes. You talk about interfaces with the museum. Who designs the dioramas at the Monterey Bay Aquarium? Who designs the dioramas at Seymour Marine Discovery Center? What is that interface? That's applied design. It isn't what artists do, per se. But what artists do filters down. If you look at art historically, the Abstract Expressionists of the forties and the fifties were thought to be idiots, in a way, culturally: "Oh, my granddaughter could paint that." The idea was anyone could make these things. Yet, thirty years later they started to become part of advertising. If you look at even a really simple scribble, like the little squiggle on a Specialized Bicycle—Abstract Expressionism and every subsequent form within art since then, has an influence and becomes a motif in applied pop culture. But the artist doesn't deal with that on that level. The artist is the one that creates the direction. How influential now is the New Topographics on current teaching in relationship to photo? It's a historical medium. It's a historical idea. In anything—taking Einstein or whomever—at one point does something go from current research to pop culture.

Reti: Right, because culture is a big soup. All of that goes in the soup pot.

Locks: It's a big soup, and Lewis Baltz referred to it as a thirty-year period. At thirty years it becomes historical. Once it becomes historical, then it becomes like the hundredth monkey. At a certain point, then we all understand that and what it does.

Our questions in terms of research and art go back to what is it that we need to be thinking right now? And what is our historical understanding that allows us to have

an overview and an ability to foresee where we're going and to invent? So creativity and the idea of original thought in creativity—creativity would mean to create something that didn't exist before. So research is doing everything necessary in order to create something that didn't exist before. It's invention. The idea of invention and research go hand-in-hand and invention and research happen in any field.

So what is invention and creativity in art? What is it that's going on in art now? We're always pushing forward on what it is we need to be making and thinking. There's a vicarious relationship to culture and what's going on in culture. What are we thinking about? What's in our brains? And what's in our brains in relationship to what we see? What do we see politically? What are we reading? What are our families doing? What are the issues; what are the problems? And then how does that get distilled into the things that we're making. But creativity would mean invention. And then invention is research. You can't invent anything without the research and the base knowledge.

Reti: So that spins a different sort of outlook on the notion of a research university.

Locks: Yes, so NASA and what was invented to get someone to the moon—well, that might have been a process—but the offshoot of that was all of the fire retardants, all of the byproduct. So when we're talking about teaching students, we're really teaching students to invent and to create, and not necessarily knowing what the byproduct is going to be. Art is a byproduct of thought. If we're working regularly, if we're doing our research, if we're making things in order to research—then the

artwork that we're making is a byproduct. It isn't the goal. We're making this thing that has to do with thought and creativity, and what we get is the outcome of that thought and creativity and making. But how is that applied? Well, what do you want the university to do? Do you want the university to be inventing and coming up with these things, or do you want us to apply these things? Well, there is no application? It's like an abstract mathematician—they are working on formulas that nobody understands, nor do we have any understanding about the applied. Now, I'm not saying that art is on that level exactly, but I'm saying that what we're endeavoring to do is to make something not necessarily that is understandable, but is the outcome of creative thinking. And that's research.

I believe in the research institution in relationship to applied and non-applied. It's like when I was hired to teach photo, they considered photo to be an applied art. Well, they were wrong. It's not an applied art. I don't believe in applied art. I believe in creative art. And creative art has no application yet. It is, in a sense, people running wild researching and trying things. Application comes after that. We're not training our best students to go out there and be commercial artists. There's plenty of commercial artists out there. Some of them will be commercial artists. They'll want to be commercial artists. But what we're working on, is we're a research institution. We want people to learn how to have imagination, creativity, and forethought. And to be able to be disciplined, to think conceptually, theoretically, and analytically.

So there is that dilemma. One of the problems that the university has faced is how do we keep our doors open? What kinds of compromises are we making in relationship to applied-ness, as opposed to research?

Reti: You mean because students need to get jobs after graduation?

Locks: Yes. Jobs or funding. Raising funds. We're raising funds based on our successes, but what is the relationship between the applied-ness and research? Obviously, we have to have a broader view. The role of the artist is misunderstood, I think, tremendously, in terms of what is it that constitutes research? What is it that we're trying to do? Just like many other places, we go out in the world, or we go into our studios; we create and collect data. We read; we write. We pull things together. We assess. We analyze. We make. We reanalyze. We conceptualize. We make.

Reti: Some of the people I've interviewed for oral histories over the years have drawn some parallels between the work of science faculty and the work of the art faculty. They say that their work is closer, in some ways, than other parts of the university.

Locks: Yes.

Reti: And from what you are saying, I can see that as well.

Locks: Mm-hmm. But you could say that about—you know, what is the difference between a creative writer and an artist? A lot of the process is related. It's just a different vocabulary.

Reti: Yes, and then that takes us back to aesthetic studies and the ways in which it embraced that interdisciplinary view.

Locks: Right. And we're going to see more of that. I always have students who are interested in—well, I was saying, there are about twelve students out of twenty-five in advanced photo classes who are double majors, and probably three or four of those are lit majors. Those lit majors are interested in text and image.

Here's another field. I have a lot of psychology majors. Psychology is the largest department in the campus. We have students doing internships in the county in art therapy. We have several students right now, I could name three in particular, who are seniors, who are thinking about art therapy. They have a double major in psychology and art. Who is doing that in the world? Who has the experience? You have to have a BA in art. And you have to have—depending on where you want to fit into the field, you could have a BA in art and a PhD in psychology. Or you could be an artist who works for a PhD within a clinic that deals with issues of art therapy, either with children. An early student, Claudia Alonzo, who got her PhD in psychology—her BA was in art, and she was working with child abuse—working with both the children and the pedophiles—with sand tray and processes by which she could analyze visual material for working with her patients. So the question is: where does somebody get art training if there are no art departments? They could go to specialized schools, but a specialized school will not allow someone to have a double degree in the highest level of psychology and the highest level of art, at an undergraduate level, in order to go on.

So if you really stop to look at your surrounding environment—you know, look at how much art is involved in this particular room [in McHenry Library]. It's a fairly mundane room—

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: —but is still is—where does furniture design come from? Where does the architectural design come from? Where does the color interest come from? The room has a computer, [so there is] the combination of arts and engineering in relationship to the software design.

Book designers. Hardy Hanson, who taught painting here for many years—well, Hardy's daughter Jody was a student of mine in photo, and she designed one of the most beautiful Matisse books as a book designer. She works professionally as a book designer. Where do these people come from? They have BA's in art.

And architecture schools want a BA in art rather than a BA in architecture. They want imagination and creativity. And they want people to have experience in imagination and creativity, and then when they come into architecture school they will teach them the techniques for drawing architectural plans. But they want base skills which come from imaginative thinking. And that's going to come from art departments.

Dreams for the Future

Reti: Okay, I think we are just about out of time, but before we wrap up I want to ask you about your own future.

Locks: (laughs)

Reti: You are a couple of years from retirement?

Locks: Yes.

Reti: So is there anything you want to say about your dreams for the direction you want to take?

Locks: For retiring?

Reti: Yes, in terms of your own photographic work.

Locks: Yes. One of the things that I have not done well is the promotion of my own work. Part of it temperament. Part of it is a lot of administrative work. Part of it is I like teaching more. And I'm not a businessman. So to be able to do that logically and well—it's like we're doing this faculty show right now. I'll have a few pieces in the faculty show. You should see that. It will be a combination at the Sesnon Gallery and the Blitzer Gallery downtown.

Reti: I would love to.

Locks: But just to do the work for that is going to cost $500 to $1000. And so in terms of the production and the shipping and all of that—I would much rather make

work and evolve as an artist. I've always tap danced around doing enough work here to satisfy research, teaching, and service. And a lot of times I've made my merits and promotion on teaching and service, doing my research, but not necessarily selling my research.

So when I retire, I'm hoping there will be more time to do more of that kind of work. I think my work is relevant enough to do that. I don't think I'll stop teaching but I don't know how that will work. I was always in my father's classrooms. I was always in school. I keep wondering when I get to graduate.

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: I keep watching the graduations. That's one of the things too—out of the thirty-six years here, I've been to thirty-four Porter graduations. I've missed two or three graduations in the time that I've been here.

[UCSC] is not an easy place to leave. But at the same time, I have a list of things that I really need to do in relationship to my own work and research. It's almost time to move on. My first granddaughter is graduating from SCAD, Savannah School of Art and Design, this June. I have another grandson who is at San Diego State. When I'm looking at students, I'm forty years older than my students now. And when you're trying to make that kind of connection, it's not necessarily that you're not effective, because I'm still a good teacher, but the question is: when does everything conspire to say it's time to go? I think that part of it is our department maybe needs to go in another direction. Maybe they need the resources to think about what's new, or

what needs to happen. And someone else needs to come on and redirect what photo is going to be now.

So there are a number of things, but part of it is I'm still healthy. And while I'm healthy, I want to do work. If I graduate—"graduate" (laughs)—if I retire at the end of next year, for example, which is in the end of the 2016-17 year, and I came in in the 1978-79 year, I will have been here physically thirty-eight years. And I will have thirty-five years credit. At a certain point, it's maybe time. I thought my dad was crazy because he ended up at San Francisco State for thirty-seven years. I thought, who ever is going to do that?

Reti: (laughs)

Locks: That doesn't make any sense at all. (laughs) But part of it is that I have always wanted to be here. When I was in school, my particular teacher, Jack Welpott, was facing even then what we face now; having enough time to do [both] research and teaching. And they were looking at workshops. The workshop program grew out of faculty at schools trying to find alternatives to teaching. Is it really necessary for me to make my income spending all this time teaching and not doing my research? So there were periods of time when Jack didn't want to be at school. And there were really dissatisfied teachers. I kind of skipped around that because Jack took me under his wing and I never had a problem having a mentor. He was always there. In grad school he was hard to find sometimes, for other students. But I TA'd for him. I was in the classroom with him. I assisted him at his studio one day a week. He was always available. So I didn't have that problem. But I certainly

experienced the disenchantedness of art faculty trying to balance that. And I always thought that if I ever got to be that way, either shoot me or I'd get out. I didn't want to be in a place teaching when I didn't feel like it.

I've enjoyed—I think it's always been important to teach undergraduates. I like undergraduates. I like formulating the beginnings of ideas. I like the period in college. I like the period of that point in their lives, where they're disengaging from home and re-envisioning their lives. I like being a mentor in that space. It's a critical space and it is a dangerous space, in a way, because you are so influential. It's dangerous because you can overly influence them. Where they're trying to make their own decisions, you can be too heavy-handed in that process. So a lot of it is helping them make those decisions without making those decisions for them. One of the problems that we face always in education, which I really am very sensitive to, is that they have been doing assignments in school for too long. Assignments start in kindergarten and when they get here our job is to wean them of assignments and get them to develop and to design their own work. That's a challenge, but it's a very difficult one because they don't know what that means. You have to teach them how to think more individually. They are coming from a more diverse background [now]. There's more diversity in the classroom. Diversity needs to be reflected in the classroom. We're not teaching photo to be a thing. Photo is a medium, so that if it's being used by twenty-five people from twenty-five different backgrounds, then you should have twenty-five very different bodies of work. That means we have to teach the principles without interfering with individual thinking.

That means that in most of my classes students will have twenty-five different cameras. From a technical point of view, it's a nightmare. They're working analog; they're working digitally. They're working on a whole range of analog cameras. They're working on a whole range of digital cameras. They're working with printmaking and multiple media. So what is the base that you are starting from? And then, how do you create a base that doesn't channel and interfere with their thinking?

Reti: Do they bring their own cameras?

Locks: They do. We do have some checkout cameras and Media Services has cameras. But they are using everything from iPhones to 4x5 view cameras. Toy cameras. Plastic cameras. Point and Shoots. High end 35 mm cameras. And film cameras that are nearly dead because they were used by their parents, and [more recently their] grandparents. So it is a really interesting challenge. And without a lot of funding, you're not able to offer students a lot.

Reti: Is there anything else you want to talk about?

Locks: No.

Reti: Thank you so much, Norman. This has been absolutely fascinating and inspiring.

Locks: Thank you. Well, I really appreciate it. Heading toward retirement too, some people put it into buildings or whatever—but what is my legacy? My legacy is 180

courses in photo and all of those students. Where are they in the world? The legacy is really what you're intellectually passing on. That's important. But things like this oral history are important to me now because—what am I leaving behind here? There're buildings, but that all changes and that's not living.

Reti: No, your legacy is all those students walking around who are now full adults doing creative work of myriad kinds.

Locks: That's right. And if Ansel Adams were alive today he'd be a DANM [Digital Arts and New Media] professor. He'd be right in the middle of and trying to be king of digital arts and new media. He loved technology. He didn't change because it was too late in his life and he was finishing the work that he'd already done. But he would clearly have been a digital artist. He was really good at math. He was really interested in sciences. So the legacy then, is not the photo darkroom. Who knows how long that should live? I don't want to bequeath something that is no longer useful. I think it's useful still, but everything evolves.

When we're re-evaluating [UCSC's] community studies and history of consciousness [departments], a lot of the time the founding faculty of those programs is where the energy was, the love, the passion. When they retire, what is going to replace that? Sometimes programs get stale and there has to be a new reason for them to be here. So I don't know—I might be sad if they don't have a certain aspect of photo, but at the same time, who knows what's going to be relevant? And if we hire somebody, then that person is going to be the torchbearer of the inspiration. And the torchbearer has to be the architect.

Reti: Just as you were, for a very long time.

Locks: Yes, I was really, really fortunate because the school allowed me the space. And it was reciprocal. I took the space to do it and I did the administrative work to be able to do it. But I was able to create space that allowed me to direct my teaching. I think that this is the greatest thing one could have for that length of time. I would think that anyone that we hire should have that privilege.

What I'm surprised about—and this goes back to students doing their own work and not working by assignment—is that I feel that sometimes faculty have a very difficult time taking the responsibility and just doing things. I feel like what I was able to do, sometimes my successors were not able to do, didn't have the capability to be able to do. Like they say (laughs), you don't ask permission. When I got here they said, "Okay, what do you want to teach and when do you want to teach it?" If I needed something I went and saw the businessperson, Erline Brownfield. And basically it was a very small set of units. There wasn't this kind of always looking at what we were doing. There weren't so many rules.

Reti: So some of that isn't about a change in the faculty themselves, but a change in the culture.

Locks: Yes, it's a change in the culture. But it's a combination. It would have to be a combination. But even when I was chairing I would say, "Just *do* it." As a workshop director, when I was at the end of a workshop, I was exhausted. I was dealing with adults, professionals, professionals from many, many different fields. There would

be NASA mathematicians. I mean, there'd be really, really important figures coming to Ansel's workshops. And they'd be raising their hand to ask if they could go to the bathroom. And by the end of the week, you're just exhausted because you just have to answer questions constantly. You're so relieved when somebody can take care of themselves. I find it surprising sometimes that at the professor level we're still trying to find the authority to be able to make a decision and to do it. Just decide and do it. Every faculty who's hired needs control of their own environment to some degree. They need to be able to exercise a sense of freedom and have a space.

Reti: For that creativity.

Locks: For the creativity. Yes. We're not automatons in any field. We're researchers. The minute we hire this person we will sit down and immediately redesign all of our courses in photo because it's got to, first of all, reflect both of us. And secondly then, reflect that person more than me because we've really got to start moving in the direction that is viable.

Reti: So you will be around for a year to mentor them.

Locks: Yes, that's the idea.

Reti: That's great. Thank you, Norman.

About the Interviewer and Editor

Irene Reti is the director of the Regional History Project, where she has worked since 1989 conducting and publishing oral histories. Reti has a B.A. (Environmental Studies and Women's Studies) from UCSC and an MA in History from UCSC. She is also the publisher of HerBooks, a nationally known lesbian press and is a landscape photographer, writer, and small press publisher.