For
The Fashion Institute of Technology
Oral History Library

Interview with
GERALDINE KAVANAUGH
Color Consultant

by
Robert L. Green
Q. This is Robert L. Green recording Geraldine Kavanaugh, international authority on color, industrial designer.

Gerry, when we talk about color, I find myself thinking, of course—having relatively recently moved to California—exposed to a world of color that I wasn't really conscious of before: Color of the landscapes, color of the buildings, color of the gardens, the excessive... The tropical nature of the climate. All of these things are contributing, I suspect, to an enormous impact that has to be filtered, has to be examined, analyzed, and appropriate used in the hands of a professional such as yourself. Can you develop or define the whole relationship of your work and your authority on color?

A. Well, my work depends so much on color. In many, many ways. And I have built a reputation by using color in ways that lots of other people have not used color. I've done a tremendous amount of not only investigation of the places that I have lived in my life about color, but I've also done an historical investigation about color, and how historical investigations lend to what I call the big pot of color.

Color, for me, was just overwhelming when I came here to California, although I grew up with color. I grew up with color because my mother had fabrics—we had all these boxes under the bed with fabrics—and there were spools of thread and everything, so I was sort of used to going through that.
Besides, I started in art school when I was eight years old, and, of course, the beginning of color, in that way, in an art school, was always in a muffin tin. And when I teach classes (I teach classes occasionally and I lecture on color) I always start students with...I start them off with the basics. I say now everybody's going to go out and get a muffin tin; we're going to learn how to mix color. You're going to learn how to mix color as a musician learns to play notes. And if you don't know how to play those notes, you don't know anything about color. And it really is amazing...

Another thing I do is, usually in the second or third session I will make each student go out and get me 12 different kinds of yellow, 12 different kinds of orange, 12 different kinds of blue, 12 different kinds of red, and we bring them back to the class to look at what yellow is about. Most people don't really know what yellow, red, blue or red [sic] is about, and to the whole gamut, unless they've had some other kind of background. But it's a very fascinating subject.

What is yellow? What kind of yellow are you talking about?

Q. What is it?
A. What is yellow?
Q. Yes.
A. Yellow, for a whole lot of people, could be many things. If you take yellow in relationship to....historically...it's always been related to royalty. And that has always been a connection
to the sun. And with a connection to the sun, it's a vitality, it's a light, it's bursting with energy. And I particularly like yellow, if it's used in the right kind of way. There are certain ways of using certain yellows and blues together which are very...almost collegaite...that I almost want to throw up over. Because they've never been...The use of those two colors has never been explored. And I....

Colors are like people too. Some colors will work together, and some colors won't. There is no bad color. It depends on how you use it, and in which proportion and in which relationship, and what you're trying to get across.

Q. It's amazing. When you look at a garden, for instance. Nature really...I have yet to see colors that really clash in a garden. You know, in other words, you look at the colors and in the garden they seem to work perfectly well. Yet, if you took those same colors and put them in one room...Ich!

A. Well, you're also dealing with color on another kind of scale, and the scale of color is an extremely important thing. Because some colors will work at a larger scale and they won't work at a small scale. The reverse of that is...I remember seeing an exhibition...We all love the color turquoise. This was down at the old L.A. County Museum. We love turquoise. Turquoise in jewelry is just wonderful; it's divine. But you see a whole exhibition of it, and you want to go out screaming! That color was not really the key to what that exhibition was about. That's what that designer thought it was, and in a miniscule way it did relate,
but it did not relate in a large context.

Q. In a way that brings to mind the selection, for instance, of wallpaper samples. I've seen people look at a wallpaper book and in the small little pieces of wallpaper they're seeing, they say, "Oh, that's just perfect." And then you put it on the wall and you wonder where your mind was.

A. That's right. That's right. But, it's very difficult for a wallpaper manufacturer to put out big swatches, because (1) it's not economic and (2) there are enough idiots around who would go and say, "Well, I want another piece of this, and another piece," and they might do a closet and something like that.

Q. Yes, of course.

A. And that's the kind of... But that's where a professional, who knows that, can help someone make that selection.

Q. Well, go back to the fact that you studied the historical use of color: Can you develop that for me? What did you learn from studying that?

A. Well, what it does, Robert, is it adds to your pot of knowledge. And every time you add something to your pot of knowledge it gives you another dimension, another tool, another dimension to go off on. It doesn't mean, necessarily, that you're going to use that historical record, but it gives you a starting point, and that's where I think it's very important.

Q. Can you give me an example? Because I still don't know what you mean by historical reference.
A. Well, let's say the word "indigo blue." Indigo blue has a tremendous historical reference. And, in fact, it helped change, not only economically but politically, the way people lived. And, historically, how it came about was Catherine Briganza of Portugal married Charles II. In her dowry she brought cane, she brought tea, and she brought the dye, indigo. Now, the Portuguese had been trading with the East--India and China--100 years before the rest of Western Europe had been trading. Indigo was the first stable dye to reach Europe. And so, when she brought this to England, they all went crazy. And there were a lot of really crazy kind of things happened. I mean, there were certain kinds of laws that were developed, not only in England but in Europe, about the importation of indigo. There was a lot of fraud with indigo. The indigo... You got it in like cakes, because indigo is a plant. The plant was boiled, and the essence of the indigo plant came out. Then it was laid out in almost like rice paddies and let dry, and the substance--the powder of that, which was the dye--was made into cakes and then shipped to Western Europe.

Well, indigo was sold by the pound. And what they would do, some people, is they would stuff the center of it with straw and there wouldn't be as much. So there were laws developed in England to prevent this kind of fraud. And that's why you have so much in the... In the 17th and 18th century, so much blue. You know... Indigo blue... There's a funny kind of, really, hangup that people have today of saying, "Oh, blue. Indigo blue is so
wonderful," and to them it has like a chic, almost social kind of statement. But when you really get down into it, it was nothing but a trade commodity!

Q. Was it available just to the rich? Because...Was it expensive?

A. No, it wasn't available to the rich. It was available to a lot of people. But the rich, naturally, when the boats came in, the first people to get down there were the rich. But it was the first stable dye.

Q. What does that mean?

A. It didn't fade as fast. The rest of the dyes, up until that time, were all vegetable dyes, and they all faded and there was no stability. We really didn't get stable dyes until after the Second World War, and that was because, you know, while the war was going on the Swiss were just working away, and they came up with "analin" dyes. There were experiments of this in the '30s, but it really hadn't been perfected. But after the war, the Second World War, these "analin" dyes were available on the market.

That's one of the reasons why there was a tremendous burst of color right after the Second World War. It had nothing to do with emotion, as most people think. You hear this all the time, people saying, "Well, there is this outrage of color because everybody is really unstable." That's not quite so. When you really get down into the depths of things you will find out there is a reason--an availability reason--why you get to it.

Q. I suppose. And I suppose there must have been some
emotional response. When you think of the fact that there weren't a lot of fabrics available during World War II.....

A. No, there weren't.

Q. ....and what was available was fairly sombre and dark because...For instance, black was the only fabric that wasn't used in the armed services. There were no black uniforms. With the result that...My feeling always was that the cream of the crop of the male population was in khaki or those really dreary military colors, and after the war everybody wanted to see some color that had not been available to them before.

A. That is true. But how I also meant it, and didn't say it, is that people will say, "We're into greys and conservative colors because of such and such." And that doesn't necessarily hold true, because designers don't necessarily think that way. You know, the rest of the world, almost, could be kind of like crumbling and falling down, but a designer is like an artist, working with these things, and coming from a different kind of standpoint.

Today, I think there is a great interest in richer kinds of colors, not necessarily the wild, strong colors, because darker colors, which can be exceedingly rich and exceedingly wonderful, have a note of quality, for some reason. And that's what people are looking for today, is something of quality. Because you can't spend your money frivolously in two ways: For fun, or for something that's going to last. There's no in-between anymore.

Q. Interesting...

Not to belabor the historical point (except that I was
totally fascinated by your story about indigo blue), are there other color relationships that go back into history we should know about?

A. Well, the one of yellow....Gold...In all civilizations, that has always been related to authority. And what I mean by authority, is the leader, whether it was in Manchuria or China or France or Peru. Gold always signified the king, the ruler. And again, that relates to the sun.

Q. Does the rarity of the....?

A. No, it's not rarity. It's...I think it has something to do with the vitality of life. The rarity of purple, now, goes back...I want to say "coquil" but that's not it; I'm really at a loss, sometimes, for words...It's made from beetles. They were smashed, and from that you got a purple dye. And because it was so expensive, it was only royalty that could afford it. That's why there is a "royal purple."

Q. Born to the purple.

A. Right. There's another little interesting thing...Not from purple, but I recently stumbled across, which I found very fascinating, in the term we use, "Oh, she's bluestocking," or, "he's bluestocking." And I never really understood where that came from. And it actually came about in the 18th Century when a gentleman who had been a protoge' of "Litnis," who was the man from Sweden who catalogued all the plants. And his....

Q. He was a botanist?

A. A botanist. From Sweden. And his protoge' in England
wore blue stockings.

Now, there is a tie in to the blue stockings and wearing blue, again, of the upper class that were in Greece, in the Greek times. And since he was an intellectual, he wore blue stockings. And at the time, too, there was a great interest in the revival of Greek—Greek architecture and things. So the ladies in England, who came to be educated....Women were educated in a very extraordinary manner. And they were taught all things that really related to the household. But when you take some of the subjects, like botany, it was a hellishly interesting subject, and these women would come to him and he would teach them about botany. And botany, of course, relates to the garden and the whole idea of the developing of the garden, in England, was an incredible thing.

Well, the term, "blue stocking," got associated with those ladies and him, because they were known as the "blue stocking ladies."

Q. Does this relate also to the term "blue blood?"
A. No, I don't think so. I don't know what the history of that is. I know an opposite of that, and it's a very amusing one to me, and that is to have green blood.

Q. I never heard that.
A. And that means traveling blood. Gypsy term. That if you have green blood it means (not that you have green blood!), but if you travel a lot you had green blood. Always going...always... That was a gypsy term.
Q. Interesting. But there must be some relationship. Because "blue blood" also means aristocracy.
A. That would be the fascinating thing to look up. I probably will go and look it up. But when I was reading this book just recently, over the holidays, on "blue stockings," it was fascinating. Because I never really knew where that came from.
Q. Where did the black come from, for tragedy and mourning, and...?
A. I don't know. Because the opposite of black mourning in the Eastern cultures, in China, is white. Entirely different. Completely the opposite. That's another fascinating thing to find out. I'll have to do that.
Q. Well, I remember, from my own work in fashion, that the assumption was that clothes that were worn on Sundays, and to the church, were made of black fabric because you were not exposed to dirt and the work pattern....Because we were talking about these fabrics were established when...Both when the country was totally agricultural, and later when it was a mixture of agriculture and industry. And the mass of people worked in those jobs. So, the Sunday-best clothes became black clothes, because it was a mark of the fact that you could afford it. And, then, in the sense that...In the same way that we associate white with rich people, in the era of Scott Fitzgerald...
A. Well, they could afford to have their things cleaned.
Q. That's right. Exactly. So that the next step, in terms
of mourning, is that you wear your Sunday clothes that you go
to church with when you go to, out of respect, to bury some-
one.
A. That's very logical.
Q. Yes. At least that was the fashion interpretation.
   It's always...I mean, it was also fascinating to me
when you think that Chanel really created and introduced the
basic, the little black dress, which is the first thing that
made her truly famous as a coutourier. And she was from a peasant
background, and her association with "best clothes" would also
be black, in that sense. So, it's fascinating...
   Are there any other colors that one thinks of histori-
cally with...Interesting stories about color? Pink, for instance.
   "In the pink."
A. "In the pink." I think that probably has a flower
   connotation to it. Because pink...Pinks were Elizabethan, and
I think that would probably...Oh...It's the same thing like
being "in clover." You know. When you're "in clover." That was
something else I found out recently, which relates to pink. And
that was, in the latter part of the 17th Century, in Europe and
particularly in England, as an in-between crop, they planted
clover. And they found that by planting clover, they made the
ground richer. And by making the ground richer, you were able
to produce more. So, when you're "in clover," that means that
you are more successful.
Q. That's interesting. I never knew that either. I love
this kind of interview, because you do uncover things. But, I can maybe offer something to you in terms of "in the pink." Again, this goes back to...Because I...When "shocking pink," the Elsa Schiaparelli color, came out, I was interested in where. You know...Why is pink shocking? And discovered that skin--healthy, beautiful, admired skin--is always porcelain like and porcelain and pink, and we look at a little child and you say, "Oh, that's the most beautiful baby; healthy...Look at those pink cheeks!" And so I made the assumption that "in the pink" meant that you were in fine condition; that you were...

A. That's probably so. I know one story about Schiaparelli and the pink. Several...A number of years ago I was visiting in Santa Barbara, with this family, on their estate, and they had a number of rugs from Peru. And in the rugs was this shocking pink. And Schiaparelli had visited them, and that was the beginning of her use of pink. And I thought that was very fascinating, because that went back to Peruvian rugs. Her fascination with it.

Q. Do you know where the bottle came from?
A. The bottle? No, I don't know the bottle...

Q. I'll tell you that story, because it's fascinating.

In the early days of Hollywood--in the early '30s, when the studios were beginning to discover the magic of the coutourier as having impact on the stars--it was decided that Mae West should have her clothes done by Elsa Schiaparelli for a movie. And Miss West refused to fly to Paris. She...I don't think she liked to fly at all. But she had no time; she wasn't going to
do that. So she said, "Well, send a dummy." Well, they sent a dummy from the wardrobe department. She hadn't been in the wardrobe department for a couple of years, so the dummy of her body--the mannequin of her body--was not the real size. And when Schiaparelli did this exquisite dress, of course, and sent it back, it didn't fit Miss West. And so, of course, they had correspondence. Schiaparelli was fired, and the star reigned. They couldn't tell Miss West that she'd gotten fat. So, they had to fire the designer, and she was left with Mae West's dummy. And she decided she had to get something out of this, so she took the dummy and made it into a bottle for her perfume.

A. That's a wonderful story. That's really wonderful.

Q. Yes. It's interesting.

Now, when you talk about yourself as a professional, people come to you and say, "I have a room, I have a building, I have a complex." What happens in their demand for your services, in relationship to color?

A. Well, I'll give you an example that happened this week. And, in a sort of long, roundabout way...I, several years ago, was down in Baltimore visiting with an architectural firm, typically promoting my environmental design work, which depends an awful lot on color and texture and materials. And nothing really ever came out of that. (that was two years ago) until last week when I got a call from one of the largest shopping center companies in the country. And they said this gentleman from Baltimore had recommended me because they wanted someone who knew
color, who could in turn tell the architects on their projects what colors should be of all the materials. And one of the fascinating things that is happening right now is the effect of food, the color of food, in our environment, and how you place food in an environment so it looks the best.

Q. To sell it more effectively.
A. Yes. To sell it more effectively. Today I don't think you would have a room out of like screaming purple to sell food in. Because what has happened to the food plate in the last 12 years, the colors on that, just would not be complementary to that. So we will be, in the next few months, working on projects for them on just color in relationship to the environment, and how it affects a food cart in the shopping centers themselves. Because a lot of people... A lot of people are not trained about color, and there's this real big fallacy around that, "Oh, she has wonderful taste in colors. She can pick out a few colors for you." Well...

Q. "My wife knows how to color."
A. Yeah. Wonderful taste! Well, that's really hogwash. Because when you really get into color, color takes a tremendous amount of time and effort. You can take one piece of fabric, say, like grey, and have a pink to match it and another pink to match it, and before you know it you have six different greys and that's not it. There is a tremendous amount of "monarching," of getting color right. And when you get into projects where it's nothing to have just the cost of just the paint material alone for a
building--just the paint--$100-$200,000, you have to be very, very careful, because you can make some big mistakes. It's not only paint. It's a permanent enamel, that would go, say, like on all the window frames of a very large skyscraper, and you're dealing with a company that's across the United States, and you have to have that a certain color and there's a reason why it has to be a certain color, it can't be off. Those are big bucks; that's a high roll.

Q. Now, how do you test that? I mean, what do you do? You're hired to do the (?). Can you take an imaginary project, or one from your past, and take me through it step by step, so I can...

A. Well, usually what we do is we will, for a client on a project, maybe do four color ways. I'm speaking now of a building...

Q. Is this external color?

A. This is external color. It also can be internal color.

Q. I mean, for instance, if a building were (as many buildings are out here) stucco, or if they are...have alloys of metal materials, that's the kind of color you're talking about?

A. Right. And you might wind up, let's say, with 10 or 12 different surfaces that have to be finished with color. And you think, well, maybe that's just a pink building or a blue building. It's much more complex than that. You have the window frames, the molding, frames. You have the outside of the building.
You have all the doors. You have certain kinds of window trim. You have floor. You have the concrete or blacktop or whatever it is that approaches the building. You have all these colors within the palette that you have to work with. You have the roof. You have where the roof joins the rest of the building. You might have molding. You might have hardware. All of these things require color, and it's not done with a flick of the wrist. There's a tremendous amount of knowledge that has to go into that, to arrive at those selections.

Anyhow, we will usually try to set up a palette of four different ways to go, so a client can have a choice. Because color, also, with some people, is a very emotional thing. And even though I know color from another standpoint, a client will always still react to it in an emotional way. You also have to give him what I can an out, a selection. You can guide a person, and you can go through, like, "this group of colors does this, and this group of colors does this, and this group..."

Q. Okay. Break that down for me. What would you say this group of colors does?
A. Well, it depends on what the building is. I mean, the color could be a hospital or a shopping center...

Q. Let's say it was a hospital.
A. Well. There's a really interesting kind of thing that's happening with hospitals, and that is, hospitals now are being merchandised like any other kind of building. It is a facility to make people well. Hospitals are vying, through
their doctors, to get patients. So, what they're trying to do is make the hospital a much more pleasant environment than what it was, instead of something that's foreboding. We've had this kind of idea (which, in truth, is true) that you go to a hospital to die. It isn't. You go to a hospital to get well. And if you can convey to a person the minute they get out of their car that they're going to go into a building, an establishment, that is going to make them well.....You try to convey that in colors that are colors that are going to.....It's a subconscious thing, but it's also conscious at the same time. Of trying to make them well.

Q. What color?
A. Well, it can vary, Robert, in very many areas. We did last year two pink hospitals. They were not...Pink is not really associated with blood, but they were pinks because there was a softness about them, and they were not...You know, for a long time, particularly around here, you would find hospitals in almost a dung color, a beige color. And it just turns you off. So you wanted something that was very pleasant to them.

Q. Would there be any value in thinking of color from a gender point of view? In other words, pink, to me, is what you dress little girls in.
A. That's because we've been traditionally trained that way; to think in that direction. It's like...The other kind of comparison is...I know a very good friend of mine, and you too, that always associates flowers with women. Well, why can't you
send flowers to men just as well? As a very good friend of mine says, "All the women in the office get flowers at Christmas time? Why don't the men get flowers? We like flowers just the same." We get conditioned by these things.

Q. But you have to deal with those kinds of things.
A. Yes, you do. And sometimes, if you can be clever enough--and I don't mean this in a smart aleck way--if you can point out to a client these things, and if they're a very savvy client, they will respond that they know that you do know then something that's very valuable to them.

Q. Well, I was thinking of it in a positive sense, when I spoke about the genderizing, because...Here is the way my mind went: Hospital-illness. When you are ill, as a child, the person who takes care of you is, traditionally, your mother, or a mother figure. If you hurt yourself, your first cry is "Mama." Therefore, when you said a pink hospital, I immediately thought, "Well, that could be very comforting, because you'd get the feeling you were returning to the world of gentleness and soothing."

And there's also...I mean, I've always thought of....Well, for instance, on Mother's Day, it's a pink flower that's put on the candy boxes or the wrappings and so forth and so on. And the general association with that color--you can call it a condition--but isn't life full of responses that we learn? In other words, we aren't born reacting to pink one way or the other. It is a learned response, which means that you, as a color analyst, you as an authority on color, hired by someone, would have to--I would
think--break down the traditional, the associative things, the psychological force...

A. But this goes back to the history and tradition of color, and that is, you know this; you know traditions or history about a color, and you can also, then, with that knowledge, make it work for you. There's nothing wrong, you know, in that pink has had this kind of association.

I can tell you a story at the office that just happened to me. We have been asked to consult to one of the largest international car companies. Car interiors, basically, have been very masculine in color. Basically black. And I was interviewed last week by this company, and the problem and the trick is, how to make what has been traditional, historically, in a car, that has been directed and advertised to a male market, appealing to women. That's the challenge. And to me it's going to be a very, very fascinating challenge. Because you can't throw out the baby with the bath water, by throwing all those pre...Not pre-history, but how they have developed the product. It's going to be how you take that product and almost go. . (sound) and pick it up.

Q. It's interesting to me that the richest colors...You know...The deepest tan, which we associate with...The mahogany color...The burnt orange, the burgundy--the colors we associate with...The interiors of jewelry boxes...The way you lay out a quarter of a million dollar present...These...I realized years ago, in my mind were associated with the Chinese. Because where I'd seen those colors was in Chinese lacquer boxes, layer after
layer after layer, which took, of course, painstaking work as well as had to be expensive because of the amount of hand labor that went into it.

My immediate association, when you talked about the car and the woman's market--because I was a consultant to the Ford Motor Company at one point--and I'm fascinated with what you're saying now, because this was years ago, and at that time I suggested that they were forgetting that the car always has been a status symbol; it's always an extension of your success, and it has a lot to do with sexuality, because of the drive and the power and the speed, etc., etc. But we're now living in a society in which women are actively playing their role and their position--and they should--that they have power, and they have drive, and they have success, and there's no reason...But my association with that would be that they'd want the richest colors, rather than the ones that society has associated with women. I mean, I can't see a woman of any taste wanting a pink car.

A. No, no, no. In fact, this was one of the things that came up in the meeting. There were five of us who were being interviewed for it, and one person said, you know, a very, very soft pink. Well, I just practically wanted to dive under the table. Because that has nothing to do...That's really like a past kind of association. And thank goodness, in this particular circumstance, we have gotten beyond that. And women do like to be involved in things that belong to men, just as well as men
like to be involved in things that women have been successful in.

Q. Would this kind of association work? I mean, picking up the Chinese lacquer colors, which are wonderfully rich.
A. Uh huh.

Q. But the other thing is, women love things that are trimmed in silver...I can remember in my childhood associating women's dressing tables with tortoise shell, you know. But tortoise shell was always trimmed in silver, rather than my father's bureau, which just had a tortoise shell hairbrush and comb and so forth and so on. Sometimes, dipping into the past and finding those things that represented real luxury, stirs (because I do think, in the Jungian sense, there are archetypal images that we all absorb)... 
A. That's true.

Q. What an interesting project. That would be fascinating.
A. It won't be, really, until this summer. But there are these things about color, texture and material, and how you articulate them or adjust them, in a way that says something that will appeal to a woman, and still, at the same time, appeal to a man...

Q. Don't offend the men.
A. That's right. Don't offend men. And, because no matter how you slice it, a car, in our society, is usually purchased by a man and a woman. The man might go there and get it, but
there has been a tremendous input from the female, because she is involved in it.

Q. I would think you would have to break it down, also, between the female who's involved who is the wife and mother, and the female who is involved who is the executive lady.

A. Well, you can, Robert, but on an economic standpoint, you cannot do that. It will not work, economically. And that's the whole trick on this. What we're referring to; to make that kind of adjustment and make these color and texture relationships that will fit into that mode and scheme.

Q. Well, I guess what I was thinking of was that...I have a house guest right now who is senior vice president at United Artists. She drives a black porsche, and drives it like a race car driver. And it represents to her, you know, the ultimate expense and the ultimate luxury, and the accessory that supports the fact that she is a lady of success and power.

A. Right.

Q. Now that's very different than the station wagon that the wife and mother who meets her mother at the train station....

A. That's right. And porsche doesn't make a station wagon, so you don't...See?

Q. Well, that's my point. In other words, I think you'd have both, in terms of whatever...

A. It depends on what the product is. The product now, that I'm going to be involved in, is not the station wagon set. It is--it will be--the most powerful, successful car on the road
two years from now, and that's what their aim is. And it is approaching the price of a Rolls Royce.

Q. Would you, for instance, do research (I'm just trying to make it so we get a full understanding of where the whole color impact....Because the color also relates, as you say, to the texture and to the materials etc.), would it make sense, for instance, to find 10 ladies who had bought porsches, or who had bought ferraris or "buvalis" or whatever and show them a sample of things--of colors and fabrics--and simply say, "If you had your choice, which of these would you choose?"

A. I might. I've talked to them about it you know, on a kind of big scope way. But, you see, you come to me, or a firm like me, because I'm ahead of what they're thinking.

Q. Develop that for me.

A. Well, there are a lot of things that are in the air that I am aware about [sic]. Because that's my business. That's my job. And it's before it ever gets out onto the market.

Q. Again, give me an example.

A. Well, I will give it in relationship to this particular project.

Q. Okay.

A. One of the gentlemen--who happened to be the president of the design area, and the president of the company--said, "We were recently in Detroit, and one of the large automotive fabric companies--Collins-Aikman--showed us a whole collection of new fabric." And they emphasized 'new.' And they said, 'It's men's
suiting for automotive." My immediate, instant reaction was, "That's interesting." But if you had said that to me seven years ago, I would have said, "Yes." Because, that was in the air seven years ago, and it's moved on. It doesn't say that the suiting is wrong for your car. But, that is the position that a person like myself has to be in. You have to be aware and catch things that are in the air, and why they're in the air, and try to figure out how long it's going to be in the air. Because everything that we're involved in, to a certain extent, is involved with change, and you have to understand how those changes come about. Example (going back to the cars): Seven-eight-ten years ago, silver was the hottest color out. A silver finish on an automobile. Well, that's now dropped out. Now, the reason why it's dropped out, [that] it's not the hottest color, is that it's now filtered down to the less expensive cars. And the less expensive cars are trying to say, "Let's like be like [sic] an expensive car." So you have to know a lot of these things. And a lot of these things you know almost like unconsciously, until the situation arises, and you say, and you go clicking through your computer head, and you say, "Well, there's this this and this," and you put this together, and then there's"this this and this," and you put it together. You have to be aware of a whole lot of things. It's one of the reasons why I spend an awful lot of time being out and about, and particularly with my artist friends. Because that's where the kernel, that's where the nucleus of it starts. There are other things that enter into it: Music enters
into it, theatre enters into it. All these things...

Q. What about fashion?

A. Fashion enters into it in another way. You could never not be aware of fashion. If you're in the color business, you're crazy if you're not aware. It doesn't mean that you're going to do what fashion says today, because fashion is so ephemeral in the aspect that it's here today, and then there's the next collection later on, and something else. But you still have to be aware of that and all the other things that are happening at the same time, and edit and choose and think and mun...ch...mulch...all those kinds of things together.

Q. You know it's interesting...I, as you know, spent many, many years as the fashion director of (?) magazine when the whole menswear industry really hung on whatever we would say the next month. Because it was appropriate to the climate of the time and the change in men's attitude toward clothes. And we had an enormous success rate, and people would say, "How do you do that? You're always right on the nose!" Well, I'll tell you how I did it. You triggered in my mind a memory, as you were talking.

I used to take the 10 top singles--records--and I would have my secretary type out the lyrics. Sometimes, during the '60s period, you couldn't understand the lyrics. Somebody had to patiently really work at it. But she put that...I'd give her two weeks to do it in--do one a day--and I'd get that report and I'd go over the lyrics. And I would discover that...Of course, when something is the top record...Because there is an industry that happens
overnight... In other words, a record or an album is released, and within 24 hours you know whether it's a hit or not. And I discovered a very simple truth, which was that I could get color relationships and direction from the lyrics.

For instance: If the majority of the lyrics of those songs were what I call destructive; you know--tear it down, burn the house, damn the government--revolutionary in quality, I would discover....

(End of Side 1; start Side 2)

Q. What I discovered was that if indeed the relationship to lyric was destructive or revolutionary, that I would find that the colors would be the strong colors. The things that were appealing to young people would be the strong reds, the strong yellows. If the lyrics were moving in the direction of, say, traditional values: "I finally found my true love, etc., etc., etc.," or, "I just want one person in my life," I would discover that the colors would be softer, and they would be more associated with romance. And I used that. I used that, because I discovered that album lyrics are, in their own way, the poetry of today. And poets are never (and we always think of them as being ahead of their time)...My theory is that they are the only people, like artists, who are of their time, it's all of us who are behind the times.

A. Uh huh. That's right.

Q. So that, I had an enormous track record of success by
doing that. Does that make sense to you?
A. Yes, it does. It makes a lot of sense. Because...that's part of your job, is to be on that, as they say, that cutting edge of what is happening. You can't go sort of back to the '50s and do what they were doing on the sale of a product. It's done by certain people as, "Oh, that makes me swell, that makes me..." Well, "Aren't I cute, aren't I knowledgeable?" And it has nothing to do with today. It's a crutch. And I think you have to...There are other explorations today that I think are just much more fascinating that are developing in color. The whole bit of what's happening in technology in the aerospace industry.

Q. Develop that for me....
A. Several years...

Q. ...because I know nothing about that, really.
A. Several years ago we had a project that we were asked to do a graphics brochure and logo for a company in the Valley that does deposition plating. And that's where you take and you burn a metal product to the point that it becomes a gas. It evaporates, it goes through a chilling process, and then comes back down on an object, plated in that metal, instead of that metal...

Q. Being dipped?
A. Dipped. This was a deposition. This company has been in business for over 25 years. It's been owned by one mega-corporation after the other. Because they realized that this
deposition plating, if they could get it to the point where it would be large enough for industry, they could do a tremendous amount of things. Their clients today are basically the aerospace industry and the computer industry. The aerospace industry—all the tiles on the rockets that we shoot up—are plated by this deposition plating by this particular company. And, the computer company uses the plating on little wires on the huge, gigantic computers, because when you've got a lot of wires coming into a certain kind of connection, the heat is so intense that generally it melts the wire. The same thing about the rockets. Going up, that force melts the plates. But by this deposition plating, it has a harder coat and it doesn't melt.

Okay. We went into their board room (which was a trailer; physically a trailer), and in this case were these objects that had been metal deposition plated. Now, I have never seen metal plated colors like that, ever, and it just blew my mind away. And, of course, immediately, I was trying to think how could that relate back into my industry? Well, it's not going to do it for another 15-20 years, because the technology isn't to the point where they can take and do that commercially on objects. They can do it on small things, and they are interested right now primarily in getting that technology to the automotive industry, to engines. That's one of the reasons why this international car company was so fascinated with what I was doing.

What I was saying to them was that if their color could relate to that kind of technology—because that technology is
going to be around for quite some time. It's not going to be pitched out. And there are more and more people that are becoming connected to that in some kind of business way. So, there is that knowledge that is going to be spreading, so people will know about it in a certain time. And they're going to have to be able to catch on to that.

Q. That's fascinating. Now tell me this...
A. The same thing is happening, Robert, too, in materials. Those materials. And they're beautiful materials if they are used right. And what I mean by materials, I mean a fabric, a texture. There was a wonderful article a couple of Sundays ago in the "New York Times" of this suspension tent that was made out of a fibre that lets light in, and the fibre was developed in Germany. Well, I can't wait to get my hands on...and find out what that's about! Because it may not be that exactly, but if you can take and translate that knowledge into a mass product, then it becomes very, very fascinating. But that's relating to this other question about being on the edge of things, not necessarily for me going and asking ten women what they think.

Q. But wouldn't both be valuable?
A. You do both, Robert. You do everything that you can to gain knowledge. And you take that knowledge and you edit it and you sift it.

Q. The reason I mentioned ten women is because I have the feeling that the real impact of buying process, the thing that makes the person impulsively say "I want it," is that it
is satisfying a need that may be buried deep in their unconscious, you know. I mean, we all have that feeling. You go and look at something... As a cook, for instance, I wander through the better cuisine shops, and sometimes just react to the design of something. You know, where just the physical beauty of the object... And you think of it as a piece of sculpture... That you'd never use it, you'd like to be able to look at it in your kitchen...

So I always have the feeling that if you can find ten people who are the real users of the product that you're talking about, who are driving the porsche and the ferrari in that same way--separate them from the station wagon set--that you are dealing with ten minds and ten unconsciouses, ten backgrounds, that are entirely different but do focus in, because of the general direction that they're taking, which is that "I am competing in a man's world," or whatever the term may be. That it's very valuable to have the human element reported by the very things that you're talking about. Because...

But that brings up something else that I started to ask you before. And that is that for the average home owner, who is looking for a color for his patio, you know, you go to the paint store and they have color charts and you look at the color charts and think, "No, that's too green," or, "That's too dark," or "That has too much blue in it," or brown in it or whatever. And you hopefully find something that you like and you use it. Now, you, as a color authority, do you... If you had a client doing... Say, go back to this pink hospital, there must have been
a pink that you finally felt was absolutely right for the purpose of that particular building. Was there a paint, for instance, that would work that way, or did you have to...

A. No. A lot of times, Robert, what will happen, what we will do is we will develop a color for a particular situation. Because you can't find it,...One of the interesting things we have in the office is we have just about every major paint company's chips. And an awful lot of them subscribe to one color system. You will find holes...In other words, one company will be very strong in blues, another company will be stronger in yellows, another company will be stronger in red. So you have to know all about it. And still, with all the jillians of colors, you sometimes have to develop a color, because that color's not there.

Q. How do you go about doing that?

A. Well, usually...I go back to the old muffin tin. We have the muffin tins in the office and we start mixing color, and we do boards of color that are either 8" X 8" or 10" X 10" and brush them on very carefully so there are no brush strokes in them, and develop a color that way. Then we take the color that we think would be best, and we turn it over to a paint company, or you can turn it over to a dye company, depending on what the situation is, and whoever they have working in their chemistry place, and the eye of the dyer is the most important person in that complex. And the people who have that gift, of being what I call the eye of the dyer, can take a color and almost
dissect it. I think they are still more important than....There are machines that can color scan a color and say this is in it and this is in it and this is in it. And that's true. But, that color can still have a different kind of relationship and still not be the color that you selected. Then it goes back, still, to the eye of the dyer. And you say, no, it has to have more brown in it. How much more brown? Fifteen percent, 10 percent, whatever. Or it needs a little bit of this...The eye of the dyer will understand that language. It can do it for you. We also had that happen just last week, where the color had been color scanned. We approved of the color, but when we got it up, it wasn't the color.

Q. What was the project for?
A. It was for a parking:garage in downtown Los Angeles. And we finally got it. I said go back to the dyer, the painter, the guy who's mixing this, but forget about that scanner. That scanner does help you, but he's going to be the person who's going to be able to put the right amount in it to get the color that we want.

Q. Tell me....
A. So, it's not just picking out a few colors.

Q. Oh, sure. Sure. The....Do you get resistance from the traditional architect, who doesn't believe in any of this?
A. I get resistance not only from architects; I get resistance from people in (?) . . . Because a lot of it. Robert, is the skill, verbally, of you giving them the background and the reasons why you want that color. And a lot of it depends
on your skill, on that ability to convey that.

Q. Whether you can paint with words or not.

A. Uh huh. That also brings up an interesting subject to me. I read a lot, and in novels, writers, for some reason or another, don't tell you that much about color. I went back to reading several years ago, because I was doing a paper, a slide presentation, on California color. So I decided, historically, to find out. And, of course, the classic book on Southern California is Ramona. They do not tell you anything about color. Which fascinated me. They tell you about color about words. Words are put together as color, but not words to describe what the color of this place was, at that time. That was missing.

Q. You made reference to California color. It seems to me that the decision as to which color should be on a building, for instance, in Los Angeles, with the sun beating down, with the clouds, with the smog, with all of the elements operating, it would seem to me that where that building is located is as much an effective indicator as to what kind of color should be used...

A. Oh, absolutely. When we do a project on color in Los Angeles, and it's a big building, well, we don't just say, "Well, okay," from the office it should be....We go out and we look at the surroundings to find out what else is there, what position that color should take on that building, within that area. And I think that is something that's very, very important.

Q. How would you break down Southern California color?
A. California color is very bright, vibrant color, that sets in a basic framework of beige. Because you have a tremendous amount of beige in the ground out here.

Q. Yes. You associate beige with the desert.

A. Well, you do associate beige with the desert, but our earth, particularly here in Southern California, is decomposed granite. It's a grade beige. So you have this brilliant, saturated color, like the ice plant, within that framework. And on good days we have this wonderful kind of blue. But the terrain, the earth out here, is quite different than what it is in other parts of the country.

Several years ago I went on a trip with some friends of mine down through Arizona, down to Mexico, and they were laughing at me, but in a very sweet kind of way, because on the trip I took a trowel and I took plastic doggie bags, and every time I would see color that was different in earth, I would scream, and they would stop the car, and I would run out and dig up dirt and put it in my little bags and mark them and wrap them up. And I brought them back to the office, and then we mixed color as close as we could. The earth was different. The earth was different in Arizona, the earth was different in Mexico. I can't say it stopped at the border. No, it wasn't that. But there are different kinds of color, and you can go back East and do the same thing.

I love grey back East. I think it's wonderful back East.

Q. Like?

A. It has a silver, shimmering kind of quality to it.
It also has a relationship to the trees back there. And it's a certain kind of birch tree back there that we just don't have out here. And it's...And there's more moisture in the air, so the sun doesn't sort of like suck everything out. It's happy, it's compatible back there, it's beautiful. I don't like it as well here. It goes dead, like a dead rock.

Q. It's interesting. I was walking around Beverly Hills yesterday, between two appointments--that inevitable 40 minutes that you have to kill, because you don't have enough time to go anywhere or do anything, so you just sort of walk--and, as you know, just above Rodeo Drive, in Santa Monica, there's that cactus garden.

A. Right.

Q. And I walked through there just to....Because I knew we were meeting this morning, and I found...I looked at that and thought, "I wonder if that influences Gerry in any of her decisions."

A. It does.

Q. How does it influence you?

A. It's...Again...It's like having a library, Robert. You go and you look at these things, and it's a library of color. And you look at these relationships, and you know at some time or another that's going to come up, and I want to have that memory. I might even go back to that place, to be able to use that kind of color.

You see, a lot of that kind of color in objects that were made in the '20s and particularly the '30s, here in California.
And it was Mexican wear that was made for the tourist industry, and it's now become very, very collectible. It has the cactus, and it has all these...

Q. I don't understand that fully. That's fascinating.
A. Well....There was a great fascination...I'll say from the time of the First World War, of the West. My parents were involved in that. Everybody wanted to come to California. That was the land of opportunity. The state was the "golden state." The citrus industry developed in the 1880s here in California. So this became a magical place. Along with that came a lifestyle that also related...kind of like to Will Rogers. Will Rogers being the Western kind of philosopher. And out of that came furniture, which is called today Monterey furniture, and ceramics that were...Also, the other thing I'm forgetting to put in here was that the train came from New York-Chicago, Chicago-Kansas City, Kansas City down to Dallas, Dallas on across the way. That was the Super Chief to Santa Fe. They stopped at all these different towns, and Santa Fe had a hotel and it had a restaurant there. That was Fred Harvey. You had product that was made by the Indians--the blankets and the rugs--they were a heavier quality so people could use them in the home. There was this mystique of what they called the noble savage, and a lot of the ceramics depicted this, plus this idea of the hacienda; the hacienda out in the West, and this whole collection of ceramics and furniture developed. And it really has its stem-ming origins from the West, from the plant vegetation, from the
hacienda, from the cowboy, to the Mexican cowboy. And the color. The color all relates to this. I have a pot in my office that ....(phone interruption)

Q. Yes. Of course, for most of us, Fred Harvey is Judy Garland in "The Harvey Girls."
A. Right.

Q. But, of course, it's a reasonably accurate portrayal of what went on with those restaurants.

I hadn't thought that, of course, they would take their china and their tableware and their surface decorations from the environment that they were in.....

A. Oh, yes. The lady who did that was a very fascinating woman by the name of Mary Jane "Koulter." She only had one client in her life--the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey--and she designed these all the way across the country, so the last one she designed here in Los Angeles in 1945, which is the big dining room at the railway station. And you go through and you look at her things, and you can see how they're all....All the designs have been derived from West and Indian kinds of motif, but sort of translated into kind of a deco period feeling, but it still reflects all that imagery. All the dishes were designed from Indian pots. You can buy those today, over on...What's the place? Over at Lowry's and a couple of other places here in town. That sell it. But that was an absolute direct influence of what you were talking about: the cactus from the cactus garden. And there was definitely a revival of that about 15 years ago, here, of
people saying, "Yes, I do live in California. No, I'm not self-conscious I live in California. California is wonderful."

And that came about, this whole bit, you know, instead of what I would say would be... depended on what I call the Conestoga wagon attitude of mentality. That you had to wait until it was imported from the East before it was any good.

Q. You can it the Conestoga wagon mentality.
A. Yes.

Q. That's an interesting... Because when you said that, I wasn't sure what you meant. But I do get it: You'd wait for the wagon to arrive, its inhabitants bringing the latest things from...

A. Yes. And it not only worked here, Robert. It worked in reverse... You know... In the 15th and 18th Centuries in England, you waited for the boats to come in from China to find out what the latest goods were. I mean, I can imagine the wild scenes there must have been on the London docks... The boats are finally in from China, my china's finally come!! They had put in the order three years before.

Q. Yes, the Chinese exports of that nature...
A. Yes. And things haven't really changed. It's only the costumes and the dates.

Q. When you drive around Los Angeles, particularly in the areas such as Beverly Hills and Bel Air, where I always think there's an element of "Theme Park," because houses are everybody's fantasy... In other words, it does seem to be an area where people
say, "Well, I loved Tara in 'Gone With the Wind,' but also one of my happiest memories was 'Anne of Green Gables' house in Maine," and they go on and on, and then you drive through Beverly Hills and see a house that's a combination of all those architectural elements. And on a spot of land that has no way to frame the great portals and columns of Tara. I don't have any conscious sense of color when I drive through Beverly Hills.

A. Well, for me, I'm not really wild about driving through Beverly Hills to see anything about color. The only thing I see that impresses me in color is the vegetation, the gardens, not the houses. The best places for me to look for color and adventure, one of the best places in Southern California is Fairfax Avenue.

Q. Fairfax Avenue?! That surprises me. Break it down for me.

A. Well, the reason for it is, it's predominantly...I'll say a poor neighborhood. I don't mean destitute. But a lot of retired people live in that area. And also you'll find the same thing happening out in certain areas of Venice.

Q. It has an ethnicity, too, don't you think?

A. Well, no, it really doesn't. I'll tell you what it really has to do with, Robert.

Q. Okay.

A. It has to do with the fact that most of these people are living on a limited income. So, on a very limited income, they're not as apt to shop, let's say, on Rodeo or at one of
the big shopping centers. Where these people shop is mainly in thrift shops. So the clothes are maybe 10, maybe 20 years old. So, I need a sweater? This is a wonderful sweater, I like this sweater. I put the sweater on. I need a skirt. So, the combinations...You could have a sweater that is, maybe, 15 years old-20 years old, or you might have a skirt that's only three years old. So, the color combinations become quite different. And they become very, very fascinating to me.

Q. Oh, you're talking about color in relationship to what people wear. Oh...Because my association was with the buildings on Fairfax Avenue.

A. Yes. I know...For looking...If I'm going to go out and drive and look at color on buildings, I'm going to hotfoot it...If I'm going to do that, I'm going to hotfoot it to Tiajuana or to Mexico to do that. I'm not going to go to Beverly Hills. I even knew before I came here I wasn't going to do that. That would not...Because it would be like what I call like pudding. I've never liked pudding. It has no kickback, no...sort of like that. But if I want to go for an adventure in color, I know that I would go to Tiajuana, or Mexico.

Q. Another way of putting it, as you talk, for me, would be that I....When I said "Theme Park," I think of Beverly Hills as being fantasies that are somewhat distorted, and supported by builders and architects that are willing to compromise design just to satisfy the client. Nothing seems real to me at all, driving through there. It all seems like facades. It all seems
like staged sets.
A. Well, a lot of that, Robert, was developed by people who were stage set designers. There's no question about that. You're in the land of fantasy, particularly because of what happened in the '20s and '30s with the movie industry. I mean, it was such a dominant industry. That industry...It's still here, but it's not as dominant as what one thinks about it across the country. There are other things. This Southern California is so filled with small industries--technological industries--that if you really added that up it would, you know, blow the movie industry...dwarf the movie industry, on that. And there is something else that is now happening, and it's because another generation has come along. And this other generation of designers and architects want to say something else, and it's on another kind of..Another kind of thinking. It's on a kind of international thinking that, at the same time it has its roots in what is here.
Q. Now, it's interesting...Just to finish one thought that I was getting at....Beverly Hills, in contrast with Tiajuana, Tiajuana it would seem to me, color in buildings was not super-imposed by an architect, but evolved out of the materials that were available there...
A. Right.
Q. ....and appropriate dusts, like color, because they were environmental in their supply. In other words, you took the earth--the clay, whatever was there, and...
A. Well, there's another element too, that adds into
Mexico, and you also find this in areas around like Santa Fe, and all. The color in Santa Fe always just blows me away. I adore going over there, visually. I mean, it's just a visual treat. And that is, the people are not afraid to use what was in the hardware store. In color.

Q. Tell me about that.

A. Well...I'll go to some of the houses out in the country in Santa Fe. You went to the hardware store, you knew you had to paint your house, and you said to Jake, "Well, whaddaya have, Jake?" And he says, "Well, I have some red and I have some turquoise and I have some other kinda colors," and you didn't necessarily have the time to mix. There wasn't necessarily a sophistication, so these colors were put on like raw on the houses. Then the sun also had a certain kind of effect on it.

Also, another element runs into this, and it runs into a lot of cultures, and that is, when you could afford to buy something, you didn't buy white. White was the basic thing that you painted something. That was usually lime. When you could afford to paint something, by painting it a color, it meant you had a little money.

Same thing, on a reverse...Not a reverse, but a comparative way, in the Orient, is that you will go into a house, in the Orient (I've been in a number of them, particularly in Korea and Japan), and instead of everything being tremendously "shabouie" and quietly worked out, I've seen houses where this wall was one paper, the ceiling was another paper, this wall was
another paper—wall paper. So you had money: You could go out and buy it. And some of the houses in New England that I have been through, that dated back to the 17th Century, where you saw the house and it had...The quarters downstairs, which was the living room, kitchen, dining room, and then you had the bedrooms upstairs, and then, as the house grew and the settlers stayed and the house grew, until finally you got to the house in the middle of the 18th Century, where you then had a parlor. And you could look at a house and see the progression of color. And by the time you got to the latter part of the 18th Century, that lady had wallpaper in her living room. Because she said, "Now understand honey, there's a boat that came in, it's down in Boston. It came in from England, and there's another one that came in from Paris, and they have that new thing called wallpaper. And I'd love to have our parlor wallpapered." And he probably said, "Well...If we have a good enough crop this year we can do it." All these things are elements into it.

There's another element that we have, in this country, and I think it kind of relates to the Beverly Hills scene: The Beverly Hills scene says, "Yes, I'm rich, I made it." But at the same time, they want to be kind of quiet about that, in relationship to kind of color. The color is in the vegetation. You want to say you've made it, but at the same time you don't want to shout that you've made it.

Q. It's interesting...Recently...Well, currently, as a matter of fact—I just recently went to see it—The L.A. County
Museum has a David "Hopney" exhibit...
A. I have not seen that, and I'm dieing to see it.
Q. It's worth seeing. But, as you know, "Hopney" has a strong feeling about color...
A. Yes, he does...
Q. Well, if you haven't...I was going to ask you what you thought of...
A. Well, I know a lot of David's work, because I first saw David's work at UCLA...This was maybe 18 years ago. And it was a drawing show at UCLA...No, it was a print show. And I said this guy's got something. Then he did move here, and he built up this reputation, and you would see him around town, drawing. And what I love most of all are his drawings--sketches--of Los Angeles bungalows and houses. Things like that. I don't particularly care for his large paintings or portraits. I think they're kinda ho-hum. But that painting that he did of Mulholland Drive, I love that. Because he created his own world. I mean, he collected all those images and put them in one area, and said this is my world. Which an artist certainly has the perogative to do.
Q. His own personal house is loaded with color.
A. Right. It is.
Q. I mean, loaded!
A. Right.
Q. I mean, every railing is a different color, every structure a different color...
A. Yeah. But you can go through this...And it goes back
to the muffin tin...You see those kinds of colors and you say, "Hey, wouldn't that be fun to put it here." And I'm sure that's how a lot of that evolved with him.

Q.  Do you do a lot of color in your house?
A.  No. But I will be getting to it, and I've got a lot of color tacked up on the ceiling and things like that. My other house, on Selby, had a lot of color in it. And I had a lot of fun because I drew on the walls. Every kid in his life has drawn on the walls, and I decided to take it a step further, and I drew on the walls. I drew orange trees, and I drew grape vines. Sometime I'll have to show you those slides. And I took sponges and made them in the shape of leaves and painted this... It was a gas. It was a lot of fun.

Q.  Well, when you think you're "Trump Loy," you know...
A.  Well, it was a contemporary version of "Trump Loy." Only I did it with magic marker and sponge.

Q.  An interesting idea.
A.  Uh huh.

Q.  It shows how one is impacted by experiences in relationship to color. When I came back from the "Hopney" exhibit, I walked around my house, and not internally, but externally, and I found a wall (which I will then discuss with you when we're finished with this tape) and I thought, "Well, wouldn't it be interesting if you did that one little wall in an unexpected color. In other words...Because, as you know, most of this is that taupe and beige contrast...with white as the trim...
Which I like a lot, as a matter of fact. I mean, I find that... Because I find that the current coloring...Well, let me ask you about that. The current colors of some of the housing, the condominium buildings that are going up around, are, it seems to me, much too strong as colors, for a residence of any kind.

A. Well, some of them are, and I think I know which one you're referring to. It's downtown, here...

Q. On Franklin.

A. On Franklin. Well, that I think is a very bad shop. But, thank God, the sun shines here, and it will fade, because there's nothing that you can stop from fading under the California sun.

Q. Do you think that maybe they did that relatively strong color because they know it will fade?

A. No, I don't think so. It was probably done by an apartment kind of developer who was trying to say "I'm with it." The building isn't a very good [sic] designed building, and he felt like "I've got to make something say it's kind of attractive," because these huge apartment condo complexes just get so overwhelming, that even if you just did them in white, it's just...blah! We've done enough of that kind of work to know that you have to have to have something to merchandise it. And color does merchandise it. That, to me, has not been merchandised well.

Q. It's funny, because those that are done in solid colors... There's one condominium that was done in a solid color, and it
looked like a big air conditioning unit. You know, that kind of grey that they have...?

A. Right.

Q. And it had no charm or...

A. Several years ago there were some condominiums put up my fine neighborhood where there were, I think, eight units. And I happened to know the developer, because he had painted the place before he even knew I was in the neighborhood. The neighborhood didn't object to the condos. They didn't object to that kind of thing coming into the neighborhood. What they objected to was the color: It was...It looked like...It was brutal. Like a bunker. If they had changed the color to something else. Maybe a light blue or a light turquoise or a light beige, instead of this heavy, almost brown-grey. The building just went ugh!

Q. There's a prison quality to things like that.

A. It does...The only thing that really saves it is that in the summer time...Because I do a lot of dog walking in the neighborhood, is that it has purple lily-of-the-nile en masse, in front of it, and that saves that brutality. That's in the front. It doesn't save the brutality from the back, when I'm walking on the back street, and I look on it.

Q. When you take on a project—say, a hospital, or any building—do you work with the landscape people?

A. Sometimes we do. It depends on what the situation is with the developer or the owner of it. And that I like very much,
because if that's worked out, and we know what kind of trees are going to be there and what's blooming at certain seasons, we try to have the building be a foil for that. Yes, definitely.

Q. Because it is interesting, going back to your reference to the silver color being the hot color a few years ago (and I remember that very well), and of course the obvious things that happens in any branch of color statement, whether it be fashion or interior design—anything, any product that starts in the upper echelons and then moves down into the mass market—eventually, of course, people of style do not want the thing that is already accepted by a large mass of people. And my feeling about what conceivably could happen with color as far as a building is concerned is... Do trends operate that way? In other words, the silver is out for the car, because it's now being done in the inexpensive car... If color were brilliantly done, for instance, for the St. James Club, this new art deco building, and then crept in so far that it was into the cheapest condominiums that are thrown together as though they are outhouses, do you have any experience with that? Where color is resisted and rejected because it now has....

A. Well, probably what would happen on that, in reality, would be that it would take enough time that that original paint would get worn, that you'd have to have a change anyhow, so it would get replaced. I mean, there's an automatic kind of sequel of the deterioration of something that it's going to get replaced. And if it is too much out there, there might be enough members
that would say, "Well, I don't like it being like this, because it's too much like such and such and such and such." And at that time, when there is a need to change it, it would probably get changed. That's what's kind of fun when your architectural historians begin to peel away--when they begin to do this--to find out what the original color of a building was.

Q. Layer after layer after layer.
A. Right.

Q. It's fascinating. Because you see, on the East coast, for instance, in Pennsylvania, where I formerly had a large estate, the main house, when I bought it, was covered in white stucco, and very attractive against the oak trees and so forth. But, as I moved in the area, and realized that the real beauty of that area were the fieldstone houses I, not knowing a lot about that at that time, simply said something one day about, "Oh, I wish I had a really good fieldstone house rather than this white stucco, even though it's attractive and beautiful and so forth and so on," and a visiting luncheon guest simply said, "But you do." And I said, "What do you mean?" And they said, "Well, fieldstone came out of the fields. That's why it's called fieldstone. And therefore it was available to everybody. And when these houses were built originally, in the 18th Century, they...That was the material that they used. As the success of the owner became more apparent, or their descendents, the chic thing to do was to stucco over the fieldstone...."

A. Because it said you weren't a farmer any more...
Q. And then you weren't a farmer anymore, and you painted it white."

So, of course, what I did was... We had a marvelous moment when we chipped away at a corner of that house to see whether the fieldstone was really there and whether it was quality fieldstone. Well, it turned out to be perfect quality, and so I had the whole house stripped.

A. Wow. What fun.

Q. And suddenly this house became major, major in its impact, because of the beautiful fieldstone work that had been done, and the careful placing of stone, and the color relationships. And it was where I began to understand the term "stone color" had deeper meaning than I had ever thought.

A. That's right. That's right. That's right.

Q. It's the opposite of your story about white paint being the limestone whitewash. That kind of thing. So that a lot depends on the area that one is in, and the direction that things took.

A. Well, that all relates though, Robert, to what I was talking about, directly. And that is that probably the people got some money, and they thought it would look nicer if they stuccoed over it. The same thing as the people who paint, and they say, "We now have some money, we can paint our place."

All these things... And these are just human things.

Q. Of course, of course. And....

(End of Tape 1; start Tape 2)
Q. We had just gotten to the end of that tape when I was asking you what you would advise a student who would be interested in a career in color, such as yours.
A. What should they do?
Q. Yes.
A. Well, the easiest thing is to just saturate yourself with color.
Q. How do you do that?
A. I would collect color. I would collect color in every possible way I could. I'd develop a library of color. I would learn to mix color. I would learn to start mixing color and learn to paint color. As much as I could. And it's not something that you're going to learn overnight. It's going to take quite a number of years for you to really learn how to mix color. I would learn how to use color in dyes. I'd do anything that was connected. I would go to as many museums and look at things. I would try to find out historically about why a certain thing is made the way it is, what were the ingredients in color that went in to it. And I would just saturate myself in this area. It's not going to come overnight, and it's going to take a long time to really gather this kind of knowledge.
Q. I would think also, from what you've said about your own influences and the places that you would go, that travel would be important.
A. Absolutely. Absolutely. It is important. Being aware of where you are at that particular moment, in your life and time,
and where you are on the surface of this earth.
Q. And what are the signposts that one would pay attention
to? Movies, theatre, any of...? For instance, do theatre cos-
tumes have any impact?
A. Everything has an impact on me, Robert. Because it's another person's interpretation of what that color is supposed to do.
Q. Because one of the extraordinary color experiences that I had was when I was asked to escort Patricia "Zickrod" to the opening of "Tannheuser," and she had done the costumes for the Metropolitan Opera. And I'll never forget this experience, because the whole opera was done in shades of sort of tan and browns and beiges, but the two leads were in...One in an extra-
ordinary blue; the lady in an extraordinary blue. In a whole series of appearances, from scene to scene, and different shades of blue, but always using blue. And as this panorama of the chorus--the soldiers and the this and the that--moved, you were excited by the appearance of this blue, giving you the break, and then the tiny touch of red. And I remember, I kept thinking to myself, "Oh, it's wonderful, and what does it remind me of?" And, of course, what it reminded me of was Italian Renaissance painting, where you have, you know, a whole lot of similar colors, and then one touch of (?)... 
A. That's right...
Q. ...highlighting and spotlighting the whole thing.
And that became...I found myself thinking, "God, you know, you
really have to be an artist and a painter."
A. You have to be a combination of a whole lot of things to be able to produce that. And to have that sense and awareness. And that's where the talent lies. That's the real kernel, of someone like Patricia, to be able to sift and pull all of that together. She just didn't snap that. It's been years of her looking, her participating, her involving...And all of a sudden, probably when she was presented the job, of thinking and mulling and mulching, and saying "That would be the key to what the music is about, and how to present this musical experience in the best way." The music and the color are really tied together; the idea of it is really all tied together. That's where the genius lies. Some people have it, some people don't. She has it.
Q. You know, it was interesting...I've done a series of tapes, probably the largest collection of the old Hollywood photographers. The greats. And some of these people are in their late 80s, you know, and sat in this room and got wonderfully turned on by the fact that they were being interviewed, and the questions were questions that stimulated them. And one of the things that I became terribly aware of was that the good ones learned how to paint with light and shadow, and some of those extraordinary Hollywood faces that we remember and see in terms of their portraits, if you look at them carefully, you realize that there was a light under the chin, or an overhead light on Miss Dietrich, which makes all her bone structure look extraordinary...
A. See, that's the whole trick, Robert; to take something that is ordinary—and I don't mean ordinary in the debased kind of sense—but making it extraordinary. Take something ordinary and make it extraordinary. That's the thrill, that is the trick, that is the accomplishment.

Q. Well, when I was... That's a wonderful comment. But where I was going was...

A. I'm sorry.

Q. That's all right. Where I was going was, where do you, personally—Gerry Kavanaugh—in facing a project, where do you deal with light and shadow? Do you find yourself thinking, "What happens when the sun goes down?"

A. Absolutely. Because... See, I can only really, truly look at color between 9:00 and about 11:30. After that I can't stand to look at color. Because the light here begins to become more orange. And after 3:00, you're dead. You can't look at it. And I made that remark one time... I jokingly said... I was visiting some designer, a very famous designer from Finland, and his wife—Ovoka—were here, and it was in winter. And I jokingly said to her, "Oh, I bet the only time you really look at color is in winter." And I said, "I bet you can't do it after 11:00." Well, of course it's dark at 2:00 in Finland, so there's no way... And she said, "Yes. How did you guess?" And that's because of what the light availability is. And it makes a difference. The purest light is around between 9-10:00 in the morning.

Q. But how does this affect your use of color, though? For a building.
A. Oh, I have to look at color at that time to see what it really truly looks like. I would not pick out color for the building later on in the afternoon, because later on in the afternoon it's going to be different than what it would be, say, at 9:00. Nine is sort of like when it's the purest, although the building does exist during that time. But it's dangerous to pick out color after 3:00 in the afternoon.

Q. Hmmmn. If you were doing the interior, say, of a hospital, knowing that patients are sedated, as they're put on the gurney to be taken to the operating room; or, patients recovering spend a lot of time, say, in traction, looking up at a ceiling. What happens to your mind in terms of color in deciding...

Q. Well, generally, I will think of color not totally for the patient. Color is for the people who are visiting, and for the people who have to work there. Because, when you're in the hospital, you're pretty much so sick that it doesn't really affect you that much. Your biggest concern is how in the hell can I get out of here?!

Q. I never thought of that. That's interesting. That's quite true, as a matter of fact.

A. Yeah... So, your responses to things are quite different. But the people who have to work there, on a day by day basis, you've got to make that a much pleasanter place and experience, and also, for the person who is visiting the sick person, particularly if it is something that is very tragic, and you know
that there is no hope. That place has to be more pleasant, because it is pure hell otherwise.

Q. Um hmmn. So the decision to make, for instance, the waiting room, which has little to do with patients—it has to do with people who are pacing, either happily, because of an expected baby; or, in desperation, because of the final report of a biopsy. Or the result of surgery.

Take those two areas: Take the waiting room of an expectant father, and take the area where somebody would be waiting...

A. The expectant father is now in the room. You don't have that so much anymore.

Q. Okay.

A. I know what you're saying. But... That's a very good example...

Q. But there is an area for expectant fathers and there always will be, because the labor process is a long time, and oftentimes they don't enter the room until the active part, in terms of the Lamaze method or natural childbirth or something of that nature.

What I'm really getting at is that the responsibility of a color authority brought into a hospital would be to examine each of these areas, as well as the external impact of the sun and light and shadow and landscaping and everything else on it. And I was just curious as to whether, in the years of your experience, whether you had changed any of your concepts or ideas as
to what would be effective a color in relationship to those areas?

A. Ah...No...It's just that we in the last few years have become more involved with hospitals. Prior to that we hadn't.

And that's because...It's a funny thing...For X number of years there was a big, big (and there still is) involvement in office spaces. Nobody really paid too much attention to hotels. Then, all of a sudden, there was this big surge to do hotels. They found out that if you made the place much more pleasant, people were willing to pay more, and people would return more, to them.

Then the next area that got on to that were hospitals. Hospitals were always kind of like pure, scrubbed, clean, medicinal green. And that was it. But there's been a direct tie-in with color in association with hotels, and the hospitals have now begun to do that.

Q. To look more like hotels. Hmmmm...Well, there's a connection. You're in a hospital on a transient basis. You don't live there...

A. Right. It's a transient basis. And it's sort of like, you know...Rooms. Only the room service is a different kind of room service!

Q. Certainly the food is different!

A. Right.

Q. That's interesting. Yes.

A. So the whole development of hospitals has changed radically. So I didn't have any preconceived ideas, of past
experience rather... Not preconceived, but past experience with hospitals. Hospitals began to realize that they needed someone like myself.

Q. Any area where your concept of color changed as you knew more, or the society changed, or...?
A. That's... That's a hard one for me. Because I really like color so much. I think society has changed an awful lot with color. I think there's a more consciousness about color. It's not just the same thing, across the board. When I was a kid, growing up, although I was around color and was in an art school because of my mother, there was still an across-the-board kind of color. Today there's such a variety.....

Q. What does an across-the-board kind of color mean?
A. Well, kind of like everybody wore the same thing. It was kind of the same. There wasn't as much variety as there is today.

Q. Grey for day, brown for down...
A. Well, yeah... You had the same kinds of blues and you had the same kinds of pinks, and the same kinds of things. And you did something a little bit off-beat or a little bit different, a little bit higher key, you were really different. And I think there's much more of that availability, and people are more conscious about color. Color is the first thing you remember about a place and situation, and that's been one of the very fascinating things about the Disney Corporation, in them putting up their "Theme Parks," is that they intensify color, because
they want you to REMEMBER where you were and the experience that you had. And you remember a lot through color.

Q. And their cartoons, their feature cartoons, are all in intense colors.

A. Well, that's a different kind of color. That's what I call electric color. And electric color is like your movies, your TV, your video--whatever. That's the kind of color that you cannot reproduce in a paint situation. You only get that color through electricity. And that's what I call electric color. It never happened until the age of, I'll say, electricity, that we got that color. And there are artists..."Puck," the man who does all the video, has capitalized on that, in the tapes. And you get that kind of color in his pieces and environments. And there are a lot of video artists who are working that way, who understand how that color affects people and what it does. It's fascinating. It's not real. It's a fantasy color.

Q. Yeah...

A. It's the illusion of what that color is.

Q. Right.

A. Or what that color should be.

Q. One of the most electric colors, for the average consumer, is dayglow.

A. Right.

Q. How do you feel about that?

A. I think it depends on how it's used in different situations. I've seen it used in parking garages, and it's been very
effective because ever since we had this energy crunch, they've had to cut down in lighting in garages. But, by having (and this is in one particular garage that I know of) dayglow paint, you don't have as much light but it's luminous. You can see it better. And I think it's very effective. It's not just for Holiday on Ice.

Q. It's interesting to me that, for instance, parking areas (which have another problem, which is you can't remember where you parked your car) are now developing a combination of color and image. Particularly out here (which is where a lot of the image is stimulated because of our memory of film), and so you find yourself thinking, "Oh, I parked on 'The Wizard of Oz' floor."

A. You do...Where you happen to be involved in a parking structure, right now, you will do anything to get people to remember where they parked their car. Because we have, here (and in a lot of parts of the country), where you enter the building, it's not through the street level. Like in New York, you enter a building from the street level. We don't enter buildings from the street level. We enter buildings through a parking structure. Which is usually the ugliest entrance in the world. And it's produced minimally. So, what they're trying to do is upgrade, with the cheapest thing possible, and that is by color and graphics in the place of saying "this ugly environment isn't really as bad as what you think it is." And, therefore, the use of color.

Q. I've always been interested why they didn't do "Trump
Loy" there. You know, there are lots of young artists around who could make gardens out of those places.

A. Sure. They will eventually get to that, Robert, but it all goes down to a bottom dollar, and how the upper echelon, upstairs, thinks about spending the corporate money. That's what it is, and no one really figuring that out in the first place. It's usually figured out as an after kind of thought.

Q. Have you gotten involved with color and packaging, for instance? Candy boxes and...

A. I haven't with candy boxes, but we've gotten involved in packaging with cosmetic companies, and we've gotten involved with packaging for department stores. And, we've been very successful on that.

One of my favorite stories about packaging (it didn't happen to me, but it happened to a lady by the name of Sarah Little, who used to be a consultant in New York. She started out, I think, at "House and Garden). And she was a consultant... And I've used this story on a number of occasions. She was a consultant to Whitman's Sampler candy. And they had asked her to redesign the package. And she had moved out to Spokane, Washington. She had married and moved out. And they kept sending her box after box after sampler of candy, and she kept stuffing the boxes in the front hall closet, and they kept on saying, "Miss Little, haven't you gotten around to working out our package design?" And, as you know, the sampler box of candy is like a sampler box. Everything is stitched, and the man with the
messenger, he's in his peti-point, like that. Finally, she wrote back (and she sent them a bill when she did it), "Don't change the box, change the candy." And she was right! Because the box had been their traditional box image for so long, that they would have thrown out the baby with the bath water. And what they were...The candy was no longer good on the competitive market, because it had too much wax in it for shelf life.

Q. Ah hah.
A. So, these are other things...
Q. That's interesting.
A. ....that enter into it.
Q. Right. Well, this has been totally fascinating. I find the whole subject of color takes on new meaning when you talk to a professional person. And, I wonder if anybody's done a book on all the historical implications of color.
A. The thing that's fascinating about it, Robert, is there's very little literature written about color. And you find it in bits and pieces, but you don't find a whole, big, massive volume on it. Which would be, really, a tremendous undertaking. You really would have to be underwritten by a paint company or a dye company or something like that, for a person to really do it on an 8-5:00 daily basis, for a couple of years, to really pull the whole thing together. But it's a fascinating subject. There's not that much written on it, and what we have in our library is about it. And you can go to any bookstore and look up the subject of color, and it's about this
long, on it. And yet it's something that we're involved in, every single day of our lives, whether it's food or whether it's clothing, or a book or if it's a magazine, whether it's a movie—all of these things—we're involved in color.

Q. Normally, when I do a tape, we establish the background of the person, etc., etc., but I was anxious to get into the subject. Give me a brief biographical sketch—where you were born, etc.

A. I was born in Memphis, Tennessee, and I started in art school when I was eight years old. My father took me down to the Memphis Academy of Art, and I can remember it just as clear today as the day it happened. We were in the registrar's office and my father turned to me and he said, "I don't expect you to do anything with this, but I do expect your life to be enriched."

Q. Oh, what a lovely thing to say.

A. It has. And I continued...

Q. His expectancy was wrong, because you've done a great deal.

A. Well, but at that time, I think he was very wise. I grew up in that art school, practically, and then I went to college and the academy...

Q. Where did you go?

A. In Memphis. The Memphis Academy of Art. And then I went to Cranbrook to do graduate work. And that was a very, very important training factor in my life. Because when I
was at Cranbrook, it was at a very, very interesting time with an awful lot of interesting people.

Q. Who was there?
A. People who preceded me, which is also important, by five years, were Jack Larsen, Bob Gelsen, and Dave Jacobs, Wynn Anderson... Peter... All of these people have made their mark in the field of design. "Tochiko," who is practically the doyen of ceramics today. One of the doyens, rather.

There are certain places at certain times that have an electricity for collecting people, and you cannot predict that or say why or anything, of how it happens. It just sort of happens.

And from there I went to work for General Motors, not on their cars, but on their interiors, and I was a general flunkie, basically, really, for "Warren Platner" of the (?) . . office. And I knew all the people in the (?) . . office, because of Cranbrook. The (?) . . office was at the back side in the school; you'd go down the back road and down the other way to the (?) office.

Q. Was "Errol Stern" there at the time?
A. Yes, I knew "Errol." And I knew Kevin Roach. And Kevin now has continued the (?) . . office. And then I went to work--because I thought it was a very fascinating place--for "Victor Gruin." Which was the company that really established the shopping center in this country. And what they were doing were things that I thought were just fabulous and magic and all like that. And
then I was asked to come out here to the West Coast by the
"Gruin" office, through "Karl van Luben," and I worked in the
"Gruin" office, and I worked primarily for Rudy "Bonvelt," who
became my mentor. And Rudy said, "You can do anything you want
to except work on Joseph "Magnin's" (?) . . And I thought, "Well,
that's fine. It's his business."

Q. Because he did them.
A. Because he did them.

Q. Oh, I see. I was wondering what the taboo was.
A. And then, within a year, I wound up...I guess I won his
trust...And within a year I wound up working on...And Rudy was
my mentor and he was my second Dad. I'll always be grateful for
that.

Q. I think it's wonderful to have people in your life like
that. And if they...If we select wisely...You know....Because it's
so easy to make someone a mentor who doesn't know what they're
talking about, it's marvelous when it turns out to be as positive
and as constructive.

A. It was. Fabulously. And then I met Frank Gary and
"Griff Walsh," and there "Marion Sampler" and Don Chadwick, and
a whole group of us. And Frank went to Paris and worked there
for a year, came back and was working for about two years, and
I was...I don't know why...But I had this drive that I had to be
on my own. I didn't really realize the full implications of it,
Robert!

Q. Well, unfortunately, the nature of a business such as
yours, is it really has to do with you; that you end up having to support a staff.
A. You do. Absolutely. So, I joined Frank in space at his office, with "Grey," and we had many hard years of struggle. But those were very important years, and I'll always be grateful to "Greg" and Frank saying there will always be a drafting table for you. And that's how I started.
Q. Frank Gary has certainly come a long way, hasn't he?
A. Yes, he has.
Q. I wonder what department that he did here...?
A. "Miriam Wosk."
Q. "Miriam Wosk." That's exactly right. Which is a total fancy, in terms of the use of color and tile and...
A. Well, part of that was also Miriam's. Miriam's. Miriam (?) . . And Miriam also had collected "bauerware" and all of these things and she was an artist. And so, part of that came out of her, not necessarily Frank. It's rather amusing for me, because a couple of years after that, a restaurant opened in Santa Monica called "Rebecca's," and when I was in...Not in Frank's office, but when I had my office in Frank's place and we put this thing together, about five years, or six years after we were together, another person joined us by the name of Deborah Sussman, who had come out of the Ames office, and both Deborah and I had all kind of "OJR" in the office, which is really kind of complete opposite of what architects are about. And I can remember to this day Frank, when Deborah and I decided to move from upstairs downstairs, and
he says, "Oh, thank goodness, I'm going to get rid of all those THINGS of yours. All those THINGS." Well, when Deborah and I saw "Rebecca's," which is completely filled with THINGS, and they were the kind of things that Deborah and I were so fond of, we both cracked up laughing.

Q. And Frank Gary did "Rebecca's?"
A. "Rebecca's." The hanging alligators and the hanging....
Q. This came from his experience with "Miriam Watts?"
A. No, I think it came from the experience of Deborah and I.
Q. Oh, I see. He got it from...
A. Yes. Because he..If you look at his work, it doesn't have any of that in it, except the job that we did for Joseph Magnin's, the three of us together. It has that in it. But after that, he sort of like got rid of all that. That was not in his framework. Until he came to Miriam, and then he did "Rebecca's." Of course, all the things at "Rebecca's" were so reminiscent of the office, when we were all together, that it was tremendously amusing to me.

Q. Well. But, you know, we are all the result of the education of our eyes.
A. Well, yes, but the education of that kind of eye was, like, oh, he'd thrown all that away, honey.
Q. Sure. Sure. Well, we all have resistances to things...
A. But do you understand the professional amusement?
Q. Of course. I can completely understand. And it's
like...Oh, I know what I was going to ask you. One of the buildings here that, of course, has impact in terms of color, is the "Mondrian" building...

A. Yes.

Q. ...which literally took "Mondrian" print and...

A. "Agann" did the building. "Agann." He's an Israeli artist, who really painted...It's called "the Mondrian," but, again, he's taken the idea of "Mondrian" and done it in paintings three-dimensionally for years. And that's what that building is really about. Not totally "Mondrian"; it is "Agann." And "Agann" really did this, what is it, 12-story? painting of what he's about.

Q. Except that it's called the "Mondrian" building.

A. Well, the reason it's called the "Mondrian" is that it was a way to merchandise the place. You wouldn't have called that building the "Agann" Hotel. Nobody would have known what in the hell you were talking about. But Mr. "Eskinaze" decided to call it the "Mondrian." But you can see, on the side of the building, "Agann" signed it, and painted it.

Q. Do you like that building?

A. I think it's amusing. It's a lot...There's a lot of controversy. You see, it was an old building. It was an office building and they changed it into this hotel. So, there were a lot of things they couldn't change on the outside of the building, and it was a pretty bland, '60s building. And I think it's pretty successful.
Q. How do you feel about the St. James Club, which is a building that is about to be demolished, which had a lot of art deco features.
A. Well, some of the art deco features have been stripped on it, which was very painful for me. I don't like that. I don't understand the economics, though, of what it would have been to replace all that. And I don't know the thinking of the man who bought that.
Q. Yes. It's possible that he can't find the craftsmen, or economically it would be too expensive.
A. Well, I think about economically.....The thing about it is, you can find the craftsmen. There is a whole sort of like generation, that is coming up now, that have...I don't know how, but they've done it...learned the skills of doing those things. And it's very, very fascinating.
Q. And it's very attractive. You drive by the building and, what a lovely experience, compared to the grossness of color in some of the retirement homes and various things that are just so awful. Because one of the appalling things about external color is the fact that we have no regulations about the mini-malls...
A. We don't, we don't.
Q. Every kind of sign is used, every kind of gross use of color...
A. I agree with you...
Q. ...and I find it a total offense.
A. It is an offense. But until enough people protest about it to the local government, nothing is going to be done about it. Because that goes into right of speech.


A. Oh, are they ugly.

Q. And what about things like the Holiday Inns, with their attempt at coloring their balconies with various squares. It has some relationship to the "Mondrian."

A. Well, that again, Robert, depends on how the building came about. You see, a lot of times a building will be built for the Holiday Inn, but it's not built by the Holiday Inn, and it's leased then back to the Holiday Inn. Or, what it is is, the Holiday Inn and you buy the service of the booking of the Holiday Inn. The hotels that they are putting up (we haven't seen too many of them around here) are much better than they used to be. I know a little bit about that, because the Holiday Inn corporation started in Memphis out on "Summer" Avenue, with a motel. And I know my family...One of my cousin's husband was connected with it. Kenneth Wilson was the one who started that. And, you know, it's one of the huge, gigantic corporations now, in the country.

Q. Sure...I wish that there were more professionals like yourself affecting outdoor advertising. These enormous billboards, these enormous signs that are put on top of buildings. Sometimes, when you get them all together in a city, and they compete with each other for the eye, boy, it's a challenge.

A. It is a challenge. But...We need more people like the
Indians, between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, they didn't like it and they just went in the middle of the night and sawed them down.

Q. Are you serious?
A. I'm serious.

Q. The billboards.
A. Yeah. They didn't like them, so they just sawed them down. There was a proliferation of them... You still have some, but you don't have as much as you used to, because they would saw them down. And who could ever find them in the middle of the night? It's pretty dark out there.

Q. It's a hard thing to do in the heart of Hollywood, for instance.
A. Yes, it is.

Q. Well, Geraldine Kavanaugh, I'm sure we could go on with endless talk about this, but... Is there anything else that you think we haven't covered that would be of...
A. Oh, that's such a hard question, Robert...
Q. I know, I know. It's difficult.
A. It's very, very difficult.

Q. Well, we talked about the sociological and psychological impact of color. We've talked about the emotional relationship to color. We've talked about the technological advances that impact on the nature of color and the use of color. We've talked about the economy of the use of color. We've talked about the learning process, of training somebody to educate their
eye so color becomes a stronger meaning and a force. We talked about the influences we all have, such as the music world, the world of stage costumes, lighting, all those things. We talked about a lot of color.

A. We did.

Q. And a lot of the initial description of assignments to students—Go out and bring me...How many examples of yellow?

A. Oh, about 12 colors of each one, like yellow and red and blue—all of that.

Q. That's kind of...That's the way I believe in teaching. I think you have to give your people projects that are real.

A. Oh, you do. You can't...And then I usually make them do a color book. In other words, you put all the yellows in your book, and then I also get them to trade colors. If you have this yellow and he doesn't have that yellow, then clip it and give it back. So you begin to have a sense and build a color library.

Q. Is it any way in which you can say to somebody, "Okay, you've brought me 12 colors, but break it down as to how you would use...How do you see this color being used?"

A. I don't do that until they have a real sense about color. They have to have a real sense...You can't do that in first. In fact, I don't usually do that until like two weeks before class is over.

Q. Define for me what you mean by "the sense of color."

A. The sense of color in how you use color. What color is
appropriate for what kind of an object?

A fascinating thing is in the...Well, like Xerox machines, computers--the kinds of colors that have been introduced to these machines as what is appropriate, and what is the appropriate color for all these buttons, and the appropriate color for the piece itself. You have to know what is appropriate. And why.

Q. Can you give me an example of an inappropriate color, for example, for a Xerox machine.

A. Well, I think an inappropriate color for a Xerox machine would be purple.

Q. Why?

A. First of all, the scale on the size of the Xerox machine, it would be so dominating in the room itself, that the purple would be out of scale. Also, if you're a person who has to work at a Xerox machine a lot, I think that the purple would affect you after a while; you just can't stand being around it this long.

Q. You also don't want to make the machine take on a level of importance in the whole context of the office ....

A. No. But it's a very important tool in the office that you have to have.

Q. Yes, but it's no more important than the electric typewriter or...

A. No. But that's the context that it's in, with the typewriter...All these things, and how it relates into the whole scheme of things.
Q. It is interesting how long it took the phone companies to recognize there could be phones other than black phones.
A. Right. Right.
Q. I mean, a long time. I've lived a long time, and I remember, you know, the first...I actually remember the first phone that I was associated with was one of those hanging on the wall that you wound up and asked for the operator. And saying, "Millie, get me so and so."
A. Yes. And it probably had a wooden box, too. You would never associate wood...It's the same thing like...The other day, in this meeting with the car people, they were talking about wood as part of their paneling for their car. And I said, "Well, you wouldn't put wood on your cuisinart, would you?" It would be inappropriate. It's the same thing as a color, inappropriate. And I don't think a cuisinart, you'd make it red or purple.
Q. They're doing it in blue.
A. I haven't seen that, Robert.
Q. It's Kitchenmaid. The big mixers. Because I have a Kitchenmaid...
A. What kind of blue is it?
Q. It's a very strong blue. It's a cobalt blue.
A. I have to see that. Because I would not associate...
Q. I wasn't pleased with it. I prefer to have my kitchen appliances be white. But that's a personal...
A. I can understand doing a teakettle in blue. Or a
teakettle in red. Because an object on a stove, regardless of what's happening in the surroundings...You do not have food that you're mixing in it. It's just water, you take the water and you pour it into something else. But, there is appropriateness and inappropriateness. I have to figure that one out.

Q. The architect that did the teakettles with the funny handles and...

A. Well, one of those is Richard "Sapier," who's an industrial designer. And then the other one, with the blue handle on it, that was done by Michael "Graves."

Q. Speaking of Michael Graves, I always feel that his decoration of buildings--those swags that he does--are like pastry decorations. You know, you have a basic cake and then you decorate it, and so forth and so on. Do you find that acceptable, or...?

A. Some of his things I've found acceptable, some of his things I have not found acceptable.

Q. Such as.

A. I think his Humana building in Louisville, Kentucky is brilliant. Just a brilliant building. I'm not as fond (but I have not seen it) of the Portland building, that has the swags.

Q. The swags, yes. I have seen it.

A. So I can't....

Q. I wasn't pleased.

A. ....a real comment. I've seen the library at San Juan
Capistrano. I love the inside of that library, I hate the outside because it's an inappropriate use of the material. You don't use stucco on a roof. He has these turrets and they go up like this, and that's stucco, and that's just inappropriate to me. But inside I loved it very, very much. It's very, very comfortable...It's furniture that's big...You know, you'd like to go and spend the whole afternoon there, reading.

Q. I wonder if you realize how many times the word "appropriate" works through your thinking in relationship to...

A. I think that has to do with manners.

Well, I don't think there are enough manners, Robert. And I think manners denotes something being civilized. And I was brought up to be that way, coming from a Southern background, in that manners are (you're going to laugh) very appropriate to certain kinds of situations. You have to learn how and when to do something. That...Those two go together; appropriateness and manners.

Q. And, fortunately for people who have buildings, they can come to you and you can tell them what is appropriate for what color and when to do it and how to do it and why to do it. I think it's terrific, and I hope it just expands and almost... Because it certainly affects the pleasure and enjoyment of the average human being looking at the building, which is interesting when you think that you associate the hiring of a professional to do the building--by the builders, by the owners, by the other tenants--but the truth of the matter is the people who see the
building, the people who drive the freeways, drive the streets, walk the streets—they're the ones, we're the ones who constantly have to look at the building. The people who work in it don't look at it. They just arrive in it, etc., etc., so, there's an enormously powerful impact of color in this relationship to buildings on society in general. And the whole environment... Because I look out my large-view window here, that I have, and there are a couple of things that really offend me, and then there are many things, of course, that absolutely delight my eye. But I suppose that will also exist, in any society, civilized or not. Because it is a matter of personal taste. Things I find offensive other people think are interesting, or bright or amusing...

A. Yes, I know. But sometimes the people that think that really don't know...

Q. That's true. I do think there are standards. I mean, I think you can't apply that everything is acceptable, because everything isn't. I think you're absolutely right about the purple Xerox as being unacceptable. It's not acceptable. It's as simple as that.

Well, we could go on forever, but...I'm very grateful to you, Geraldine. On behalf of FIT, much thanks for everything, quite precise, almost romantic...