Overview

Oral history interview with Claire Falkenstein, 1980

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: No, there was.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well, there were quite a few artists and we were art.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Not the late forties, the whole, all of the forties.

The interviewer is Paul Karlstrom. Claire, you were already beginning to do is stop here. [tape turned on]

PAUL KARLSROM: Did you ever sit in on any of his classes or visit his teaching?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: What?

PAUL KARLSROM: And didn't compete with him?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well, he was more related to the great one,

PAUL KARLSROM: But his work was quite different from Clay Spohn or

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: The only thing I can say is I always kept that very important dealer and very close to this Art Autre group in Paris.

PAUL KARLSROM: Appel?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: What?

PAUL KARLSROM: Did you all get together? Did you have a social life?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: What?

PAUL KARLSROM: Like these behind you, these paintings.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: That's it.

PAUL KARLSROM: Yes, but how did that happen?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: I wanted to. I was feeling dimensional, three-

PAUL KARLSROM: Did you start sculpture then? Did you begin work as a sculptor?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: I started working on the floor with that one log, and

PAUL KARLSROM: What is this, My Homage to Gaudi. Again, I had to put it out the window. But

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: I started working on the floor with that one log, and

PAUL KARLSROM: Now, just for the record, this work is titled The Couple

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: It was twelve feet high and I think the ceiling of this

PAUL KARLSROM: I should say for the record that, Claire, that you're
did it in a lattice. I want to see if I have that wire. [tape turned on]

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PAUL KARLSROM: I think I've seen some, but I'd like to see them again.

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PAUL KARLSROM: Why?

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some wonderful artists, some of the great artists. I'm trying to think of the other artists or modern art?

discussing art was part of your relationship? Did you talk about art or

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well, that was the big thing, but I've had two or

PAUL KARLSROM: And how long were you at that studio in Venice?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Yeah. So I thought, as long as I'm here, I think I will

PAUL KARLSROM: We were talking about Wilshire Boulevard, and there

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: No, this is a terrible thing about America. There

PAUL KARLSROM: Okay. I remember it well. What ever happened to that

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Sixty-five.

PAUL KARLSROM: Got an advance?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Unnamed. I won't say. So anyway, I then had to

PAUL KARLSROM: Where would you go if you were coming to town and

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well, I came back by invitation of a gallery-- and

PAUL KARLSROM: You said you were friends.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well, I came back by invitation of a gallery-- and

PAUL KARLSROM: How do you mean?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Some of me and the rest of the artists out in front, looking at it the other way. So, when

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Bella Arti and she hadn't seen them installed. And I said, "Oh yes, she

PAUL KARLSROM: And how long were you at that studio in Venice?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: And I arranged it on a wall. I put up, "Proposed for the gates of Peggy

PAUL KARLSROM: When you were there, you met Peggy.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Herbert says you can't make anything strong enough to protect my

PAUL KARLSROM: And how long were you at that studio in Venice?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Sixteen feet. We are talking about that piece out in

PAUL KARLSROM: What would you say the nature of the forties was for you?

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CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well, that influences your work to have these relationships, your loves you may have had.

PAUL KARLSROM: Fulbright. So do you feel that you keep your art and your personal life quite separate, then? You have your friendships, your

PAUL KARLSROM: No. I know what he does. He's a critic.

PAUL KARLSROM: Where did you meet Al?

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: I'm not interested. I really am not. I'm interested in domestic entanglements that would perhaps interfere with--

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Okay. But I tell you, people who say, oh, I'm free, I wouldn't have gotten that if I had been just, the other .

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: And I wouldn't have gotten that if I had been just, even now I need that relationship.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well. I married, but I never gave up art. I kept the other .

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: No. If I had had children, that would have been an agreement in the marriage.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: No. Thank God. Oh no. Cut-- Take that out.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well, I tell you, the choices are always pretty concentrates on painting. And a lot of it is because I've never done that other day that you, in a sense, returned in a big way to painting.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Well, I was earning my living through commissions. For instance, Allan Temko's coming on Thursday.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Here. I'm just taking this one area here and just see the shape.

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Here's the shape.

PAUL KARLSROM: Okay. Show me an interval on this painting. Show me

PAUL KARLSROM: But you can make your own choices about how--

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: I'm not a ne'er-do-well. I'm very disciplined. I know exactly what is it I can

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CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: I just think that they weren't in the fashion of

CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: And when the observer is inside the church and working with motion all the time.

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CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Oh yeah. How long ago was that? Two weeks?
PAUL KARLSROM: Yeah. You look great compared to last time when you
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: I do?
PAUL KARLSROM: Well, you look great.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: That's still going. I'm trying to think of all the things.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: And then there's something in New York. Still
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: November .
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Any shows?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Any shows coming up, any
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: You get them for yourself. That's the important thing.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: It hasn't interfered with your growth as an artist?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: You're an internationalist. I mean, there's no question about that, but do
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: You know--" New York was
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: You know, of all the places, I had a studio in Rome
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: You had time in New York; you had a studio in New York;
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: course, spent time in Paris. We all know that. So you've had a European
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: And then I think it's going to go to Laguna, as well.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Oakland. Then it's in Armand Hammer .
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Oakland. It's in Oakland now.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Pacific Dreams?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: I don't know. All I know is that's what he's doing.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: How many years?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: How many children?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Good for you.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Thirty.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: How many children?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: How many years?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: about you?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Is she doing a study of all of you? Is she going to write
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: Humanities.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: You said she's a teacher. What does she teach?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: How old is she?
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: She doesn't intrude,
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: She's a dancer, another woman
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: whatever you want to call it. And she just got back from New York. And
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: She's just a woman that she thinks is important. And then she has me
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: She considers important. And she devotes her time traveling to each one in
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: She's a dancer. And she's a pianist, too. She's a musician.
CLAIRE FALKENSTEIN: She's a woman. She's a professor at a university, and she's a writer, and she's a
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