

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF DUDLEY CARTER

BY EMMANUEL MONTOYA AND EMMY LOU PACKARD

2/11/83 at Emmy Lou Packard's apartment (from tape of EM)

Transcription by Jeff Goldthorpe, CCSF.

[Editor's Note: Remembrances get a little fogged with time.]

ELP: I always loved Pierre Trudeau he's so handsome. (laughter)

DC: they staged quite a big party for me on my 91st birthday

ELP: Got a letter from Buckingham Palace.

EM: You got a letter from the Canadian president?

ELP: Yeah, Trudeau.

EM: A telegram?

DC: B.C. President and Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, and Queen Elizabeth says she can't write me a letter of compliments till I'm a hundred years old, but what she did say was better than what she originally. (laughter)

EM: Oh, look at that.

ELP: Well, I have this photograph.

DC: That's the one I started that just after the grounds were completed. That's the first one, I mean sold to the Seattle Art Museum in 1932.

EM: That's called

ELP: [*The Goddess of the Forest*](#), this is the first one in the park.



EM: That's huge.

ELP: Oh, Dudley, tell about when they got that log. Remember?

DC: That uh taxing the voice

EM: Tell us how they got the big log for the *Goddess of the Forest*.

DC: Think it was 32 feet if I got it right, it weighed about 30 tons, about 7 feet in diameter, I think. But the redwood was very heavy. It was green, green wood

ELP: And the train fell down into the river, didn't it? When it was carrying that, remember? You told it.

EM: The train, she said the train had a wreck

ELP: ...and fell down into the river. The log dragged the train down into the river.

EM: The train had a wreck that was carrying the log. Is that true?

DC: I don't quite get what you mean there.

EM: Emmy Lou says that there was a wreck, an accident.

DC: Oh, oh, the accident! That wasn't getting this one, It was getting the one they tried to get...what happened, they were hauling it out of the woods. The road bed settled, the load went into the canyon, and then they salvaged it, set up a big locomotive and crane to salvage the locomotive, they had an accident and they both went into the canyon the crane and the locomotive. So, they had two locomotives and a big crane

EM: Where was this at?

DC: That was a big timber company. There was a manager.

EM: Here in California?

DC: In northern California, up in guess it was probably in Humboldt County, not too sure, it was a big timber area. And this was Murphy, the general manager, he was the President for the company, he was telling me about it he said don't worry about it, nobody got hurt, but he got a tremendous amount of publicity about it, it must have cost him thousands of dollars to repair the locomotive and the crane, Heh!

ELP: Do you remember when Diego took you and me and Mona, I guess, to see the marble king I guess his name was Mr. Musto, Mrs. Musto, he was going to paint a picture of Mrs. Musto, top of Pacific Heights

DC: To see what?

ELP: To see the marble man, Mr. Musto

EM: When Diego Rivera and Emmy Lou took you to see the marble man, Mr. Musto, do you remember that? ...

DC: Was it a motion picture?

5:00

EM: He was a marble man.... It was a marble company.

ELP: Diego painted his wife, who was very beautiful.

EM: Diego painted a portrait of this man's wife.

DC: I don't remember... Oh, did we go out across the Bay to a dinner that night? I remember that, yeah. They had a party, heh-heh-heh-heh.

ELP: Ask him if he remembers being taken to see *The Great Dictator*. Diego took all of us to see that.

EM: Do you?

DC: He was a Russian dignitary of some sort, wasn't he?

ELP: I don't think so; Italian, Italian

EM: Do you remember when Diego took you to see *The Great Dictator*? The movie, the motion picture?

DC: Yes, I think I remember that yeah. (laughter)

EM: What did you think of that movie?

DC: I guess it was a very good movie, I don't remember it too well, that's where he represents the motion picture industry, by his illustration of that *The Great Dictator*

is played by Charlie Chaplin and Francis Lederer, I think. Jack Oakie was in that. Edward G. Robinson, too. [Note: Chaplin and Oakie were in *The Great Dictator*, Robinson and Lederer were in *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, also referenced in the Pan American Unity mural, [panel 4](#).]

ELP: Yes, he was painting that in the panel of City College mural, of course at the Golden Gate International Exposition and he took all of the actual crew to see the movie, I remember.

DC: <asks for clarification>

EM: Diego took the whole crew to see *The Great Dictator*.

DC: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ELP: He had been staying with the Chaplin's in the... [Note: Paulette said Chaplin didn't like many of her friends and Diego spent the night at the home of his friend Dolores del Rio. This was Diego's first weekend in California and he went to L.A. from S.F.]

DC: Yeah, Charlie Chaplin was the star of that, wasn't he?

ELP: Rivera had been staying with the Chaplin's on his way up to San Francisco, and of course Paulette Goddard was Mrs. Chaplin at that time, and she came up to pose for the central figure in the mural, and something has disappeared I was going to say, I'll have to think about that, with, oh yes, Rivera was very, very, political, well afraid of the German menace, the Nazis, and he warned everybody that , and it was true, I saw it in news in a book by a news person, said the same thing, gave the same names of the German spies that had been sent over and were working in the

German embassy in Mexico City. And Diego had said in preparation for when the Japanese would attack the United States, and nobody believed him, and he talked to a great many people about this, I remember.

EM: This was before the war.

ELP: Yes, this was just before we entered the war and of course a year later Pearl Harbor happened. He painted the mural in 1940, not thirty-nine, people say thirty-nine, 1940. I spent forty-one with Diego and Frida in Mexico, and I came up to the United States, and was having a show in Hollywood in Los Angeles, just as Pearl Harbor happened.

...

EM: See what else we have here.

DC: This is designed pretty much like the *Ram*, only this other one was *Goddess of the Forest* a principal of the totem carving, it utilizes the full dimensions of the tree, designs the thing so it utilizes the tree in its cylinder form. It's a little closer in design to the totem style design in the *Ram*

ELP: It maintains the tree form the way the totem.

DC: It was simple to do. You could see how I made good time on it. Just a put a big notch in.

EM: You said you had an elevator to get up?

DC: Yeah, an elevator, move by hand up and down, also saved a lot of time...a good way to work big thing like that, it was so convenient to get up

10:00

ELP: I remember when you were working. We were on the mural scaffold we were fairly close, you could see Dudley working... This was in the Art in Action section of the Golden Gate International Exposition in a big airplane hangar, hanger B on Treasure Island. Dudley would demonstrate the axe, the two-sided axe he was carving with by sharpening a pencil how well he could use the thing. It was fantastic.

EM: Emmy Lou remembers seeing you working there on Treasure Island, that you would take your axe and you would sharpen a pencil

DC: Yeah, he-he-he-he. I used to do some stunts. A motion picture was made of me for Paramount, and that showed some of these stunts where, just for the fun of it, put up a chip on a tree, about 60 feet away and throw the axe and cut the chip in two. <EM laughter> It shows that in the motion picture for Paramount. It takes quite of <sic> practice to do, I could still do it. I could practice up for a bit.

ELP: I bet you could...This is a very different piece of sculpture here, very

DC: This is one at entrance to the Palace of Fine Arts. Now that was timber brought out of Pillow <?> Colorado canyon and uh

ELP: A winged figure

DC: After the Condor which was entered in the San Francisco Art Museum, and this one was finished at... I got most of the work done. I brought it into the Four.... I bought it into Theater in and finished it there the Four Theater in Carmel and finished it there, and then let's see the second year of the Fair San Francisco asked me what I had, if I could loan something for the Fair and I told them this one, and

there's a picture of the other one representing the other one representing a legend
there was a bigger area than this one

ELP: This has a very different quality, there's a very moving quality, not at all like a totem, there's a beautiful male and female figure...

DF: This represents a local Indian legend, the San Francisco area, in terms of ancient story

ELP: Where is it now?

DC: Where's it now? It took it up north, not till seventy-three and sold them to Allied Stores. They were on sale at Monterey for several years, and no one to buy 'em there, and so I took them up north and sold them right away. Allied stores bought 'em, bought a collection of them, sixteen pieces all together he-he-he, that was a pretty good deal and sold them, about six of them were big ones, so I did pretty good on that deal. Right away Allied Stores bought 'em.... sixteen pieces.

They were building a big shopping center, planning on building this big shopping center right on a common boundary with my property. They had trouble developing that shopping center, there was too much opposition to it, and it went to court, and it remained in court, they may have eventually won, if they took time but they didn't want to take that time, so the president sold the property, where they were going to develop this shopping center, and it was bought then by a California developer, and they held it for a while and then I sold my property to this developer, that bought Allied Stores property, and they held it for two or three years and then it was resold again to what is known now as the resorts park. I think that what they do there

what they're planning to getting under way, that all together it's a 120 acres see it's
a

15:00

problem of research projects, principally Boeing's, such a huge concern, there's
such a tremendous amount of, quite a number of subsidiary companies working for
Boeing, going to occupy 120 acres also on my property, so I did pretty good in the
sales, there's properties that, it sold for double the money that got sold to Merrill
and Lynch in Los Angeles, the second time it sold the price had doubled. We paid
big money, millions and millions for the property, so I had to find some way to get
the money out, didn't see any other way this research department of Boeing that
supports the whole Seattle area.... there's a tremendous amount of work going on
there.

ELP: for the record we ought to say that Dudley Carter, who is sitting in my
apartment on Mission and Capp Street in San Francisco and Emmanuel Montoya is
trying to get Dudley to talk, we are looking at photographs of his sculptures

EM: What is this here, Dudley? What is this photograph here?

DC: That is the facade of the Cascade Building I was telling you about that...

ELP: That was at the Fair

DC: That's Sugar Pie, which was my wife and I soon after the Fair opened, before
the mad rush started

ELP: The architect ...of that was named?

DC: Otto Deichmann... he was the architect of the building.

ELP: You think he might be the one shown in the mural

DC: I don't know. This man you point out to me looks to me like him

ELP: Good, we'll look it up and see.

DC: Now this is the top half the lower half of the same piece, this is Peggy Alice?

This is to represent, was the one that made a pair with the other one you are looking at there that was the entrance to the Palace of Fine Arts, second year of the Fair

ELP: And this?

DC: That's the top half of the same thing ...it goes on up.

ELP: Yes, I see

DC: And that's maybe an Indian chief in Alberta (laughter). I had done a totem for the high school there, a tremendous high school, it had over a thousand students and I was expected to attend the party there and give them a little talk... this was a cheerleader, the queen for that year, (laughter)

ELP: This is, what's this?

DC: That was another piece that was supposed to be loaned to the Exposition and sold to Allied Stores

EM: And where did you do this piece?

DC: That was done in 1935 or 36, and that was already made and they loaned it

ELP: What is this animal? ...

DC: This is a mythical character, it represents a very simple story down on the coast, down at Monterey. The story tells of a young Indian chief who brings his

girlfriend down to the sea coast to meet this sea monster (laughter) she doesn't look very pleased to meet him," (laughter). That was also sold to Allied Stores

ELP: That's a beautiful head...forest deity...

DC: That was a head that was made at the time that Paramount was making this motion picture, they would like to have two large pieces under way. So, I started this one, didn't quite finish it... it was a standing living tree, an odd thing they got a standing living tree, not sure, somewhere

20:00

ELP: This is a fascinating one, with the figures inside the tree.

DC: This was commissioned by the King County Art Commission in Seattle, and this stands in Marymore Park, that's an illustration of something in my later things, I opened up a tree and set something in it, according to a story they say these legends of the moon, how the ancient moon was born in the sky and his mother there bringing him; this represents the passageway from the earth to the sky and its put together just like the Indian artists put it together in British Columbia and Alaska

ELP: Those are beautiful things

<recording halted>

DC: the other one in Seattle Art Museum and you saw these two and the other

<recording halted>

DC: followed a tree in Big Basin Park in which some of the material spilled out and...Carmel...I think you had pictures, how do you say it?

<recording halted>

DC: How you say it, that was the first one on the banks of the Carmel River that was our home when men wife, my daughter and myself bought a home in the Carmel area after we left San Francisco.

ELP: This says its <she quotes> “a replica of a Haida Indian big house of Alaska and northern British Columbia fitted together in an authentic manner without nails or hardware. It was the sculpture studio in Carmel, California, 1934-35 to 1941, purchased in 1941 by SFB Morse of Pebble Beach, California.

DC: The only thing I didn't make is the glass. There was no manufactured lumber. The cost is...

ELP: That's a beautiful house is that still there?

DC: Seven dollars and fifty cents (laughter)

EM: Is that still there?

DC: No, it's been moved twice. It's very simple to move, just like...comes apart.

Just like the big houses in northern British Columbia and Alaska, only they built them very large, this is only just a small replica of. No, it was moved it wasn't washed coming on like <?> considering my engineering work. This was sold to Sam Morse, he was big promoter. He was the one who tried to bring the capital from Sacramento to Monterey, he pretty much ... <?> he didn't quite make it Sam Morse <Morris?> he bought it, he used to set up a big swimming pool used to entertain a lot of motion picture stars and the swimming pools...<?> this was a turtle that belonged to it, one solid block from the top. And this is the pin, the oak pin of this door, it goes right across the door, see. ...And then I made another

one...a studio at Bellevue, a while till I sold it, was larger than this one and I bought eleven cords of this and this is the totem in the, very similar to a totem in front of the second one, I sold that one. This is the frame marker, shows how they are put together...

EM: I see

ELP: Why do those heavy

DC: This is a totem, called a totem with its ...<?> This is done for the Northgate, another new shopping center in Seattle. That was carved in 1954, no 1953, You have a bird form, no a canoe, gosh that dates it <?>

EM: And the

DC: And the other people ...<?> cleaned it I think it was ruined it (laughter)

EM: Oh yeah?

DC: That was a commission for one of the banks in Seattle, the National Bank of Commerce downtown, it's now the Rainier...National Bank

EM: And what does that symbolize?

25:00

DC: This represents progress in the Northwest... I chose abstract forms because we don't know as time goes on the machinery of today, not only machinery but solemn <?> ways might be different a hundred years from now so, I choose this is...<?>in abstract form. The woman represents progress and the Northwest is discarding the Chicalote blanket, representing the laying off the ancient art, and the reaching out to the modern age.

One interesting thing about that piece, it was green wood, was going to be used in doors...<?> might...<?> set it badly. But it has quite a bit of steel on the back to hold it together, has a big hook that hooks it on the wall come right to the floor see, and I felt it was necessary to dry the thing out in the interior <?>.... talking about some results drying in the interior. The time was short to meet the deadline to get this thing done, so I thought the best way to take care of it was to install an electric heater in the back. It was hollowed out, so some parts were only four or five inches thick, so I installed an electric heater in the back. This was just before the bank was to open, a few days, it was about to open, or it might be a week or so. So, I wrapped that heater in asbestos and fastened it in the back. And then just a day or two before the bank did open, I had it so I could lift it off, and take the heater out, the heater dropped out a lot of charcoal so the thing set the thing on fire inside. There was nobody in there at night, it must have filled the bank with smoke, and yet nobody ever knew what happened (EM's laughter). I thought I'd keep it quiet, and not say anything about it, nobody ever knew, but so I was taking a chance but what happened is it gradually dried out in a few days, a part of, it got so hot that the asbestos did not protect it enough, and it set fire to it, and it burned as far as, till it came to the green wood, and then it went out (DC laughter).

ELP: That's lucky

DC: ...Found out how lucky I was that I burn the whole thing down (laughter)

ELP: It would have been embarrassing to burned the bank down, wouldn't it?

(laughter). <overlapping speech ELP / DC> That's a beautiful head. That's a nice animal one there.

DC: Did a good job trying This is down in my camp, this is also sold to Allied Stores. This is sold to a man, named <?> Bellevue, he's quite a wealthy man, he keeps an airplane right in front of there. And this is his residence there. I sat up on, right in front of his residence right on the lake shore, keeps his airplane right in front of there.

EM: And how long did it take you to do this animal?

DC: That went fast. I carved that in about two weeks. And that's hollowed out inside, the same thing again, you don't see it, you don't see the hollowed head, and yet it does a great deal to lessen the weight of it. It cut the weight to probably 25% of what it was <?>...of course <?> in cases like this you have to be sure you use plenty of reinforcing steel and conceal it, so you don't see it, so the things are always much stronger than what you, originally in a solid block, and to fasten the horns pieces selected.... conceal metal also

EM: How do you keep the wood from splitting and cracking?

DC: Well, just as I was explaining, the best thing to do, however you can do it, why, if it's a relief, against the wall, you can apply heat on the opposite side of the carving, like you might apply heat to the sun, you might set it out in the sun. I did that for the Shasta Cascade Building [At the Golden Gate International Exposition]. That wasn't completed right, so I that dried out some in the sun, but these here,

these large ones, well I, they're often heated by fire inside, set fire in it, this was an accident, this fire I was telling you about here, but I've done the same thing intentionally many times, some of the big ones maybe ... select a tree... there's a hole through it, and set a fire one of these 35-foot feet high ones, five and half feet in diameter ... it's like it's got a hole this big in it, so I set up at an angle like this and set a fire here, so a fire run through it a flame come out the other end. And you have to be careful then that you didn't go too far, like places like (laughter) in the bank there and put a lid over the top and put a fire out, and that does wonders to save the wood from (checking?) on the outside. It's the best thing you can do because it makes the wood so much lighter for transportation and in many cases cuts about 25% of the original weight and there's no sense in having that big solid block of interior wood, but what happens, naturally the wood will dry on the outside, then that whole mass of wood an interior will remain.

31:22 END OF INTERVIEW