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Marge Levy Lecture at Mandeville Art Gallery

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1 hour, 3 minutes, 47 seconds

Speaker: Marge Levy

Transcribed by: Sarah Fuchs

[History of the UC San Diego Visual Arts Department](#)

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Time	Transcription
00:07	Woman 1: Speaker Marge Levy has been the executive director of Pilchuck Glass School since 1991. And prior to that, she was a professor of Fine Arts while serving as dean at University of Michigan School of Art from 1968 to 1991 and she was also the chair of the division Art and Design at Purdue University in the 80s as well.
00:30	For many years, Marge was an active creative artist exhibiting ceramic vessels and sculptures in solo and group exhibitions nationwide. She has been an exhibition curator and curator, a leader in national and international artistic and educational associations and projects, and she's also an honorary fellow in the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts and the recipient of a distinguished alumni award from the University of the Arts.
1:06	Marge is active in the Seattle arts community. She is part of a number of boards there including the Contemporary Arts Council at the Seattle Art Museum. At Pilchuck, she lives on campus during the summer and occasionally creates pieces in glass and other media. And there's a note here that says, an edible birdhouse made of polenta and sunflower seeds. [laughter from audience]
1:33	[unclear] garden projects. In the winter, she lives and works in Seattle at Pilchuck's administrative office where she works year round with a staff of twelve. In 1996, she led a committee in producing, marketing, and distributing the first book on the history of The Pilchuck School and I know she's brought a copy of this really beautiful book with her today, which you can look at after the talk. And in 1997, she curated an international Pilchuck glass exhibition in Munich, Germany.
2:09	And then just last year, she led the school to the successful completion of a 3.4 million dollar capital campaign, which is pretty impressive I think. Marge resides in the Queen Anne neighborhood in Seattle with Rosa and Catastrophe, her Yorkshire terriers, very appropriately named I think, and exercises at Sound Mind and Body, hoping to maintain both for years to come. [audience laughter]
2:43	So Marge, we just want to welcome you here and we're delighted that you can speak and tell us more about Pilchuck today. Thank you. [applause]
2:59	Marge Levy: Ok so, there is a kind of energy and kind of charisma that a place can have and Pilchuck has that place, but it's rare that I come into a room of people and meet a group of people that I just feel the vibes from. I read in the Union Jack what- what was that four years ago?- I got a call from someone in Portland, Oregon and she said there was people I know who want to come to the Pilchuck auction and every year, in order to support Pilchuck, which is a non-profit 501C3, all of that, we have to raise about a million dollars a year.

- 3:44 And the artists are so thrilled to be a part of Pilchuck and they understand that Pilchuck really is there for the artists, that the artists give us a piece of glass once a year. And we take that glass, put it together, have an exhibition, and have an auction. A thousand people come and it is totally phenomenal. 300 and – 300 come from out of town, 300 artists, another 400 people from Seattle. And it was sold out. So this woman calls me from Oregon– Portland and she says there are these people, Jack and Judy White and they really want to come, and they've been on a waiting list for 2 months, they can't get it; we've got to do something.
- 4:24 I said thank you very much. "No really." [audience laughter] She says "No they're really cool." So I say alright I'll call them. So I call them, intending to say sorry, and– I think it was Jack that I spoke too– and I say well, you know, it just sort of came up, maybe I can sneak you into a couple of things, because we have groups from out of town and I've had to sort of do this hit and run and here and there and everything and maybe you can just come in my car and I'll take you to a few things.
- 5:00 Well little did I know that Erna Zul, this collector from Belgium, was going to show up. She was on a waiting list, we never told her to come, she just showed up, and she was there. Livio Seguso, a very very well known Italian sculptor, he just sort of showed up..
- 5:16 And then Judy and Jack were there. And they wound up being my saviors because we took Livio and Erna Zull around and they had a big enough car [audience laughter].
- 5:28 So I just told people, 'oh, they're all with me' so I'm in my car kind of directing and Jack and Judy are behind me, these two other people who I had to take and it was one of these serendipitous things. I wound up just finding that– that Judy and Jack were just the best. Absolutely the best. Sometimes you talk to people and they don't get it. They got it.
- 5:48 They got the charisma. They got the work. They got the art. They're just smart, really cool people. And Livio and Erna were not bad either! [laughter] And so, I wound up making lifelong friendships with everyone and it was all because of Judy and Jack and I'm delighted to know that they were instrumental in having me down here today.
- 6:10 Because, I'm going to show you slides about Pilchuck and I hope that in the course of– I just realized that I'm supposed to use this, just a moment. I think I have a microphone in my voice and I'm not used to speaking with the mic but I hope that I'll be able to answer enough questions that you have through the talk, because I know some of the kinds of things that people ask about, like "What does [Dale] Chihuly have to do with Pilchuck?," "What does Pilchuck mean?," "Where is Pilchuck?," "How many students come?," and "What do you make?" And the

answer to the last question is the only thing Pilchuck does, is make artists. We don't produce glass. Pilchuck is really a school. And artists and energy are what we create. And from those artists and the energy come the work, come the level of accomplishment and come all the excitement that you know of and think about when you think about Pilchuck.

- 7:15 And then I hope through the slides that I can show you some of that and then I hope that I can show you the answer to the last question that people ask which is "What's next and what's happening?" And by the end of the slideshow, I hope that you will all be part of the Pilchuck family, because if you're good and stay awake, I have a picture of the newest Pilchuck Spirit. Dale's Baby. Two and a half weeks old: Jackson Viola Chihuly
- 7:47 Jackson is his former fiancé, who is the mother of his child, who— her name is Leslie Jackson— and that's the baby's first name. Viola is his mother's name and, in truth, Viola, his mother, is really the most important person in his life and Chihuly, of course, is the last name. So that's the reward for staying awake and alert [laughter] Ok?
- 8:15 Now if you have any questions— I can't believe, they're trying to video tape this and I'm directly in the line of Alessandro's sculpture where I don't know HOW they can see me. So if there are any questions you have or I mumble or if I— you don't understand something, ask; and if I go on too long say "thank you" and I'll keep moving. ok?
- 8:50 Is there a way that we could turn off the lights on the sculpture— on Alessandro's sculpture? Can I darken the area a little bit?
- 9:01 I'll start out by showing you some slides of the place. The place that 28 years ago, Dale chose to do this really cool idea. Dale is from Washington and he's from Seattle and he studied interior design. He's actually from Tacoma. And he had studied interior design at the University of Washington and later on, wound up in the north east. And at a certain point, he wound up having gotten his bachelor's and master's degrees. He went up the Haystack in Maine. One of the people who was at Haystack was Jack Lenor Larsen, the textile designer.
- 9:50 And Jack was also from Washington and he knew Dale. And they were up at Haystack at the same time and Dale was sort of teaching what he knew about glass, which was, you know, one horse powers worth of glass information, very little, because most of what Dale knew and sort of melted window glass and woven together and didn't know a lot and he was always very enthusiastic as he always is.
- 10:14 And he was saying "Wouldn't it be great if we had something like Haystack out on the West Coast and wouldn't it be great cuz it's— it's so cold there and nasty there

all the time. It would be great for blowing glass.” And Jack had served on the board of the American Craft Council with John Hauberg. John Hauberg’s grandfather, Mr. Denkmann, and Mr. Weyerhäuser were buddies.

- 10:39 As John Hauberg put it, he— he and Mr. Weyerhäuser were some of the old Germans who lived in Wisconsin. And they were very tight with their money and tight in their business. And when they realized there were all these trees out west, they would go up and down the Mississippi River and they would take orders for lumber. And then, they would go to the west coast and cut it and bring it back and provide the lumber for all the mid-western houses and communities that were being built in the late 1800s, so that they never cut a tree they hadn’t sold before. It was a really good way to go in business and they also went together in these sort of buying groups and business groups.
- 11:19 Ultimately, they moved and some of the people settled down in the west coast. And Mr. Weyerhäuser really wanted to sort of break away from the whole group, but a bunch of the— the German guys— guys of German ancestry from Wisconsin went out to the West Coast and they stayed there, but Mr. Weyerhäuser was most enthusiastic, so we gave everybody else Weyerhäuser’s stock and then they went on and did what they wanted to do. And so John Hauberg has a giant share of Weyerhäuser stock and he never has worked at all in his life, but he’s always— he— he was very, very well education at Princeton and because he got involved, inadvertently— John did, through his grandfather Mr. Denkmann, he studied forestry at Princeton. But he did.
- 12:07 And so, never having to make any money through it, he always did very experimental things in forestry and became a leading forester. He owns a whole bunch of hills and a mount— mountain here and mountain there and a mountain in other places and Jack Lenor Larsen knew this. John married Anne Gould Hauberg. Her father was an architect. He designed the Seattle Art Museum, the original one. He designed the campus of the University of Washington as an architect and planner. He designed the Henry Gallery, most of the central buildings on campus. And they met, fell in love, and got married.
- 12:40 She also didn’t work and came from a family that was very well educated, and they both had the freedom to do what they wanted. John wanted to do something really cool and was an art collector and environmentalist. And Annie *loved* artists. Annie loves artists more than John ever loved artists, but Annie thought it would be great to have a school for weavers.
- 13:04 But nobody liked that. Then Annie thought it would be great if Morris Graves and a few of his buddies, you know, in the Northwest Painting School sort of went up and had a retreat, up where the trees were. They thought this was just stupid.
[laughs]

- 13:16 But Jack knew that Annie and John had land and space, were sympathetic artists, and wanted to do something. And Jack introduced Dale Chihuly to John and Annie Hauberg. And they came out and they came to this beautiful land.
- 13:33 This land that had this first growth timber. Those are the big bottoms of the trees that they first cut down. When they cut them down, they only got paid for the sticks. And the trees grew very narrow, very quickly; very wide base and then very narrow. So they didn't cut them down at the bottom because they didn't have saws that were that long. They would cut them up about that high.
- 13:54 And then the stumps of the trees stayed there and in this day and age now are rotten and all the birds have pooped little bird seeds in them and they have various other trees growing out the top of various other trees— berry trees usually.
- 14:07 But you can see that John's land is about a thousand feet up. And what you're looking at is west towards the Puget Sound towards Japan. All the trees rotted, here; and then Dale moved in. Dale came up with a \$2,000 grant from eight colleges, brought sixteen students, who turned out to be maybe twenty, but a few of them didn't like it, so they left.
- 14:34 They came. They pitched tents. There were horses that wandered around. There were fields, and within 16 days they had built little sheds like this. They were blowing glass; you can see furnaces in the background. They had built shelters to live in.
- 15:53 And they were living there making glass. Some of the ugliest junk you ever saw, but it was the first attempt and some stuff that was made the first summer. Most of the houses decomposed after the first summer. There are four of the origin— remaining original artist houses that are left. This is the most famous one and this one we actually had to decommission because that— see that little planter box there, the back of it rotted off and somehow that planter box became a catch basin for all the water and the water seeped in and under that window— you notice, by the way, there's no structural elements on this little house. [laughs]
- 15:32 And it formed a puddle for about nine months that rotted the remaining plywood floor that was in there, so we have to kind of rebuild that. You can see the [unclear] steps because they rotted. But this is a house that was just built on one of the tree stumps.
- 15:50 We- when we were looking to put together the Pilchuck book we hired an airplane to fly over the place so you could get an idea of what the land looked like. And you can begin to see what the campus looks like now. It's a view nobody has. The spaceship looking, round building, is the hot shop which was the first building that was built.

- 16:12 The second building that was built was the flat shop, which has the flat roof which is why it's called the flat shop. Then, in the woods, you can't see a lodge but I'll show that to you in a minute— in the 80s, housing was built because the health department found out what the students were living in and did not like it. In the 80s, the first bathrooms were built. [laughter]
- 16:36 This is what the central campus looks like now from one perspective. It— there is, straight ahead, you see a little, kind of— what looks like a little arch with a few steps going up that goes to a bridge that goes over to a lodge and I'll show you in the next slide. My office is right over here. I can see everything that's going on.
- 17:04 The flat shop is— has a big neon facility in it. And what Pilchuck started out, glass blowing; now, we teach anything that has to do with glass: blowing, casting, neon, etching, engraving, stain glass, black glass, slumped glass, about five different kinds of cast glass, anything. Anything that's made with glass, we have the supplies and the equipment to teach. That's the lodge that that little stairway goes to. And in that lodge on the lower level, we make prints and do laundry. On the middle level, we eat and party. On the upper level, we have part of our permanent collection of glass and stuff that people have left and when that was started, there were no trees around. That's the way it is now.
- 17:55 The school operates full tilt from May through August. Four months. Every three weeks, a different shift comes in. When— you measure time in different ways. We measure it in the summer by sessions: session 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Every session we have five classes. Every class has ten students in it. So we have fifty students at a clip. Five of them. Two-Hundred-Fifty students come through. Now the students range in age from 18 to 70.
- 18:26 Some of them are novices. Some of them are very experienced. Sometimes we'll have somebody who will teach one class one session and be a student the next. Some of the classes are— you have to be able to walk and talk and want to take it and then you get in. Others, we have a jury. Some classes have a waiting list of 130.
- 18:46 Some, if they're either strange or new, or very specific, we only have eight people in the entire world who have any interest in it. And we don't have courses based upon popularity; we have courses based upon what we think needs to be disseminated in the world. We could fill up Pilchuck with beginning glass blowing and have 50— and have 25 classes beginning glass blowing but we don't do it. We have people who come from all over the world to study. The students come from 39 states and 23 countries. And the faculty and the teaching assistants a— come from the same range.
- 19:27 This summer, out of the 25 classes, 17 of them are taught by international faculty. It's rather incredible. Our staff are all American or people with green cards,

because that's the law. But the TAs and the various assistants work— sort of like they work, we kind of pay their plane ticket and give them money, and so people are happy.

- 19:51 The building, up in the back, you're seeing up there with little dots on the top; that's the coal shop. That's where we sand glass, engrave, carve, etch. And because we have had faculty teaching that over the years, we have Czechoslovakian engraving tools, and Italian engraving tools, and German cutting tools, and Italians cutting tools, and American modern tools. And we have air powered tools; and we have water powered tools; and we have electric powered tools. And it's very crazy but we try to do what we both wanna do.
- 20:22 We also operate the school 20 hours a day. Classes start at 5 in morning and go 'till 1 in morning. And we only have 4 hours of down time to let the glass settle and pray that people will all sleep slightly at the same time.
- 20:38 The campaign that we just finished at Pilchuck to raise \$3.4 million was kind of to ensure the future. Two million of that is designated for [unclear] scholarships, so we always have artists come and teach students no matter what their financial circumstances, but one— one and a half or \$1.4 million we devoted to enhancing the campus. It's almost like we've created a monster, because what we did was that we taught people how to do new things and we taught ourselves to do new things but then we didn't have any room to do it.
- 21:12 So this was the first project that we finished and this was a new hot shop, the second hot shop, purely for casting glass and I'll show you more slides of that. Another thing that we did to really bring campus up to snuff was that we built real staff housing and real toilets and showers. Can we believe it? Until two years ago the staff were— they did not have toilets and showers. While I felt very proud that we raised the money, it was not too hard to go to donors and explain that we didn't have toilets for the staff. And so that helped.
- 21:45 And all the houses are individual little houses, just like they were even though our trustees are so fabulous because they said, "well why don't you just build like a motel?" And the staff said: "No way! You know, we're there all day. We need our privacy" And we said "alright."
- 22:01 And, so, we built all these funny little houses in the woods. But these are waterproof and the wood is treated. Pilchuck was built in the beginning by, not only artists who were kind of hippies, but architects who were hippies and most of the wood that was used in the original buildings was from the land and wasn't treated because you didn't want to put bad chemicals on things.

- 22:21 Consequently, we had to replace most of the original architecture because the bugs ate it all from the inside out. It was a real thrill. [audience chuckle] We have a pond. And this is actually— is a picture of the staff meeting.
- 22:39 Pilchuck is not just a place about— not just a place. It's really about people. And it's about energy and it's about spirit. And Chihuly is right there in center with his former fiancée on his— on one— on his left. The gal with the long hair. A lot of the old Pilchuck pioneers were there. Flora and Joey are there on the left and Fritz Dreisbach in the red shirt who's kneeling. Flora is kneeling next to Fritz and Rob Adamson. I don't really know any of these people.
- 23:13 Ben Moore and Joey are standing on the left. She has the striped shirt and she's holding the pipe and Ben's behind her. And all these people were up there for a special anniversary event that I'll tell you about later.
- 23:23 But, there are many, many people who you know about who have been at Pilchuck. Dale, of course. Dale has nothing to do with the management of the school, at all. His spirit perm— permeates every piece of wood, every brade— blade of glass. Everything we do and we sometimes say— and I sometimes say, "what would Dale think?" And we think it's chaotic, it's crazy, we love it. But Dale is— is a trustee and is actually vice president of the board of trustees.
- 23:53 Someone who you know very well is Italo [Scanga]. And I don't know whether— is Italo here? Italo has been an artist in residence from, I believe, the second year. He came up there. He and Dale were buddies because they both taught at the Rhode Island School Design and Italo has been absolutely critical to the history of Pilchuck and the development of Pilchuck, because I truly think that without Italo, Pilchuck would have become a craft school. It would have been a school about making as opposed to being a school about making and thinking.
- 24:28 Pilchuck has always distinguished itself by having a fine arts approach. And Italo was sort of a classic example of somebody who has no skills, but has a great artistic sense and knows about materials. He's good with his mind, just not real good with his hands. So what we do is provide the hands for Italo. And it's much easier to provide hands than it is to provide minds.
- 24:57 One of the hands that was at— that still is at Pilchuck is Bill Morris and I'm sure that you've seen him and know his work. Bill did not come to Pilchuck being the artist that he is today and he's probably one of the most important artists working in glass— directly working in glass itself. I think in the world. He came there as a truck driver. He came up in 19— 1978. Twenty years now. This was twenty years ago.
- 25:27 And he came up because he had been a potter and he had worked in the round and he just thought this might be kind of interesting and somebody suggested he come up so he showed up. And said, "So anything I can do to be useful?" And

Dale said, "can you drive?" "Yes." "Take the truck; go pick up somebody at the airport."

- 25:45 And he never left. And he's been there now for twenty years. So Dale taught him how to blow glass. Dale then hired him and had him work for him for ten years. Bill said, "it's just a privilege to work with you" that he never took a dime from him. He worked for him for ten years for no money. I have no idea how he did it except I know he comes from a family of doctors, like his mother and his father, and his two brothers are all doctors, so I think they must have helped him out.
- 26:13 But he never took a dime from— from Dale and just worked and worked and worked and is— has taken off on his totally independent route. Bill works at Pilchuck every— every winter. We in— in 1980, Dale started sort of staying over in the winter and asked Bill to help him. And then Dale started building his own studios in town, and so Bill inherited the studio so Bill uses the campus in the winter— all winter. And he's working on building his own studio but he's having some problems with neighbors who think [unclear].
- 26:47 Behind him is somebody else who's a very important person at Pilchuck and you will always see him behind other people. He's been probably Pilchuck's most distinguished alumni. And that is Dante Marioni. Dante is the son of— of Paul Marioni, who has two brothers: Tom and Uncle Joe. Three men who are artists in totally different ways, in three totally different cities. But Dante grew up with Paul, and was raised by a single dad and started coming to Pilchuck with Paul when he was 15.
- 27:23 And he's been coming almost every year since. He— he never went to college and went to high school in Pilchuck. And he's just stayed at Pilchuck and worked with the other artists at Pilchuck and has come into his maturity as an artist though Pilchuck.
- 27:39 This picture when I put it in here I thought was pretty significant too because down— at the end of the pipe was Alison. Alison Chism, and Alison is a young artist who, like many of the artists who are at Pilchuck now, went to art school, and comes— and started coming up to Pilchuck just in the summer. She moved back to Seattle, settled there, wasn't that good and was a girl. And wasn't so accepted by the boys.
- 28:05 But she stayed and stayed and stayed and persevered. And there is a whole generation of women artist who are working in glass, who work out, who work with weights, who get their shoulders strong enough so they can do anything that guys can do. See Bill's shoulders, I mean not all the glass blowers are built like Bill, [audience laughter] but it's really hard for— for women to look like— just because of the physics of it and the fact that you're standing up there and you have to have big shoulders and big muscles to do it.

- 28:37 But these gals work out and they taught themselves to do it and I'm showing you some slides of some of the women who are doing some really interesting things with art.
- 28:48 What Bill was doing there, actually this slide, was that he and Dante were working as gaffers. It's sort of embarrassing but we paid Bill \$8 an hour to come up and blow glass for us. We also paid Dante \$8 an hour and Dante says it's so embarrassing to take it that he says just take my check and give it to the school and that's alright, I can find \$8 dollars an hour somewhere else. Bill takes it; I don't know what he does with it. But what they are doing is that they are working for an artist and in this case they're working for Lorna Simpson and I don't have any finished work of hers but they have also worked for Italo.
- 29:25 And I just want to show you sort of an example of the kind of thing that they'll do when they are with an artist because Italo has been trying to make the perfect glass plane for fifteen years. And he's worked with this gaffer and this gaffer, and different gaffers. And there's such a difference. Now there are some sculptures outside, you can see have planes in them.. But is the plane robust? Is it cuppy? Is it solid with little flickers?
- 29:52 And are the flickers clear or are they red? Or does the tail come up? Or is it pulled down? And then how does it relate to the tree that it's next to? Those are the kinds of the things that an artist, who is working on a form whether they have an idea in their head or not, has to see and has to see if there's a resonance. And that is one of the main things that Pilchuck does for artists in the world. And what you're seeing in this room, in part, is a result of that.
- 30:24 Kiki Smith, for example, has come to Pilchuck and I'll— I'll show you some examples of some recent things that she's done there. And Pilchuck has been her hands while she has been allowed to live in her mind and express *her* issues.
- 30:40 Pilchuck has developed its hand through mastery and through masters who have come through. And probably the master who has been most influential at Pilchuck has been Lino Tagliapietra. Lino is the— is a craftsman who, in working at Pilchuck for twenty years himself, has turned into an artist. He wasn't when he came, he could only make reproductions of Renaissance things and sort of typical Venitian kind of glass that people had shown him how to do.
- 31:13 Now mind you, it's not so easy to see in that slide, but he has made, sort of, pencils out of imagine white lead and clear around it and laid them up diagonally and pulled them and stretched them and crossed them so that in every little square that is formed between the crisscrosses of glass, a little bubble of air is trapped. I think that's really killer. But Dale— Dale has worked with Lino for many years.

- 31:39 Lino is the one who's worked with Dale at developing Venetians, who's developed a lot of flowers and take a look, who's in the background there? Dante. Watching. Dante's always watching. He never stops and he had a baby last week. And he named this baby Lino [audience laughter], so excited.
- 32:08 Now notice, Lino is working with the girls. This is unusual. Now, Deris [?sp] is french, she's on the right. And Kate is on the back with Noah Myers [sp?].
- 32:25 Lino just has a touch. But there are more women who are changing the field. Laura and Joey were the first. And when they were working in glass, they were really the only two women who were really working. Karen who is helping them now, works on Bill Morris's team and has been one of Bill Morris's main assistants for seven years now.
- 32:48 That's Karen Willenbrink. There are some other people who are very, very involved at Pilchuck. One of them being Fritz Dreisbach who was at Pilchuck year two and here he is working on a piece that he made for the Corning Museum. Pino, another Venitian, has been to Pilchuck many times. He helped Pilchuck develop— Pilchuck— people around Pilchuck to develop a whole way of working in solid pieces. Not hollow. Solid. And it's a whole different kind of thing.
- 33:22 Kiki Smith is there, on the left, on one of the many occasions where she worked at Pilchuck. And here she is with Paul DeSomma who studied glass working with Pino. And Paul is making one of Kiki's famous sperm, one of her earliest solid pieces that she made in glass. Jim Mongrain is helping Paul DeSomma. Jim, with John Christie, formed a glass studio at Cleveland in that— in Columbus, Ohio, where Kiki worked with them, I believe, making the blood red drops that are in the other room, allllll incestuous.
- 34:07 At Pilchuck people are able to do things that are larger than they are because there are so many hands. This was part of an installation that Ruth King did where she took these triangular pieces of glass and stuck six of them and floated them all over the pond and drew lines in space. But she couldn't have done that without a whole hot shop full of people where, you know, today everyone will make this form. And they did it and then they all were a part of it.
- 34:32 Now, when artists come to Pilchuck they are not students. I'm not telling you too much about students today because it's the artist in residence program that, I think, has distinguished Pilchuck in the world. And, in fact, has gotten a lot of people, like Kiki, and various other artists to come and bring their sensibility to the school and then take it back out with them, but be able to learn how to do it.
- 35:04 When Kiki or Italo say our residents in the school, they have a profound influence on the people who work with their hand because it shows them how engaging their minds is equally important. And by example they did that. Now, every time— every

session, that we're open during summer, we have two artists in residence. We select them extremely carefully.

- 35:31 And we have a huge waiting list. Because when we invite them, we say "Y'all come. We'll play— pay your plane ticket to get there. Ok, then you get there, we'll give you a private studio. We'll give you a private assistant. We'll give you two people to blow glass. We'll give you a print maker to help you make prints. We'll give you any other staff member you need or want to help you make anything else you want on the campus.
- 35:54 We'll let you do it and teach you how to do it yourself so that you can go away and do it and everything you make is yours to keep. We want nothing out of it." And the artists sort of think that they've died and gone to heaven. Buzz Spector, who some of you might know, he's an artist from LA and now lives in Indiana. He said, "Pilchuck is a place for artists to go to heaven without having to die first."
[audience laughter]
- 36:17 But Kiki came and Kiki is an artist who works with her hands but also works with her mind— with— with her hands— she works with her mind and her hands. And we taught her how to flame work and here she is working in glass by herself, not just watching and directing. John Christie worked with Jim Mongrain in Ohio and they, I believe, the plates that are out there..
- 34:41 And what she was doing here was making some of those little wormy baskets and little wormy objects that make miniature sperm. Kiki has been just the most incredible artist in residence because she is so dramatic and she is so serious and so personable about what she does. Here she was working with the gaffers and they were making moons and craters on moons, which I originally thought were ovaries and I told somebody that they were ovaries, and somebody said no they are moons and they're eggs. Now, I think they're moons but I thought they were eggs.
- 37:14 But, while being serious and very dramatic about what she does, she's also hysterical. And that kind of experience for— for the kids, for the artists, for the staff, to be around people like Kiki Smith who come from a lineage of important artists, get a real feel.
- 37:33 The way I know Kiki is that she's my morning walker and we go hike and talk about being fat and old— but she's just a real stitch.
- 37:45 Flame working is a way working in glass that a lot of artists have really come to like. It's been developed at Pilchuck by a number of artists, one of the artists who's worked in recent years with us is Anna Skibska, who's a Polish artist, who, because she lived in Poland, had no space, no equipment, no nothing, learned

how to take window glass, break it into little strips, like band aids, heat it up and tease it out with a tweezer.

- 38:11 Her only tools are a tweezer and a little pitcher, a little baby welding torch that you're seeing there and a paint brush to brush away little bits of glass that get in the way. That's it. And what she does is she just takes little lines of glass and she makes huge webs and she makes things 17 to 20 feet high. It's rather phenomenal.
- 38:35 There are flame workers all over the world. This is Kirk Wallshob[?] who is a German flame worker, but think of all the people— all of these old guys and— not— not women unfortunately, [unclear] work in a chemistry labs, they're all flameworkers and they all know how to do it.
- 38:49 But the person who really got flameworking going at Pilchuck was Ginny Ruffner. And you may have heard about her. She got flame working going because at— at Pilchuck because she just went out and bought some torches and brought 'em up and said we will flame work, because the guys didn't want to do it.
- 39:07 And it was something— it was like chemistry lab or something weird. So she started doing it and it's become quite well known. I just sort of— I got some slides from her and this is a series of pieces that she calls *Conceptualizing Beauty*. And you have clear glass brains down there on the bottom that are thinking about beautiful things.
- 39:30 Woman 2: Oh, that's beautiful.
- 39:32 Marge: This is a cornucopia from *Conceptualizing Beauty*.
- 39:37 *Distilling Beauty*.
- 39:42 *The Virtual Vessel*, part of the *Understanding Beauty* series. That's life size. And Ginny learned at Pilchuck that you can be the mind without being the hands and she has metal workers who make all the metal work— the gold and the silver. And she draws it out.
- 40:05 Some of you may know Ginny, she had a terrible automobile accident about five years ago and was left physically very disabled, where the whole left side of her body does work, her throat doesn't work, her tongue doesn't, her arm doesn't work, her leg doesn't work, but she was determined that she was going to do fine. And— unfortunately, she was left handed so the hand that she can control and work with is her right hand which is her minor hand and she's a trustee with the school and I was— I was writing some memo for her— she told me what she wanted as chair or something [unclear]

- 40:37 And I said, "Would you like to see and sign it before I send it out?" And she said, "Oh, just put a pen in the wrong hand and sign it. It'll look like my handwriting, don't worry." And you can see that there is sort of a bit of a hesitation, a little crudeness, to the piece at the bottom and that was her direction. So, it's really— it's quite interesting and some of the— the top gold part are also kind of crude and that's also at her direction.
- 41:01 And that was something she learned at Pilchuck, watching the skilled people making things for someone else. She learned very easily how to give artistic directions to someone to make something. So that you still have ownership of the work, and ownership of the aesthetic but you don't have to be the hands on everything. Is this interesting?
- 41:22 [agreement from audience]
- 41:23 A couple people left, I don't know whether because their parking meter ran out or if this went on too long.. I'll go fast.
- 41:32 This is one of her students, Sarah Chase, who works in her studio, and more and more, we're finding the artists are concerned with message and image; not so concerned with high skill, high tech or having the look of great skill. It's kind of hard to make these cakes.
- 41:57 And it's very complicated to get all these colors and get the color dry and, you know, all of that. But there's a kind of directness that shows a kind of human touch, that many of them very, very much like.
- 42:10 Sarah Natalie works in glass. She works in [unclear]. [audience admiration] She sets up thrones, tables; she draws; she makes prints. This is a full sized room.
- 42:27 And this piece is about birthdays being real killers. And here, you have glass knives hanging on the ceiling of an inflated birthday cake. [audience laughter]
- 42:43 One of Pilchuck's missions is to be international and to be diverse, and to be diverse means diverse points of view, diverse ethnic backgrounds, diverse histories. So one of the ways that we're able to fulfill that mission is through our artists in residence program where we're able to invite artists to come who we really work hard to discover.
- 43:09 This is a man, I bet you've never heard of, that I'd never heard of. His name is John Scott. He teaches and has taught for 36 years at the only African American Christian private school in the United States: Xavier University. He founded the art department and has taught there for 37 years. And he is the recipient of the MacArthur Foundation Genius Award.

- 43:36 He has a studio where he does public art projects and does works in and around New Orleans, and in the South where he guarantees that he will employ every graduate who finishes the art program at Xavier. It— he is rather extraordinary. Here he— he was here at Pilchuck one summer and he did a lot of work that sort of didn't come out.
- 44:04 So we invited him to come back the second summer and come out and hang around because he just didn't really have enough knowledge about glass. Well, when he came back he realised that we didn't have enough knowledge about molds, so he taught us how— in ten minutes— to cast aluminum molds and he made a clay model of his head, then made it in wax, made an aluminum mold and blew into it and worked with the artists and taught us a thing or two. It was rather incredible.
- 44:32 He also worked in the print shop and he got us working a whole different way using paper models and doing things in paper stencils for monoprints, in a way we would have never suspected. Another artists who has been quite good, and quite influential, at Pilchuck is Deborah Butterfield who does horses and she came and this is driftwood from the Puget Sound and I don't know whether you've heard about this but one of the— the things that happened at Pilchuck auction - I'll have to show you a photo at the end, this is kind of a half done one. At the Pilchuck auction, she gave us this horse, when it was done, which blew me away, because— I don't think it's in the picture— she blew a lot of glass and had the guys blow glass horse hooves for her, sort of up to the knee, in glass.
- 45:27 But they were so exciting for her and so new, she didn't want to give them to us and I was like [mumbling] great that the Butterfield glass thing and she turned around she said take the horse and I almost passed out and it wasn't stuck together well enough so she had her pastor from Walla Walla, Washington come over, pick it up, take it back to Walla Walla, give them the joints with wood and they looked perfect and then he delivered it back.
- 45:57 And she said what is this worth to be auctioned off and she said \$50,000. Well this is the highest valued piece we'd ever put in the auction because Dale gives us pieces every year but he says, "no one is gonna go yea! \$50,000!" when you're drunk and we think it's the best time when we shouldn't, so he always gives us something and— he always gives us a great piece and he alwa— he tries to gives us pieces a little older, a little unusual, like this year he gave us this really big basket, that we just don't get baskets [unclear]
- 46:29 So he— she gave us this horse and I was just dying. Well, we tried to pre-sell it, we had a few people come in and look at it. And I'm just like, "oh it's going to go for \$12,000. Well, little did we know that the two wealthiest, major donors both wanted it and between alcohol and [unclear] [audience laughter], they bid it up to \$150,000 [audience awe].

- 46:56 Now, when you're the founding president of Microsoft you have a lot of discretionary money [audience surprise and awe], but the other guy owns all the land on the both sides of the railroad in the Pacific Northwest, so it's like old money or new money [audience laughter].
- 47:10 And— and the guy— the guy who owned the railroads said “I just wondered now how high the Microsoft would have gone up” and he said “but you know, sort of, a hundred and fifty is about as much as [unclear] I could have gone higher but I would have lost anyways” so he let him off.
- 47:31 John Buck is Deobrah Butterfield's husband. He did a lot of glass— which I don't have pictures of— but, he did some very, incredible work at the print shop and he'd always wanted to do prints— woodblock— very fancy woodblock prints, which he did and we helped him.
- 47:49 And then if you want that, he gave us an additional fourteen, the whole top layer. I'll let you see that again because it's really cool.
- 48:04 Some other artists who've been around— and I'll go through this fast now— there's Ellen Driscoll. Here she is. See, Dante's there again. Dante is the gaffer this time. [unclear] all around.
- 48:16 She was trying to do some work where she'd made figures inside of environments and she literally made cast glass figures that she's trying to figure out how to get inside of environments.
- 48:29 When she wasn't doing that, she was drawing and painting.
- 48:32 Nick Cave was working in the print shop and working with glass. The black pants there are wax and he cast those later on in glass. The pieces in the back, well, they were made in glass.
- 48:49 I'll keep going kind of fast. John Newman. He— teaching at Yale and did this work. And the drawings on the back are drawings of sculptures that he's envisioned in his mind and here he is with an assistant, trying to create them in glass.
- 49:05 We made him polish his own stuff. Now, the question people ask me all the time that I'm going to answer now is: what's next for Pilchuck? Well, at Pilchuck we try— we are now trying to bring back more of the fine artists who have— we taught them how to glass, we're trying to bring them back as teachers. So The Gallery Center's Maria Porges who shows at the ruin in California, in San Francisco, and she was an artist in residence twice and she's there teaching with Tina Aufiero, who's on the left, who's a glass artist who's now showing non-glass things in galleries, so there's this whole mix-up going on. They were teaching a class in multiples, teaching people how to make most molds in cast glass.

- 49:48 Kiki has come back and she's taught a couple of classes for us, where she's the brains and Tom [unclear last name] who's the brawn.
- 49:59 Bertil Vallien has been at Pilchuck many times and he taught us, and everyone else, how to cast glass. And as a result of that, we built that big new addition, the second hot shop which you can see here on the inside, right after it was built. And it still looks like this, it's a— mainly a big old floor with everything on wheels so we can move it around.
- 50:20 When people cast the glass, they just pour it into various kinds of mold, or sometimes pour it through machines and shape it; sometimes pour it into shapes that have copper or other things into it— in it. This is— this is Paul Marioni, [unclear]'s dad, grandpa we call him now.
- 50:41 Or in the case of this work, they cast units in pieces and make concrete furniture and buildings with Hank Murta Adams. Hank with Alessandro and a couple of other people— I'm going to show you who you— are all in a show that's travelling around the world called *Glass Skin*. And if you could just change the tray, and I've got only 25 more slides, I'll do my best.
- 51:06 [inaudible murmuring]
- 51:41 Now, what else is happening at Pilchuck? Are we all making poofy cakes and painting with crayons on glass? No. The skill and a level of skill that we teach and we expect, which is a level of skill well enough to hold something together, we still teach. Rich Royal made these pieces and he teaches with us almost every summer.
- 52:04 While flame-working can make little drizzly things, flame-working can also be used to make very, very controlled work like this work of Roger Paramore. So the skill has not gone out the window. We teach casting in really goofy, silly ways as well in very structured ways as in this work by Antoine le Perrier from Paris who has the best French accent.
- 52:30 And we continue to foster experiments in glass. This piece being a piece that Dante and Dick Marquis worked on, together, in order to make that kind of oaky glass, make little glass eyes, and they developed that and developed a contemporary way of working with that, at Pilchuck.
- 52:53 What's going on at Pilchuck is that there are more girls blowing glass. And that's information— I probably am a very old feminist but it's simply information. More women are getting involved. It's not the boys club anymore. Kait Rhoads is sitting down blowing glass at the tree and a hoodie, has her shirt tied up and it looks like she has a fish on it.

- 53:15 Kait Rhoads– if you're a collector and investing or you're interested or concerned, I think she and Harumi Yukutake are the two hottest, most interesting women working in glass today, who are starting out.
- 53:32 This is Harumi's work. Harumi lives in Japan; she studied in America and lived in America for over five years and so she completely understands and knows Americans. It's really bi-cultural. She works in blown glass, flame work glass, cast stuff– she does whatever necessary. And she's one of the artists who's in *The Glass Skin*. This is a glass brick wall that she's built. Notice how she has figured out, as probably many people have, that you don't have to make big things. You just have to make small things and build them together.
- 54:09 She has just been commissioned by Corning to make the newest piece of sculpture for their newest headquarters building. This is after Chihuly, Bertil Vallien, Libenský, [unclear name], [unclear name]– I think Howard Ben Tré. And now Harumi Yukutake, so you've heard it here. Harumi Yukutake.
- 54:33 You can see some influence of Micheal Sheiner in her work, where she studied in Rhode Island when he was teaching there part time. And this is a piece that's held together purely together by tension. It's not glued together in any way. She calls this a nerve route and it's a detail of a bigger piece and she didn't give me a slide of the bigger piece.
- 54:54 This is a piece she made at Pilchuck, where she made– she cast all these–sort of– nipple little things and then she asked somebody to blow her just giant, big glass globby things. She glued them on with silicon flexible glue and, after she got them all glued on, she broke the eggshell glass that was underneath so that they all move and they are very, very responsive to movement, but she did this at Pilchuck when she was an emerging artist in residence. We have a few select places we give for young people and have them in the fall.
- 55:36 Another artist who I think is hot is our friend Alessandro, who is in the room. He has the ability to take advantage of all the history of glass and the knowledge of his time and his place. He, like Harumi, functions in many cultures and, because of that, can understand and see many cultures. You know, I truly feel sorry for kids who don't speak different languages or have not travelled. I travel all over; it makes up for the fact that I'm a total idiot with languages and I can speak nothing at all.
- 56:15 But to be able to understand that your point of view is not the only one, is the greatest gift that I think you can give to your children and give to your culture. Alessandro lives– or is from a very old Venetian family. He grew up with parents who were truly international, speaks a bunch of languages, has lived in many cultures all over Europe and I understand now as he. I think this piece is– I'm not sure where this is– this piece– was that in Corning, the first one?

- 56:49 Alessandro: No the third one
- 56:50 Marge: The third one. The red one. That's the Corning one. This piece, I first saw in Seattle and I think it's just a marvelous, marvelous piece. It's just incredible strength
- 57:02 This piece is in the collection at Corning Museum and this piece lives in Seattle. It's the first cousin of this piece. And I'm very proud to tell you that Alessandro now works in Seattle. Because of Pilchuck, all of these artists that came from all over the country and all over the world have come and they've stayed in Seattle. There are more hot shops in Seattle than there are in Venice at this point. And we believe, if we're counting right, there are over 500 artists who work in glass, who work within about an hour and half of Seattle.
- 57:40 Most of them in Seattle and some of them just a little north of Pilchuck which is an hour north— and so just a little hour north. It's really— it's— it's remarkable that this happened. What it has done is allowed that subculture of glass arts and glass artists to have a— a critical mass, where you have people who can really help each other, who can understand each other, who are good supporters, as well as good critics.
- 58:10 And we are very thrilled that Alessandro has chosen to do his work in Seattle. He, like Harumi, are artists who were in the Glass Skin, which, I think, is probably the most important glass exhibition that's been curated— other than this one— in the last couple of years.
- 58:29 A lot of what's going on in Pilchuck is attributable to Pike Powers. Pike is here looking like Heidi helping on that earlier project where we were blowing an addition of pieces for Chihuly. And Sonja Blomdahl is sitting in the back and I bet if you look Dante'll stuck in the back some place. Pike is the artistic program director and she is the person who has the sense of vision, the sense of playfulness, the sense of fun. That sense of permission to be and the encouragement to be, the encouragement to think. It— she supports when we're at Pilchuck— a lot of playing around, which is very much in the Chihuly tradition. The Chihuly tradition of getting dressed up.
- 59:17 On the left, in the green, is Martin Blank who is one of Chihuly's main glass blowers. The guy in the beard is the head of maintenance who's been at Pilchuck for 15 years. Alain Gustafferson [sp?] is a journeyman plumber and she works on maintenance and she also runs another glass facility in town. And I cannot remember the name— ah, David Swanson [sp?] is the guy in yellow.
- 59:42 We have parties at Pilchuck all the time where everybody gets together. We have the Sasquatch twins, Jonathan and Abel, who showed up at that party.

- 59:55 The playfulness comes out in work that artists do. This is just kind of a bag shot of some slides of Kim Connell's work. Kim who was on the faculty. He was also up for one session. And of course, Italo. We couldn't— I cannot give Italo enough credit for being a kind of presence at Pilchuck. He was there for 23 years. But probably, of course, the most important presence is Dale. And this is where Dale lives. This is where Dale was 2 years ago when we did a project to support the book that's on the table.
- 60:30 And I brought down a copy of the book down to leave with Kathleen so that she can have it here, for you to look at, and for everybody to look at, and have it in the library [unclear] showing the book. It's a book that took a couple of years to produce and when it was all done we said how are we going to pay for this?
- 60:49 The way we chose to do it was that we did a limited edition of these pieces. We made pieces that were like this and completely hung them in trees like this very ripe fruit and after we hung them in trees we took them down and examined them. And about a third of them had hit other things in the trees. [mumble] So we took them down and the perfect ones Dale signed the edition and numbered and they're available for sale with the special edition of the book with [unclear]. And if anyone is interested, see me later; we have about 6 left. We thought we'd sold them out but we found 6.
- 61:28 If any of you ever want to come to Pilchuck, we preserve that artistic environment for the artists who are there, so that they can do what they need to do. The only time you can come is when we have the auction and we have a whole tour, that if you sign up early, you get to go with everyone else. You don't have to go with me or [unclear]. In fact, don't. And we have these fantastic centerpieces that artists make. For a couple of years Katherine Grey, who's sitting back there, designed and, with a team of Canadians, made centerpieces that we sold in the auction, as well as the art. She did that for two years and then moved onto another design.
- 62:06 Then, you can come in October. There's a week in May where we have groups only, not individuals. And there's one Sunday in August that we allow anyone who can walk or talk to come and if you're there come on in, but I wouldn't recommend it because it's just too crowded. And then on the 3rd Sunday in October— in August, we another day where we allow members of the Pilchuck society— people who have given us a gift of \$50 or more. And there we limit it to the first 300 [unclear]. And if you do that you can become part of the really cool Pilchuck family and we let you get a picture like that..
- 62:45 This is the newest member of the Pilchuck family. Little Vi— Little Jackson Viola. It's a bad picture; it's the only one that turned out [unclear] and he's two weeks old in that picture. And there's the proud dad looking up and we gave him some flowers, his first bouquet.

- 63:07 So, I invite you all to be part of Pilchuck family and to ask me any question that you'd like. Thanks [applause]
- 63:26 Woman 3: The floats that you showed that were in the pond—
- 63:30 Marge: Yes
- 63:32 Woman 3: now, those were not for sale
- 63:33 Marge: those floats were not for sale. Those are what we call cups [crosstalk] where we blow them and blow them and blow them until they're a big shell—
- 63:37 Woman: [crosstalk] I saw them in an exhibit in New York.