

**Robyn Horn**  
**First Person Plural Interview Summary**  
**8 September 2014**

Intro - Jo Blatti interviewing Robyn Horn for the First Person Plural project at her studio, 8 September 2014

JB Family -

RH Parents Bill Hutcheson, Dede Derick met in high school, Fort Smith  
Both still with us, Dad has Alzheimer's, Mom 89, painter  
Sister Karen also a painter  
Art always obtainable in our lives

JB Dad

RH Sold shoes Tulsa, Fort Smith, Grandma Wortz from Indiana, Wortz Biscuit Company, Fort Smith

JB Where grow up?

RH Waldron Street, near university, little bitty house  
Great neighborhood, lots of kids

JB Fort Smith edge of Indian territory, little different area Arkansas

RH Really not that much different

5 min in

1900, grandmother very concerned  
Reservations very rural  
No Native Americans I recall Fort Smith

JB African-Americans?

RH Some, not many  
I went to North Side [school], where parents went  
Timmon for two years  
Fairly small community  
Hendrix [College] Conway

JB Schools integrated?

RH Yes

JB Neighborhood?

RH No. Seemed fairly calm after Central High [in Little Rock]. Not enough people to cause problem

JB Fayetteville –  
RH Couple of stores very similar to Fort Smith  
JB Sister and brother -  
RH In middle, didn't think about it too much  
JB Dishes, garbage -  
RH Mother didn't want us in the kitchen, make mess  
Don't remember stuff like that  
Remember music

10 min in

‘Opposite Sex’ band  
We had only learned 7-8 songs, 30 songs  
JB Special interest- guitar  
RH Popular songs, Rhonda Fleming, I played drums  
JB When?  
RH Junior, senior - 1968-69  
Hendrix - my friends in education  
Art easiest  
Mother made signs, gifts - couldn't afford decoupage  
JB Other teachers?  
RH Spanish teacher in high school, then met someone who spoke Spanish  
Bob McGill, choir director really good  
JB You are a big artist now  
RH Maybe in this little bitty pond  
It's about making good work, having continuity to it

15 min in

When I started working in wood, brother in law had been to Airmont School, Gatlinburg, TN  
Showed me lathe, movement  
Albert LeCoff, Wood Turning Center in Philadelphia, met him in St. Louis  
Said, might want to think about doing something unique to you  
Began looking at ceramics as source  
JB How does an artist do that?  
RH I'm a visual learner - looking at books, magazines

Started with geodes series, millstones  
Than mostly carving, now slipping stones series, find enough variations  
John [Horn - husband] and I collect art

David Nash came and did a piece for us  
I started doing larger pieces  
When Crystal Bridges [Museum of American Art in Bentonville, AR] wanted to get a piece for the museum, [then chief curator] Cris Crosman came out, [successor] David Houston

JB Crystal Bridges, Renwick [Washington, D.C.]  
Over 100 people at symposium here - support for the fields

RH One of the best parts is meeting the artists

23 min in

[Introduces Sandra Sell, running my saw for me]

My parents set up Windgate, so many artists on the board, interested in art  
Education tailored to written word  
Doesn't seem to be an alternative for people who can excel through the arts -Thea [North Little Rock], Arkansas Arts Center, Airmont  
People who would be told they're stupid  
Not too many foundations doing this

JB How work with others on this?

RH John Brown [executive director, Windgate Foundation], there is a network - matching, challenge grant situation.

JB A favorite among programs Windgate undertaken recently?

RH Choosing one very difficult. A+ program Thea - curriculum that uses art to support all areas. Paul [Theopoulos] has worked relentlessly on this. Should be an option.

JB An option comparable to STEM [science, technology, engineering and math]?

RH Yes, add 'a' to 'stem', 'stem' = steam  
Keep kids engaged, approach from the arts, with miniscule attention spans

31 min in

I've seen results - remarkable  
Airmont, Haystacks in Maine basically these schools help students figure out artistic interests  
UALR - applied design, UA-Fort Smith, UA-Fayetteville coming around more supportive art departments

JB Mom creative, yet you speak of modest circumstances  
Windgate one of the top foundation in Arkansas  
Where'd the money come from?

RH Sam Walton [founder WalMart stores] asked my father to set up shoe departments, eventually entire shoe operation - stock market

36 min in

Interesting to research Arkansas foundations based on similar histories - Jack Shewmaker [WalMart executive & philanthropist, arts & education causes, 1933-2010]

JB You came of age time of change

RH Never had great plans  
When out of school, typesetting for seven years, then [Arkansas] Parks and Tourism photographer  
Happened on to things  
Never had problems gender-wise  
Lot of things not usual  
Wood not necessarily women's area  
Never had any kind of discrimination  
Other artists very open

JB Among small group women

RH A couple doing - my husband very supportive

41 min in

He's very impressed with way I can carve  
Have to be able to keep it [the saw] sharp  
Sandy Sell running chainsaw with me - really great  
I've been having some back problems

I was floundering through life [before art]

JB I wondered what parents said

RH I never said that, they've been very supportive. Very proud

JB Remember first credit card?

RH After college, couple of years before marriage, past that time - issue

JB Gloves, hat?

RH High school- dress, Hendrix [college] pant suits, haven't worn dress since March 3.1979, day I married, I hate dresses.  
Talks about childhood experience - having to wear dresses

JB Change moved in your direction

RH Yes

JB Women's shows, woman artist?

RH Not experienced discrimination, see it as theme

Curator at Arizona State University very interested in collecting work by women  
I'd rather be noticed because my work is strong

48 min in

Makes me a little uncomfortable

[Cell phone goes off]

JB Noticed a talk you gave at Fort Smith on women's history

RH Hadn't done anything in Fort Smith, didn't speak on women's history  
Spoke about my work, women who were historically significant to the region, happy to be in  
the show

50 min in

JB Coming up to the studio is like a sculpture park

RH When run out of room in the house, move outside

JB Very diverse

RH Most relate in some way to my work - form and texture  
Abstract work, planes & geometry, lucky to have around

JB Study collection, to family?

RH John has son, seven when we got married, tells story of son crying - thought there would be  
more babies, they'd made decision not to have more children

JB Art to museum? Family?

RH Responsibility to artist to preserve work, kind of scary as artist - not know where some of [own]  
work is  
Collector has responsibility to benefit

JB Conversation creative/public - where that idea comes from

RH I've always believed  
- Value in act of making the work - ex. Barbara Hepworth, David Nash, Isamu Noguchi  
- Never like every piece  
- Have to build up to museum quality work  
- Certain pieces really successful, better than others  
- Early pieces as explorations  
- If put too much preciousness, comes back to bite you  
- Some pieces wouldn't want the public to see

JB Juvenile drawings great artists –

RH Not all in that category

JB Family foundation -25% disbursement

RH We're all getting older, need to get it done

JB Lots of foundations hang on

RH We all make them [decisions] together - mother still active - family  
Ford Foundation - new director changed mission -  
Ours - art, food banks, etc.

1 hr. 2 min.

JB Where develop that ethos?

RH Arts deep part of us, can change people's lives, we hear it all the time

1 hr. 4 min.

Off

Resume recording

JB Husband woven throughout

RH Roommate Ellen Alexander, dating John's brother  
She cooked dinner, set us up  
Pick up every other weekend  
Letter press printer, met him as Sam's brother  
Both had self-esteem issues  
He's been a supporter of all the arts I have done  
Forklift for an anniversary present

JB Self-esteem- last woman

RH Until you find the thing you are meant to do  
He'd been in Viet Nam, bad marriage  
Windgate really important

JB Women's opportunities

1 hr. 10 min.

RH Significant, always places  
One of these days, a woman president, maybe Hilary [Clinton]  
Reproductive rights - just crazy to me  
Progress has been made

JB Is there anything I haven't thought to ask?

RH -

Off