

# ALTERNATIVE PROJECTIONS

Experimental film in Los Angeles, 1945 - 1980

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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### INTERVIEW SUBJECT: Diana Wilson

#### **Biography:**

Diana Wilson was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio surrounded by old-growth forest. She met her future husband and collaborator David Wilson while attending Kalamazoo College in Michigan. After college, she moved to Colorado and took painting classes at the University of Colorado, Denver. Inspired by the Whole Earth Catalog and back-to-the-land movement, she moved to rural land 17 miles outside of Montrose, Colorado in 1972 where she and David built their own house and collaborated on animated films without the benefit of electricity. In 1974 the Wilsons moved to California so that David could attend classes at Cal Arts, where Diana also sat in on classes and used equipment to make shorts films. Her animation talent led to work with Adam Beckett, Roberta Friedman and Pat O'Neill on film effects for the Star Wars trilogy.

In the early 80's Wilson began creating sculptural artist books that showed in galleries in Southern California and San Francisco. She went on to study Anthropology at UCLA, where she earned a PhD. She co-founded the Museum of Jurassic Technology with David Wilson in 1987. Currently, she is working on another large house outside of Montrose that will serve as an intentional living space and art center.

### **Filmography:**

*A Film for Log Hill Dogs* (with David Wilson; 1974, 16mm, 00:02:00)

*Eclipse Predictions* (1982, 16mm, 00:04:00)

*Film for Log Hill Dogs: The Log Hill Story* (1976, 16mm, 00:02:00)

*Four Corners* (1978, 16mm, 00:10:00)

*Rose for Red* (1980, 16mm, 00:02:30)

### **Tape 1: Pages**

**Interview date:** May 1, 2010

**Interviewer:** Mark Toscano

**Cameraperson:** Alejandra Bouza

**Others present:** David Wilson

**Transcript Reviewer:** Diana Wilson, Elizabeth Hesik

### **Tape 2: Pages**

**Interview date:** May 1, 2010

**Interviewer:** Mark Toscano

**Cameraperson:** Alejandra Bouza

**Others present:** David Wilson

**Transcript Reviewer:** Diana Wilson, Elizabeth Hesik

### **Tape 3: Pages**

**Interview date:** May 1, 2010

**Interviewer:** Mark Toscano

**Cameraperson:** Alejandra Bouza

**Others present:** David Wilson

**Transcript Reviewer:** Diana Wilson, Elizabeth Hesik

### **Tape 4: Pages**

**Interview date:** May 1, 2010

**Interviewer:** Mark Toscano

**Cameraperson:** Alejandra Bouza

**Others present:** David Wilson

**Transcript Reviewer:** Diana Wilson, Elizabeth Hesik

## **TAPE 1: DIANA WILSON**

**00:06:00**

**DIANA WILSON**

My name is Diana Drake Wilson, D-I-A-N-A D-R-A-K-E W-I-L-S-O-N.

**00:06:34**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Okay.

**00:06:34**

**DIANA WILSON**

Early life? Okay. The only moving images I saw were Disney films on TV. My earliest memory of images would be, what's the name of that, *KUCKLA*, *FRAN AND OLLIE* were the early TV when I was about three. TV had just started so, and the things would--it was very crude because things just came in from each side, the sock puppets. And that probably had an influence on me. It was a very flat, it was like a box. TV was a box.

**00:07:15**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

The same thing with the football. There was only one stationary camera point and the people would run this way and then run that way. So [laugh] it was weird. And then also the Indian, we see it now but the Indian on the test pattern because most of the day the test pattern was on because there wasn't enough programming so we spent hours staring at [laugh] maybe that's why I got interested in Indians but I don't think so.

**00:07:43**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

But that Indian meant a lot to me. So and then of course all the war footage. Hours and hours and hours of war footage on early television. It was really influential I think. I'm not sure how [laugh] but just, and I remember John Cameron Swayze and reporting the Korean War and just being sort of terrified by the tanks coming up over the hills and so that--and then of course being very small, I don't know if I was in school yet, seeing the live atom bombs go off and seeing those images a million times.

**00:08:25**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

But to be sitting on your living room floor and your mother ironing and be watching [laugh] these families being blown away by atoms bombs, that's probably my early memory of moving images [laugh].

**00:08:39**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So that had a profound impact at the time would you say, the war footage or?

00:08:44

DIANA WILSON

I haven't really thought about it but when you asked me what early moving images, a lot of violent images in America. Of course, there's old fashioned cartoons that were from the '30s that were so boring. They were endlessly looped. So there's something about early--maybe this predisposed me to structural film because all the images were very kind of flat and repetitive and boring [laugh].

00:09:19

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

I mean, there wasn't a lot of, I don't know. It's like there wasn't a lot of content, like in later Disney films. The cuts were real fast and there's a lot more dimensional action. I remember watching a lot of hours of those really early '30s cartoons that were just really repetitive.

00:09:41

MARK TOSCANO

Did you find them boring at the time though?

00:09:42

DIANA WILSON

Oh yeah. But I was kind of interested in the boredom they created as a kid. I became kind of meta aware of God this is so horrible [laugh]. So and actually when you wrote me the email and said, what's your early art experience, I immediately thought of in the same vein, the *SATURDAY EVENING POST*, because we got the *SATURDAY EVENING POST* and I would look through that thing and look at these paintings and illustrations and I knew they were bad.

00:10:15

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

But I didn't know why. I would spend a lot of time thinking what would I do to make this good. What would be good? I had never answered that question. That was kind of my earlier aesthetic experience was like knowing things weren't quite right but not knowing how to improve it.

00:10:50

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

I just kind of made a connection between that *SATURDAY EVENING POST* experience and the museum [laugh]. You better stay in case you need to censor something. I might give away the whole secret here. [Diane Wilson's note: That was addressed to David.]

00:11:30

MARK TOSCANO

Since we had that slight pause there, I realize I probably should have started with asking where did you grow up?

**00:11:37**

**DIANA WILSON**

I grew up in Ohio, Dayton, Ohio. I was born in Dayton, Ohio. And when I was four we moved to the suburbs and in an area which was virgin forest and there weren't too many houses around and that forest really, really had an impact on me as a kid, being able to be in that woods, virgin woods, like never farmed. It was just incredible power in that and that had a huge impact.

**00:12:06**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I was regretted that I wasn't able to give Daniella that experience because she grew up in LA so there was very few things like--obviously they're here in the state but we didn't really get out. We saw Daniella last night at her puppet show and she was wearing a t-shirt that said, "Jurassic Park, I survived the ride." [laugh] We were laughing because she survived the ride. She had no childhood really because this place began when she was three.

**00:12:39**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Anyway, but the woods was a huge, I mean, that whole nature--I mean, when you're four and you're in the woods and you think anything red is poison, and you're afraid if you touch it you'll die immediately and it's very powerful and scary place. And like all these little spaces like architecture in the woods, like there'll be a little opening or clearing here with a foreign tree that's completely different than the stream down there.

**00:13:14**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

It became this whole map in my head, the landscape around my house.

**00:13:22**

**MARK TOSCANO**

I mean, that seems like that's something that is a theme throughout your work too.

**00:13:28**

**DIANA WILSON**

Possibly.

**00:13:30**

**MARK TOSCANO**

I'm not surprised to hear that.

**00:13:30**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah.

**00:13:31**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But so and you were talking about TV and innovation and boredom, the repetition, war.

**00:13:41**

**DIANA WILSON**

Structural film. [laugh] It all comes together now.

00:13:42

MARK TOSCANO

But you mentioned also the Disney, like the features I assume, in the theatres or?

00:13:48

DIANA WILSON

I must have seen Fantasia. I don't remember being taken to any until I was pretty old like seven or eight, but *PETER AND THE WOLF*, was that a Disney film?

00:13:58

MARK TOSCANO

I don't remember. I don't think it's one of the features.

00:14:00

DIANA WILSON

It's--

00:14:01

MARK TOSCANO

It's a short maybe?

00:14:03

DIANA WILSON

It's supposed to teach kids music because there's this famous composer that-- who's that?

00:14:13

MARK TOSCANO

Is it Percofia?

00:14:14

DIANA WILSON

It's a hunting scene--

00:14:20

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

And I'm sure Disney did it. Nobody else was doing animation like that and there was this--they were hunting, there was this little cartoon.

00:14:28

MARK TOSCANO

No, I think you're right.

00:14:29

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, and so my dad right before he died bought me that and this attempt to get high culture into my life I guess [laugh]. That was the last high culture I had for a long time, but that would be the first Disney thing I saw, other than Mickey Mouse cartoons which were completely different than this stuff before the war.

00:14:59

MARK TOSCANO

So how did you--if you had that certain reaction to those cartoons you're seeing on TV from the '30s, I mean, the Disney ones were obviously--

**00:15:05**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, much more entertaining. I mean, you could just lose yourself. You didn't have to think. There's no meta thing of I'm bored. It's just like entertainment.

**00:15:17**

**MARK TOSCANO**

In a way did that make them less interesting?

**00:15:19**

**DIANA WILSON**

No, no, no, I'm just like it's fine, mindless TV watching at that point.

**00:15:27**

**MARK TOSCANO**

What about your parents? What did they do?

**00:15:30**

**DIANA WILSON**

My dad was an electrical engineer at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base and he--I don't know how much of this is true. I'm slowly finding out by corresponding with people on the Web who are researching Wright Pat Air Force Base, but that a lot of my ideas about who my dad was and what he did there were incorrect, and they come to me down through my family.

**00:16:18**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

My cousin told me at my grandpa's funeral that my dad had invented a way to transfer radar via radio from the ground to planes or something and I don't know if that's just complete fabrication or what but he was kind of an inventor type. And I thought he had been very high up and it was called the Radio Lab at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and it--another uncle of mine told me this. This was interesting.

**00:16:53**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

This was political but, that after World War II, there were seven of these kind of--they were basically corporations but they were government run and government owned, like the Radio Lab. They were around the country that had been dedicated to the war effort and that the government sold them off as non-profit corporations to these two, what became like TRW and Boeing and McDonnell Douglas and so my dad's thing became Raytheon in Boston.

**00:17:33**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And had he lived, I would have gone to Boston. He would have certainly moved with them. He hated working for the government and he wanted to be in private [Diana Wilson's note: private business]. But I guess that was this huge tax-payer giveaway, but at the core of all these huge military industrial complexes are these tiny little non-profits that are still there. Anyway, my dad was involved in that.

**00:18:00**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But he died when you were kind of young?

**00:18:01**

**DIANA WILSON**

He died, yeah. He died of a heart attack. I'm very conspiratorial. I think maybe he was offed, yeah, but that's just me. I mean, later. I didn't think that at the time, but yeah.

**00:18:18**

**MARK TOSCANO**

How about your mom?

**00:18:19**

**DIANA WILSON**

She is from Kentucky and people from Kentucky are called briarhoppers. You've probably never heard that word [laugh]. It was so amazing because it's just a word that no one except people from Kentucky have ever heard, but my theory is no one ever leaves Kentucky [laugh]. But she left Kentucky and came north to Ohio during the war to work at the field, Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and she met him. She was his secretary.

**00:18:47**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

She was a completely different kind of person, she didn't even know there was a depression. The family raised all their food on a farm, lived far from town. I think they only bought sugar and flour. She got one pair of shoes a year that kind of thing, ten kids and ... interesting.

**00:19:14**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Was there an awareness of the arts in the household at all?

**00:19:18**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, like I said, my dad bought me that Peter and the Wolf thing which was very unusual and yeah, after he died, it all went back to--my mom's not white trash but [laugh] sort of. I wouldn't use--I mean, I torment my daughter with that word but it's very, I don't know what the word, they're not rednecks. They're just ... they're briarhoppers. They are briarhoppers. She has this huge family so I grew up on that side of the family and I always felt like that I was from a different planet.

**00:20:01**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I just--I'm not a briarhopper. I'm a hybrid soul.[laugh] I always felt really out of it with those people.

**00:20:13**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So even from when you were young you felt kind of different from them?

**00:20:16**

**DIANA WILSON**

Oh yeah. Oh yeah, but then I didn't have any--I didn't, it's like, yeah. You know what I'm trying to say. I was like searching for my people.

**00:20:30**

**MARK TOSCANO**

At what point did you feel like you found them?



**00:20:33**

**DIANA WILSON**

When I met Dave.

**00:20:36**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So when did you meet David and how? I mean, you told this story but--

**00:20:40**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, I went to college, I went to Kalamazoo College, and which I found in an article in *SEVENTEEN* magazine which I subscribed to when I was in high school. And the first night they wouldn't let us out of the dorms. We were just kind of locked up and the second night was this mixer and because it was a Baptist college and they didn't really condone dancing, they had a square dance which I guess they considered not dancing [laugh] and so do I.

**00:21:13**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Anyway, I walked in and this guy came up to me from my left, really quickly, and I just glanced at him out of the corner of my eye and he asked me to dance but when I tried to look at him, I forgot about this until now, but I saw this like really old gnome person [laugh] scared me to death. It was like oh my God, and I didn't look at him.

**00:21:52**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

We were dancing and I was afraid to look again for a while and then I looked at him and he looked like a normal person, but one of the first things we said is, he said where are you from, I said Dayton, Ohio. He said oh my mom was born in Dayton. So the first thing I learned from him is that his mom and I were both born in the same hospital which was pretty bizarre because he's from Denver.

**00:22:19**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So we danced and we just, I thought great. I liked him right away. We just kind of hit it off. We were square dancing but in square dancing you change partners so I changed partners, I thought oh this is great. I'm going to go like all these guys and then I danced with a few more guys that I didn't like and I just--I finally just walked off the floor and he was waiting by the side of the gym and then we're just kind of hanging out for the rest of the four years together.

**00:22:53**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Because there weren't very many people in that college that I felt compatible with.

**00:23:03**

**MARK TOSCANO**

And what were some of your early interactions around, again, we talked to David a little bit about Kalamazoo not having been an entirely positive experience.

00:23:14

DIANA WILSON

No [laugh] just awful. For the record, it was a terrible, terrible place.

00:23:22

DAVID WILSON

Can I ask you a question? What was our first date?

00:23:25

DIANA WILSON

Oh yeah, I'm getting there. I remember that. So then the next Saturday we went out and he had found--I was impressed with him because I would have just given up. It's like there's nothing to do here and he had it in his mind that he was at college and they were going to be showing independent film. I was like [unintelligible]. Well, actually I did have an experience with independent film and I'll tell you later in high school, but in Dayton.

00:23:54

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

He just persevered. He was making all these calls. There wasn't anything on our campus, that's for sure. He was calling all over and he called to Western Michigan and he found this thing. I was so impressed so we walked up there, it was a long walk, walked up this big hill and we went in and it was--it was this really strange but wonderful film, and it was Tarkovsky--what's the name of it? *MY NAME IS IVAN*.

00:24:24

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

Unbelievable. It was like this is a cool film. And then we went there quite a lot. They had, I forget what else we saw but that became such a significant film and we didn't really realize who Tarkovsky was until when? I mean, in the '90s, right? We saw *SOLARIS*. We didn't even tell you about seeing *SOLARIS*? Okay. It was in '74 and we went to the first Telluride Film Festival which was really cool because we lived right there.

00:25:08

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

It was like the only good thing that ever happened to us in the two and a half years we lived in Montrose but so we were there and they were showing this film called *SOLARIS* and it was--did we realize it was by Tarkovsky, the same guy that made--okay. We saw the director's cut. It was like five hours [laugh]. I nearly died. Five hours, was it translated? [laugh] You've seen Tarkovsky's *SOLARIS*, right?

00:25:41

MARK TOSCANO

Oh yeah, yeah.

00:25:42

DIANA WILSON

Well, five hours on that spaceship in this old, old opera house with hard wooden seats. I was suffering. He loved it. He was so happy and I'm like oh. When is this going to be over, but five hours is a little bit much, but it was fun. So I don't know when we put the Tarkovsky thing together but I remember standing in line on Santa Monica Boulevard to see *MY NAME IS IVAN* some time in the late '90s.

00:26:11

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

After all those years and it was just so prescient that our first date was a Tarkovsky movie. It was very fitting. Well, our first date was a square dance, which was my side of the equation, and Tarkovsky was his. So it was nice.

00:26:30

MARK TOSCANO

Somehow you've created something that exists in the space--

00:26:33

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, I don't think people realize how the briar-hopper thing is a very--and I don't even totally understand how it's very important to Dave to have that connection. I'm not sure what that is. It is. He's a very sophisticated, wealthy person but underneath there's this sort of strange toilet-in-the-yard type [laugh]. We won't go there.

00:27:11

MARK TOSCANO

So pretty early on you started, you said you had a high school independent film experience.

00:27:16

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, in Dayton there was this little theater called the Art Theater, how appropriate [laugh]. I think it had been left over from beatniks, some beatnik had started or something and they showed Roman Polanski films and they showed sort of soft porno, sort of every other night, to keep the revenues up I guess. And they actually had a little coffee house and Peter, Paul, and Mary came to town and actually showed up at this coffee house. Yeah, it was fun.

00:27:49

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

I forget, I remember just seeing *KNIFE IN THE WATER*. I think I saw some Shakespeare films and then there was an even tinier theater, it was the tiniest theater I've ever been in in my life in Yellow Springs associated with Antioch College. I think it sat maybe 12. Well it's actually about the same as your [addressed to David Wilson] theater. And I remember seeing *MONDO CANE* there which was a real--have you ever seen *MONDO CANE*? Yeah. So and I must have seen other films there but I can't remember what.

**00:28:25** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So there wasn't interest. I had these--I had a kind of intellectual boyfriend in high school that liked to go see these odd strange films so we did that.

**00:28:40** **MARK TOSCANO**

Were you, to stay in that period just for a little bit longer, were you doing anything with drawing?

**00:28:47** **DIANA WILSON**

In high school?

**00:28:48** **MARK TOSCANO**

Anything like that?

**00:28:49** **DIANA WILSON**

No, I was always, I don't want to talk about it though.

**00:28:57** **MARK TOSCANO**

So then once you got to Kalamazoo, did you have a sense of what you wanted to study?

**00:29:01** **DIANA WILSON**

I started--in high school I found a book by Nietzsche and I thought oh this is cool stuff and it was [filed] under psychology and I thought this is psychology. Cool. [laugh] I mean, I had no idea what Nietzsche was talking about but it seemed interesting. And so I signed up for psych [laugh] oh my God. And here it was rats and, S&R crap and it was just awful stuff. Terrible. So that took a year for me to realize that I wasn't going to get the Nietzsche through rats and so I switched to art.

**00:29:47** **MARK TOSCANO**

And what brought that about?

**00:29:49** **DIANA WILSON**

I always liked to paint and draw and yeah. I love art. Yeah, I always did. And they had this great Polish guy, Michael Waskowsky --he had a big influence. He had some influence on you [addressed to David Wilson]. He had been at the university--Art Institute of Chicago and he knew Paul Klee and he was sort of this kind of iconic being to us. It was like wow, he knows Jackson Pollack of course and it's like geez.

**00:30:29**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

He was pretty good. And he was just a big--a huge spirit. He's probably 6'6" and really, he encouraged me. And unfortunately the other art teacher there, art professor was this very in-the-closet-gay woman who was--because she was in the closet had a very pronounced mean streak [laugh] so she was a little difficult, but I like Michael Waskowsky. He died the summer after we graduated, pretty much early in his '50s.

**00:31:15**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So what kind of work were you doing?

**00:31:17**

**DIANA WILSON**

At school, just painting, just the normal painting but I really liked to paint and I did some pretty good paintings, but unfortunately they all got lost. That's kind of a theme [laugh] throughout life, of losing artwork. And I remember going out with Dave. We'd go out in Michigan, Michigan's such an odd place because it's so trashed with the pollution just everywhere even back then.

**00:31:45**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

You'd go out in the country and try to find a nice spot or a lake. You'd find a lake, a small pond and it'd be red with algae and smell like this really--you didn't want to be near it. There was a lot of crap in the landscape out there but I remember this one fall day going out and finding a bunch of cows and painting them and just being so, so sweet. Do you remember that? And we got apples.

**00:32:15**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So during this time were you collaborating with David on anything?

**00:32:17**

**DIANA WILSON**

No.

**00:32:19**

**MARK TOSCANO**

You were just kind of doing your own things?

**00:32:20**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, I helped him on his Alex film but that wasn't collaboration. That was just standing around holding clappers or whatever. Yeah, it was fun to make that film.

**00:32:34**

**MARK TOSCANO**

And so four years, right?

**00:32:36**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah.

**00:32:36**

**MARK TOSCANO**

You met, right?

**00:32:37**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah. And every quarter, every single quarter we were determined to transfer. Every single frickin' quarter. Sorry, but it was like we hated that place so bad [laugh]. And that's for the record.

**00:32:54**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But you just stuck it out?

**00:32:55**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah.

**00:32:57**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So during--I mean, still it's four years. That's a fair amount of time.

**00:33:01**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, we spent a year in Europe too so that was, that was kind of an enticement to get--to get to go abroad because I'd never been to Europe. He had but I'd never been there. And--

**00:33:17**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Where'd you go? What did you do?

**00:33:18**

**DIANA WILSON**

I got shipped off to Spain. I was supposed to go to Lebanon which would have been really cool in those days but we got busted for, I don't know, they caught me sleeping outside the dorm one night so I was put--I think I spent half my time on social probation. Seriously. Like two years on social probation or whatever that is. That count was from college for shenanigans with Dave [laugh].

**00:33:54**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

It was horrible. Anyway, so they decided that I was not fit, morally fit, to go to Lebanon so they decided I would, since I'd had Spanish in high school, I would go to Segovia, Spain which turned out to be a very sweet whole experience.

**00:34:10**

**MARK TOSCANO**

And did Dave go too?

**00:34:11**

**DIANA WILSON**

He went to Germany. We would hook up in Paris and it was very--I think we traveled around Europe. It was fun. We weren't making any film--did you make movies in Germany? So that was a year away, but that was a strange year to be away because like '68, '67, '68, that's when they raised the Pentagon--tried to raise, Alan Ginsberg tried to levitate the Pentagon and there's huge amount of stuff going on back home. We kind of missed all that.

**00:34:49**

**MARK TOSCANO**

When you were done with schools, did you go to Chicago?

**00:34:52**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah. He was up in Kalamazoo finishing the film so he could get his--well he never did get his diploma but whatever. And he called--I was back home in Dayton with my mom and he called and he said that he had somehow gotten this connection that we should go to Chicago, because we had no--we had no plans. I mean, we didn't know what we were going to be doing next week.

**00:35:21**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And never, seriously, in four years of college, it never once occurred to me how I was going to make a living, not one time. I can swear to that. I don't think it occurred to Dave either because in those days it was so different. It was so easy to get a job. If we wanted a job we'd get it. It's like everybody had this little credit card. If you were White especially and middle class. It's like, it's so different.

**00:35:57**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And you didn't need money. You really--it was so cheap to live. People just--you could live between the cracks. It's all gone now but anyway. So we--what'd you just ask me because there was no--

**00:36:12**

**MARK TOSCANO**

The Chicago thing.

**00:36:13**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, so he just called and said oh, you know, let's go to Chicago. Had something to do with a friend of ours. I forget what. Hank Schaller. So we ended up in Chicago and we both got jobs right away. It was no problem. I got a pretty--actually, pretty good job as a commercial artist and he got the job at AGS&R.

**00:36:42**

**MARK TOSCANO**

What kind of work were you doing then?

**00:36:43**

**DIANA WILSON**

Laying out...it's this company, I think it still exists, called Edward Don. They are a restaurant supply company and they have a huge one of those telephone book sized catalogues of restaurant, just endless types of pots and pans and toothpicks and swizzle sticks and everything. And it was all in catalogue and they were--the pages had become very very jumbled and so I was like super good at organizing all these things and doing--and everything.

**00:37:14**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

You know, there was no computers, nobody had ever seen a computer. It all had to be done by hand so I did that.

**00:37:29**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So around this time were you still doing your own artwork?

**00:37:33**

**DIANA WILSON**

No. No. I mean, there was always this impulse. It's mostly guilt of like well I should be doing art but I never did. Nothing kept me from doing it and it's just like an internal thing. But then Chicago only lasted for three months and he was drafted and we had to leave and go to Denver which was wonderful. I mean, that's the first time I landed in the West.

**00:38:11**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I mean, I'd visited Denver, but it was the first time I lived in the West and believe me, there's no going back to the Mid-West. That's why there's this western push in this country because it was just great. I love the West. And I just felt this huge expansion, psychological expansion because the horizons are very much larger in the West so it was great. And then I got that job in an arts supply house in Denver.

**00:38:41**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

The jobs were much worse in--it was getting more difficult to get jobs and the jobs in Denver paid a lot less than Chicago. But then I started doing art. I started taking grad courses at the UC Extension, Denver, and had some really good painting instructors and I actually did a lot of artwork in that two-year period we lived in Denver. My instructor was encouraging me to go to grad school in painting and I actually was seriously considering it.



00:39:20

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

We both seriously considered going to grad school at CU. I'm not sure what-- I'm not sure you considered it, but you--he was talking to Stan Brakhage, remember. Did you talk about that? Because we were close to Boulder, there was this great bookstore up there called Brillig Works, right, and he would look for film books up there and he--they probably burned up but we got some really cool early film catalogues. You'd be really interested in them because they're like that one-off, kind of catalogues, show exhibitions and stuff.

00:40:02

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

Do you remember those? And he got something from Brakhage but I remember being in Boulder and you calling him. Do you remember that? And I don't why you called him anymore but it was just basically for encouragement and he was encouraging, so it was good. So yeah, there was this arts thing going on in Denver when we lived in Denver.

[end of tape 1]

## **TAPE 2: DIANA WILSON**

**00:00:59**

**DIANA WILSON**

Okay, the reason I didn't go to grad school was we had this wonderful dog named Obie who got killed so that threw us for a loop and I remember driving around in the park where he was filming that Paul film, after Obie died, and just knowing we had to get out of the city. Why, I'm not sure, but so we decided instead and that was the time of Stewart Brand's Whole Earth catalogue, the big one, which was like a cliché.

**00:01:32**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

It was like the internet of the day. I was really into it and so we decided because, you've seen it, right? The Whole Earth Catalogue has all these pumps and all these things. You get the idea that with enough stuff you could go out there and live. There was this--and it was so cheap to live back then and we had a little bit of money. So you couldn't even think about doing this now, but it's like, okay, we'll just go out there and we won't work and we'll have all our time to ourselves and we'll survive.

**00:02:08**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So we bought this--did he talk about this? We bought this piece of land in Montrose or outside Montrose. It was 7600 feet altitude. I mean, it's crazy. So we had this notion that we would go out there and be self-sufficient. So we left the city and we sort of left the whole art thing behind and you still made films, but I didn't--I mean, it's so tough to survive out there. Like most of our time was spent going out, getting wood, [laugh] trying to stay warm, and building the house.

**00:02:48**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And that was--and to me building is like--takes the place of doing art. And you can see that in my recent years also. I love to build. Always did. I built lots of clubhouses when I was a kid and this is jumping back to when I was a child but one of the most ecstatic experiences I had was kluging together this clubhouse out of a pile of old wood that somebody had torn something down, like really old. Old tongue and groove, thin...

**00:03:29** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And we actually created a structure, a space. We created a space that we could go into and come back out of and that was just like a miracle, a total miracle. And so then I would dream about this--I basically wanted to build this miniature Parthenon but somehow it was below ground. It was very archetypal, I have no idea what this means. Well I have some idea what it means.

**00:03:56** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I made this materials list. I knew I needed so many concrete blocks and so many, I knew exactly how I was going to make this thing. And I had gave my mom this list of materials that I wanted from the--and I knew the lumberyard would deliver it. She was saying I don't think so [laugh]. My mom never knew what to do with me. And so but I was always frustrated that I couldn't build this little underground space.

**00:04:26** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Maybe we'll still do that, but I don't know. Anyway, so that's kind of a side thing but I mean, I kind of got it, building has, throughout my life has kind of eclipsed doing painting and drawing or it's like one or the other.

**00:04:43** **MARK TOSCANO**

How remote was the Montrose place?

**00:04:47** **DIANA WILSON**

Oh, God [laugh] too remote. It was 17 miles from town. We only went to town once a week. We spent our \$12 at the grocery store I don't want to repeat this but, I was talking about this to Helen the other day, who is the caretaker of my mom. We--I mean, it only cost--we ate pretty well, 12 bucks a week.

**00:05:20** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

We had this famous bag of--I'm sure you told this story? No? Oh my gosh. There was this great co-op place in Montrose. It was called the Potato Co-op because they grow a lot of potatoes around there. We went there, I don't know how we knew to go there, but we went there looking for pinto beans, 50 pound bags. So a 50 pound bag of pinto beans was pretty expensive. It was like 25 bucks or something.

**00:05:50** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So we said do you have anything cheaper and they said yeah, we've got splits for \$5. We got like 50 pounds of pinto beans with the--that they usually feed the pigs because they were the broken ones but the only problem was that these broken beans had rocks, the size of beans that slipped through the whatever, however they cleaned them.

**00:06:12**                    **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So this was our staple food. I mean, we ate beans practically every day and every night. Before we cooked the beans, you have to soak them overnight. You'd have to sort through them. We only had--this is such a walk to school up-hill both ways kind of story, but we'd have to use our kerosene lanterns to try to look for the stones in the beans [laugh] and we never found them all. So we were always breaking our teeth on the beans.

**00:06:50**                    **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Oh God. What a dumb story. Oh well, anyway, but I was just talking about the food we used to eat but mostly, we made a really mean chile relleno, enchiladas, anything you could do with beans we did it. But it was a great time. We had no money and it was very cold.

**00:07:17**                    **MARK TOSCANO**

Was it the early '70s?

**00:07:18**                    **DIANA WILSON**

Yes, '72 to '74. We lived there two and a half years until we went to Cal Arts. We often talk about that, what influence that had on us because we took ourselves out of the cultural stream. We had no magazines, we heard no popular music. I mean, we completely cut off from whatever was happening in music because we had one radio station coming out of Grand Junction that was entirely Country.

**00:07:51**                    **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

The only decent song we ever heard on that was by Leroy Jones. Somehow he crossed over and they played him on country. And no news. We had five minutes of news, that canned news, and we had--and the whole Nixon thing was going on, the whole Watergate thing and we could only listen to that in these little five minute sections and we could only read between the lines about how they would change the news from each hour to the next hour, like what they were leaving out and what they were adding and we discovered that late at night the news got a little bit more radical.

**00:08:33**                    **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

They would sort of tell--be more truthful at night than they were during the day. So it was very--we were very, very removed from any kind of--we just had nothing. We had no print, no internet, no TV, and really, for all practical purposes, no radio. And that made a huge--it was only two years, but we were never the same. When we came to Cal Arts, even though we were glad to be around people because we had no friends either.

00:09:09 DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

We knew people up there but they weren't really--they were friends but we weren't--we didn't have the same aims or the same basic, whatever, assumptions about what life was for, whatever. Life is out there, life is just to survive, you know, stay warm and it's different.

00:09:37 MARK TOSCANO

At this point yet had you done any film work? Since David--

00:09:41 DIANA WILSON

I had never--well, no. I helped Dave with his films a little bit, animating that summer.

00:09:48 DAVID

Oh yeah, those were full collaborations.

00:09:50 DIANA WILSON

Yeah. We did a few animations together, that was all. That first summer after college. What's this one?

00:10:01 MARK TOSCANO

And then there was the commercial work too? Wasn't that, the whole--

00:10:08 DIANA WILSON

Oh yeah, forgot about all that. Yeah, we were doing those, yeah. I'm sure you talked about those.

00:10:17 MARK TOSCANO

You should still talk about it. If you want to say something.

00:10:19 DIANA WILSON

I forgot about them. Well, just that first one I remember was just a black and white, so crude. The guy paid us 100 bucks to do this little animation we just did on really tiny paper and had a pyramid and it was a really cute little animation. And we had to send the film to Denver.

00:10:59 DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

It was that one.

00:11:17 DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

But that first one was just incredibly crude. We did it, we filmed it by--we filmed it by kerosene lantern and we had to scramble to get two kerosene--did we have two kerosene lanterns?

00:11:31 DAVID WILSON

A mirror.

**00:11:31**

**DIANA WILSON**

We had a mirror. That's what I was going to say. I can't believe it myself. So to get the light balanced and it was just about as crude as you can imagine. I mean, it was like, I don't know. And then we'd have to send the film to Denver and they didn't care. I mean, they kind of, we'd send it to them and they're like oh well whatever. We'll do this whenever. And we needed it back and they'd just take forever.

**00:11:54**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And we'd go down to our mailbox every day and it was really hard to call them in those days. It was, "What's happening?" Mostly, the best information we were getting about where our film was from the I Ching. Like is it coming today or isn't it? I remember the I Ching mostly said no [laugh]. And so it finally showed up. It was just hair-raising. We finally delivered this little thing which they showed on TV. I don't know if anybody reacted to it or not.

**00:12:28**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

But then we got more, more ads. I forgot about that. I don't even want to think about it [laugh]. And then finally ended up doing color ones. I remember using my prisma colors to color all these things. But one thing I was--this is jumping ahead but and it seems like a lot of work at the time, doing all these frames but really it wasn't that many frames and one thing I wanted to say to you is, and maybe Dave talked about this, but we didn't--when we got to Cal Arts, we saw Kathy Rose--I remember seeing Kathy Rose animating.

**00:13:12**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And she's holed up in her room, locks herself away for like days, weeks at a time, producing these amazing animations and I was thinking, God, I can't--I'd never seen people work that way. It was almost frightening. God, she's just working constantly. At least the idea entered my mind then and then when I went to work for Adam in the film industry, I realized that I could work that way too, because he was such a slave driver.

**00:13:46**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

It was like I could work for ten hours, twelve hours, even 16 hours a day, day after day after day and that was a revelation. And it was a really--well obviously the museum came out of that, just that--

**00:14:07**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Little discipline.

**00:14:08**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah. People don't realize what you're capable--I mean, you realize what you're capable of, but a lot of young people don't--I certainly didn't. I shouldn't speak for other people. I certainly had no clue. I think that's a really critical point in life when you realize like okay, there's a lot more I can do.

**00:14:32**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Well, you say that, but then as you mentioned it was work just to survive where you were living. So it's not like you were slacking off.

**00:14:38**

**DIANA WILSON**

That was different. It was different. Yeah, I don't know. It's like that one point in like I'm going to do this, and I'm going to sit here until it's done, and it's just that incredible willpower and intent to do something that's not necessary. That's the thing because the art is really not necessary. I mean, in a way it becomes necessary. You make it necessary but yeah. People work hard in the country but you have to.

**00:15:15**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

You want to keep your rear-end warm. You want to not freeze your toes off. You've got to get that wood in but and I don't know if Dave ever told you that but this is, I was telling Helen this story the other day. The first winter we were up there, I mean, it gets really cold. It was 7600 feet, we were in this house that is like only half done. I mean, it's not even a cabin. It's the wind is just like coming through it.

**00:15:44**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So did we put away wood? [laugh] Our only source of heat? Nope. So ever winter afternoon we would have to get on our cross-country skis and ski out to a dead tree. Dave would chop it off with a chainsaw and we would carry it back on our skis which is absolutely insane. Really hard. And then we'd only have that log or whatever to get us through the night. Same thing next day. So you would think that the next winter [laugh] nope.

**00:16:19**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Same thing. We didn't put away any wood. And that always says something really important about us too that we are not focused on the pragmatic side, because we were busy. It wasn't that we were just sitting around. It's like that we were making our house, or making something look good or doing something that would give us some kind of gratification as creative people, rather than gathering wood for the winter.

**00:16:47**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I think that's also a very strong pattern in our life.

**00:16:55**

**MARK TOSCANO**

The relates maybe to what you said about the whole time you were at college not knowing--

**00:16:58**

**DIANA WILSON**

Exactly. Exactly. I think that's a very strong pattern in our life is not thinking ahead and seriously and, and when I know when Dave started the museum, we didn't think ahead. We didn't think what is this place going to be--what? No. There was nothing--in some ways we--I used to think of--I used to think about okay, this is going to change, the context is going to change because it was kind of a mystery when it started.

**00:17:35**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And I knew it would get to be known and I knew that, I don't know. You know that's played out, but I couldn't predict how it would play out but.

**00:17:48**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Well, this museum is kind of a monument to the beauty and the genius of not thinking ahead.

**00:17:56**

**DIANA WILSON**

[laugh] Yeah, yeah.

**00:17:59**

**MARK TOSCANO**

You should change the name to that.

**00:18:01**

**DIANA WILSON**

Did he ever tell you, we tried to change the name at the last minute because he went out and bought all the gold letters that said the Museum of Jurassic Technology and "Jurassic Technology" always threw people for such a loop and it was kind of like weird. So at the last minute we were doing--we were saying well what else can we use these letters for [laugh] and we were trying to do all these others-- and I swear he came up with this amazing thing about Harlan County.

**00:18:33**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And I cannot and Doug Harvey spent hours when I told Doug Harvey this-- he spent hours trying to come up with what it was. It was a cat. There was something about a cat, Harlan County and Doug Harvey could never recreate it, so I don't know. It's lost. Lost to history.

**00:18:55**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So you were living at 7600 feet and you're kind of working to survive but also you were doing some commercial animation film work.

**00:19:04**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah.



**00:19:05**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But then at some point, I mean, David did talk about this, but don't worry about repeating it.

**00:19:10**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah.

**00:19:10**

**MARK TOSCANO**

The idea came of going to Cal Arts, but not specifically Cal Arts but some art school I guess.

**00:19:17**

**DIANA WILSON**

Right.

**00:19:18**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Can you talk about that, getting to that point?

**00:19:20**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, I remember coming to California in the fall of '73 and I don't know how it came about that he wanted to go to film school. I don't remember anything about that. It was probably because we were just so isolated out there that there was some kind of hunger for getting back with our generation and getting in touch with things that were happening. There wasn't anything happening out there except sheep and weather. That was it.

**00:19:58**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

We were getting tired of sheep and weather. But yeah, we made this big trip out here and Dave's dad just jumped at the chance and he gave us some money. Said oh yeah, his parents were just beside themselves when we decided to go out [Diana Wilson's note: to Log Hill, in Montrose], because they always, especially his mom, but his dad also thought Dave had a lot of potential and it wasn't to be a pioneer [laugh].

**00:20:28**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

[Diana Wilson's note: This doesn't sound right, but I can't guess what it should be] God washed up western slope Colorado so and Dave's dad also was a big Disney stockholder and he kept getting these brochures about Cal Arts and he would talk to us about Cal Arts. I remember being around the dinner table at Dave's home and his dad saying, well there's this art school opening up and blah, blah, blah. And like because it was coming from his dad, we were like yeah right. And Disney? It's like no. God forget it.

**00:21:01**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

We just didn't even entertain it. And then because I worked at this art store, they got *ART FORUM* and I was standing around reading *ART FORUM* and when I was standing around reading about this incredible, radical, they were chopping grand pianos with axes and, crazy stuff happening at this place and I realized this was the same place his dad was talking about.

**00:21:27**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So we kind of had this Cal Arts in the back of our minds. We knew about it. So when Dave--I don't remember truly about what prompted the--

**00:21:41**

**DAVID WILSON**

[unintelligible]

**00:21:42**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, or you did. I mean, I didn't care. I mean, I was pretty much committed to the house. I was like--that was my focus was like how do we get this house livable and like make it into what we thought. I should also say, I'll go back to the Cal Arts thing, but the house that we designed for there was our first collaboration and we both learned a really amazing lesson coming up with that, that it was way--what we came up with was way more than what either one of us could do on our own.

**00:22:19**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And we were very conscious of that and remarked on it a lot. Anyways, so we knew about Cal Arts and we had this trip and Dave's dad was like yeah, I'll give you the money. Here just go [laugh]. Get out of there. So we went to my aunt's house in Orange County and what did we do? They loaned us a car and we drove up to Cal Arts first I think. And it seemed great. I mean, the woman who ran the library, I think she might even still be there.

**00:22:52**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I don't know. She was really kind to us. We saw Pat's [ONeill] movies, right? I forgot what else we watched and it seemed very, the building seemed very large and imposing and kind of a little intimidating. We were hayseeds at that time. We were complete country. You know, we had our hiking boots on and we had taken on this Colorado, western--well, I still do. So, but it seemed intriguing.

**00:23:27**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And then we went to UCLA I think the same day. We looked at the film department there and didn't seem quite as exciting, but it seemed all right. And then we went up north to San Francisco and, that seemed like a possibility but I think it was clear. I felt right away that it was Cal Arts. And so he applied.

**00:23:57** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So he applied and I still remember this. Sitting--this is so Dave. Everything he does is a little late. Like how many times--it used to be, you can't do this anymore, but we would get on a plane and they would slam the door right behind us and Dave would just be absolute last person on the plane. But he made--I forget what he made. He made some films to apply. What did--oh whatever.

**00:24:29** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So he got the whole application package together and we drove into town and we're sitting in front of the courthouse and he's ready to go into the post office and we realized it's like Memorial Day and the post office is closed. It was like oh shit. So I threw the I Ching [laugh] and luckily I got a hexagram that I knew because I didn't have the I Ching with me and I knew that it would be okay.

**00:24:55** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So I can still almost remember the hexagram but I can't name it. [Diana Wilson's note: It was number 20, "contemplation"] It just meant waiting,, like overview and it's like it'll be fine. Because it was a little touch and go whether it was going to get there. I think you called them and they said oh we'll be--and they made an exception and they'd look at it later. I mean, they wanted him because his dad was paying full tuition so it was like whatever.

**00:25:26** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I mean, it was kind of obvious. Anyway so he got accepted.

**00:25:34** **MARK TOSCANO**

You mentioned the I Ching a couple of times. Has that been a--?

**00:25:37** **DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**00:25:39** **MARK TOSCANO**

You want to say something a little bit about that.

**00:25:40** **DIANA WILSON**

It's just, I bought a copy in Denver when I was probably 23 and I read the whole thing and I've always used it my entire life, for better or for worse. It's been helpful sometimes, usually in situations like that where it can just reassure you and calm you down and it's like whatever's going to happen is going to happen. At least you don't have to be anxious about it. I don't use it like John Cage used it.

**00:26:16** **MARK TOSCANO**

So then you got accepted to Cal Arts. Was there the idea from the beginning that you'd both be going there sort of?

00:26:23

DIANA WILSON

I sort of asked my mom if she'd pay for the tuition and I realized it was just \$5,000 or \$6,000 a year at that time. And I thought nah. My mom doesn't have that kind of money and I would go to classes. I went to the film history classes and I wasn't really that interested in making films at that time. So I just--why are you grimacing?

00:26:55

DAVID WILSON

[unintelligible]

00:27:03

DIANA WILSON

I don't know. Well, yeah, I did make those--well yeah, what I was thinking too to say is that for me art is like, you need this community and Cal Arts provided that and I did this-- I saw Kathy Rose and I admired her so much, her work's so amazing. The stuff especially she did at Cal Arts. I can't remember the names of the film.

00:27:29

MARK TOSCANO

Like *MIRROR PEOPLE*?

00:27:30

DIANA WILSON

Yes.

00:27:31

MARK TOSCANO

*THE MYSTERIANS*.

00:27:32

DIANA WILSON

Yeah. Oh incredible stuff. I just love that. That inspired me to do some really short little animations with the dogs and then, a few months after I got to Cal Arts, we got this--it was Sunday morning and this state patrol comes to our door and he says you have to call your brother in Colorado. And I'm like why? He said, "I can't tell you just call him."

00:27:59

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

So we had no phone, we had no money so we walked down to this payphone and we knew what we were--Dave calls Bill and it's like yeah. Our house had burned down, I don't know if he told you this story but the day our house was burning down, we had this long, long talk. We got up in the morning, and we both had stuff to do. We started talking, we talked the entire day about how everything that was happening to us was a choice that we had made.

00:28:40

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

And that our lives were exactly the way that we wanted them to be and they were very hard at that time. We had absolutely no money. Dave's dad was paying our rent but we had, I mean, we were hungry. We didn't really have enough to eat, just barely. We weren't starving but it was really tough. We didn't have a lot of gas money, we didn't have a lot of food money, we just didn't have a lot of money.

**00:29:09** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And didn't have any phone, but we kind of realized that--it was hugely energetic. It has like this conversation had a lot of energy. It was like a bell-shaped thing where it's like yeah, everything that's happening is perfect because that's the way we meant it to be. And then it kind of tapered down. Well that corresponded to the burning of our house [laugh] we found out later.

**00:29:44** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And all that energy from the house was like being transformed and we were connected to that event. It was quite remarkable really. And so then that energy lasted for a period of four or five, six months. We were just coasting on that energy. It was really an amazing period. And then for me, I started doing these Log Hill stories which I have somewhere. I started writing.

**00:30:16** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Like that's the first time I ever started writing, started writing these little poetic little one or two paragraph stories. I made a whole book out of that. And then that's where those animations came from. So it was like this release of transformational energy. And that was really the beginning of being in California and being--I don't know how it worked for Dave, but obviously being in Cal Arts was a creative time for him and he was making a lot of films.

**00:30:49** **MARK TOSCANO**

But when you got to LA, would that have been in '74?

**00:30:55** **DIANA WILSON**

October of '74, yeah.

**00:30:57** **MARK TOSCANO**

Did you meet people right away, I mean, through the school or elsewhere? Like did you find that community?

**00:31:05** **DIANA WILSON**

Well, we met Adam pretty much right away. Beckett. I'm sorry. Adam Beckett and Kathy. I remember meeting them and Dave will probably--I remember not knowing Don Levy very well obviously you kind of see the professors from afar and they have an influence. And then Pat [Pat O'Neill] wasn't there. He was on sabbatical and he was supposed to come back and he had his aneurism so it was really sad and then I don't know when Pat invited us to his house but that was a really big deal.

**00:31:47** **DAVID WILSON**

In December of that year.

00:31:48

DIANA WILSON

It was in December of that year. We were very excited to go to Pat and Bev's house. I always remember that night. He had his aneurism soon after that. So that was--

00:32:06

MARK TOSCANO

But still I assume that, I mean, there's extreme change obviously from that move to LA. And I mean, the *LOG HILL*, the first *LOG HILL* film was kind of about that, I mean, that transition of moving through the apartment, but then you catch these glimpses of the mountain.

00:32:26

DIANA WILSON

I guess you could look at it that way. I was just trying to be a small pale shadow of Kathy Rose, I just so admired her work so much. And there was something very-- we weren't doing drugs at that time, but there's something very trippy about animation and, it affected-- That's my memory of it anyway. It's like this doorway into another place in your mind, well obviously Kathy's movie, then Adam's, and they were doing drugs [laugh].

00:33:01

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

Or Adam was anyway but I don't know about Kathy.

00:33:05

MARK TOSCANO

What about James Gore? Did you know him at all?

00:33:10

DIANA WILSON

Yeah.

00:33:13

MARK TOSCANO

[unintelligible] Sphinx.

00:33:15

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, I just vaguely remember it. I remember that name has a lot of kind of energy around it. Yeah, but I can't--I have an image.

00:33:29

MARK TOSCANO

[unintelligible] on Adam but I didn't know--

00:33:31

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:33:33

MARK TOSCANO

Somebody that you encountered.

00:33:34

DIANA WILSON

No. I don't remember meeting James Gore. Did we meet James Gore? See that's the kind of thing, I mean, the stories are--no, and Dana Crummins I really admired her films. I don't know if her films exist when we got to Cal Arts but in that two-year period they were amazing. I mean, they still are. I mean, they're some of my favorite things.

00:34:06

MARK TOSCANO

She finished *DIVINE MIRACLE* in '73.

00:34:08

DIANA WILSON

Okay. Yeah, yeah.

00:34:12

MARK TOSCANO

Which as a very quick aside, I'm restoring digitally now [all talking at once].

00:34:47

DIANA WILSON

I always remember when she had her son, she has a son, right? And she totally, it was all about the son. I always felt that when the son was grown, and he must be grown by now, that she would start making films again. She's so good. The potato mold-- yeah.

00:35:08

MARK TOSCANO

So she was somebody that you encountered there in the museum?

00:35:11

DIANA WILSON

I wouldn't say that she was a real good friend but her films had a big influence on me.

00:35:19

MARK TOSCANO

What other kind of stuff did you start to see?

00:35:23

DIANA WILSON

At Cal Arts?

00:35:23

MARK TOSCANO

Or just in LA or Cal Arts?

00:35:26

DIANA WILSON

Well, we didn't come into LA all that much at first especially. But I guess the second year we started coming in more, but, well, to see Pat's films was huge. And then we were in these film history classes so we'd see all these like Len Lye and just the sort of film history, the standards. *L'AGE D'OR*.

00:35:58

MARK TOSCANO

*L'AGE D'OR*.

**00:35:56**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, I used to call it garage door [laugh]. That's awful. But all those, but it's like the art history text book of film history. It was like all the things you have to see to know. And those were cool. I can't remember any of them though but I saw them all. So I don't know what else we saw at Cal Arts. Cal Arts is kind of a dim memory for me at this point.

**00:36:28**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Several--I feel like I've had six lifetimes between now and then.

**00:36:36**

**MARK TOSCANO**

What else--it's such an interesting transition to me going from the one place to the other especially not too long after to have it burn down and to feel whatever it must have felt like.

**00:36:49**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah.

**00:36:50**

**MARK TOSCANO**

I'm almost curious to know more about that. What was--just what was that transition like?

**00:36:56**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, a couple of things. We always talk about this. Cal Arts has these very famous Halloween parties. They're just like--they're pornographic basically. And so we were there in our--we had no money to buy clothes so we just were wearing Levi cords or whatever. Just Colorado crap and we were hanging--I remember being on the mezzanine and seeing these people that had body, flesh colored body suits on with their ancillary hair painted on the body suits and like, naked but not naked.

**00:37:37**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And just completely, just like oh my God. I don't know. I didn't know--well okay. So during the '73 trip, when we went to San Francisco, we met up with a friend that he [David Wilson] had known in Denver when he did his conscientious objector service in the hospital. And this guy knew this amazing Jesuit that was living there. The Jesuit was very much into the, I forget, the guys that dress like women in San Francisco. What's that scene called?

**00:38:25**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Like the drag queens.

**00:38:27**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah.



00:38:29

MARK TOSCANO

Transvestites?

00:38:30

DIANA WILSON

Transvestites. I was thinking transgender. Transvestite. So he would take us, the Jesuit was very trippy guy. He's this very kind of trickster type person and he kind of very keyed in on where we were coming from and what our minds were capable of but also this incredible naivety we had at that time from living in the country. And so he took us to this club and he didn't tell us it was a transvestite club and were like far from thinking about transvestites.

00:39:08

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

There are none where we lived. Believe me. And it was a long time, we spent a long time at that club before I realized and I remember looking at this guy coming down the stairs and looking at him thinking wow, what a beautiful woman. What a beautiful young woman and I was looking at him and he looked at me and he knew I thought he was a woman. And he looked at me, he gave me this really funny look but made me realize he was a man and it just like--

00:39:45

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

I had those types of experiences several times in my life where what you think turns out to be just the opposite and it creates this feeling of falling and it's psychologically moving for a long time. And he did that, this Jesuit. I think he did it on purpose. I don't know. And then he would take us other places and just keep building on this experience of--and so I went home thinking to everyone are you a man or are you a women? [laugh] I got back to Grand Junction and we went into this crazy typical restaurant where all these ranch farmers are--it was Sunday and they were all with their families and having Sunday brunch.

00:40:31

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

And I could never look at those people the same way again. It's like who are these people and what do they think they're doing and it was very odd.

[end of tape 2]

## TAPE 3: DIANA WILSON

00:00:49

DIANA WILSON

But the reason I jumped back and talked about the Jesuits and the transvestite thing is that that was still kind of bleeding through my experience with coming to Cal Art to like, things aren't what they seem. And that trippy kind of falling feeling. I remember having that falling feeling. But yeah, we were basically country hayseeds and again, that cutting ourselves off from the cultural stream for two and a half years had a permanent effect. And mostly I would say for the good. Because I think it, and right away at Cal Arts we started making, anyway hanging out with Adam and Kathy and that, and Roberta.

00:01:39

MARK TOSCANO

Roberta, her last name.

00:01:40

DIANA WILSON

Friedman and Grahame. I don't know Grahame.

00:01:46

MARK TOSCANO

Weinbren.

00:01:46

DIANA WILSON

Weinbren. Yeah, but mostly Roberta. And we started having friends and -- Beth Block, to some extent. But we never felt, we were always kind of once-removed. It goes back to watching the bad cartoons. It was like there was always this mental awareness of who we were of not being part, quite part of things completely. We never, it's like we weren't watching the Disney cartoons. We couldn't lose ourselves ever again. There was always this like step back. Which is, can be a very useful thing and it can be a very lonely thing also. So, but I think we mostly used it to a good effect. So.

00:02:38

MARK TOSCANO

So where were you living when you first came here?

00:02:42

DIANA WILSON

We were really lucky. We found a little tiny one bedroom apartment in one of those courtyard things, California courtyards. On I think Walnut and 22<sup>nd</sup> or what, something like that. In Newhall, right in Newhall. So that was really nice. And we had these two good friends that lived across from us, Marilyn and Jimmy Hildebrand. Who we still see, and I don't know what they're doing now. They ended up working for the City of Los Angeles. But, so they were kind of good friends.

**00:03:15**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So you were sort of a student at Cal Arts but sort of not. But did that also affect the way that you approached sort of going to school. So it was like were you, I mean Cal Arts is a pretty loose environment.

**00:03:22**

**DIANA WILSON**

Very.

**00:03:30**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But did you feel in a way that because you weren't officially enrolled there, did you have like less to lose or something or was it kind of..

**00:03:38**

**DIANA WILSON**

No, I mean it was nobody ever challenged me about-- well you can't be in this class. Right, and mostly the classes I went to were just watching films, it was in the dark. So who cared. But yeah, I didn't take any technical classes. I didn't really use the equipment. I mean, if Dave was using the equipment. So.

**00:03:58**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But then you started making some animation...

**00:04:00**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, but I made them at home and I don't... did I use the Oxberry, I don't...

**00:04:04**

**DAVE WILSON**

All those films were shot on the Oxberry.

**00:04:06**

**DIANA WILSON**

See I don't even remember. But there you go. I was using the equipment. So, yeah.

**00:04:14**

**MARK TOSCANO**

When I was kind of looking at the films at least that I know of yours, I started, I kind of run down, I realized there's a perfect, at least according to the years, that I associate with them, is this perfect two year gap between each one.

**00:04:26**

**DIANA WILSON**

Oh really, I'm very slow.

**00:04:29**

**MARK TOSCANO**

*LOG HILL DOGS* in '74. And then *LOG HILL STORY* of '76. And then *THE FOUR CORNERS* was '78. And then...

**00:04:36**

**DIANA WILSON**

Rose for Red '80.

**00:04:38** **MARK TOSCANO**  
And then *ECLIPSE PREDICTIONS* is '82.

**00:04:40** **DIANA WILSON**  
Oh, how nice. I'm very slow.

**00:04:40** **MARK TOSCANO**  
And I'm sure it's not exact, obviously. But it did get me wondering about your-- is the creative process for you making the films, but also the technical process and how you approach them. Animation is a patient art in a lot ways. Why don't we talk about that concept.

**00:04:58** **DIANA WILSON**  
Obviously the films are very, were fast to make. I mean there, especially animations. I did not have the patience of Kathy Rose to, or the intent to spend hours and hours and hours. But I just, I wanted to talk about the effect of Oasis had on my will to produce work. And basically I made *ROSE FOR RED* because of this community. We were putting in a lot of time and effort every two weeks to do these screenings. And it became really kind of this-- it became kind of the primary thing we were doing. Even though it was just one night every two weeks. It was like we were always oriented to that. We always had to be in town to do it. It became a big, it was almost like having a child. Not quite, but and I was like, oh God, Oasis. And so I think we were...

**00:06:04** **MARK TOSCANO**  
Just stop for a second. Even though other people are going to be talking about Oasis and it's kind of a given. Could you maybe just back up a little bit and just talk to people very briefly about what it is, and your David's involvement.

**00:06:17** **DIANA WILSON**  
I remember Roberta coming to us with this idea of starting this screening organization. I think it was around the time we were getting out of Cal Arts. But we were still at Cal Arts. And I don't know how it developed out of that. I don't even remember the first place we were showing. But I remember being at LAICA on Robertson which is right up here. 2020 Robertson I think it is. And starting, no, no, no. We were at Haymarket, that's right. That crazy Haymarket. I remember the first screening was Jonas Mekas, *Stories from Lithuania*. And we, we were very excited. We'd done this big mailing. And somehow I did, I was in charge of doing the graphics, because I was working at the Newhall Signal so I had access to graphics and stuff. And I remember Morgan saying, that they were vulgar. [laugh] And I wasn't sure what he meant by that, but anyway. I have an idea.

**00:07:24**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And, so we'd done this big mailing and I, Roberta of course, was in overdrive. And I'm sure you've heard this story a million times. So we're at the Haymarket, which was a just grody old, you know, decrepit place. And Roberta, I mean we were telling, Roberta's telling me to clean the toilets. And which I did. I had this Zen mentality even back then, I was happy to clean the toilets for the screening. Because I really believe that doing things like that actually make a difference, you know, just anyway, on many levels not just having clean toilets. But anyway I cleaned the toilets and so we were just inundated with the entire Lithuanian community of Los Angeles. It was wonderful. I mean we had like 200 people. I mean more people than we ever thought. I think the actual independent film audience was very tiny. But we had this... So we made lots of money. And it was a huge success. And so that kind of launched Oasis. I think after that our audiences shrunk dramatically.

**00:08:33**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I don't even remember what the next shows were. But that's where I saw Chris Reagan's *OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS* was at the Haymarket. I remember screening that. That's forever etched in my mind. I don't really remember what else we screened there, but moving to LAICA after that. I don't know how, I guess Oasis lasted four years or three years. It just seemed like an eternity. You know, it's like every two weeks we just like... So...

**00:09:03**

**MARK TOSCANO**

What your role and your and David's...

**00:09:05**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, Dave was elected President immediately, which I thought was hilarious. But it's kind of why I think of him as George Washington, as the first president. I don't know, it was just a very small group. So everybody kind of did everything. Just basically putting chairs, setting up chairs, putting them away, designing the graphics, doing mailings. It was a lot of work. And I had no computers. Keeping the mailing list. And typing it, the crazy things. And dealing with all the typos and Morgan. So, but it was a wonderful community. The meetings, although we had our squabbles. Which I don't really remember now. But the thing I remember is when we hired Arlene Zeichner to do the, to actually do the work that we had been volunteering to do-- was the end of Oasis. And that was not Arlene's fault. But it's like the minute we stopped sharing, collaborating on the actual work, it was like the, something slipped away and that was the beginning of the end.

**00:10:30**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

But it was just a great community. And it, you know, watching all these films together, every two weeks for year after year. Then we had planned an Oasis show and that motivated me to make Rose for Red. And that's, I mentioned that earlier. It's like for me art always needed this context of a community. I never had enough sort of will or intent to do it just for myself. I would do it for other people. But, and I wanted to be part of the group. And I remember watching Rose for Red at, downtown at that art space. I can't remember the name of it. On Alameda or whatever, Traction. LICA was that LICA, and they moved down to Traction. Where the art community kind of discovered downtown. And I remember watching Rose for Red down there. And nearly-- I thought I was going to have heart failure. My heart was just pounding.

**00:11:27**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I was always so incredibly self-conscious. I thought I was going to die. And that's always why I made short films, maybe one of the reasons. But I couldn't endure, you know, my heart would actually fail. If I had to sit there for an hour, my heart pounding like that. So, I was proud of that film though. And I felt, I was terrified to show it, but I survived it. And I liked it.

**00:11:58**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So, we moved forward in time a little bit. But we could go back.

**00:12:02**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, to yeah, yeah, whatever.

**00:12:04**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Not because you, I mean know the films that you made. The only one I haven't seen is the Eclipse Predictions because there's no print. But... but I have a pretty good sense of some of the things you're interested in. But I was wondering if you wanted to talk a little about to the extent that it's even conscious to you what some of your, maybe influences were in animation. It's a unique, I feel like you have a unique approach. And so I mean, you've mentioned Kathy Rose but what kind of things were you after.

**00:12:36**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, I always admired Pat [O'Neill]. And I think my, I mean I remember talking about how *ROSE FOR RED* was kind of a cargo cult optical, it was like because I'm not technical, I, when I made *ROSE FOR RED* I just hate A and B rolls. I mean I can't even tell you how much I hate A and B rolls. It just drove me nuts to sit there and, I really, you know, that's about as technical as I can get. You know, so the optical printing thing was always just a nightmare for me. So I designed this board to do like crude, "primitive indigenous", say it's indigenous opticals. That's a good way to-- and then the cargo cult thing was like, well I want it to look like opticals in order to sort of draw down this energy, of having the plane drop out of the sky or whatever. And all my artwork is like, I don't want to say... It's ceremonial in a way. It's like the intent, and it's come true. It's like when I do artwork and or even other sorts of events. But if I put a lot of certain kinds of energy into something then my life will open up in a certain way.

**00:14:01**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And that's how that film works. For sure. And at the end, for better and for worse. But at the end for some inexplicable reason I put the word anthropology. And that was it. And that's where it came, out of that film. But let's see, yeah I admired the optical printing. I might, probably Pat's the biggest influence. I just so admire his work on so many different levels. The storytelling and I just, his mind is really amazing. So I think I was trying to be Pat, but just also me. And that's what came out.

**00:14:53**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Well, there's certain humility I find in your work.

**00:14:58**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah.

**00:14:58**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Which is very impressive. But I like say to use the ceremonial, because each film feels a little bit like a ceremony. I mean there's a vignette like quality too. I mean there are homages or something. Or the ceremonies in honor of something.

**00:15:09**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, they are. For sure.

**00:15:16**

**MARK TOSCANO**

And I feel like the two Log Hill films are very much about that place, obviously. And I was wondering I mean is there anything that comes to mind about...

00:15:24

DIANA WILSON

Well, I think the Log Hill films were coming out of that energy that we, you know, I describe about the transformation of the house burning down. That was a huge event in our lives. Or in my life. And, you know, it, we put two and a half years into that house. And a lot psychic energy and a lot of visionary energy. I mean it looked like a frickin' spaceship. And people thought we were absolutely nuts. I mean everybody else is living in a log cabin and we're living in this spaceship. It was insane. [laugh] But that was, I think it was a way of dealing with the energy that was released from that. And if it was homage it was through the process of transformation of energy. And if that makes sense.

00:16:20

MARK TOSCANO

In the film the *LOG HILL STORY* I mean the year it was '76, so I mean you were making in '76 it's a whole two years after the place burned down. But obviously this holds an important place for you. And looking at that film, I remember it was really moving to look at it with David. Because he was saying, I remember all these places. But the film is kind of on the boundary between abstract and figurative too, and it's really transforming. And so it has this, it's like in the realm of the memory too.

00:16:47

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, yeah, yeah, right.

00:16:49

MARK TOSCANO

And not mean, but it also utilizes this animation technique which David has described to me, but this kind of like continuous dissolve kind of happening.

00:17:04

DIANA WILSON

We're not going to talk about that. I mean I have nothing to say about it really. No, I'm sorry.

00:17:12

MARK TOSCANO

Well, in the midst of this at least, you were doing some of this animation work and then you and Adam Beckett did it. And so at some point you got involved in the *STAR WARS*. But you're not, could you...



**00:17:28**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, Adam, I didn't, he just asked, he must have called me and asked me, if I wanted to work for him. And that was, you know, that was my first experience working in the film industry. I was eager to work for him, because we needed money desperately. I mean any kind of extra-- I was entirely financially motivated. I mean I had no interest in working on a commercial film or any of that. And I remember going, but it turned out to be an absolutely incredible experience. Because Lucas was there and he had the whole storyboard on his office wall. And it was just the whole *STAR WARS* production was in just a small warehouse in Van Nuys I think it was, or Sherman Way. I don't remember what, I remember driving there with Adam in his VW van, and looking at this storyboard, thinking, oh what a piece of shit, this is going to be awful. And but Adam was just insane.

**00:18:29**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I mean he had ordered this, he was in charge of lasers I think at that point and explosions. And so we started with lasers. He had this special piece of glass, it must have been 12 feet long. And he ordered it from Belgium, don't ask me why. I mean it had something to do with optics. And then we, and then he wanted me to draw these gigantic 10 foot long lines that would be optical elements for the lasers. And he thought they had to be that long because they had to be perfect. Well, you're just blowing light through them. I mean you don't see the lines. And he, we were using the rapidograph which are just constantly clogging. He made me use really tiny ones. And then, you can't draw a continuous, I mean he had these huge big steel rulers but I still had to, and where the lines joined I had to look in a micro... under a little, it was just so insane, but I did it. And Adam loved me because I would do it.

**00:19:38**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And I never questioned it. It was like, you want this? Okay, let's try, I'll try as hard as I can. Because I remember he had some other women there who were like, complaining. As I should have been probably. But, so he always liked me because I didn't complain. But I tried doing this. Well, soon enough, I mean and then he was drawing explosions and I mean that all went by the way side. Bobby Blalock put an end to all that. And I didn't know there was a big warfare going on. So I just worked for him for a short time. Maybe a month or so at first. I think Adam, they pulled the rug out of, I mean they saw that he was insane. He wasn't producing fast enough. And they started doing explosions in the parking lot. And they were fine. But then they called me back at the end. We were already living down in West L.A. at that time. And he called me and he begged me to come. He said, look, I'll put your names in the, I'll put your name in the credit. I said, I don't care, I don't think I want it. And he said, just come out and do this work.

**00:20:51**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And so I went out. And I did a little animation of lightning on R2D2 and I saw the death trench at that time. And I went, oh that looks pretty cool. So I did, and I did quite a bit of animation work at the end for him. And then we went together to see the cast and crew screening at the Academy on Wilshire. And we sat with Adam in the back row. And I remember this, I actually-- Chris Reagan's film was just as good. When we saw the first frames with Chris Reagan was the pigeon painted in red paint was almost about the same experience. But when the opening shot of Star Wars, and nobody had ever seen that before. And we just started screaming. The whole theater was screaming, Adam, David, David wasn't screaming. I'm sure. David doesn't scream. Adam and I were just screaming our heads off. And we through the first three or four shots of the movie. And it was really fun.

**00:21:50**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And so then I was very thankful that he put my name on the credits. Because that was, that's my one claim -- I go-- in Western Colorado no one's ever heard of this museum and I don't talk about it anyway. I would never use it, but I'm not shy about saying, well you know, my name is on Star Wars. And then people are like, oh, very impressed, so, then everybody...

**00:22:17**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Can you look at the movie and point to, oh yeah I did that...

**00:22:20**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, yeah, definitely. I made the R2D2 lightning and I ended up working on all three. And I can point to a lot in the third one, which I didn't get a credit for, Pat [O'Neill] got the credit. You know, there's so many people on the third one. But I did a lot of animation on the third one.

**00:22:38**

**MARK TOSCANO**

But I don't know you worked on the other ones. You did other...

**00:22:42**

**DIANA WILSON**

On the second one, Roberta got me the job. I can't remember-- it's out in Burbank-- Ander- something. Roberta had a very large role in the second Star Wars. And she got me a really nice job. And I made a lot of money. It was always for money. I never cared about the films. But I did all the laser swords, every single one of them. I, this is so crude. I drew them with a pencil and rotoscoping and then I cut them with an Exacto knife and then I photographed them over black paper. Yeah, and it took me months and it cost them gazillions. And you could do it with a computer. I've heard that they've done them all over with a computer now. I don't know why they would do that, but for the second one, yeah. Yeah, so absolutely inane stupid job but you know, it was like lots of money.

00:23:43

MARK TOSCANO

That's what you needed it so.

00:23:46

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, yeah, yeah. A third one, the third one sent me over the edge. And actually sent me to grad school, which was not a good reaction, but what happens was what is what is. But the third one, I was working with Pat at Lookout Mountain and we were, you know, working along at a very good rate. I mean 10, 12 hour days and then we got to the end and it was 16 hour days, 7 days a week. And at one point, I don't know what they called it. The screen is very wide and narrow, but then we were getting anamorphic and then we were getting the film, the square format. And I was animating to that. And I had to animate the fight with Luke and the Emperor and the Emperor falls down the endless waste paper basket I called it. The endless trashcan. So they were fighting and I was doing half that animation.

00:24:58

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

And they said, now make, just make it go up his nose and make it really sinister and evil, they wanted it. So I was doing it, and doing my best animation. But I was doing it as squished and when they put it in the real format it all looked like snot instead of, or ropes, you know, it was just like these gooey [motions with hands] instead like lightning. And they were getting very upset up north. Very upset, because time was running out. So they actually called Pat up. They said, and we want you to come here. Because you're ruining our movie. So Pat was kind of enough to send me instead. As the sacrificial lamb so I had to fly there, drive there. I'm completely exhausted by this time, I had been doing this for months and months and months. And I could care less. I just was never a big fan after, that first one I loved. After that, it was so so... So, I go into this room and they said, you're going to meet George. I was like, okay. Well, George didn't appear but these other guys were there. I mean I felt like, it's like an old movie where you're in the interrogation room and they're showing me these clips and what they look like.

**00:26:21**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I hadn't seen it before. And it does, it looks totally like snot. It looked awful, and they said, you know, George is watching us. Apparently he was looking in on this meeting from behind the wall. And like they're doing everything they could think of to intimidate me. And I just, I wasn't intimidated. It was like, I bit my tongue because of Pat, because I wanted to say, I really, I won't say what I wanted to say. But you know, I really don't care about your boy's movie. I don't care about your 40 million dollar... I mean they'd say, oh you know, this is a 40 million dollar film. I was like, I'm sorry I just don't care. I'm trying to do my best. So, they saw that I wasn't going to be intimidated. So they came up with a good solution, they sent me to this really kind animator that was doing the other half. And he just sent, he squeezed his drawings to my format and I could see what they looked like.

**00:27:26**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And I went home and I did it and it was fine. And I didn't have to be intimidated. And Pat was happy. And everything worked out perfectly. But that was a funny story. But I came home and Dave picked me up at Burbank Airport and he said, I was just as white as a ghost. I just looked like, anyway the whole point of this story was as ridiculous as it-- that I was so through with the film biz by then. I was just, I had just had it. And when we went to see the third one I was physically nauseous. I just hate that film. It was all about, to me, it's all about this really immature boys story. And it just turned my stomach when I saw it. I don't want to be part of this anymore. So I started making plans to go to grad school. Which was not a solution. But yeah, that was the last... I don't really think I did any, maybe one or two small jobs after that. But that was it.

**00:28:31**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Were you ever working with David on the stuff he was doing commercially? Or was that probably something separate.

**00:28:35**

**DIANA WILSON**

Sometimes, we used to work for this guy named C.D. Taylor. We'd end up doing jobs for Nickelodeon. I have no idea what he's doing now. But we used to work together on jobs for him, but very rarely. Very rarely.

**00:28:54**

**MARK TOSCANO**

So you worked at Abel's?

**00:28:54**

**DIANA WILSON**

Oh yeah, yeah. See that...

**00:28:57**

**MARK TOSCANO**

That's an interesting.

00:28:58

DIANA WILSON

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:29:00

MARK TOSCANO

Bob Abel's.

00:29:01

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, because after, I want to say it. If you could say the name.

00:29:03

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

Oh yeah, I worked at Bob Abel's because after *STAR WARS* came out and I was wrong. It wasn't a piece of crap. It was a really good movie. And so suddenly I'm famous because my name, it's totally undeserving. My name as an animator on *STAR WARS*. So I had a lot of cache in Hollywood at that time. I forget how I got my job at Abel's or I can't even remember. Suddenly I find myself working at Bob Abel's. They're like, oh yeah, you're an animator on *STAR WARS*, well here's your office. You know, I'm okay. And actually I wasn't prepared to work there. And they, again I found myself using rapidographs and doing like really fine inking. And I was never really trained or able to do that. But I was sharing a room with a really nice guy named Michael Sterling. I don't know what happened to him. He was a musician. And he was really kind to me and helped me along. And kind of got me up to speed. And I just did a lot of graphics work. And, oh dear, Bob Abel's was a very intense place to work.

00:30:18

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

And one, I had kind of two phases at Abel's, like rotoscoping and doing this very intense graphic work. And sun-burning my eyes a lot by starring into the fluorescent lights. And I admired Richard Taylor a lot. He worked there, and I thought he was very brilliant at the time. I don't know what I want to say about-- Elvis Presley died while I was working at Abel's. [laugh] I remember that. I remember they bought-- one of Abel's producers I guess you would say, would come into my room - I never appreciated this - and make the cocaine deals in my room. Because I think I was the only person in the building that didn't do cocaine. I've never taken cocaine, even though it was offered to me several times at Abel's. They stopped offering when I refused it. But I didn't appreciate that anyway. But not that I... Then I got into doing-- I decided I wanted to learn to do computers. They were starting programming camera shots.

00:31:39

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

And I started trying to do that. Because I liked math, but I wasn't up to that. And I actually kind of drove myself crazy trying to do that. And that's when I left Abel's.

**00:32:04**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

Abel's was a really...

**00:32:13**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

But Abel's was an amazing place during that time, as you must know. People must have talked about that. I mean it was THE place in Hollywood. And like everyone, all, it seemed like all the really talented people were there. Like Richard Taylor and other people that, but whose names, some guy named Wayne and I don't know. And then Abel tried to hire Dave. And we were going to work there together. And we were so excited. And it all fell through because Dave wouldn't work for a salary. He wanted an hourly wage. Because you didn't literally, I mean I've worked at Abel's. I've stayed at Abel's for 24 hours in a row. I mean he, you know, when the job needed to be done, they would actually get the janitors, they would gather everyone in a room and I was in a room one night all night long with janitors painting cells to get this stupid commercial done. So Dave wouldn't agree to a salary. Even though they had probably offered him a pretty good salary. And it never happened.

**00:33:22**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So that was kind of disappointing. I was hoping we would work together. And then Abel's really fell apart when they got Star Trek. And Richard Taylor just went nuts. And he said, this is going to be the best thing ever and he did an Adam thing. It's like the 12 foot lasers. He just started doing everything like, just over the top. And it failed, just like Adam did. That's my memory, it's probably not accurate, and then they took the job from Abel's if I'm not mistaken. But then at that time they wanted Dave to work on Star Trek as a, I don't know, a director, assistant director or producer or whatever. Optical person, and I was going to be his assistant. And I was like, oh wow. This is going to be great. Because you know, we would make a lot of money. To me the film industry was always about making money. It was never about, I didn't really need, feel like I needed the skills that I used or could learn in the film business. So, but I think for Dave it was different.

**00:34:38**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I think he actually learned skills that were useful to him. So anyway, I wanted to say that when I did make the, in 1980 when I did make *ROSE FOR RED*, or I guess it was after *ECLIPSE PREDICTIONS* in '82 I started making books. I got very frustrated with the technical aspects of film. The A and B rolls were just... And I wanted something very immediate so then it did get me into doing, back into doing more studio art. And the film I think got me into the narrative and writing and letting stories come to me. Stories would just come and if I, they still come but I have to pay attention to them or write them down or they'll stop coming. So I haven't been writing them down. That's bad on me but at that time I was writing a lot of my stories. And I just switched over to making physical objects. Like I could cut my pages out of plywood. I did a lot of woodwork, carpentry, a lot of wax, collage type things. And I was a much happier camper. Much happier camper. You know, I, but the down side of that is a lot of that artwork got lost.

**00:36:02**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I mean some of it's in the attic at Benton Way. But a lot of just got destroyed. It was big. I'd make these room size books and that, spaces I would make, like these geometric spaces. Like egg shaped spaces. And again...

**00:36:24**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Were these all in books.

**00:36:25**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, again, it was a ceremonial process. Yeah, yeah. They were made on-- they were like kind of oversized very tall TV trays and they all fit together and made kind of egg shape that you enter at the narrow end. And then the pages of the books were unfolded, were wood and were unfolded on top of those TV trays. So it was at eye level. And they were covered on both sides with collages and print and stuff. So I really got into that. And then Judith Hoffberg who has passed away now. I don't know if you know her. She was very prominent in the L.A. book, like the Women's Building does a lot of books. And but she was kind of The book person. The artist book person in L.A. and she helped me a lot, supported me in my work. And showed my work a lot. So there was a period there after '82, between '82 and about '86 where I was doing a lot of, making a lot of books. And I had a lot of shows. Well, not a lot, but I had a show in Irvine. I had a show up at, what was the name of that place in San Francisco. New Langdon Arts.

**00:37:53**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So when I think of my career as an artist I think of that period. And not the filmmaking.

00:38:06

MARK TOSCANO

So, what about *FOUR CORNERS* now. I did want to ask you about that, because it's very different from the other work. And first of all that's like four times as long as any of your other films. Being that, and it's only like 9 minutes.

00:38:19

DIANA WILSON

I always said, well after sitting through Magellan at the Gates of Hell, I would say, I never want to do that to anybody. So all my films always real short. I think that's a cargo cult of the structural film. You know, it's the same kind of impulse of trying to make a structural film, but not quite. It's a little bit different. But again, it's that, I love that film because it's, it required this discipline. This four days of just intense concentration. And once in a while there's like these frames where I goof up. You see the blank. I think I goofed up everyday at least once. But that was a big part of it, is just the concentration. And there were, well, yeah.

00:39:20

MARK TOSCANO

And is it that each of the four sections was shot on each a separate day or?

00:39:22

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, yeah, each one is a day. Yeah.

00:39:35

DAVE WILSON

Can I make a confession? I had always known Diana was aesthetically far more advanced or something. And for *FOUR CORNERS* she had wanted for the fourth section to be, which in each section is how many sheets? Some number of sheets. And she had wanted to take each sheet and as it, as she was animating through, throw it into the fire and burn it. And I said, oh no, you can't do that. Because it'd be destroying the art.

00:40:11

MARK TOSCANO

So you messed up the movie.

00:40:11

DAVE WILSON

I messed up the movie. Oh, I've always felt so badly about that.

00:40:19

DIANA WILSON

You messed up the movie because you came home and you said, that you had word that we needed a new transmission in the Saab and I messed up. That's like, that's \$600. And it's like I missed the beat. Yeah, I don't, I did burn them at the end I thought.

00:40:35

DAVE WILSON

No, the fire was behind it.



00:40:36

DIANA WILSON

Oh, I should have burned them yeah. It was all about burning the... Oh no, well whatever. I'll have to do it again sometime.

00:40:43

MARK TOSCANO

Well, if you saved the pages you could.

00:40:45

DIANA WILSON

Yeah, we've got a fireplace.

[end of tape 3]

## **TAPE 4: DIANA WILSON**

00:01:00

DIANA WILSON

No, Adam was obviously larger than life. And I can truly say I've never known anyone approaching-- I can't characterize Adam. He truly, I just, when he passed, when he left the planet, he left so quickly. It's, this sounds corny but it's really like he went back to a very distant star where he came from. And he just was not... Usually people are present and especially in a death like that. When all his, because we, I remember being with Beverly. I don't know if Pat was there. And I think Dave was there. We went up to his house, all, a lot of people were there the next day or the day after he died. And we were going through everything. And everything was scattered everywhere on the ground from the Fire Department. And I remember someone picking up a piece paper and it was \$50,000 of GM stock. And that \$50,000 in the mid-70's was a huge amount of money. And but I mean that, and everyone was gathering his art. And the stuff.

00:02:15

DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)

And normally in a situation like that you really feel the presence of someone who just passed. It has been less than three days. And Adam was just not there. I've never felt anything like it. He just, there was nothing. He was so gone. And there are these stories, I'm not going to get this right, but you know, David Berry was right next door. And Val Verde is a very odd place and there were a lot UFO sightings. And I'm going to ask Dave if he can remember this, but Adam I think would tell me about these sightings of these lights that would come and then just recede very, very quickly. It's a typical UFO thing. And that's always how I felt about him. He just was beyond the speed of the light. He was out of here. So what that has to do with Adam. He didn't fit in this world. Like Dave was saying, he was very depressed all the time. He thought things would get looser. His vision was, well *KITSCH IN SYNCH*. I remember watching that at Kathy's house, Kathy Rose's house. And thinking what, maybe 20 years from now this thing will be, have a context.

**00:03:39**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

It had no context. I mean Adam was brilliant like that. He could make things with absolutely no context. I mean that's hard. I mean [Doug] Harvey can approach sometimes, but not like Adam. That *KITSCH IN SYNCH*. I mean I wish you could have seen it in '73. I mean that thing was just completely nuts. And not nuts, it was, that's too crude. It was so other, that it really felt like it had come from some distant planet. And that was it, that was what was brilliant about Adam. Plus all his very multiple personalities. And then we used to go over to our friends, when we lived in West L.A., we were just a block away from Tim Sheppard and Andrea Georges who were, Tim was Pat's partner for a while. And Adam would be over there and they had a friend named Peter Zane was just brilliant beyond a shadow of doubt. Just very bright, bright person from Princeton I believe. And we were sitting around and somebody said, something like, how many atoms are in the universe?

**00:04:56**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And so both Adam and Peter started figuring, like you know, I wouldn't know where to begin. And Peter was doing math and Adam had some other thought process. And, David will corroborate this. Do you remember this? Peter comes up with a number, I mean they're at opposite ends of the room, and Adam somehow came up with a similar number. It was like, I don't know if it was right or wrong. But they both came up with about the same preposterous number. But at that time I was aware that Adam's thought process was so entirely different. And Peter had done it like a physicist would. You can't figure that, because the universe was infinite, but anyway he came up... So at that time I started wondering where Adam really was coming from. He was a very mysterious character to me. And I just was talking about this multiple personalities. I mean he really did seem to be five distinct people at least.

**00:06:06**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And one of them was a really good friend of mine, like I said. And we had long, it was like I said, it was like talking to a very good girlfriend. And we'd just talk and talk and talk. I can't remember about what. You know, but it was, they were very fine talks. And we were very close. But then I would see him and, you know, to me he was a friend. And he didn't even know who I was, practically didn't know who I was. So he was a very complicated person. But I remember going to his house and seeing the grapefruit peels. So those were very important to him. Peeling the spirals, creating the spiral out of-- it had some sort of very important meaning for him. And he also had something in a pillowcase and I think it was a dead pheasant. So what, this first time we went to his house and he was showing us all these, but of course ridiculously tiny. It was like one of those, it was a closet, literally.

**00:07:17**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I mean it must have been under 200 square feet, the entire house. It was just a room where he had his animation desk and it was just absolutely packed with science fiction paperbacks. I mean, there were no wall space. And he had one of those high intensity lamps. And I think that's what caused the fire. And he had a tiny kitchen, I mean just like one third the size of that kitchen. And then off the kitchen was a utility room. I don't think there was, the way I remember there, if it had a washing machine, that would have filled the room. And in that room he had all these peels and he had this pillowcase. And I think there was a dead pheasant in the pillowcase. And I remember thinking, hmm. It's like, and he was very proud of all that. And it was all very meaningful. And I remember thinking, this guy is just not, not ordinary, you know. It didn't seem creepy or anything, it just was very different. He was very different. You know, uncategorizable person. So. There's probably a lot more to say about Adam.

**00:08:34**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

He was always very kind to me. You know, he gave me the job at Star Wars. And, of course, well I was always sorry I couldn't work with him again, because we worked well together. He was hard to work for, but we had fun. I was very, I was very shocked. I remember Beverly [O'Neill] called me when he died. And I remember I was very, I was just too shocked. But it seemed right because he had been, the whole Star Wars thing was just a horrible, like Dave said, he's depressed. And that was just, well anyway. I mean I'm sure you've heard all about his dad and it was kind of...

**00:09:27**

**MARK TOSCANO**

I'm not familiar.

**00:09:29**

**DIANA WILSON**

His dad was a well known architect in L.A. And had had a very successful young career, was a rising star, full of potential. Just like Adam, you know, just destined to be among the best. And I don't know what happened, but he started drinking. And then everything went south. I think divorced, I'm not sure about all that. But his dad ended up basically on the street, very poor. As a doorman at the, it's a great-- it's the hotel that's on Pershing Square downtown. It's a very high tone-- the Biltmore. And that's one of the things we found in the fire. Was some reference to his dad as the doorman at the Biltmore. So he ended up not working as an architect and then dying by walking through a plate glass window along three floors up and falling to his death.

**00:10:39**

**MARK TOSCANO**

With Adam?

**00:10:39**

**DIANA WILSON**

I don't remember that. I don't remember that, Dave. Adam was there?

**00:10:46**

**DAVE WILSON**

Adam was in the room. This is, you know, I'm just talking to people and this is my... but Adam was in the room. And his dad just... I don't know if he didn't break the glass. There was no glass.

**00:10:56**

**DIANA WILSON**

No, I thought he went through...

**00:10:57**

**DAVE WILSON**

He just walked off.

**00:10:56**

**DIANA WILSON**

He walked off. So basically Adam, I was, I forgot about this. But Adam was recreating his dad's life in a way. I mean he had just, he was poised. I mean that, with Star Wars and Abel's the whole optical thing was just starting. I mean there was a whole paradigm shift in Hollywood going on at that time. And Adam was poised to be a brilliant force in that. And he did, I don't know. Well, it's as if he walked off a cliff. I mean the Star Wars thing, he was so depressed after having that yanked. His vision like of the hand drawn explosions. I mean he wanted to do it that way. And...

**00:11:51**

**MARK TOSCANO**

This one thing I'm going to interrupt on this. But one of the most bittersweet things I found of going through his collection at the Academy was a small role of 35 Vista Vision print. Which was hand labeled scratched into the emulsion the words True Art. And then I unwound it and it was hand scratched on each Vista Vision frame explosions. Like an explosion. And I could imagine him doing this at the deepest point of his anger and frustration and just having this, I mean being taken off of that. And saying, well, he kept calling it True Art. And that killed me when I found that.

**00:12:31**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, yeah. I mean I don't know the details of his dad's life and what happened with his architectural career, but I always felt that there must have been incredible parallels and that Adam was actually kind of following in his footsteps for some bizarre reason. I mean you know the whole story about his sister and that was another sign or, I mean that was such a, not even coincidence. I mean his sister who we had met once or twice. And she seemed like a fine person. Was living up in Washington I believe and had a large house. Because each one of those kids had enough money to buy a perfectly good house in those days. I mean \$50,000 in those days would have bought him a house in the Hollywood Hills. Like a 2,000 square foot house at least. You know, no problem. So he had enough money to be living in town or wherever he wanted to live. But he chose to live in this tiny place. Anyway, his sister had bought this apparently a craftsman style house in Washington.

**00:13:38**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And had kind of a commune type situation, a lot of people living with her. And had gone out one night and met a guy at a restaurant or a bar, I don't know which. And brought him home. She met somebody, brought him home, he spent the night. And in the morning he murdered her and took her car. And the police called Adam's mother from Washington and said, left a message I think. And said, we need to talk to you regarding a, and they gave a number, like 402, I don't know what the number is. And she called her lawyer and said, what is-- you know, and in some bizarre indirect way, she found out a 402 was referred to a murder. So that's, it's just sounded awful. So then she had her lawyer come over and they were, she just learned the news. And then I guess David Berry called her, right? Once Adam's house burned down and...

**00:14:50**

**DAVE WILSON**

He was there the same day.

**00:14:51**

**DIANA WILSON**

And it was the very same day. And then she gets-- she's with her lawyer and then she gets this other phone call that Adam has passed away. And to me that's beyond coincidence because Adam would have single handedly gone to Washington and strangled that man, there is no doubt. Because he loved his sister. He would have broken into wherever that man was and killed him. Or attempted, I mean I don't think he would have done it. He would have definitely attempted to kill that man. There is no doubt in my mind. He would not rest. So and he never, I guess I was thankful. But he must have known on some level his sister was gone. That was another really strange, I don't want to say coincidence, it's more than that. It was all very Adam like. To leave. And I always wondered if he left because of his sister or, following her or I don't know. I mean it, I never really thought about it that much because a lot of things having to do with Adam like that were, or are I feel are beyond my knowing.

**00:16:12**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

They are coming from another place and they have another cause and effect going on. And it's not just for me to know. But it was very, it reminds me of Flatland. And he lived in another dimension and it looks odd from my point of view. But I can't figure out what's going on. It's one of those Flatland experiences. And that's why I don't want to say it's just a coincidence. It makes perfect sense on Adam's level of things.

**00:16:40**

**DAVE WILSON**

The curious thing was Adam wasn't on the Flatland too. He was only seeing these things. He didn't necessarily-- he didn't see them in volume. He was also seeing them as these strange manifestations which was the curious thing about them. And he was conscious and knew, but was also just with...

**00:17:07**

**DIANA WILSON**

Right. I agree with that. It's like he didn't have, and that's what pained him so much. Because he knew he needed that..

**00:17:16**

**DAVE WILSON**

The overview right.

**00:17:19**

**DIANA WILSON**

The overview and he just didn't have it. He went so badly to drugs. I don't know what drugs. But you know, after *STAR WARS*. Cocaine and that certainly didn't help things at all. And I didn't really know him or talk to him too much during that last little bit. When did he die?

**00:17:39**

**MARK TOSCANO**

It was early '79.

00:17:43 DIANA WILSON  
And *STAR WARS* was finished in '77.

00:17:47 DAVE WILSON  
The last year of [mumbles]

00:17:50 DIANA WILSON  
Yeah, I don't think I talked to him much.

00:17:53 DAVE WILSON  
I would see him over time.

00:17:54 DIANA WILSON  
Yeah, maybe so. I remember talking to him a lot on the phone in '78. That's it, anyway. But that... it still gives me chills to think of it.

00:18:32 DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)  
No, Oasis was a real important collective of people. I mean it really I think shaped both Dave and my lives of having those friendships during that year, those years. Because it did serve as a counter weight to just-- because you know, we were working in the commercial film industry and then you spent your day with Michael Sterling and a wonderful person. But you don't have the same-- I mean it was, we were interested in art. And it was good to have that during those years. Although the commercial thing went on long after that. Without the counter weight of Oasis. So, anyway, do you want to... it's up to you.

00:19:26 MARK TOSCANO  
Well, it's up-- I mean *ECLIPSE PREDICTIONS* being the only film I haven't seen. I don't know much about it, but you, it is something you could talk about.

00:19:37 DIANA WILSON  
It's basically one of the stories that I told you that was coming to me and there was a time after 1980 I was, I've always been dealing with things that happened to me during high school, grade school years and the stories were mostly about those. So it was kind of a healing, because it's about these-- when I was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade a bunch of my classmates were going on a girl scout field trip to a nearby town. And they were coming back and they were in a brand new Chevy station wagon, stopped at the railroad tracks and for some reason the, they had stopped and then they just crept out onto the tracks. And so they were hit and all killed. It was very, it was traumatic to have-- wake up and find 12 or 9 of your classmates' pictures on the front page. And, *ECLIPSE PREDICTIONS* is a story about basically seeing them in open caskets having aged about 20 years in two days, so because they did a bad job.



**00:21:00** **DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

It's better, it's not good to just talk about things like that. But I had put it into a story that sort of, you know, it was a ceremony about a trauma that had continued and still continues. I mean I still think of them on that day.

**00:21:26** **DAVE WILSON**

And visually it's parallel in a way to...

**00:21:33** **DIANA WILSON**

I don't know, it's a cargo cult opticals. I can't even remember what it looks like actually. And I showed that at Pasadena Filmforum. I remember showing that. And I wasn't quite as terrified to show it. But...

**00:21:46** **DAVE WILSON**

They always seemed to be too, like a para film showing, *ECLIPSE PREDICTIONS* was that to me, it was. That was definitely.

**00:21:59** **MARK TOSCANO**

And Tom Lesser told me you used to work on a film together.

**00:22:01** **DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, a little bit. I don't know, I don't remember what I did, I think I did a soundtrack, it had to do with a dream. I don't really remember. I remember him showing something out at Claremont College, but an exhibit. That was kind of the end. I think I had started in grad school by then. And so that was all that, talk about *ECLIPSE PREDICTIONS*. Grad school really eclipsed my artwork.

**00:22:31** **MARK TOSCANO**

So actually I think when we were following more of a crowd, that's kind of where we ended up, is you decided after *RETURN OF THE JEDI* to go to grad school. So could maybe you could go back if you want to talk about what you did and what you worked on.

**00:22:47** **DIANA WILSON**

In grad school?

**00:22:48** **MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, like what did you do. Well, when you decide to go to...

**00:22:52**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, I really didn't want to do commercial film work anymore. And anyway computers were, you know, actually you know, John Hughes. He was really, he was kind enough to allow me to learn word processing on one of his UNIX computers and that enabled me to actually consider going to grad school. Because if, you know, you could imagine writing-- and so and actually Dave and I were up in San Francisco. He had done an exhibit up at the Exploratorium. And I was helping him, it was fun. We took, that was a museum exhibit. Did you happen...

**00:23:40**

**DAVE WILSON**

It was pre-museum based.

**00:23:42**

**DIANA WILSON**

It was pre-museum but it was a museum exhibit. You didn't know he had the museum yet. And, I don't know there was something about helping him and I wasn't really enjoying... I mean I enjoyed helping him but I don't know, anyway. I decided in the Fall of '83 to go to grad school. And... it probably wasn't the greatest decision. But actually, oh I don't want to tell that story. That's okay.

**00:24:14**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Well, what were you deciding-- did you do?

**00:24:16**

**DIANA WILSON**

Oh yeah, I went to UCLA. I started, I did a Master's in Anthropology. It was really easy. They gave me the money. I didn't have to pay tuition. They thought I was wonderful because I was older and you know, had some experience. And I think they liked the fact that I worked on *STAR WARS*, I'm serious. [laugh] Oh God. And I actually wrote a couple papers on Star Wars. We did it anyway. I don't, I really don't, grad school was so boring. And so really awful. It took ten years. It was one of the worse periods of my life. And...

**00:24:54**

**DAVE WILSON**

The Master's was fun.

**00:24:56**

**DIANA WILSON**

The Master's was okay. Actually I did the Master's, I did my Master's thesis analyzing these Navajo films made by Navajos and it was actually pretty interesting. I don't know if you've ever seen those films. It was anthro project called *THROUGH NAVAJO EYES* done in the '60s. And they went to the rez and they gave these Navajo young people a camera, Bill Wexlis and then the way edited the film was just fabulous. I mean crazy. So I did this whole like time space analysis and it was good, it was fun. So, but that started my whole thing with Indians. You know, my love affair, my love-hate affair with Indians. And I mean a lot of good things came out of grad school. But not grad school itself. So. I mean I really considered those lost years.

**00:25:49**

**DAVE WILSON**

You should then say something about, for that, all the work at UCLA when...

**00:25:59**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, yeah, for the record. Well, those were all the years we started in the museum also. Because, okay, there was this amazing like week at the end of March, beginning of April in 1984. Where Dave started his commercial film business, West Indigo. He's going go like that...[editor's note: motions pointing a gun at her head] I started grad school. And we, Dave conceived the museum and we together conceived Daniella. All like within the space of a week. All four of those things changed our lives quite a bit. [laugh] And there's this really sweet little story about, I used to do a lot of Tai Chi in Silver Lake. And he was coming to pick me up after one Saturday morning. And I came out and I got in our Saab and he handed me this slip of paper and it said, the Museum of Jurassic Technology. And I said, what the hell is this? And he kind of, describe-- I forget what you said. But he had just had the epiphany of putting the case over the fox's head and like having this whole museum just kind of fall into place. And he told me, and I said, this sounds like your life's work.

**00:27:21**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And he said, well probably not. You did. You said, he said it in a way that like well, I'm going to do this but then I'll do something else. And I said, uh-huh. This is it. [laugh] And you know, we were young then. We were like I think you were 39, and I was 37. But I knew, it was over. Like okay. Yeah. So that was a sweet little story. We used to tell that story back and forth all the time. And then the story, I don't know if he told you this, but when I was 40, or turned 40. We had the museum but it was traveling all the time. And like when Dan Rae was born we had her first trip, I think she was under six weeks old, we went to Taos. And he set up the museum and it was really, really hard. And just holding that baby for hours and hours and hours. Watching Dave, you know, do all his crazy stuff. And so anyway that-- there was this need to stop doing exhibits. And to have a place. So it was really nice.

**00:28:30**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

On my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday I think I was in grad school and I came home and Dave had arranged a babysitter. Dan Rae, was I don't know, 3, 2. About to turn 3. Almost 3, so we went out to my favorite sushi place on Beverly Boulevard and walking in, yeah it was great, great sushi place.

**00:28:57**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Sam Francis on...

**00:29:00**

**DIANA WILSON**

And it's all these Sam Francis paintings. It's really a sweet little place. But we walk into...

**00:29:05**

**DAVE WILSON**

And Sam Francis was kind of interwoven into our bodies.

**00:29:07**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, yeah. We were walking in and we saw this really great building across the street. And it had this kind of Moorish crap on the top. And it looked charming. It was one of those L.A. really charming buildings. And it had a big For Lease sign and we got to talking, a couple things with Sake, you know, it's like why don't we rent a space for the museum. So that was really the beginning of... And so after that...

**00:29:33**

**DAVE WILSON**

And really Diana was giving permission to...

**00:29:37**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, I had had too much Sake or I probably never would have. Because we really didn't have the money to do it, but that never stopped us doing anything. So, after that we just started every weekend we would just cruise everywhere. And we were looking primarily in Eagle Rock and Glendale and places we thought we could afford. We looked downtown, we looked everywhere. Just everywhere. And literally every weekend. And finally in late to mid December he calls me and he said, I saw this storefront on the way to work. And it's just around the corner. And it was cheap. And he, and I remember him describing it to me on the phone. And it just sounds perfect. So yeah. So we got it right after Christmas that year. And Dan Rae was just 3. And we saw Dan Rae last night doing her puppet show, her graduate puppet show at Cal Arts. And she had a T-shirt on that said, Jurassic Park the Ride, I survived the ride.

**00:30:43**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And it's so true. She survived this ride. Sacrificing her childhood, because we were here every single weekend for all those years. So Dan Rae never got to go camping. No horseback riding, never got to do anything that little girls love to do. She was here. Every single weekend. Sometimes she got to roller-skate on the sidewalks. [laugh] With Dave playing the accordion. I thought they were kind like a, oh well whatever. Yeah, so, you better ask a question.

**00:31:26**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Well, I mean you've been working on this project recently. Do you want to talk about maybe kind of what was with that.

**00:31:38**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, that was another not looking ahead, and not thinking. You know, we were, because of Dave's family and a family farm that got sold back in 2004 we had to invest in real estate and we, we're not the most financially savvy people in the world. And we thought, well this will be easy. And you have to invest in real estate in 45 days or you have to pay a lot of tax. So and 45 days is not very long. But we thought, okay, we could do this. And unfortunately at that time-- and Dave has no interest in real estate whatsoever, I'm the real estate person in the family-- but I was writing a report for an Indian tribe in Merced County that wanted to have a casino in Merced County. And they needed some kind of proof that they actually had people living in Merced County in 18, whatever, you know, 50. So way back when. So I was researching and it got more involved than I had counted on.

**00:32:41**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And it took quite a while and so we ended up with about 15 days of having to look for a property. And so we got a realtor and we were looking around here and I mean I can't even begin to tell you the stories. It was like we were looking at buildings that we would have inspections on and they said, well it's not when, it's not if, but when the hill comes down and covers this. I mean it was just, it was height of the real estate madness and there was nothing here. So I got on the computer and I found this piece of land which in Montrose that, at least our, my brother-- his brother lived nearby. And it seemed like a good investment and a lot of development around and okay. You know, that's the best thing we could come up with. And never dreamed in a million years that we would live there. I don't, I think I would have run away to Mexico if I'd known.

**00:33:45**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

I know I would run away to Mexico if I'd known. Anyway, so we run a search for it, we buy the property and in about a year, that's just a long complicated thing. But my mom was in a very expensive nursing home here and so I get the idea that maybe I should build a house there and start an old folks home and one thing led to another. And anyway, we ended up building a big house out there. And my mom is still living there and Dave's mom is about to live there. And it's kind of turned into a, it's a project. That's kind of my farm project right now. And I think although we can't see really far ahead I think it will turn into a museum project as well. I don't think we could have ever, we didn't go into it with that idea, well maybe a little bit. Maybe a little bit. But it's just something that's in the middle of this process anyway.

**00:34:55**

**MARK TOSCANO**

And how remote is that?

**00:34:56**

**DIANA WILSON**

The museum?

**00:34:59**

**MARK TOSCANO**

No, yeah, that place is it...

**00:35:00**

**DIANA WILSON**

It's near a small town in Colorado, called Montrose. No, it's just two miles from town. It's not, it's at 6,000 feet. The climate is brutal. The culture is brutal. The people are not brutal but you know, it's rural America. And there-- it's incredibly conservative. Meth epidemic is unbelievable, drugs everywhere. Guns everywhere. Very different environment than living in L.A. But you know, I'm learning to-- it's been really hard but I'm, I can feel myself getting more conservative year by year. Because I think I really look at politics right now as rather than them and us, which I used to look at it, it's like both sides have great, there's something valuable on both sides. And we need to look for the balance of those ideas. And it's part of a larger picture. Because I think that people in the country are really strong on self-sufficiency and that's where in that eventually comes out as a lot of conservative crap, like Tea Party stuff. But the core idea is not a bad one.

**00:36:25**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

So anyway, and it's changing me living there. And it's, you know, when I came home this time I told Dave, I said, this, I'm visiting. This was my home, but now I'm visiting. So I feel like I'm there and I'm trying to get him to come out and bring parts of the museum, because it's beautiful. It's actually very beautiful out there. But very strange. Very strange.

**00:36:57**

**MARK TOSCANO**

And have you been, did you design the building and everything?

**00:37:01**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, pretty much. And I really like to build, as I said. And Oswaldo who built a lot of this place, I don't know if you know Oswaldo.

**00:37:08**

**MARK TOSCANO**

Yeah, I met him.

**00:37:11**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, he's a wonderful person. And he's just sort of, he's a very giving person and a very serving, you know, he's like, he's all about giving to other people. And he gave, he's given Dave and I a tremendous amount and not only in this place but then a year of his life building the house. Which was really fun, really, really fun. So I've been building a lot and just survival, you know, just getting the gardens going and everything. And I was telling Nana the other day that I really think about, it's a trans generational thing. I feel like I'm using what's left of my energy and life creating something that will be for another generation. And whether that's Dan Rae or not, I don't know, but hopefully you know, it will be an art center. It's designed to, it's a huge house and it's designed as kind of an intentional living place. And there's lots of room for other houses and other buildings. And I really want it to be like this model that is in Georgia, this really wonderful arts place.

**00:38:27**

**DIANA WILSON (CONTINUED)**

And I think Dave and I both imagine it as sort of a poet's garden or a philosopher farm or something like that. And we start talking a lot about just integrating the animals and the animals' buildings in with like camera obscure type exhibits and building like ways, trails that you walk over the land, but not in the land. And so it's kind of a wetlands environment. And so it's really, it can be really beautiful. So, and we're both very inspired, especially Dave though, but me too. With Ian Hamilton's family's little Sparta garden in Scotland. I don't know if you're familiar with that. That's a life long art project. Whether we have time to do this, I don't know. But that's been kind of the intention. So, that's where that is. Okay.

**00:39:24**

**MARK TOSCANO**

We just have a few minutes left on this tape and I feel like...

**00:39:26**

**DIANA WILSON**

We're kind at the end.

**00:39:28**

**MARK TOSCANO**

I'm kind of lost.

**00:39:30**

**DIANA WILSON**

Well, we caught up with...

**00:39:30**

**MARK TOSCANO**

I mean it's brought up other things, you know, I mean David told me not that long ago, and correct me if I'm wrong, that maybe you had been considering doing a little animation again or a film?

**00:39:40**

**DIANA WILSON**

Yeah, definitely.



00:39:40

MARK TOSCANO

Could you, do you want to say anything about that?

00:39:43

DIANA WILSON

Well, you know, I didn't mention but as a kid I was really into the View Master thing. I had a huge collection of View Masters. And I really liked 3D and a lot of book work was also-- I did a lot of 3D prints with one of my books.

00:40:05

DAVE WILSON

And they make beautiful, View Masters.

00:40:07

DIANA WILSON

I really like, like spatial ambiguity and well you can see that in the films. You know, so I was doing that in a kind a View Master format. So I'd like to do that again. Because the farm, the building, I feel like I'm kind of nearing the end of another segment of my life. It's nourishing but it's also almost done. And I need to do something more, maybe mental and less physical. So, we'll see.

[end of tape 4]