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Oral history interview with Hiroko Sato Pijanowski, 2003 May 13-15

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Hiroko Sato Pijanowski on May 13-15, 2003. The interview took place in Honolulu, Hawaii and was conducted by Arline M. Fisch for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

Hiroko Sato Pijanowski and Arline M. Fisch have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written prose.

Interview

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Hiroko Pijanowski at her home in Honolulu on May 13, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

This is disc number one.

Hiroko, I think of you as a truly binational person, both Japanese and American, but I wonder how you think of yourself. How do you define yourself? Are you a Japanese person who lives in America, or a person who is of both cultures? What do you think?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I am a Japanese who lives in the United States. But I have a mixed feeling about it, because when I think about am I really truly Japanese, I'm not; and when I think about am I really Americanized, partially, yes, but mostly no. But I'm not Japanese-American or American-Japanese. And when I go back to Japan, I don't feel like I'm a Japanese.

MS. FISCH: You don't.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not 100 percent. And when I live in United States, of course I'm not American, but more feel like Japanese. So I myself don't know who I am. [Laughs.] And once my friend said, "You're not Japanese," in Japan. I've been told by my friend that I'm not Japanese anymore. So I asked her, "Then what am I? What do you think? Am I American? Am I American-Japanese?" And she said, "Well, you are"-what did she call me-"You are international person."

MS. FISCH: And does that make you comfortable? I mean, are you happy with that definition?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: In a way, I thought she is right, because I don't belong to either any longer.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And I don't [feel] sad.

MS. FISCH: It doesn't make you sad.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, it doesn't make me sad, because I know what part is still Japanese, and I know myself that I'm more towards Japanese than American. And if I feel that I am American, I will be taking American citizenship.

MS. FISCH: I see. And you haven't done that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I just can't. No, because I just don't feel 100 percent that I'm American. If I feel 90 percent I'm American, I will. It doesn't have to be 100 percent.

MS. FISCH: Can we talk first about you family and your childhood and youth in Japan? What was your family like? Where were you born?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I was born in Tokyo.

MS. FISCH: In Tokyo.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, 10 days after the Second World War started. And I was the first grandchild to my grandparents. Also -

I don't know what to talk about, what you mean by this. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Okay. Who were your parents?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Who were my parents?

MS. FISCH: What was their background? What did they do?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. My father was a medical doctor. My mother was a typical housewife. And I didn't have any brothers or sisters. I was only one child. And so I was being loved a lot and I was spoiled.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And I didn't know that I was spoiled.

MS. FISCH: Was there an extended family, with other children from aunts and uncles and so on?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. We are not a big family. And my uncle doesn't have any children. I'm talking about my mother's side now. My uncle doesn't have any children. My aunt has only two. They lived in Kawasaki, which is south of Tokyo, for a while. And my father's side, only two cousins. And now I have two more, but I already left Japan, so I never even met one of them still. I don't know who.

MS. FISCH: So you were a very small family, you and your mother and father. And where did you live?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: We lived in Tokyo, but then when the Second World War started, we moved out of the city. And when we came back to Tokyo, we didn't have any house, so we moved to Yokohama and found a fishing village to live in, and lived there. And I started going to elementary school. But the fishing village did not have a good school system, so my mother found one school which is basically run by the-Christianity?

MS. FISCH: By a Christian group?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Christian group, which was quite far from where I lived. It took me about one hour to get to the school. And that was starting in my third grade. I made lots of good friends. I still correspond with them.

MS. FISCH: I know. I noticed that you talked yesterday about how you are still in contact with your schoolmates at different levels.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah!

MS. FISCH: And I think that's really unusual in this country.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But why? [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Well, it's unusual in this country, I think, because we move around so much. But it must be quite-is it quite normal in Japan?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't think so.

MS. FISCH: But it's normal for you.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's me. Yeah, it's me. Because I didn't have any brothers and sisters, so the friends are more important, right? So I think it's very unusual that I kept contact with elementary friends, high school friends, university friends. And the reason why I'm saying [that] is that once I went to a party with 40 university friends there, and one guy said to me that "You know, my friends at work envy me so much." And I said, "Why? And he said, "Just because I have such a great relationship with my colleagues." And I said, "What do you mean?" And he said that most of the people don't have.

MS. FISCH: So it isn't all that common.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: But it's important for you.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: I think that's wonderful.

Were your parents artistic?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: My father was a Sunday painter. That's how I started oil painting, when I was very young. My

mother was not doing anything physically, but she, I think, had more sensibility.

MS. FISCH: Sensitivity?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Sensitivity for the arts. And she can criticize, and it's quite severe, but it's also, in a way, very true. My father likes to do physically, but he was a terrible painter. [Laughs.] And their relationship wasn't great.

MS. FISCH: Between your mother and father.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. That's why I have a job now-and it's very unusual to have a job, for my generation particularly, in Japan-just because my mother had a terrible life with my father.

MS. FISCH: Yet you loved them both. No?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes and no. I loved my mother, and I used to dream-could I talk about something like this?

MS. FISCH: Of course.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I used to have a dream of my mother going to leave me, every night when I was little. And I didn't know why I was having such a dream. But every night? I thought that was very unusual.

MS. FISCH: Is this when you were very young?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Very young, like maybe first grade or a little before, for a long time, even [when] I went to high school. I had a dream every night my mother is leaving me. And always she is going away and I am standing and calling my mother's name, and she never turned around to come back. And I found out later why. It's because my father was having affair with quite a number of ladies, but a particular one-we found out, after he died, he still kept the relationship. So he actually had a second wife all year[s] long.

MS. FISCH: Did he have other children?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. That was good thing, my mother said. That was a good thing that he did not have, he didn't make any children.

MS. FISCH: And probably good for you, as well.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. I think so, too. And one day I was walking with her and I said to her, "Oh, that is the lady my father took me to the beach and I thought 'I don't like her.'" That was a time when my mother was thinking of leaving home and leaving me behind and she'd just take off so that he would get married with this lady and would take care of me. But since she heard that word, she couldn't leave.

MS. FISCH: She couldn't leave because you didn't like this other lady.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't like her.

And then a couple years later I think my mother actually tried to commit suicide. And I knew, even though I was little, what she was trying to do. And I even told my father I should not tell anyone about what happened today, won't say anything. I never said anything about it till maybe five, six years ago, never told anyone.

MS. FISCH: You never acknowledged that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. I just kept secret, just because for my mother. It's kind of embarrassing, hard for her, to have done such a thing.

MS. FISCH: Right. And it's her secret, I suppose.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But from that experience, she had a thought that women should have a job, so then the woman could be equal with the man if the woman makes income. Also she can-I mean she or me or whoever has a job can leave him anytime, so they can make a living.

MS. FISCH: So your independence, she felt, was important.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. If she had a job, she could have left him, taking me with her. She couldn't do it, just because no job available.

MS. FISCH: That's very interesting that that background has so influenced your career.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. Yes. So I've been told, when I got into the junior high, the woman should have a job.

Whatever job you want, anything, have a job.

MS. FISCH: Just so that you can be your own person.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But she didn't tell me why. I figured it out later. But I just listened to her suggestion, I think.

MS. FISCH: So what kinds of schools did you go to? I mean, you said you went to a Christian elementary school.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm, elementary school.

MS. FISCH: And then what kind of school did you go to?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Then I went to another Christian junior high, senior high, which was Episcopal mission school; also the high school, junior high, senior high, both.

MS. FISCH: And did you study art there? I mean, did you have any special art instruction? You said you started painting because of your father being a painter, but did you also have art lessons in school or after school?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. From the elementary school, I liked painting the best, and that was the best grade. I always got A. Everything else was, like, B or C.

MS. FISCH: That told you something.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That told me something. And another thing was that-again going back to my mother-that I thought was great, she saw it, what's the good-because of the grade, right? So she brought papers and pens to me as much as she can, because at that time it was very difficult to get those things after the war.

MS. FISCH: Because of the war shortages.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. It was very difficult, but she got it, as much as I wanted. So I was feeding by her also and supported by her. And then, of course, junior high, senior high, I loved painting. And there was a group you can take extra after the class ended. I took painting. And then in high school, at one time I was going to go to Geidai.

MS. FISCH: What's Geidai?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Where Mr. Hiramatsu teaches.

MS. FISCH: Oh, it's a school, the university.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The University of Tokyo in Fine Arts. We call that Geidai, G-e-i-d-a-i [Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music].

MS. FISCH: And it's the art school.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. It's a short name for -

MS. FISCH: Art school at the University of Tokyo.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, a particular one, the University of Tokyo in Fine Arts. You don't call "Geidai" for all art schools.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: If you say, "I'm graduate from Geidai," that's a -

MS. FISCH: Everybody knows what that is.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, it's a symbol.

MS. FISCH: And that's where Mr. Hiramatsu teaches.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. So to get into this university in Japan, as you know, you have to study and you have to pass the test. And passing the test at the University of Tokyo in Fine Arts has two sections. It's a written test, which includes English, Japanese literature, math. And after that, you have a test on charcoal drawing, and then the third section will be interview. So in order to pass this charcoal drawing, you've got to study outside of the school. So my mother, she found the person who teaches particularly for the students applying to Geidai because he knows what the Geidai expects to see. So that happened my age of 14 or 15. So the school ends at

2:30; then go to his studio around 3:30 up to probably 6:00. Almost every day, Monday through Friday, I took charcoal drawing.

MS. FISCH: Amazing.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Isn't it amazing?

MS. FISCH: It is amazing at that age to have the kind of-not just the time, but to have the kind of discipline and interest to do that as a teenager is quite extraordinary.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Well, that's kind of expected to pass the Geidai test to get into Geidai. So what the drawing [was] based on was to draw-look at the plaster costume of Apollo. Or the Brutus. The famous sculpture that you see in Italy, but it's made out of plaster of paris.

MS. FISCH: Okay. So you looked at plaster models, plaster casts, they're called.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. And then we study the forms and mass and the space and all that.

MS. FISCH: Mm-hmm. So you had actually a very extensive art background.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yes, I did. Two years. I continued it two years. And then I gave it up.

MS. FISCH: And why did you give it up?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Just because it was very common not to pass test to get into Geidai for the first year, and at that time it was very unusual for the woman to go to college to begin with. Maybe one-third of the class went to college. The rest, they didn't. On top of it, if I missed it, if I couldn't get into Geidai, and wait around the next round year, it will be very bad for the woman.

MS. FISCH: Yes. It would be much harder to get in.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Also, it was bad for marriage.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I see. [Laughs.] It was all-around bad if you didn't make it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So I kind of didn't have the confidence that I would pass.

MS. FISCH: So is that why you went to Rikkyo University?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: And what was that university?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I studied Japanese history.

MS. FISCH: And where is that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, in Tokyo.

MS. FISCH: And is that a private university or a state university?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's a mission -

MS. FISCH: Oh, another mission school.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Episcopal. [Laughs.] I don't know, I have -

MS. FISCH: You have a lot of Christian background here.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So that's where I went.

MS. FISCH: And you studied Japanese history for four years?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Four years.

MS. FISCH: And you graduated when?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: 1964, degree in Japanese history, bachelor of-art?

MS. FISCH: Bachelor of art, yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Art.

MS. FISCH: So how did you get from there into metalsmithing?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. When I was a junior at the university, I wanted to go back to art. I just couldn't understand studying art history and to have it as my profession, as my job, like my mother told [me], to have a career. And my mother thought that I should study Japanese history and become high school teacher, to teach Japanese history. And I didn't see myself being high school teacher.

MS. FISCH: It's interesting how mothers think that's a good idea.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes! [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: My mother thought I should be a high school art teacher.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Really?

MS. FISCH: Mm-hmm.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: She thought it's great. And I asked why. And I said, "I hate high school teacher." And she said, "Well, you should think about it. You have a summer vacation and you don't have to work full day. And also, you get a governmental benefit when you retire."

MS. FISCH: Right, you get a pension.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So there's no such a great job for the woman. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: So she saw it as a good career for you, but you didn't want to do that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: So then what did you do?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But at the same time, I wanted to go back to art again. However, I knew that I could not get into Geidai because it's very, very, very unusual to transfer school in Japan. Still is. So at the same time, I wanted to go away from my parents, because I felt so heavy on my shoulders about their love and my responsibility to them in Japanese way, the Japanese custom. I wanted to go away from them. So I choose to go out of Japan. The reason I chose the United States, because at that time Kennedy was the president of the United States and it was a most exciting country for me.

MS. FISCH: And it was a very appealing time then.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Appealing time, right, for throughout the world, I think. And also at the same time I started buying jewelry. I even told my mother to start to buy jewelry because of preparing for my marriage. What do you call that?

MS. FISCH: Oh, a hope chest.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Hope chest?

MS. FISCH: In this country, in America, it's called a hope chest.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Hope chest.

MS. FISCH: And it's not jewelry; it's mostly linens and that sort of thing.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, jewelry and clothes and kimonos.

MS. FISCH: Oh, that's what the Japanese buy.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Right. So I went to jewelry store, but it was not interesting to me at all, design-wise. But one day I went to Maruzen, which is basically a bookstore in Tokyo but also at the same time-at that time they didn't have a craft corner. They also had a little, small case at the menswear section. That's where I saw one ring which I thought it's a great design, which was not regular ring like a ring. It looks like a bird nest, has a hole in the center. So I bought that, and I said to myself, "Maybe that's what I want to try. If there's not much of nice design in Japan, maybe I can go to United States, study much more interesting design and learn technique and

bring back to Japan, and then I'll design the jewelry," which was not available at that time, period. And that was a ring made by Mr. Hiramatsu.

MS. FISCH: Aha!

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So I still have one.

MS. FISCH: Did you know that it was by him, or did that name mean anything to you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I didn't know, but I knew who made it. And I didn't know who he was. I didn't know he was teaching at the Geidai at that time. But anyway, that was the beginning.

MS. FISCH: When you came to California, you came to Cal State Northridge [California State University at Northridge]. Was it for one year you were there, '65-'66, or were you there longer?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I was there a year and a half.

MS. FISCH: A year and a half?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: And why did you choose that particular school? Because it didn't have a jewelry department, did it?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Oh.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: By Fred-Fred-[pause]-[Lauritzen].

MS. FISCH: That's all right. We'll think of it later.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Fred -

MS. FISCH: I don't know who taught there.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No? His name is Fred-he died. Sorry, I have to check on it.

MS. FISCH: That's all right. We'll look at it later. So you knew that before you went?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, because I arrived in United States to study English for half a year to begin with, so I had time to investigate which school I wanted to go to.

MS. FISCH: Where did you study English?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: In Los Angeles.

MS. FISCH: In Los Angeles.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Los Angeles. And there are a couple I could find at that time. One was Long Beach [California State University at Long Beach].

MS. FISCH: Right, where Al Pine was teaching.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And also San Fernando Valley. And I didn't know about San Diego [San Diego State University]. You were there already?

MS. FISCH: No, I didn't come-yes, I was. I came in '61.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So I was there in 1964. But nobody mentioned about San Diego State. So I only could find two schools. And it was said that Long Beach is better, so I applied. But that was the middle of the semester-I mean, middle of -

MS. FISCH: Middle of the year?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -the year, academic year, I mean federal year. Federal year? No.

MS. FISCH: No, academic.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Academic year.

MS. FISCH: Right. It was in January?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Fiscal year.

MS. FISCH: Fiscal year. Okay.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So that was January. And it was already full, so I could not get in, so I applied San Fernando Valley [Northridge].

MS. FISCH: So that's why you went there.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That's where I went.

MS. FISCH: And was that a good experience? Did you learn a lot there?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I did learn a lot.

MS. FISCH: Well, you must have, because you then applied to Cranbrook [Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI], which was highly competitive.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: Why did you choose Cranbrook?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, because Fred actually graduated from Cranbrook. Also his wife was graduated from Cranbrook, but she was in ceramics. And he suggested me-I asked him what is the best school in United Sates to study jewelry making, particularly jewelry making, not hollowware.

MS. FISCH: Not hollowware.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Of course he suggested Cranbrook because he graduated, even though that's more oriented to the hollowware, which I didn't know. Also he suggested Rochester, RIT [Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY], and RISD [Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI]. Three schools. So I actually went to three schools to -

MS. FISCH: To look?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To look, to investigate. Oh, and one more, CCAC.

MS. FISCH: California College of Arts and Crafts in San Francisco.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Or in Oakland.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. Four schools. I went to those four. I liked Cranbrook the best, probably just because of the -

MS. FISCH: Environment.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -environment more than anything else. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: But you went to look in January, when it was cold and snowy? That was okay?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That was okay. And CCAC was terrible because the attitude of the students there didn't appeal to me, because at that time I was more naive then, and they looked more like hippies.

MS. FISCH: Well, they probably were, in that particular era.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And it was kind of scary to me, so I didn't like it. RISD wasn't really appealing just because of the environment, again. So was Rochester.

MS. FISCH: Well, they're both very urban.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And Cranbrook is the kind of -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Cranbrook is beautifully -

MS. FISCH: -beautiful environment.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Environment and landscape and everything. So that's how I decided to apply. And I didn't know that I would get in or not, but it probably helped because Fred graduated from there, so he knew Mr. [Richard] Thomas. And also another guy applied at the same time, Richard Dehr. He died a long time ago-

[Cross talk.]

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So we both applied. And I didn't think that I would be accepted, but I was accepted.

MS. FISCH: And what was it like for you at Cranbrook?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, it was terrible. I went there with a little fishing box, and I looked around, and everybody had a huge -

MS. FISCH: Toolbox.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Toolbox, full with the tools. I didn't have any. And also, my work was terrible. It was so bad. And there was another woman accepted at the same time. Two women were the worst.

MS. FISCH: There were only two women, or were there more?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Of our classmates.

MS. FISCH: In your class.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. And then one above us, Ruth Laug.

MS. FISCH: Oh, yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: She was one year ahead of me. And then one more person, who was a nun. So there were only four women among 14 students. And they were doing a great job. So I was going to give up.

MS. FISCH: It must have been very intimidating.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. It was very difficult.

MS. FISCH: And how did Richard Thomas handle that? I mean, was he -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: He was ignoring me.

MS. FISCH: Oh. He didn't help you; he ignored you.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, he didn't help me at all. He was ignoring. And I think that he thought I was not going to make it. So as me; I was going to quit at the end of the year. But the reason I stayed was that it came to my mind, "Everybody else is doing it, why not me? If I work hard, maybe I can try to catch their level, or maybe I may be one or a couple years behind, but I should reach their level. Maybe I need a little more time. I should try more."

And then at the same time, when I was raising, I think that became like a meditation. So I was there but I wasn't there, and I liked that feeling a lot. I never had it before in all my life.

MS. FISCH: So what did you discover about yourself in this experience?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Experience?

MS. FISCH: Yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To try to find the maximum of my ability, what it would be. Not that was the goal; that's what I found. Because I never thought about to try to find myself how far I can push myself. Is that discover, you say?

MS. FISCH: Well, yes. When you went there, what were your goals before you went?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The goal is the same, learning the technique and the design.

MS. FISCH: To be a jeweler?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To be a jeweler and take all this information with me and go back to Japan.

MS. FISCH: So that was what your goal was.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That was my goal.

MS. FISCH: And then what you discovered about yourself was quite different.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Was quite different. I'm not trying-pushing myself to see what I can do the best. So that my goal started to change. I mean, the direction started to change. Also, another thing that happened to me was everybody asked me about the Japanese metalworking techniques; I didn't know anything. [Laughs.] I was so embarrassed, not knowing anything. So that was the time to start to look back [at] my country. Before, I was not really thinking what's there, what should I look at. I was just thinking, focusing on jewelry, because that's something new for us. "For us" means for all the Japanese, because we never had such culture to wear rings, to wear a necklace, to wear earrings. We didn't have [it] because of the country being closed so long.

MS. FISCH: When did that develop? After the war?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The jewelry came after 19-no, after 18-yeah, early 1900s. That was the beginning that we started to know what jewelry [was] about.

MS. FISCH: Because of the Western influence.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Western influence. Before, we had a jewelry, like a comb or like a hair ornament or a belt buckle for the obi, but nothing else. Of course, if you go all the way back, they wore the jewelry because [of] influence from Korea and China, but we had such a long period of time that we're not familiar with what you call jewelry.

MS. FISCH: So who were your fellow students, besides Ruth Laug, the other woman? Who were the men students? Do you remember any of them?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. David LaPlantz.

MS. FISCH: Oh, really?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. And Skip [Millard] Holbrook. He was a dean for the American Indian school in Santa Fe. Bud [Alfred] Green. Do you know who he is? Who else?

MS. FISCH: No. Well, I know that Gene [Eugene] Pijanowski was a fellow student.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I forgot about him! [Laughs.] He was.

MS. FISCH: So we need to mention Gene.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Gene Pijanowski. Right. Also Richard Johnston, who you don't know, and Chris Sublett.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I know him.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. And Ruth Laug and-who teaches at the Houston? What's his name? He teaches at the University of Houston.

MS. FISCH: Val?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Val Link.

MS. FISCH: Val Link.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. He was one year ahead of me.

MS. FISCH: Now, was Gene in your same class?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, he was one year behind me.

MS. FISCH: He came in after you had already started.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, the second year. So if I had quit after first year, I would have never met Gene. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: You wouldn't have met him.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, going back to Mr. Thomas.

MS. FISCH: Yes?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: When I decided that I'm going to try to push myself to see what I can do myself, he beginning to help me. This was very odd. But he knew that something-he was probably observing me, that I'm not-maybe he felt something from me, the weakness, because as soon as I started to raise a piece, as soon as I felt that kind of sensation of working metal, being there but not there, that kind of sounds like meditation -

MS. FISCH: The meditative part.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That part. And also, I made a pot that is smoked with the pine needle, and that was a beautiful piece, actually.

MS. FISCH: Was it silver?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It was copper. And it was all black, but it's not oxidized. It has a beautiful, rich quality of black because of being treated with the pine needle.

MS. FISCH: And how did you know to do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That I read in a book. Japanese book. Because of people asking [about] my Japanese technique, I asked my mother to send some books to read about Japanese technique. And not much was available at that time, but a few books talked about how they get the black color on the metal, so I tried. And not only the surface, but the shape of the pot I made was quite nice. And that happened at the end of the first year.

At that point, Mr. Thomas turned around and started to feel close to me.

MS. FISCH: Pay attention.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. And I think he saw some kind of possibility in me which I didn't know, which he even didn't know, but something. And I think Mr. Thomas [was] very good at finding something; maybe not perfectly what, but he senses what's going to be, what happens, what might happen, might be good for other people. And he was very good at combining people in that way, and mixed it.

MS. FISCH: So did he give you special instruction, or he just paid more attention to you and gave you a different kind of direction?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Kind of support.

MS. FISCH: Support.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But not support by word, or not support by criticizing my work. He didn't criticize anything. But support by just the human feelings. I can't explain it more than that.

MS. FISCH: And between your first and second year, what did you do in that summer? Did you stay at Cranbrook and work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, that was when I went back to Japan and tried to catch Japanese technique. So I went to work with the master, and that's where I started to learn line inlay and the other type of inlay, like flat inlay, mound inlay, all that. And I brought those techniques back with me. And I was going to write a thesis about the inlay-because it was not done-in a thesis format at Cranbrook library. And Mr. Thomas was more supportive because I brought back something.

And at that point he thought that I should be staying in the United States. And when I mentioned to him that I'm going to-no, no, I asked him once what I should do, because my goal started really changing, changing from taking some techniques back to Japan and becoming a jewelry designer. From that, I started [being] more interested in finding who I am, what I can do. And so I really confused myself, and one day I asked him what I should do, what his suggestion will be; should I go back with my original idea, or should I stay here in the country and try what I can do. And he said to me at that time, "We need you." I said, "What do you mean, you need me?" And he said, "Well, I think you can do something in this country." And still I didn't know what it means, but I think he meant to bring the technique from Japan.

MS. FISCH: To make a contribution.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Well, also he may have seen that you would have more opportunity to work in America than in Japan.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Maybe. He didn't say anything. And at that time my language understanding was much, much lower level, so maybe half of what he said I didn't understand. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Well, I know that he often placed his graduate students not only in teaching positions but in other things in the field in order to help them stay in America or help them to advance their careers. So did he do something like that for you after you graduated?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: No.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But I think that that word remained in my mind for a long period of time, what does it really mean.

MS. FISCH: And did you do your thesis on line inlay?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I did.

MS. FISCH: And then the thesis was-I'm not sure how Cranbrook conducted its thesis project, but you had to do experiments and then write about them and then make a piece?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, and then take photos. So that usually a thesis is that thick. And you have to make it to follow their format.

MS. FISCH: Right, a normal library format.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, same cover. The thickness doesn't matter, but same format.

MS. FISCH: And was doing the thesis a good experience for you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Because?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because to think again back [to] my culture.

MS. FISCH: It was sort of combining your culture with yourself in a new role, I suppose.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But also I don't think that I really thought about my culture if I lived in Japan. I started to think about it just because I was away from it and just because somebody asked me. Otherwise I wouldn't have thought about it. And also, nothing to do with the art, but I never thought about my parents more deeply, appreciation. It has been changed a great deal.

MS. FISCH: By being in -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Being in another country, in the United States. Because I left there because it was too much for me, but [in] actuality, how the parents' love is so great, and how deep it is, is something that you never can ignore. And whatever I do, they will accept it, which is great. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Right. Now, tell me a little bit about Gene Pijanowski at that moment, as a fellow student and how your relationship developed.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. First, I met him- [END TAPE 1 SIDE A.] I liked his eyes. This is very personal, because he had such a warm eye and whole thing, whole body was warm. And I never had met a person who had such a warm feeling. I don't know [if] you understand that.

MS. FISCH: Oh, yeah, I think so.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: You do? It's hard to say. Also, I was surprised to see his work.

MS. FISCH: He came with much more background to Cranbrook.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Right. The reason why I was surprised of his work was that he's not trying to follow so-called traditional forms or traditional manner. For example, if someone gives you assignment to make a teapot, everybody makes beautiful teapot, Scandinavian style, but he wasn't. He was trying to make-in a way, it's a little ugly side, but it's something that's totally different from how normally people will approach. And that was very surprising for me. At that time I didn't want to take any chance, and I thought that Scandinavian was the best way to design. But again, we were talking about before, that Japanese, they use the new materials and they

make good pieces, but that's that. And I always liked to see something-they're trying hard to do something else. I always liked that. And that was the first time I felt that he's trying to do.

MS. FISCH: So you noticed his work right away.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. It's different. And it's hard for most of the people to be accepted. And I knew, too. And I was hard to accept it, but I could-felt that he's trying not to do what normally people do, and I thought it's great.

MS. FISCH: So you responded to his work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and I respected that aspect. And other peoples', yeah, sure, it's a great piece, beautiful piece, but it's [been] done. I've seen it in another book; it's just a little different variation of the form; it's the same. But his is -

MS. FISCH: Totally different.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Totally different.

MS. FISCH: So did you start working together as students?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, separate.

MS. FISCH: And you graduated a year before Gene? And what did you do after you graduated?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: After I graduated, I had to wait one year for Gene to finish.

MS. FISCH: Because you had already decided that you would be together?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah. Right. Let's see. When I graduated from Cranbrook, I married him.

MS. FISCH: I see. When you graduated, you married.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: So he still had another year to go.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So I worked for a couple places. First, I tried to find a job in that area, but I didn't know how, so I opened up the Yellow Pages in "Jeweler" or "Jewelry," and I started from Z, not A, because everybody goes at A. So I thought maybe I should start from the other end. The first person I called, his name was John Zelinski. And I talked to him and he said, "Well, I think you should meet Charles March. You should talk to him. He graduated from Cranbrook. But that's all I can suggest to you. And I don't think I can give you a job, but I would like to look at your work." I brought my work, and he looked at my pieces from his commercial side, and he gave me some suggestions, but I couldn't get the job. So I called another place, and I worked as a buffer for a half-year. But I felt miserable.

MS. FISCH: Being a buffer is probably the worst job of all in the jewelry business.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's the worst job. And I said, what am I doing here? What did I get the degree for? This is terrible.

MS. FISCH: With a graduate degree, I'm being a buffer. Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: This is terrible. And at that time I just decided to meet this guy John Zelinski mentioned to me. And he was working for Little Gallery.

MS. FISCH: Little Gallery?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. And this was the gallery run by a woman, a Jewish woman named-[Peggy De Salle]. Anyway, she was the one other person who I'd ever known running the gallery just dealing with handmade jewelry at that time. And I'd never seen another gallery just carrying jewelry. But I went to her gallery and then the whole thing is just handmade jewelry. Do you know her?

MS. FISCH: I know the gallery. I don't remember now who owned it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Anyway, so I met her through this man. And he hired me to work with him, work for him, because he was getting orders from her to make a piece or repair a piece.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I see. So he had his own studio, but he worked through her gallery.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That's right. That's how he was making living out of that. He also graduated from Cranbrook, and he went to England after Cranbrook and studied and came back. But he never wanted teaching; he only wanted to make pieces, and stuck with her, also. And I worked with him, for him, for a year. And that was a great experience, because strictly just jewelry, nothing to do with hollowware. And that's the time I learned, really, about wax working.

MS. FISCH: I see. So it really increased your skill a great deal.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

[Audio break.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Hiroko Pijanowski at her home in Honolulu on May 13, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disk number two.

Hiroko, after you and Gene married, you returned to Japan. And did you at that moment intend to live in Japan more or less permanently?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: You did plan to do that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: And what did you do when you got back?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I started the one-of-a-kind jewelry business. I run the business.

MS. FISCH: And you started your own business. Is this the business that was called -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Gene, Limited.

MS. FISCH: [They laugh.] Why did you decide to call it Gene, Limited?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because I felt sorry for Gene. Actually, he cannot work. He cannot come out to the surface of the business, because at that time [in] Japan, nobody wanted to come to Japan and work and earn yen, because at that time, one dollar equaled to 360 yen.

MS. FISCH: And this was in 19 -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Late '60s. So he cannot be involved with this business, right?

MS. FISCH: Officially he couldn't be involved with the business.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Officially he cannot.

MS. FISCH: Because he wasn't a citizen, or because he didn't have the right kind of papers? Or why not?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because he's a foreigner.

MS. FISCH: Because he was a foreigner.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But [in] actuality, he made the pieces.

MS. FISCH: He made the pieces. I was going to ask you. You had this jewelry business called Gene, Limited. What did you produce?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: What did we produce?

MS. FISCH: Yeah. What did you make?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: What do you mean? Like, actual pieces?

MS. FISCH: Yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Rings. Mostly rings. Brooch.

MS. FISCH: One-of-a-kind?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: One-of-a-kind, handmade. And at that time it was very unique.

MS. FISCH: And how did you sell them?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, luckily, through my father. His patients. [Laughs.] That was the beginning.

MS. FISCH: I see. You just dealt privately with private clients.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Right. At the same time, Gene was going to-Gene was a student at the Geidai. That's how he could get into Japan, with a student's visa, not a working visa.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not working visa.

MS. FISCH: He couldn't come in as your husband?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. How could he?

MS. FISCH: Well, in this country, if you're married to an American, you become -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, like me.

MS. FISCH: Right. But he was married-right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: That wasn't allowed.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because again, Japanese government was very tight about it, so they won't issue green card, even though he was married to Japanese woman. So since Gene was a student at the Geidai, where I met Hiramatsu and he was very supportive, and he introduced me [to] a couple galleries, so then I started to deal with galleries. The famous one at that time was called Vivo, V-o-v-o [sic]. Now they are out of business. But that was one of the big ones. And Mune, M-u-n-e, Kogei, K-o-g-e-i. Mune Kogei. Both located in Ginza.

MS. FISCH: And so you sold your work -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Through them.

MS. FISCH: Through them. And was it successful?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: And it supported you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Both; the combination of selling [in] the gallery and through the individual -

MS. FISCH: Private clients.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Clients, yes.

MS. FISCH: So you were able to make a living.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: And did you feel comfortable and at home in Japan? I mean, were you happy to be back living in Japan?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: Why not?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because mainly I was worried about our future, how Gene can live in Japan, what kind of situation he would be [in], what kind of job would be available for him; if I continue the business, how it's going to support my old age. I was already started to thinking [about] my old age.

MS. FISCH: In your 20s you were worried about your old age.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. And everybody says that's unusual. Is it?

MS. FISCH: Yes. Most people at that age don't think about it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Don't think about it?

MS. FISCH: No.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I really started to worry about that. And then I found out at that time the woman who doesn't work also can apply for Social Security in Japan.

MS. FISCH: So if you didn't work and you stayed living in Japan, you still could have Social Security.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: So there were some advantages.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The Japanese government just started, and I read it in newspaper. So I started paying in Social Security in Japan. But still I was very uncomfortable about thinking [of the] future. Also, Gene wasn't that happy.

MS. FISCH: I was going to say, was it hard for Gene to adjust to living in Japan?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Adjust in Japan because of the language; secondly because of his own character. He doesn't like to be-how do I say-looked at by people. He feels that they are looking at Gene because he's a funny guy, funny guy Gene. They looked at him just because [it was] unusual to see foreigner, but he thinks that something [is] wrong with him. He didn't like that.

MS. FISCH: He didn't feel at home at all.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: Did you live by yourselves or did you live with your family?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: We lived by ourselves. My parents prepared a house for us to live in. And also, I was not kind enough to Gene.

MS. FISCH: I find that hard to believe.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I was not kind to Gene because I was frustrated at the same time going back to my own country.

MS. FISCH: And not liking it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not liking it. And so I did not have a space in myself to try to support Gene. So, more than to support him, I got angry easily. So we had lots of fights, arguments.

MS. FISCH: So is that why you decided to come back to the U.S.?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. Gene said-one day he woke up and he was telling me that he can't stay any longer; he's going back to the United States. "You've got to come with me." I said, "I don't know. I just have to stay and see how I feel, [whether] I want to stay in Japan or I want to go back with you." I told him I don't know. So anyway, he left. And I thought about it and I talked to my grandmother what I should do; I should go back to United States or I should stay in Japan and take care of my parents. And her answer was that if you think that you will be happy there, to go back; don't think about the parents.

MS. FISCH: Well, your parents didn't need you to take care of them at that particular moment, did they?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, but in long term, I should take care of them.

MS. FISCH: Is that the Japanese -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's the custom. It's the Japanese custom.

MS. FISCH: Custom? And you were the only child.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: So it's your job.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. That's my obligation to them. And probably, I asked my grandmother knowing that's

what she will say.

MS. FISCH: You got the right answer.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: So when you returned to the U.S., I think it was in 1972?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. FISCH: What were your personal goals?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Honestly, I didn't know. But I was making a piece at home.

MS. FISCH: Well, I understand that you had already completed a GIA [Gemological Institute of America] course in Japan.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And you'd been studying traditional Japanese inlay techniques with a Japanese master.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: So when you came back to the U.S. with that skill and that information, were you hoping to teach, or were you expecting to work as a studio artist? Or you didn't know.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. I came back to the United States just because of Gene. Nothing to do with the art. But I probably wanted to teach; however, because of the language problem, I thought that I would never, ever get the teaching job to begin with. So I was very negative about getting [a] teaching job. I didn't have confidence to teach, period. But I had to do something, so naturally, going back to make a piece.

And Gene said, "You can work at the school." San Diego State [University].

MS. FISCH: Right. You came-I mean, Gene came to teach at San Diego State. And I thought you came with him, but you actually came after him? He came, and then you came?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, at the same time, but we met. He was living in Midwest after he went back from Japan, and when he got the job, he moved to San Diego and I flew in from Japan to join him.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So we didn't have a studio at home to work.

MS. FISCH: No. I remember you had a rather small apartment.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: It was very nice, but it was small.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So Gene said that I can go to school and work, but actually I could not work there.

MS. FISCH: Well, it was difficult because the space was very small and there were a lot of students.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Students around, and I felt very, very uncomfortable. And I cried. I told Gene I just can't work there. How could you work? Gene can work around people. I can't work around the people. I just need quiet, very private space. And so Gene said okay. Luckily, we had two bedrooms, and he said, "Okay, one bedroom will be your studio. That's where you can make a piece." That's how I started making.

So at that time, answering your question, I don't think I really knew what I wanted to be, but I wanted to continue.

MS. FISCH: You wanted to be with Gene, and you wanted to continue with some work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I wanted to continue to work, but that's all I knew.

MS. FISCH: And you still had your business, your production or one-of-a-kind business, but you changed the name from-did you change the name from "Gene" to "Hiro"?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. Hiro, Limited. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Hiro, Limited. And why did you do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know why I did it. Just because Gene thought now I'm back to United States and maybe he felt sorry for me not having any status, like Gene being teaching. So probably he thought that it's good to have my name to be on the public.

MS. FISCH: To have some public presence.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And how did that go? I mean, did you sell your work through galleries?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I did, but it was not enough to make a living, even not to make a living [for] just one person. It wasn't enough.

MS. FISCH: So what did you decide to do?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But you have to also remember that was just a couple years I tried to sell through the gallery, right? So it wasn't long enough to know if it really worked or not.

MS. FISCH: Was it because you didn't understand how to produce things in quantity or because you only wanted to do one-of-a-kind things?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: A couple things. I didn't know enough about the gallery scene. First of all, I didn't know how to find the galleries at that time. I didn't know how to deal with them. And third, I didn't know how to produce pieces, say my production. I didn't know how. Those three. But I learned something from this.

MS. FISCH: What did you learn?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: How to deal with the gallery.

MS. FISCH: How to deal with the galleries?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. I needed a contract, which I didn't know. I need a contract. Also, I learned that [the] gallery pushes you. They ask you to leave [the] piece as a consignment, then they sell one piece of mine and then ask me to send five pieces more, which means I have to invest more money, but they haven't, they don't have to. But then I couldn't handle [it] any longer. So if they even say, "Send me five more pieces" after selling one piece, I learned that I should not.

MS. FISCH: You couldn't do that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I couldn't do that. I should just replace one, or maybe two at the most.

MS. FISCH: So how many galleries were you working with?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: At that time one is in Seattle, run by a Japanese woman, and I had a list. Maybe three or four. Little Gallery.

MS. FISCH: All in the U.S.?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Seattle, the Little Gallery, a couple more. I don't remember. But I did that for how many years.

MS. FISCH: Well, you started when you were in San Diego, but then Gene moved to Purdue [Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN] -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To Indiana. I still was doing that till '87.

MS. FISCH: -and so you did work there. Oh, so quite a long -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Six years.

MS. FISCH: To '87 or '76?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, '78.

MS. FISCH: Seventy-eight, yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So that's six years.

MS. FISCH: Right. And was that successful?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, it wasn't. I mean, successful, what do you mean by successful?

MS. FISCH: Did you feel that it was worth your time to do that, and was it satisfying?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It was worth to do, but it's not satisfying, just because I found out that I cannot make [a] living.

MS. FISCH: So it was being subsidized by Gene's salary?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: Did you also start teaching part-time?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Where?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: At Purdue. Adult education.

MS. FISCH: And so that was your first teaching experience.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Exactly.

MS. FISCH: And did that give you some confidence about your ability to teach?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, [laughs] because that's adult education. I think it's different.

MS. FISCH: But it gave you experience, if not confidence.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because I think that university level has to talk about more -

MS. FISCH: More ideas.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Ideas, designs and histories. But at adult education, you don't have to; you just tell them how to do it and just show them a couple books to give them ideas. And it's not really serious about teaching art. But teaching art at the university, for me, is more serious.

MS. FISCH: So then in 1978 you applied for a job.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't apply.

MS. FISCH: You went to Ann Arbor.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The job came to me.

MS. FISCH: The job came to you. Well, that's even better. How did that happen?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: How it happened. One year before the U of M [University of Michigan] tried to find a person; Gene and I were invited for workshop and we gave a workshop together. And the man, Wendel Heers, who [was] in charge for metal and jewelry making at that time, I think he was observing both of us, me and Gene. And he knew that they were going to hire someone at that time already. And when the job was open, Gene applied, of course, and then Wendel called me and said, "Are you interested in teaching? I know Gene applied, but you didn't. Are you interested in teaching?" I said, "I'm not sure. I have to think about it. And why are you asking me, even though I didn't apply? Gene applied. Why not Gene?" And at that time I think I was lucky because they needed a woman and they needed -

MS. FISCH: [Laughs.] Right, they needed a woman and a minority.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -minority.

MS. FISCH: Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So that's why. And they saw me, how I worked with the students. That was acceptable for him, I think. So that's why he called me. And I said, "Give me a couple days." And I talked to Gene, and I told Gene

that totally I don't have confidence to teach, period. But Gene said, "Why not? Try it and see your possibilities, and if you don't like it, you can quit anytime. You can quit within a month, you can quit [after] one semester, you can quit one year later, you can quit two years later. See how you can handle it or how you like it." So I said, "Okay." So it's a big support by Gene, pushed by Gene.

MS. FISCH: It was a very brave thing for you to do if you felt so nervous about it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I was so nervous. I didn't have any confidence, period. So just because of Gene, I took it, and I moved to Ann Arbor.

MS. FISCH: And there was already a program established with this Wendel Heers.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Very small.

MS. FISCH: But there was a studio?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: There was a studio, limited equipment, such as buffing machines, a few torches available, huge electroforming.

MS. FISCH: Oh, that's interesting. That was unusual for the time.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, because he likes Eleanor Moty. He's fond of her.

MS. FISCH: I see. Eleanor Moty.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Eleanor Moty. So he took her workshop at the Haystack [Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME], and I think he wanted her to teach at U of M, but she didn't want to move, Eleanor Moty. So that's why the job came to me. And at that time I was competing with Mary Lee Hu. She's a woman, right?

MS. FISCH: Right, but not a minority.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not a minority. That's why I got this job. So I was lucky.

MS. FISCH: You were in the right place at the right time with the right person to see potential. I mean, clearly he must have seen potential in you or he wouldn't have been so supportive.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] Right. One thing, he already knew our names just because of mokume gane. So he had enough knowledge. And he had never been to any conference. He never thinks that he's a jeweler. He never thinks that he's a metalsmith. He thinks he's a sculptor, and he is. But he has an art education background, a degree in art education. That's how the metal program started at the U of M.

MS. FISCH: As part of art education. That's fairly common, actually.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And then he felt the time came it's no longer-that he should not handle-it should be handled by someone who really -

MS. FISCH: Is going to pay attention.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Be in metal, professionally in metal world. So he gave it to me. So from there, I had a lot of support by him, and then I moved to the bigger room and got more equipment and set up new studio.

MS. FISCH: And how did you see that program within the school of art? Did it have a good place in the structure of the school of art at that time, or were you having to think about changing its position, its perception?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think that's a hard one, Arline, because when I got the teaching job, as you know, I was so nervous and I didn't have any confidence. I didn't have any frame, any goal. It was enough for me to handle myself, whether I can teach or not. [Laughs.] So I don't have any vision. But after I settled, maybe five years later, of course I [was] beginning to think that I needed to develop the program.

MS. FISCH: Right. And how did you develop the curriculum? I mean, you didn't have to build facilities, but you had to expand what was there. But clearly, you had to evolve a whole new curriculum. So what was your vision for that and how did you do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: How did I do that?

MS. FISCH: Slowly, or -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Slowly. And I think I was trying to catch [up], to make the studio, equipment-wise or space-

wise, to the level at other universities. That was the first goal. Second, my goal was to still [be] following what was going on outside of my school. For example, if they are trying to teach technique, I followed that.

MS. FISCH: Well, during the '70s and '80s, there was lots of interest in new techniques and people.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Techniques. So I followed. And then after that, as concepts came in, I followed from those. So I moved along with what's happening in our field. But then early '90s, I [was] beginning to think that I'm not going to follow.

MS. FISCH: Well, you said somewhere that you changed your philosophy of teaching in 1995, and I wondered how and why.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. Early '90s, that's where I think it started to begin. And '90, '95, around that time, I was very clear what I wanted to do. In 1990, I went to restaurant near the university, and that's where I found a student is working as a waitress, and I really felt bad.

MS. FISCH: You found one of your students working as a waitress.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, after they graduated.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I see.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not as a side work. After they graduated, the job they could get was a waitress. And I clearly remembered that I got the job as a buffer, and I said to myself, "Why am I doing this, with all those degrees?" And I felt really sorry for him. You can think about it two ways. It's nothing to do with you, because you finished teaching them, so whatever they do afterwards, it's none of your responsibility. But I felt that I have responsibility. I cannot get a job for everyone, but it's worse to be a waitress after having degree. And that's happening all over the world-or all over the United States. And it was very common. But I really felt bad, and it hurt a lot.

And I started thinking, what was I teaching? What I can do? Why do they come to university? What can I do? And when I was a student, I didn't have to think-I didn't think, actually, about what I'm going to be, I mean what I'm going to do as a job, what kind of job.

MS. FISCH: You weren't thinking about that when you were a student.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. I just got into it just because I liked it.

MS. FISCH: Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And I liked it; I liked it, and I did it, but I did not worry about a job.

MS. FISCH: Don't you think that's how students still are, that they don't necessarily come -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Now? I don't think so.

MS. FISCH: You think students have changed.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The students changed.

MS. FISCH: They are looking for -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: For a job.

MS. FISCH: -a job. And they think that that's where their education will lead them?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It is very important. And even now they are thinking of getting a job right after the BFA, not MFA. It's very common at the University of Michigan.

MS. FISCH: Right, because the MFA is for the people who are going to teach, and there are fewer teaching jobs, so there's less incentive.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And even MFA, they come and get the degree to go to teaching job; and how much is available? And everybody [who] tries to come to U of M, I tell them, "I think you have to know that teaching job is almost dead. You have to know. And a position will be open, but the fact is that a couple hundred people apply. The chance is very little. Is it okay? You want to work your own piece; you want to develop your own art, not expecting to get the job? If it's okay with you, I'll work with you."

MS. FISCH: So you were only interested, then, in working with people who were dedicated to being studio artists?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm or even know that they want a teaching job and knowing that -

MS. FISCH: That they weren't available for most people.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. That's fine. Because I wanted to be honest with them. I just didn't want to tell them, after-sometimes people ask, the students ask what can they do after they get the MFA degree, what kind of job [is] available. "I would like to be a graduate student and get MFA because I want to get a teaching job." Well, sure, that's the goal, but the fact is there's nothing available, and I have to tell them so.

MS. FISCH: So what you changed was how you responded to the students; but did you actually change the curriculum?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: How?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: How?

MS. FISCH: That's what I'm interested in, yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: How? Just because I thought that the students have changed, and do I have to change to teach art? Yes or no? You have a choice. And I choose that at least I should try to teach something that may be possible that they can make a living, studio artist or commercial jewelry, that's all, because teaching is out of the question, for me. So I really focused on how to produce jewelry, semiproduction; how they should deal with a gallery; how they should keep the bookkeeping; but at the same time, how they should approach to make more unusual pieces.

MS. FISCH: So you didn't abandon doing unique work from the curriculum.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't, because you need both. You need to know how you can be a business side, but also you need to have an education background to make a piece that is a little more unique to appeal to the customer.

MS. FISCH: And did you also increase the amount of effort you put into production work for the students? Is that only at the graduate level, or both undergraduate and graduate?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Graduate, it depends on what they want to do. If they want to go that direction, it's fine, I will teach that way. But if someone really wants to focus on artistic, very-what you call -

MS. FISCH: Unique.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -unique, conceptual pieces, it's fine. I thought I can teach both way[s] at that time, because I have experience a little bit on commercial side. I taught in the past without the confidence, but I had the confidence then to teach more creative side. So I accepted script and followed what they want.

MS. FISCH: And what about the undergraduate students?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Undergraduates, strictly I just decided to go for more practical jewelry making. And the reaction? They liked it. They liked it a lot. I started having only one beginning class; I increased to three at the last, and each class had more than 20 each. And then with advanced class, I only had one; ended up having three, and each had more than 15. So enormous amount of students were going through the studio. Total of students per each term was more than 150 students.

MS. FISCH: And were you the only person teaching?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I got someone to teach. No, I could not teach everybody.

MS. FISCH: You couldn't do that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. So then after that, I made another class. It's called Metal for Designers. That means it includes I.D. [Industrial Design] students, also whoever [was] interested beyond jewelry making. So this special course being taught, nothing to do with the jewelry but some kind of metalwork: watch, hollowware-I mean silverware. So that attracted I.D. students. And I.D. students love this class because what they do there is not real; it's drawing and a model, but what they produce at Metal for Designers is [an] actual piece. And that's

something that they really liked. So this class became popular. Of course, at the beginning I had just one, at mixed level, but then it's expanded to two levels. So, counting all this, that's how I said there are 150 students.

MS. FISCH: But you must have, then, had help; with the beginning classes primarily?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. Beginning. I taught two beginning classes at the undergraduate level, and then two advanced classes, being taught part-time. So there are five-no, two others, so total of six going on, six classes going on. So always some classes going on, which I found out is-in a way, it's bad because [of] cutting into studio time. But the reason why I think that it probably became popular [was] because I switched to more the commercial ends and switched so that-hoped that they can earn some money, doesn't have to be waitress. Hopefully, someone can be more getting into commercial jewelry and being a jewelry designer or just to get the job as a jewelry designer. So that's how it's expanded.

And then finally the computer came in. And that's something I learned from students, from Metals for Designer.

MS. FISCH: From the I.D. students.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. I.D. students said, "Oh, I'm designing a piece on computer." That I knew. And then he said, "Oh, I'm going to send this design. [END TAPE 1 SIDE B] -by e-mail." I said, "What? Can you send design by e-mail?" I said, "How could you?" And he said, "Well, it's easy, just send it by e-mail. At the other end, they will receive it, and when they receive this design, they will cut the steel, quarter-inch-thick steel, right away." I said, "How could they do it?"

MS. FISCH: Was that laser cutting?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Laser cutting. So I'm always curious about it and I have to find out what it is. And [it] sounded like because the I.D. students [are] doing it, it will connect to jewelry industry for sure, which I didn't know anything about at that time. But then finally I found out it is. But that's where it started. And so going into the computer created more interest to the students, because they want to try it.

MS. FISCH: Right. Well, they're very computer literate, and it makes sense to them to use it as a tool.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So that's attracted more students to take the classes. So it just moved along. And at the time, '95, I was really definite, definite I was going. I was slowly moving. From early '90s, the direction had been slowly changing, but definitely I just decided, period.

MS. FISCH: And that was a successful decision, I thought.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I thought so, too. And also, I hired Ruth Taubman one semester to teach one class, because she is more knowledgeable than I am about the jewelry, I mean, how to deal with the people, how to make pieces production-wise. She knew a lot. And she shared a lot of stuff with the students, and cost a lot, too, for the students, though, but they did it.

MS. FISCH: Because they had to pay to have the things produced?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, because they made a model. She did it the same way she does. She sends all these models to New York casting people, let them make a mold, let them cast, get the casting back to the studio, and they finish it. Or stone setting, send out. Everything done by the way she handled it. So that way, I think they learned a lot. And I taught some sections, but I combined like Mr. Thomas did. He mixed people. He-how do I say it?

MS. FISCH: He connected people.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: He connected people. He placed this person needed for this, he placed this person needed for that, and he just directed.

MS. FISCH: He was like a conductor.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Conductor. So I took the same role that he did. So Ruth knows more in this part, and one person knows better the computer, so I put her here. So I kind of directed, and I taught the beginning students because I'm very good with beginning students, encourage them and to make them interested in making things.

MS. FISCH: And also giving them some technical skills, hand skills.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And they liked me a lot in that way. They wanted me to teach advanced class, but-advanced class I can teach, but as you go above, you have to be more verbal.

MS. FISCH: More verbal?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, because you have to talk. And I'm not good at it. I can say, "Oh, this is bad" or "This is good," but you have to talk more than that to make sense to them: why it's good, why it's bad.

MS. FISCH: And is that because you feel inadequate in the language?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: I mean, could you do it in Japanese?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think I can. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Easier than English.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Easier, much easier.

MS. FISCH: Well, I know that some of your graduates have become prominent as both studio artists and teachers and that you've been an important mentor for them. So why don't you tell me about a few of them? Do you keep in contact with them on a regular basis?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Let's see. I think there are three different types. One, a teacher. He got the teaching job. And his name is Jim Hopfensperger. He taught at the Philadelphia, and he is the one [who] hired the-what is his name? He used to teach at IU [Indiana University, Bloomington, IN]. The man -

MS. FISCH: Leslie Leupp?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Is Leslie teaching in Philadelphia now?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I didn't know that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, I don't know now.

MS. FISCH: No.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Still he is? I don't know.

MS. FISCH: No, I don't know.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But Jim Hopfensperger was teaching there. He got Leslie Leupp-or Leupp. And then he got more interested in administration than teaching. Now he's a dean of department of art at the Michigan State University.

MS. FISCH: Oh! In East Lansing?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Wow! That's a big coup for a former student.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] Yeah. Right. And so I saw him before I moved to Hawaii. And that's where he was born, actually.

MS. FISCH: At East Lansing?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. And his father was a dean of a school at the high school. So he must have the blood to be an administrator. So I think that's one type.

The other type is studio artist, like Ruth Taubman, others. She moved to San Francisco selling more like one-of-a-kind, what we call one-of-a-kind. Those, a couple of them, I still keep in contact.

And the third kind is the purely commercial. One was a graduate student. His name is Steve Kretchmer. And he is pretty well-known among those commercial jewelry designers. Is that what you call?

MS. FISCH: Mm-hmm.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because like JCK [Jeweler's Circular Keystone] has a designer section. Right?

MS. FISCH: Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Among that, he's kind of a leader now.

MS. FISCH: And how long ago did he graduate?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Let's see, early '80s. And also Diana Heimann. She also graduated about early '80s. She became a jewelry designer at the JCK Section and she started having a reputation in that field. And if you said "Diana Hermann" or "Steve Kretchmer," almost everyone knows who they are.

MS. FISCH: Well, they're well-known in the commercial world.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. They get a lot of orders, and they are totally making a living out of that.

MS. FISCH: Well, that must be very gratifying, to have successful students.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And do you see them occasionally as colleagues?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. They write me e-mail.

Oh, another one is like-went to Melbourne.

MS. FISCH: Oh, the young lady who went to Melbourne. What's her name?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Nicole DesChamps. No, excuse me, Nicole Jacquard. I had another student called Nicole DesChamps. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Okay. And she's at RMIT [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Australia] getting a Ph.D., as I recall.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Yeah. I think she is interested in teaching a great deal, in getting a job as a teacher. And I think she will get it sometime. She had a job, actually, teaching at the Toledo Museum of -

MS. FISCH: Toledo Museum of what, of Art?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. That's where she was teaching. And she could teach longer, but she just decided to go to Melbourne to get the Ph.D.

MS. FISCH: So are you still currently on a pre-retirement furlough?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, till the end of August.

MS. FISCH: And then you'll be fully retired.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: How do you feel about that? Or is it too soon to tell? Will you miss teaching?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. [Laughs.] I had enough teaching. And I think there are more-better people, can teach better than me.

MS. FISCH: So it wasn't hard for you to -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To leave? No.

MS. FISCH: I think that's terrific.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: You've always taught workshops and intensive short courses around the country and even abroad. How does that teaching differ from university teaching?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Pause.]

MS. FISCH: It is different.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It is different. I don't know how to answer that question. How it's different?

MS. FISCH: Yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Just because it's such a short time.

MS. FISCH: And it's very focused on one -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Focused on one thing. So it's totally different.

MS. FISCH: Do you like doing those, or are you tired of those?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I used to like it, but I'm tired of doing it anymore. And I think also people-I mean, the workshops that I have been giving, inlay or basically Japanese technique, I think that they are not really interested.

MS. FISCH: The interest has gone away now.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's gone away, I think.

MS. FISCH: You think so?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: It will come back, of course.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think it will come back. I think one reason is that just because it's time-consuming and they don't like it. They like some kind of quick results.

MS. FISCH: Just in general, you think students are-students, or workshop people? I think workshop people are more interested in -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Quick result. Easy, but quick and good results. Without much effort. And I'm sorry, I'm not really attacking anyone; I'm not attacking Komelia Hongja Okim. I like her and I like what she has done. But that's what they like.

MS. FISCH: To do something like kuem boo.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Kuem boo. But if I teach them, I'll go for traditional flat inlay. Takes a long time, and result is not good because you need to practice. And that isn't suitable for American workshops.

MS. FISCH: Right, which are often just two days, if you're lucky. [Laughs.]

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So I think that's the reason. But they will get tired of that soon. They want to do more.

MS. FISCH: So would you consider accepting an invitation to do a workshop or not, now?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, not now.

MS. FISCH: It's a lot of preparation.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Maybe I may go back, but not now. Like I mentioned to you, I'm just exhausted from everything at this moment. [Laughs.] I just want to live in totally different world.

MS. FISCH: Okay. Do you want to talk a little bit longer?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Sure.

MS. FISCH: Research has always been a significant part of your teaching and your art, so in the early years, certainly this research centered on traditional Japanese metalworking techniques. And what drew you to this area of investigation?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: A couple reasons.

MS. FISCH: Okay, tell me.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, a couple reasons. One, just because I'd been asked about Japanese technique. I didn't know and I [was] embarrassed. I thought I should know a little. That's the beginning. But secondly-how do I say

this-the Scandinavian design was at top at that time, everything smooth, no surface decoration, no texture.

MS. FISCH: And no color.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No color. So I always-my basis always is try to go opposite, like I looked from Z in the phone book, not A.

MS. FISCH: Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Same idea. So I looked at the smooth, clean, beautiful, and thought, why not texture or surface decoration, or to color the metal? That's full in Japan I found out. So that's two things.

MS. FISCH: Right. And how did you pursue the subject? I mean, how did you get your information?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: How did I get? Well, I saw a piece-oh. Luckily, one of my father's patients was in metal. His name is Tateo Uno, U-n-o. Mr. Uno. His uncle was a national living treasure. But Mr. Uno was a patient of my father, so my father connected to him. That's how I learned first. But then I learned that if I approach some craftsperson who I'm interested, they may have a chance to teach me. So that's where it began. I went to see the show in Japan. I wrote a note on whose work I liked, what kind of technique that I didn't understand. I wrote it down, and on the catalogue, behind the catalogue it has the name, addresses, and phone numbers.

MS. FISCH: And you simply went and talked.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Simply called and asked.

MS. FISCH: And were you well received?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: For the most part.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Most part, yeah.

MS. FISCH: And people were willing to -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To share their knowledge.

MS. FISCH: -share their knowledge. That's unusual, isn't it? I mean, I've always thought that the Japanese craftsman was rather reluctant to share his information or his knowledge.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Among their own people.

MS. FISCH: And you're not considered -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I'm not Japanese.

MS. FISCH: Aha.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because I came from United States and married to an American.

MS. FISCH: And even though you speak Japanese, they don't think of you as Japanese.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And it doesn't have any danger for them that I will stay there and I will steal their technique and start using it. They don't have any fear for that, so that's okay. And also at the same time, they have a great confidence that even though they teach me for one semester or one year, they knew that I'm not going to be good at it, because that's going to take a long time. So they have a confidence.

MS. FISCH: You were not a threat.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. So in that sense, they are kind.

MS. FISCH: And when you were doing that, did you take photographs?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I did.

MS. FISCH: And they let you do that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And so how did this kind of research influence your own work, and how did it influence your teaching?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. It influenced to see how they approach-to make things, how they approach to act to their own work. [Pause.] You don't understand me.

MS. FISCH: But how did what you learned influence your teaching? Did you bring that information back to your students and share the technique and the photographs?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, of course I did.

MS. FISCH: And how did you feel about that? Did you think that that was a way of broadening the world of metalsmithing, or was it, in a way, threatening to the Japanese?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's not threatening for the Japanese. I think that it helped to share my knowledge with American metalwork artists. And that's what Mr. Thomas saw in me, which I didn't know at that time, but then I knew what he meant when I started doing it.

MS. FISCH: How did it impact your own creative work? I mean, when you would learn these new techniques, would that then impact your work when you came back?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm, it did. But at the same time, I didn't stay with what I learned. For example, I learned inlay, but I always want to push, so I pushed it. And the result was the twisted wire.

MS. FISCH: That made it look like fabric.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But that came from line inlay. [Break.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Hiroko Pijanowski at her home and studio in Honolulu on May 15, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

This is disk number three.

Hiroko, there were some other things you wanted to say about teaching, so we'll go back a little bit.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, teaching. Okay. Because I mentioned that I carried 150 students per term. That was wrong. Because I thought about it. And I was having six classes, and each class should have 20 enrolled in the school, so that means 120, plus extra. There's always beyond 20, because they wanted to take the class and they say, "Please, please, I want to get in," so I always took maybe five extras. So probably not quite 150, but between 130 to 135.

MS. FISCH: And that was every semester you had that many?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Every semester.

MS. FISCH: And did you do this all by yourself?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: No. You had other help.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I taught two beginning classes, and intermediate and advanced taught by one of the former students who lived around the area, and then two Metals for Designers taught by another graduate student, I mean who graduated from U of M but lived around the area. So that was six.

MS. FISCH: So it was a very busy program, very busy.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It was a very, very busy program. That's what I mean; I don't understand why this new dean tried to cut it down, understand why he did it, he had to. Now they only have two classes. Can you imagine?

MS. FISCH: That's a huge drop.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I know. Just one beginning class and then one advanced class. From six down to two.

MS. FISCH: Right. How do you feel about that? Angry?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Sad. Not angry, but I'm sad because it took quarter of a century to-see, I start to cry. It took me a quarter-century to build up to that high enrollment and that it was popular, so that that said something to the students. And dean didn't see that.

MS. FISCH: Didn't understand that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Didn't understand.

MS. FISCH: Or didn't think it important.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Well, to me, because I changed the direction, to me jewelry design is part of the I.D. design, and of course, I.D. design people doesn't think that jewelry design is I.D., so there is a friction. And dean didn't see that, but if you go to the conference for I.D., there are groups who do jewelry design, and they're always kind of pushed in a corner. The same situation. But it could be within that category, and I want it to be.

MS. FISCH: And in some ways, that's probably why jewelry design-commercial jewelry design-is so poor, because it doesn't have a prominent place in education.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, it doesn't.

MS. FISCH: And that's really sad.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's sad. And I'm really willing to do it, to dig in more, to find out about those I.D. group[s], how jewelry designer[s] are situated, how they go by, and how the students can go to these kind of conference and see, and how I can connect to the industry. I always had a vision what I'm going to do, plus because I saw the students like it. If I didn't see that, of course, I stop.

So another reason is that because of that, I went to the computer because it is connected.

MS. FISCH: Well, let's talk a little bit about your research, which was very extensive, into the use of computer technology. How did you start?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: How did I start? It was because of my lack of knowledge. One day my student said-didn't we talk about it? Maybe not-over the phone, [not] the microphone. One day the I.D. student actually said to me that he is designing a spoon with a computer. And that was nothing new to me as knowledge. Then next sentence he said, "Then I'm going to send this by e-mail." To my knowledge at that point, e-mail, you can send only letters.

MS. FISCH: Not drawings, right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So I said, "How could you? How could you send a drawing by e-mail?" And he said, "Well, I can do it, anyway. I can show you." I watched how he does, and surely the mail went through. And I said, "What happens [at] the other end? Whoever receives [the] drawing, what are they going to do about it?" And he said, "Well, they can hook it to the machine, and they can cut quarter-inch steel very easily and very inexpensively. If you cut one piece or 100 pieces, price is the same." So that was very, very surprising and new to me, and I saw something behind it, because it was related to metal. If he said "plastic" or he said "wood," maybe I didn't -

MS. FISCH: You wouldn't make the connection.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -it didn't hit my mind, but that was because it was steel. So that's [where] it began. I thought that I should find out what's really going on. If they can cut the steel, quarter-inch-thick steel, must have something beyond.

MS. FISCH: Was this being cut by laser?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Laser. So that's where it began.

MS. FISCH: Was this a combination of university and commercial, or could you do it all on the university campus?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, engineer.

MS. FISCH: It was through the engineering department.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They were more advanced [than] commercial jewelry, of course, so they had all kinds of equipment that I didn't know that they have such set-up. But anyway, after I started to investigate this, engineering had a whole bunch of stuff, and they are willing to work with art just because what they do, the forms are so boring. And when we went there with the slides of what we can do, probably, after-well, after I got into it, I applied for the grant and I got some few monies to start. And I made all kinds of mistakes to finding out the right kind of software.

MS. FISCH: So this was a grant from the university.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Grant from university. At the same time-I don't know why, but I hit always a good timing. At the same time, the university are encouraging the school of art and design to [get] involved in the technical aspect, which mainly was computer, so they had a huge amount of money, but nobody was applying.

MS. FISCH: Well, artists in general, I think, were very afraid of that kind of technology.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, against the computer. So no one applied. [Laughs.] So I got a big chunk of money. And everybody laughed at me or said to me, cheek in-no, tongue in cheek-

MS. FISCH: Tongue in cheek?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -said, "Oh, you are so great. Think about it, your age, and computer is high tech and steps are so steep."

MS. FISCH: The learning curve is so steep.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Learning curve, yes. Anyway, I said, "How could you say? You don't know. You just think so, or maybe you cannot do it. But I try. If I cannot do it, it's fine. But I have to try anyway."

MS. FISCH: And what year was this?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That was-when was it-19-I have to get my records.

MS. FISCH: Nineteen-eighty-something or '90-something.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Nineteen-ninety-six, '97?

MS. FISCH: Somewhere in there.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Nineteen-ninety-seven, '98, around that time. And so not knowing anything, of course it was difficult-what kind of software I needed to do, what kind-I knew that I have to have PC. Mac won't do it.

MS. FISCH: Oh, really?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I thought Mac was the computer of choice for-maybe that's graphic design.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, it's true with Mac some of the software can make three-dimension, but basically it's good for architects. So you can build something 3-D, but its aspect is always architectural, so it won't fit for the jewelry.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not small detail, the software.

So that's where it began. But luckily, one of my former students, I also forgot his name -Ross Carl-he got into commercial jewelry and worked for different firms. And I was so lucky, too; he contacted me somehow, for some reason, and we started to talk about it. Of course, my priority interest was the computer, and I mentioned it to him. He said, "Oh, sure, I do it. I am playing with it." When I asked him what kind of software he was using, he said Arias, which is very expensive software.

MS. FISCH: A-r- -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Arias. A-r-i-a-s. Which the movie industry uses. And it used to be very, very expensive, like $100,000, 10, 20 years ago, but came down to $10,000. But still for the university level, as equipment, this is really very expensive equipment. And he said, "Yeah, sure, I can show you how it works." So I went to Chicago and looked how he operates. That was the beginning. And then he said, "I'll take you to the company, how I can e-mail the design and how the company [that] receives it, what they produce afterwards." So I saw the, sort of, whole- whole sequence. So I got some idea how that works. And at the same time, luckily, looking at some magazines, I found an ad talking about some software for the jeweler. So I contacted the company and it sounded like it's a good one. It was not cheap. That was, like, $5,000 for each software. But I had grant money. I bought a PC. And then this technical research money was coming into the school of art, so I'm the only one applying and I'm always getting it, so ended up getting $60,000 total.

MS. FISCH: Wow.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So, slowly I build up, buying more PC, buying very simple prototyping machine, and I started it.

But at the same time, after we made a few, we took samples, we took slides to the engineering [department] at the university, tried to connect with much more-use their facilities. And they were very interested just because of the form.

MS. FISCH: You were doing something interesting.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Theirs was boring, like a box and some boxes in the boxes. But they cannot create a form like we were doing, but then I was going to suggest using our form to make the software at the engineering school.

MS. FISCH: To develop software to do the forms you were showing them.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So I connected these links. So we were ready to start, and they showed what they are doing somewhere else, something else. It's amazing. It's a lot of materials, lots of techniques, has a lot of potentials for jewelry. But that's -

MS. FISCH: Cut off?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Cut off, because I'm too tired.

MS. FISCH: Right. And I was going to ask you, can you continue to use this sort of technology for designing now that you're not at the university? I mean, do you have access to -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't. No. Actually I can't, because I have my own software, and I can send this e-mail to the factory who produce the model for me, and I can get this model back to me, and I can send this wax to the commercial jewelry-casting company.

MS. FISCH: So you can, in fact, do it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Huh?

MS. FISCH: You can, in fact, do it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I can do it, but the situation now I am, I can't. So without the university's equipment, it's impossible for me. Just the cost of doing this process, it's not cheap.

MS. FISCH: When you do things like that, my experience has been, there are always minimums like set-up charges and so on.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, they don't.

MS. FISCH: They don't do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They don't have minimum. There's not much a minimum. And also, those industries who receive the designs are basically from, like, car industry or the I.D. industry, or parts for something, so it's not interesting. But the jewelry is something to really intrigue them, so they are really getting excited about it.

MS. FISCH: So they tried to help.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, they tried to help. So if I try to negotiate, they will come down in the price, of course, because they are hired by the company; they are not making money from making models. You know what I mean? They have a salary working for this company, not going by how many orders they will get.

MS. FISCH: I see. So it doesn't matter to them that they do a few.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Or cut down the cost. So that was good.

And finally, I researched into the company who makes this very expensive rapid prototyping machine, which does everything, three-dimensional form, everything that you'd like to do, because I noticed that they are changing the models almost every year. So I started thinking, what are they going to do [with] the older models, people who bought it already? Big companies, they always buy new things or the university buys the newest things, like in engineering [department]. So I called the company and I asked where they sold those.

MS. FISCH: The ones they were throwing away.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So they told me where they sold to, and actually U of M bought two of the new machines because that's the best kind within that context. Of course, [the] university won't give away, but gave me [a] couple names of the companies which were in California. And I called the head, or the president, and told him

my situation and circumstance, "And I'm sure you will buy new equipment, but you have good old ones." And they said, "Well, as soon as it gets old, with the tax-

MS. FISCH: The depreciation.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -"depreciation, we won't use it." So I said, "Do you think you can donate it?" and they are glad to do that.

MS. FISCH: Yes, because it's a tax deduction-they get some money back from their taxes.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right. So that's how I got one. So I had the whole thing set up. Isn't it sad -

MS. FISCH: And now you had to walk away.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -that the dean was not -

MS. FISCH: Not interested.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I mean, he was interested to taking all this machine away from me and giving it to I.D.

MS. FISCH: Did anybody at I.D. know how to use it?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Oh, they did.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: One professor said yes, but I don't think he knew. I think it was a big lie-he had a big mouth.

MS. FISCH: [Laughs.]

MS. PIJANOWSKI: This is the guy [who] came from England. I don't think he knew.

MS. FISCH: Well, a lot of the research that you did, you presented in a paper at the SNAG [Society of North American Goldsmiths] conference. And what was your idea there? Why did you do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Really just for-you're talking about the computer?

MS. FISCH: Yes. Didn't you give a research paper at a SNAG conference?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I did ["A Look Into the Future: The Implementation of Computer-Aided Design and Manufacturing for Metalsmiths." 1999, St. Louis, MO, Conference; presented with Nicole Ann DesChamps of Waterford, MI]. The reason why I did it?

MS. FISCH: Yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Why [do] you ask such a question?

MS. FISCH: Well, because in a lot of cases, people develop things and they don't want to share.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They don't want to share?

MS. FISCH: Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Why? That's odd to me.

MS. FISCH: Because they want to keep it to themselves, or they feel they've done all this hard work and maybe they don't want to just make it easy for somebody else.

But you wanted to do this paper. And was it well received? I mean, did you get a lot of questions about the information?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes and no at the same time.

MS. FISCH: Or was it too much above the heads of most of the audience?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think that's one thing, that it was too much over their head. Secondly, the way we presented was not great. I will do it different way second-another time. I noticed that there are parts where some people wouldn't-couldn't-didn't understand. But we thought we wrote a paper for the people who don't know anything about the PC, who don't know anything about even how to send e-mail, because that's how I was. When I started

to see this student's process, I didn't know how to e-mail. I never did. I didn't understand e-mails, period. So I think that was 1997, I said. So five years ago, I never touched it; I avoided PC or Mac, whatever computer, just because same reason that maybe the people who belonged to SNAG has the same feeling. They are, first of all, afraid. Secondly, they don't see much use of it for their work, particularly. I was the same way. But just because of the routine that I went through, I knew how other people feel. So the basic idea that I had when I was writing [the] paper was to write [for the] person who doesn't know anything about even e-mail. So I thought that's down to the base; but still, when I presented it, I think half the people didn't understand it.

MS. FISCH: It wasn't clear?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It wasn't clear. Partially that's my fault. The presentation wasn't really clear enough. If you read the paper, I think everybody can understand, because right after I wrote that paper, I submitted [it to] about 10 or 12 people to read it before I presented at SNAG: the level of people who already know everything, to look at whether it's wrong or not; the second level is the people who knows a little bit but not much of all the details; the third group are people who doesn't know anything about it, about the operation of CAD/CAM [Computer-aided Design/Computer-aided Manufacturing], period. So the most important part was the reaction from these people, what they said, what did they comment.

MS. FISCH: What they understood.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So if those people understood, I thought if I presented at SNAG, would understand. So I rewrote it many times, until those level of people understands.

And also the reason I presented is because it's coming. It's coming to our place, to our -

MS. FISCH: To our profession.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -world, yes, sooner or later, probably soon. I don't know, five, ten years. As soon as I started to play with software, I really felt it's a tool. Everybody says it's a tool. Until I started using it, I didn't understand why they are saying the computer is one of their tools. It is tool. Because I felt here I am using a saw; I don't have to. Here I am building with wax tools; I don't have to do that.

MS. FISCH: A machine can do that for me.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Machine can, the computer designing can do, but just the vision or just not using the hand tools, but eyes and my fingers are part of the tool. So it is true; it's really true. And then I'm sure the commercial industry will get into that more now, more so.

MS. FISCH: Well, don't you think they already have -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They already have. But that was still partially just like using for setting the-channel setting stones, or just the bit, and they were starting to produce the way I ended up doing it in industry, but still it's expensive. But the cost is going to go down someday anyway, as with anything else. In the beginning is always high. As it goes down, then progress more in an easy way.

MS. FISCH: Right. And I know that you involved students in this research.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And I thought that that was certainly a smart thing to do, because in some ways they're more comfortable with the technology.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: But also it was a way of mentoring students -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: -to prepare them for the future.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And was that your idea as well?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Plus the fact I'm very limited within the idea, within the skill. The young kids, like you mentioned, they live with it, so they learn much, much faster than I do. They can play around faster than I do. So I thought that it's very helpful between students and me.

MS. FISCH: And somewhere I read that at some point you proposed to teach high school students during the summer under a grant program.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And did that actually happen?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I didn't get the grant.

MS. FISCH: You didn't get the grant. I thought it was a wonderful idea.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I thought so, too! I didn't get that. I really wanted to.

MS. FISCH: And it was to continue this CAD/CAM research but at a younger age level.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: Well, that's too bad.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That's too bad. [Laughs.] I don't have the time. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Right. But you're still interested in pursuing this for your own work now.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: I mean, when you get back to it, you will work in this direction, you think?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And also could I talk a little more about this? The reason why I presented to SNAG? Another reason, not just because it's coming. Another reason is that then we really have to think what the handmade is or what the machine can do, because the machine almost all can do, through my experience. But then there is some level or some things that machine really cannot do. So that's something, the comparison of what -

MS. FISCH: The interface between -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Between machine, between handmade. So I felt that the handmade can be much more critical in the future. We really have to think if you are going to produce one-of-a-kind jewelry. I would.

MS. FISCH: That's the area for the handmade. [END TAPE 2 SIDE A

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MS. FISCH: Now, you also did another research project, which I didn't know about before, using LED [light-emitting diodes] lighting.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Tell me about that. I don't know anything about that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] That came after.

MS. FISCH: That came after. Yes, I realize that. What is the project?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That was a guy, I think-Rodemer.

MS. FISCH: Was he a professor?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, he used to teach at Chicago. We hired him. Michael Rodemer. We hired him, kind of pulled him out from Chicago and brought to University of Michigan, just because he was familiar with the computer a lot. And he had this -

MS. FISCH: LED?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -LED lights, little tiny ones. And he showed me what he has and what it would do. And he started asking me the question whether I can make the jewelry with it.

MS. FISCH: I mean, those light-emitting diodes were used in jewelry quite a long time ago -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: -in a very primitive way, I suppose. So is this a new technology, or simply a new application?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Application. To me, new application. And that was a challenge again for me, what I can do. Because I've seen jewelry made out of this light, but it wasn't really attractive to me.

MS. FISCH: It was like wearing a little sign.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And I thought it was stupid then to use it as a sign. Or there was-some girl is doing it, but her design was not the level of what I think is jewelry. I mean, the material is too raw. It should be -

MS. FISCH: It wasn't refined enough, not sophisticated?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, no. No, not enough. So that's what I tried to do. And I talked to him and said, "Sure, maybe we can team up. And you do a part"-what you say-electronic parts, because I don't understand at all how that works. "I will make a piece, I make the parts, and if I do this, how can you connect and how can you light up, how many and how?" So he got so excited, and that's where I started out. And my idea was to produce the parts by computer, design with the computer, produce by this prototype thing, and then use his lights and connect. And I made some samples, and that was stopped because I [was] really tired.

MS. FISCH: I didn't see any of those samples. You didn't show me any of those.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I have some.

MS. FISCH: I'd like to see them. So, when did you do this? This was very recently.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, about two years ago. And then I said to him, "Why don't we take a patent on this, introducing jewelry? I think there's a market." And he started to research how he can get the patent.

MS. FISCH: That has to go through the university.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. And so he started out with the university, and the university was very helpful and started doing it, and I think were still doing it. And he got busy, and now we moved to Hawaii, but still we can go back and -

MS. FISCH: Well, the patent process takes quite a long time anyway to go through the courts.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. I think we applied, anyway, because we had the samples.

MS. FISCH: I mean, the disadvantage of applying through the university is financial.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: They get the financial benefit. But I think it's interesting to pursue that line of investigation of applying for a patent, because you might in the future have another idea that might do that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But I thought that's another way that the students can pursue, too; if they try to get something going on, team up, and then go through this and try to apply [for a] patent. Doesn't mean that they would get it, but that's another way that they can think of.

MS. FISCH: And it happens all the time in the tech industry, so it's not so out of line of thinking that it could be done.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And this has happened in the school of art. He is a professor at the school of art, doesn't do it with engineering [department], so that's what I thought is unique, to be done something within art!

MS. FISCH: Right. Are there any joint appointments between engineering and art?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: I mean, I think that's another interesting approach done in some cases.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think so, too.

MS. FISCH: I think MIT, for example, does some of those kinds of joint appointments, as I understand it.

So, just to go back over this, you've been fortunate to receive many grants over the years to support both the research and the creative aspects of your work. Did the university support your buying the gold to make the models and so on?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: They did?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not the gold and silver. They rejected that part because that is something that has a marketable value.

MS. FISCH: Well, and you own it, and so that was always the answer I got also, that we're not going to buy you precious metal materials, because it has recycle value.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But that was okay. I was willing to use my own money. I always end up using part of my money anyway for any grants, and I didn't mind it at all.

And if I can go back and answer your question, usually people try to keep it in because they work so hard and it's yours. But my standpoint is, probably because I was in an academic situation, that in academic situations, you're supposed to share everything. Teaching is something to share something that you have, everything.

MS. FISCH: And so the research is also meant to share.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And also that if I share what I know with a student, the student is supposed-the hope is the student will progress more than what I -

MS. FISCH: Take it further.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, take it farther. That's the purpose of education. So that's why I don't mind to share any of the knowledge or any of the research to anyone.

And another reason, the last reason was that I'd been always presenting or always sharing the knowledge on the Japanese technique, traditional Japanese technique. I wanted to do this because I knew that my retirement is coming soon, so the last presentation should be something [that has] nothing to do with Japanese, nothing to do with tradition. So the newest technique, that was computer, for me.

MS. FISCH: And I know that you received all this financial support for your research projects, and I guess this is an indelicate question, but was the fact that the money was available a stimulus for you to think about how to use it, or was it only a means to do what you already wanted to do?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think it's both.

MS. FISCH: I mean, did the university, did the art department put pressure on you, on the art faculty, to do research?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, of course they do. They did. They do now, too. But that doesn't mean that -

MS. FISCH: But to do research in technology? I mean, was the art department interested in that kind of research?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They did.

MS. FISCH: Yeah. I always got the impression from talking with you that there was a certain amount of push in this direction.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. They always pushed to research. They always pushed to exhibit. They always pushed to teach well. They always pushed to have high enrollment. So I take everything seriously, so I tried my best. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Well, I think you also figure out-you have a good way of understanding how to organize things to take advantage of what's available. And I think that's also very unusual; many artists don't want to change the way they work, and so they ignore all those possibilities. And I think you've taken advantage of those possibilities in a way that's quite unusual.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, really?

MS. FISCH: Well, if it was usual -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's me.

MS. FISCH: -there would be more research going on. At the moment, the only other person doing research was Stanley Lechtzin at Tyler [Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA], who started very early, and

maybe Joe Wood at the University of Massachusetts [Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA], but I don't think-I mean, Stanley has approached it very seriously over a long period of time, but I don't know that Joe Wood has, other than an interest in his own work. I don't see him communicating that in the same way that you did.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But I thought that he had a workshop ["Work and Inspiration on Progress." 2000 SNAG Conference] on PC at the Boston -

MS. FISCH: Yes, at the Boston conference. But I don't know that he teaches it regularly at the school of art.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: You know what? I think there's difficulties, because you have to have a certain amount of PCs, a certain amount of software, and that becomes very expensive.

MS. FISCH: You have to have a certain amount of money to do this.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. You do.

MS. FISCH: And so small art schools probably are not going to have that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. I could have five computers and three softwares, but I wanted to get more. So I made a deal, which didn't go through. This was the dean that I hate. Then I couldn't run the class, just teaching computer design, and then I already had machine ready to go for the students. And of course one was not enough, but since I made a connection to the engineer[ing department], they said that we can use their equipment any time we would like to. So I could run the class.

MS. FISCH: Well, I think that's the huge advantage of being within a university system.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: A university. So that's why-Joe Wood may want to teach, but the situation doesn't allow him to do.

MS. FISCH: So are there any other research projects of that kind that I don't know about?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: In terms of?

MS. FISCH: I mean, you told me about the CAD/CAM and you told me about the LED. Is there anything else in that arena?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: You mean technical.

MS. FISCH: Yeah. That you pursued? Or pretty much those are the two major things?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because PC was-I mean, it's a huge, really new area for me, because I feel I started from scratch, not knowing or going to schools to find out.

MS. FISCH: And did you take lots of courses or -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, none.

MS. FISCH: You didn't.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: None.

MS. FISCH: You wanted to be-I'm sure you wanted to work much faster than a course would let you do.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] Right. So I didn't know anything about how to run a computer. I didn't know that I had to have log-in name. I didn't know that I had to have password. So that's where I started to work with PC. Bang! Before the e-mail. Bang! And then I had to work with the three-dimensional form, not the writing, which is okay. I don't think that it helped anyway. So in the beginning, I was awful. I was so slow. But those people who are [in] industry are [a] great help. It's amazing. They are so much willing to help, so they give us so much information. And that's how I learned so fast what's available. Of course, my curiosity was very strong. I had to find out right away, next day. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: [Laughs.] So your learning curve went even faster than it might otherwise have.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Right. Not maybe learning skill with the computer or software, but to knowing what is going on outside was fast, very fast.

MS. FISCH: Knowing what was available for you to use.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. It's like a vine. If you pull one, comes the next. And if I pull this, comes out the other leaf. So if I pull out the other one, another vine comes out, and then pull this one, another leaf, the second leaf from the second vine. Something like that.

MS. FISCH: So it's cumulative.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it's very fast. I was amazed. I don't know how that happens. Really fast.

MS. FISCH: Do you think you have-I mean, you must have the right mind-set to acquire this-to understand this information. I'm not sure everybody does have that kind of mentality. I mean, it's true you didn't know anything at the beginning, but it sounds to me like you learned very quickly, and you understood what you were looking at and learning. And that's, maybe, not so easy.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: I think that was really interesting.

Well, let's talk a little bit now about your artwork, your creative work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay.

MS. FISCH: You always maintained an active studio production. And how did that relate to your teaching and research? I mean, did you do your studio work separately from your teaching, or was it that they all, kind of, mixed together? Maybe it's different for different periods.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think it's separate. Oh, no. No, I can't say that. Some things are together. For example, mokume gane, I did in my studio, but I did also work with the students, collaborated with the students.

MS. FISCH: Well, but that's sort of a process thing. I guess I'm really talking about your private creative work and how that related to your teaching. Were they completely intertwined, or did your private studio work involve other personal interests that you didn't share with the students? [Pause.] I mean, do you feel yourself as both an artist and a teacher, or do you feel yourself as a teacher who makes art?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think I am the artist who makes art my own and also I'm a teacher.

MS. FISCH: So those two things are separate but parallel.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Separate. Parallel. It's always parallel. But it's separate. I don't mind to show them what I'm doing, I don't mind to talk about it to them, but I do mind that they copy my work. That's a no-no.

MS. FISCH: How did you prevent that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't show much of my work. Because if I start to show it, they will start to copy. Two reasons. One group of students think it's great. Another group of students thinks that if they make similar to my work, they might get a good grade. I don't like that, period. And I don't think that's good, both aspects, because that's not my intention to teach.

MS. FISCH: You don't want to make disciples.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: So how would you describe your creative work? Are there separate categories, like jewelry and sculpture and hollowware and design? Are they separate in your mind or is there a, sort of, all-encompassing character to your creative work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That's a difficult question. I think it's changed by the year.

MS. FISCH: Yes. I don't know that it necessarily is all the time consistent, but I guess -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Overall?

MS. FISCH: Overall.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's all in the one pot.

MS. FISCH: You don't see them as, "If I make hollowware, I do this, and if I make jewelry, I do that." It's all one kind of creative effort.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's all one creative-yeah, I think so.

MS. FISCH: And what do you think are the characteristics of your work that make it your work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: What do you mean? Characteristics?

MS. FISCH: I mean, do you think of your work as being narrative, or poetic, or geometric? Are there some characteristics that are common throughout your work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: One common characteristic is nothing to do with design, nothing to do with art, but to push -

MS. FISCH: To push. What does that mean?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -from one to the other. Means that I always have a little bit of twisted mind-[laughter]-when I look at things. So I think we mentioned earlier in this interview, if I see the Scandinavian design-oh, we talked about that when I talked about Gene's work. When the Scandinavian was popular, I'm one step back and see, with a little bit of crooked mind, that it's beautiful; why? It's smooth and shiny, and it's great. Why? Why don't they have something dirty? Why don't they have something not smooth? So I push from that point.

So then going to the surface decoration, right? Then after I learned some Japanese technique, because the surface decoration [is] great in Japanese art, then line inlay. Line inlay, why always have to chisel? Basically, it's a pattern development. Basically, it's a line. Why couldn't I do something else to -

MS. FISCH: To achieve that same idea.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The same idea. Partially it's a laziness. I didn't want to spend such a long time of doing it. At the same time, it's hard. So everything is kind of twined together. At the same time, I was interested in fabric. I was interested in ikat a lot. I really liked the patterns. And so the idea was how the two can be together. But it's so complicated; it's going to take such a long time to do the way the traditional people do inlay. That's why I came out with the twisted wire.

MS. FISCH: Because the effect was of inlay, but the manufacturing of it, or the making of it, was very different.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So then after doing all that, again one day something happened to me, so that's why I started to think and push why; then that's how the paper jewelry came out.

MS. FISCH: That suddenly you saw another material, another possibility to work with line.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, but something happened before that. So it does not just happen right away, because I had some reason why I was looking for something else. And as a result, that was the paper cord, but it had something that was pushing me from the back.

MS. FISCH: When did you first start working with paper cord?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, let's see. Mid-'80s. But before I did paper cord, I really made paper jewelry, which not many people know because I didn't exhibit anywhere in United States. I exhibited in Holland, Netherlands, and I sold almost all that. But that was the beginning. Then I moved into paper cord. But also this computer was also being kind of pushed. Everybody hated it; everybody didn't think that a computer will be in our thing, but because the demand pushed.

So what I'm trying to say is that constantly I see something, is some need [to] be a little bit twisted-minded to look at something against-not against, not a hate, but-I don't know how to say this.

MS. FISCH: Pushing something a little beyond where it is.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Beyond, yeah. That's what I always did. And I don't think that's all what artist does, but that's how I did my work. And I don't think there's nothing wrong about it.

MS. FISCH: Well, no, not at all.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's one way of doing it. That's why I always-I have a cycle. Every eight to nine years are changes.

MS. FISCH: And is that deliberate or it just is intuitive?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Intuitive?

MS. FISCH: It just happens.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It happens. I didn't mean it to be, but it just happens. And looking backwards now, then I realize there was a cycle.

MS. FISCH: And do the cycles ever repeat?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Every eight to nine years.

MS. FISCH: Right, but do you then go back again?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't.

MS. FISCH: No. You never go back to what you did.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I lose interest. Period.

MS. FISCH: You said somewhere that you like to make things because you can devote yourself to them and they are your world; it's a fantasy, a daydream or a nightmare. Is that still true?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: In a way it's true, some part gone. Like I mentioned the first experience I had with raising and planishing, I really had the feeling of meditation. And that was a wonderful feeling. And that happens a lot when I'm working. I am working, but I lost myself, but I'm there. I don't really understand this.

MS. FISCH: Well, you're there because your spirit is there and your total focus is there.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And only I feel spirit is there.

MS. FISCH: And the spirit is there.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, that's all. Physically I'm there, but I don't feel physically I'm there. Just the spirit is there.

MS. FISCH: I see. You're just floating there.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And I like that feeling. And I have experienced this totally away from art. I had an experience in meditating at a Zen temple, and that was more expansive than working with the art, just because you're only facing yourself. You know? You don't have any media that you have to work with. So I really want to talk about this a little bit.

MS. FISCH: Well, go ahead. I mean, it seems to me, then, that the Zen philosophy has a lot to do with your work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think so, too, which I didn't know, but I think it does. After this very interesting experience at the Zen temple, I realized that that's based on that.

MS. FISCH: And this experience at the Zen temple, I assume this was in Japan?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: What Zen temple?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Ann Arbor Zen temple. [Laughs.] They have a couple Zen temples that I just wanted to go to. And I went to retreat, which -

MS. FISCH: What motivated you to do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To do that? Because I was unhappy, I just wanted to find out how I can be happy. I thought that if I get more into the religion, maybe I will be more happy. For reason?

MS. FISCH: For other reasons?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know. I just thought that maybe religion may help to be happy. Mentally happy. So I went there, and I took retreat. A retreat. Which means that you had to go to Zen temple early and stay overnight, go to bed at 9:00, get up at 4:00 in the morning, and then eat and meditate, then clean up. Everything they do turns to meditation. Eating, cleaning up their place, and meditate again, and eat lunch and walk a little bit, and you're supposed not to talk anything.

But anyway, while in this retreat, just before lunch I was sitting and meditating, and all of a sudden, the wall started to move, this white wall. It was a solid wall, right? And it started to move back and forth. And I said, wow, the wall moves, is moving. Then all of a sudden, there is no wall.

MS. FISCH: The wall disappeared.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Disappeared. That doesn't mean that I saw through to something beyond the wall. What happened was that I was floating, and I was flying in some kind-somewhere, looks like a desert. No tree, nothing. And the wind just very, very-a good feeling of the wind, soft, not too strong, but soft wind is blowing, is blowing through me, and I could move anywhere.

MS. FISCH: What a liberating feeling.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It was a fantastic feeling, and I was very peaceful, which I never had such feeling. Was more happy or-not happy-more peaceful than the feeling I got from that burnishing. And that was the sensation to me. And after that, it never happened. It never happened.

MS. FISCH: It never happened again.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, but that feeling of sensation is-it's here.

MS. FISCH: You still remember it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Remember it. So every time I go back to meditation at night to this temple, I float again. I don't float in [the] desert. Everybody around me also [is] floating. They are not floating, but -

MS. FISCH: You feel they are.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -I feel they are floating. It's like a cloud. Cloud is just sitting like that; wind will kind of move. Same thing, the clouds. So each person becomes cloud, myself too. And somehow I felt maybe this might be [the] feeling after my death. That might be, I feel, that the body will [be] gone, but the spirit remains somehow, some way. And maybe when I was floating over the desert or maybe floating among those people, they're not people; they're probably spirits around me. Maybe that's the feeling.

MS. FISCH: And how did this experience affect you in your daily life or in your creative life?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Nothing! [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: It didn't affect you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think it's nothing. But like I said, when I'm working with computer, I'm here; I'm there working, but I'm not there, that my physical body is not there. My spirit is only working with the computer.

MS. FISCH: So in effect, you are getting the same kind of meditative feeling.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But not expansively peaceful like that, because I'm thinking.

MS. FISCH: It's not peaceful and you're not floating.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. But there is a connection. And from then, whatever I do, whenever I do painting, whenever I make haiku, it's the same.

MS. FISCH: And have you gone back to such retreats? Do you do them regularly, or was that a once only?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Once.

MS. FISCH: Would you think about doing it again, or would you think it won't be as good the second time?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I wish I could do more. The reason I stopped going is because they don't allow you to put the makeup on. [Laughs.] They don't allow you to put the lipsticks on or nothing.

MS. FISCH: And you didn't like that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, because I love to put the lipsticks on.

MS. FISCH: Oh, but for two days it wouldn't be so bad.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Now I'm more-I don't put much makeup anymore. I do still lipsticks now, eyes, but much, much less than I used to. So one day I may not put on any makeups. [Laughter.]

MS. FISCH: So then you can go back to the -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Then I can go back to temple.

MS. FISCH: Now, you also talked a little bit about dreams. Yesterday we were talking a little bit about dreams. And you said something about you remember your dreams. Do you remember them vividly?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: And do they relate to your work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Not at all.

MS. FISCH: So that they don't have any impact on your work. They don't provide you with images or visions.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Nothing to do with it.

MS. FISCH: But are they peaceful?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Sometimes peaceful, sometimes-didn't I mention about the dream when I talked about my mother?

MS. FISCH: Yes. I think so.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Over the phone? The microphone?

MS. FISCH: No, on the microphone.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because I always had a dream from young childhood, which was about my mother always leaving home. And that was a dream I was having every day until I got married. So that after I got married, Gene is the person for me.

MS. FISCH: He is your safe person.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. It no longer was of my mother. But till then, I had it. So I had some kind of habit to remember all these dreams, and always not only my mother leaving me, something else I dream. And usually my dreams were not happy. Always negative. Only once I had a very good dream, and I laughed [at the] end of dream.

MS. FISCH: And you woke yourself up? Did you wake yourself up laughing?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. That was a time I was in love in Japan. And usually I always thought that I was not a popular girl. I always thought that I'm not being loved. But a man I really liked at that time, he also liked me, and that made me very happy. So that was a dream about him, and I was laughing because I was happy. [Laughs.] Now I think back to my young age, [when] I thought I was not popular, actually I was popular. But I think my standard was very high.

MS. FISCH: And you didn't reach your own standards.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. [Laughs.] That was the problem.

MS. FISCH: Well, in talking about your artistic pursuits, what made you decide to make jewelry, specifically? Were you interested in the interaction with the wearer, or was it the scale or the materials? What made jewelry the thing you wanted to do?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. You know all those stories, but I'm supposed to talk. Yeah, right. Okay.

Going back to my young age when my mother told me to start my hope chest -

MS. FISCH: That's right. Well, you did talk about that a little bit, but -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Here?

MS. FISCH: Yes, on the tape, right. But what I want to know is, why are you particularly interested in jewelry as an art form, as opposed to painting or as opposed to weaving?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh. I just choose it for a very simple reason, because, [as] I mentioned, this just goes back to this hope chest. I didn't see any good design jewelry in Japan, so I wanted to be a designer to make better design for the people.

MS. FISCH: Right. And that was your motivation for your study.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That was motivation. And then I saw Mr. Hiramatsu's piece, right? And that motivated me more.

MS. FISCH: Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But then as soon as I came to United States and studied at the Cranbrook, just because of my circumstance, my goal started to switch, but then I go back to jewelry again, right?

MS. FISCH: Yeah, I wanted to talk about your -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I just don't know why I choose jewelry.

MS. FISCH: Recently you established a limited production jewelry business on your own.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: I mean, I'm assuming that that's something Gene's not so directly involved in. Is that true?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. He actually [was] against it.

MS. FISCH: So tell me about this. I mean, what was it called? What's your company called, your production?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Hiroko Sato Pijanowski, direct from my name because I want it to be a jewelry designer, and always jewelry designers goes by their full name, so I just followed.

MS. FISCH: And this is something you wanted to do absolutely on your own.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, without any grant, because I can't get the grant, sure, because -

MS. FISCH: But also without Gene.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yes, because he [was] totally against it, and he totally said that, "Okay, you can do it, but I'm not going to help you at all." So I said, "Fine, I will try it." I still wanted to try. So I did that.

MS. FISCH: What motivated you to do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay, two things. One, just because one of my former students, or a couple of students, were successful in this field, so that was one thing, was challenge; could I -

MS. FISCH: Could I do as well as my students? [Laughs.]

MS. PIJANOWSKI: As well as student.

The second is, it's expensive experience, but I thought that since I was concerned about the students' future and I myself changed the curriculum for my classes, but I didn't really have experience in different directions-I had experience dealing with galleries, but another aspect, going to this commercial jewelry, I didn't have. So I thought that I can try without knowing whether I was successful or not. I just wanted to see. It's expensive fee, expensive tuition.

MS. FISCH: It's been an expensive exercise, yes?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Very much, but I involved my students with this, too. So I hired the students to do bookkeeping so they can learn bookkeeping. I hired not just one, a couple of them, and then I took them to the JCK [Jewelers Circular Keystone]. Of course, I needed help, too, but also I didn't need so many students to take with me. I needed just one, maybe, to help me.

MS. FISCH: So these were the trade shows that you went to to market your commercial production.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. JCK and JHO.

MS. FISCH: I think we should stop at this time and change the tape.

[END TAPE 2 SIDE B.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Hiroko Pijanowski in her home in Honolulu on May 15, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

This is disc number four.

The title of your commercial collection is Carpe Diem. Do you want to tell me a little bit about that, why that name and what you think it represents?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. Carpe diem, of course you know what it means. It means to take -

MS. FISCH: To seize the day.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To seize the day, enjoy the moment or the day. And actually, there is a Canadian professor at the school of art, Shawn Jackson, who said that it's not really true meaning; true meaning is "enjoy the moment." But Latin doesn't have a word for "the moment," so -

MS. FISCH: Ah, so they use "day."

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, so they used-they translated it to "day." And a moment enjoyed is something like condensed your life. You enjoy this moment, you enjoy talking to you, and that's it. You enjoy painting, and that's it. Something like a course I enjoyed and focused for 25 years, and that was it. Ended. And my life will be ended, so why don't I enjoy this moment? So that's why the jewelry that I make connects all these moments because basically I've started making a series of flowers, mainly the orchids. Just because to me, the orchid is one of the erotic flowers, very erotic. And erotic, to me, has something to do with life and death. That's two things very close, but eroticism is here, is honored. And death, life and death and flower, all those is just a moment. Everything is just a moment. That's where the Carpe Diem came in. And that's why I chose that title, I chose flower like the orchids. So I tried to make it a symbol, the flower, but in a subtle way.

MS. FISCH: Okay. Of the moment, in a very subtle way.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: And you developed this collection specifically for a commercial audience, but it's also very high end. And what are the materials?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They were all 18-karat gold, platinum, diamonds, all precious stones: ruby, white diamond, yellow diamonds, black diamonds.

MS. FISCH: So to do this, you had to have a certain amount of financial resources just to get started.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And you committed some personal resources to that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And you also seem to have researched all of the commercial opportunities for manufacturing your jewelry, so that this is not jewelry that you actually physically make.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: So explain the process, what you do.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. I will design first, right? And I draw on the paper.

MS. FISCH: Do you actually draw on paper now for most of this?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Not on a computer.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Just because, as I mentioned before, I was just thinking what really computer cannot do is organic forms, intensive organic forms. You can, but it's very, very difficult. You have to really know how to run a PC, how to run the software, and some softwares, too, cannot do it. Like I said I always have a twisted mind? So that's one thing, to show off what has to be done by hand. So flower is a perfect example. And also orchids, but particularly cattleya has such a flow in the petal, which is so difficult to create [on] the computer. So that was one-I forgot the question. I forgot the question.

MS. FISCH: Why did you decide on orchids as your theme in this?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. So that's another challenge for me, to think what computer can't do, but by hand. And

then you're asking the process, right?

MS. FISCH: Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So I draw. I take a picture first, or I see the picture somewhere in a magazine, and then I draw. And this drawing is very, very tight dimension-wise, height and everything, the details.

MS. FISCH: Do you draw it in several planes?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: I mean, do you do several elevations?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The top view, side view, back view, just like a rendering. And I didn't do the rendering because that, to me, [is] time-consuming because you have to learn again. And actually, I bought a couple books and started learning, because I wanted to teach rendering to the students also. That was another goal. I never got to it, but that was my part of the goal, and I started doing it because I have experience drawing. I took classes in drawing right after I graduated from Cranbrook, learning from a person who had been [a] designer at GM. So I had some few ideas, so I knew what I had to draw, but they were very simple line drawings, and writing in what kind of texture and light and how the flows are going to really look like.

Then I took it to a professional wax carver in New York, in Manhattan-actually in Brooklyn. But I took it to her, and when that comes back-I always went with my drawing and explained more details, because it was not really [a] commercial rendering. It's one step below, level-wise.

MS. FISCH: So in order to be sure you were going to get what you wanted.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Explanation. And when the wax came back, it's fantastic wax working. I just couldn't believe it how well done. And I don't think I can teach that level of wax working technique at the university level, technique-wise, but if someone can teach that level, I think that university students can do more interesting stuff, not just the commercial end, because I can see the potentials from that commercial type of wax working bringing to the academic level. That would be fantastic. You should see it. It's just amazing.

And then after I get the wax back, I will directly send to the commercial casting company, who makes a mold, with a silicon mold, and cast the piece. This is the original. That will come back to me. And then I will clean up and finish it and send it back to the caster again. Then they make a rubber mold. The reason is because rubber mold is very weak. It has a lifetime. But if you have a silicon, an original, to begin with, that's the master.

MS. FISCH: That's the master, and from that you can make another wax and then another mold.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Another rubber mold when the rubber mold broke. So then they will keep under your name, and number it. And I have the same number with them, so whenever I'm ready to cast more of a particular design, I just call up and tell them number P-1, 18-karat gold; I need three of them.

MS. FISCH: And how many molds do you have?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Do I have now?

MS. FISCH: Yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Wow!

MS. FISCH: A lot, huh?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's quite a lot. Maybe close to 100. And when the casting comes back, I had special jeweler to assemble everything.

MS. FISCH: So you would get the cast parts back, and then would you have them finished, or -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't finish.

MS. FISCH: No, you would have them finished, or they get assembled first, and then finished?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I will send direct to the jeweler. They will clean it, assemble. Then that comes back to me again. I will send it out to the stone setter if I needed to. And that's done. It's a long process.

MS. FISCH: So in a sense, though, the process is not hands-on, from your point of view.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Just the idea. Just the design. So I was a jewelry designer, period.

MS. FISCH: And this is very different from what you initially did. Was that a difficult transition?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. I enjoyed it. Actually, I enjoyed it, just because, being done by professional, it's so perfect. It's not frustrating for me not making bad wax. It's not frustrating for me that I cannot do solder right away, or I don't have to melt anything. If it melts, it's their fault. And they won't melt anyway. And stone setting is perfect and quick. And at the same time, physically I am starting having a problem. If I do work a long period of time, I get [a] headache right away. If I file, my shoulder gets hard, and that goes to my headache. Also, my vision started [to get] weak, so my eye gets too tired easily and goes to my headache. Everything goes to my headache. It's not worth it for me any longer.

MS. FISCH: So this became, then, that you were kind of the orchestra leader, the conductor.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I was the director. I was directing. And I liked that.

MS. FISCH: But from your original designs.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And it's fun to see when it's done.

MS. FISCH: It's such a different way of working.

And you also use a lot of carved stones. So tell me a little bit about how why you decided to use carved stones and how you get them carved.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. One day I went to Manhattan and a very little show, done by a person whose name I never heard of before. He was born in England, and he was in a wheelchair from childhood. And he started to carve stones and started making jewelry, and then afterwards he decided not to carve stone, have somebody else to carve for him in that jewelry. And that was something that was a totally different type of jewelry that I had seen. Everything was made out of precious-semiprecious stones. In a way, it's very gaudy.

MS. FISCH: And what were those carved into? I mean, were they flowers or -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Flowers. Basically flowers, animals, and also the clock, totem clock, with the little characters.

MS. FISCH: Oh, like a grandfather clock?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, but they're all with the stones. Mostly precious stones, like tourmaline, aquamarine, citrine, which has to have a large crystal form, otherwise they end up in little pieces. But like I said, I'd never seen such jewelry before, very realistic, in a way, and gaudy. And I started thinking about the jewelry again, and there are so many geometrical designs, a lot of them, and I started to get tired of seeing it. That's another reason I wanted to go to more organic forms, not only the computer.

MS. FISCH: Not just organic, but actually narrative.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: With flowers as the subject matter.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Right. So that just came into me. So I wanted to use those aspects to my jewelry, but I don't know who does it. I could not ask him, because that's his profession. I just didn't want to bother him. And I understand that he was a kind of well-known jeweler in Manhattan among the rich ladies, and almost all rich ladies has to own his piece. It's kind of faddish, I think. And also I found out his grandfather clocks are in collection of museums. So he must be famous, but not in our world, which is fine. And I knew my wax worker was very interested in carving stones-she liked to carve everything-stones, wood, anything-but the stone. And she also saw this show. So we both got hot from this thing at the same time. She said, "I really want to carve, but I don't have [a] machine." So I said, "I will buy this equipment for you, and you can return the money back slowly, maybe within three years, so that you can start to carve stones." And she got excited. And since she can carve wax, stone was a little bit harder because of the material itself, but she started doing it and doing very well. So she made some petals for my cattleya pieces. That's how it began.

MS. FISCH: And now, you were telling me, you have another carver in Germany, who does some very beautiful work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, because her price went very high and I could not afford it, so I started to investigate where else I can get carved stone. There are dealers in the United States, but also their prices are very high, so I thought about Japanese. When I went back to Japan, I investigated and found some carver[s], but the sense, or

sensibility, wasn't quite right to me. So then I went to the Tucson gem show. That's where I found German stonecarver[s] and asked them whether they would carve my design or not. And they said, oh, sure, they will be glad to: "You just have to give me really detailed materials, hopefully from plasticene model."

MS. FISCH: A model rather than a drawing.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not a drawing.

MS. FISCH: Yes. I have another friend who does some carving-has carving done, and he actually makes models carving acrylic, so that it's totally three-dimensional and totally accurate as to the thickness and so on, and then he sends that to the stone carver. But I thought, well, if you're -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That takes a long time. And he could carve his own!

MS. FISCH: That's a long time, and you have to be almost as good as the stone carver to do that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Just needs the machine.

MS. FISCH: Right. But you do it with a plasticene model.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Plasticene model. It's easy for me to do because when I was studying Japanese high-relief repoussé, that's where they start. That's the starting point.

MS. FISCH: Oh, that you make a plasticene form.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. First. And then you make exactly from this model.

MS. FISCH: So you were good at that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: So this business, I understand, you've discontinued now. Why?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Because I failed.

MS. FISCH: Well, failed in what way?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: There are so many so many reasons. I think bad management from my side. I should have planned it a little more.

MS. FISCH: Did you have a business plan?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't.

MS. FISCH: That's a big mistake. [Laughs.]

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That's a big mistake, right. And [a] friend of mine who is very good in business, she told me what I had to do, but I ignored. And that's a bad part of me, or bad part because I am an artist? I don't know. I just ran towards making business. So partially it's my fault [for] not having a good business plan.

And secondly, I think that the fact of this commercial jewelry industry is that buyers are very careful buying -

MS. FISCH: They're not very adventurous.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. They are very careful about buying new designs from [a] new designer. They will watch at least three years how, financially, I can run, how stubborn I will be. And so also the third one is the commercial organization, JCK or JA [Jewelers of America]. To me they are trying to help artist designer, artist jewelry designer, but I don't think it's thoughtful.

MS. FISCH: Their method is not successful, because they don't support them for long enough.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. If they really think about those newcomers, they should have a little more different way to organize. Otherwise, they are-they fool us. That's what I felt.

MS. FISCH: Would you consider doing this again if you-in another few years, if you had the idea that you could be more successful and planned ahead, knowing what you have learned, would you do this whole thing again?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: If I am young, I will. I am definitely interested. If I am, let's say, 40. Now I'm over 60.

MS. FISCH: You're not ever going to be 40 again.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. The reason is because physically it's a lot of work. You have to build the booth, you have to pack-first of all, you have to pack humongous things to ship them.

MS. FISCH: To be in a trade show. We're talking about trade show.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Because that was the way you marketed your work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: But are trade shows the only way to market? I mean, would you think about some other way to market your work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think so. I think I need a break. I need a break to reconsider, or to really think what I only should do, because I think when I did the jewelry show-I don't think I really had a plan. I don't think I had focused things, what I should do. And looking at other people's booths, looking at how they set up, how they do it, I think I really didn't know what I was doing.

MS. FISCH: So you didn't do enough investigation beforehand.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. That was another mistake. I should have waited. But I think I applied for the JCK booth, and normally, people tell me, you have to wait six to seven years to be accepted, but I was accepted right away. And that's something that made me excited, and I just jumped in. I think the reason I was accepted [was] because my name was already known, and when the jeweler saw my name, I think they are interested in my name, I think, what I can do. So that's after the fact. I didn't know why.

MS. FISCH: So not just in terms of this commercial development but all of your work, what are the things which have most powerfully influenced your work? And I'm thinking more about sources of inspiration, whether it's nature or heritage or other artists. I mean, what are the important things that inspire you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Inspire me. That's a tough question. I really don't know.

MS. FISCH: What do you like to think about? I mean, you've already talked about the orchids, so those became a theme for your commercial production, but I was thinking more about your Gentle Solitude series, which incorporated a piece of jewelry within a sculptural format, but certainly the imagery and the feeling that went into that came from a different place than the commercial work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think I [am] supposed to be [an] artist. But whenever I start to make pieces, I don't think I really think form of art. I always think either technique or like I am going back again, twisted mind, and "What is this?" So there's nothing influenced me, because I don't have any great inspiration.

MS. FISCH: Well, you were telling me about your paintings, and there you have a goal. You have something you want to do.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: Capture.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: So that's an inspiration. What is that that you want to capture?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know where it comes from, though.

MS. FISCH: No, but what is it? You were telling me it was about time.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, I said I want to paint the time, just because-again, it's twisted mind. The painting I see is always-it's the moment. A good example is a still life; it's a still life.

MS. FISCH: Right. And it's a photographic image.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And then the fruit. This fruit is always fruit; it never dies. The flower, there's a painting of a flower. It's always blooming; it will never die. So I want to challenge, again, some-I want to paint something that has the time within the canvas.

MS. FISCH: Right. That element of time.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: But have there been similar kinds of things that have influenced your work in metal? I mean, what were you trying to do in this Gentle Solitude series?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Pause.] Hmm.

MS. FISCH: It was more than just placing objects, it would seem to me. You had some kind of-was it a mood you were trying to create, or -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Is that your question?

MS. FISCH: Yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I thought you were asking question what would influence me in my work. Right?

MS. FISCH: Well, that also, but also what makes you do certain kinds of work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the beginning of my art, if you call it, my focused art career, I started from technique. I just followed what's going on in our world. Right? So I just did a lot of technical stuff. And then all of a sudden one day one woman said, in a good way, "You are Miss Mokume." That hit me, and I said, "Wow, I'm Miss Mokume." That's great to be called, but at the same time, it means I am-that's it, that's all.

MS. FISCH: That's all I am.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That's all I am. And I am not. I am not just mokume woman. That's how I always started to confuse everything, and then that's how it came, as a result of the paper cord.

MS. FISCH: Well, tell me a little bit about the paper cord things, then. Maybe we should start with that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. That's easy for me to explain it, what's the influence to my work. Because that, to me, is influence. Somebody's word has really influenced me to think [about] my work.

MS. FISCH: Well, influenced you in the sense it made you think about positive and negative things.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So it's a positive, and at the same time it was negative to me. I didn't take it in a bad way. Of course, she said it with a respect, but also there is a meaning behind it, too. So I said, what I was doing? Why was I doing all the technique? Why I had to always stick with the metal, and why-what's this? So that's the starting point; so I was trying to deny metal, period. But at the same time, I think that kind of thought was going on in Europe, and in different reasons, not my same reason, but for different reasons they are starting and looking at other materials. And I don't know the reason for it, but I think the time was kind of same time this lady said to me, "You are Miss Mokume." So I started working with a very, very textured paper and made very simple forms, but at the same time, a great impact for designing.

You said, what influences me a lot? It's Issey Miyake's approach of designing, because I love clothes, as you know, and I love Issey's clothes. And I thought about, well, how could he get such a unique design, how he approached things. And I noticed a couple things. He denied everything. For example, the shoes he designs. Shoes always has a hole, shoes always had an opening, right?

MS. FISCH: To put your foot into it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: He made shoes [that] doesn't have any hole.

MS. FISCH: How do you put them on?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: You zip out. [Laughs.] So when you see the shoes, it looks like a purse. There's no hole. It's just zipped up. And I bought the shoes and I still have them. And that's one way he approaches. So I started to analyze his way of designing.

Another approach is that clothes is all two dimensions when it's flat. And when you wear it, it becomes three dimensions, right? His way of approaching, in a way, is opposite. So that if he thinks a dress is flat, why don't I design from 3-D to make it to the dress. So when I examined one of the sweaters I bought by his design, it was a box without the top. It's constructed really like a box, but when you wear it, just because [of] the material, it drops everything. It becomes -

MS. FISCH: So it drapes.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it becomes flat. And when you put it on, of course, the body and the dimension, it won't come as a box form, just because what he chooses as the material. Because it's a knit-so it drapes. And so his design concept, it has a lot of those things to do. So I said, okay, if he does it, how could I do it in jewelry? If I choose some kind of material that's very flexible to make the form, that's maybe something I'll start. That's how I started with the paper.

MS. FISCH: Paper cord.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, no. With the paper. Roughly textured paper. And I put the canvas between, and it's so simple. It's a very simple form, and both sides are a different color of the paper. Within that I had canvas, and the center, I just cut the lines in little tiny circles. So if you put over your head, just because [of] the materials, it makes great shape. It goes like this when shoulder goes up. So I made that and the-[inaudible]. And that's what I exhibited in the Netherlands and Holland, and it was great-what's the word?

MS. FISCH: It was a great success.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It was a great success. Everybody somehow liked it. And I think one thing is something to do with the Dutch nationality. They're not afraid to try new things. And the price was right, also. So I had 20 to 25 pieces. Almost all I sold, except one piece.

But that wasn't really quite satisfaction for me, because that was taking over from Issey Miyake's kind of idea, or how he approached things. So I wanted to push further again. Same thing with line inlay. I don't want to stick with traditional line inlay; I wanted to get something of my own. So that's how happened paper cord, just because when I went to buy more paper, I saw paper cord just as a raw material, which I had never seen before, because Mizuhiki always made some kind of form already to decorate over the envelope for special occasions in Japan.

MS. FISCH: It's interesting. When I went to Japan in '78 for the World Crafts Conference, the Mizuhiki struck me. I was very excited about it, but because of the forms, not because of the materials. [Laughs.]

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] I see.

MS. FISCH: So I came home and made twisted silver and gold wire and made the knots Mizuhiki used, but it didn't occur to me to just use the material.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Maybe because you didn't see the raw material.

MS. FISCH: Well, I did, because I -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: You did?

MS. FISCH: Oh, yeah. I saw the colors and I thought they were just fantastic, but I couldn't see any use for them for me. So instead, I looked at the form. And then when I saw what you were doing with it, I thought, oh, what a great idea.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't think about it either. Just when I saw it, the material, it just struck me as the material, that's all. So I took it home and played with it with Gene, and I made quite a number of pieces with the paper cord, not just the gold. Black and white, and red and white. But I didn't exhibit it many places either-I still have it somewhere-because I wasn't really satisfied with what I was doing. And again, I exhibited a couple places, very few, and also Holland. Holland was very-they accepted that approach. And I don't think Americans at that time, even when I exhibited, I don't think I had any reaction. But then after that, I started to use gold.

MS. FISCH: When you started to make the really big ones, I think the big collars were probably the most dramatic, and so they had an instant impact.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Impact. And I think it's color. And I started small scale, which ACC [American Craft Council] has a collection.

MS. FISCH: Of the small scale ones?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Of the first piece we ever put out in public. But to be honest with you, I think the other ones were much better, because we expanded in size.

MS. FISCH: I think the expansion in scale was so important.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Scale was something, and that was Gene's suggestion: "Why don't you make a large size?" So I said okay, and I tried, and it was striking. So that's how it was influenced. And then going to the Gentle Solitude, at the same time making them in paper cord, it's always going-I always work with -

MS. FISCH: Parallel things.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. I always work with something-not only just one. I just can't stand it. So that was always going on. And so I was studying, with a Japanese master, high-relief repoussé chasing at the same time, and that's metal. And still, because I started work with the metal, I also didn't want it to be totally away from metal, so that's why I continued. At that time I personally wasn't happy in my life. And I didn't know why I was not happy at that time. Now I know why I wasn't happy. So to make that, I had to make some kind of excuse why I have to make this. And at that time, you had to have [a] concept, so I am trying to push these two to make it together, which is not honest way.

MS. FISCH: Your interest in making these three-dimensional metal things meant you needed to find a place for them.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. That's why I put the haiku as the title. But that's not necessary, because [the] work itself should speak out. The haiku itself-the totally complete art form. So, getting two things together, I did it just because of following this fad that's going on.

MS. FISCH: Well, it kind of justified the work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And I felt that it's not really honest way to do. So that's why I quit.

MS. FISCH: So you stopped doing haiku with it, but did you continue with the Gentle Solitude pieces as sculptural formats?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I did. But then I felt that without the haiku-and why do I always have to think of Gentle Solitude, sad side. The life is not on the sad side, is a joy side.

MS. FISCH: Well, did you think that Gentle Solitude was [about] sadness?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: In a way, sadness.

MS. FISCH: I guess I wouldn't interpret it necessarily as sadness.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No? It's sad, because every time I give a lecture on that, some people cry in my lecture. And I felt bad. Why do I have to make them cry? Because I think bottom line was I was unhappy and I was so negative about things, and people felt that probably. I made them cry. And in a way, it's great I made them cry from my lecture. Nobody cries. So at the same time, I said, I should get out of this; I should look to the more positive side. That's how it changed to the large gold-leaf leaves.

MS. FISCH: So now you do these large, gold, carved leaves.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That, to me, is the beginning of the life now. So the first piece I made with gold leaf was carved wood covered with 22-karat gold, an amaryllis. Life-size, about three feet high. And that was-now I don't have -

MS. FISCH: Is it totally three-dimensional?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, it's totally three-dimensional. It's a beautiful piece, very erotic at the same time, because again, I think that life, sex, death has all related to eroticism. So I made eroticism for my beginning of the life.

MS. FISCH: And it can be very personified in flower forms.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. Right. So that was a bud form of the amaryllis.

MS. FISCH: Did you carve that yourself?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. I started to hire people to do these things for me much faster. I mean, physically I started getting weak. And again, this headache problem. And particularly the gold leafing, if you ask the professional, it's perfect. And if I do, it probably takes three or four times of their time. Of course, I have to pay, but the result is just perfect. And I don't think that a craftsman has to have everything -

MS. FISCH: Doesn't have to do it all.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Sometimes it's impossible to do it perfectly.

MS. FISCH: It's interesting that sculptors have a totally different approach about hands-on, and then craftsmen seem to think, oh, they have to do everything. It's too bad.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't agree. It can be combined. There's nothing wrong about that. So maple leaf is, of course, seeds, seeds and the shoots. So all of that -

MS. FISCH: And they were very much in your environment in Michigan, the maple trees.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So that was the result from the Gentle Solitude, which not many people knows either.

MS. FISCH: So it has evolved into this. I didn't know that until the other day when we talked about it.

I know that at one point you became an avid diver, and you were very interested in underwater photography. And I wonder-I don't see any real influence of that in your work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: Is that deliberate? You don't want its influence, or it just hasn't happened?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It never happened, and I think I never dove enough to make a piece.

[END TAPE 3 SIDE A.]

MS. FISCH: That wasn't your intention in learning to dive, to look for inspiration?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, that was totally for fun.

MS. FISCH: And it hasn't had any influence. I think that's interesting, because I think your photographs are wonderful, your underwater photographs.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Thank you.

MS. FISCH: I enjoyed seeing those.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Actually, I wanted to take more. I wanted to take more photographs, but because of my vertigo-I could not continue to dive, because I started diving in '91; I got the vertigo '95, so only four years of diving experience. So it's a very short time for me to bring into my work or to influence to my work or to continue taking more photos, because there are so many interesting forms, so many interesting textures, it's very, very true that I can bring it to my work. It's full of the ideas down there. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Right. That would be my impression. But it hasn't happened.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But with four years, no, four years, and I could do diving only certain time of the year, only in the winter, on vacation. I went to the Caribbean because it's so close to Michigan. It's only three hours flight. So it's too bad.

MS. FISCH: Well, maybe you'll dive again. You were talking the other day about maybe you would dive again.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Right.

MS. FISCH: Have you ever done any large-scale sculpture or public art works, or would you like to do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I'm not interested in doing public art, period. It's a lot of pressure, probably. Lots of committees, and I don't like to deal with people. The biggest sculpture I did was-what?

MS. FISCH: Well, the maple leaves are fairly large. Have you done anything larger than that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. One's in Gene's room. It looks like a surfboard.

MS. FISCH: Oh, right, I heard about the surfboard series. I'll have to take a look at that. I haven't seen it yet.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] That was a large one. But I think the maple leaf, the three maple leaves with the two is the biggest one. But I really liked it, and I made a single one, too. So when I had [an] exhibition at U of M museum, I hanged everything. And to me it was beautiful and exciting and striking, because huge maple leaves float in the air and swing; even though no wind, it moves. So all of this is moving, and huge.

MS. FISCH: How many were there?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, one, two, three, four. But the size took such a large space, and it's above, and not many pieces float, anyway. A sculpture has got to stand, stand from the floor or come out from the wall. But mine is just hanging in air. It's like diving, actually, you float.

MS. FISCH: So there was a certain amount of influence, not in imagery but in feeling, the floating.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] Yeah. The feeling. And I had two cases full of the maple seed jewelry.

MS. FISCH: You've started to paint again. And I wondered, is this a serious professional pursuit or more of a personal thing?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: At this level, it's personal, but knowing myself-[laughs]-I will probably pursue it as well professionally. Again, the circumstances do not allow me to spend a lot of time in painting, but I have a great interest in processing, and plus the fact I really would like to resolve that I really can paint the time.

MS. FISCH: So you're highly motivated to pursue this idea of time.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. And I forgot to mention before when you asked about what kind of art education background I have and I mentioned to you-my school-and drawing, but at the same time, I was taking painting too, which was held every Sunday ten to five. So that was quite intensive, and I did this for a year, by the same teacher that I was studying drawing with. And then I stopped. After I got into the university, I started to take again, and I actually applied for this-is not amateur-a professional group-and I had my thesis accepted. Then I left Japan. But they were already planning to give me the prize for the next year. So if I stayed one more year in Japan and if I sent my painting again to this group, then definitely I was going to receive some kind of prize. Then maybe I wouldn't have came to United States.

MS. FISCH: I see. If that had happened, you might have stayed.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oil painting-oil painting. Probably that's what happened.

MS. FISCH: So now you think you'd like to try again.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Again. So I have a little bit of experience in oil painting to be in a professional level.

MS. FISCH: Have comments from critics or responses from the public affected your spirit and your thinking and your work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. I would think so.

MS. FISCH: How?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: This particular lady, "You are Miss Mokume." That was great feedback. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Right. But I mean have there been reviews of your work, for example, that made you think about working in another way or made you angry, or -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It never made me angry.

MS. FISCH: Made you think.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Made me think, why? They said this. Is it really true? Did the critic understand what I was trying to do? And I always thought about it, and in most of the cases, they're right. Objectively, I thought they were right.

MS. FISCH: So did it depress you, or it simply made you more thoughtful?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It made me more motivated. To be better.

MS. FISCH: Well, that's a good response.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. That's always good for me.

MS. FISCH: And that kind of criticism didn't dampen your spirit.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. If the criticism is fair and it's very not subjective opinion, very objective opinion, which is very important?

MS. FISCH: Well, sometimes they're not as objective as one would like.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No? Really? I always think -

MS. FISCH: But as long as you take them in a good spirit, I think that's important.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. I don't get mad. I just think. You know why? That's how I think, so I think that's how everybody thinks; so I say straight something, right, because that's how I take it.

MS. FISCH: Because that's how you take it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But I realize that you are right. I realize a lot of people won't take it, that take it very subjectively and they get mad at me. They do.

MS. FISCH: If you criticize things.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Or I try to say something very straight.

MS. FISCH: Well, because everybody's maybe a little bit lacking in confidence.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But at the same time-oh, this is not concerning the art-but at the same time, I found out that my best friends took what I said objectively, and they are the very, very special friends and long -

MS. FISCH: Over a long period of time.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: A long period of time for relationship with me.

MS. FISCH: I'm interested in who are your professional colleagues in Japan and in the U.S., and how do you get to know them, and are you able to meet and interact with them? I mean, I know that you remained a member, up until recently, I guess, of the Japan Jewelry Design Association [JJDA], and you often exhibited with them. And you maintained that over many years. Was that important to you to keep that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It was important, and I felt that I was contributing something to them in [a] different angle of what jewelry might be. I'm not saying that that's what jewelry's supposed to be, but because to me they had a very conservative idea, conservative approach, I thought that I was doing something for them. At the same time, Mr. Hiramatsu, who was one of the founders, influenced me a lot from the beginning. And he supported me a lot. I think I was lucky that I got such support. So it was important.

And through that, I met a lot of jewelers, but at the same time, I was not really interested in only jewelers; I was interested in more of traditional metalworkers-who are totally in a different category in Japan-just because there are traditional techniques that I could learn. Also, their techniques started being forgotten by people, which is sad to see, and it should stay. And Japanese jewelry designers should try to promote that, which some young people started doing that.

MS. FISCH: Oh, that's good.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. They are taking a lesson, high-relief repoussé work to study. There are quite a number of JJDA members who are studying this.

MS. FISCH: Oh, that's encouraging to hear.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah! I thought it's great.

MS. FISCH: So that it is going to be a continuing tradition. Well, also, how did you get to know the metalworking community? Was there an organization, or you just approached them individually, the masters?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: In the United States?

MS. FISCH: No, in Japan. You said you learned more from the traditional metalworkers. Did you just approach them individually?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Individually, yeah.

MS. FISCH: And have you become friends with them, or do they always see you as just somebody who is out to learn from them?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think it depends on the person. Some, we became really good friends. Some, we still [are] the master and the student. Someone I really respected in the traditional metal group became national living treasure, and he died. And he was a great person. And he probably influenced me the most. What he did, what influenced me the most, is the attitude against the metal, how he works, how he faced to it.

MS. FISCH: And what was his name?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Ikkoku, I-k-k-o-k-u-Kajima, K-a-j-i-m-a. He specialized in-[off mike]. When I studied with him, he was already over 85, but he sits on his desk every day for a minimum of four to five hours. And he [is not] necessarily working with the metal, but he [may] make drawings or he may make some models in plasticene, or doing something. To me it was amazing, age of 83, to come out in the studio, sit down on a chair, anywhere, doing something. I don't know what he was doing, but he's doing something at the table. He's there.

MS. FISCH: That's very inspiring, isn't it, to see someone that age.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah! I just respected right away to see his attitude. He doesn't have to work with the metal, but he sits at the workbench four or five hours a day. That's a lot! And he sometimes carved and showed me-he calls to me and says, "Watch me, I'm carving." And I carved. Of course, I can't do it, and nobody can do it in Japan anyway anymore like his carving. Then he says, "Would you like to have one?" I say, "Sure, I'd like to have one!" "Which one?" And he tested me. He tested me which carving is good. He's testing me. I felt that, oh, he's testing.

MS. FISCH: And did that make you nervous?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Challenged. [Laughs.] Okay, if he's testing me, I've got to pick the best piece. Didn't you ask about -

MS. FISCH: Oh, I asked you about the colleagues in America?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. I didn't answer. Because I want to say something.

MS. FISCH: Okay. Well, say what you like.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. See, when we came back from Japan with Gene, when he got a job at San Diego State, the first person I met was you. And you were my first mentor. Arline Fisch.

MS. FISCH: Well, that's nice to know.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I have to mention the name, right?

MS. FISCH: [Laughs.] Well, I'm very happy to know that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, you were the first mentor to me. The reason is because how could she be so famous for that age? That's why I asked your age.

MS. FISCH: [Laughs.]

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Secondly, it was a shock to me to see combined metal and feathers.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I was doing feather things then.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And I never thought [of] combining metal with some other materials, and feathers. Later on, I understood where that came from. You researched so many books, so many materials, and you got an idea to combine them, right? Like probably you were looking at the Chinese, looking at African -

MS. FISCH: Actually, I was looking at pre-Colombian things, mostly.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, pre-Colombian. African, that's what I thought that idea came from. But I didn't know at that time. I just saw your work and the feather, and the metal, "How could she combine it? Is it bad or is it good?" But something even hits my mind, it remains [with] me for a long time without understanding. It happened to me [with] many things in the past. For example, the drawing teacher talked about the space, talked about how a line goes. The dot is a dot, but the continuous dot is a line. I didn't understand that at the time because I was too young, but it remained [with] me here so long, and finally I understood what it means. Same thing with your piece. I didn't understand why and where it's coming from, but when I saw it, I made a piece with a feather, copying your idea, actually, and I sold it right away. But that piece, I did something a little bit different from yours, combined it with a feather, combined with a basketry technique, so it had a fiber. So the combination of the fiber and feather and silver. And it sold. And when it sold, I said to me, "Maybe that's not bad. That's not wrong." [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: It's not wrong; somebody likes it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Likes it. It's accepted. That's where it started. That's how I started combining fabric and metal.

I don't know [if] you remember or not the pieces. Because I sold it right away.

MS. FISCH: And you didn't take a photograph of it, probably.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I didn't. Oh, no, no, it's in Oppi's [Oppi Untracht] book [*Jewelry Concepts and Technology*. London: Hale, 1982].

MS. FISCH: Oh, is it? Oh, I'll have to look it up.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So that was a big mentor. And [to be] honest with you, I think you were very, very helpful for us to get going, for some reason. I don't know the real reason. I asked you how I can enter the show in Europe, because I realized that you were entering a show in Europe, so I wanted to find out how I can do it too, without my work is great or not. I didn't think that part. I just wanted to know how can you do that. And you were kind enough to tell me everything, how you did it, and you gave me the names how to apply so I could follow them. And also you helped us to kind of advertise-maybe the word is wrong-advertise of what we do.

MS. FISCH: Well, make known what you do, because you had a skill that -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So that's-the word went out-just because of you. And that's the beginning to meet other people, going to other workshops, giving a workshop, meet those people, and then those people spread the words to the other people. And that's how I met a lot of people. So it becomes a network. That's how it began. That's how I met people. And I think mainly the people I met, they're all nice people.

MS. FISCH: Well, I think it's so different, in my view, between America and Japan, and Europe, as well, in that way; that Americans, maybe because we didn't know any better, we always helped each other. There were never, or very few, people who said, "I'm not going to tell you what I do." That's very common in other parts of the world, that they don't want to tell you. They want you to like their work and they want to show it to you, but they don't want to tell you how they do it, because they don't want you to do it. And I think that's not been the attitude in the United States. It's never been the attitude.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They want to share.

MS. FISCH: I am happy to say that the sharing idea continues, and I think that's really important.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So, from the beginning, I wanted to share everything. That's how I started, anyway.

MS. FISCH: And certainly you shared all that wonderful information, and that was terrific. [Audio break.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Hiroko Pijanowski at her home and studio in Honolulu on May 15, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

This is disk number five.

I remember your involvement with the program of the World Crafts Council Conference in Kyoto in 1978. Do you remember what role you played? And was it difficult-I remember that it was difficult for you to function effectively in Japan because of the dominant male hierarchy. But why don't you talk a little bit about that experience.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. My role for American Craft Council in Kyoto was to organize the program in metal, cooperating with one of the representatives from Japan. And I think American Craft Council choose Mr. Hiramatsu as their representative on the Japan side.

MS. FISCH: Right. But it was the World Crafts Council, not the American Craft Council.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I see. World Crafts Council.

So since I know Mr. Hiramatsu, I thought it would work well. However, I forgot about the attitude of Japanese men, who are not like Americans. They try to lean on someone to help him out all the time. So probably he [was] talking to this man, male, who was at the Geidai studying the casting at that time-he came from Seattle, I understand-to help him out to organize for him.

MS. FISCH: So this was Mr. Hiramatsu you're talking about.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, Mr. Hiramatsu. For him. And he knew that I am presenting from the United States side. So that's where I think the conflicts came in. And probably-it's my guess-probably Mr. Hiramatsu told this American male from Seattle, sort of giving impression that he is the only one going to help Mr. Hiramatsu. So I think he felt-this man from Seattle felt a great responsibility that he really has to do a lot, because he knew that

Mr. Hiramatsu doesn't speak any English; he's not going to organize anything.

MS. FISCH: And you weren't living in Japan at the time. I think that was the difficulty.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I was not living in Japan. Right. And also, I didn't know that Mr. Hiramatsu asks this man to help him out. So all that miscommunication, I think, created a problem. So when I got there, this man from Seattle thought that he [was] in charge for everything. At that time, I didn't know why he was -

MS. FISCH: And you thought you were in charge.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So I didn't know why he was so dominating me over what I am supposed to be, what I am supposed to do. So that's, I think, now I think that was probably miscommunication, but at that time [it] made me so angry and made me very difficult to do things. And finally Arline Fisch just stood up and, I think, talked to him, what's going on, who's in charge for what, and then everything went smooth.

MS. FISCH: Well, because I was worried that the program would just fall apart because there was all this dissension. I didn't know it was from the American. I thought it was just the Japanese not allowing a woman to function, even though you were supposed to be in charge.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But I think that's what it was. He didn't know what my role was, and he didn't know that there were such people coming from the United States. I don't think that Mr. Hiramatsu told the whole story or whole view, or maybe he didn't know; Mr. Hiramatsu didn't know. I really don't know how it happened.

MS. FISCH: It happened that the metals program was wonderful, because the people that were invited were very prominent. I think it was-Hermann Jünger came, and Arnaldo Pomodoro came, and Albert Paley came, and David Watkins came.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Albert Paley and David Watkins. And who else?

MS. FISCH: I don't remember who else. I just remember that it was a wonderful program. And I hope you got sufficient credit for putting the invitations in the right hands, because it certainly made for a very strong program.

But what's your memory of the conference? Do you have a memory of that conference?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I thought that the program was wonderful, like you said. And I think everyone really took advantage of being there. I thought that there was great interaction between Japanese craftsmen and the people who came from the world. But unfortunate, again, is the language. That was kind of -

MS. FISCH: It was a difficulty.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. That's what I found. I thought the program and everything else went great. And also, the Kyoto craftsmen were very, very cooperative, and that was a great part, too. They were not well-known people, period, but the young group of craftsmen in Kyoto tried everything that they can do. And that's part of-I have to give credit to Mr. Hiramatsu because, again, he knew he can't organize anything, so he drafted one man in Kyoto also to help him out. Yeah. That was Mr. Tanaka. No, no, Yamanaka. Mr. Yamanaka.

MS. FISCH: Right. I have to tell you that I met Mr. Yamanaka again in Kyoto in 1993. When I had an exhibition in Kyoto.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, really?

MS. FISCH: He came, and he introduced himself, and he said he wanted me to meet his wife, because after '78, he had given her my book and she started crocheting in wire. And she does the most extraordinary work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, really?!

MS. FISCH: I'll show you some pictures.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Really?!

MS. FISCH: Yes. It was a wonderful information for me to learn this.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Wow! Yeah, that's great.

MS. FISCH: He worked in pewter.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And he was the person who was making the pewter for Mr. Hiramatsu. A dish and others.

So Mr. Hiramatsu, I think he doesn't want to do it. He doesn't want to organize anything, but he wants to be a part. So he gets someone to help him out. Mr. Yamanaka understood his role, but the American, I think, didn't understand, period. That's what the problem was.

MS. FISCH: That's what made the problem.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But I think after you talk to him, I think he understood.

MS. FISCH: Well, I thought it went very well, and the conference was a wonderful memory for me. Was it good for you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes! It was a big conference. And I would never expect that the prince or princess would come and have a party and meet them, in the sense of-how do I say-among the people. So that was quite a honor, I thought. But Mr. Yamanaka must really [have] hated to have them; it's more job.

MS. FISCH: Oh, because it was more work to do?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not for him, but for Kyoto City, because of the guards, policemen, has to be there and all kinds of things that they have to do. Also, he is against the royal family anyway.

MS. FISCH: Oh. [Laughs.] So that part wasn't so good for him.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. He didn't think that is necessary; Japan shouldn't have any royal family anymore. I-think different. I am more conservative. I think we should have.

MS. FISCH: Well, I remember that afterwards, you organized a little trip for some of us. Where did we go?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I arranged a place right next to the very famous temple; it's called Tenryuji. And it was actually the vacation home for a big company in Osaka which is related to the steel company. And actually that was his vacation home, but no longer. He could not maintain [it] because maintenance costs got so big. So he just decided that it belongs to the company, but just limited to the people who can go to it. And I had a connection with this man. So you -

MS. FISCH: I think there were eight of us who went.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: You, Lois Moran, and a person from Australia. I forgot her name.

MS. FISCH: Jane Burns?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Jane Burns.

MS. FISCH: And Brooke Horgan. And Mary Lee Hu. David Watkins. And Albert and Frances.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Albert Paley and Frances. Right. And I could not contact Hermann Jünger, so I wanted him to be there with Josef Symon. But I could not find him at the conference. That was sad. I really wanted him to be in your group. And then one more person, Japanese-American, Azuma. Mr. Azuma. I arranged [for] him to be there so that he will be a guide and translator. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Right, since none of us spoke Japanese. [Laughs.] Well, it was a wonderful opportunity. We really appreciated it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. That's a beautiful home. It's a pure Kyoto-style Japanese home. And also, the garden was fantastic.

MS. FISCH: It was.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And it was just like I said, temple and the river, which had cormorant fishing performance. Did you see that?

MS. FISCH: No, but we rode the rapids at the Hozu River.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah? And the end of it is where the cormorants are supposed to have some entertainment.

MS. FISCH: Right. I don't remember the entertainment. I remember the river. It was a very exciting trip.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But that place has been used so many times for TV stories, like samurai-what you call-samurai-stories, or the movies. They used it inside for a very famous one.

MS. FISCH: Well, it was very beautiful.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, two or three movies.

MS. FISCH: And it was wonderful that you organized it. And the only sad part was that you and Gene couldn't come. You had to go visit your family.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because I felt that you all were going to stay in a Western-style hotel, and I wanted you to know how the Japanese house [is] like. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Well, it was a wonderful experience, and it was very nice of you to organize that.

Have you also been actively involved with American organizations, like the American Craft Council or the Society of North American Goldsmiths? Have you been involved in those?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Just a little part. The SNAG conference?

MS. FISCH: Yeah, Society of North American Goldsmiths, SNAG. But, I mean, you came to the conferences quite often.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I did at the beginning.

MS. FISCH: And you brought students.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I brought students, and I think that was a great thing that I've done. And I wish I could have done [it] more often, just because at that time the school of art had more money, so they had their own van, which takes 16 people. So I arranged to take about 10 students with me and connect it to the different schools after the conference at Boston, to visit different schools so the students can see another facility and also to meet other students and talk to them, just among the students. So I think we went to RISD, and in New York it was just sight-seeing.

MS. FISCH: The conference in New York was just sight-seeing? Or did you take people to that conference?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, no, no. I'm talking about the conference in Boston. Then after that, we went down to RISD, where Stanley [Lechtzin] teaches?

MS. FISCH: No, Tyler.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Tyler, right. No, New Paltz.

MS. FISCH: You went to New Paltz?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: We started at New Paltz, and RISD, and Temple, and then RIT. And they had a great time, particularly at New Paltz. They really thought that's a great idea to get those students together and exchange the idea[s]. And all the students stayed-some students at the New Paltz. And I think-my thinking, maybe it's wrong-that's where Bob Ebendorf got the idea to get all the schools together and exchange, because that happened a couple of years later.

MS. FISCH: Yeah, at New Paltz. They did those conversations. I'm not sure if that was Ebendorf or Jamie Bennett, but -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It was Ebendorf who started, and then after he left, it was Jamie was in charge. But all the schools except RISD are very helpful. RISD is a little strange, I thought.

MS. FISCH: Well, they've never been terribly friendly.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, they are not. And each place we went to, we gave a workshop, or demonstration, at least, to exchange, so that we can stay.

MS. FISCH: So you were gone quite a long time. Was it about two weeks?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah. It was, yeah, two weeks, maybe, we were gone on the road. And Stanley, you wouldn't believe, he offered his home for us to stay. So everybody has a sleeping bag anyway, so you know his huge living room. We spread all over the sleeping bags and slept there. And RIT, where did we stay? At that time I think Gary Griffin was already teaching, and somehow we split the students. And by the time we [were] back to RIT, they are all exhausted, the students were all exhausted; ready to go home. But those students has a long period of relationship, too, with me, and that's a good memory for them.

MS. FISCH: That's a very nice memory for you.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Not just go to conference, but going to different places. And they are giving demonstrations, not me. Just run by all the students.

MS. FISCH: Did you do that just once, or did you do it more than once?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Just once. After that, they saw us use the van and we spent so much money on the gas, they said, "You better stop this or to pay at least amount of the gas." And the students didn't really want to pay for the gas. They are so poor. So they stopped. But I did it one more time. That was just to take them to Purdue [University, West Lafayette, IN]. And then when we went to Purdue, I think Mary Lee Hu gave a workshop, so we all joined and stayed overnight there (at our West Lafayette home where Gene was living). The students cooked the breakfast. We slept again in a big house with sleeping bags. And I think that to me, if I could continue, to me I thought that's a part of education, too, to get students [with] each other, spend the time together, and then there's more cooperation between what happens, help each other.

MS. FISCH: So you thought that was more important than your participating only by yourself.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The students. Purely just the students. I just watch and let them take responsibility, so that they know that they are responsible for what they're doing, what they're going to do. So they have to prepare for that. They have to communicate with others and cooperate with people together. I thought that's important.

And that experience comes back all the way from my high school time. My grandparents lived near a beach, so during the summer vacation, good friends of mine went there, because they offered one small room; so we all girls went and stayed for a week. We had a kitty cash. We chipped in. We had to manage everything, money, food. So that was a very good experience. We bonded because of the time spent together. And those people still bonded together.

MS. FISCH: So you thought you could see how that was a valuable experience.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Valuable for the students. I wish I could continue that.

MS. FISCH: That part you'd like to do.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Have craft and art magazines played any significant role for you? I mean, are they important to you, or only for information?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: For information.

MS. FISCH: But you don't care whether you're in them or not in them, or you like being in them?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Of course I like to be in them, but not a great deal.

MS. FISCH: Okay. And now that you've been involved in the commercial world, there are also trade magazines that are important.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

[END TAPE 3 SIDE B.]

MS. FISCH: And you had good response from them.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I did. I did have good response. And it was important, because I thought that it would help sell my jewelry, but it didn't do anything.

MS. FISCH: Well, it's good for your ego. What were those magazines?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: *JCK*. *Professional Jeweler*. Sorry, there are two more. I will check [*Modern Jeweler*, *American Jewelry Manufacturers*].

MS. FISCH: Okay. But I think it's interesting that those were actually more important to you, because they served a function for you.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: When did you first exhibit your work? Do you remember?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, 1987.

MS. FISCH: That's the first time you exhibited your work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.]

MS. FISCH: Really? Not before?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: My jewelry, yeah. My painting before that, but the jewelry -

MS. FISCH: In '87 or '77?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, excuse me, '77.

MS. FISCH: Okay, '87 I'm sure is too late.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, no. Excuse me, 1967.

MS. FISCH: In '67. Okay. There we are.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Nineteen-sixty-seven. That was the first time I exhibited, in Japan.

MS. FISCH: In Japan. Now, when you were a student at Cranbrook, did you exhibit your work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That's the time I exhibited.

MS. FISCH: But it was in Japan that you exhibited.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: But in Japan, right. And the response on my piece was great because at that time they didn't know about wax working; they didn't know anything about centrifugal casting, didn't have any information about flexible shaft. So all those three. They couldn't see how it's been done.

MS. FISCH: How you did that work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And I know you participated in many national and international exhibitions over the years since then. How important are they to you, being in exhibitions? Is that important to you? Why?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Ego. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Ego. Well, it's important to your career, certainly, to be in major exhibitions.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And also I was being pushed by the university that I should exhibit [at the] national level, and then later on they told us no longer national level is not that great; you've got to exhibit [at the] international level. So I was pushed too. At the same time, not only that; I wanted to test myself, how my work will be accepted by the public. I wanted to know what they say about my work, so that I can think about it, so I can be better than what I am, what I was.

MS. FISCH: And which exhibitions do you think were the most important for you over your whole career?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. Two. You must remember the title. One was at the Vienna. What was the title?

MS. FISCH: Oh, I think it was called "International Jewelry." It was in 1980? At the conference in Vienna.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That was a very important show for me because [it was] one of the first exhibitions [that] had insight for international, just on jewelry, wasn't it?

MS. FISCH: Well, I think there were other international jewelry exhibitions, but they weren't perhaps as well advertised. I mean, there were always international exhibitions in Japan.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, but not that scale. Not that big show.

MS. FISCH: Not that breadth. Yeah.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I thought it was one of the biggest shows I'd ever seen. Beautifully installed. And I thought that it was great.

And the other one is "Poetry of the Physical."

MS. FISCH: "Poetry of the Physical." Which was sponsored by the American Craft Museum.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And that was a great show. Those two really I remember.

A third one is the show in Kyoto, international jewelry show in Kyoto ["The Americas, Australia, Europe, and Japan: Contemporary Jewelry." August 29-October 7, 1984. National Museum of Modern Art, Kyoto].

MS. FISCH: What year was that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Maybe in the '80s. I don't remember. We can look it up.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think it's mid-'80s. 1984, something like that.

MS. FISCH: And you saw the show in Kyoto.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I saw the show, and it was very well done.

MS. FISCH: That's the one that was at the Museum of Modern Art?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: In Kyoto, right. And also the reason I think it's important is because it's run by Japanese, to have such a show with a big vision. And they're not afraid to put all the new type of jewelry, like Germans did it with the TV, which I didn't understand what it is. But they're all included, and I think that was very well curated, the show overall.

MS. FISCH: Right. And so you thought that being in those shows was particularly important for you.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: Do you remember what you showed in those shows? "Poetry of the Physical" was your paper cord.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: My first paper cord piece. And the National Museum in Kyoto was the wall piece, the series using all different type of materials. Now in Vienna, I don't remember.

MS. FISCH: I don't remember what I showed there either. I'll have to look it up.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I totally don't remember.

MS. FISCH: But you came to that conference in Vienna. So you saw it?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I did. And I saw the show. And I was overwhelmed by other people's, so I don't remember my piece, because the pieces that really struck me was done by two people. One was Gijs -

MS. FISCH: Gijs Bakker.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: He had a huge piece of a photo of hibiscus with one dewdrop. That's the first piece I'd ever seen made out of a flower. That's what I had in my mind always, always in my back of my mind.

MS. FISCH: To do a flower?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Do the flower. That was a beautiful piece. It's just striking. And another one was-[pause]-I forgot his name.

MS. FISCH: Well, tell me what the piece was.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. He made frames without any pictures. Big house.

MS. FISCH: Robert Schmidt?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Very conceptual.

MS. FISCH: Oh, Otto Kunzli.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. Those two struck me. I just couldn't get over the idea and concept.

MS. FISCH: So in general, it was important to you to go around and see some exhibitions. I mean, did you try to go to exhibitions that you were in, so that you could see them?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I tried, as much as I can.

MS. FISCH: It wasn't always possible, I'm sure. Did you go to the opening of the "Ornamenta" exhibition in Pforzheim?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. I wish I could. I was planning to go. I don't know what happened; I didn't go. "Ornamenta," I forgot about that. That was an excellent show. I forgot about that. "Ornamenta I?"

MS. FISCH: Mm-hmm. Well, there never was a II, but -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. That's what they called it. And that was a great show also. I forgot about that, maybe because I didn't go. [Laughter.]

MS. FISCH: Probably so. So when you did go, did you make connections with international artists? I mean, did you meet artists from other countries in Vienna, for example?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think I did.

MS. FISCH: And was that important? Did you continue those connections?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: You didn't.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Hmm-mm. [Negative response.]

MS. FISCH: Well, some of those artists actually came to America somewhat later. And did they ever come to Ann Arbor? I mean, Kunzli taught in the U.S., and Gjis Bakker taught. But you didn't have future contact.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Onno. Onno Boekhoudt came, and taught at the U of M.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I didn't know that. For how long? For a semester?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: For one summer school. David Watkins came, I think twice.

MS. FISCH: So your contacts internationally did also benefit the students by bringing people.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. And who else we invited? [Pause.] I think one more came. I don't remember who. Isn't it awful?

MS. FISCH: Well, there were lots of international artists who traveled around the country, and sometimes they stopped just to say hello and sometimes you could organize something.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Carlier Makigawa.

MS. FISCH: Right, from Australia.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. She came. David Walker came but didn't give any workshop or lecture. But he came through.

MS. FISCH: And I remember that you went to Australia for a conference. What was that like?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: We were invited to give a workshop. It was in Perth. Onno was there? Yeah, Onno was there, and also the guy from London who teaches with David Watkins. Michael Rowe. He was invited. So I think four of us gave a workshop.

And that was interesting for me because I'd never been in Australia and I didn't know what was going on. At that time already someone is starting working with the computer in Australia. And I saw a work, but it wasn't really exciting for me. And at that time, just because a work is not striking as much as I expected, maybe, so I was not interested in computer then. But Australians are very kind, I thought.

MS. FISCH: And also very sharing. They're rather like Americans.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They share a lot, too. So I felt very comfortable.

MS. FISCH: So that was a good experience. And did you travel around after the conference?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I did. I went to Sydney, I went to Melbourne, I went to New Zealand, went back to Perth,

and on the way, I went to Singapore, and-Hong Kong and went to Japan.

MS. FISCH: And then to Japan. So you had quite a long journey. You were away a long time.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: There are now many museums around the world collecting contemporary crafts. Which ones do you think have made a special commitment to the metals field? Do you think there are any that are particularly interested in collecting contemporary metal?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think ACC does-I mean, American Craft Council does.

MS. FISCH: American Craft Museum.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Craft Museum.

MS. FISCH: Well, the museum at Pforzheim must own some of your-do they have your work?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. And what-Danner -

MS. FISCH: The Danner collection.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Danner collection. They do always collect some metals, right?

MS. FISCH: Right.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: How about the Western Australian.

MS. FISCH: Well, now that Robert Bell isn't there, I'm not sure that will continue, but while he was there, he did put a special interest. And actually, many of the museums in Australia collect, the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney and the Gallery of Western Australia. But now Robert Bell is at the National Museum in Canberra, and so I think he may be starting to think about adding to that. They have a fairly good collection, but he may be wanting to add to it. The collection there is primarily Australian.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Also, not international, but the Kogeikan in Tokyo. They have quite a collection of metal.

MS. FISCH: What is that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Kogeikan. K-o-g-e-i-k-a-n. "Kogei" means craft. It's a museum. It's a national museum. It's run by the government.

MS. FISCH: But also the Contemporary Art Museum in Kyoto has collected contemporary metalwork.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, they do.

MS. FISCH: And they made a rather serious commitment, I thought.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: That's more international and Kogeikan is more Japanese.

MS. FISCH: I see. And I'm sure you're represented in those collections. And how did that come about? Did they buy the work from you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, they did.

MS. FISCH: Directly or through a gallery, or both ways?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, directly. National Museum in Kyoto, they -

MS. FISCH: They bought directly.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The Western, they bought directly, Western Australia. And Danner -

MS. FISCH: Did they buy directly?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because there was a show and we got a prize, and they bought it. Purchase prize. Is that what you call it?

MS. FISCH: Yes.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, purchase. Lots of purchase prizes. And the first purchase prize that I had was way back, 1965; no, 1966. That was the first purchase prize, by Sacramento.

MS. FISCH: Sacramento, or Oakland?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Sacramento.

MS. FISCH: Sacramento is the Crocker Gallery.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Crocker Gallery. They bought. They gave me a purchase prize. Is that considered purchase? Through me?

MS. FISCH: Yes.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Not through gallery, most.

MS. FISCH: Well, that's good.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Nothing through gallery.

MS. FISCH: And have you actively tried to sell your work to museums?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: Have you thought about that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: You should.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I should? [Laughs.] Why? I thought that museums approach you.

MS. FISCH: Well, that's true, they do. But one could also think, as one gets older, where do I want this work that has never sold to go? And you have to-from what I understand, you have to approach museums and say, "Would you like to have this piece after I'm gone?" Because if you don't do that, after you're gone, somebody else may not think about it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, I see.

MS. FISCH: So you might consider that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, Smithsonian.

MS. FISCH: You're in the Smithsonian collection, aren't you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, they bought a piece. But that, I don't remember. That was through Helen? Helen Drutt? I don't remember.

MS. FISCH: No, the Renwick Alliance mostly purchases. But they sometimes do purchase through galleries.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Galleries. I don't remember.

MS. FISCH: That seemed to be a policy of theirs for a while. I don't think it is now. But your work's also been widely published in books and magazines. And other than your ego, do you think it has any other good effect? Does it mean anything to do that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To be able to make catalogues?

MS. FISCH: No, not catalogues. When somebody publishes a book, includes your work, is that important to you? Why?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Why? Because I think that's another form of sharing to people.

MS. FISCH: You wrote-didn't you do some kind of small article for Oppi Untracht's book?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. I shared -

MS. FISCH: You shared through his book.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. That's another form of sharing. I think there are three types of sharing: teaching, workshop, book. That's three good ways to share.

MS. FISCH: Have there been galleries in the U.S. or in Japan that have been good places to sell your work-to show your work and sell your work? Have there been special galleries that you think are important for you, or not?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Helen Drutt [Philadelphia, PA], Yaw Gallery [Birmingham, MI]. And because I was lazy, I didn't really approach different galleries, but I think there are a lot of them important. Susan Cummings.

MS. FISCH: Right, but I'm interested in the ones that handled your work.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. I think Susan Cummings are not interested in my work, period. One time, I don't know why, but she said, "I think your work is dishonest." That's the comment I got from her.

MS. FISCH: How weird.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I know. And I didn't understand. I tried to analyze what she meant, but I just couldn't figure it out.

MS. FISCH: Well, it's not urgent anymore. She's not in business anymore.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, she's not? Oh, she's out? Wow. I thought it's really a weird comment that I got. Dishonest. Dishonest in what way? I don't know. [Laughs.] It was really weird.

MS. FISCH: Have you worked with galleries in other parts of the world? I mean, you said something about Gallery RA. Did you work with Gallery RA?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Was in a small town in Holland.

MS. FISCH: So a different gallery.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Different gallery. Run by a woman. She's very aggressive. And she had a show called "Jewelry by Japanese." That was the time I exhibited, and that was the time I had paper jewelry, paper cord. And she liked my work a lot, of course, because she sold a lot. So I was sending my pieces to her. And then finally she started not to pay me. That was always a problem. So I stopped. I said, why should I send it to her? And also Electrum.

MS. FISCH: Electrum in London?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: London? I think that's an important gallery. And I did try a little while. And Japan, I don't think I have any.

MS. FISCH: How do you sell your work in Japan; through friends? Or you don't?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't anymore. I think that the only way I can do is to have my one-man show. And I think I will do it.

MS. FISCH: And in Japan, my understanding is, the system's a little different. You rent a gallery.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Rent a gallery. And you pay for it.

MS. FISCH: But then you have the chance to decide what you want in the gallery? I mean, do you have total control?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I do. I will. And in Japan, when you rent the gallery, you know that you will break even because our custom is if you invite your friends; they have a duty to buy. [Laughs.] They buy something.

MS. FISCH: So at least you get your expenses back.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. And gallery knows that too. Everybody knows.

MS. FISCH: And have you thought about which gallery, a gallery in Japan?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No. I don't know yet, because I'm quite away from the field. I don't know what exists.

MS. FISCH: So you have to go looking, do a little research.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I have to investigate. I have to research. But I think that Mr. Hiramatsu will be a great

help. If I ask him, he will give me a number of galleries to go to.

MS. FISCH: Well, somewhere you commented that you felt it necessary to exhibit your work in order to prove that you exist, but also to share it with the world. And I think you have talked about sharing it with the world, and I think that's important.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Right.

MS. FISCH: I know that you also have juried exhibitions. You have been the juror for exhibitions. And what do you think is your responsibility when you're a juror?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's a hard job.

MS. FISCH: I mean, do you work from a personal agenda, or do you try to work from the goals of the organization that you're jurying for?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Both. Yeah, because they have their certain goal of how many pieces has to be accepted, so I have to follow that rule, which is difficult sometimes because sometimes I see not enough. I don't want to reject [sic], but I have to let them in because of lack of number, which I don't think is right but I have to do. But at the same time, when I am choosing, I don't think about this is sellable or this is more creative. I don't do that.

MS. FISCH: You don't let that affect you.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't.

MS. FISCH: So, what are your personal values?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. I look at the piece that it's-I think it's more unique; I think that it doesn't have much of influence by some other jewelers in the United States or Europe, as much as I know. I don't know everything. It's hard. But as much as I know, I try to avoid.

MS. FISCH: You're looking for a fresh view.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Fresh ideas. Even though the work is not quite successful, I think it's really important for the people to know that it's something else that's there, rather than always looks like Arline Fisch, always looks like Helen Shirk, Alma Eikerman. I'm not interested in that. I always need to see something beyond. It's okay to see influence, but just the influence does not interest me at all.

MS. FISCH: Right. And do you like to jury exhibitions?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I do.

MS. FISCH: Have you done it a lot?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it depends on "a lot." Your standard and my standard might be different, but I did a lot. And I did a lot in high schools, too, which I think is very exciting, interesting, because so much of potential in their work.

MS. FISCH: Well, and my observation is that you did a lot in the Ann Arbor community with exhibitions, organizing them and jurying them.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, in high schools.

MS. FISCH: High schools, but also a lot with your own students. Didn't you do that? I mean, didn't you take a place in the Ann Arbor street fair, or something, for your students? I sort of remember that.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, yeah. But that's not jurying, though. That's something to let them know what's the-real life, in a way.

MS. FISCH: Well, it's not jurying, but it is curating, because you're deciding which pieces they can show.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. At the same time, the Ann Arbor Art Association are kind enough to let the students in, I thought. That's a great chance, too. But also, people came to the booth just because of the students' work. They were curious and they are very supportive, too, amazingly. The people tried to help students and encourage them.

MS. FISCH: I think you did a lot to make that possible in the Ann Arbor community.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: You've received many honors and awards over the years. What do you think are the most significant for you?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The awards?

MS. FISCH: Yeah. Honors, awards.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Danner Collection. That's a big honor.

MS. FISCH: It is. And you got some NEA grants? No?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, you're including grants, too?

MS. FISCH: Yes.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Of course NEA grants, and also the NEA-what do you call that? They don't call you juror.

MS. FISCH: Oh, you were on a panel, a selection panel.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Panel. I thought that was very-an honor to do. It was very interesting the year I did it, because they had trouble with other sections because-I think the painting section had problems because they wanted to get these very, very erotic paintings, but the government wouldn't let them. And some people left during the jurying. [Laughs.] So we came after. So we were talking about what we should do. And that kind of discussion was more, maybe, sometimes than-well, I shouldn't say more, but intensively we had discussed. So we didn't have much of a rest. We go in and jury, during the lunchtime we'd have to talk about that, and after the jury, we get together and we talked about it. It was very exhausting. Intensive. And then at the last, I think the newspaper people came and interviewed us about all these things. That was an exciting experience.

MS. FISCH: What do you think are your greatest accomplishments so far? What are you most proud of having done?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: My paper cord jewelry. That was the most powerful and most influential, I think, to Japan, to the United States.

MS. FISCH: Well, to the field in general, I think. It made a very big mark.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: A mark, yes. So that's why I think it's the best piece I've ever done.

MS. FISCH: And what do you hope to do in the future?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: With that? With it?

MS. FISCH: No; what do you hope to do now?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Now. I am really exhausted from making jewelry, period. I would like to go away from it. And I would like to try oil painting. I would like to try haiku, which I'm already heavily involved. Now I belong to professional group in haiku in Japan.

MS. FISCH: Talk a little bit about that. I don't think we did talk about your haiku group.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. I didn't have any background making haiku. I didn't have any literature education, period. But I've always liked haiku. As you know, I put haiku as a title for my Gentle Solitude series. But I felt that haiku itself is art form. It could be by itself. And then one day I met a guy who came from Japan staying just a short time. He was a businessman. And he wanted to form a group at Ann Arbor, just in Japanese. So I joined them. That's the beginning. And then I got serious about it, and then moved to Hawaii. I was looking for the group that does haiku in Japanese, and there are two groups. I called both groups, and one group-both groups said, "Okay, give me five haikus that you made recently." So I did. Same haikus I gave both of them. And one group said, "Oh, how wonderful your haiku is. You have such a talent." And the other group corrected right away. So I choose the one who corrected haikus right away. And that was one of the professional haiku groups in Japan, had a branch in Honolulu. And this particular group is contemporary haiku group. There are three kinds in Japan: very traditional, contemporary, and in-between. There are three. In actuality, the haiku that I made is more towards the traditional format, but my goal is to make more contemporary haiku, which means that they try to express inside of you, not just landscape or beauty of the nature. But I cannot reach to that level yet, but I'm working on it.

MS. FISCH: But you also have an e-mail haiku group that I think is interesting.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Group, yeah. I just don't think there is such thing exists anywhere, and I [am] really proud of it. Because I live in the United States and most of my friends who are Japanese live in Japan, I cannot have haiku meetings or group, so I formed with my university friends in Japan. I pushed them to learn how to do e-mail, to begin with. They didn't know how to do it. That was necessary to do before haiku group. To communicate. So now I run it exactly how Japanese people run haiku in Japan physically meeting together in a room, physically having the critics among the people. But ours is done by all on Internet. So I made a few rules. Each person has their own color to write, so immediately when you read, you can tell who's talking, just like a face, but it's in color. And we have a one-year rule, and we also keep the score of the points. And whoever gets the highest becomes the master.

MS. FISCH: Just for the year?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Just for the year. The second rule, whoever became the master cannot be again. So the second time, which will happen in this coming June, I don't know who's going to become the master, but also we made the prize like golf has, booby show [sic]. You know what it is?

MS. FISCH: No.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: When you play golf, they have who was first-ranked, highest player, but also they have a booby show-a booby prize, which is second from the bottom, the lowest from the second. That's what we made in haiku, too. So it's more exciting. It's kind of embarrassing for this booby, but trying to push them to be better, we gave a prize.

MS. FISCH: And how many people are part of this Internet?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Now it's 11.

MS. FISCH: Eleven. And you were telling me you write five per month?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, not to write five; to submit five for this group. And we have an office to send these five haiku, so that office will collect five from all 11, and he mixes it up without any names, and then he will send back to all the members, and each member has a duty to choose the best five within that. And then after we choose five of them, one has to be the top of five, and we have points for this. Top of five gets two points, and the rest is one point. And also we have a juror. And if the juror chooses as the best, it's three points. The second prize, two points. So, adding all those, that's how we get the points per person.

MS. FISCH: And did you make up this system? And it's working okay?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, it's working okay. First, someone said, "Are you trying to play school?" I said, "No. It's something that has a goal for it, something so we can try hard a little bit. All will be better."

MS. FISCH: But you're also publishing these. Aren't you making a book?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, the second book. The first one was made about two years ago. That was because-memory for someone leaving town. So I did that. The second one is-one of the members died from lung cancer at a young age, age of 55, so we are making memory of-a memorial thing. But of course, the second one is much better than the first, more professional look. And I'm waiting to publish my own, just my own haiku in hardcover. Maybe another five years.

MS. FISCH: So this has become your current art form.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And also I'm entering two national competitions to test myself on where I -

MS. FISCH: Where you are placed.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And I'm getting pretty good.

MS. FISCH: Now, is there anything else we haven't talked about that you want to mention? Either past or present or future? No? Well, then we're done.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Didn't you have a question asking me [about] the depression?

MS. FISCH: Well, I didn't bring that up because you didn't bring it up. Do you want to talk about that?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I thought you were going to ask.

MS. FISCH: I didn't.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Why?

MS. FISCH: Well, I didn't know if you wanted to talk about it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Of course.

MS. FISCH: Well, then do.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I mean, you have to question to begin with. The reason-why did you think that I don't want to talk about it?

MS. FISCH: Well, I guess because it's a very personal thing, and I think you have to decide if you want to talk about it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I saw it, you asking me [about] my depression.

MS. FISCH: Well, I asked you if you wanted to talk about it on here. Anyway, go ahead.

You suffered from depression.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Has that been a lifelong thing or was it a very specific time?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think that was a lifelong thing, but I didn't know this, that I was in depression. So when I wrote that paper, Gentle Solitude-also at the time I was making Gentle Solitude, I think I got in really, really deep depression. I think that's the main reason I was unhappy. But when I wrote that, I didn't know what really was wrong. Some people say it's very scary to write something as a letter because it remains forever, and that's, of course, true, but honestly, that's where I stayed. And I don't mind that everybody think that I was unhappy. And of course, at that time they didn't know why, so as me. And now I know why I wasn't happy, and I don't have anything to hide.

MS. FISCH: What do you do about the depression?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: What did I do about my depression?

MS. FISCH: How did you get past the depression?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: First of all, I want to tell you how I found out I was in depression. Because I didn't know I was in depression myself. One day I went to see doctor. That was for a general physical checkup. And he asked me how am I doing. And then I started to cry. Just tears came out. I couldn't stop. And he said, "Is something wrong with you?" I said, "I don't know, but I just cry a lot and I'm very unhappy." His next question was, "You are suicidal?" And I said, "Yes, I am," because I was hitting the point that I'm ready to crash into the tree when I'm driving, and I was so afraid to drive because that's the sensation I was getting on the way to school.

So I told him that, and he took me to psychiatric department right away. And the department said you should-I mean, "I would like to hospitalize you for a week." At that time, Christine DePaul was coming to give a workshop and I had to take care of her. I had to be host for her, and I just couldn't go. So I told doctor, "I just can't do it. I think it makes me more nuts to be in hospital worrying about her." So doctor said, "Okay, you can go," but he gave me medication.

And the doctor explained to me that there's nothing wrong about being depressed, nothing wrong about taking medication, just because-think about it. "Some people were born weak in [the] heart, and they cannot do anything about it. Maybe you were born weak in-mentally, so you need some help, like people who has a problem in [the] heart, they need help, maybe medication, maybe something. In your case at this moment, you need medication. At the same time, when people get old-there's a chemical produced to fight back with what you don't like, but when you get old, this chemical doesn't produce fast enough, so you cannot get out from this bad feeling; then you get depressed. So you're just ill, but you're ill in a different format; it's not ill to the heart." So I started to take medication. And that was the end of the March, and from that point to the school ends, I didn't know what I was doing. I went to school to teach. I was getting criticized, but I don't remember.

MS. FISCH: Because of the medication?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, because of the depression. But I had a duty to go to school. I had a duty to teach. So I was there and I was doing it, but I don't have any memory. I asked Susan later what I was doing, and I was acting

normal, strange enough.

MS. FISCH: So, outside, people didn't see any difference.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: They didn't know that I was having depression. And that was pretty bad, because- [END TAPE 4 SIDE A.]

I could go to school, but to begin with, I could not get up from the bed. I felt like some chain tied me down. So I just tried. I had to fight so much. Then second round came, I could not get up out from the room. So I had to fight to go to school. Then as soon as I go out, I feel as though everybody's going to attack me so I had to fight back. No one was actually coming to attack me, but there's just the feeling.

MS. FISCH: But you had panic.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: The panic, or I felt someone underneath the ground pulling me down and pull down under the earth. That's a terrible feeling. But I guess I went through. And in May, because the medication started to work, I think it started to help me. When you get the depression, you don't want to do anything. You don't want to do, period. Nothing. But one day I said, "Maybe I should put the nice big hat with a nice flower on it to make myself a little bit dressed up, and I should play with the flower to plant it." That's the beginning to perk up a little, but I wasn't completely well.

I went to SNAG conference in Skidmore. I was still depressed and I had a bad feeling, but I could go out and meet the people at that time. But I knew I had to present the paper, so I did. That was a paper about Gentle Solitude. But you can see I was in depression. That's why maybe I wrote -

MS. FISCH: Maybe why you wrote the paper.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And I said in the paper, I'm not happy. I was happily married. I have a career. I have reputation. Why I was so unhappy? But that's how I was at that stage.

Then slowly I became good, but I really didn't get well. I took a semester off and went back to Japan. And when you're depressed, you don't have any desire. You don't have any-I don't want to buy clothes, I don't want to eat, I don't want to go anyplace. You don't have any desire for sex, even. It's just dead, dead to everything.

And I was like that for a while, but then one day I went to Issey Miyake store, and I saw a coat. That was a great design. I said, "What am I doing? I'm just depressed and not doing anything, and here is a guy who does great design." That's the beginning. So he actually saved my depression, Issey Miyake, his design, because -

MS. FISCH: Did you buy the coat?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And that cost 10,000-no, a thousand dollars. At that time a thousand dollar coat was quite a expensive piece. I couldn't buy it, so I called Gene up. I said to Gene, "I saw a beautiful coat which costs $1,000; could I buy one?" [Laughs.] Of course, you know how Gene is. He said, "Sure! Buy one." I said, "Okay!" "If it helps you, your depression, it's worth it. Spend a thousand dollars." From there, I started going back to normal. Because when I was in depression, I looked around me and said, "What are all those things around me, so ridiculous?" I looked at my clothes, lined up the clothes. I said, "So stupid; I only need three clothes per season. Times four, that's only I need 12." It's true, though. If you have -

MS. FISCH: Well, that's true, right, but it's -

MS. PIJANOWSKI: You don't need any -

MS. FISCH: No, it's not the needing, it's the wanting.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Wanting. It's a desire. My ego.

MS. FISCH: Right. Oh, not necessarily your ego. It has to do with just-

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Enjoying?

MS. FISCH: -making you feel good.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah? But I didn't see any purpose of it when I was depressed.

MS. FISCH: So did you go into therapy, or only medication?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Not at that time. Medication. And then I perked up with Issey's coat again, and then my desire

is expecting more, more. And I went back well. That was 1988. Then in 1995, I went back to Japan. I was exhausted by helping my mother to move, selling the house, finding the condominium. At the same time, the sarin happened.

MS. FISCH: The sarin gas attack.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And then at the same time, big earthquake happened in Osaka. And that's two things really -

MS. FISCH: Hit you.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And that's why I think I got vertigo. I just couldn't get out. I don't know why; it's nothing to do with me, but it's just a terrible thing for the people that happened. I don't know why I got into vertigo. And then I got in depression again at the same time.

So when I came back to the United States, that time I was hospitalized. And then I was hospitalized in the psychiatric department, and that was very interesting experience to me. A couple things. They lock the door so that they cannot run away.

And at that time Mike Tom visited me at the hospital [and Sarah Bradock from England]. Gene asked me whether he can bring Mike Tom to the hospital or not. Maybe Gene thought maybe I would be embarrassed to be in hospital in psychiatry. But I don't hide anything to people, because that's how I am-that's how I am at that moment. Now that's how I am. So I am not afraid to go into telling business, because nothing [is] wrong. I said, "It's me. Everything's me. And I'm not doing any bad thing." So I said, "It's fine, just bring Mike." And I said, "I would like to say hello." And Mike came, and I think he felt bad, and I think he had alcoholic problem before, so he understood, probably. And he sent me white roses. Was beautiful.

But anyway, this psychiatric department, while I was in there, I worked with three people; one was the psychiatry doctor, one was the counselor, one was the intern. And what they did, we had to eat together any meals, three times. You cannot eat in bed. And also, you have to go to one meeting that's required, at 10:00. And the doctor will ask individually, in front of the people, what would you like to do today. You have to tell him one thing. But everybody that's depressed, nobody doesn't want to do anything. Nobody tells nothing. But you have to. So I say, "Well, I will try to ride on bicycle and exercise for one hour." And he says, "Fine." And maybe you say, "Okay, I will call my mother." Maybe you're having a problem with your mother. And then the next day he comes back at the same time and he will-she will ask the same question, did you do -

MS. FISCH: What you said.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Most say no, so as me. And I thought it's such a stupid meeting they are doing; why they do this; nobody not willing to do? And then one week later, I understood why they are doing it, because finally, I did one thing, one week later. I did one thing that I promised to do. And that's the beginning, and increase one. The next day she asked me, "Why don't you try to do two?" Then increase slowly what I would like to do. So there was a purpose doing that. Of course, some people stayed not doing anything.

At the same time, when I was hospitalized, I was only one in the huge room, but then it got more crowded. So a black woman came in, younger than me. She committed suicide. She came in, and as soon as she came in, she was on the phone talking or someone come and visiting her. And it was so noisy to me, so I didn't know what to do. And I could not go to sleep. At the same time, I still had a light vertigo, and I just couldn't sleep. If I go to sleep at night, maybe 30 minutes. And they didn't give me any sleeping pill. They said, no, you cannot have it.

So I started to walk out the room, and I started crying again and I didn't know what to do, because she's so busy, I cannot stay in the room, I cannot sleep, and I am just, of course, physically exhausted, too. Then a counselor saw me, luckily, crying. And she said to me, "Why are you crying?" And I said just because-blah, blah, blah, "I just am not happy to be in the room." And then she said, "Why don't we have a session, just the three of us." Then we had, and how she started was this way.

"You know, you are having a lot of visitors, and also you are making telephone calls, but Hiroko is not. Maybe Hiroko [is] jealous of you doing this. That's why she's unhappy. And at the same time, you might be jealous of her." This is just a story that she made up, I think, I noticed later. "Maybe you [are] jealous also of Hiroko, how quiet she is and how personal she is, and all those maybe comes from background of the culture. You have American culture, Hiroko has a Japanese culture, and those things"- [Audio break.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Hiroko Pijanowski at her home in Honolulu on May 15, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

This is disk number six.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: So the way this counselor said to me and to her again hit me somewhere in the heart, so I started to think about am I jealous of her because I don't have any visitors? And so I told her that I'd like to work with her as a counselor [to] me. So I worked with her for probably two and a half years. I saw her once a week every week.

And then during seeing her, I went to visit Gene's parents, who live in Michigan just an hour and a half away driving. And his younger brother lives very close to his father, so he joins every time we go. And on the way back home, Gene said, "Let's visit them next week again," and I got mad at Gene. I said, "Why you want to visit them. You saw them this week. Why you have to go back to see them again?" Then her words came back to my mind, and maybe I'm jealous of the relationship between Gene and his father and brother, which I don't have here.

So that was the point I started to think about myself. Maybe it's cause for me, everything that's making me unhappy, because she might be right that I'm jealous of Gene having his father and brother so close by but I don't, and Gene is so close to them that I'm not. So that's where I started to think about myself.

Then the counselor started digging [into] my character. Then I started being that I am not-unhappy because of two things: I was so pushed by school to be this way and that way, have to do this; I got so busy, I was so exhausted doing this; and I didn't have to, but I did it. Why I have to do this? Some other people are not doing it, but why I have to do this?

There are a couple reasons. One, because that's how I was educated from young time. Second, I always has to be top. I always has to be good at something. That's again going back to my childhood. Also, everything has to be under the control of the way I want to. And some things, of course, doesn't. So that's again, I realize, going back to my childhood, because I was so spoiled. Everything then went the way I liked to. I was always the top, because I was only one child.

MS. FISCH: Because you were the only child.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And so always I was top, right? So I realize that's going back to my childhood. Of course, this counselor knew that was the problem, because she said one day, "Being only one child is a problem already. So you have a problem to begin with." And she told me that "it's none of your fault. You shouldn't take it that it's your fault, because that's how you were raised. You cannot do anything about it. You cannot go back to be educated by parents. So you shouldn't blame yourself that you have to be top all the time. You don't have to be frustrated that everything has to go by your own way. It's not. The world doesn't work that way."

And I think that everybody knows that it's supposed to be that way but me; I didn't know until the age of 55. But I was willing to find out why. And as soon as I knew why, that this came from my childhood, the way I was raised, the way I was spoiled, that's all carried-not 100 percent-but mostly carried up to my age, then I really felt like a snake -

MS. FISCH: Shedding its skin?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: -shedding out. I really felt that way. And I became-my mind became very, very peaceful.

And after that, I still get frustrated. but it's in a different way, because that time I got so angry so easily, and everything, my anger was throwing to my mother, throwing to Gene, and those two people are taking it, so I have a great appreciation for both.

And I think that the reason I want to talk about this is I think most of the cases is coming from yourself.

MS. FISCH: I think that's true.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: It's you. You are creating all the problems. And I found out through my experience. And whether the people who got into depression will take my advice or not, but that's one way, again, I can share. That's why I'm not afraid to talk about my depression. It's nothing to be ashamed of, either.

MS. FISCH: Well, no, I don't think it's ever been something to be ashamed of. But are you past that now, or do you take medication for it?

MS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I used to take medication, but slowly I got off it. I don't take it anymore, because I think I should not rely on it. It's not truly recovery then. So I don't anymore.

And everybody goes through this, maybe.

MS. FISCH: Well, not everybody, but many people do, and many people don't figure out how to solve it, and so they don't get over it, or they don't get past it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: You know why? Because they don't want to dig [into] yourself; they don't want to see your ugly part; they don't want to see your weakness; so they try to avoid it. And that's a bad thing. Why they are afraid? They should not [be] afraid.

MS. FISCH: I think it's fairly normal human response to just not think about it.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: To not see the bad part? But then you won't resolve any problems.

MS. FISCH: Well, I suppose the people who do end up solving the problems are the people whose problems become overwhelming. And I think for you, the problems became so overwhelming that you couldn't get out of bed.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. I just couldn't take it anymore.

MS. FISCH: And those are the people who seek help.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: And the first-this counselor asked me what I want. That was the first thing she asked me. I told her, "I would like to have peace of mind; that's all I want at this point; I'm not happy; I don't have peace of mind and I don't know how to get this peace of mind. And hopefully, if I find out what's wrong with me, maybe I can get peace of mind."

And I do have peace of mind now. I do. And I'm very happy that I got it. So whoever gets into depression, and if I talk to them and somehow it helps, I'll be very happy to see. And the funny thing is that just because you are so subjective yourself, you don't see your problem. If you could see me, that the problem is just because I was only one child, I was so spoiled and I was raised that way, and that was cause for it; I didn't see it myself. A long period of time, age of 58, 55?

MS. FISCH: But I'm not sure other people see your problem, because you covered it up very well, as we all do.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I did.

MS. FISCH: We all try to present a face to the world that is not a problem face, so we cover up.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: What I mean is, when I tell you that I have problems, all those, you might see why I have these problems. You might see some section, maybe not the whole view. But I didn't see any of this view. And I'm glad that I went through with her. And at the end, she gave me-what do you call it-not prize, but she gave me a good word: "I'm proud of you that you went through, because it's a very difficult thing to do." Because you had to dig in; you had to see the bad part of myself. So I'm glad.

MS. FISCH: Well, I'm glad too.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I [am] still frustrated, but it's less. And you ask Gene; I changed a lot, and less arguing back to him, because it doesn't really matter. It doesn't really mean anything. So, yeah.

MS. FISCH: Well, I think it's very courageous that you were able to solve-to approach your problem. And it's been very lucky that you were able to solve it with a good counselor.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I think lucky that I met this woman. She was good, I thought. But at the same time, I needed desperately to find what's wrong with me. I just couldn't take it myself any longer. So the timing was good, and the man-or the person I met was good. So I think from both ends-it came together at the right moment. So I'm happy now.

MS. FISCH: Now you're happy.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Now I'm happy.

MS. FISCH: That's very good.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: I would like to keep it up. And I know now the beginning of depression. I know the signs. So I can watch.

MS. FISCH: I hope you never have to go through it again.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Keep your fingers crossed. You never know, though. It may happen again.

MS. FISCH: Right. Well, we'll hope not.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Hope not.

MS. FISCH: Good.

MS. PIJANOWSKI: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

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