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Oral history interview with Wendy
Maruyama, 2010 March 5-6

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a recorded interview with Wendy Maruyama on March 5 and 6, 2010. The interview took place in San Diego, California, and was conducted by Mija Riedel 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.

Wendy Maruyama has reviewed the transcript and has made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

MIJA RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art interviewing Wendy Maruyama at the artist's home in San Diego, California, on March 5, 2010. This is disc number one.

So it's a pleasure to be here and to get started.

WENDY MARUYAMA: Nice to meet you, too.

MS. RIEDEL: I thought we'll just begin at the beginning, because you were born — well, you grew up not too far from here, but you were born in Colorado.

MS. MARUYAMA: Born in Colorado, La Junta, Colorado, small farming town, and lived there until I was perhaps two or three.

MS. RIEDEL: What was the date you were born, Wendy?

MS. MARUYAMA: Nineteen fifty-two, July 11, 1952.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: We eventually moved to Chula Vista [CA].

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: For a very short time, and then —

MS. RIEDEL: Which is not far from here, right?

MS. MARUYAMA: Which is not far from here.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's right near the border, and then from there my parents moved us to then — wait a minute, Hemet, California, and San Jacinto, California. It's up — I'm not even sure where it is. But anyway, they farmed.

MS. RIEDEL: They were farmers?

MS. MARUYAMA: My sister was born there. My second sister was born in Hemet.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: I went to grade school there until about the age of eight.

MS. RIEDEL: Are you the oldest?

MS. MARUYAMA: I am the oldest, yes, of three sisters [Laurie Maruyama is the youngest].

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: My sister Karen [Maruyama] is now an actress and a comedian. She teaches improv.

MS. RIEDEL: Was she the one in the video [*Vanity*, 2006]?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, she is.

MS. RIEDEL: Was that your sister? Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: She was in that video. She was so patient in doing the video.

MS. RIEDEL: *Vanity*, the *Vanity* video.

MS. MARUYAMA: That's very funny.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, she was delightful, the eyeliner.

MS. MARUYAMA: She did a great job.

MS. RIEDEL: She did.

MS. MARUYAMA: She was evil, and she did the perfect stereotypical —

MS. RIEDEL: Female, yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: Female dragon lady, which is what I was trying to draw out in the video.

MS. RIEDEL: Literally draw, yes, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Pretty funny.

MS. RIEDEL: So you both grew up together in Hemet, just the two of you?

MS. MARUYAMA: In Hemet, the two of us at that time, yes. Then we eventually moved back to Chula Vista, because, as my mother told me, she found out that they had a very good speech and hearing program for elementary school kids, and perhaps my dad had better job prospects in Chula Vista. So we moved there, and I enrolled in what was called Mueller Elementary School. They had speech and hearing classes for people like myself. I guess at that point my mother made the decision that I would be mainstreamed into the regular population as opposed to going to a school for the deaf, which was probably another option.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: But this one was just readily available. Thinking back at it now, I'm sort of glad that I chose — she chose - that route, being integrated with the quote, unquote normal population.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, right. You were born deaf?

MS. MARUYAMA: I was born deaf, with a 60- or 70-percent loss in one ear and an 80-percent loss in another.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: So I wear hearing aids. I've been wearing hearing aids since I was about nine and anyway - so that was a good school, by the way. The kids there were very — they weren't — I guess they were accustomed to being around other children who had disabilities. We had some kids there that had cerebral palsy. That seems to be a common trait, where you have cerebral palsy, and you also have a hearing disability.

I also have cerebral palsy, and I think that has something to do with my motor control and my speech impediment. So the courses were to train us to use what little hearing we did have, and then we took lip reading courses. So I spent a lot of time in that class. We also were integrated in the regular classes, as well. That was kind of a nice balance.

MS. RIEDEL: Your parents, too, were farmers? Am I understanding?

MS. MARUYAMA: They were farmers, and I believe shortly after moving to Chula Vista, my mother began to work for San Diego County as a secretary.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. What was her name, Wendy?

MS. MARUYAMA: Reiko Maruyama.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: And John Maruyama was my father. I think he was a farmer for a while, but eventually he started working for the supermarkets as a produce manager. So he oversaw the produce department in the stores around San Diego County.

MS. RIEDEL: Do you remember a lot of racial diversity in Chula Vista, because that had a fairly large Latino population, as well, did it not?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, most of the students I went to school with — there was, maybe, in elementary school, mostly Caucasians, a few Asians, and some Latinos. But when I went to high school and junior high, most of my friends were Latino. There were some Asians, not very many.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: The only Asian people I knew were family, and my parents made us go to church for a while just because there was a Japanese Christian church, and she wanted us to get to know more Japanese people. So we went to this church.

MS. RIEDEL: Was it Presbyterian?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah. I just didn't enjoy it. To this day, I think religion, I don't — I'm not buying into that whole religious thing. Hopefully, Mom won't read this. But anyway, so that was the only primary reason why we had to go to that church, and eventually —

MS. RIEDEL: To meet more Asian people?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, to meet more Japanese Americans.

MS. RIEDEL: More Japanese Americans so you'd have some sense of ancestry and history.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: Did you have a large family, or was it primarily —

[Cross talk.]

MS. MARUYAMA: It was a fairly large family, if you included the cousins and aunts and uncles, which was good. I was happy that I had that kind of a connection with family.

But getting back to the whole Japanese thing, the other difficulty that I had with being around other Japanese Americans was my sense that they were judgmental about people with disabilities. I think I remember them saying the word *kawaiso-ni* a lot when they were around us.

MS. RIEDEL: *Corazón* like the Spanish word for "heart"?

MS. MARUYAMA: When they were talking about us — talking about me. And I later found out that *kawaiso-ni* means "poor thing." Oh, poor thing, she can't hear; oh, poor thing, what kind of future can she possibly have?

So then, of course, like with families, they aspire for their children to become very successful, white collar workers, and, of course, they expect students to be straight-A students, which I was not part of that. Academically, it was tough, because when you can't hear what's being taught, it's very difficult academically.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, absolutely.

MS. MARUYAMA: But I excelled at the art classes, because get some clay in front of me, and I could just take off.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: So perhaps that was my first connection with making objects, was through elementary school.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: It was the only thing that I felt like I was good at. Other students wanted to take my work home.

MS. RIEDEL: From the time you were in elementary school.

MS. MARUYAMA: Because it was made so well, yeah. I made the best dinosaurs out of clay, you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. So, early on, you had a real sense for three-dimensional objects. Did you draw and paint, as well?

MS. MARUYAMA: I did some drawing, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: But more three-dimensional.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think I was drawn by making things — three-dimensional objects.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: Then in junior high — no, wait a minute. The junior high had a horrible art program. We just made copies of somebody else's work. It wasn't very good at all.

In high school, though, I took a craft class, which was amazing that we even had a craft class in my high school. But we worked in clay and paper-mâché. I don't really remember much else, but I remember the class that I enjoyed, and I thought that when I went to college, I would take art classes.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting, and was this something your parents were supportive of? Was anybody else in the family interested in art?

MS. MARUYAMA: Not really, no. They were just happy that I was thriving at something.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think they did try to — I do remember my mother asking me to take typing classes because she thought, "If there's going to be any job for you, it might be as a secretary or something." Terrible typist, I was horrible. I mean, I can type but not 100 words a minute.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: So I took typing, and I worked over the summer — I was lucky that I had family members that worked for the county because that enabled me to have summer jobs working for the county.

MS. RIEDEL: Got you.

MS. MARUYAMA: So at one point I did work as a secretary for one office and then another time I worked in the planning department during census year. That would be 1970.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: So we were directed to work with maps. We had to map out new addresses of homes.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: So then I thought, "Oh, maybe this is a job that I could be good at." So I took drafting and cartography. But I was drawn, again, to the crafts, and I took a metalworking class at Southwestern Junior College [Southwestern Community College, Chula Vista, CA] right after high school.

MS. RIEDEL: Who taught that? Do you remember?

MS. MARUYAMA: Pardon me?

MS. RIEDEL: Who taught?

MS. MARUYAMA: I believe it was — what was his name? His last name was Richardson. But I know he's retired now — David Richardson, I think it was.

MS. RIEDEL: It sounds as if you were interested in a variety of media. You weren't focused on strictly ceramics or metal. You were interested in form primarily?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, just form and process and technique. I took batik, macramé. Remember when macramé used to be a class?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, yes, I do.

MS. MARUYAMA: Anyway, you're much younger than me. I don't think you would remember macramé.

MS. RIEDEL: Not that much. No, I remember macramé.

MS. MARUYAMA: But then, of course, that was my first experience with woodworking. I had a craft teacher that was teaching a woodworking assignment, and it was a woman. It was a woman.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. MARUYAMA: I remember thinking that was pretty cool.

MS. RIEDEL: This was in the junior college?

MS. MARUYAMA: In the junior college.

MS. RIEDEL: It was female? It was a woman teacher?

MS. MARUYAMA: It was a female craft teacher who also knew enough about woodworking to make furniture. It was great.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting. That's extraordinary.

MS. MARUYAMA: She was very good. Her name was Joanne Peterson. She retired in — I have to go —

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay.

[Audio break.]

MS. RIEDEL: So we were talking about Joanne Peterson. So you were experimenting with a variety of media. Was there anything in particular about wood or furniture at this point that was different to you?

MS. MARUYAMA: I think what drew me the most — what struck me the most about that experience was not only artmaking on a very general basis but dealing with the issues of function and craft. That really struck me as being a challenge and very interesting, because we use functional objects all the time.

But the idea that the functional object can take on a nontraditional appearance really struck me as being a challenge and a lot of fun. So I think I came away from that experience seeing craft as simply another art medium, and it would be painting, sculpture, and craft.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting, and function was just one aspect of this particular art form?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, and the variety of materials that one could work in at that point.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I was still trying to decide what I wanted to do. But furniture and jewelry really struck me as being one of the two choices that I would be making when I went on to San Diego State [University, San Diego, CA] as an undergrad to finish my undergrad program.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. When did you go to San Diego State?

MS. MARUYAMA: Let's see. I graduated from high school in '70, went to Southwestern College for two years. So I guess that would put me at San Diego State in '72.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, and was Arline Fisch there then?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes. Arline was there. She was my first jewelry teacher there. It was at that point that I realized — I mean, what is that word — Arline, I began to realize that she really had a career doing what she was doing.

She was, A, not only a professor but a professional metalsmith and a woman and traveling and giving lectures and having shows. At the same time, she cared very much about her students. She would arrange to have shows for the students and to basically share that experience with the students, having shows of your work. Wow, you know, when you're an impressionable 20- or 21-year-old, that's kind of a big deal to be able to show your work.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, and a very different possibility then: secretarial work or making maps. All of a sudden there was a new possibility.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, absolutely. It was like, forget this secretary business. I want to do this. So then, at the same time, I took a furniture class from Larry Hunter, who was the head of that program for so many years. He

was also very inspirational, pretty much encouraged sculptural furniture versus pragmatic furniture, joinery. It was very unusual for the time.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I don't know if you know about the California Design shows that took place in the '70s. That was pretty much the heyday of crafts in California, I think.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, and did you go to see those shows?

MS. MARUYAMA: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: I definitely did, and it was certainly a milestone for California crafts and also for us students to strive for that level of professionalism. It was really inspirational.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, and the variety of work that was exhibited there also would have been, I'm sure, mind-opening, to see the variety of craft, the variety of furniture, the variety of painting, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Jewelry, ceramics, textiles. It was really —

MS. RIEDEL: - diverse.

MS. MARUYAMA: I felt like it was the right time to be in the field.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, very exciting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, it was being at the right time.

MS. RIEDEL: How did you decide to focus more on furniture with Larry Hunter than metalsmith, or metalsmith while working with Arline?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, I think there were a lot of metalworkers, I remember. That was a very large program, and I certainly did enjoy making jewelry and learning metalsmithing technique. But woodworking was, to me, a little more of a challenge, because it was a little bit of a novelty, too, because it wasn't, at that time especially, not typically women's work, for one thing.

I was always under the impression that woodworking was men's work, and to suddenly be able to take a course like this was — this isn't so hard after all. What's the big deal? Then the fact that the scale was interesting; working with furniture, it's a much larger scale. Jewelry is very small and somewhat compressed, and I think I felt like there were more opportunities to expand within that field of furniture for me as opposed to metalworking. Both fields were very compelling. But the woodworking field seemed to me to have a great deal of potential in the long run.

MS. RIEDEL: How so?

MS. MARUYAMA: Hmm?

MS. RIEDEL: How so?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, because I felt like furniture then was a relatively new field. When you look at the grand scheme of things, ceramics had been part of this field for quite a while, and metalworking certainly had its reputation established in the '70s, as well. Woodworking, I think, aside from the hobbyists and the traditional woodworking, the contemporary woodworking and furniture field seemed very new at the time.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: I thought it was anyway.

MS. RIEDEL: Do you think that was partially because of what you were seeing on the West Coast, or were you excited by the possibility of bringing personal expression into this functional form with a long history, or both?

MS. MARUYAMA: I think — well, West Coast woodworking was very interesting. It was very unique, and certainly everything that was made at that time didn't really look like the end product. In other words, chairs didn't look like chairs, and the tables didn't look like tables. People were making speakers that were made of wood that weren't square. And there were clocks. Larry Hunter made a bunch of clocks that were made out of wood, but they didn't look like clocks.

It was an aesthetic challenge, I thought, that seemed to be very fertile, to me, at the time. So I think by the end of undergrad studies, I decided that furniture was going to be my major. Then what next? So I decided to go to grad school. But I didn't know where.

There weren't many grad programs. So Larry showed me some slides of some other professors' work. There was that professor in Northridge, California [California State University, Northridge]. They had a small furniture-making program. I can't remember the person's name right now. I can't remember. [Tom Tramel.]

MS. RIEDEL: I can't think who that would be either.

MS. MARUYAMA: I just didn't really — I felt like maybe being in Southern California wouldn't be such a good idea. So I decided to go —

MS. RIEDEL: You wanted something —

MS. MARUYAMA: Hmm?

MS. RIEDEL: You wanted to go someplace different? Is that it?

MS. MARUYAMA: I wanted to go someplace different, but I wanted to work with somebody whose work was somewhat familiar, meaning sculptural. He showed me some slides of Tage Frid's work, who taught at RIT [Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY] at the time, I think, or was it RISD [Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI]? I think it was RISD. Maybe he was at RISD by then, and his work was really traditional looking, and I just wasn't too impressed. No offense.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, not what you wanted to do.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, it was really traditional, and at the time I certainly admired people like Sam Maloof. But it wasn't my desire to do work like that either. To me, it was traditional.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting,

MS. MARUYAMA: So then I saw the slides of Alphonse Mattia, who was teaching at Virginia Commonwealth University [Richmond, VA], and I was like, "Wow, I want to study with this person. This person's work is really interesting."

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, wait a minute, back up a little bit. I really wanted to study with Wendell Castle, but Wendell had written me saying he wasn't going to be teaching.

MS. RIEDEL: He was leaving.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think it was Buffalo [NY]. I can't remember where he was.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, he was at RIT, wasn't he?

MS. MARUYAMA: It was before RIT.

MS. RIEDEL: Before RIT, okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think it was Buffalo [State University of New York, Buffalo].

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: I can't remember. He was not available, but he was the one that recommended Alphonse. So I found some images of his work, and I thought, "Okay, I want to study with Alphonse."

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: That would be in 1976. I applied and got in. I was a semester behind. I took one semester off after graduating and, I guess, trying to find out where to go. I was admitted to VCU in January. So I flew out to Richmond to start grad school with Alphonse Mattia.

What a change! I'd never left California before. So it was kind of scary. I didn't know anybody in Richmond, and it was a tough — socially, it was very tough because I was in the middle of a term. People had already established their friendships. They'd already been there for one semester, and that was tough. Then I found out that I knew nothing about woodworking.

MS. RIEDEL: In terms of technical skills?

MS. MARUYAMA: In terms of technical skills. I knew how to slap wood together and make these beautiful sculptural forms, but I didn't know how to fabricate or construct in a very traditional way. It was like trying to fit a round peg in a square hole. That would be the best analogy.

MS. RIEDEL: You wanted those skills, though, in order to actualize your own vision of work.

MS. MARUYAMA: Pardon me?

MS. RIEDEL: You wanted to learn some of those traditional skills, even though you didn't want to make that sort of work.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. I think I sort of had to.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, to develop.

MS. MARUYAMA: I didn't realize until later that there's a construction method that's very different. But with Alphonse's work, his work was very sculptural.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: He still used traditional methods of work, but you couldn't really — it wasn't really a real obvious detail.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, exactly, that you could see that work and not know that one needed those skills in order to make that sort of work.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. But then I realized that I didn't know how to do anything. I didn't know what a mortise-and-tenon was. I didn't know what a dovetail was. I didn't know how to use a hand plane. So it was really clear to me that maybe I wasn't ready for grad school at that level. At the same time, Alphonse was hired to teach at Boston University [Boston, MA].

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: In a relatively new program called Program in Artisanry [founded in 1975]. Can you hear?

MS. RIEDEL: No, it's fine.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, you're testing, okay.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm just listening in.

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay. First I was kind of pissed that he was leaving but at the same time he said, "Maybe you should go up there. They don't have an M.F.A. [Master of Fine Arts] program, but maybe you could go up there. Jere Osgood is also teaching there. I think it would be great if you could study in Boston." So I decided that there was no reason for me to stay in Richmond.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: So I decided to curtail the M.F.A. studies until for later, and I went to Boston, much to my parents' consternation, because it's costing them money. It was going to take longer.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: It was really hard for me to convince them that that was what I needed to do. It's just what I did. How I managed to win out, I don't know. I had a lot of help from some relatives that had some money. My dad's uncle was very generous. I mean, my dad's brother, my uncle, was very generous with helping me with the tuition.

MS. RIEDEL: Wonderful. Yeah, it must have been expensive.

MS. MARUYAMA: I really lucked out.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: It was the best thing I could have ever done in my entire life. Moving to Boston was — to this day, I've still maintained friendships with everybody that I studied with at BU.

MS. RIEDEL: And who was teaching there at the time? Who was teaching at Boston at the time? Alphonse was there at the time.

MS. MARUYAMA: Alphonse and Jere Osgood.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, right, exactly.

MS. MARUYAMA: And people I was in school with, to this day, are very impressive furniture makers themselves.

MS. RIEDEL: Who else was there?

MS. MARUYAMA: Michael Hurwitz from Philadelphia [PA].

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, right.

MS. MARUYAMA: [Thomas] Tom Hucker from [Hoboken] New Jersey, James Schriber from [New Milford] Connecticut, Timothy Philbrick from [Narragansett] Rhode Island. There were just all these people that really were serious about their field, and it was really important. I feel I was fortunate to have landed there when I did.

MS. RIEDEL: Were you going — I want to backtrack a little to when you were still in California. Had you been going to museums and regular art classes as a young child, or was that something —

[Cross talk.]

MS. MARUYAMA: No, I didn't even go to any museums until I was probably an undergrad student.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, so then you saw the California Design shows, and then you got to Boston.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, and then go to the MFA museum [Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA] there, and I remember, actually before I moved to Boston — I think it was when I — yeah, I think I was in Virginia. The King Tut show had just arrived at the Smithsonian ["The Treasures of Tutankhamun," 1976-77, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC]. Was it the Smithsonian?

MS. RIEDEL: It could be. It also could have maybe been the Met [Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY].

MS. MARUYAMA: I can't remember what museum it was.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, the Met?

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh wait, was it the Met?

MS. RIEDEL: It could have been the Met.

MS. MARUYAMA: No, I think it was in D.C.

MS. RIEDEL: Was it in D.C.? I don't remember.

MS. MARUYAMA: I ran into Arline Fisch.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. MARUYAMA: I was waiting in this hopelessly long line. She happened to walk by. She had just seen the show, and she said, "Oh, I've got an extra ticket. Take the ticket and go through the back door."

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, my gosh. How perfect.

MS. MARUYAMA: Isn't that funny? Very funny, right?

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, it's amazing.

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm pretty sure it was D.C.

MS. RIEDEL: It could be.

MS. MARUYAMA: I know it was the New York tour, but I'm pretty sure it would have been D.C.

MS. RIEDEL: Where you saw it, okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, where I saw it. Yeah, I'm pretty sure.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: In '76, probably '76, spring of '76. I'll have to look it up. So that was funny because Arline and I have crossed paths many times over the last 35 years.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, she travels, and you travel. So that makes sense.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, so it's interesting to suddenly — we crossed paths in D.C., New York, Boston, England.

MS. RIEDEL: England, too?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, it's pretty amazing.

MS. RIEDEL: That is amazing. So you were in Boston for two years?

MS. MARUYAMA: For two years.

MS. RIEDEL: And studying with Jere and with Alphonse.

MS. MARUYAMA: Studying with Jere and Alphonse

MS. RIEDEL: All this time really working primarily on technique, it sounds like?

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, I tried to focus entirely on all the things I didn't know, mortise-and-tenon and lamination. It was some jewelry, but I also learned quite a bit about carcass construction, which happens, to this day, to be my favorite furniture form.

MS. RIEDEL: What about it, in particular, makes it so appealing?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, the first thing, you have an interior space and an exterior space, and I think with a tremendous amount of potential in displaying an object that may appear to be something at one point, until you open the door, and then you reveal an unexpected either personality or function or color scheme. I just found that really challenging. I think it's a fascinating object.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, right.

MS. MARUYAMA: There's all kinds of drawers and doors and different ways that you can hang a door, sliding doors. It's very interactive.

MS. RIEDEL: The potential for surprise and for juxtapositions is especially powerful.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think so.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: When you go to some historical museums, some of the more powerful, or almost intimidating, historical pieces of furniture are the large highboys from the 18th century.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, right, beautiful and imposing and elegant.

MS. MARUYAMA: Very imposing, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: They command a presence, which I enjoy. Then at the same time, a carcass form can be small, too. I'd like to show you some samples of some tiny carcasses that other friends have made for me.

MS. RIEDEL: I'd love to see.

MS. MARUYAMA: You can see how they range to scale from very, very tiny to large.

MS. RIEDEL: So, especially versatile as well, the form.

MS. MARUYAMA: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RIEDEL: That was primarily from Jere, okay. Then how did you transition from Boston up to Rochester?

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, by the end of two years, I decided that I had acquired enough technical skills to go to grad school, go back to grad school. At one point, I went to Penland School of Crafts [Penland, NC] and took a

workshop with [William] Bill Keyser, okay?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's funny how all these names are crossing over.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Bill told me that someday, if I was ready to go to graduate school, I should consider RIT, because they have a special program for the deaf, as well. It's called the National Technical Institute for the Deaf, NTID. It's right next to RIT. They have a collaborative relationship together. I think they're the same school but different campuses.

MS. RIEDEL: Wonderful, I didn't know that.

MS. MARUYAMA: The benefit is that if you were deaf enough, you could have a break in tuition. So for once, I wanted to take advantage of my disability, which Bill certainly was a knowledgeable figure in the furniture field, too.

MS. RIEDEL: Was that the first time you'd been to Penland?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, that was in 1976, the summer between going to Penland — I mean, going from Richmond to Boston.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting. You were really covering all of the main venues.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, it's kind of funny.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: Very funny.

MS. RIEDEL: You were pretty much anywhere that anything was going on.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's funny. I never would have thought — when I was kid, I was so shy. I couldn't do anything by myself. I had to be with Mom all the time, and my sister used to go to the store and buy milk. I couldn't do that by myself. I couldn't do anything by myself.

I was really a helpless person, it seemed. So it's ironic that all of a sudden this shy, helpless girl from Chula Vista has had this new life change. I don't know. I think back on all of that, and I can't quite figure out how that happened. I don't know how. I can't really put my finger on what it is that suddenly freed me from that.

MS. RIEDEL: Do you think it was the desire to master woodworking, or furniture, that propelled you to take those risks?

MS. MARUYAMA: I don't know. I guess there — well, I guess there definitely was pressure from my parents, you know? "When are you going to get out of school? What are you going to do when you get out of school?" You know, so, I guess, I felt like I had to make it work. But I'm not sure that was really what made me so — I'll have to think about that.

MS. RIEDEL: There was also a sense of —

MS. MARUYAMA: When I think of desire and ambition —

MS. RIEDEL: - curiosity?

MS. MARUYAMA: I don't think of — this might seem weird, but I don't think of myself — at that time, I didn't think of myself being an ambitious person.

MS. RIEDEL: What about curious?

MS. MARUYAMA: Maybe I was ambitious. I don't know.

MS. RIEDEL: Or curious perhaps, for your curiosity.

MS. MARUYAMA: I just looked for things to do, I suppose, and when these things presented themselves to me, I went ahead and did it without even thinking, really, what the outcome was going to be.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, why don't you go to Penland? Okay. Why don't you go to Boston? Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah. With the studio furniture movement, there was a real sense that you could make a living doing that, yes, that in between furniture and perhaps teaching — had you always thought of teaching?

MS. MARUYAMA: I never knew what kind of teacher I could have been because I thought I was too shy to teach. I knew so many other people who were such good teachers. I didn't really see myself in that role of being a teacher. But by the time you finish grad school, that seemed to be everybody's goal, was to teach. When I think about it, how else are they going to find a place to work?

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: So I did apply for teaching jobs. It turns out that the one job I ended up getting wasn't even one that I applied for.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting. That was in Tennessee [Appalachian Center for Craft, Smithville, TN]?

MS. MARUYAMA: It was Tennessee. Tom Hucker had just been hired to be the head of the furniture program there, and they needed a studio assistant to assist him at Tennessee.

MS. RIEDEL: This was the brand new school for crafts.

MS. MARUYAMA: It was.

MS. RIEDEL: Susan Peterson was behind it, or setting up, and [Robert] Bob Brady was there, right?

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, Bob Brady, David Huchhausen, [Phillip] Phil Fike, the late Phil Fike. Susan Peterson was the one that kind of put it all together. I really didn't even know what it was. There was a lot, and I respected and admired Tom Hucker's work tremendously. So I jumped at the opportunity to work with him. He ended up leaving after two years, and I stayed three years longer. I was there — it turned out to be a great experience really, Tennessee, of all places, Tennessee with Tom.

MS. RIEDEL: It seems that fairly early on in your work, after mastering some basic techniques and then mastering some beautiful forms — lamps and chests and that sort of thing — very early on, you got very interested in color, and a sense of humor came into the work. I'm thinking in particular of the *Mickey Mackintosh Chair* [1981], and I'm thinking of the *Salami Tray* [1980], those trays early on in the '80s. How did that come about?

MS. MARUYAMA: That was in reaction to what I perceived to be the most conservative, crappy art ever, and that was furniture and woodworking. We had *Fine Woodworking* magazine, but it was the most conservative magazine on the planet and remains to be, and seemed like everything was made out of natural wood.

Everybody else did other things, like ceramics and metals and textiles and glass. They were working with some beautiful colors, and it seems like color was not an option in furniture design. I really wanted to use color in my work. At that time, I think Alphonse was also painting his work. That was what sort of inspired me to go in that direction.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: The Italian Memphis Group [founded in 1981] was a big catalyst. So it could be okay to do this kind of work, even though I feel like I was there already. That was sort of like justification.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: This is the new direction.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think in the early '80s there was what was called the Pattern and Decoration phase. It's funny. You know all about that stuff.

MS. RIEDEL: A little bit.

MS. MARUYAMA: So that fit into my aesthetic also.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: So I just felt very lucky to be — again, I felt lucky to be where I was at that time, and being in Tennessee in the middle of nowhere, I had nothing to do but work. So that was one of the benefits of being in Tennessee, not being under some watchful eye of a woodworker saying, "That's not okay."

MS. RIEDEL: So now you had all the skills that you developed. You'd been exposed to a broad array of artists working in a variety of styles, and now you had time to just work and experiment.

MS. MARUYAMA: That's correct. Then also I had the opportunity to meet so many artists who were coming through to give workshops, and it was really a high caliber place to be at the time. Great people I worked with, like Robert Brady. I loved his work, and to this day I still love his work. I now have a bunch of his pieces in the house.

MS. RIEDEL: I thought I saw, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: So he was so good at talking about art in general. He's so interesting to listen to.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, he is.

MS. MARUYAMA: I feel fortunate to be able to meet so many interesting people in Tennessee, of all places, and then being able to work in the different studios allowed me to experiment with glass, working with some various glass artists and collaborating with them.

MS. RIEDEL: Do you remember who in particular? Do you remember which glass artists?

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yes, Hank Murta Adams was probably the first person I collaborated with, and then Curtiss Brock, who's still in Tennessee, we collaborated on a few things. Then later I collaborated with — I collaborated with Bob Brady at some point. We did furniture pieces.

MS. RIEDEL: How long were you in Tennessee?

MS. MARUYAMA: I was there from '80 to '85.

MS. RIEDEL: It seems like there was also a real community of artists there. Anyone I speak with about that school and that time talked about the back and forth between all the artists and the teachers. There was a teacher and a teaching assistant for each one, correct?

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah. It seems like an extremely creative, generous community spirit.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, it is, particularly — particularly I think craft in general is a very generous and communal group of people, more so probably than the painters and the sculptors, I think. Particularly woodworkers, they're extremely willing to give a hand. At times, of course — there's been a couple of times where some woodworkers have lost their homes, their studios, to a fire, and everybody would pitch in and try to raise money so that they could recoup.

MS. RIEDEL: That's extraordinary.

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm sure a lot of craft people do that, too.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, there's that Craft Emergency Relief Fund I know about.

MS. MARUYAMA: [Inaudible.]

MS. RIEDEL: The Craft Emergency Relief Fund service?

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yes, and then there's that.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, but that does seem to be a thread that runs through in wood and clay.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's also a comfortably small world, too, you know? I mean, as you know, you know a lot of these people whose names I've mentioned. It brings a level of familiarity and comfort, in a way, when everybody knows everybody.

MS. RIEDEL: At this time, you were also doing a number of residencies while you were in Tennessee, right?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, I think the first residency after I moved to California, that was the beginning of my many residencies.

MS. RIEDEL: You were at Artpark in [Lewiston] New York. Is that correct?

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yeah, I forgot about that. I was at Artpark, but that was only for a week maybe.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, it was brief. Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, it was short-term.

MS. RIEDEL: And then in Indiana, sometime in the early '80s?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, Indiana [State] University [Evansville, IN], that was for about a week also.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, so brief.

MS. MARUYAMA: A few one-week residencies. There was one at Carnegie-Mellon [University, Pittsburgh, PA]. I forgot about that. Where did you dig up that? Wow. I forgot all about that. But, yes, there were the national residencies, but then the international ones began after I started teaching at California College of Arts and Crafts [Oakland, CA].

MS. RIEDEL: It's just, your career is interesting to me because you have done all these different residencies. You've been at all the different craft schools — Penland and Haystack [Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME] and Arrowmont [School of Arts and Crafts, Gatlinburg, TN] — and affiliated with RIT and Boston and San Diego [State University, San Diego, CA].

MS. MARUYAMA: I was a professional — I'm still a professional student.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I've never left school really.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, well, in that best possible sense of endless curiosity, it seems. And you are constantly — your work seems to work that way, as well, because it seems to happen in series, that something is explored, an idea is explored for a period of time, and then you're on to the next one.

MS. MARUYAMA: The series is important to me because it helps me to focus on a line of work without wandering too far. I think if I didn't have that, I'd be all over the place. But the series, it's always a result of something happening with some experience that I have had that allows me to create a theme from these series.

This kind of goes into my teaching, too; I don't expect my students to do a series in one semester, but I feel like if I give them an assignment, then they, as a group, are working on the same series, and then when we're critiquing the work, there's a real continuity between each piece. Even though it's done by different people, they address the same theme, for example.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: So I think it's a great way to kind of channel the direction that someone can go into creatively when they set out to make their first piece for the semester.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely, and then to see the variety of other possibilities that exist within that focus.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: I'll pause us here for a moment to change the disc.

[END CD 1.]

This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art with Wendy Maruyama at the artist's home in San Diego, California on March 5, 2010, disc number two.

As I was saying —

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay, so you were saying —

MS. RIEDEL: You had finished teaching. You taught for five years in Tennessee, and what moved you back to California? Why did you decide to come and teach at CCAC [California School of Arts and Crafts]?

MS. MARUYAMA: Gail Fredell had been my classmate at RIT.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, we were the first women grad students, believe it or not, in the RIT woodworking program.

MS. RIEDEL: Really? Wow.

MS. MARUYAMA: It sounds ridiculous, but it's true.

MS. RIEDEL: This was mid-1970s?

MS. MARUYAMA: Nineteen seventy-eight.

MS. RIEDEL: Extraordinary.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, so they made a big stink about that. No, actually, I remember going to BU, and that was the first year that they had women students at BU's woodworking program.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. MARUYAMA: I remember they were making a big stink about it then.

MS. RIEDEL: Were you the only student at BU?

MS. MARUYAMA: No, there were several of us women in the program at that time. But I remember what a big stink it was, you know, like, "Oh, you guys are the first girls. We can't wait to see the girls in the program." Anyway.

MS. RIEDEL: Was that difficult for you?

MS. MARUYAMA: It was amusing maybe. Some people thought — some of the women didn't care for the jokes. It depended on what kind of attitude you had. If you could just play along, you'd — [inaudible] — in woodworking was pretty — it can be very frustrating. In an academic environment, it was not quite so bad. But in the public sector, like at a lumberyard or a hardware store, it was a pain in the ass to be a woman sometimes.

But as time went on, obviously, you develop friendships with the vendors that you work with, and that part of it was necessary to get the job done. You know, as I get older, I don't really give a damn if somebody wants to help me carry my wood to the car. I'm happy to have them do it.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, absolutely.

MS. MARUYAMA: I used to be the one that insisted on carrying my own wood to my car, but nowadays, yeah, sure.

MS. RIEDEL: Were you very aware of the women's movement? Was that something significant to you at the time?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, I was aware. I wouldn't say that I was a full-fledged feminist.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: I believe in equal rights and women's rights. Sexism is an ugly thing. I know to this day it probably still goes on in different businesses, private businesses. I feel maybe I could be optimistic, but I feel like, the academic environment, it's somewhat sheltered from all of that.

For one thing, there's mostly women enrolled in the art schools now, and most of the students in the woodworking classes are women. So sometimes when there's more men in the class, sometimes it's a surprise, like, "Oh, look at all these men; what are they doing there?"

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: So it's really changed.

MS. MARUYAMA: So it has changed. But it's funny now. I haven't talked about the sexism problem in a long time because it hasn't really been a problem. I think, if anything, when I was in Tennessee, sexism, yes, was a problem, but racism was probably more of a problem. I was probably the only Asian person within a 100-mile

radius in Smithville, Tennessee. The school itself wasn't so bad that way, but the village and the town that you had to go into to buy groceries was all white.

That became apparent to me even in Virginia. I can't tell you how many times people have asked me when I came to this country or said, "Oh, your English is so good." In California, it probably wasn't as big of a deal because there were more of us than back east, and then you have to remember Richmond is the South. But even in Boston I would get those kinds of inquiries.

MS. RIEDEL: Really? In Boston?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, in Boston, surprisingly, huh? None of them knew about the internment. That's getting into another topic. But that's really the vast difference between the east and the West Coast, maybe, at least back then.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: So, yeah, I was more aware of being a minority than being a woman in the woodworking field.

MS. RIEDEL: It's interesting because when I think about your work, and the evolution of your work, I think about how being a woman, or objects that women use, in particular vanities or the incredible elaborate combs of the geisha, that those are topics or themes that you have really examined in your work, both being a woman and being of Japanese-American ancestry, looking at the internment.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. It's funny that it happened later in life, though, because I think all these experiences have finally started to kind of rise up to the surface. That's why the video that you mentioned earlier of my sister was kind of based on an experience in Tennessee where we had this very redneck purchase agent for the school who was in charge of ordering supplies for the Appalachian Center for Craft.

My friend Silas Kopf was teaching a workshop at the time, and he said, "I want to talk about ordering something, and if you don't mind, I'll go ahead and talk to the guy about what I need. You don't need to do this. I'm happy to do it," and I said, "Okay, great, so you need to talk to this guy, Bill Rummel." He said, "Okay."

He goes up there. He comes back, and he said, "I can't believe what he just said." And I said, "What did he say?" Silas said, "Bill, I need to order some saw blades for this workshop, or I needed to order some machine part, and Wendy said that I can go ahead and ask you." And Bill said something like, "Did you ask her, and then she just gave you one of her Oriental inscrutable looks?"

MS. RIEDEL: That's astounding. That's astounding.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, an "Oriental inscrutable" — no, no an "inscrutable Oriental" look. "Did she give you one of her inscrutable Oriental looks?" So, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Extraordinary, extraordinary.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, and I was young at the time, and I think if that had happened now, I would have reported him.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure.

MS. MARUYAMA: You know, it's funny, now that you're asking me about the sexism, because when I came to San Diego State, we had a very sexist art technician that was just the bane of my life the whole time he was there, just very disrespectful, very chauvinistic, and just really an awful person. By the time I found there were ways to remove him, that there were ways to take steps to remove him, it was too late, because I had not recorded everything that he had said to me and dated them and kept a file.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I didn't know that you can do that. I mean, he would say stuff about my disability, my gender, my ethnicity. It was awful, and I don't know what he was thinking that he could say something to one of my colleagues and not have it come back to me, you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: So unfortunately, that's been fairly recent history. I guess it is — [inaudible]. Like I said, it's a problem, probably, in the private sector.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm sure. It's interesting, though, because I think oftentimes - or I see that things that happened

years ago take a long time, but then they do often surface in the artwork. And certainly gender issues and ethnicity issues have become an increasingly significant part of your work.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, and I do know that some excellent African-American artists have been doing this for years, and I've admired them for doing that. I've often wondered how I could interpret an ethnic or a historical experience through my work, and I'm only now dabbling in that. It's difficult. It takes time.

I mean, right now I feel like a year ago the work that I started doing was certainly a beginning, but they're not fully resolved. If anything, it's almost an elementary attempt at this point, because right now I'm using the obvious visual clues, like photographs of the barracks and the tags, the ID tags, and the barbed wire.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, tar paper.

MS. MARUYAMA: But somehow trying to find a language that would imply those things without being literal. It's been a huge challenge for me, and that's something I'm working on right now.

MS. RIEDEL: The new work that I'm thinking of [is] E.O. [Executive Order] 9066 and the Tag Project. [These projects are made up of several individual artworks that address issues related to the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.] They feel like such a fusion of personal and political work. The materials, the forms, in between the personal and the political, or the fusion of the personal and the political, seems to have created a very poetic new kind of work, more so than — it feels especially poetic to me. Does it feel that way to you, too?

MS. MARUYAMA: I do. It would certainly be my hope that people would get that feeling from the work. I think it's been more rewarding for me, reconnecting with the Japanese-American community that I rejected years ago because of my perceived — my perception of their judgment on me at that time maybe. It's kind of hard to put my finger on that.

MS. RIEDEL: With time and distance, you've been able to reexamine it, and something — I don't know if it —

MS. MARUYAMA: Certainly coming back to — [inaudible] — and an Asian American can be an artist and still be successful. We don't all have to be lawyers and doctors and landscape architects, you know? There is some satisfaction in being able to bring that into play.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: But, no, that's being — that's a small part of it that I wouldn't really want to emphasize. But if anything, it's the bringing together of the community. There are people who were interned or evacuated from California that are still alive, and they're participating in this project and telling me their stories.

At the same time, young people are coming to this thing and learning from the stories that are being told and getting kind of a — as they write the tag, I mean, hopefully, they're thinking about what that person who originally wore the tag must have been thinking in 1942, when they were being shipped off to God knows where. So that experience has been, for them, very powerful to contribute to this project.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, and this project, the Tag Project, we should say for people who are listening or reading, is also very different for you than anything you've done before.

MS. MARUYAMA: It is very different. Why I even thought to do it is beyond me, but I think the photographs — I mean, my only — let's see. My only connection with what happened there was through my family's experience, okay? But there's no photographs. They never told stories about that. They never talked about it. So I have no — nothing to grab onto.

MS. RIEDEL: It was your mother's family?

MS. MARUYAMA: My mother's family, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: That was in one of the camps.

MS. MARUYAMA: They didn't go to camps. Everybody was told to evacuate, and so if you got the hell out of this exclusion zone by a certain time, you didn't have to go to camp. Most people didn't have anywhere to go. So they went to camp, and my parents — my mother's family - didn't have anywhere to go either, but they went anyway, which was probably a mistake, thinking back on it, because they were pulled away from that community. So they were left to fend for themselves out in Utah and —

MS. RIEDEL: Is that where they went, to Utah?

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm sure that they experienced some prejudicial difficulties while they were trying to find a place to go.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm sure.

MS. MARUYAMA: What was I talking about that before that?

MS. RIEDEL: The Tag Project and community.

MS. MARUYAMA: The what?

MS. RIEDEL: The Tag Project.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yeah, I'm trying to think. So anyway, how I came up with the Tag Project, the most compelling — so I did a bit of research, and Dorothea Lange, she photographed for the most. To me, the best way to imagine what was going on during that time and what really stuck in my mind were the photographs of families wearing their tags, getting ready to be shipped off to God knows where.

I just remember those tags were so significant, just paper but like a very heavy object, you know, especially when you think about 120,000 of them. So I decided that that would be kind of a — why I thought of this, I don't know. Part of me wishes I never did it. It's a lot of tags, you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's like my whole house has been taken over by tags. But anyway, so I decided to try it out. What I did is I personally wrote out the tags for only the people from San Diego and Chula Vista who were sent to Poston [War Relocation Center, Poston, AZ]. Most of them were sent to Poston. That was 1,100 tags. I thought, Oh. It took a little while, but it was a real beautiful — it just looked like — it was pretty.

MS. RIEDEL: Was this the piece called *Cascade* [2009]?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, that was *Cascade*, and it just reminded me of the Hiroshima folded cranes at the [Hiroshima] Peace [Memorial] Park [Hiroshima, Japan]. Have you ever been to Japan?

MS. RIEDEL: No, not yet.

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, you should go some time.

MS. RIEDEL: I want to.

MS. MARUYAMA: The Peace Park had thousands — I would say bazillions - of these folded cranes, and this all made out of paper. But it's so heavy, just emotionally so heavy, and I thought that the tags might — hoped that the tags would have that same impact, you know? Also the fact that so many people, to this day, still don't know about the internment, that's an outrage. It's an outrage, and even my husband's colleagues didn't even know about it.

So then I felt — then the people who were evacuated or interned, most of them are dead. The *Issei* [Japanese immigrants to the U.S.] are gone. The grandparents are gone, and the second generation people are slowly dying out. The remaining people who went to camp are all in their 60s, 70s, and 80s. I just felt I needed to bring awareness to this experience through those tags. So I guess that's my compensation for abandoning my heritage when I was 15 years old by refusing to go to church. I don't know. I'm just saying that, but you know.

MS. RIEDEL: I know. Now, the Tag Project, you're about a year into it? Is that right?

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm about eight [months] — it will be a year in December.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: That took me — yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: What is the ultimate goal, Wendy? What are you planning to do with the tags?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, there were 10 camps total.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Each camp had anywhere between 17,000 to 5,000 inhabitants. So my goal is to complete the tags for every person who was interned, by camp, for each. I'm hoping to have 10 of these forms or structures —

[Cross talk.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, these cascading forms, okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: — shown all at once in one venue, so that people can see how many people, in the form of those tags, there were that were interned. So, so far, I mean, I've finished completely the Poston tags, which was in Arizona.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Four of the other camps are finished, as far as the names and the numbers go. But I still have to age them. Then I have about three more camps - wait a minute, five more camps - to finish. I keep saying it's going to be done in two years, but it's already been a year, and I don't see this being finished in one year. I think, realistically, four years would be more likely, unless I figure out a way to get some funding to hire somebody to kind of help.

It's kind of hard to do this and teach and do my own work and have a domestic life, feed the dogs. It's been a challenge. But the community has been fantastic. My mother and her friends and the church, the Buddhist temple, the local high schools have all been fantastic. Then we're having another tag project at the Smithsonian [American Art Museum, Renwick Gallery, Washington, DC], which I think would be really interesting.

MS. RIEDEL: Another exhibition at the Smithsonian?

MS. MARUYAMA: No, a tag project.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, you're actually doing an installation.

MS. MARUYAMA: Where everybody's going to help with the tags and stamp numbers.

MS. RIEDEL: When is that?

MS. MARUYAMA: It's going to be in April. [The event took place on April 11, 2010.]

MS. RIEDEL: Okay. Are you going east for that?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, I am. There's a beautiful show that's going to be exhibited at the Renwick called "The Art of Gaman [: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese Internment Camps, 1942-1946]". Have you ever seen that book [*The Art of Gaman*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2005]? It's a book of objects made by people who were interned in the camp — furniture, jewelry, textiles, wood, all these — they didn't have anything to do, for God's sake, so some of them made artwork. This woman, Delphine Hirasuna, wrote a book. I will show you the book today.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: All of this work will be exhibited. She's going to be giving a talk, but then the Renwick has invited me and Mira Nakashima to come and give a talk, sort of as a companion event to this show, which is really nice.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, absolutely.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's a great opportunity to be a part of this exhibition that's so relevant to what I'm doing now.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, absolutely, and these are objects that were actually made in the camps?

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting. Kay Sekimachi, who we were talking about over lunch -

MS. MARUYAMA: What did she make?

MS. RIEDEL: She had drawings, little drawings. She was a child at the time. Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yeah, yes. So I wonder if anything of hers will be in the book. I wonder.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, that's interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah. It's a beautiful book, too, and really well-made objects.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm going to move us back to some of the earlier work, because, I think, so much of the earlier work

leads up to the Tag Project. I'm thinking in particular of the series from the late '90s and moving forward, the Kyoto Series.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, right.

MS. RIEDEL: Was that inspired by your first trip to Japan?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, it was.

MS. RIEDEL: That work feels very much more like furniture as a group, benches and desks, wall pieces, but very much about color, too. You were studying lacquer work at the time.

MS. MARUYAMA: Definitely, yes. I think the main impact that that first trip had in my work was sort of a change in the shapes and the forms. Well, I don't know. I think those forms were always there, but the color palette changed almost 180 degrees.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Just the brightness scale went from one end of the spectrum to another. That was a good experience, because it made me more aware of the possibilities of color, that they didn't have to be this certain hue or value. It made me appreciate the more muddy colors, and I don't see them as being muddy anymore. They're very muted, but they're just as powerful, I think, as a bright color.

MS. RIEDEL: So color, you were experiencing in California a sense of color, and then East Coast, and then Japan must have been completely different from anything.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think our environments have a lot to do with the perception of color and form.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure, yes. One of the first things I noticed when I walked in the house are these deep red walls in the dining room

MS. MARUYAMA: Bright walls, blood red walls.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, they are.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think I was the first person on my block to paint this, use this color, and now I've been seeing more and more red living rooms down the street. People can see part of the house when they walk by.

MS. RIEDEL: I was thinking about the Kyoto Series of work as opposed to the Turning Japanese series.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yes, that was from the second trip to Japan, of course. So suddenly I realized that — well, I think I noticed it back then, the first time. But the first time, "Oh, you're in Japan," so you want to do nothing but have total respect for the awesomeness of Japan.

But then, at the same time, you notice men in the subways reading these really nasty comic books and kind of a real perverse culture with *pachinko* parlors [game arcades] and plastic flowers, and there's this real un-Japanese side of Japan. But it's very much Japan, you know what I mean?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's weird, and you don't want to look at it the first time. Then, the second time, I decided, well, I want to look at this stuff. So I was looking for Manga and Hentai and Anime, and walking into these pachinko parlors and looking at these people smoking endless cigarettes. And the young people were wearing funny costumes at the train station every Sunday. They'd dress up as some character. I have to ask somebody what that's called. But you can't stop looking. You're kind of disgusted, but at the same time you can't stop looking. It's very fascinating.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: The reality of Japan is really — the stuff that you think Japan is, it's still there, but it's beautifully preserved. I don't know.

MS. RIEDEL: It's interesting, because the two series feel very different. The one feels completely immersed, and the other one feels very distanced and observing. One feels about immersion in Japan and the second feels about observation and about Japan. I know one of the pieces was a *tokonoma*. [*Tokonoma* is a space of contemplation. The portable tokonomas created by the artist were part of her Tokonoma Series.]

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: It feels like that spirit, that space of contemplation and observation, yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: It is a place of contemplation, but at the same time, I put figurines in there that were really not about contemplation. But I don't know. It's fascinating.

MS. RIEDEL: But your contemplation of Japan, and that nexus of your own personal experience and history with the political sense, and the experience of women in Japan versus the U.S., or the politics of — the multicultural politics, just going back and forth, and trying — I know you said you felt you didn't fit in exactly in Japan, either the way —

[Cross talk.]

MS. MARUYAMA: I did not fit in. That made me realize that no matter how hard I tried, I don't think I could ever fit into that culture just by having my historical roots there. You know, earlier we talked about feminism, okay, and these things are hardly pro-feminist, if you think about it.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, those figures.

MS. MARUYAMA: That was intentional. I'm not sure why I chose to embrace that with the work. But I think it was more of an interest in throwing that perversity in people's faces, saying, "This is Japan, believe it or not."

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Well, there is that sense of humor that came in and just runs through in a very irreverent —

MS. MARUYAMA: It's amusing.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I do enjoy it. I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy it. I love looking at those figures, you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, and cabinets are a perfect form for that sort of observation, that conceptual - that examination of culture, or examination of gender, or — it's interesting because they create a place of contemplation but with a completely different content than normal.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. It's also about the pop culture there, too, you know? [Cartoon character] Hello Kitty is ubiquitous, and even in this country it's a recognizable icon, much like Mickey Mouse.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: So that's why some of those pieces had Hello Kitty vibrators in them. My goodness!

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. At the same time, you now are doing teahouse installations. There were a couple of big installations.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. The first attempt to do a large structure, it happened — I don't know if that really fits the definition of installation. But I suppose it does. I did want to use that teahouse as a means to display the contradictions of Japanese culture, what we perceive Japan to be, which is on the outside of the teahouse, very calm and contemplative and Zenlike. Then you open the sliding door, and there's Godzilla and octopus legs and Hello Kitty. [*Tea House*, 2003, from Maruyama's series *Turning Japanese*, was exhibited in the exhibition "Gimmee Shelter" at the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, Santa Cruz, CA.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I just really wanted that to be a contrast. I'm not sure if — I'm trying to remember when I made that.

MS. RIEDEL: Two thousand three, I think?

MS. MARUYAMA: It just literally kicked my ass trying to make that. It was physically difficult.

MS. RIEDEL: This was at the Santa Cruz Museum?

MS. MARUYAMA: Mm-hm. [Affirmative.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, 2003.

MS. MARUYAMA: Making that teahouse was very — it made me realize that I'm not as strong as I used to be. It's

one of the reasons why I'm contemplating retiring a little sooner than I thought, because I need to reserve some of that strength for making some — [inaudible]. I don't want to allow myself to get burned out teaching, and then by the time I get out, just be too physically tired to work in furniture again.

That's the big disadvantage to woodworking, I think, is that it's demanding physically. I think I'm using my car as a gauge for size. Everything I make must fit in the back of that car. You know what I mean?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I don't like being dependent on other people for trucks or whatever. I'd rather just make things small enough to fit in a car, although I do have a proposal to do another installation. So I think I'm a glutton for punishment, you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: But I still have all the parts to the teahouse, and I'm thinking about recycling those materials and making an installation about the Executive Order 9066. I've been to several interpretive centers at various camps, like at Manzanar [Independence, CA], and there are some beautiful museums there, artifacts from the camps and reconstruction of the barracks and reconstruction of the interior spaces of the barracks. I'm hoping that, by then, my studies and research of this theme will have matured enough. You know how I said in the earlier work it's still a little elementary?

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm hoping that, by then, my interpretation will have evolved somewhat to have a different perspective on this new work, without having a ton of barbed wire and tar paper, or be able to use those materials in a much more ephemeral or subtle way. Tar paper and barbed wire is really beautiful.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's just a matter of trying to manipulate those materials to be — not to go off topic — but to speak of that experience with[out] that being a replica in that environment, you know what I mean?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, I do, and I'm thinking of those forms. I'm trying to think of the names of the pieces. Poston [2008], I'm thinking of the piece called *Poston*, and *The Watchtower* [2008], but *Poston* in particular, because, to me, it has — it's made the barbed wire — the piece of barbed wire, the tar paper. But as a wall piece, it's such minimal use of those materials, and set up, they're almost like a cabinet for contemplation.

It strikes me as such an effective use of those materials. They're so removed from context of a camp, but the power of the material really comes through. And the fact that they're mounted on a wall as this object of contemplation brings a whole other dimension to the idea of contemplation and material and the tokonoma, that space for contemplation. So I think that —

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, I'm glad that you're able to see it that way, because sometimes I worry that it's a little too literal. But I do want to say something about the format of those cabinets.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes?

MS. MARUYAMA: In Buddhist religion, those little furniture forms are called *butsudan*.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, that's the word, right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Basically, it's a ritual of honoring your relatives that have passed on. It's a place of, you're thinking of those people. I can't think of the proper word to describe the process of that ritual. You ring a bell, and you're burning incense, and you pray, and there's usually photographs of the relatives in the cabinet.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: So they were all meant to be butsudans for every camp.

MS. RIEDEL: That's the word I was thinking of, yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm hoping to do every camp at some point. So, so far, I have *Poston* and *Manzanar, Tule Lake*. But I do want to do another Tule Lake cabinet. So as you can see, I think I feel good that I have five years' worth of work to do without getting burned out or tired of it. The theme is such that it's not going to go out of style.

MS. RIEDEL: I don't think so.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's not really about some trend.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, not at all.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's going to be a little more timeless, I think, or I hope.

MS. RIEDEL: Let's talk a little bit about your teaching career.

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: We started talking about CCA [California College of the Arts], and then we got off on another tangent, which is good, which is fine. That's the way conversations work.

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, when they do the oral thing, does it get transcribed in the same order?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: That's too bad that it can't be rearranged so that — [inaudible].

MS. RIEDEL: That's kind of the way conversations work, don't you think? We don't march through conversations in a chronological order.

MS. MARUYAMA: I feel like we're jumping all over the place, but that's fine.

MS. RIEDEL: I think that's okay. We'll come back, and we'll put this into an order now. But, I think, sometimes it's important to follow the trains of thought as they come up.

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, we don't want to march too harshly in a linear fashion.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: But we were talking — okay, well, one other question. When you look back — we're thinking about all your educational experiences now — is there one in particular that feels especially significant or rewarding to you from all the different BU, RIT, your studies in Japan of lacquer work? Anything that stands out as especially rewarding, or was it the combination?

MS. MARUYAMA: Of course, for me, what sticks in my mind is the BU experience, and I think a lot of it is because I am still really good friends with everybody from BU. Moving to Boston was so — I was so thrilled and excited about being in Boston for the first time, because it was such a different kind of city from any other that I had been to. I mean, it was just an incredible place to be at that time, such a sense of history. Everything was so old. To me, it seemed like everything was so old.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, compared to California.

MS. MARUYAMA: Compared to California.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Then the learning environment has a lasting effect on me, because I think it was the basis for my own teaching, at least for the beginning of my teaching. I learned a lot about teaching from being the student of Alphonse and Jere and Bill and Larry. I would like to think that I've taken the best of all of them and tried to create my own curriculum based on those experiences. So that to me — what was your question? Which of the experiences?

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: So, I think, Boston definitely stands out as being — as an educational experience, an important one. Also I think that gave me the chance to go to New York City for the first time, and Philadelphia, and there are so many furniture galleries in that area, more so then than now.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: There's still some present. Then the museums had huge furniture collections back then. So you asked me about going to museums when I was young. I don't think I really went to very many museums until I moved back East.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting. So then when you left Tennessee, and you came back to CCA, or CCAC, as it was then —

MS. MARUYAMA: CCAC.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. What were you trying to teach to your students at CCAC?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, technique is the largest part of teaching, which is a good thing, and it can be a bad thing because it's so time-consuming. But by the time that somebody gets a handle on it, there's no room for any kind of creative work.

MS. RIEDEL: Experimentation, maybe.

MS. MARUYAMA: Experimentation. At the undergraduate level, I will be honest, it's hard to teach. Beginning in woodworking is very difficult, because there's the safety of the students that's your primary motive, and becoming even more so now because it's such a sue-happy country that I've heard enough stories. Anyway, it's too bad, really.

Then so much technique that has to be covered and the kind of teaching structure — you know what? Maybe I'm talking more about San Diego State, because that's my biggest — my longest tenure. At CCA, I was only there for four years.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: The difficulties that I had, that I have, at San Diego State, the scheduling is such that we only meet two days a week for roughly three hours a day, whereas BU and RIT, when I was a student, we met three days a week for four to five hours a day, much more concentrated. So much more material can be covered in that amount of time.

CCA, I'm trying to remember what my teaching schedule was. I think it was similar, but it wasn't quite as intense as BU. There just didn't seem to be enough time. But if you really think about it, if I really think about it, I think a lot of the learning process for myself, and probably for my students, is during the time when they're working in shop with their colleagues and their peers.

I learned a lot from my peers. The teachers are not there all the time. But I remember learning quite a bit from people like Michael [Hurwitz] and Tom [Hucker] and James [Schriber], and I'm positive that that is the case here at San Diego State and even CCA. Having said that, I think it's important to nurture a sense of community with the students. They need to learn to interact with each other, because they have much to gain from each other.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: The same goes for the grad students. I'm so lucky I have a graduate program. I think they bring the creativity to the program. They're dedicated. They're challenging, in a good way. It's very rewarding to work with grad students. They give so much to the program. I owe it to my grad students for the success, the perceived success, of my teaching. The credit should go to some of my grad students, absolutely.

MS. RIEDEL: That's very generous.

MS. MARUYAMA: But you know what I mean? I think it's what really made the program tick. But, yeah, as I get older, I think I'm more reliant on them.

MS. RIEDEL: I was going to ask, do you find a back-and-forth between what you're teaching and your own work?

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, is there —

MS. MARUYAMA: What do you mean, back-and-forth?

MS. RIEDEL: Well, is there some correlation between what you are working on and what you're teaching, or do you find your own work is very separate from your university teaching?

MS. MARUYAMA: I think it's very separate.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think, once upon a time when I was working in the same facility - when I first started teaching at San Diego State, I was working at the school. I loved doing that. But I think there was a tendency for the

students to become much more influenced by your work when they see you making these things on the premises.

I'm finding that ever since I moved out of the shop, I see some of the forms in my work much less now in the student work. There's less. I mean, what is the saying about imitation being a compliment or something?

MS. RIEDEL: Flattery, yeah, imitation is the highest point of flattery, perhaps?

MS. MARUYAMA: I guess. But at the same time, I think it's nice that they can find those forms on their own.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, especially when they're so young and just developing, especially undergraduates, I'm thinking.

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm guilty of the same when I was younger. Of course, I was influenced by a lot of other artists. But, I think — oh, I think, though, as far as the correlation between teaching and my work, I'm very quick to share my mistakes.

You learn by doing, and so I think that has enriched my teaching. If I wasn't a prolific maker in the studio, I don't think I could be as good of a teacher as I was — as I am now - because there's a lot of tricks to the trade that you don't know if you're not practicing yourself.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, right.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think that's valuable. I think my experiences with galleries and clients are also a source of information that I can provide to my students, as well.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely.

MS. MARUYAMA: One thing that I am doing that my teachers didn't do is encourage my students to get involved at a professional level, like enter shows and apply for project grants. There's no reason why they have to wait until after they've graduated from grad school to apply for these things.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think that increases their chances of success in the future.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely.

MS. MARUYAMA: I've been very fortunate to have some very talented grad students win awards and get into shows that are significant.

MS. RIEDEL: That's interesting because it makes me think of how broad your own community is. We were talking over lunch, and all the different places you've taught, all the different places you've been a student. I know you've had NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] grants. You've had various residencies. You've taught at Penland, at Haystack.

You've been on the boards of the Furniture Society and Haystack and the Renwick. So giving your students a sense of that broader community and how to be engaged gives them all sorts of different ways to interact with the field and to develop their own work and careers, I would imagine.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think it's important. I don't think I got that so much when I was a student. But then, of course, maybe I wasn't pursuing that from my teachers. But I probably didn't even know that was an option back then.

But I think it's important for students to know what kind of experiences could be had. I don't know. I keep telling them that networking is really important. You can't just sit there and wait for someone to call you. You've got to get out there. But I do try to stress that they have to be —

[END CD 2.]

MS. RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art with Wendy Maruyama at the artist's home in San Diego, California, on March 5, 2010. This is disc number three.

We were talking about teaching. Then we were talking about — oh, we were going to talk about travel.

MS. MARUYAMA: We were going to talk about residencies, yeah, travel.

MS. RIEDEL: Residencies, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, you know, before going to Virginia, I had never gone farther than Colorado from Chula Vista, never been out of the country beyond that. So the experience of moving to the East Coast, I think, subconsciously reinforced my confidence in travel.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: So just trying to think back to major — I mean, going to New York, going to Chicago [IL], those were all amazing things that I did between college and Appalachian Center.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: When I was in the Appalachian Center, my first trip to Europe was with a boyfriend to Italy for the Milan [Furniture] Fair.

MS. RIEDEL: When was that?

MS. MARUYAMA: That was 1983, maybe, '84. That was a tough trip because there are different preparations that one needs to make to travel, and I really didn't know what I was doing. You have to remember the Internet is a major tool for travel now. I can't imagine not making plans for a trip without the Internet.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, back then it was guide books and word of mouth.

MS. MARUYAMA: Back then, you just had to — yeah. What was it? I can't even remember.

MS. RIEDEL: Travel agents, guide books, remember?

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, *Lonely Planet* or *Fodor's*.

MS. MARUYAMA: So it was a good trip. It was short. It was stressful because, as it turned out, all the lodging was taken when we arrived in Milan because of the Milan Fair. So we ended up going on to Venice [Italy] in the pouring rain. It was raining cats and dogs. We hadn't slept since we left the U.S., and we arrived really late at night two days later in Venice. I saw all these boats floating around. I had forgotten that it was a canal city, and I thought that the whole place had flooded. I thought, "Oh, my God, it's been raining this much already!"

MS. RIEDEL: That's funny.

MS. MARUYAMA: Fortunately I had a very young, youthful boyfriend that was willing to carry all the luggage. It was just a funny trip. It was a funny little trip. We went to Venice first because the boyfriend was a glassblower. I wanted to go to Milan. That was a good experience. Eventually we did make it back to Milan to see the final days of the furniture fair. We were not prepared, thinking about it. I did not really get out of that trip what I should have, and it's just for a lack of preparation.

MS. RIEDEL: Were you inspired to go there because of the Memphis Group and what you had seen in Memphis?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, I was, and I didn't even see any of it the whole time. I didn't know how to do my homework, and I didn't know how to find my contacts. Perhaps that was a good trip for me, because since then, all my trips abroad have gone very well.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, right.

MS. MARUYAMA: But, of course, now, that was the first trip that I went on where I had to make all the plans myself. Then the residency, my first residency, was in France in 1991 or '92.

MS. RIEDEL: Ninety-one or '92.

MS. MARUYAMA: There's a benefit to doing these residencies, because a lot of the plans have already been made for you. All you need to do is book a flight, and then you go to a designated place, and then you're with a bunch of other artists who have never been there. It just taught me a lot about preparing for travel.

MS. RIEDEL: Where was the residency?

MS. MARUYAMA: It was in La Napoule, L-A N-A-P-O-U-L-E. "La" is one word, then "Napoule." It's in the south of France. It's about 20 miles west of Cannes [France].

MS. RIEDEL: How awful!

MS. MARUYAMA: Isn't it terrible, right on the edge of the Mediterranean.

MS. RIEDEL: Did you get any work done?

MS. MARUYAMA: Lived in a castle. I mean, imagine a little girl from Chula Vista living in a castle. That's great.

MS. RIEDEL: Wow.

MS. MARUYAMA: But what was nice was it was a challenge first. The studio I had was basically one big room, no tools, nothing.

MS. RIEDEL: Wow. No tools?

MS. MARUYAMA: No tools, but you know what was great? I was able to just sit there and design furniture for three months straight.

MS. RIEDEL: Did you sketch, or did you make small maquettes?

MS. MARUYAMA: I sketched and made — I didn't make any models, but I did a lot of work in drawing. So that I knew when I got home, I could just hit the ground running, make work right away. I think it's a luxury that a lot of us furniture makers, or artists, don't have, is that there's a designated period of time to design pieces and then be able to get right to work and start making them.

Instead, you're kind of in-between. You're doing a project in the studio. Maybe you've got a piece on the drawing boards. Maybe you've got a piece being finished. Maybe you're quitting a piece that's kind of back and forth. This allowed me some time to take in the environment and travel, and then let my work just evolve from those experiences. It was the first time I realized how much the environment can contribute to your work. It becomes a resource, in a way.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely, and all that drawing reminds me of how Bill Keyser talked about working with doing so many — I think it was Bill Keyser - talked about having so many drawings well thought out before you actually got into the studio. Experimentation happens with the drawings, not necessarily in the studio.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, not just saying, "Oh, here's a piece of wood. I'm going to cut it such-and-such a way to see what happens."

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: This way, I have — I tend to prefer to work that way, with a plan. I'm not very good at — I know Gail [Fredell] is very good at spontaneous working. But I have to have a plan. That's the way I am. I need to know exactly how much wood I've got to buy and what sizes they need to be. I can't work any other way. I'm obsessive-compulsive that way. So that was my — that was really good. I haven't had one of those experiences in a long time.

MS. RIEDEL: The SUNY [State University of New York] New Paltz experience was not so much like that, because you were teaching?

MS. MARUYAMA: No. I made furniture while I was there, although it did give me a time to do a little bit of research, go to the library. That was good because I never have time to do that here. I don't think I've ever been to the library here on campus.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, I understand.

MS. MARUYAMA: So that's good.

MS. RIEDEL: So how long was the residency in France? Was that —

MS. MARUYAMA: It was three months, three months.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: Three months, and then the next residency — then, of course, you get more confident. You gain confidence when you are able to apply for it and get these grants, which I didn't have a lot of in those days. "Oh, that was easy. So now I can apply for — let me apply for a Fulbright."

So I applied for a Fulbright to be in England for three months, and lived in an area that was very close to the Cotswolds, the Lake district, which is kind of the home of Arts and Crafts [furniture movement]. I was kind of a

resident scholar at a university called Buckinghamshire College [University] in High Wycombe, California — I mean, not California — High Wycombe, England, I guess.

MS. RIEDEL: This is '94, I think, yeah?

MS. MARUYAMA: It was west of London. It was interesting because I felt like I had been there in a past life. But I think it was my familiarity with the history of furniture. Historically, the British have had a huge influence on furniture design, especially on the East Coast, or as — [inaudible] — says, "Only on the East Coast" — [inaudible].

So it was interesting to be there and have this curious familiarity with the place, a special closeness with the furniture I was looking at in the museums there. The Cheltenham [Art Gallery and] Museum [Cheltenham, England] had one of the largest collections of Arts and Crafts furniture from that location.

MS. RIEDEL: Were there particular pieces that you were intrigued by that were especially gratifying to see, or just, in general, the collection?

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm trying to put my finger on it now, because I say this about feeling like I had been there in a past life. But I can't — I never really sat down to think about what exactly made me feel that way. Is it a combination of the furniture and the location, or was it just the furniture? I really can't say.

Maybe it was just being able to see these pieces in the flesh. There's a subtlety about this furniture that doesn't come through in photographs. I think part of that, seeing the real thing, is much — has much more depth than seeing it in a photograph.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: There's a certain sheen to the work that you don't see in a photograph. There's a certain patina of use that's in those pieces that you don't see in a photograph.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Personally, I like Arts and Crafts furniture more than the Early American furniture that we studied, like Queen Anne and Chippendale furniture from the 1700s and 1800s. The Arts and Crafts were much more closer to home, maybe. It was difficult because of my hearing impairment and the very strong British accent. That was kind of a challenge, in a way. They speak with a very quick clip. Have you been to England?

MS. RIEDEL: No.

MS. MARUYAMA: They just — same language but a completely different accent.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: But that was interesting, too, because I was able to observe how they teach. You were talking about the correlation of travel and teaching, and being a student and then also watching a class being taught in a different place. It brings a lot of tools to teaching. It was more traditional. The assessment of the work is primarily on its craftsmanship and design, not so much on creativity, which is admirable because the quality was very high. The furniture program I was in was, like, a five-day-a-week class. So it was even more intense.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely.

MS. MARUYAMA: In fact, you could be a student there and only study upholstery. It was very specialized. So that was good to see. I visited a lot of studio furniture makers in England.

MS. RIEDEL: This was strictly a research trip?

MS. MARUYAMA: It was a research trip, definitely. I did not make anything. I had the opportunity to, but I was a little intimidated. Those guys were cutting dovetails to die for, and I'm just not a very good dovetailer. I gave them — I'm sure they thought I was an idiot. But my colleagues said, "We'd like you to give the students an assignment and then work with them." I gave them some goofy assignment like — I can't remember what. I think they had to do like a self-portrait. For them to think of a self-portrait was just way off base. They didn't know what to do.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Interesting, interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: How do you make a piece of furniture that's a self-portrait? That's something I'm very familiar with. Our students do it all the time. I think they thought I was just a joke. But that's okay, whatever.

MS. RIEDEL: That California — yeah. But both of those trips — France and England — inspired different types of work for you.

MS. MARUYAMA: Totally.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm thinking about [the series] *Simple Pleasures and Indulgences*.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, that all came from that British trip, and it's very different from the French furniture.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: When you go to France, everything is so ornate. If you go to the chapels and the castles, everything is so Louis XIV and just over the top, whereas the Brits are very subdued, almost depressed. Their pleasures were very simple, very simple foods; afternoon tea was a ritual, but certainly it was not fancy, by any means. It was just tea, and then their desserts were delicious — clotted cream. It's just a different — they have a different palate for foods, very basic, very basic.

MS. RIEDEL: So then where did those pieces like the Lipstick pieces, those fabulous wall installations —

MS. MARUYAMA: That was in the middle of France and England.

MS. RIEDEL: I was going to say —

MS. MARUYAMA: Definitely French inspiring.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, yes, and so bright. They almost feel Italian, colorful and bright and playful and over the top.

MS. MARUYAMA: Those were more about sexuality and trying to attract a mate, which I wasn't very good at in those days. I think those are — there was a time when there were all kinds of books written by women about how difficult it is to be single and what a pain men were. There was a book called *Sex Tips for Girls* [Cynthia Heimel. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983] in the '80s. I don't know if you remember those books.

MS. RIEDEL: I don't think.

MS. MARUYAMA: There was quite — [inaudible] — of books that were written by young women about the whole dating process. I think that was kind of in response to that.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. They feel very different.

MS. MARUYAMA: But it was partially in response to the French women, who just loved — they were just so beautifully made up, dressed to the nines just to go to the store, and dressing tables and vanities were very much a part of the furnishings of some of the castles. I'd never seen so many until I moved there.

MS. RIEDEL: Dressing tables and vanities?

MS. MARUYAMA: Dressing tables and vanities.

MS. RIEDEL: It's not a piece of furniture we have here in great supply.

MS. MARUYAMA: We never had one. Did you ever have one?

MS. RIEDEL: No.

MS. MARUYAMA: I only saw them in movies.

MS. RIEDEL: I had a desk that you could open that had a mirror that was sort of a desk/vanity. But it was never used as a vanity. It was a desk.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. It was mostly a desk.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, very serious work.

MS. MARUYAMA: But the vanity, I just wanted to do something pretty.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's about enhancing your self-esteem, and it's all about people's perception of beauty.

MS. RIEDEL: Those were interesting because they feel like another frame, or another angle on the gender issue, being female, as opposed to the combs. Do you say Kanzashi? [Series of oversized hair ornaments.]

MS. MARUYAMA: Kanzashi.

MS. RIEDEL: Kanzashi.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, those were all figures.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Then I had the mirror that's a vanity mirror with the video playing [Mirror Mirror, 2007].

MS. RIEDEL: Yes. How did the video come to be part of the work?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, it's interesting. I remember in the '80s talking to a group of people about what could be the most imaginative thing that you could possibly do with studio furniture, and I said, "Embedded videos, because no one would think about it. People are familiar with TV cabinet." They've got a cabinet for their TV. But why does that always have to be the TV? Why can't it be a specific video that's specific to the piece?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: But that was years ago. Then finally the opportunity came to me in the form of that Tasmanian tiger piece [*You Don't Know What You've Got til It's Gone*, 2005].

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: That was the very first video. It was my first attempt at video work, using Final Cut Pro [computer software]. I tell you, this video business is a whole other set of skills alone. I don't know how much longer I can do it. But it's certainly something I want to keep doing.

But there's not only shooting the video. There's editing the video. Then there's the electronic stuff, which always has a tendency to break down sometimes, and trying to refine that process took a little bit of time. But I enjoy doing it. I think it adds a narrative to the piece that you wouldn't have otherwise.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely. That piece was in 2005. Yeah, then you followed that in 2006 with *Vanity* and then in 2007 with [*Kanzashi*] *Stroke*.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Then the [series] E.O. 9066 has that racist cartoon.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, is it *Tokyo Jokio* [1943]?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, *You're a Sap, Mr. Jap* [1942]. [*You're a Sap, Mr. Jap*, 2008, is also the title of a work.]

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, Mr. Jap.

MS. MARUYAMA: What struck me the most about that is I remember that cartoon when I was a kid. I remember when I was — I used to love cartoons, and on Friday — Saturday morning, I mean - I remember seeing that cartoon, and it was the first time I'd seen Asian people depicted in a cartoon. I remember feeling pretty perplexed about that.

But I was too young to know that it was derogatory, you know what I mean? Then it's weird because they finally released the internees in 1946, and I was seeing that cartoon in 1957. I think occasionally I remember seeing that in the early '60s. So I'm amazed that they let it show for that long.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, that's a whole other nine or 10 years.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. Anyway, you know, I can't — I mean, the whole 9/11 experience is almost the same. Should foreigners attack American soil - and the unfortunate thing that the people who did it looked a certain way, and so they just immediate — that's why you see so many Muslims at the pilgrimages — the internees — I mean, the Manzanar pilgrimage. There was a lot of Muslim Americans in those because the Japanese Americans embraced the Muslim-American community because they were talking about evacuating them, too. Maybe my husband is here.

MS. RIEDEL: Should I pause that for a minute?

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: I think I trace internment as a topic in your work back to the *Girls' Day* piece in 2003.

MS. MARUYAMA: Which piece?

MS. RIEDEL: *Girls' Day*.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Does it feel that way —

MS. MARUYAMA: That was the very first piece that addressed that topic.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, so it's something now that you've been working on for seven years. That was the first.

MS. MARUYAMA: That was the only piece I did.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Anybody could have interpreted it however they wanted to. But it was strange to see it in a porcelain doll head and then some wire covering up an opening. It was very subtle.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: In many ways, it's more successful than the *Poston* piece, because it's subtle. Do you know what I mean?

MS. RIEDEL: Do you think so?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, the *Poston* piece is very direct. I'm glad you think it's subtle. But the other one was — if you didn't know about the internment, would you have thought that's what it was about?

MS. RIEDEL: Not necessarily.

MS. MARUYAMA: It could have been about anything.

MS. RIEDEL: It could have been very gender specific, too.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, the oppression of Asian women. That's another thing I noticed about Japan. Women are treated very badly in Japan. I just cannot imagine living there and trying to eke out a living in that patriarchal society. It would be very hard. Now I'm understanding why a lot of Japanese women want to move here, because it's difficult. I'm amazed in this modern day and age that men push women out of the way to get on the elevator first.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes! It's ridiculous. It's crazy.

MS. RIEDEL: I had no idea.

MS. MARUYAMA: I was shocked. They push you out of the way to get in first. Subways, elevators, you name it. It's almost laughable. It's funny. At first I remember being so pissed, but you get so used to it. And I've seen other Japanese women getting pushed around. They just sort of deal with it. They don't seem to put up a fight.

MS. RIEDEL: We started this disc talking about travel, and so it seem —

MS. MARUYAMA: Sorry.

MS. RIEDEL: No, but it makes sense that we're talking now again about Japan. It seems we've had this talk about residencies in France and in England and certainly these trips to Japan. Are there any other places you've traveled that have been influential to your work?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, China. I went to China a couple of years ago, maybe four years ago, 2006. That would have been four years ago.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: That was interesting because, again, it was another Asian country, and I was very curious to see what it was going to be like, the comparison between Japan and China. They're vastly different places.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm sure.

MS. MARUYAMA: Again, I'm kind of hypersensitive sometimes, because I'm very aware of what Japan did to the Chinese and the Koreans. So the issue of identity was suddenly kind of different. Fortunately, nobody seemed to judge me for being Japanese American. Maybe it was the American part that was — but I was in Nanking at the university. They call it Nanjing now, at the University of Nanjing [Nanjing, China].

I gave a lecture on American studio furniture. I remember they were saying, "What do you want to do while you're here?" And I said, "Well, if I had time, I'd like to go see the memorial for Nanking, the massacre." They were, "Oh, are you sure you want to see that?" I said, "Well, yeah, I think it's really terrible what happened there." But I didn't have time to go see it. But it was interesting what their reaction was. I don't know.

MS. RIEDEL: Was that a residency?

MS. MARUYAMA: Huh?

MS. RIEDEL: Was that a residency?

MS. MARUYAMA: No, that was just a travel. I gave a bunch of lectures in different cities in China. I was invited by one person to come, and I just sort of tried to make connections so that I could make the trip a little more well rounded.

MS. RIEDEL: Where else did you go?

MS. MARUYAMA: I went to Beijing [China]. That's incredible. That's an incredible — well, you know what's funny. Japan, like I said, their places of heritages are so — their heritage places, or their artifacts, are so well preserved, very well kept. They maintain it.

In China, everything is deteriorating, and there's virtually very little upkeep. The Forbidden City has these various rooms that you can walk through, and some of the rooms were glassed off so you couldn't touch.

But it's all dusty. It was just interesting to see the contrast in how they treat their historical monuments. But at the same time, there was a beautiful — like I was saying about the British furniture - there is a beautiful patina to those lacquered walls. They're cracking, but they looked better because they were so old, you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Anyway, the aesthetics in China is very different. The mirror that I made that's in the living room is very much inspired by Chinese furniture [*Mirror, Mirror*]. Chinese design tends to be a little more linear, geometric.

MS. RIEDEL: Is that mirror a new piece?

MS. MARUYAMA: Uh-huh. [Affirmative.] No, that's an old piece, actually.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, I was going to say it feels like an older piece.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, I made it right after I got back from China.

MS. RIEDEL: So 2006-2007?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, roughly.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: That's kind of old, I guess.

MS. RIEDEL: It feels much more like straightforward, beautiful wood furniture than what I think of your contemporary work.

MS. MARUYAMA: But see, we were invited to be in a show called "Inspired by China" [2006], and it was before that trip, which was kind of nice. I felt lucky to be able to go there after that show.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, and was *Vanity* for —

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, the *Vanity* was also inspired by the China show.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, right.

MS. MARUYAMA: That was really — I like that piece. It looks traditional, but I really like that piece because everything about it is traditional except for the video, and also the depiction of the person in that video is very different.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, it seems to pull together a lot of your interests, gender issues, ethnicity issues. There is an aspect of performance art that I think of with your pieces, as well. All of that seems to come together in a beautifully formed piece of furniture.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's functional.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, exactly.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's functional. Again, it's one of the things that I really love about furniture forms.

MS. RIEDEL: Function?

MS. MARUYAMA: You can have all this other stuff happening, but, hey, you can put stuff in it.

MS. RIEDEL: And that's still important to you, that function aspect?

MS. MARUYAMA: It is for some pieces; the *Kanzashi*, less so.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I like being able to go both ways. Furniture is special that way. If I have time, there's one thing I wanted to talk about that I thought was really — it just fell in my lap at precisely the right time. There's a place called — a historical wood association, and there's some guy that goes around and collects wood from trees that have become diseased, or they need to be removed from the property.

The property is usually historical in some way. Like the oak, some dam was made of wood, and then they had to remove the wood. But the wood is so old and mainly oak, and they recycle the wood so people can make other things. They've having a show. They've invited some artists to be in the show, and the artists were able to select woods of their choice for their pieces. So I'm in the show. I'm doing a piece about the internment, and it's made from wood from Monticello [Thomas Jefferson's home, Charlottesville, VA].

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: Very interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: The founding father of the Constitution.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's all about the internment. It speaks to that experience, being made out of Thomas Jefferson's tree.

MS. RIEDEL: Do you know what you're making? Have you designed it already?

MS. MARUYAMA: I just shipped it out this morning.

MS. RIEDEL: What is it?

MS. MARUYAMA: It's basically a long horizontal cabinet, and it's very Japanesey-looking [*Fractured*, 2010]. It's got sliding doors. But the doors go out at weird angles. You can't open them. You have to have one door open before you can — then the whole back of it has tarpaper and nails and wire, all across the back of it. So it's really simple. The most difficult thing about this piece is that it doesn't look good in photographs. It's really hard to view. You can't see those doors are angled.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Anything long and horizontal —

MS. MARUYAMA: It's long and skinny, and it just does not photograph very well. But it's a format that I enjoy very much. But it's impossible to photograph. I don't know how to do it any other way.

MS. RIEDEL: That's an ongoing problem for artists, to be sure, is photographing their work, and yours, in this case, more than most. What's the piece called?

MS. MARUYAMA: *Fractured*, and I'm trying to have the work address people, like my own mother, who was evacuated, but they didn't go to camp. There's a whole group of people who feel a little bit excluded from all this historical — what's the word — remembrance, E.O. 9066. The emphasis is always on people who went to camp because it's kind of — you can put your finger on it. There's a picture.

But there are all these other people who took off with what little they could carry and drove east to get out of the exclusion zone. They're not really — they don't feel like they're accounted for, even though they are. The emphasis is on the internees because there's some record of that.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, so they're excluded even from the formal exclusion.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, so my mother was kind of whining about that the other day. She said, "Well, aren't you going to do a piece about us? We had to take off." I said, "I don't know how." It's hard. I'm not sure how that can be done.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, but the seed has been planted. So we'll see what might come up in a few years.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah. So *Fractured* was — [inaudible]. The only problem is that it has tarpaper in it, which is obviously a reference to the camps.

MS. RIEDEL: But if one isn't familiar with the camps or with that tarpaper reference, then there is an abstraction that could just be interpreted in a variety of ways. I know it feels very specific to you, but —

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, maybe they would see it in a broader point of view. But anyway, that was my last piece, and I really enjoyed — that was satisfying to me because I was able to kind of take a Japanese feature — well, I guess, I did that before, too. But I don't know, and then I was able to kind of take it out of context, where it didn't function the same way.

MS. RIEDEL: That's an interesting idea.

MS. MARUYAMA: Anyway, but the fact that it was made out of that wood was really fun for me.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's like, "Thanks a lot, Thomas Jefferson."

MS. RIEDEL: And the fact that it's a functional piece that doesn't really function is actually interesting, too.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I kind of like doing that, too, don't I? Making nonfunctional -

MS. RIEDEL: Functional things that function differently.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah. Yeah, dysfunction.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: But it's interesting. Who knows?

MS. RIEDEL: Let's — the disc is about to end so let's stop for today?

MS. MARUYAMA: Sure.

[END CD 3.]

MS. RIEDEL: This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art with Wendy Maruyama at the artist's home in San Diego, California, on March 6, 2010, disc number four.

Good morning, again.

MS. MARUYAMA: Good morning.

MS. RIEDEL: Let's start this morning with a discussion of the various educational institutions you've been involved with over time and starting with universities in general. What place do you see for universities in the American craft movement and, in particular, in terms of furniture?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, from my experience, it seems that if it wasn't for the university structure, craft would be nonexistent at that level. Perhaps it's that particular time in the '70s, when it was on the rise, more or less, starting with the late '60s on through the '70s. I would say that I'm almost a professional student as a result of that, having never really left the academic environment, going from being a student to a teacher in the same type of environment.

Each university definitely has a particular style, or they are known for a particular medium. I would like to think that San Diego State is one of the many — one of maybe five universities that are known for their furniture program. Then you have certain universities that are known for their metalworking programs and ceramic programs, which add to the diversity of all these different institutions, which is always very interesting.

But I'm certainly feeling very privileged to have studied — gone to so many universities, almost on default. It wasn't really intended that I was going to jump around. But it certainly was advantageous to see how different universities approach their teaching, and what kind of faculty members were there. That was an advantage for sure.

Rochester Institute of Technology, for example, was very different from Boston University. But I was really glad to be able to take away different experiences from both schools.

MS. RIEDEL: What did you take from Boston, and what did you take from RIT?

MS. MARUYAMA: Gee whiz. I think with Boston, there was a sense of community, based on the fact that it was a new program.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: So it was only two years old when I got there, and so everybody was pretty much handpicked for that program. It was unique in that it selected all these amazing people for the first few years of its existence.

So there was a different sense of community that I experienced from that program that I didn't get from RIT. RIT, because of its long history, it had sort of a very — a trademark of its own, based upon its integrity in craftsmanship. And Bill Keyser and [Douglas] Doug Sigler were a very unique teaching team themselves. They both had different perspectives that were unusual.

MS. RIEDEL: Did they complement each other?

MS. MARUYAMA: I believe they did. I think they worked together very well. That was one thing that was nice. There was no sense of discord or competition between the two faculty members, and that can be kind of destructive sometimes. But that definitely was not an issue. I will say that, at that time, Rochester's furniture program was extremely male dominated, and I think it had a certain attitude that was sort of prevalent during the time, that it was kind of perpetrated by some of the faculty members.

Doug Sigler, I think, was very macho, and I think that had a lot — it influenced the students quite a bit. So that was a little difficult at first, and I remember being kind of angry at him many times for some insensitive things that he said. We've since kissed and made up, but those kinds of things do happen.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: That was probably the worst — we talked the other day about gender issues and discrimination in a male-dominated field, and I think that was probably one of the hardest things about being in Rochester. I don't think — I can't — as far as the students, it's unfortunate that it was kind of a pack mentality that, I think, happened. But I think it made me stronger. I'm sure that it built my character, for better or for worse.

But I think any experience, whether it's positive or negative, has, in the end, a positive effect on your character as you grow. I've had to overcome many obstacles throughout my lifetime, whether it be as a minority or a woman or a disabled person. But anyway, I'm wandering off a little bit, but the university, it's definitely a safe haven, as far as you're not as affected by discrimination, whether as a minority or as a woman, in the university art department.

Now, I can't speak for engineering or math or any of the other disciplines in the university. But the art schools

are definitely very open-minded politically and creatively. It's a good place to be.

MS. RIEDEL: How were your experiences at Haystack and Penland and Arrowmont, any other universities or programs, specifically related to craft?

MS. MARUYAMA: It's very different. The universities, you're in there for the long term, two to three years, maybe four years, nowadays, six years for undergrad students. Haystack and Penland and Anderson Ranch [Arts Center, Snowmass Village, CO] were the three programs that I've been involved with. They were two-week sessions. I was a student at both Penland and Haystack before I taught there. It's different. I remember going to Penland the first time as a student. It was difficult because you have to make friends fairly quickly, and if you're very shy, like I was back then, it was a little difficult.

But I happened to be taking a workshop with Bill Keyser, and so I learned quite a bit from his. I think we did a little bit of steam bending. That was his M.O. [modus operandi]. But I remember the first time going to Penland was difficult. Penland has two different groups of students. Some of them are there all year round, and others are there just for that specific workshop. I think there were groups of people who had already been established socially that were also taking the workshop. It was difficult to penetrate those social groups.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Haystack is exclusively a summer program, and for some reason was just much friendlier. Everybody was there at the same time. They all needed to form friendships. Maybe it was just a coincidence that those people — everybody was friendly. That happened. But it was a real positive learning experience. I got to know more people, a very diverse population from all over the country and all over the world. So that was a positive — that opened a couple of windows into another world that time.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: To this day, even teaching there has always been a wonderful experience.

MS. RIEDEL: Every artist I've talked with has said that about Haystack.

MS. MARUYAMA: Who did?

MS. RIEDEL: Everyone I've spoken with has only good things to say.

MS. MARUYAMA: Haystack is a very special place. I think part of it has to do with the environment. It's right on the water.

MS. RIEDEL: On those rocks, perched, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Very beautiful. I guess it's just like fantasyland, I suppose. Then, of course, Stuart Kestenbaum is a very magical person. He is somebody who remembers everybody's names. I don't know how he does it year after year after year. That leadership — I think Haystack has thrived through that special leadership.

He's very gentle. He doesn't lead the place with a heavy hand. It's quite nice. I'm less familiar with Penland, but I'm looking forward to teaching there this summer. It'll be the second time that I've taught. It's always a different experience when you're teaching versus being a student. I had a great time there the first time when I was teaching, and it's funny because I still know all the students who were in that class.

MS. RIEDEL: That's amazing.

MS. MARUYAMA: Which is amazing, yes. That was a very unique group of students.

MS. RIEDEL: How long was the session?

MS. MARUYAMA: It was two weeks, and it was at least 10 years ago, maybe 11. I can think of every person that was in that class, still keep in touch with them.

MS. RIEDEL: Extraordinary.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: How did your experiences at universities and at these craft programs shape your own ideas about teaching and curriculum? I know you went back and forth with needing to develop technical skills, and balancing that with personal expression and concept development in the work. When it came to developing your curriculum —

MS. MARUYAMA: I've been really fortunate to be on the board of Haystack. Even though I was only one of two woodworkers on the board, we had — it was a really good experience to work closely with people who work in different disciplines. I found that, being in woodworking, it's very easy to become sort of wrapped up in that tiny little world and not see anything through a different lens.

But when you're talking to textiles people or ceramics people about the way they engage their students - I feel like I've expanded tremendously from that dialogue that takes place with these other individuals, particularly at Haystack. I don't know if you know Warren Seelig. He was for the longest time the head of the textiles program at Philadelphia University of the Arts [University of the Arts, Philadelphia, PA], I think.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: It was always interesting to have a conversation with him about teaching and the kinds of books that he would have them read, and I actually came away from a Haystack board meeting with new assignments that I would not have ever thought of if I hadn't been at Haystack.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: So that definitely enriches my experience.

MS. RIEDEL: Who do you consider the most significant writers about American craft or about furniture? Anyone in particular?

MS. MARUYAMA: I'll have to think about that one. I don't read very much. I just look at the pictures. No, I think for a while I enjoyed Arthur Danto's writing in the '90s. I don't know what he's been doing lately. There's a writer from Seattle. I'm trying to remember his name.

MS. RIEDEL: Matthew Kangas?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, Matthew Kangas; I read his writing. Occasionally, I remember reading some of Janet Koplos's articles in *Art in America*. Of course, she was always sympathetic to artists who worked in the craft medium, and that that could be in *Art in America* was significant.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Then there's the obvious. There's Ned Cooke. But I think Ned speaks primarily from a historical point of view. He certainly knows the history of studio furniture. Then his student Glenn Adamson, who's now in England, has been writing quite a few books. But I don't follow that very closely, I'm afraid.

MS. RIEDEL: The periodicals that are specifically geared towards wood and towards furniture, have they made a difference to your career, or do you think they make a difference to the field?

MS. MARUYAMA: You know, it's funny. I don't read those how-to magazines as fervently as I probably should. My students do, and every now and then I will pick up a trick from them that they read in *Fine Woodworking*, and I go, "Oh, that's a good idea. Fine, go ahead and do it that way."

But woodworking, like I said the other day, tends to be really conservative, and all of the magazines are incredibly conservative; actually very boring, unfortunately. I think if you're really interested in learning woodworking, then they're great magazines, *Fine Woodworking* and *Woodworking Magazine*. But they don't really contribute to the diversity of the field.

MS. RIEDEL: Are there other periodicals that you prefer?

MS. MARUYAMA: I guess - I have to say I have been a longtime reader of *American Craft*, which I think my interest in that magazine kind of comes and goes. I get a little tired of the same advertising. It's gone through many changes in the last couple of years. So it's hard for me to put a finger on where it's going right now. I do enjoy a couple of magazines that are no longer in existence. *Nest*, *N-E-S-T*, *Nest* magazine was a great magazine.

MS. RIEDEL: Oh, yes, I remember that, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I loved that magazine, and *Dwell*, especially, is a good magazine.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's a little bit heavy on the '60s modern, mid-century modern. But it's a good magazine. They don't show ugly things, by any means. But to be honest, I'm more interested in *Metalsmith* magazine and *American Ceramics*.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. MARUYAMA: Those magazines, I think, are much more provocative to read and look at than *American Craft* or *Fine Woodworking*.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes. Some of the British-made craft magazines are also very interesting, and Australian magazines are interesting.

MS. RIEDEL: Any in particular that you —

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, I think, there's a magazine called *Object* magazine from Australia, and then there's one called *Craft[s]* in the U.K. I think it's called *Craft[s]*. I'll have to look it up. I'll have to look it up. So those are the periodicals that I think I would encourage people to read.

MS. RIEDEL: What do you think of as the difference between an artist that's trained in a university program and an artist that has learned on his or her own or through different programs, or is there not much of a difference? Is it very individual?

MS. MARUYAMA: It depends. I think that, generally speaking, if you're talking about people from my own field, I would say that there's a vast difference between people like Sam Maloof, who is self-taught, from the people who are taught in the university setting. I think, unfortunately, there always seems to be some conflict between those two groups.

MS. RIEDEL: Why?

MS. MARUYAMA: I think — well, I think, unfamiliarity breeds fear for some people. If they don't understand something, they fear it. I do think that both are very equally respected. They should be equally respected. It's just unfortunate that both sides can't enjoy one another.

I try to be very supportive of programs that support students that are more self-taught, like the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship in [Rockport] Maine, College of the Redwoods [Eureka, CA], even the local community colleges. Palomar College [San Marcos, CA] has a woodworking program.

But most of the people that take these classes are wannabe woodworkers that just want to enhance their technical skills. They're not interested in the design or artistic aspects. They just like working with their hands, and they appreciate fine craftsmanship. The university-taught program, I think it's difficult to be able to teach both high craftsmanship and creativity at the same time.

I will be the first to acknowledge that some of the university-taught craftspeople may not be — their priority isn't on the perfect dovetail or that tight mortise-and-tenon. Their building skills are just different. I can't say that they're bad. They just appropriate craftsmanship for the effect that they're going for.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think that's happening in art, not only in woodworking but other fields. Glenn Adamson wrote an article. It was called "Sloppy Craft" ["When Craft Gets Sloppy." *Crafts*. London, March/April 2008: 36-41], and it's basically an article about artists whose work - they work in the craft medium, but it's not really about precision or the precise application of craft technology, and that may be viewed as, quote, unquote sloppy, but it's well done in a completely different way. I envy some people like that. I think Bob Brady is a perfect example, okay?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Bob Brady doesn't know how to sharpen a chisel to save his life, okay? But he makes the most beautiful wood sculpture that I could ever set my eyes on.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, yes, I agree.

MS. MARUYAMA: I don't know how he does it. There's no way that I could ever imitate that or even begin to

come close to what he's able to do. Some people are just magic that way. It's a struggle sometimes to balance - how much effort do you put into the craftsmanship, and how much effort do you put into the conceptual quality of the work?

MS. RIEDEL: Have your thoughts about how to balance that changed over time, and can you point to specific pieces or series where you see that happening, or can you discuss how your thoughts on that, in your own work, have changed over time?

MS. MARUYAMA: Through — based on craftsmanship?

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, versus that idea or that —

MS. MARUYAMA: No, unfortunately — I say unfortunately because I think there are some disadvantages to being overly trained as a woodworker. Having studied with people like Jere and Alphonse and Bill and Doug, I'm afraid I could never go back to that naïve way of working with wood anymore. I mean, all four of them are sitting on my shoulders looking in. So it's almost impossible for me to even think of slapping wood together in a haphazard way.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: There's a disadvantage to knowing too much about how things go together. I need to be deprogrammed. But I would say that maybe — even when I made those combs, which were meant to be very low on the technical side, I still got kind of persnickety about, "Oh, that glue joint," or, "Oh, I've got to sand this a little more," or, "Is this good enough?"

It's a sickness almost, you know? You go to Bob's studio, and he's using this really thick, heavy epoxy that comes in like a putty, and sticks two pieces of wood together, and the glue's squeezing out all over the place, and it looks beautiful. So I envy people like Bob. I don't know if that answered your question.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, it's interesting. That's very interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: I have learned to loosen up a little bit with the latest series of work.

MS. RIEDEL: The 9066?

MS. MARUYAMA: The 9066 series. The camp environment was so raw and so unfinished and so barren, so to speak, that the pieces that I've been making have been very stripped down, no finishes. I sand the wood, but there's no finish. So I'm hoping that the wood will gain a different kind of patina from not being finished, maybe being handled may leave some marks by people.

Maybe the museums won't be happy about that. They're meant to think differently about materials and using nails to put things together. Of course, I'm trying to measure the distance between the nails, so that's still an issue.

MS. RIEDEL: But through the materials, the materials and the content of those pieces have driven you towards a loosening up of the technique, it sounds like.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah. But I'm still not without my — what's the word — concerns about whether something is tight enough or good enough. That's still in the picture there, unfortunately. I wish I could let that go.

MS. RIEDEL: Maybe that tension is important.

MS. MARUYAMA: Maybe, maybe.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: Either that, or too bad there's not a shrink that can talk you out of it, but anyway.

MS. RIEDEL: How has the reception to your work changed over years?

MS. MARUYAMA: You know, I hate to admit it, but when I look at the work that I made in the '80s and the '90s, it seems so dated.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. MARUYAMA: So out of style. I know some artists have — some craftspeople and artists have an ability to work in a very timeless manner, and I admire that. I think it's a virtue to be able to make work that, no matter

what century you're looking at it, it's going to be timeless. But at the same time, I feel like my existence is pretty much based upon time and place and the now. So my work is always going to be influenced by whatever I'm doing now. I think that all goes to clothing and fashion. I like those kinds of things.

The way I dress, definitely, is based on — maybe not so much now. I think I've become very unfashionable in the last five years. Maybe it's age. I don't know. I'm wearing a lot of sweatshirts and kind of pathetic. But I used to love buying interesting clothing. That used to be a favorite. I think fashion has been an influence on applied design and craft. I think there's some connection between fashion and design and craft and fine arts.

MS. RIEDEL: It seems like —

MS. MARUYAMA: But back to your question, I think it's dated. But that's okay.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, because I do remember reading a quote of yours someplace saying something about what a relief it was to be able to make work that was fun and not necessarily serious all the time, and playful. I'm thinking maybe of some of the Lipstick wall-mounted pieces or the Trays, the *Salami Tray*, that there was a relief to be able to make work that was of a moment and not so serious.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think woodworking should be fun.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think, too often, woodworkers and woodworking are too serious and so self-conscious sometimes. So it is great to be able to kind of break out and make something very quick and fun and quirky, and maybe it is about something of the time. But that's okay. That's the way I was — that's where my mind was at at that time.

MS. RIEDEL: Do you find that that happens between series, when you've been working on something more serious and more examined, that you just want to do something that's lighter? Or was that more true of your earlier work, that it tended to be more playful?

MS. MARUYAMA: I think I always, like, break out now and then. I could be doing a series that may be very serious, and then right in the middle of it I've got to do something that's a little quirky, like the video piece, which was sort of funny in a way.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: And the Combs, there's a couple of funny combs. I think you need to break the monotony somehow.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think years of doing serious work may have led to the Turning Japanese series.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Anyway.

MS. RIEDEL: There seems to be a real sense of juxtaposition in your work between very serious examination and then a great sense of humor and pop culture. I'm thinking of the Hello Kitty images, Godzilla, all the Anime.

MS. MARUYAMA: I enjoy that, and it's also a part of me, too, more so for me than for some other people. Godzilla was a significant part of my life. Dad used to take us to the drive-in movies in the '60s, and we would watch all the Godzilla movies. That was my first perception of Japanese people on the screen.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I'd never seen Japanese people in movies until we showed Godzilla. So that was my first sense of identity. "Oh, they look like us," and this monster is a big part of that fantasy world. So I do love Godzilla for that reason. It's very nostalgic.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

[END CD 4.]

This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art with Wendy Maruyama at the artist's home in San Diego, California, on March 6, 2010, and this is disc number five.

When we were talking last, the disc suddenly stopped. So we're going to pick up. We had just begun to start talking about exhibitions and, in particular, commissions, and if you —

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay, maybe I'll start with the exhibitions first.

MS. RIEDEL: Sure. We were talking about the salability, or not, of your work, and that was not so important to you.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes. I think becoming a millionaire, obviously, is not part — is not in the stars for me, because I have a rampant disregard for making objects that sell. Now, I mean, of course, I hope that they sell, and I hope that people who have the same passion and interest in the things that I have an interest in can see that in my work. But I so enjoy making the work when I'm able to do whatever I want.

So when galleries give me the opportunity to show, I find it best to do a series of furniture, so that there's a bit of cohesion between all of the pieces; not that they all have to look alike, but there has to be a sort of common thread, even in its function or its personality or the conceptual statement that I'm trying to make there. They all have to relate somehow.

That's always kind of challenging. It also helps to channel my design process better. I'm not running all over the place trying to decide what to make. I set a certain assignment, if you will, for myself and try to do work that follows those parameters. It's enjoyable.

MS. RIEDEL: From your exhibition schedule, you exhibited once a year for the past 20 years. Do you usually work as if you're preparing for an exhibition?

MS. MARUYAMA: I try to. For me, it's the best way to work, is towards an exhibition. If I don't have an exhibition, then I would still continue to build a body of work based on a certain theme. Occasionally we get invited to be in a show that has to follow a certain theme, and that's always a lot of fun for me. Of course, I'd like to think that the work would sell eventually, but when I'm making the work, I'm not having to follow some code that's going to ensure that it's going to sell. I probably should, but I just can't.

For that same reason, I think commissions are very hard for me, because I'm overly self-conscious when I'm designing a commission or making a commission. I'm thinking way too much about the client and less about myself. I guess that's the way a commission is. There's nothing wrong with that. I just have this anxiety. Of course, I want to please the client, and I just have this anxiety that maybe it's not going to be what the client expected.

I would say that I had one experience where I was given a commission. The client — I provided the designs and the models, and the client said, "Oh, that's great; go ahead." Then I built it and delivered it, and they said, "This isn't at all what I wanted," and I said, "What do you mean? It's exactly like what you wanted."

She said, "Well, I didn't think it was going to be small." I said, "Did you measure it?" The dimensions were on the drawing. Unfortunately, the gallery owners that got me the commission, they had gotten so much work from this one client that they weren't standing up for me at all.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. MARUYAMA: They said, "Well, I think you should make another piece, and we'll try to sell the one that didn't —," you know. That was really early on in my career, back in the early '80s, and I think that always had a negative effect on me from that day on. Commissions have not been enjoyable for that reason.

It's wonderful when you do a commission for somebody who ultimately says that they love the piece. But there's always something in the back of my mind that raises my concerns that it's not going to be the perfect piece.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: That's kind of unfortunate.

MS. RIEDEL: Have you done many commissions, and how do you choose them?

MS. MARUYAMA: I have done — I would say maybe, of all the pieces I've made, maybe a quarter of them were commissions.

MS. RIEDEL: That's quite a lot.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's enough.

MS. RIEDEL: Are most of them fairly successful experiences?

MS. MARUYAMA: They were. For the most part, they were. But it's just not as enjoyable for me.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I wish it could be more enjoyable, but it just isn't. It's a hang-up, I guess, that I have. I much prefer doing speculative work rather than commission work.

MS. RIEDEL: I think most artists do. Most artists will flat out refuse to do commissions because they have those challenges and those frustrations.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. I think also speculative pieces tend to be a little more honest and straightforward. Commission work is always driven by a client's needs. So I feel like I wouldn't have come up with a certain design on my own. I suppose now and then there may be a commission that would give you a great idea for the future, but I can't think of anything that has done that.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: If I had more of those, maybe I would be doing more commissions. But I can't really think of a commission that I have done that has spurred me to do more — what's the right word? Anyway, drove me to do some new work.

MS. RIEDEL: In a new direction, yeah. In terms of dealers, it seems — how is your relationship with dealers been?

MS. MARUYAMA: A lot of people love to hate galleries and gallery owners. But for the most part, I have very positive relationships with galleries and gallery owners. It is unfortunate when you have the occasional gallery owner that tries to take advantage of you or isn't true to their word or are dishonest or unreliable.

That's too bad because they make it hard for the real, honest dealers. But the reason why I love them so much is I cannot sell my work to save my life. I just can't. I used to do one of those — do you remember the Armory Show [New York, NY]?

MS. RIEDEL: Sure, sure.

MS. MARUYAMA: It was in New York, and each artist got to have their booth, and I had the opportunity to have the booth. I mean, standing there by my work was painful. It was really difficult for me to go up to somebody and say, "Hi. You want to buy this piece?" Or if somebody would say, "I really like this piece, but could you give me a discount?" And I would say, "Yeah, sure, you can have it for free."

I mean, I didn't really say that, but that's literally what I was doing. I just could not sell my work. I could not stand up for myself in terms of pricing. I'd much rather have a gallery do that work for me.

MS. RIEDEL: You've had two very long-term gallery relationships that I'm aware of, Pritam & Eames and Peter Joseph.

MS. MARUYAMA: Pritam & Eames [East Hampton, NY] and Peter Joseph [Gallery, New York, NY]. It's unfortunate that that gallery folded. That was really a great — they did very well for me. Snyderman Gallery [Philadelphia, PA] for the longest time represented my work in the '80s, and they did very well for me. So in this day and age, 2010, the economy isn't so good. It's a bleak picture right now. But I certainly hope that it will pick up again.

But the group shows and the museum shows are also very vital to my career. I enjoy that, as well. Again, the emphasis is not on selling the work but just showing a diverse body of work by a diverse body of artists. It's always a great pleasure to be in the company of those other people. It's like a family reunion every time there's a show like that. I enjoy those things for more social reasons than anything else.

MS. RIEDEL: How have you seen the market for craft — American craft and furniture in particular — change over the course of your career, short of the recession right now?

MS. MARUYAMA: I believe so. But then, I think, there are more of us doing diverse types of work. There's a lot of us making furniture, and American craft certainly tends to show the best of the work that's being done now in our field. I think furniture, studio furniture, is kind of in a holding pattern right now. It's harder for the galleries that are selling furniture. The scale is a problem. The cost of shipping and the materials and labor involved in furniture making is a little tough for this economy.

It's funny because one year I decided to make all of my work out of wood that I already had. It was really a good exercise, because I have collected a lot of materials over the years, and I never use them, or I have leftover

wood from another project, and I never used them. So for one year, I made all the pieces out of whatever I had.

It was really satisfying to be able to rummage through my stockpile and find some wood that I had bought 20 years ago. That was partially economic and partially not wanting to invest a lot of money in making a piece during an unstable economy

MS. RIEDEL: Right. So the holding pattern is primarily due to the economy?

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think so. I don't know where it's going to go. I think creatively there's a bit of a holding pattern, too. It seems like everything that's been done has been done already. I will say that looking at the Dutch designers has been very inspirational. There was some very provocative works being done using digital technology, which is something that I'm not doing myself, but I'm certainly interested in seeing how it's unfolding.

I have a new colleague now that teaches at San Diego State. For the first time I have a teaching partner, after 20 years, and he's a young whippersnapper who works a lot with robotics and solar-powered motors and digital — 3-D digital software and CNC [Computer Numerically Controlled] technology. So it's definitely the direction things are going in right now. I think it's a matter of time before you see a profusion of this creative work.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. Who is that? What's his name?

MS. MARUYAMA: This is Matthew Hebert, H-E-B-E-R-T, and it's been really — talk about a great partnership. We couldn't be more different than we are, and I think it's a perfect combination.

MS. RIEDEL: Great. So the students have access to a wealth of different ideas and techniques and approaches.

MS. MARUYAMA: Correct. I do feel like the old school now, old school versus new school. But yes, it's great. It's good.

MS. RIEDEL: Has technology had any impact on your work over the years?

MS. MARUYAMA: Not really. If I needed something done, and it was going to be faster using technology, I would utilize a little bit of that. Like those metal plates on that cabinet was using the laser-burned technology. The image was burned on with a laser printer. Then, of course, the video work, I don't know if you would consider that to be high technology. But it certainly is part of that new movement, I suppose.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: I have had parts cut out and multiples done with the laser cutter, but nothing that speaks about that technology. You would think that maybe I could have hand cut some of those pieces out. But I've not. I probably should. But I've got to learn how to use the software first. I've got to take Matt's class, if I have time maybe.

MS. RIEDEL: You've traveled a lot. We talked about that yesterday, and then we didn't even mention Korea or Australia. You've traveled quite a bit. You were just mentioning the Dutch furniture work. Where do you see American craft and American furniture on an international scale, and do you see it headed in any particular direction, or does it feel still that holding pattern?

MS. MARUYAMA: In a global sense?

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, you know, I think, to this day, studio furniture is very unique to the United States and Australia. Those two countries seem to embrace the same ideas about craft and studio furniture. In Europe, I think it's very heavily based on design, design for production. Certainly, their designs have become very provocative and very exciting with the advent of technology.

I even traveled to England for the first time in years to see a show at the Victoria and Albert Museum [London], and it was basically design art furniture, meaning that it was art furniture designed by designers. But we've been doing this kind of stuff all along. One thing that designers had, they have a somewhat advantage in that they have access to technologies that they need for production.

But they were doing some very interesting things with technology. I couldn't even remember the names. I have

a list of the names. Marcel Wanders is one. Let's see, these names are so hard to pronounce that I can't remember them. There's a group in England called Studio Job. They do some very interesting things. But in Asia, like Japan, Korea, and China, studio furniture is almost nonexistent. It's kind of a foreign concept to them.

They are more interested in production, designing for industry and manufacturing. One-of-kind studio furniture isn't practiced on a regular basis. I think of all those countries, Korea is probably the most involved in the craft field. They have a very high level of metalworking and jewelry design over there.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think they are much more savvy about studio furniture due to the Hongik University [Seoul, South Korea], which has a very significant craft program in Seoul. Of course, there are some programs that have significant lacquer departments. So there is some. Japan is probably the most conservative as far as the craft fields. They tend to cling to the traditional ceramics, for example. I don't see a lot of really contemporary objects made of ceramics or glass, and definitely no studio furniture.

MS. RIEDEL: So the States and Australia remain the main —

MS. MARUYAMA: Right. I don't understand why that is, but you know, because, I mean, Japan does have some amazing craft histories here.

MS. RIEDEL: Absolutely.

MS. MARUYAMA: The history of ceramics and woodworking and the temple designs, but somehow that hasn't moved into the 21st century.

MS. RIEDEL: This is an interesting question, I think, for you: Do you think of yourself as part of an international tradition, or do you think of yourself as a tradition that's particularly American?

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, definitely American, I would say. I'm not even sure what international — what would you mean by international? What's an example?

MS. RIEDEL: I guess, my thought would be, do you feel very rooted in the American tradition of furniture making, or does it feel more related to experiences in Japan or Australia or equally so from a variety of locations?

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay, I think I understand. My applications are very firmly rooted in the American educational experience.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, I would think so.

MS. MARUYAMA: I feel 100-percent connected to my experiences here that are American. But I think the content of the work could be influenced by travel experiences.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, that makes sense.

MS. MARUYAMA: Not necessarily only travel, but a lifestyle.

MS. RIEDEL: We were talking about that yesterday, the influence of environments. So that seems to correspond to this question.

MS. MARUYAMA: Function drives some of the ideas, too. When I did that Simple Pleasures and Indulgences, all the pieces had to do with an indulgence in chocolate, sleep, and dreams. Coffee was an indulgence. So that influences my work.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, that series was so much fun.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, I enjoyed it.

MS. RIEDEL: It was such a great commentary on how busy everything is today, that what was commonplace has become sort of extravagant luxury, the luxury of sleep, the luxury of time for coffee.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: It's interesting.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's enjoyable because I know that it's a common — people can understand that they have —

MS. RIEDEL: Right, no matter where they are, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: They can identify with that.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, absolutely.

MS. MARUYAMA: So that was good for me.

MS. RIEDEL: What do you see as the similarities and the differences between your early work and your more recent work? We talked about how you see some of the pieces being more dated. But other pieces don't strike me as dated. What do you see as the similarities and the differences, for example, in the Turning Japanese or the Kyoto Series and the work today?

MS. MARUYAMA: It depends on how early you're talking about. The early work from the '70s is very different from the work I'm doing now because the technology used was very simple. There was no joinery and no traditional joinery used in the older pieces.

But the forms are very organic and certainly not referential to furniture at all. It's very sculptural. I sort of miss that kind of freedom that I had back then. I don't think I ever could — I could go back to it to some degree.

In a way, I did return to that in the '80s, when I started combining organic carved forms with traditional furniture cabinets in the '80s. So that did come back, but the language of how it was put together was different. I think, going from the '80s to now, the technology is still the same. There's a constant in the interest in carcass work, and my fabrication methods have not changed much since the '80s all the way to now.

We talked earlier about the color palette changing. It's incredible how that can change a piece, even though the form is the same. Am I answering the question right? I'm trying to remember the question right now.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, the similarities and the differences between — so the difference in the technique - or the technique really hasn't changed since the '80s, though it changed a lot from the beginning. The color has changed drastically.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes, the colors have changed.

MS. RIEDEL: Content and ideas?

MS. MARUYAMA: Kanzashi was definitely, maybe, a throwback to the earlier work, where the wood was just glued together and carved. So that was kind of a liberating way of working, although I still had the same inner concerns about craftsmanship. Oh, gosh, is that sanded well enough?

When am I ever going to be free of that, you know? But that's one of the few bodies of work that were not functional, when I think about it. I'm trying to think of anything I made that was not at all functional. The Combs were the only ones, I believe.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, would you consider some of those 9066 wall pieces - they're not really functional. They're more strictly sculptural, don't you think?

MS. MARUYAMA: Perhaps, yes.

MS. RIEDEL: And *Cascade* is very strictly —

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yeah, I forgot about that, yeah, definitely no wood either. But yes, perhaps the — it wasn't intended for you to put a bunch of dishes in there.

MS. RIEDEL: Right, not at all.

MS. MARUYAMA: They were more of a spiritual piece, a different kind of function, I guess.

MS. RIEDEL: Exactly, exactly.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's an emotional function versus a utilitarian. I think the definition of function is pretty wide, if you come to think of it. I remember giving an assignment to my students, and it was called "function." And then there can be so many different things.

MS. RIEDEL: That actually leads me to think of another question. Do you think of your work as being spiritual in any particular way?

MS. MARUYAMA: Not intentionally.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think the 9066 series has come the closest to being spiritual, or maybe more poignant, in my methods. I suppose, to some degree, they would be spiritual, thinking about the lives and the souls of the people who have had to go through that.

MS. RIEDEL: That makes sense. I hadn't thought about your work in terms of spirituality specifically, but when it comes up in this context, it makes —

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, I wouldn't really consider myself being a person that makes spiritual furniture. It sounds a little religious.

MS. RIEDEL: No, right.

MS. MARUYAMA: But if it's evocative of an emotion, then I suppose —

MS. RIEDEL: Spiritual to the point that it's an emotion, really. Yeah, that makes sense.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think it is. In everyday life, I think it's important to be able to feel that. I think emotion, definitely, is in everybody's work. Some people — maybe not everybody, but the colors, I think, contributes to that emotional content.

MS. RIEDEL: It's interesting because I'm thinking of the 9066 series, now, is really devoid of most color. Some of your pieces have been so brilliantly colorful, and this is very calm and quiet.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, did I tell you about the time when I got really tired of painting everything?

MS. RIEDEL: No.

MS. MARUYAMA: It was back in the '80s, and everything I did was painted. And then pretty soon everyone and their uncle were jumping on the painting bandwagon, and everybody was painting. So for a while I did a series of work that was not colorful. It was all white, and it was called the White Series.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: That was kind of interesting. I enjoyed that, getting away from the color and focusing almost 100 percent on the form.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: There is something to be said about a form that's strong enough that it holds its own without having the color distract you from the form.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: But that got kind of old after a while, and I went back to the paint. Right now, I haven't used — well, that's not true. But aside from the combs, I have not been using much color.

MS. RIEDEL: It seems that way.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's really not appropriate right now. I can't think of how I would use color, other than the color black from the tarpaper. I'm using very simple, plain woods to represent — it was fir and pine that was used on the barracks. That's kind of refreshing.

MS. RIEDEL: We've talked about your professors. We mentioned — I don't know if we mentioned on tape Isamu Noguchi. But when you look back over the course of your career, who stands out for you as the most significant influences for your work? We've covered a lot. We've talked about, certainly, everyone you studied with.

MS. MARUYAMA: Obviously, they had influence on me, and definitely some of the other students that I studied with have influenced me, as well.

MS. RIEDEL: We mentioned the Memphis Group.

MS. MARUYAMA: Pardon?

MS. RIEDEL: We mentioned the Memphis Group.

MS. MARUYAMA: The Memphis Group, that's definitely one.

MS. RIEDEL: Dorothea Lange.

MS. MARUYAMA: Pardon?

MS. RIEDEL: Dorothea Lange, the photographer, right?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes.

MS. RIEDEL: We may have covered it, but I thought I'd — you've mentioned Martin Puryear. Martin Puryear?

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yes. I think everybody loves Martin Puryear. I think you'd be crazy to not like his work.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: Then, of course, I would say that Bob Brady is an influence just because he's just — when you sit around and listen to him talk about his work, he's very good at that. You know that. It's hard to explain what it is — how it is that he's able to. I think that he's just so articulate is what it boils down to.

MS. RIEDEL: He is, and he's a great storyteller.

MS. MARUYAMA: When he talks about his work, he's very good at describing what moves him as an artist. But who else? I'd be lying if I [said I] wasn't influenced. I think I'm definitely influenced by when I was in Japan, seeing all those temples and the color schemes there and then looking at all the Anime and the comic books. That had some influence, too.

MS. RIEDEL: And the lacquer work, in the sense of color.

MS. MARUYAMA: It was an interesting experience, because Japanese lacquer is basically made out of sap from a tree that's highly toxic. It's related to poison ivy. So you're —

MS. RIEDEL: We'll pause it.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay, we paused it.

[Audio Break.]

How have your sources of inspiration changed over time? Have they?

MS. MARUYAMA: I suppose as you grow older, you, hopefully, become more mature. So the subject matter perhaps has also become more mature. When you compare the work that I'm doing now compared to the work I was doing back when I was in my 20s and 30s, the early work was pretty self-indulgent and playful.

I certainly could not be in the right state of mind to be doing the work that I'm doing now back then. I just wasn't ready to deal with that topic. I was still very angry and resentful about the whole experience. We grew up sort of in a lower income bracket, and I always felt like the internment, if we hadn't had that experience, we would be better off. It's just very childish, immature thinking.

MS. RIEDEL: But true, too.

MS. MARUYAMA: But it's true. [Inaudible] — grandparents and parents had to suffer so much, blah, blah, blah, blah. So I just wasn't willing to deal with that subject matter. I just wasn't — I wasn't willing to face up to that subject matter. Also this disconnect with myself and the Japanese-American community early on — I just wasn't mature enough to accept who I was and my background and get over the fact that, yes, Japanese Americans have a certain perception and expectation of each other that I may never fulfill, and I have.

I've come to know they're perfectly great people, and the Tag Project has certainly brought me together with that community. But I don't think I would have been — again, I think it has to do with growing up, finally, at the age of 57. So I do think that — what was the question?

MS. RIEDEL: How your sources of inspiration have changed over time.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh, yeah. I think it tends to be a little more introspective as you're older and thinking about things. What could you have done differently, or what did I get out of a certain experience, and how did that shape me? I think the work reflects that to some degree. What is it that moves you or motivates you? But I think nowadays, in school, we try to get students to think that way already. But I remember when I was in college, that certainly was not the kind of assignments that we received.

MS. RIEDEL: What wasn't?

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, as an undergrad, you're asked to make pieces in mortise-and-tenon, make pieces in dovetail. Now you're going to do a chair, and now you're going to work in plywood and veneer and the different applications of that technique. This time, I mean, with my beginning students, they are making a piece out of plywood.

But the piece has to address a sense of place. So there's no real function applied to it. They just had to think about what the perception of place is, whether a certain place geographically, an emotional place, or a place in your heart. So I gave them a range of choices to make while they're learning how to use plywood.

MS. RIEDEL: So you're trying to overlap technical skills with creative thinking.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, and I don't think we did that so much in the '70s, at least in furniture. There's so much to learn. That's part of the frustration that I feel sometimes, because by the time we get our students, they're almost ready to graduate, and they're just now learning — enjoying the process, and then they graduate. Anyway.

MS. RIEDEL: How has your working process changed over time? It seems like we discussed this earlier, in terms of technique. The techniques were evolved pretty much up until the '80s, and then you haven't necessarily changed the technique dramatically since then, but has your work — when you changed your studio, for example, from at a school to a more private location, has the working process changed significantly over time?

MS. MARUYAMA: No, not really. I think I still follow the same basic processes, starting with a general idea and then a sketch and then maybe a model and then a working drawing and then set out to build the thing. Over the years, though, I have learned that it's okay to ask for help, and it's okay to hire people for help.

So over the last 10 to 15 years, I've had students working for me part-time and helping me. I'm finding it to be more and more valuable now, because physically it's harder for me to do some things, like lifting large sheets of plywood. I just don't have the strength that I used to have. So it really helps to have some stronger, younger people helping me lift this stuff around. I like to think that besides being my slaves, that they would also be learning something.

I think I'm pretty easy to work for, too, very flexible. I used to sub some work out, too, and always to former students. That's one of the things I love about teaching. You have this network of students who are able to do work for you and help you out.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: They, of course, benefit from that. But I don't do that so much anymore because it's very expensive, and I have the resources here in town to do that. But other than that, my methods have been pretty much the same. I can't think of anything that stands out as being any different than 20 years ago.

MS. RIEDEL: Interesting. What are the qualities of your working environment? Is your studio — I read one place where you said, "I'm not a tool wienie." Do you remember saying that?

MS. MARUYAMA: A techno wienie.

MS. RIEDEL: A techno wienie. Are there specific tools that you have to have in your studio?

MS. MARUYAMA: There are some tools that I'm very obsessive about, and even if I'm not using them, if I don't know that they're there, I become very obsessed with finding them. One of them is a tape measure.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I probably have about 20 tape measures somewhere.

MS. RIEDEL: Really?

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, they're just in places I can't find them right now. There's a chisel that I really love that I bought from Japan that I use for a number of different processes, probably the only sharp tool that I have. I'm probably a bad woodworker in that I don't maintain my tools like I should. I sharpen them when I need them, and then unfortunately the studio I have is pretty — it's in a garage, and it's not insulated. So some of the things I have are kind of starting to rust, which is probably a no-no. But I can't think what I have that's so important.

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: The tape measure's not important. It's just that I keep losing it and when I can't find it, all work comes to a standstill.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah, I'm not a tool geek.

MS. RIEDEL: A tool geek, that's it.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yeah.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, I think we have done a very good job of covering most of the questions.

MS. MARUYAMA: Oh good, I'm glad.

MS. RIEDEL: Just a few more.

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: I think we'll change the disc.

MS. MARUYAMA: I think this is almost going to end, isn't it?

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah, so let's change this now.

[END CD 5.]

This is Mija Riedel for the Smithsonian Archives of American Art with Wendy Maruyama at the artist's home in San Diego, California, on March 6, 2010. This is disc number six.

So we were going to wind up with a couple of bigger questions, looking back at the work that you've done over the past three, almost four, decades now. What is it in particular about furniture that has held your interest over this period of time? What is it about this particular form that, as a means of expression, that has something that no other form does?

MS. MARUYAMA: Furniture has this amazing ability to surprise somebody, especially in the form of casework, where it's like the whole cabinet of curiosity, and you're able to open a piece up and reveal something entirely different. They're definitely figurative. There's a body. It's a chair. I think that's probably one of the most wonderful things about furniture form, for an artist to use those metaphors in the work.

From a materials standpoint, I'm not a wood worshiper. A lot of people are. They just worship the wood. They worship the tools, and they worship the technology. Initially, not only was scale attractive to me — I think we talked about this yesterday — I think it was the challenge, again, of a male-dominated field and coming into this field and being able to challenge that. I'm from the time and age when women — I mean, girls weren't allowed to take woodshop in high school. Remember?

We had to take home ec [economics] and sewing. So we were taught at a very early age that this was men's work. So that was part of the attraction and the challenge at that time. Then after that, it was just the potential that furniture has as a sculptural form. You never run out of ideas. If I ran out of ideas, maybe I would be doing something else. But the possibilities are endless, I think.

MS. RIEDEL: When you look back on your career, do you see it as a specific set of episodes, or do you see a thread of continuity connecting all the different series?

MS. MARUYAMA: It's certainly somewhat autobiographical. If you follow the work from the '70s all the way to now, you kind of get a sense of where I was, either mentally or physically. I like to think that a person could see that. Maybe it's mostly evident to me because, of course, every time I see the old work, I'm reminded of certain things that have happened during that phase of my life. It's actually a good thing to have, because nowadays I have trouble remembering anything.

But the work triggers, "Oh, yes, I was in Tennessee then, and I remember we were on the lake with a bunch of people," and then this piece, "Oh, that was my first trip to New York City." So for me, it's a way of tracking where I was. I can remember my timeline better through the work. I don't know if I —

MS. RIEDEL: What about the work in particular matters to you?

MS. MARUYAMA: Matters to me? You mean in terms of its perceived success or —

MS. RIEDEL: It could — you were just talking about how it tracks your life experiences. Maybe that's one thing that it does. But is there something in particular that has been consistent throughout that you see as a theme

pulling it all together? Are there specific different aspects that you can see yourself exploring in different series? Is there anything in particular that makes it, as a whole, compelling to you, or is it - perhaps it's more isolated.

MS. MARUYAMA: I have to — I sort of have to think about it. This is going to be a little bit off-track, okay?

MS. RIEDEL: That's fine.

MS. MARUYAMA: One of the things that I think has been really important to me - and I tell my students this all the time - is that it's really important to be prolific, to make as many pieces as you can. And that's very hard to do with furniture because it's time-consuming. But the reason why it's important to be prolific is because I believe only one of 10 pieces are going to be truly successful. It's going to take those nine pieces to come up with that one successful piece.

So I guess if I were to look at the timeline of work, there's probably going to be five pieces from each decade that stand out as being truly successful, and then successful in a way that there's a feeling of content upon finishing that piece.

For example, maybe one of the pieces, which was the "Inspired by China" [exhibition] piece, was made of this very difficult wood, and it was a pain in the ass to make, actually. But when I finished it, despite a few imperfections, I was really pleased with the way it turned out. I guess there's the feeling of victory over this difficult wood.

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's like a wrestling match, and I managed to get that wood to submit to my demands. Then the combination of the video, all these difficult and strange processes that came together to make that piece work, that was —

[END CD 6 TR 1.]

MS. RIEDEL: Okay.

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay, you were asking —

MS. RIEDEL: Last question is how or where you see your work fitting into the larger picture of contemporary art.

MS. MARUYAMA: Well, there's always going to be this divide between craft and fine arts, I'm afraid. Eventually, I think that's changing. I'd like to think that it is changing. But just recently I'm finding that my newest work on the evacuation of Japanese Americans has been reaching out to a much broader group of people than my other work because — I mean, for instance, the Tag Project being a community project that's been viewed and received by a wider audience than furniture.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: Normally, it's limited to people who enjoy looking at furniture - and running into a community of people who are activists in different fields, they're beginning to take notice of this work.

For instance, the African-American artists who have done a lot of work on their history have been taking note of this work, and that makes me feel good, because they are certainly inspirational to me and probably have had a lot to do with my interest in pursuing this work, using my work as a means to educate the public about something very specific historically. There's not very much work being done by Japanese Americans on this topic. I can't think of very many.

MS. RIEDEL: No.

MS. MARUYAMA: Or even Asian American for that matter, about immigration issues or how they came to this country.

MS. RIEDEL: There was the exhibition in San Francisco a few years at the Craft and Folk Art Museum [Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco, CA]. You were part of that too, right? That's the main thing that comes to mind right now.

MS. MARUYAMA: Which?

MS. RIEDEL: The Craft and Folk Art Museum? [Los Angeles, CA.]

MS. MARUYAMA: Which show was that?

MS. RIEDEL: I can't remember, but I thought it was a show around the issue of Japanese internment.

MS. MARUYAMA: Really? I don't remember.

MS. RIEDEL: Two winters ago, I think. I have to go back and look.

MS. MARUYAMA: Okay.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, I'm pretty sure.

MS. MARUYAMA: That's the museum, and then I think being invited to different shows that are not necessarily craft- and furniture-related has opened up a wider range. That's been good, actually, come to think of it.

MS. RIEDEL: I would think, yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: I hope to continue. I have a lot of ideas that would take me through the next five years about this subject matter. They just passed a bill, I believe, to make all the former camp sites a national park, so all of these areas are creating interpretive centers much like the one at Manzanar.

I think there's one at Minidoka [Jerome County, ID], too. But a lot of them are just bare spaces with no reference to the camps. So I envision that the tags will eventually find homes at these interpretive centers, as well.

MS. RIEDEL: Right. So it seems as if your career now is moving in a slightly different direction, really.

MS. MARUYAMA: It certainly is. It's taking itself on its own almost, and other ideas have come up through dialogues with people that have experienced evacuation. There's a project I'd like to do about 422, which was a group of all Japanese-American — who were all Japanese-American — what do you call them — battalion that was sent to Europe to rescue a bunch of Texan — it was a battalion from Texas that were trapped in Germany or France. I can't remember.

But anyway, they were the most decorated military installment. They had the most Purple Hearts. Nobody knows that. But I want to do a piece about that. So I'm discovering a lot more interesting facts about this historical point in time that I'd like to investigate. So I envision being kind of busy for the next few years with this work.

MS. RIEDEL: It's interesting, too, to think that this was really developed during your residency, right?

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, it is interesting.

MS. RIEDEL: That you finally had time again and space to work on a very different body of work.

MS. MARUYAMA: It's funny that you mention that, because I wonder, if I hadn't gone to New York, what would I have been doing to this day? I'm not even sure that I would be doing this kind of work. So something has to be said about that opportunity to have that residency. I could only hope that other people would also be able to benefit from residencies and have that end result.

I think in all cases, though, even — like that trip to Japan, which was a six-month residency, it took quite awhile for that experience to appear in my work. It took probably almost a year, and I think the piece that you mentioned, *Shut Up and Kiss Me* [1998], that was done right after Japan. It had nothing to do with that experience. So I just think that the residencies do eventually result in some new work. It may not happen right away.

MS. RIEDEL: That combination of time and a new environment has been really effective, it seems, in your process since the early '80s, when you first began to do residencies.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right, right. Right now, it would be nice to not even — it would be a luxury to eventually stop teaching and just be able to do my work and have a residency in my own home, so to speak.

MS. RIEDEL: To work full-time, yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: Yes. I need that.

MS. RIEDEL: And hopefully, that's not too far away.

MS. MARUYAMA: Hopefully, it's not; it's not.

MS. RIEDEL: Right.

MS. MARUYAMA: I will have been teaching for 30 years as of this year, having started in 1980. So I'm hoping that

I can move on before it becomes too difficult.

MS. RIEDEL: You'll be ready to stop and focus full-time on the work.

MS. MARUYAMA: Now that we have a new faculty member in furniture, I feel confident that we could leave without the fear of losing that program.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes, you've done a lot. Now there's the new faculty member, and there were just those relatively large grants from Windgate [Foundation], as I remember.

MS. MARUYAMA: Right.

MS. RIEDEL: So the program is in good shape.

MS. MARUYAMA: Definitely so. But it would be nice to not have to be doing any more fundraising, any more worrying about the future of the program. Now I can be a little more selfish, I think. I will miss the students. But, of course, now I've got so many former students all over the place that their kids become my grandkids, and I never really wanted kids of my own, but I feel like I have a ton of kids.

MS. RIEDEL: Yes.

MS. MARUYAMA: They're, of course, the best kids in the world, you know?

MS. RIEDEL: Yeah.

MS. MARUYAMA: I'm lucky.

MS. RIEDEL: Well, thank you so much.

MS. MARUYAMA: Thank you.

MS. RIEDEL: I very much appreciate your time.

MS. MARUYAMA: I enjoyed your questions. It made me think about things I hadn't thought about in a long time.

MS. RIEDEL: I'm glad to hear that.

[END CD 6 TR 2.]

[END OF INTERVIEW.]