



Smithsonian
Archives of American Art

Oral history interview with Kay Sekimachi
[Stocksdale], 2001 July 26-August 6

Funding for this interview was provided by the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America. Funding for the digital preservation of this interview was provided by a grant from the Save America's Treasures Program of the National Park Service.

Contact Information

Reference Department
Archives of American Art
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560
www.aaa.si.edu/askus

Transcript

Preface

Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project For Craft and Decorative Arts in America

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Kay Sekimachi on July 26 and 30, and August 3 and 6, 2001. The interview took place in Berkeley, California, and was conducted by Suzanne Baizerman 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.

Kay Sekimachi and Suzanne Baizerman have reviewed the transcript and have made corrections and emendations. The reader should bear in mind that he or she is reading a transcript of spoken, rather than written, prose.

Interview

MS. SUZANNE BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Kay Sekimachi at the artist's home in Berkeley, California, on July 26, 2001. We're going to start today with some questions about Kay's background.

So Kay, where were you born, and when was that?

MS. KAY SEKIMACHI: I was born in San Francisco in 1926. My parents were first generation Japanese Americans; that is, my father [Takao Sekimachi] never got naturalized, but my mother [Wakuri Sekimachi] did become a naturalized citizen. And so they're called Issei, and I am a Nisei, meaning second generation Japanese American. We were living in San Francisco, and all I can remember of that time was that my father worked as a gardener. Then, in 1929, my father sent my mother and four kids [elder sister: Yae; younger sister: Kazuko; brother: Koya] back to Japan, and that was sort of the custom of Issei parents, to send their kids back to Japan to live with their grandparents until they were teenagers.

And so, off we went to Japan and spent a whole year there. And my father did want my mother to leave us there, but the oldest child was a boy and he died while we were there of dysentery, which was apparently a very common thing that happened. And so, my mother refused to come back unless she brought us all back. And so that's how my three sisters and I grew up in the States.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did that mean that there weren't a lot of Japanese children of your generation in the States at that time?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I really don't know. No, there were enough.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you grow up in neighborhoods where there were Japanese families?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. After coming back in 1930, we were living in Berkeley, and there was a Japanese community, a Japanese Buddhist church, and there was also a Methodist church. And we did go to Japanese school after classes, and there were other Japanese kids around.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You had contact with a community then.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And would you say your parents raised you in a traditional fashion, or had they become Americanized? How would you describe that?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, for sure, they weren't Americanized. But on the other hand, I don't think there was too much in the way of Japanese culture. I think they were just too busy, my father, number one, trying to make a living. This was during the Depression. And I know my mother took in sewing. And anyway, it was, I think, a very hard time.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you learned good work skills, it sounds like.

MS. SEKIMACHI: That's all I learned, yeah. Then, of course, my father died in 1937.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Let's see. You were about 12 then.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Ten years old. And so, after that, my mother went to work doing housework, and I think at that time, she worked for about 50 cents an hour, but that was the going wage. And so, for sure, she didn't have time to give us any guidance or tell us what to do or what not to do, and so we just grew up.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But it sounds like you were a pretty close-knit group in that period, just with the death of your father.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, my sisters and I and my mother, we were just very close, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And so she did sewing at home, and then she did work outside the home, domestic work?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I wondered if there were any subtle evidence or indications of a Japanese culture in your childhood. Were there any parts of your life that you think reflected your heritage?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, I guess. One loves to eat, and so I think about growing up eating Japanese food, which, of course, my mother was more familiar with in cooking. And in those days, there was a vendor who came around to the various Japanese houses, and it was always fun going out to see what the man would have. So my mother was able to buy tofu, and fresh fish, and daikon [oriental radish], and all kinds of Japanese produce. And then there was also a Japanese grocery store run by Japanese around the corner, and so we were able to get groceries there.

And I do remember a few Japanese New Year's feasts that we would have. And I just remember one time, my mother cooked a lobster and put it on her great big plate that she used for just the New Year banquet. And anyway, I remember things like that. And also, once a year, she would pull out her *kori*, which was like a suitcase that Japanese women would store their kimonos in, and she would pull it out mainly to air them. And so, we always looked forward to that, and it was a big treat to see her wedding kimono and her obis and her other kimonos that she brought over.

I also do remember, we did kind of celebrate Girls' Day, which was a big thing in Japan. And we had a set of *ohinasamas*-I think that's what they were called-and you had a tiered platform, like a little stage set that you set these dolls on. And on the top, you had the empress and the emperor and the courtiers. And anyway, I'm positive we did not have a full set, but we had some, and they were always sort of our treasures.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And those dolls wore a kimono.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, they were garbed in their traditional kimonos.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you were saying your mom had, sort of, the trunk with her kimono. Did she wear those ever; I mean, were there occasions?

MS. SEKIMACHI: No, I don't remember ever seeing her wear them. I'm sure if we had really belonged to a Japanese church and there was some special occasion like-I know today the churches celebrate, or the Japanese community, has the Obon festivals, where the women dress up and do their dances.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But this wasn't part of your experience.

MS. SEKIMACHI: It wasn't.

MS. BAIZERMAN: During the Depression, it doesn't sound like after your father died there was a lot of free time to-

MS. SEKIMACHI: No, there really wasn't. But one thing I'll mention, coming back to the kimonos and textiles, I didn't remember the sash from seeing them when she pulled her kimono out, but it was later on, after I became a weaver, that she did pull out this sash. And she told me that she actually prepared the silk from the cocoon, she wove the material, and then she tie-dyed it. [She was in her late teens.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is your mother.

MS. SEKIMACHI: My mother. And so I still have it. I also have a photograph of us as kids. She made two of them, and so my older sister has one around her waist and I have one around my waist. And as I say, I still have it, and it's one of my treasures. But she said that she made a mistake by marking her stitching lines with a pencil, so the graphite never came out in the washing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, for goodness sakes, so it remained.

MS. SEKIMACHI: It remained. This story must have come out after I became a weaver, that is, after I bought a loom.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Isn't that interesting.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Because she told me she wove after I bought a loom.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you hadn't really heard about this part of her life until much later.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you moved to Berkeley when you came back from Japan. Did you stay in Berkeley your whole childhood?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, until World War II.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you were there the whole time.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And so you went to elementary school. Can you tell me a little bit about those years?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I went to Longfellow Elementary, right down here in Berkeley, and then to Burbank Junior High, and then I had two years of, or maybe not even a year, at Berkeley High, when we were relocated, when World War II came on.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So when you say you were relocated, was this your whole family as a unit that was relocated?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, my mother and the three of us, the three girls.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And what happened with your home, where you had been?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, we were living on Berkeley Way, and all I remember is that my mother, you know-rumors started flying around that if you had anything Japanese, that you had to get rid of it. And so I remember her breaking Japanese records and even burning books, I think. You weren't supposed to have any books or magazines in Japanese.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right. All of the sudden, the world kind of went in some strange direction.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And then, of course, we were told that we were going to be relocated, or that we were going to an assembly center, and to pack up your belongings. And so it turned out that my mother worked for a very nice family here in Berkeley, the Denneses, and they said they would take as much stuff as we wanted to store. And I don't know where these trunks came from, but we did pack up a couple of trunks and we put what we thought was precious to us.

And I know I saved my paper dolls, because as we were growing up, all we had to do for recreation was to play with our paper dolls. And that meant cutting the dolls out of the newspaper every Sunday, and then making clothes for them. So I still have them.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And this was sort of an art project combined with having a toy that you could play with in the end.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And were they fashion dolls or, kind of, more little girl dolls?

MS. SEKIMACHI: They were both. Well, Jane Arden was one of my favorite, I guess, characters. The doll was only about 10 inches high or so, but I made her a vast wardrobe, and we built stories around the dolls.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So in a funny way, it's related to textiles, isn't it, being kind of substitute fabrics and having some of that aspect to it, like a real dress. And you said you left those behind.

MS. SEKIMACHI: We left them in trunks, and I guess that's why I still have them to this day. And I still can't throw them out, because I guess we really put a lot of work into them.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You know, I'd really like to know a little bit more about that transition between what life had been like before and transitioning into a relocation kind of life. What was it like for you with the non-Japanese people, your neighbors and friends? How did they react, if at all?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Actually, we didn't have any interaction with other Caucasians. And as for our school, I think maybe we didn't really even talk about it with our classmates. We just knew we had to go, and we did it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, just straightforward. And I'm sure the Denneses that your mother worked for, if they were willing to store the furniture, they must have had a compassion. But as far as everyone else, it just sort of happened and you went along with what was laid out for you.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Exactly.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And where was it that you left for? You had some suitcases and boxes, I suppose.

MS. SEKIMACHI: We had some suitcases-well, as much as we could carry, that was about it. So it wasn't much. And I do remember, we left a whole bunch of stuff right in the middle of the room. And, at that point, dealers were coming around buying up what people left. And we did have an upright piano that was given to us, and that went for five dollars. That was probably a pretty good price for it in those days [laughs]. But anyway, I do remember that we did get five dollars.

And what I do remember the most is that we left a bunch of quilts. These quilts were given to my mother by one of the women she worked for. And I do remember that they were beautiful, and I think now, my gosh, if we only had them.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, these beautiful old quilts.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, they were old, like, crazy quilts.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really nice, old textiles.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And these came from two women that were schoolteachers in Oakland, and they probably came from the Midwest or somewhere.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And their family somehow.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you were how old at this time?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I was about 14.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you gathered up your belongings, as much as you could carry, and then you were transported to-

MS. SEKIMACHI: By bus to Tanforan Assembly Center [for "Persons of Japanese Ancestry;" opened April 27, 1942, and housed 8,000 people]. And then, we were assigned rooms in a barrack, and there were cots and we had straw mattresses, and it was just bare other than the cot. And somehow, we managed for-I think it was about three months that we were in Tanforan. But I must say, the first few days, I thought, when we had to stand in line at the mess hall for meals, and I really thought, gosh, are we going to survive, because nothing was organized.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, and so even your basic needs for food were in question, up in the air.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And was it Japanese food? Was it things you were used to eating?

MS. SEKIMACHI: No, it was, I guess, sort of army meals, beans and hot dogs and stuff like that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So, adding insult to injury.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And so what did you do, a 14-year-old girl, three months in this armylike existence?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, the older Niseis, who were, like, in Cal by that time, they started a school. And then Professor Obata from Cal was in our camp, and he started an art school. And so, that's where my younger sister and I went to. So every day we drew and painted.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that must have been a bright spot in some way, in an otherwise pretty drab existence.

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

MS. BAIZERMAN: And what was Mr. Obata like? It seems quite amazing that somebody would, out of the dreary period, just think of something that he could do to help others. What was he like?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I don't know that I ever really got to know him very well, but certainly he was just a very capable person who got this thing organized, got the school going, and quite a few students were there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You said you painted and drew-they had art supplies for you?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I think, finally, art supplies came to camp.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, well, that was a step in the right direction. So you felt like you really learned something that helped you later on.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, I think so. In fact, in school, the only classes I liked were the art classes. The only classes I did well in were the art classes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: At Berkeley.

MS. SEKIMACHI: At Berkeley. I was not a good student, and I really didn't like school, but I did enjoy my art classes. And so, anyway, I must say, camp wasn't all that bad. Number one, here my mother had to work and, you know, try to raise three of us, and so it was a hard time. And in camp, we were taken care of, we were housed and we were fed, and you were able to earn a little money, eventually, and so my mother worked as a dishwasher in one of the mess halls.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it was not good, but it did have some pluses, it sounds like.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And we were together.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you were together, and that was certainly something to be treasured. And did they have school for you, in addition to the art classes?

MS. SEKIMACHI: They did have school. We were moved to Topaz, Utah, and there they did have schools organized. And so, actually, I graduated high school in Topaz, class of '44, something like that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And then, you left Topaz in-

MS. SEKIMACHI: We left after I graduated because another family that my mother worked for in Berkeley, Mrs. Ziegler, her mother lived in Cincinnati. And at that time, of course, it was still during the war, household help was very hard to get, and so Mrs. Ziegler's mother was very happy to take my mother and my younger sister in. And so my mother went as a housekeeper and my sister was still in school, so she just went off to school and, I guess, helped my mother. But the Quakers had organized hostels, so my older sister and I went to a hostel and eventually found jobs.

MS. BAIZERMAN: What kind of work did you do?

MS. SEKIMACHI: The first job I got was to work in a home.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that's like domestic work.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Domestic work-and my sister did the same thing. That was the easiest way to get started. And so, that lasted for maybe six months. But all I know is that the last six months that we were in Cincinnati, Ohio, for one month I worked as a glazer at the Rookwood Pottery, which was a famous old pottery. And I guess now, the little pots are worth something. But anyway, I got acquainted with a little bit of pottery, and then there was a Japanese man who was the designer there, a man from Japan, and it was wonderful to see him working [Kataro Shirayamadani (1865-1948)].

MS. BAIZERMAN: He was a master.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, painting scenes onto these pots.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well known. I can't remember his name, but well known in that field, a beautiful decorator. And so, that didn't last too long.

MS. SEKIMACHI: That lasted about a month. And then I found myself working as an assistant to a dental technician in a dental office. And there I even learned how to cast gold, so that was my one and only time

working with metal.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you didn't like the pottery job very much.

MS. SEKIMACHI: No, I don't think I really liked it. I worked as a glazer, and of course, it was-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Not very creative.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, production work. We were, you know, a production line, and so it wasn't at all.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, probably the dental office was more creative.

MS. SEKIMACHI: [Laughs.] Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you had that experience with the dental technician work, and what happened next?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Okay, the war ended and friends were coming back to California. Our relatives already came back, and they said come on back. And if we came back in a certain period, the government would pay our way back and also pay for the freight of our stuff. So we decided that we would come back, although we did make friends and we did have some friends in Cincinnati. And it was, you know, an interesting experience, but anyway.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You were happy to come back to Berkeley in the end.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, right.

[Audio break.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Kay Sekimachi once again, at her home in Berkeley, California. Today is July 30, 2001.

Kay, since we were together two or three days ago, did you have any other things you might want to add to our first session together?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, as I was thinking about my childhood, I guess one of the most important things is that we did speak Japanese at home. And so, I guess English was almost a second language at that time.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Pretty important.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Very important. And well, I think I did mention that during the Depression, we really didn't have very much, but I think everybody was sort of in the same boat, especially in the Japanese community. No one had very much.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So did it make you feel less deprived, since people around you were in very much the same situation?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Maybe we didn't know any better; maybe that was it. But certainly, I know that after my father died, I think we felt insecure, for sure.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, like how you were going to make out without him.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And my mother had to go out to work every day, so that was always a worry for especially my younger sister and I.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, you couldn't quite see how this was going to work out, and you already knew that you were having some financial troubles anyway, and then this was adding more to it.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you all made it through that really rough period, it sounds like.

MS. SEKIMACHI: So it seems. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, you came out maybe the stronger for it, who knows.

Well, speaking of your Japanese heritage, it seems to me that you did travel to Japan at one time. Would you like to tell me what that was like for you, why you went?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, the first time we went when we were just practically babies. I don't remember it at all, so I guess that doesn't count. But actually, in 1975, I had applied for an NEA [National Endowment for the Arts] grant, and one of the things that I wrote in the grant was that I would like to go to Japan. And so, when I got it, I decided we had to go. So Bob [Stocksdale, Kay's husband] and I-and then my mother decided that she wanted to go with us, and so the three of us went, and it was really a very, very interesting trip. In fact, when we got to my mother's family home, I really had the feeling that I came home.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I did.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You absolutely felt like you belonged there?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. I guess when we were growing up, she really did tell us stories about Japan.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So in a way, you recognized-

MS. SEKIMACHI: My cousins and my aunt and uncles, and I guess we had photographs of her home, et cetera. And so, it did seem very familiar to me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And so, you visited with your relatives.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And then we went to really, sort of, the tourist spots, I mean, Kyoto-let me think. Where else did we go on that trip?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Where is your mother's home, her ancestral home, so to speak?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Actually, both my mother and father came from the same area, Ebaraki prefecture, and the area is called the Kanto Plains, and it's about maybe not even 60 miles north of Tokyo. And the capital is Mito, and apparently it's a pretty famous place in Japanese history. There is a little place called, I think it was, Yuki, which was a little southwest of my mother's family home, a little village where they did weaving, and a very special type of weaving called-my memory is getting terrible: I can't remember. But they did fine ikat [Malaysian weaving techniques] with silk threads, and it was really very impressive, and they worked on the low looms.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So had you expected to find this village, this place where they did have weaving?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I had heard about it, and the name is coming back to me, and I think the technique or the type of textile is called-it ends with a "ji." Maybe it will come back to me at some point. Tsumuji, yeah, T-S-U-M-U-J-I-yuki tsumuji. [tsumuji]. I hope I'm correct.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So this is that very special, fine ikat.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Silk ikat.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And so, you watched people doing dyeing and weaving there.

MS. SEKIMACHI: We didn't see the dyeing, but we certainly saw weaving. And they had a showroom where they sold some of their products.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So does anything else really stand out from that trip? How old were you when you went back there?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Oh, my heavens, I was in my 40s. I was 46 when Bob and I were married, so I had to be 48.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you had not returned to Japan since early childhood.

MS. SEKIMACHI: That's right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Anything else that struck you at that time when you visited that you really remember or that pertains to your career as a textile artist?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, let's see, I think I really found out that I really loved the old Japanese things, like the tansu chests-

[End Tape 1, Side A.] [Begin Tape 2, Side A.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Kay Sekimachi at the artist's home in Berkeley, California. This is a continuation from tape one of our interview on July 30, 2001.

We were talking about your trip to Japan, and you were talking about the architecture and the gardens, and how that felt to be there with things that seemed familiar.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Anyway, I guess I found out that I really loved the Japanese aesthetic. And up until this trip, I hadn't really seen a lot of Japanese things, not a lot. And we were familiar with the colorful toys, the plastic things-

MS. BAIZERMAN: The exports-

MS. SEKIMACHI: Exported things, yes. But, of course, on the trip, we were right there and we went to antique stores and the flea markets. And anyway, I decided that I really loved everything Japanese.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that was something you weren't aware of-probably didn't see that much of in the United States at that time.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right. And I really loved the Japanese homes, the interiors. You know, they're so serene, and no clutter.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right, that's hard to achieve.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I know.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that sounds like that put some part of your thinking about aesthetics into a different framework. You had a name for it, or something like that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I can't think of a name for it, but anyway, it was really one of my first trips. Maybe it was the first trip out of this country. So it was just sort of an eye-opener.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah. What about other travels? Were there other trips you made that opened your eyes in some other way?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. Wood turning was just really beginning to become-well, I don't like to use the word popular, but anyway. This would be in the early '80s. And so he [Bob] was asked to participate in a number of symposiums in England. And so we made three trips in all, and again, I just loved the country. And I thought the English countryside was just absolutely wonderful.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you were outside of London; you were in a smaller town.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, well, we were in London, but also we toured the country and finally ended up, on one of the trips, or maybe two of the trips, at a place in Dorset called Beaminster, and that's where John Makepeace [furniture designer] had his woodworking school and home and studio. And this was a marvelous-I can picture the building in my mind; I can see it, but maybe it's about a 16th-century building, a manor house, just absolutely wonderful. And the gardens were done up just beautifully, very much like Jane Austen's, the settings where the movies are being made based on Jane Austen's books, with manicured lawns and terraces, and steps going down to a fountain.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And there you were.

MS. SEKIMACHI: There we were. And we were put in the king's room, which was just a wonderful, great big room. And I remember it was in the winter, and so they had put a hot water bottle in our bed for us. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: It works, too.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, it sure worked.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that was Bob's moment, in a way.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Were you able to meet people in the textile field out there?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, got acquainted with Ann Sutton and also Peter Collingwood. And so, on all the trips that we've been to England, I think we've always made it a point to see Ann and to see Peter. And just very recently, we've been in touch again with Peter Collingwood, and I think he has written a book on split-ply braiding [*Techniques of Ply-Split Braiding*, Unicorn Books, 1999]. Back in 1976, when I first discovered camel girths, I did a series of small hangings called *Variations on Camel's Girth*; the technique is called split-ply braiding.

Originally, the braids came from India, and so Peter had made a complete collection of these camel girths. And this September, he's organized a conference and an exhibition. And so he asked me to participate by just sending some things over. And so anyway, I think that's why the camel girths are on my mind. I did get the ones that I have; I got them out and sent pictures over, and we'll have about four or five pieces in the show.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So those connections go back quite a ways. Let's see, that's about 20-some years that you've been in touch with Peter, something like that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And those contacts last a long time, I think.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And he's certainly a figure in the world fiber scene, and he has been so consistently. How did you happen to come upon the camel girth technique? Was it through his writings, or through something else?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, I got interested in it in the '70s, the mid-'70s, when there was a lot of interest in ethnic textiles. Then at that time too, a lot of people were traveling to India, and some girls just came back from India with camel girths, and I thought they were quite beautiful. And then Virginia Harvey up in Washington wrote a monograph, and then two girls from Cal wrote another little book. And anyway, I just got very interested in it and started doing it.

And also, it's a technique that is portable. Well, in India, the men did the weaving-if you want to call it weaving. But they stood right there in the street with the-let's see, I can't remember now, but the woven part may be thrown over their shoulders, and then the part that they're working on, they would just hold it right in front of them. And they're working with very long ends of yarn, but still, there was, I guess, by the time they got to a certain point, it wasn't dangling all over the place.

But what I did was I got a basket with a pretty sturdy handle, and Bob made dowels for me, and I put the threads around the dowels. The dowel was tied to the handle and then all the ends of the threads just sat in the basket. So wherever we traveled to, I was able to take the basket along with me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you were traveling more with him, weren't you, than you had in your earlier life?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, for sure.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, were there any other places that just stand out in your mind as travels that enriched your career or the way you looked at things?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, I always think of Haystack Mountain School of Crafts [Deer Isle, ME].

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, we should talk about schools a little bit. What about Haystack?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, let's see, the first time I went, I went with my younger sister, and it was the first time we had gone across the country.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So this was before you were married.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, this was 1956, so it's way back. And Jack Larsen was teaching, and I got a scholarship. So since we had been nowhere, my younger sister decided to come along with me. So we took the *California Zephyr* and took the train all the way across to Boston and then another little train up to Maine. And Haystack was still at Liberty, near Augusta, at that time. And it was, again, a very interesting experience, having never been to camp-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, to summer camp.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Summer camp or been thrown together in a situation where you live with your fellow students and you eat with them. It was very different for me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You're just thrown right into it.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you studied with Jack Larsen at that time.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I studied with Jack Larsen, and that was, I guess, a wonderful experience for me, because he would just assign problems. And I did a sampler-the problem was called Emotional Stripes, where you're using

color and making as many different color striped patterns as you can think of. Well, maybe I was still working on the loom, and Jack came along; he saw what I was doing, and he says, "Kay, that's the most beautiful striped pattern I've ever seen." And so, I think I felt very flattered and encouraged.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh yeah, to have somebody of his caliber really tune right into what you were doing, really had a strong encouragement for you.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And then, before the session ended, his assistant, Win Anderson, was also teaching there—maybe Jack had left by that time. But anyway, Win asked me if I would like to come to New York and work in their studio. I gave it a thought, but I thought, oh no, I'm just too scared to do that. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, 1956-

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, so, anyway, I didn't do it, but it was nice to be asked.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that was affirming. You were on the right track. And you had studied with Trude [Guermontez] by that time.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So things were starting to fall into place. So actually, Haystack was quite a boost to your career, in a sense, to your self-esteem.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, for sure.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And any of the other schools, Arrowmont or any other programs that you've been involved in, vacation kind of thing?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, after Maine I said, oh my gosh, this is where I want to live. And, of course, when I say that, people say right away, well, have you been here in the winter? And I would say, no. But then again, in the '70s, I started teaching for Mary Woodard Davis in Santa Fe, New Mexico. And, of course, I fell in love with New Mexico, and I thought, this is another place I would love to live, if I didn't live in California.

MS. BAIZERMAN: What appealed to you in New Mexico, do you think?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I loved the desert. And, of course, I just loved the Indian things, the blankets, the pottery, and the jewelry.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, a beautiful aesthetic that somehow maybe you felt some sympathy with or some affinity.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And I loved the adobe houses.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, the architecture. So all the different ways that they express their aesthetic. You taught for Mary in her craft school there in Santa Fe?

MS. SEKIMACHI: In Santa Fe. Actually, it was a summer program, and she had various teachers come and teach for one week.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, you know, we've talked about your travels abroad in Japan and England, and this brings us to a question that has to do with whether or not you see yourself as part of any international tradition or international movement in fiber art, or perhaps you see yourself as a part of an American tradition. What do you think about those kinds of questions?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I really don't think I think about things like this. I just do things that I want to do and that's it, and I don't think they're international or American.

MS. BAIZERMAN: They're just what you do?

MS. SEKIMACHI: They're just what I do.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay, that's fair. Does the function of objects play a part in the meaning of your work? Do you think about function?

MS. SEKIMACHI: No, I don't think about function either. And again, I just do the things that come to mind.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And function has never been a particular part of that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Okay, maybe I have to take that back, because when I first got started, that is, weaving, I was

trying to make a living, and so certainly, in those days, I had to weave functional items. And by that I mean, you know, place mats, and hand towels, and ponchos.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's right, we talked about that, I remember. But once you were freed of the responsibility for earning an income from your craft, then you went onto nonfunctional.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, yes. And I think that happened-well certainly, studying with Trude [Trude Guermonprez taught weaving at the California College of Arts and Crafts from 1954 until 1976], she just really opened my eyes to what weaving could be. And so I began to weave tapestries like the one I showed you, which is just a very small series, but I certainly did them. And then, wall hangings and room dividers, and then she had taught us about double weaves. And then, from double weaving, I realized that you could weave more layers. And so by experimenting with multiple layers, I came upon the pieces that eventually became my monofilament hangings. And so they were absolutely just decorative pieces; I mean, there's nothing functional about them.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But more than decorative, I think, just to me very aesthetically pleasing as art, something that you can contemplate.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Thank you.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you place Trude, it sounds like, at the center of this change to doing nonfunctional work, to doing more aesthetically oriented work.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. I had been weaving for-well, I got my first loom in the fall of 1949. And so I was weaving and, in fact, I quit CCAC [California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland] when I saw the girls in the weaving room weaving. It just fascinated me, seeing the harnesses going up and down, and the girls throwing the shuttle. And I didn't even know my mother had woven in Japan. I just got fascinated.

I spent the last \$150 I had and I bought a loom. So I had to quit CCAC, and I thought, well, this girl I had befriended at CCAC would teach me how to weave. Well, she tried, but it was not good. And so I found out that there were free classes at McKinley Adult School right here in Berkeley. And so I went to the class, and although the teacher wasn't great by any means-Walter Houle, a very nice man. And in the class, I met some wonderful women, and one in particular, Claire Weaver, who became one of my very best friends.

But certainly, I learned more than I would have if I had struggled all on my own. So then I was asked-well, when I bought my loom, I asked my friend, where can I buy a loom, and she says Ahrens' in Oakland. And this was a studio in the Fruitvale neighborhood, and so I did get acquainted with Dorothy and Jim Ahrens. And so while I was going to school at Berkeley Adult School, Dorothy Ahrens asked me if I would like to apprentice with her. And so I thought, well, why not.

And so I went out there. And there, of course, I learned how to make warps, which-the method I still use. And also, I was able to make a little income, because Dorothy taught, but she just would put a warp on the loom for her students and they would just come in and weave. And so, I made all the warps for all these ladies.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you thread the loom, too?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I threaded the looms. I made the warps and I dressed the loom, and then got it all ready to go and-

MS. BAIZERMAN: And didn't get to weave. [They laugh.] I mean, to some weavers, that's the worst part, isn't it.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: They just look forward all through the warping to weaving.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I know.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And here, you never got to experience that. Well, I guess it was a job at the time.

MS. SEKIMACHI: It was a job.

MS. BAIZERMAN: In a nice environment.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Exactly.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And you must have learned quite a bit from that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, for sure, I learned a lot. But coming back to Trude-okay, I had this background before I

studied with Trude.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, very practical.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And so, studying with her came just at the right time. I think I was really ready for her. And anyway, she really made it all logical. You know, before, I really didn't know the relationship of all these—you know, the harnesses, the patterns. No one taught that way. They just taught you what to do, and that was it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It was strictly do this, and then do this, and then weave.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I see. And she actually forced you to understand the fundamentals of how to read drafts. So she empowered you, in a way.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Absolutely, yes. And then, she really had a gift of—well, she was a wonderful teacher and she really made you think, and she made you want to go on and explore on your own.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's very interesting that she really brought that out in you. She was like the right person for you right then.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And then, in the summer session that I was able to take from her, I got started on the eight-harness loom, so I felt that that was a big leap, too, because it seemed like such a mystery, you know. It's something that she made all very clear again.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, just one more level of complexity. At the time when you studied with her, she was doing wall hangings and artwork in fiber, is that right?

MS. SEKIMACHI: She was, yet she did everything, because she was doing some designing for a textile manufacturer back east. We became very good friends, and she said, "Kay, don't you want to try doing some place mats," and you know, see if we could design something that would become a real production item. And so we decided we'll just weave place mats and try stenciling designs on them. And, of course, it didn't pan out. But anyway, she was very interested in doing a lot of things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: She was very broad in her interest in fiber. And somehow, you and perhaps other students really got swept up in her. Is it kind of a passion for what she did, or was she passionate about fiber, or what? How would you describe it?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I suppose you could say that she was passionate about weaving and textiles.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But not in a very demonstrative way.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right. She was quiet; I think maybe a sensitive person. But anyway, all the other teachers, I felt, were just sort of teaching superficially, but Trude went much deeper.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Thorough?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: With Jack Larsen, you had a kind of moment when he turned to you and he said that these were the most beautiful striped samples that he had seen. Was there a moment like that with Trude, would you say, where she recognized your ability, your promise?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, she never gave, I don't think, praise, you know; she didn't say, oh, wonderful, wonderful. But anyway, I just remember very well that she always left around 12 o'clock, and I just stayed on and I did my work after everyone left, because I could just work much better. But I know one time I had done something, in fact, I still have the sampler. She said, "I really like what you did today."

MS. BAIZERMAN: That was very simple, but it had a meaning to you that you knew that she really appreciated what you were doing. So that was similar to with Jack Larsen. You kind of felt yourself recognized.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And then, of course, before Haystack, Trude had asked me to substitute for her, because she went to Haystack the summer before we went, and so I subbed for her. That was my first experience with teaching, and so that was really something. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: A trial.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, that was a trial.

MS. BAIZERMAN: What did you find particularly daunting about it? What was that experience like for you?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Just facing these students and trying to get them to do something. Well, she had started the class, and so I was just finishing up for her, so it shouldn't have been that difficult. But anyway-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Your first time, though, it's always going to be difficult, I think. It's a hard thing to take on. And maybe you're feeling kind of reserved in having to be in this teaching role. It's kind of, maybe, a little bit harder than it might be for somebody more outgoing. But you've done a lot of teaching, so somewhere along the line; you really got over that feeling of being reserved.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And following somewhat on Trude's model.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I tried to. I still think the way she taught us was just still the best way.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I'm changing the subject here a little bit. I wonder, could you tell me a little bit about what religion or a sense of spirituality, what role they might play in your work, if any?

MS. SEKIMACHI: None. Let's see, actually, my mother became a Christian.

MS. BAIZERMAN: When was that, when you were younger or older?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Actually, when we were growing up, I think-maybe especially after my father died. We had relatives who were devout Christians, and they belonged to a group, sort of a fundamentalist group called the Plymouth Brethren. And there are still groups; the Plymouth Brethren is all over the country, as well as abroad and, I think, in Canada. But they're just small groups that just meet.

MS. BAIZERMAN: In homes-

MS. SEKIMACHI: We had-well, because I used to go-a meeting house in Oakland. But they are called meeting houses, and there's no minister. So, in that sense, it's sort of like the Quakers.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But with more dogma involved?

MS. SEKIMACHI: To tell you the truth, I really did not understand what they were teaching.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Were you influenced in a negative direction, do you think, by some of that experience, or just not at all?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Not in a negative way-I don't know. I guess maybe I wasn't really interested.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's just never been a direction that you've taken.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right. I know that up to a few years ago they were still interested; they wanted Bob and I to join, you know. I didn't think it was for me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Nothing wrong with that. Here's another, kind of, change of pace for us here. This question is about the market for craft. You must have seen a lot of-you worked at street fairs; you must have seen a lot of changes in the way that crafts have been marketed. Tell me what your experience has been like.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Okay, let's see, I guess the way we started was at street fairs, and then, of course, the state fairs came up, and everyone participated in the state fairs. The Oakland Museum had Christmas sales, and we certainly looked forward to that, and the San Francisco Art Festival. And so, these are the places where we, sort of, got started that was, sort of, a small outlet for sales.

And then, this was in the late '50s and '60s, early '60s, there was a group called the Designer Craftsmen of California, and Trude was one of the craftsmen responsible for getting that group going. Marguerite Wildenhain and, I guess, Margaret Depatta-no, maybe Margaret Depatta died before that, because I think she died in 1960. But anyway, the group was composed of the so-called professional craftsmen here in the Bay Area. And so we had a shop out at the Cliff House, the restaurant. And so I remember going out there to man the store once in a while.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was it like a co-op?

MS. SEKIMACHI: It was like a co-op, yeah. But here I was, trying to make a living with these saleable items, and

so I think I did try to get my things into shops.

We were trying to sell work. But all I remember is that sales were few and far between. I know that at the time I had started with my younger sister, and we were doing Christmas cards, silk-screening them and trying to sell them through stores. And Fraser's handled them, and there were some shops in San Francisco, Local Color and Nanny's.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was Nanny's the jewelry store?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Nanny's was a jewelry store. And I think we even had some stores back east, but the Christmas card business only went on for a number of years; I really can't remember how many years.

[End Tape 2, Side A.]

MS. SEKIMACHI: But I did better at selling Christmas cards than weaving, period. But I think in the '70s, it was mainly all these exhibitions, especially the three-dimensional work that took a lot of my time and I spent a lot of time at. And again, I was teaching, so I wasn't depending on selling things for an income.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Where did you sell those dimensional pieces, or was it for shows?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Again, they were few and far between. The sales were just absolutely nil at my show, at Lee Nordness Galleries in New York. I think I sold one, for not very much money either. In the '80s, I think we had the biggest change. I know with Bob, you know, he was always selling his bowls, the salad bowls through Gump's and the decorative bowls through Fraser's. And so, he was kept pretty busy and-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Kind of steady.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Steady-he did have a steady income. But anyway, with weaving, I don't think the sales came until the mid-'80s, and I think that's when the collectors sort of came on the scene, like the Saxes here in the Bay Area, and then the galleries started to open. And okay, prior to that, Louise Allrich did have a textile gallery in San Francisco, and maybe she sold one or two pieces of my work, and that was about it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So where did you sell most of your work, then? Like, people would see it exhibited and then contact you outside of galleries and other shows? How were most of your pieces marketed?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I don't think I sold that much in the '70s.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it was real slow going. How did you keep your morale up? How did you keep going?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, I guess I just wanted to keep working or doing these things. Okay, the sales were few and far between, but for instance, I did send a piece to the Lausanne Biennale [Switzerland] in 1970-was it 1972? And I hear that it was the first piece that sold. And I say that it was probably the first and the most inexpensive piece, because I still have no business sense whatsoever. And I don't know-no sense at all as far as making money.

And so, I didn't think that my monofilament hangings should cost more than \$2,000, and I think that's what I had on that piece. And chances are everybody else's things were twice that much.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, at least. So you started with some exhibits; you sold a piece at Lausanne. Then, what happened after that point? The collectors started-

MS. SEKIMACHI: The collectors started coming.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Would they come to your home and look at pieces?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, the Saxes just came right to us. And by that time, I was doing the paper bowls, too, and those sold readily, because they were just easier to do, and I could sell them for \$300-well, maybe the first one, I sold for \$75. I know I did, yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That was a real bargain. And so most of your career, you've been exhibited widely. It seems like if you look in your file, you've had many, many group and individual shows, but your sales have been primarily with individual collectors, either through a place like Louise Allrich, or were there other galleries that represented you?

MS. SEKIMACHI: No, I'm drawing a blank here, I can't remember that there were many galleries.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, textiles have never enjoyed that sort of business activity so much, so maybe there just

weren't any other places.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, I'm going to have to try to refresh my memory on this.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Brown/Grotta [Brown/Grotta Gallery, Wilton, CT], you've been with them for how long now?

MS. SEKIMACHI: For more than 10 years. And so, that was at the beginning of the '90s. And now, Del Mano Gallery [Santa Monica, CA] has done fairly well for us. Brown/Grotta, and I know that Snyderman Gallery [Philadelphia, PA] is doing very well for a lot of textile artists.

MS. BAIZERMAN: They seem to have had some nice textile shows recently. So I think we've kind of shown the way the market has changed for you.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And then, of course, the museums started to buy, too.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, that's true; that's another audience.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Maybe the late '80s, early '90s.

MS. BAIZERMAN: A little later than the collectors.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, a little later. Of course, at one time, there were many galleries selling crafts, many opened up, and some have even folded. Like in San Francisco, you know, there was Miller-Brown, and they sold textiles and had textile shows. Elaine Potter Gallery was flourishing at one time, but she's gone.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you exhibit in either of those?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I had shows at both places. And again, I don't think-you know-we didn't sell much, but nonetheless, we had shows.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, a lot of that is just getting your name out there and your work. It's important, but it takes a lot of time and it's kind of disappointing if nothing comes of it. Well, I think it would be easy for a person to get discouraged, but your work seemed to pull you along.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I guess so. Well, I think maybe it goes way back. I spent my last \$150 on a loom [laughter], so I felt like I had to do something with it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Make it produce something for you, yeah. Well, it's interesting to hear how you clicked with weaving like that and just have stayed so centered on it and explored it so beautifully.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And going back, there were the California Design exhibitions too, and those gave you quite a lot of exposure. [A series of exhibitions, first at the Pasadena Museum of Art and then at other nearby venues.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: And those were in the '60s and '70s.

Could we talk just a minute about the dealers that you've worked with? In general, can you tell me just what your relationships have been like, how you feel about working with the dealers?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I guess I really don't like working with dealers or agents. And I know that some artists really feel that having an agent really is a big help, but I don't know. Well, maybe it's just me. I don't like to work with other people.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Do you think it's easier to work with collectors, to do your business directly with the person that's going to be buying the piece?

MS. SEKIMACHI: We've done a lot of it, and yet I'm not so sure that that's a way that I really like.

MS. BAIZERMAN: We've talked a little bit about commissions, and I think you said that you've only done a couple.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And as far as I'm concerned, they were failures. I did one for Japan Airlines, and they didn't even use it. I did another one for a very beautiful Japanese house in Atherton, and the decorator is trying to tell me that-well, he actually came out and said, "Kay, these people have nothing but money." And still, I didn't have the sense to say, okay. So here I think I charged them something like \$150, and I'm sure they thought, well, it's got to be at least \$1,000, so they'll make a decent commission.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it sounds kind of like the marketing of craft is the part that's the toughest, in a way.

MS. SEKIMACHI: The toughest, and one that I'm just not good at, period.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, that's interesting. Well, I'd like to switch gears a little bit right now and talk about your working environment. Your studio space sits right above us, and maybe you could talk about what's there and why you have it arranged the way you do, how it helps you in your work, that sort of thing.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, let's see. More than 20 years ago when we did remodel the house-it's an old Victorian, 1895, and so the rooms were very small, although the ceilings were 10 feet, but the rooms were very small. And I was weaving these long tubular hangings, also the monofilament hangings, and so I needed space and height, so we decided to remodel. And so, of course, the question came up, where would my studio be? And we decided that the only place that it could be is upstairs. And so the architect created a loft space for me.

And so I work upstairs. The first level is where we live, and Bob's shop is in the basement, which is directly under the living room. And so this worked out beautifully for us, because I would just go upstairs and Bob would go downstairs, and we would meet for meals right on the main level. Also, sometimes I find myself working at night, and so it was very nice, because Bob would be sitting downstairs reading and I could just work and not feel terribly lonesome. Other than that, I've got my two little [Macomber] looms up there that I use. One I use pretty steadily, but the other sits. But hopefully, one day, both will be in operation.

MS. BAIZERMAN: How wide are those?

MS. SEKIMACHI: They're not very wide; they're portables. One is 20 inches wide and the other is 22 inches.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But that serves your needs, because you're working in narrow widths, it sounds like.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. I have a worktable, which is directly under the northern skylight, so I do have very good light. And because of my paperwork, I needed paper storage, so Bob built this very nice cabinet with shelves in it for my storage of papers. And let's see, what else do I have up there?

MS. BAIZERMAN: You had some things hanging on the walls, some woven works.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right. I've got a piece of Trude's, which I really love, and then I have across from hers a very early piece of mine, which I did in 1959. And then, on the opposite wall, there's a big platter of Bob's and then a couple of monofilament hangings.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I remember a loom that's made out of a curved stick, a bow loom.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, that's from the Amazon, a tribe called the Mayoruna [Upper Amazon Basin, Peru]. And it's really a wonderful little loom or gadget, or whatever you want to call it, because they weave what they call wristlets or bracelets on them. And it's so beautifully designed that when it comes off the loom, the fastener is already just built right in.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Very ingenious.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Very, very ingenious.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And what is your typical routine for working? Do you have a certain time of day you work or anything like that?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I try to work a little bit every day, but right now, I think things have changed a bit because Bob's not too well. But before, I used to try to get up there early in the morning and do as much work as I can, and then come down and get lunch for us, and then go back up and do a little more work.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it was a routine every day to spend a good hunk of time in your studio.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, as much as possible.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Have you ever had apprentices or people that you worked with in your studio, or you've been a solo kind of artist?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I'm a solo artist, and I've never had an apprentice. I have taught in my own home, but this is before the '70s. And let's see. I guess my only experience with having someone do some weaving for me was when I had Sheila [O'Hara, Northern California fiber artist] weave a couple of monofilament hangings, and then she did some woven boxes for me, and I think she even wove a few Baskets with Brown Lines.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So she has been the only person who you've really involved in your work.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I wonder if you could discuss the difference, if any, between a university trained artist and one who's learned his or her craft outside of academia. Do you have any impressions about that?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Gosh, I guess I really don't have anything to say about that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you ever feel that a more academic experience was something you wanted?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, I certainly feel that there are huge gaps in my education [laughs]. I have none other than a little art school, and then I guess I devoted my life to weaving.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Even at CCAC, you were a part-time student.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I was a part-time student, so I took all the classes that I liked, which was watercolors, which I loved, and silk screening, and I did some commercial art work, lettering, thinking that maybe the commercial art field was somewhere I could make a living. But I think I really enjoyed the silk-screen class the best, and maybe it was because it's related to textiles, or we were printing on textiles.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And it's very graphic and it has that aspect to it. Do you think that universities have played a role in the development of craft in America, for example, for people working in fiber? You know, if you look back on it, do you think they have played an important role, or any role?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Gosh, I really don't know. Certainly, a lot of, I think, good students have come out of the universities. And I think some of the universities have very good craft departments.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But in a sense, it sounds like that's not been your world, that's not been the world that you've been part of, and you're not maybe feeling like you can even comment on it.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, yeah. [Although today we're asked to write statements for shows/catalogues, which I hate to do. When I read other artists' statements-some are so good, even poetic, then I glance down at their resumes and find they've got B.A.'s in English, literature, etc. So maybe it helps to have a college education.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, that's fine; we have other topics here that we can address. This one is about community, whether or not there's a community that's been important to you in your development as an artist.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well certainly, at the beginning, way back when I first started to weave, I studied at the Berkeley Adult School, and there I met Claire Weaver and she really became one of my very best friends. And she got me to join some of the weaving guilds, like the Loom and Shuttle Guild, the Contemporary Weavers of California, the Golden Gate Weavers. And they were all just a bunch of wonderful women, and also great cooks. And anyway, they were just very supportive.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So the, kind of, weavers' guild community was something that helped you, especially in the early days, it sounds like. I've observed that in the Bay Area, there's kind of a craft community that seems to get together around openings and at craft events. And I don't know, is that a community you feel a part of?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, we enjoy going to openings because we do see our friends.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's not quite the same as what you felt in that weavers group, perhaps.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. Because you know that all these craftspeople are working, all of these artists are very busy working, so you don't want to bother them by calling them up or chatting-time is so precious.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, it's a whole different thing. The weavers groups were mostly women and very nurturing, I guess you'd say.

What about periodicals for craftspeople, like fiber artists? Have there been some magazines that you've enjoyed or felt inspired you or influenced you at all, or provided you with information?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Certainly, at the beginning, it was only *Handweaver and Craftsmen*, so I think we all subscribed to it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And it was focused primarily on new techniques and applying old techniques to new things.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And I think sometimes, did it cover or did it do a profile of an artist? I'm not sure; I don't remember.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, I think it did-ethnic weaving, it had some articles on that sort of thing. Okay, so that was the only one out there for a long time.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Then, what came next?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you subscribe to *Craft Horizons* and later *American Craft*?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Had that been a favorite of yours?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, because it was the national magazine, and certainly, to get your work in it was, well, you thought it was a big thrill to get your work in it, I guess because of the exposure.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that you were subscribing to it for quite a while.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And I think, was it 1959 that they did a little article on me.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really, that early?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, that early.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I didn't know that. I'll have to go look that one up. And what about *Fiber Arts*? Is that a magazine you have read?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I still subscribe to it, and it just tells you what's going on in the textile world.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, it's kind of a general-and it definitely emphasizes the art end of things, I think, rather than technique. It very seldom has anything to do with that end of it. So did you find inspiration in those periodicals, or was it more, kind of, a news source for you?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I think maybe a news source, because I know that my favorite book way back was Mary Atwater's *Byways in Handweaving* [MacMillan: New York, 1954].

MS. BAIZERMAN: I have that book; I know that book, yes.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I just loved it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The designs or the techniques?

MS. SEKIMACHI: The techniques-well, let's see, inkle-loom weaving.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Did you use to do belts?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, that has a lot of variations in there.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And what else was in there that I was so crazy about?

MS. BAIZERMAN: A lot of pickup weaves. I don't know if you did any of those. Card weaving-

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. Card weaving, leno. [Leno is a type of open-weave structure based on twisted warps.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: I don't think leno was in that one, but that's another favorite of yours, isn't it, your early weavings, the room dividers and things that you did with that technique? If you had to reflect on what influences inspired you, what would you say?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I also loved Anni Albers's books.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, they had an aesthetic that might be related to yours. Did you feel that about those books?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, I just loved the book-it was called *On Designing* [Pellango Press: New Haven, CT, 1959], and all the essays were just wonderful and just very thought provoking. And actually, after I studied with Trude, I thought I should maybe study with Anni Albers. So when Trude asked me, what are you going to do after this, and I said, well, maybe I should go to study with Anni. And she said, actually, that she taught very much like Anni did-and her book, maybe by that time, *On Weaving* [Wesleyan University Press: Middletown, CT, 1965] had come out. And she [Trude] said, if I wrote a book on weaving, it would be like Anni's.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Do you think there was any rivalry between them, or were they good friends?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I guess they were good friends.

MS. BAIZERMAN: She was just being honest with you, it sounds like-just her point of view.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Could you discuss your views on the importance of fiber as a means for expression? Have you ever found yourself limited by fiber to do what you wanted to do as an artist?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well yes, everything has its limitations, and certainly fiber does; and certainly techniques, and of course, the loom has many limitations. I love working within limitations. And all I know is when I started weaving the three-dimensional boxes, I would make a little tiny paper model, because I just wanted to see how the folds would go and whether it would work. And so I made all these paper models, and some I thought would work beautifully in linen and would stand up. Many of them had to be reinforced or had to have armatures, but they did work. And so anyway, those worked, but I know that I had folded other designs that I knew would not work, period, so that I just wouldn't try them.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You kind of ruled them out.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I ruled them out. But anyway, when I got this stash of antique Japanese papers, they were just beautiful sheets of, we think, maybe gampi [specific type of Japanese paper].

MS. BAIZERMAN: And when was that, Kay?

MS. SEKIMACHI: That was back in the '80s, maybe-oh, no, the '70s, maybe the late 70s. And I got all this wonderful black paper, and some came in brown too, but I loved the black because I knew it was indigo-dyed, because on the underside you could see the scum of the indigo vat. It was treated with persimmon tannin, which kept the bugs from getting at it. And so actually, I used the inside for the surface of the pieces. But here, I had these great big sheets of paper, and I didn't want to cut them up and make little tiny paper bowls or fold small boxes, so I decided I would start to try making the bigger boxes.

And so that's what led to the paper sculptures. I realized I could stack these; I could do all sorts of things. And so paper worked perfectly for this particular thing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So in a way, working with paper, as opposed to thread, gave you some other options.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, I think so.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Kind of opened a new door. And it seems like in the more recent past, you've been doing these bowls with leaves, and that sort of thing.

[End Tape 2, Side B.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Kay Sekimachi at her home in Berkeley, California. This is a continuation of our interview on July 30, 2001. As we finished the last tape reel, we were talking about your bowls made of leaves, and why don't we continue with that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Okay. When I started making paper bowls, different organizations did ask me to do workshops for them, and so I did. You would always have to include a materials list for the students. And so I would tell them, bring anything that you might use that you might want to include or use as an inclusion in your paper bowl. And so people would bring all kinds of things, and actually, friends started giving me things to put in between my layers of paper. I know this friend brought me some skeleton leaves bought at Cost Plus, and, in fact, they were dyed purple and pink, and they were very garish.

And so I looked at them, but I did nothing about them; but they'd been around for a long, long time. And so I just had them around, and I don't know what-I can't remember exactly why I tried using the pink leaves, but I did. I probably was invited to participate in a show, because that would often get me going. And so I thought, well, I've got to do something new, and so I thought, well, what the heck, let's try something with these leaves. So I took a laboratory flask that-gosh, how do you describe this shape?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Kind of a beaker.

MS. SEKIMACHI: A beaker with a perfectly round bottom. And, in fact, Sylvia Seventy gave them to me, because she said they didn't work for her; maybe they'll work for me. So I had these. And so, by golly, I cut some leaf shapes out of paper. I traced the leaves and put them around the beaker, and then I realized that I had to do it

in two parts, because it would never come off the beaker. So I did both sides. And then, after the first layer of paper was on, I took the leaves, I soaked them for a good many hours until they were very soft, and then just brushed wallpaper paste on them and put them on top of the paper leaves, and let it dry.

And in those days, I used to let it dry overnight, with sort of a weight on them. Actually, I used Saran Wrap and just wrapped them up very tightly so that they would conform to the shape of the beaker. And so in the morning I would take them apart and then put them together. And by golly, kind of a nice little bowl came out, sort of round and with a small opening at the top. So that's what actually got me going, and I think I did a number of them and sent them to Martha Connell [Connell Gallery, Atlanta, GA], who was having an exhibition. And I know she sold two, and maybe I sent three, but anyway, that's what started me on the leaves.

And then, after that, I think this man by the name of Booker Morey in Palo Alto saw my work at the Palo Alto Cultural Center-it's the [Palo Alto] Arts Center now, but that's what it was called then. He came up to see me, and he said, this is what I do with leaves. And he actually collected leaves and processed them, and made skeleton leaves out of them.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, he's the one that did that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And so he had a collection of big leaf maples and other leaves, and just gave them to me. And he said, play with them. So again, they just sat around for a long time. And so finally, again, I think another show was coming up, so I thought, well, I'll do a few more. And so I did, and that just got me going. And I guess the more I worked at it, the better I got at it technically, and so they just looked better to me. And so I'm actually still doing them.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I think I've seen them recently. You know, we haven't talked about your book forms either, the folded books and that line of your work. When did you get into that?

MS. SEKIMACHI: The first series started way back in, I think about 1985 [1980]. And one of the first ones I did was called "Waves". And again, that was because the British Craft Center was having an exhibition of miniature textiles, and I, let's see, I participated in many of their exhibitions. And maybe for the first one, I did the three-dimensional woven box, and I did a whole series after that of nesting boxes. And then, the split-ply twining came, and then another show came up, and I thought, well, what am I going to do for them?

I can't recall what actually triggered the woven books, but maybe I'm beginning to remember that a book was given to us that came from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and it was a reproduction of an old Japanese book, and it was *The Book of Butterflies*. And it was an accordion fold book, and when you stretched it out or opened it out, it spread to about 20 feet. And so I looked at it and I looked at it and thought, well, gee whiz, if I did a double weave, I could have two images, one on either side.

So I thought, okay, let's just give it a try. And so I tried a book of waves, and I still have that one, and it's in the show down at the Mingei [Mingei Museum of International Folk Art, San Diego, CA]. And then after that, I was looking at the work of Hokusai and Hiroshige. I've just started thinking about Japanese things or Japanese books and Japanese prints. And then I even remember that we had a little tiny miniature book, which was an accordion fold book, and it was *Prints of Hiroshige*. So the prints were just tiny, but that went way back to our childhood, so I pulled it out and looked at it.

And so the next book I did was called *100 Views of Fuji*, and it was just Mt. Fuji repeated all the way across the whole front and the back of the book.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Was that paint and warp, then? Did you paint your mountains on that?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I think the wave book, I actually painted the image of the waves onto the threads with acrylic paint. And then, Joy [Stocksdale, Kay's stepdaughter] had given me some transfer dyes, and so I thought, well, why don't I try the transfer dyes? The only thing is that you have to use part-synthetic material, and I wanted to use linen, because of the crispness of linen and the body that linen has. So I thought, well, I'll give it a try anyway.

So I made the warp, which was in 40/2 linen, and set at, I think, 30 threads to the inch, and so it was double-it would be 60 because of the two layers. But anyway, I painted my image on with the transfer dyes onto tracing paper, and then when the warp was ready, I just stretched it out across an ironing board, and then put paper under my first layer of warp threads. And then I took the image and my hot iron, and just pressed the dye onto the linen.

But I knew that I had to do something to make the dye adhere to the linen better than-well, I wanted it to take on linen, and I knew that I had to size the linen with something. So in some of my experiments, I have glued warp ends. Actually before cutting off the woven part of the warp-you can weave an inch or so and then weave

in a stick, then a little more weaving beyond the stick. The inch in front of the stick gets glued, so as not to fray; the woven piece is cut off, and the stick gets tied to the front beam. No knots are required, so you don't lose a lot of warp.

I had strips of material with glue on it, and I found that the dye just took much better on the glued part. So I made a glue wash. I sized my linen threads with glue and let that dry. It was kind of a slow process; it took many steps.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But it got the result that you wanted.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. So thereafter, I just kept doing that.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's great. It worked for you.

Have we covered the different kinds of things that you've done-the functional work you did early in your career, the monofilament and multilayered pieces, the camel girth variations, boxes, the books, the bowls, the paper?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, the paper boxes are more like origami, where I actually would take a square piece of paper and I would fold. And again, I would make a small model just to be sure it worked. Because when I'm doing a piece that's about 12 inches wide, I want to be sure that it's going to work.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The paper is precious, that excellent paper you have.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Exactly. In fact, now, I have only a few sheets left. They were planned pretty carefully. I marked stitching lines on the paper, and then I actually stitched two layers of paper together on the sewing machine. Some of the stitch lines became fold lines. And then, on some, I would even reinforce the two layers with another piece of paper on the inside just to give it a little more body.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Now, you mentioned origami. Is that something you learned as a child, or did you learn that-

MS. SEKIMACHI: That's something that we did when we were growing up-origami. We just grew up with it. I think my mother probably just did it, and we just grew up knowing how to fold the crane, boxes, and hats.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it was, sort of, taking that idea and making it, enlarging the scale of it, and more beautiful refined paper, and having something that really is unique.

[Begin Tape 3, Side A.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Kay Sekimachi at the artist's home in Berkeley, California, on August 3, 2001.

I was reviewing our other interview tapes, and I found myself going back to your relationship with Trude. We talked about what a strong influence she's had on your career and teaching you about weave structure, and that sort of thing. And I found myself wondering what that relationship became on a social level, as you both had known each other quite awhile and matured, both of you, as artists. Can you tell me a little bit about, kind of, how your relationship evolved?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Let me think. I think I was just really, at first, maybe in awe of her, but just thrilled to know her. Well, she seemed like such a glamorous person to me, having come from Europe. And her parents-let's see, her mother, besides doing bookbinding, she was also a voice instructor, and her father was a musician, a conductor of operas. And you know, it just seemed a very fascinating background.

So anyway, we really got to know each other, and we just visited back and forth, and she would have me over for lunch and dinner, and vice versa. And I got to know her mother when her mother came from Black Mountain College [Asheville, NC], and I, of course, got to know her husband, John. It was just kind of nice. And I know she really encouraged me all the way. And like, for instance, she wanted me to teach down in the Southwest for Mary Woodard Davis, and so she, I guess, told Mary about me.

And I can't remember about Haystack, whether I had just applied for that scholarship and got it, but we certainly talked about going to Haystack. So maybe my younger sister and I went first, and then Trude went there to teach, and I took over for her at CCAC when we got back from Maine.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that was her signal to you that she really felt you could handle her class, and that sort of thing.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it was, sort of, a confidence in you that she, kind of, communicated somehow, that she was confident in your abilities. And that's a very special gift to give someone.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, I certainly think so.

MS. BAIZERMAN: When you were describing her, I don't know why, but it made me think of your paper dolls and the gorgeous wardrobes you made for them, and how they were sort of larger-than-life figures; and here she is, a real person who had these very worldly experiences. So that was kind of an interesting person in your life, from that respect.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, for sure.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So I imagine that was quite a loss when she passed away.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, it was. Although, maybe after 1972, after Bob and I got married, we didn't see that much of each other. But nonetheless, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: She was still a figure. So after you got married, you didn't see her as frequently.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right. I got busier, number one, and adjusting to married life.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, you don't have much free time, it seems like anyway. You know, throughout our discussion together about your career and its history, we've referred to different decades as having certain strengths or when a certain thing happened, and I thought it might be useful for us to look decade by decade about what might have been going on in fiber art, what might have been going on in your career, and sort of take it maybe one decade at a time. What decade should we start with?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, shall we start with the '50s? Because I did have my loom in the fall of 1949.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Okay.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Okay, the '50s, I would say maybe for me, it was getting to know the women in the guilds, and I think I really made some of my best friends. And again, they were very supportive, and we just had a good time. And I was, at that time, trying to weave salable items. You know, here I was trying to make a living, not having started to teach until 1964.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And as I recall, you said that the functional woven things didn't sell as well as the Christmas cards and other things that you made for sale. Is that right?

MS. SEKIMACHI: That's right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you were weaving, but it was not really-yeah, okay.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Actually, my mother, younger sister, and I were living on Milvia Street, which is only about five blocks from here, and we did have Christmas sales where we had people come in. So we sold actually more Christmas cards than the weaving, but I know I did weaving for it, too.

MS. BAIZERMAN: In hopes of-

MS. SEKIMACHI: Selling. Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Because you enjoyed that activity, I'm sure, compared to some other things.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And then, the '60s, let's see-in the late '50s, I did this very small series of tapestries. And then after that, having learned about double weave, I got very fascinated with the idea of see-through objects. And so I wanted to weave a tapestry that was in three layers, and one that you could look through the top layer to the second layer, to the third layer. And so, as I was just fooling around making samples for it, when I took a piece off the loom, I realized that it would open up and stay opened out if I chose the right materials.

So that's when I remembered the nylon monofilament that was given to me by a friend that I had made at-well, a girl who became a friend-met her at Haystack, and her mother worked for DuPont in Wilmington. So anyway, I put that on the loom [and wove my first monofilament hanging], and that was in 1963. And actually, between the tapestries and the monofilament hangings, which I started in 1963, I did this series of room dividers, and they were strictly see-through.

But anyway, when I did the sample with nylon monofilament, when I took it off the loom, it really worked. And so, that's when I started on the series of the hangings.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And how many of those do you think you've made over the years? Do you have any guess?

MS. SEKIMACHI: If I sat down and really tried to count them, I probably could come up with a figure. But maybe it's not going to be that many, so maybe 25. That's a real rough guess. And then, I know that I did exhibit one in Jack Larsen's show at the Museum of Modern Art. He curated a show called "Wall Hangings," and that was 1968.

And then from the '70s, I think it was show after show after show of shipping these monofilament hangings all over the country.

And I know there was a show in New Zealand-well, certainly for the Lausanne Biennale. And for the Lausanne Biennale, I really did the best hanging that I had ever done. I had solved all the problems, and I think it was one of the most successful. And so, in a way, I'm kind of sorry that it's gone. But actually, it did go to "Deliberate Entanglements" in Los Angeles, and then it went to the Biennale.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that was a celebrated piece, really, wasn't it.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So the '70s really focused on those monofilaments, then.

MS. SEKIMACHI: The '70s, yes. And in the very late, well, 1977-the Japanese, you know, have to get in the act, too, so the Museum of Modern Art in Kyoto decided to put on a "Fiber Works: Americans and Japan" exhibition. And so I was invited to again show monofilament hangings. And I think maybe three of my card-woven tubes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you had started those.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, I had started those. And this was a show that I actually did get to, and that was really a very exciting event.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Why was it exciting to you?

MS. SEKIMACHI: It was one of the first big openings that I had ever attended.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The other shows you hadn't been able to attend, the big shows that you were in at the Museum of Modern Art and the Lausanne Biennale. So you were there.

MS. SEKIMACHI: So we were there for that one. And I must say it was exciting, because quite a few Americans went. Also, I know a woman from Canada who was in the show, from Argentina, so it was sort of an international group of people. And we were treated royally.

And I was just recalling, in fact, recalling yesterday afternoon about this banquet that we attended after the formal opening, and it turned out to be a very formal dinner. We got ushered into this quite large room, and there were dinner trays placed all the way around the room. And at each tray, there was a cushion where you were supposed to sit.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it was a big circle.

MS. SEKIMACHI: A very big circle. Actually, it was a U.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, it must have felt great.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, it was really very nice. And, of course, the curators did come from Japan before they ever got the show going, and so we got to meet Mr. Fukunaga, who was the curator of the museum at that time.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And I suppose your role was pretty central, since you were the Japanese American in the group. What was that like for you?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, at this banquet, the Americans decided that maybe we should say a few words to thank the museum for inviting us, et cetera. And so I was asked to do this, but I was too shy to do it. And you know, Marian Clayden thought I could speak Japanese, but no, my Japanese wasn't good enough. So anyway, Barbara Shawcroft said a few words and it was just fine.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, she's very outgoing, and she got you off the hook, then. That was convenient, too. I know sometimes people make assumptions about language abilities, and when you learn at home and then you grow up, you don't necessarily have all those skills.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And the language, I mean, my mother's Japanese was old fashioned.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Medieval.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Really, yes. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's very different. When people emigrate, they continue the same language they learned, and it doesn't evolve very much, I guess. So Mr. Fukunaga was the curator of the show?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So what else were you thinking about in terms of these decades?

MS. SEKIMACHI: The '80s ['70s], let me think. In 1980 [1974], the British Craft Center organized these exhibitions called the International Exhibition of Miniature Textiles at the British Craft Center. And these went on for four years, so it went into the '70s ['80s]. They were two years apart, actually. Well, it started in 1978 [1974] and then '76, '78, '80. And that's when I started doing the smaller pieces, like the woven boxes and the woven books, the split-ply twinings and the basket with brown lines.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you were exhibiting internationally at this point.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. Then, in the '80s, there were a bunch of exhibitions. I participated in the Fourth Biennale in Poland. The Textile Museum in Washington, DC, put on a show called "Old Traditions and New Directions," and I know I had a monofilament hanging in it. And I think that piece came from the Renwick. And then Jack Larsen came out with a new book called, *The Art Fabric Mainstream* [Jack Lenor Larsen and Mildred Constantine, Van Nostrand Reinhold: New York, 1981], and there was an exhibition to go along with it, and it toured the country.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Anything else from the '80s?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I find already that I was in a basketry show at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston. And I know exactly what I sent there. While I was doing the card weaving, most of the card weavings turned out to be long tubular hangings, some were eight feet long. And then I thought, well, gee whiz, it's such a flexible technique that maybe I could do some basket forms. And so, anyway, it took a lot of doing, but I did several, and they turned out really kind of nice. And so I know that I sent a couple of those to this show in Boston. It was titled "Basketry Tradition and New Form" ["Basketry Tradition in New Form," Institute of Contemporary Art Boston, January 12-February 28, 1982]. And I know that someone wrote me after that show and said they just loved my baskets and they hoped I would continue. But they were so complicated.

[End Tape 3, Side A.]

MS. SEKIMACHI: To do the tubes, actually, Bob made me a long board, which actually looked like a huge cribbage board, six feet long. Narrow belts or bands can be woven with one end of the warp tied to a knob and the other secured around the weaver's waist. But using up to nearly 100 cards or tablets and 400 warp threads, it was impossible to handle them without the threads tied to a stick that was securely held onto a board and under tension. The tubes are seamless-woven flat and the weft pulled to form the tube after the whole piece is woven. In other words, the weft goes into the shed from the right side and then goes under all the warp threads and into the next shed again from the right.

And so what I did with the baskets is I started with the handle and then started on the body of the basket. And so here's the handle that's woven, so the weft went from one side to the other side and around and around in this way, until I got down to the bottom. And then it got pulled into a tube, and then I had to figure out how to finish the bottom. It was challenging, but once finished, they turned out well.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And how big were these?

MS. SEKIMACHI: The tallest stood about 20 inches high.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And about how big around? Kind of this size?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Interesting. But they were really a pretty exhausting task.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you only did a few.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I only did a few.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And what else were you working on in that decade?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Certainly, woven books from about the '80s.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It almost sounds like you had kind of had it with the monofilaments. That's a hard material to work with.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. [It's crazy. Think I solved all the problems with *Nobori*, 1971, and to quit.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: You really sort of burst out with quite a few other ways of being a fiber artist.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Let's see. Just to go back a bit to the late '70s, I guess I was trying to figure out how to end the woven strips of the monofilament pieces, and I finally figured it out that I would pull the weft so that the strips would come down together to a point, and then the fringe would just hang at the bottom. But I thought, oh, maybe card weaving would be one way of ending it. And so that's when I think the card weaving started. And I actually did some pieces, just a very few pieces, in just monofilament, and I called them "Rivers." And some came out kind of nice, and I thought they were successful. And I know that, actually, we were talking about Barbara Shawcroft. Well, she has one.

Yeah, they were kind of fun because I really thought of them as rivers, or maybe the title came to me afterwards. But the weaving started out plain or appearing calm. Then I split the cards apart, wove strips, and then at times I wouldn't even put any weft in at all. Would have a twisted area of warp which made me think of rapids and then put them back together again.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Card weaving is a little less restrictive form of weaving than the loom, in a way, because you can break things apart.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, that's correct. [The warp is free to move in any direction.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, it sounds interesting. So the '80s you were, it sounds like, just experimenting and trying different forms, and that sort of thing. Anything else from that decade that comes to mind?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Maybe the craft museum in New York, the American Craft Museum, actually moved-and I think I'm correct. And in 1986, they opened the new museum where they are right at the moment, and that was big affair, with a catalogue published. And the show was called "Craft Today: Poetry of the Physical," and then it toured Europe for a couple of years. But I think we did go to that, and many artists, craftsmen, went to the opening. So that was an exciting event.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It sounds like a major milestone.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And then, the Philbrook Art Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, had an exhibition called "The Eloquent Object," which Marcia and Tom Manhart curated; they toured the country looking for the work of craftsmen they wanted to include. And so that turned out to be a very beautiful exhibition.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, a very important show.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, it turned out to be an elegant catalogue, book.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, that too. It did actually travel here to the Bay Area at the Oakland Museum.

MS. SEKIMACHI: That is correct, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: We can be very proud of that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, for sure. Also, that's when I made up my mind that I would buy Cynthia Schira's tapestry. We saw it at the Philbrook and I really loved it, and in fact, Bob did too, but I wasn't quite sure, because I didn't know exactly where I would even put it. And we were off to Hawaii, so I wrote to Cynthia and she wrote back and said, it's available, you can certainly have it. But I wrote back and said, can I have another look went it came to the Oakland Museum? And so, when it came to the Oakland Museum, we dashed down there and took a look, and we still liked it so-

MS. BAIZERMAN: It became yours.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And it's in a wonderful spot.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Any other milestones in the '80s?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Okay, this is the end of the '80s. Well, in 1987, the Murakami Museum, which was begun by a man by the name of Murakami in Florida, a lovely little museum in a Japanese house. He made his fortune in Florida, so he wanted to give something back to the State of Florida. So it's there and it's still going.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Do you know what part of Florida it's in?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Del Ray Beach. So this is fairly close to Miami. They organized a show called "Japanese American Craft Invitational." And so I used to have the catalogue. I had quite a few catalogues, but I must have given them all away, because I can't locate one right at the moment. But that was one of the first exhibitions that I was included in with Japanese Americans.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That was a first experience with maybe even becoming aware of a kind of community of Japanese-American artists?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And then, in 1990, the Oakland Museum, actually the history department, put on a show called "Strength and Diversity: Japanese-American Women, 1885 to 1990." So I got included in it. And in that exhibition, they even wanted some watercolors I had done in the assembly center, Tanforan, and my paper dolls. So I got my paper dolls. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh really, were they on exhibit there?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And then, besides those two things, my paper columns or paper sculptures.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Do you remember who curated that exhibit?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Was it Carey Caldwell as well as the Japanese-American Historical Society? I think they got together and put this show on. And I must say, this was a very exciting event. And maybe my mother had just died, so I was going through her things, and so they even used a notebook of my mother's, one that she had made when she was taking English classes, and that was nice. Also, her sash that she showed me, when I started to weave and told me that she was a weaver or had done some weaving. And so that was on exhibit, among a few other things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, that's great. I had no idea.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, that was very nice. But the '90s, there were many, many exhibitions, exhibitions of people's collections. For instance, the Minneapolis Institute of Art received a gift from—was it Ruth Kaufmann—her collection of miniature textiles.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right, I remember that exhibit.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, it was called "Intimate and Intense: Small Fiber Structures" [1992]. And so I had a paper bowl that she had purchased from me in that show. And they put out a beautiful little catalogue; it was square-

MS. BAIZERMAN: I have that catalogue. I know. It's a lovely form, isn't it?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, it just goes so well with the contents of the show.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Absolutely.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And then, right after that, there was another collection given to the museum by Mildred Constantine, and the show was called "Small Works in Fiber," and I had a paper bowl in it. And then also, the Toledo Museum of Art was given, I think, some pieces from the Saxes' collection, and so there was an exhibition called "Contemporary Craft in the Saxe Collection." And all these exhibitions had catalogues to go with them. In fact, the Saxe collection was a book, actually. And then, some basket shows started coming up.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And your work, even though in some ways it might not be considered basketry, was embraced by this term, basket.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. The term is used very loosely today, so anything that can hold something or looks like a container or a vessel is thrown in with the baskets. And there were many more basket shows to come up, but let's see, in 1995, there was a show at San Francisco State University. And this was an all-Asian exhibition, and it was called "With New Eyes: Toward an Asian American Art History in the West." And it was a very interesting exhibition, and it was curated by Irene Poon Anderson.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I'm not familiar with her.

MS. SEKIMACHI: She is in charge of the slide collection at SF State. And she says that it opened her eyes. Well, it certainly opened my eyes, because I didn't know that there were so many Asian-American artists right here locally. But there were quite a few. And then I think it was Whitney Chadwick who told her-Irene is a photographer, and so Whitney said, "Why don't you document all these artists, because some were pretty elderly." So from that time on, she started photographing all these Asian Americans. And, finally-with the hopes that maybe a book will come of it and an exhibition. And, finally, this January, it did happen.

And so, this is the catalogue, and it's called *Leading the Way: Asian American Artists of the Older Generation* [Gordon College: Wenham, MA, 2001]. So there's a bunch of us in it with our photographs that Irene took, as well as pictures of our work, and then a little bio.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So she kept going with the project.

MS. SEKIMACHI: She kept going.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Isn't that interesting? Well, good for her.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And so, that was just in January, well, this year, and the show took place in a small college called Gordon College in Wenham, Mass. Another Asian show took place, too, at Pro Arts Gallery in Oakland, California, and that was in '98, and it was called "Art After Incarceration."

MS. BAIZERMAN: I remember that show. So somehow, the sensitivity to the unique aspects of Asian-American art started being investigated in the '90s.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, and I think maybe more books came out on the relocation, too.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's true; there was the settlement and all that going on.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I think maybe it was the younger, the Sanseis and the Yonseis, who really wanted to know what happened. And so they started questioning their parents. And I think there are projects that are still going on, people being interviewed.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right, I think so. It's opened up a whole era that was very quiet, both on the part of the American government and the people that were affected.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And mainly, people like us who were actually incarcerated; we really didn't want to talk about it. And I think one of the hardest things about oral histories is that you do forget about painful things; you put it way back at the back of your mind.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And it seems separate from you and your present life. It's almost like it's someone else or some other lifetime. Yeah, I hope you wanted to do this another time, because I know you talked about these things, and it can't be easy. But I think it's real important for people to understand your whole life. It's been quite an odyssey from start to finish.

Now, you mentioned that, at some point-was it the '90s?-when museums started actively collecting more craftwork?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, and certainly showing. Well, you know, they accepted these collections and certainly actively started collecting. And I think one of the first basket shows-and of course, Jack Larsen has a way of getting in there at the very beginning. He curated a show at the Erie Art Museum in Erie, Pennsylvania, and a very nice little book came out of it, and it was a show on baskets.

Okay, I found the title, and the book was called *The Tactile Vessel: New Basket Forms* [Jack Lenor Larsen, *The Tactile Vessel: New Basket Forms: An Exhibition of works from the Collection of the Erie Art Museum*, 1989]. And again, it was at the Erie Art Museum.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And what year was that?

MS. SEKIMACHI: This was 1989. So this was really, sort of, the very beginning of this real interest in the basket form.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So then it just unfolded during the '90s.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you really put your emphasis on the vessels and the container form in that time period.

So how would you describe your work today? Where are you with your work today?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I'm still doing some basket forms. Let's see. We had a show at the Brown/Grotta Gallery in, was it '99 already? And I needed to have work for the show, so I came upon this series I call "Takarabakos," and these were the woven boxes. They're woven in a tube and then folded and pressed to make a box form. Anyway, I did a whole series of those, and I'm still on those.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you are doing some weaving.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I'm still doing some weaving. I did a whole series of woven books for that show. And I guess I've got to admit that maybe this series was a failure in that I forgot to put a glue sizing on my linen threads, and so the images are really fading out. And so, right at the moment, I'm thinking of trying to redo this whole series to see if that was the problem. And also, I was using a new brand of transfer dyes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, that's disappointing.

MS. SEKIMACHI: It is, because I really loved the subtlety of these things. But I think maybe they were a little too subtle. And Jack Larsen has one, and he said, you know, the image just keeps coming in and out. It's real strange.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It disappears and then it kind of comes back.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And I don't know whether you have the image in your mind, so that when you stare at this piece, you can just see it again.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's funny.

MS. SEKIMACHI: It's very funny, but I'm pretty sure that it's the fact that I forgot to put the glue sizing on, which I did on my first series, because this transfer dye just works a lot better on a-

MS. BAIZERMAN: A sized fabric?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And what show were these Takarabakos for?

MS. SEKIMACHI: In a show called "Books, Boxes, and Bowls," and it was a show at Brown/Grotta Gallery in '99.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Anything else that you're currently thinking about?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I still continue to get hornets' nests sent to me, and some are really very beautiful. And so I've got one that is in little waves, and they're in fan-shaped pieces. And so, I'm thinking of maybe trying to very carefully take the nest apart so that I can still retain this wonderful-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Those forms.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Exactly.

MS. BAIZERMAN: We haven't talked too much about the hornets' nests, but for people reading this oral history, it's hard to convey the subtlety of them, the beautiful patterns just in the nest. And these you drape over forms to form bowls, and you kind of capitalize on that beautiful textured pattern.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes it's amazing; each nest is a little different. And what I call the good ones are fresh-the ones that the bugs haven't gotten into. One of the best bowls that I ever made was made with the paper of a hornets' nest that came from Indiana. Bob's niece lives on a farm and she had watched the hornets making the nest. And so the minute they left-they're only in a nest for a year and then it's abandoned. So the minute the hornets left, she grabbed it and sent it to me. The bowl was made to pair with a beautiful walnut bowl of Bob's for our exhibition "Marriage in Form." Being the first of the marriage sets, the bowl is maybe the best hornets' nest bowl I've ever made. And sometimes, the first pieces are-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Inspired?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. So we're still keeping it. But what I do is I have to very carefully take the nest apart. And it's amazing how strong the paper is. I tear the paper into pieces-small or large depending on the size of the bowl-and when ready, I brush wallpaper paste on each piece. Then it just gets pasted right onto the-you can call

it a lining paper, which goes on to the form or the bowl first.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, I noticed there's kind of a pale paper inside.

You know, early this year, late last year, you had a show at the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum, now called the Craft and Folk Art Museum. And in that show, there were exhibited some of your work with seashells, and we haven't talked at all about the shells, but I'd love to hear you talk about how you felt about exhibiting that work and what those collections, how you put them together, and that sort of thing.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Okay, well, I love the beach, I love the ocean; I really love water. And so anyway, we'd been going to the Big Island for more than 10 years now-

MS. BAIZERMAN: Hawaii.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, usually December or January. There's really not much to do, since we don't go to the hotels or dancing, et cetera, so I spend my days looking for shells. And one year, we had just a terrific year where we had huge waves and high surf and, in fact, the waves did some damage to some of the piers at Kawaihae. And sometimes where we stayed, right on the beach, the tide would come rushing right down our driveway. And we're in a basement studio apartment, so you could hear the water just rushing down right beside you, and then it would just go right back out. But it's very exciting. And then, of course, afterwards, you just looked on the ground and there's pebbles, and shells, and just everything.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right by your driveway.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right in your driveway. And so that was a fantastic shelling year. And a native Hawaiian told me that Kawaihae was the best shelling beach on the whole island. And I must say I believe him, because I really made quite a collection of shells. Only a very few times would I come up with very big specimens like, you know, five inches long. But since you can't find those often, you start looking for the little ones.

And so anyway, I've got a whole chest full of shells, in fact, more. And then I started taking my watercolors over to the islands with us and started mounting them on handmade paper cards. And what I finally learned was to put a little square watercolor wash underneath the shells. And, of course, the shells got pasted on top of the wash, and I would arrange them in either a square or sometimes a triangle. And then, sometimes, I would even paint a little sunset design with a horizontal stripe across the bottom, and the shells would just go across the bottom.

So I started doing them, and I would collect quite a few, so I decided I would just make a little paper folio for them. And so they went into a set, about seven of these cards in one little folio. And I gave them titles like *Sea, Sand, and Shells*, and *Sticks and Stones, Shells and Bones*. And, anyway, they're just a lot of fun to do.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Play.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Play, real play, real relaxation.

MS. BAIZERMAN: No pressure to make this object that has to live up to all your famous pieces.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right. And people have asked me, are these for sale? And, in fact, galleries have asked me. Gosh, I mean, they said, "We could sell these." But somehow, I just haven't gotten around to-

MS. BAIZERMAN: I think that would ruin it for you.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Maybe it would. I just sold one folio, but it's the only one that I was able to part with, maybe because-I guess I just love these things.

MS. BAIZERMAN: They really are dear to you.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And it's fascinating because every shell is different. But they were a nice part of your exhibit at the craft museum, because people hadn't seen that work before and it was so nice to see them with your other things. Also one of the highlights of this exhibition of the woven books and shell collages was a lecture about me by Yoshiko Iwamoto Wada [artist, textile scholar, and curator].

MS. BAIZERMAN: I was really flattered when she said something about my work being as ingenious and inventive as the Peruvians.

So there were some additional shows in the '90s. I think, at one point, you referred to them as survey shows, where they had a lot of different artists together. What were some of those?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, okay, actually maybe in the late 1990s, the Crocker Art Museum had a show called "Material Witness: Masters of California Crafts."

MS. BAIZERMAN: That was fairly recent.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Very recent, and again, a very nice catalogue. And then, believe it or not, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art had a show called "Far Out: Bay Area Design, 1967-1973." And Bob and I didn't quite see how our work fit in it, but we were there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, it was a lot of hippie material and clothing, and so on.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But maybe they wanted to make it inclusive of more than just that part of what was going on.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And then, of course, there was another big craft show at the Fine Arts Museum, de Young Museum, in San Francisco, "The Art of Craft: Contemporary Works from the Saxe Collection." And this whole collection is a promised gift to the museum, and a very beautiful catalogue was published. And anyway, again, the Saxes didn't start to collect until rather late, meaning about '85, so they don't have too many of my woven pieces, but they do have the paper bowls, and the leaf vessels, and the boxes. So they gave me a little case all to myself. So that was nice. And in the catalogue, my leaf bowl was used on the title page.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, that's right!

MS. SEKIMACHI: Or the title page. It was the title page.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, that's a compliment.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, I think the image just fit. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, in more ways than one, probably.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And then, in Los Angeles, a show that we did not get down to, which took place this year in January, was called "Made in California," and it was at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. And you would call that a big survey show, wouldn't you?

MS. BAIZERMAN: I think so. It was a huge show.

MS. SEKIMACHI: All inclusive, other media.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, a very ambitious show. But you were in that show.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

[End Tape 3, Side B.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is a continuation of the interview on August 3 with Kay Sekimachi, in her home in Berkeley, August 3, 2001.

We were talking about exhibits in the 1990s, and I noticed here on your list that there's just quite a number of small exhibits in addition to the ones that we singled out as the bigger ones. Any of those other exhibits that you wanted to mention?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I'll mention a few more. There's one called "Generations: The Lineage of Influence on Bay Area Art," and this was at the Richmond Art Center in 1996. And this was, again, a show that included painting and sculpture and crafts. And anyway, it was kind of interesting because we were asked to exhibit a piece and then also invite someone you had an influence on or someone who influenced you.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So who did you-

MS. SEKIMACHI: Sheila O'Hara. The main thing is Sheila O'Hara always says that I was her most influential teacher. In fact, she studied under Trude, but they didn't get along. So when Trude got sick and I substituted for Trude back in 1975, Sheila was in the class, and she was my best student. She just did all the projects. Well, she just did some beautiful work. And I think some of her first things were in three-dimension. But anyway, she does what she calls a three-layer weave.

MS. BAIZERMAN: But I was trying to think, because to look at it, her work is quite different from yours, but it does incorporate three layers of warp, and that's the connection. Well good, she got some recognition.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And back to the American Craft Museum. They had an exhibition called "Four Decades of Discovery: The 40th Anniversary of the American Craft Museum," and this was in New York in 1996. And I think they had just picked things out of their collection to sort of celebrate their 40th year. And then going on to other shows, there was a show at the Brown/Grotta Gallery called "The 10th Wave," and this was 1997, and this was in celebration of their 10th anniversary.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The gallery.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So much going on in that era.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And I think once when we talked, you mentioned that the prices you received for work, like if we think about when you first started doing baskets or boxes, and then, you know, into the '90s when there was so much activity. Why don't you talk a little bit about that? I think that's kind of impressive.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. Let's see, when I started out, I had no idea how to price my things, and they say, well, you should just look and see how other people price their things. But somehow, I just didn't have, maybe, the courage to ask a bigger price. And then, of course, that has to do with modesty too. And so maybe that entered into it. Anyway, I was asking, like, \$1,000 or \$2,000 for a monofilament piece. I think the one that went to the Renwick for the first show that they had-I think I sold that piece to them for about \$700.

In fact, when I had a show at the College of the Holy Names [Oakland, CA]-that was right after I had started the monofilament hangings-I think I was asking, like, \$40. And one of the sisters said, my gosh, they should all be three times that. So already back then I knew my prices were low, and they just remained low. Until finally the '90s, the new craftspeople, the young people, aren't shy at all about putting big prices on. And I suppose this happened with everything: the prices have just gone up. Of course, the dollar doesn't buy as much as it did in the '50s. I know I sold my first paper bowl for about \$75, and for one of the more recent ones, I got \$750 for it. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's a big change!

MS. SEKIMACHI: A big jump.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you were able to do better as a professional artist in terms of income in the '90s.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, in the '90s.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You adjusted your prices more in keeping with what others were charging.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And it was Tran Turner who told me, "Kay, do you know the galleries are just doubling your price?" Here I put a retail price on it, and he said-I mean, I didn't know whether to believe him or not. But he said that they are doing that. So, I mean, he was trying to hint to me gently that I ought to put them up a bit.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, you ought to be able to enjoy some of the benefits of that. And as your reputation grew, I'm sure you could command even higher prices. But pricing work, I think, can be a problem for many artists. You're not alone.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Good. [Laughs.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: You know, the other thing that happened in the early '90s was the formation of the Friends of Fiber Art. Did that organization have any impact on your or others around you?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, it had an impact, for sure, and I think they're really doing some very good work. That is, they're organizing symposiums and trying to get museum curators and collectors and artists together. And certainly Camille Cook and her husband, Alex, have been very supportive to fiber artists. At one time, I know they had the biggest collection of my work.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Really?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. And they recently gave one of my pieces to the Metropolitan [Museum of Art]. And she says that they've got a big wish list, and they want more of my things. So that was nice to hear.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So their dedication to promoting fiber art has really paid off personally for you, but for all of us who are in the field in any kind of way.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. They've helped finance-they give grants. And so when there's an exhibition that involves a catalogue, they will help finance it. They've been, actually, very generous.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's great. Maybe we should just talk a little bit about some of these more recent pieces. We haven't talked about the images on the woven books. I wondered, what kind of images do you generally use on those?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Usually landscapes. And the first series I did goes back to the '80s, and that's when we were going to Santa Fe every summer. And so, the images of, like for instance, the rainbows would stay in my mind, and I know I did one called *Rainbow*. And then flying across the country, like taking off from JFK at sunset. There was a bank of low clouds, and then the sun just dropped down into it, and that made a wonderful image. So that was *Sunset*, part of one book, and then on the reverse side I did one called *Sunrise*.

Because again, flying into Fort Wayne, Indiana, early in the morning-this was really early in the morning-the sun was just coming up out of the clouds, and the color was just glorious. So I would make notes in my little notebook about the colors and then came home and tried to make a little sketch of it. And so, I would really look to nature for the images.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Is that true of your watercolors too? When you painted, was it mostly outdoor, landscape?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Mostly outdoor, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So that's a theme that even goes back before the weaving. The other thing that stands out with a lot of your work is it's very delicate, fragile, with paper and with very thin layers of leaves, and these paper bowls, they look fragile. I wonder if you've thought about that, if that's something that is important to you, or how you see that in your work?

MS. SEKIMACHI: I think that maybe the paper columns are the things that I kind of worry about because they are so fragile.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And they're tall. I mean, this one over here in the living room must be six feet tall, at least.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, it is. And it is made in units, so that there are six units to make the paper column. And there is a steel rod that goes right down the center of each of the boxes, and the boxes do nest into each other. But nonetheless, it's really only two layers of paper, with some stitching on it. And so, if you happen to bump one of the units, the paper will dent in. And so this bothered me.

And so people have told me, you know, "Kay, there's copper sheets, and the sheets are as thin as paper, you know, why don't you try using it?" And then, more recently, June Schwarz said that steel, you could use sheets of steel. But so far, it's just been talk and I haven't tried it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: What does it make you feel like, though, to think about those metals rather than paper and fiber? Does it make a difference, do you think?

MS. SEKIMACHI: One thing, I really don't like the feel of metal. I don't even like the feel of steel heddles. So on the loom, I prefer string heddles. So maybe that's one of the reasons why I just stay away from it. And also, someone said, well, if you did it in another material, it wouldn't be paper. And so maybe I like the fact that they are so darn fragile.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes. It's like a ceramic artist making a tower like that and worrying about it falling over and breaking the pieces. Whereas yours, you have more to worry about it falling over and getting poked or punctured, or flattened even, if it was a big enough disaster, I guess.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right. One thing with paper is that if you tear it, it could be patched. And I wouldn't mind patching it at all, because a patch might kind of enhance it. And also, this paper is just amazing. It could be ironed. In fact, I took a piece and I crumbled it, put a wet cloth over it, and I ironed it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And steamed it?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Steamed it and it came out flat, as though I had not touched it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it's very resilient. Well then, maybe there's not too much to worry about.

MS. SEKIMACHI: I hope not, because you know, the Mint Museum in North Carolina has five of them, and they look marvelous in their space, but I do think about it once in a while.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, they are a little vulnerable. Well, maybe we should talk a little bit about what else is here

in your environment. We're sitting in your dining room having this conversation, and as I look across the room here, I see this weaving straight ahead of me going into the back of the house. I think you said that was a Peter Collingwood.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: What did he call those?

MS. SEKIMACHI: *Macro Gauze*.

MS. BAIZERMAN: *Macro Gauze*. And you know Peter and purchased that piece.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, on one of our trips to England; in fact, it was Christmastime, and so we always go out to visit Peter. And so I thought, well, this will be a chance to acquire one. And so I told Peter I needed a Christmas present, and I saw this one and I really liked it, and I think it was really promised to someone else, but he let us have it. And so that's why we have this one. And the other one that we own, he actually made it for us, and I kind of knew what I wanted. You know, I just love the fact that the colors went from the left to the right side, and the black went from the left to the right, and the same thing happened with the natural colored threads.

MS. BAIZERMAN: The color and the structure work together so nicely.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And of course I gave him the dimensions, because I knew how high I wanted it and how wide it could be. And he said, "You know, it was really hard to figure out the dimensions or the spacing of the rods and the crossing to just get it to come out."

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, he was challenged by that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: We're over in part of the living room here. What's this in this case right here?

MS. SEKIMACHI: It's a piece by Dominic Di Mare, and it's one of his Rune Bundles. And again, well, I love his work, and I also love crosses. So if you look right down on top, there is a cross.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, it's woven in the top. That's really a beautiful piece.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And it's wood and it's paper, dyed paper.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And maybe linen thread or something.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, some linen.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And then, right next to it is a card-woven piece that you did, I think.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. I did a number of these, and actually a set went to the Camden Art Center in England, I think in Camden. And a curator of the Royal Scottish Museum-Revel Oddy was the curator of this show. And so as payment for curating the show, the Camden Art Center wanted to give Revel something, and so he picked one of my tubes, and it was a piece that went with this one. And Revel told me that it was the first American piece of weaving that the museum had acquired. So I was pleased that he wanted mine.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It looks like up above that is one of your room dividers hanging from the loft where your studio is.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And it goes back to 1960.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So we have a range there. And, then, these two pieces are actually --

MS. SEKIMACHI: Virginia Davis's, and they're double ikat, meaning that she dyes the warp and the weft, and then weaves the fabric together. And, of course, I just love indigo and I love natural linen, so I think that's one of the reasons why I was just attracted to these pieces. And I also loved the square.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So in all ways, this piece really works for you. And this looks like--

MS. SEKIMACHI: It's a basket of Lillian Elliott's. And you know, she did wonderful tapestries when she was, well, just earlier. And of course, later on, she told me that some people thought of her only as a basket weaver or maker, and so she found that kind of disappointing.

MS. BAIZERMAN: I remember some of her tapestries too. They were very unique.

MS. SEKIMACHI: But, anyway, I kind of like this one, maybe because the bold black paintbrush stripe made me think of calligraphy.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, an ink, that nice bold ink work of some of the calligraphy.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And over here is a piece by Emily Dubois. And I have forgotten what she called this series, but again, I just loved it.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It's like a floating rectangle.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And this is an interesting piece. This looks like a Japanese textile, maybe.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, it is, done by-[Hiroyuki Shindo.] He lives in Kyoto, actually outside of Kyoto, and he's very well known for his indigo work. We visited his home studio, and there saw fascinating indigo vats in the floor.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Right in his home? That's great! That's a beautiful, subtle piece. And then, we have the big Cynthia Schira piece that you mentioned before that was in that show, and you just loved it and came home with it. And on either side of it, on the left there's a nice piece of fiber art.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, that's the work of Adela Akers, and it's in linen and horsehair, woven in strips and then put together. And again, I think I loved it because the horsehair covers the parts of the woven fabric, and you're looking through or seeing through the horsehair.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, it's like a little forest of horsehair here. You're looking through to see this nice clear design underneath. It's quite an interesting piece. And here's another famous fiber artist whose piece you have here in your home.

MS. SEKIMACHI: It's the work of Lia Cook, and this one, I think I really loved the colors. In fact, I saw the colors first before I ever saw the image. And I have a feeling that there's maybe something wrong anatomically, but, nonetheless, I don't think I even look at the image. I just keep looking at the pattern, and the pattern of the weave, and the colors.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, it is quite an active piece, isn't it, in beautiful subtle colors. And here's your paper tower on the stairwell here going upstairs. And is that another Emily Dubois piece there?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes, it is. I think she calls it *Sky Book*. This one she just, again, wove it and then formed it into this shape. And being a twill weave, it just does it kind of naturally?

MS. BAIZERMAN: That flexibility that they have.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: That's great. And an ikat piece from-is it the Philippines?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Is it Mindanao? Is that the Philippines?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, it is.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And I think it's abaca.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Which is a natural fiber.

MS. SEKIMACHI: And it's very stiff, and it amazes me that they could handle this material. They could actually tie-dye it, and it was woven on a back-strap loom.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And so delicate, the patterning, isn't it? What a masterpiece.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Now, this piece I found on the Big Island in a gallery called The Gallery of Great Things [Kamuela, HI] that you must go to. I could have bought the loom. I could have bought a piece with-

MS. BAIZERMAN: With the loom attached.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. But the heddles and warp threads were all tangled up and so I thought, you know, I would spend hours straightening-

MS. BAIZERMAN: All the warp threads, yes?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. But it was a beautiful thing, should go to a museum.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, I think we're probably coming to the end of our interview sessions. And I think we should just maybe talk a little bit about the current exhibit you have up. That's at which museum now?

MS. SEKIMACHI: It's the Mingei Museum of International Folk Art in San Diego [Kay's exhibit at the Mingei was titled, "An Intimate Eye: Woven and Paper Objects," which ran with her husband's exhibit, "Eighty-Eight Turnings"], a beautiful museum, actually, a wonderful space. I mean, it's like one great big room that they could divide with dividers into galleries. My husband's show actually went down there from the San Francisco Craft and Folk Art Museum, so Martha Longenecker [director of the Mingei Museum] asked me to have a show at the same time. There was not really very much time for me to get any new work done for it, but I was able to borrow everything back.

Some of the earlier pieces go back to the '80s. And we went down for the opening, or there were two openings. I'm actually wondering exactly how this was going to all work out. You know, you just wonder when you send things off and you don't know the space and you think, how are they ever going to put this together? But when I walked in, I was just absolutely amazed. They had done such a beautiful job of installation. And my old things-in fact, there are two room dividers from the Oakland Museum in the show, and they do go back to 1960. So it's much earlier than the '80s. And they looked stunning. I think it's because the walls and colors of the wood panels-white, dark charcoal grey, and brown-were the perfect background colors for my work.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yes, it's kind of a roomy open space and very modernist architecture, at least inside. I can imagine that it's beautiful. I hope to get down to see it. I noticed there's a newspaper here on your table: it's dated Friday, August 3. That's today, the very day of our interview, and there's a box here. It says, "Last Chance: Kay Sekimachi's Alms Box at the Jewish Museum." So that's a new object.

MS. SEKIMACHI: It's not all that new. It's, again, a woven box in the "Takarabako" series. And the first one I did was for the Jewish Museum in San Francisco, and this was a theme show. And Ken Trapp had given them my name, and so I thought, well, maybe I should participate, since Ken knows my work and he thought I should be one of the invited artists. So I made my version of a *tzedahka* box, which is a charity box.

Apparently, every Orthodox Jewish family would have one of these boxes in their home, and the old ones were like tin cans, or one would be in the shape of a house, with a slit for money. And whenever anyone would come to your house and they would see this box, they're supposed to drop a coin or some money into it. And then, this goes to charity. So anyway, I did it for the Jewish Museum. And I know that Gary Bennett [San Francisco Bay Area furniture maker] was at the opening, and he said, "Kay, your box is the best thing in the whole show." I thought that was really sweet of Gary.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Yeah, to recognize you like that.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. But it was sold, and again, the Saxes bought it for their daughter and her husband, because this was the piece that they liked the best in the whole show. And then after that, I got another order from the Jewish Museum in San Francisco, and it turned out that Ceci Swig wanted one, and so I did one for her. And then, I received a call from the Jewish Museum in New York, and they decided that they needed one for their collection. And so it took a long time to get it done, because my husband wasn't feeling too good at that time, and I was kind of busy caring for him.

But anyway, it finally got done, and it apparently got to them, because they did have a pretty good picture taken of it, and here it is in the newspaper.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you can be sure they have it now.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right.

[End Tape 4, Side A.]

MS. BAIZERMAN: This is Suzanne Baizerman interviewing Kay Sekimachi at the artist's home in Berkeley, California, on August 6, 2001.

Kay, you know, we haven't talked much about your partner, Bob Stocksdale, a wood turner and a well-known craftsman, United States, celebrated craftsman like yourself, and I thought we should spend some time talking about that part of your life.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Okay. Anyway, I guess, as marriages go, I think it's been a good one, I think maybe on a personal level as well as career-wise. And I think we came into each other's lives right at the right time. Bob's wife had just left him, and my younger sister, with whom I was very close, decided that she really needed to

break away and had gone to San Jose State to school. And there were really no men in my life and very few opportunities to meet men. I was 46 years old, and so, you know, over the hill. And so there was Bob. Maybe we saved each other, and so I think maybe we were grateful for each other.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Appreciated each other?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, yes. And so before I knew it, we were on the road. That is, well, Bob has always loved to travel, and he's done a lot, but I had never gone anywhere. But suddenly I found myself starting to travel, and I really enjoyed it. And at the same time, I was asked to give workshops here and there, and so, of course, Bob would always come with me. And the thing is, I don't think I would have ever gone alone, so he made it possible and was the perfect companion.

So anyway, it was good that way, too. Then I guess we've talked about the '70s, the '80s, and now the '90s. I really think maybe the '90s were maybe our best years; that is, we had a dual retrospective. In fact, certainly the first for me, or maybe the first for the two of us, which was organized by Signe Mayfield, who is the curator at the Palo Alto Cultural Center; now it's the Palo Alto Art Center.

And anyway, she decided that it was time that there was a retrospective for us. And besides, 1993 was the year of American craft-anyway, they were celebrating crafts that year. So it got planned for '93. Let's see, there was a catalogue, the first for us and certainly the first for the Art Center. Then, it traveled to six venues, from 1993 to '96. It was just really kind of wonderful, because we went to each opening and we were treated royally. It was just a lot of fun. I met a lot of wonderful people.

MS. BAIZERMAN: It was a real high point, it sounds like.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Now, you had another exhibit not too long ago where you both went off to, was it North Carolina, to the Mint Museum?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And what took us there was Jane and Arthur Mason, who are important collectors of wood art-gave a large part of their collection to the Mint Museum. And so in celebration of this, the museum put on a lovely exhibition, as well as dinners, symposiums that went along with this opening. And so, for sure, Bob had to go. In fact, we had to go, because the Masons are just very good friends of ours. In fact, among the collectors, they're really our favorites. And they live in Washington, DC, as well as they have a home on Captiva Island, and we've been to both places, and staying in their home in Washington, DC, was really one of our best trips to Washington, DC.

But anyway, this event was going on in Charlotte, and it turned out that Mark Leach, the director, had just bought five of my paper columns, which were included in the Inaugural Gift Collection, and this was on exhibit, too. And so it made it even nicer for the two of us to be there.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So it worked out that both of you had a big role in the opening festivities. And this was a gift. The museum was celebrating a gift of the Masons?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you were right in the center of the festivities, it sounds like.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And then, it was around that time when you came back from that trip that Bob started having some health problems and has kind of been in that situation ever since. That was a year ago or so, a little more than a year ago.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah. Actually, in March, he had the surgery called TURP. And so he wasn't supposed to work for six weeks, and so I think that was sort of the beginning of not working.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And this is a man who's worked every day, practically-

MS. SEKIMACHI: Every day.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And had a very steady routine of working in the morning, coming up for lunch. So this six weeks that he was idle was really difficult.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Right, yeah, it was hard on him. And I know he went down and tried working. I think maybe he went back to work too soon, and so naturally, holding the gouge at the lathe, it would vibrate your whole body.

So I'm sure it didn't work. And so he came up and said, "Can't do it." So anyway, that happened in March.

MS. BAIZERMAN: March of 2000.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. And then Charlotte was in May. And going, we were able to upgrade to first class, but coming back, we weren't. And so the flight back was really hard on Bob, and so right after that he had a backache, which was sort of misdiagnosed, if you want to call it that. They thought it might have been a kidney infection, but it wasn't. And it finally turned out to be a back fracture, a T-12 fracture of the vertebrae. And so, when they found that, which was maybe in July, they did hospitalize him for a while. But I was able to bring him home with the hospital bed. And unfortunately, you have residual pain from it, and he's also got a pinched nerve, and he-

MS. BAIZERMAN: He's still in considerable pain.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah, he hurts. It's on and off.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Oh, I see, one day might be good, and the next day not so good.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And he can't work now.

MS. SEKIMACHI: No, he can't work, unfortunately. And, of course, his macular degeneration has gotten very bad.

MS. BAIZERMAN: And that is a progressive eye condition, so he's not seeing very well at all.

MS. SEKIMACHI: He's not seeing well at all. And, of course, we knew that was coming on for a long time. So years ago, we should have had him on vitamins. There are different things that are being prescribed for the eyes now, but, of course, he thinks it's just too late; but of course, he just doesn't believe in vitamins. He has never taken one [laughs], so he says, why should I take them now?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, he's been so healthy, too, hasn't he?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yeah.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So, your role in the last year has turned from being a co-professional with him to being much more of a support and caregiver, really, in that sense? So your work is on the back burner until he gets to feeling better, I'm sure.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. I try to do a little work, but it's hard, because I guess Bob is still number one in my life.

MS. BAIZERMAN: You want to make sure you're there for him.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Exactly.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So how long have you two been married?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Almost 30 years; actually, it's going on 29 this year.

MS. BAIZERMAN: So you've had 30 years of working together and giving each other support in your careers and in your home life.

I seem to recall that in 1997 you got an award.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes.

MS. BAIZERMAN: Can you tell me about that?

MS. SEKIMACHI: Yes. Anyway, it seems I received an honor award from the Women's Caucus for Art, which is a national organization for women in the arts. [National Women's Caucus for Art - Honor Award. The citation from the Award reads as follows: "1997 Honor Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts. We honor you, Kay Sekimachi, for your innovative materials and processes and your textile works that are defined by their clarity and elegance of expression."] And so, anyway, the ceremony took place in Philadelphia at the University of Pennsylvania Archaeology and Anthropology Museum. And it was followed by a dinner in the Egyptian Room at the museum, which turned out to be a very beautiful room. Anyway, Jack Larsen came down to be my presenter, and that was really very good of him.

So before the ceremony, we took him to lunch at the Four Seasons and then a cab over to the museum. And

anyway, Jack got up and said some very nice things, and I managed to say a few words myself, but always afterwards I feel, why can't I rise up to the occasion and do a little bit better than I do?

MS. BAIZERMAN: Well, Kay, I think we've covered a lot of ground these many hours that we've spent together. And I want to thank you for being such a steady, and helpful, and informative interviewee. And thanks very much again for all your time and contribution to this.

MS. SEKIMACHI: Well, you're certainly welcome, and it really was my pleasure. Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]

Last updated... *February 16, 2006*