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Oral history interview with Eugene and  
Hiroko Sato Pijanowski, 2003 May 15-16

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# Transcript

## Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Eugene and Hiroko Sato Pijanowski on May 15 and 16, 2003. The interview took place in Honolulu, Hawaii, and was conducted by Arline M. Fisch for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This interview is part of the Nanette L. Laitman Documentation Project for Craft and Decorative Arts in America.

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

## Interview

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

Since I have been interviewing each of you separately about your backgrounds and careers, this conversation is going to focus more specifically on your partnership in both life and work. Yours, I think, is a rather unique relationship, which has endured for 35 years and has continually produced extraordinary work. I would like to explore the nature of your artistic collaboration, how it began, and how it has evolved over more than three decades. I know that you met at Cranbrook, but had you ever thought about working with any other person before you met each other?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I haven't.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I haven't.

MS. FISCH: And how did your working relationship begin? Was it as students at Cranbrook [Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI]? Or you didn't do anything together as students?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: When we moved to Japan after we both finished our education at Cranbrook.

MS. FISCH: And when you got to Japan, you decided to start a business.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Start a business. Along with the business, I was attending two different schools, one for language and one for Japanese metalworking techniques. And Hiroko did an extraordinary amount of legwork to drum up business: going to different galleries, finding out sources, materials, and other craftsmen who would help us to mass produce and/or limited edition works to be sold to-how many galleries?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Just two.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Just two galleries. [Mrs. Pijanowski laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Did you make a conscious decision that you would work together rather than each of you finding a separate job? I mean, when you got to Japan and you thought, oh, well, we will start a business. How did that happen?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, because we didn't have any choice, because Gene being American-talking about close to 40 years ago, the Japanese government would not allow to work foreigner intensively, to make yen, because the yen was very, very expensive then.

MS. FISCH: Compared to the dollar you mean?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Compared to the dollar. I think it now is a dollar equal to 100 yen, or 120 yen. That was at times equal to 360 yen for a dollar.

MS. FISCH: Right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So they didn't want foreigner to work full time. So what do we do? And also, his language problem. Again, that time, there is not really expected to have some foreigner to work for the company.

MS. FISCH: So it was really a practical matter that you started working together-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, together, right.

MS. FISCH: -rather than a philosophical one. Did you think, when you started, about how you would work together? Did you sort of split the responsibilities, and you did something and Gene did something else? Or did it just kind of develop-you both did everything -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, there is a definite role. Gene made and produced the pieces, and I went out to sell and deal with people, because, again, it's the language, and again, the transportation-because we didn't drive, we had to take the train; it's very difficult for him to get to anywhere.

MS. FISCH: So where did you set up a studio?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: At home.

MS. FISCH: And where did you live?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We lived in Ichigao, which is off of the Den-en-toshi Line, which runs to Tokyo and Shibuya, where-and Ueno, where I was going to school, and around Ueno, where a lot of different suppliers.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but Ichigao, basically, located in Yokohama, Kanagawa Prefecture, which is about 40 miles south of main area of Tokyo.

MS. FISCH: So you lived there, but a lot of what you had to do was -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -was in Tokyo. The wholesalers and industries are in Tokyo, but the clients are not living in Tokyo. But also two galleries that we-that was also in Tokyo, yeah. Nothing in Yokohama, because at that time, handmade jewelry was something really, really new.

MS. FISCH: And what kinds of things did you make?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, a variety of things. They were mostly cast, and they were rings and things, brooches and pendants, but mostly brooches.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Rings.

MS. FISCH: In gold or silver? Both?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Both, yeah, they were both. They were designs that were, we thought, unique to the Japanese aesthetic-were they? [They laugh.] In any case, they were more Western than Eastern.

MS. FISCH: What did you think the Japanese aesthetic would be?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, basically, I thought it would be very clean, very German. And we were doing mostly organic, with some geometry thrown in; that is, the cast portions of the pieces were usually very organic, very central, as opposed to some of the others were more-or in combination with the organic-geometric, utilizing square and round wire to frame or accentuate the design. We used pearls and stones and-

MS. FISCH: What about the scale, Hiroko? Were you working sort of small scale in relation to the body because of the Japanese stature?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: The scale line was very small. It was more towards the commercial end size-wise, maybe a little bit bigger than that. And also, we have a lot of job to design using their own precious stones, or with old rings.

MS. FISCH: You mean you had private clients to do this for?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, quite a few actually.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, quite a few.

MS. FISCH: And how did you get in touch with private clients? I mean, you had been away for a while, and you had never lived there, Gene, so how did that happen?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because of my father. Being medical doctor, he had lots of patients. And so he advertised us and-to his patients, nurse-whatever he can contact with. And another place was at this hospital that he was at is connected to one of the big steel company at that time. And so, he was-he had a-high position at the hospital, so he had a chance to go to this main company to meet higher people.

MS. FISCH: The executives -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Executives. So that helped. So the word went around.

MS. FISCH: Did you, kind of, give him photographs of your work, or he just talked about it?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, talked about it.

MS. FISCH: And where were the galleries that you found to show your work?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Both in Tokyo; one is called Vivo. Vivo. V-I-V-O. And the other one is called Mumane, I think you wrote that down.

MS. FISCH: Yeah, I think I did.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Mumane. M-U-M-A-N-E, that's in Kogei. K-O-G-E-I.

MS. FISCH: And did the galleries take your work only on consignment, and you only got paid when they sold it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, it's consignment.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And also they get to order.

MS. FISCH: So they could order things and you would make them and deliver them.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: And I know that your business was called Gene Limited. [They laugh]. How did you decide that, or why did you decide that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's because it would have been-it sounded more foreign. And I designed a logo and I used "limited," because limited is more often used in England. So I thought that a cachet would be more becoming or more interesting for the Japanese clients.

MS. FISCH: Was there any kind of anti-American feeling in Japan at that time?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. Well, at that time-actually, in Ueno Park, I remember a few mornings-they were on the verge of re-signing the security agreement, and this was probably the '70 / '71, and it was interesting to see the students practicing for the demonstrations, because they had to arrange the demonstrations with the police. And the police on one side of the park, practicing with their riot gear; and the students on the other side. And I would walk through [laughs], and I think, just like in any case when there is a demonstration against another country for whatever reasons, it is usually against the government. It's hardly ever against the individuals of that country. We see it today in the United States.

MS. FISCH: But you didn't find any resistance to your work because it looked American?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no. Not at all.

MS. FISCH: In fact, maybe that was an advantage?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That was the advantage.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That was an advantage, actually.

MS. FISCH: At that time, what was the Japanese attitude about jewelry? I mean, did men buy it for women, did women buy it for themselves, was it something very conservative that would sell? What was the, sort of, general picture?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Very seldom men buy jewelry for the women, no. Housewives will buy jewelry for themselves, probably without asking the husband, because they always had the side money.

MS. FISCH: Where does the side money come from?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because they get the money from her husband to make a living per months, and he will give you, really, a chunk of money, or a part of the salary that he gets, and she decides to whatever she like to do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and he gets an allowance. [Laughs.]

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, he gets allowance from his wife.

MS. FISCH: So the wife runs the finances of the family. And is that fairly common?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It is very common.

MS. FISCH: Still? Still, or certainly at that time-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: The young kids, I don't really know how they do it. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: But in your generation, that was very-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -was very common. So she could save some money, not using for some things. Maybe food, I don't know what.

MS. FISCH: Whatever money she could horde, she could spend?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. Put in the drawers.

MS. FISCH: And so that's how jewelry got sold; I mean, that's to whom jewelry was sold.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's the main client, I think.

MS. FISCH: Hiroko, did you have a feeling about what kinds of designs would be the most successful, or you were just going to try a whole lot of things?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We tried a whole line, but I think the wild design, actually, didn't sell well. Just a bit different from what they see, what they know of: that was the good line.

MS. FISCH: That was important.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -very important. So they were not looking for really conservative rings, but if we think that it's very creative, that would be too much for-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It would be harder to sell.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -be harder to sell, yeah.

MS. FISCH: Now, when you said you made waxes and cast them, did you have equipment to do all of that, or did you send that out?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Both.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Both, but we cast at home. Oshiire. You know what it is?

MS. FISCH: No.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: A closet.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But the Japanese closet, they close it, they put a futon in-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They have a shelf.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -they have a shelf. So the one studio we had at home, of course, we didn't put the futon, but we set up the center for the casting machine, because we brought with us from the United States. And in one side of the closet, because of the sliding doors, was the buffing area. So you can close both off-[laughs].

MS. FISCH: So this studio was in your home?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: Did you live in an apartment or a house?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: In a small house, yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Individual house. One to three bedrooms, and-

MS. FISCH: Well, that's not so small, three bedrooms.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But the bedrooms were probably what size-eight by 10?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, six tatami, so 12 by nine.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, nine by 12. And we used two of the bedrooms. One bedroom had two jewelers' benches and-did we-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We started with the one room and then we expanded, using two rooms. And I taught some housewives at my place once a week, so that's another reason that we expanded to have a studio-

MS. FISCH: So that gave you some extra income, by teaching.

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

MS. FISCH: My first impression of jewelry makers, specifically in Tokyo, was that many of them went to private classes. Is that true?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: I mean, there weren't very many schools -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, actually, no schools for jewelry -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: At that time.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -design, at that time. So you're right, there are lots of-not even lots of private school either, very little.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: So mostly-in our time, for artists and craftsmen to supplement their income, a lot of them had a few students; and the students would stay for years, literally. So that was one way; because if-there are very few teaching positions in Japan in the arts, very, very few.

MS. FISCH: Well, if there weren't any classes in art schools, then there wouldn't be teaching positions.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, well, but there's very few public institutions that have art. There's all these private, noncredited places geared for hobbyists, primarily.

MS. FISCH: So who did the teaching-well Hiroko, you did; because you spoke Japanese, you did the major teaching. And what did you teach?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: What did I teach there? Making rings. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Working in wax, or working in metal directly?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Both. Because centrifugal casting available at commercial end, but not in our field. So it was very, very something new, and also-I don't mention it before-the flexible shaft wasn't known. So, yeah. Flexible shaft-is really something totally new for them. So other schools, how they had been teaching was all construction, and they taught wax form that they sent out to the commercial caster.

MS. FISCH: And then when it came back, they had hand tools enough to finish them.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And the wax that they got was only the type of the wax they used in Japan for the sculptor.

MS. FISCH: So it was very soft.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Soft, brownish-they didn't know anything about the finer wax or the sheet wax or-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: At that time.

MS. FISCH: So, did you bring any of that with you?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, we did, because I knew they don't have it.

MS. FISCH: And so you had a chance to introduce some things to people.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And how many students would you have?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Let's see: one, two, three, four, five, six; between six to eight. At one time.

MS. FISCH: And they came for a whole day or an afternoon?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Afternoon, just afternoon, from maybe one to four or five, and we had teatime break; we have cake and chat. [They laugh.]

MS. FISCH: And that was a good source of income?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Helped-but it wasn't-I couldn't live on it, no. But it was helpful.

MS. FISCH: Have you always shared a studio at home?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, mm-hmm.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: And does that affect the way in which you work? I mean, describe how you work together in the same space.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: To begin with-I don't remember.

MS. FISCH: Well, how did it evolve? How did you begin to work together?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, how to work with-you mean on the piece?

MS. FISCH: Yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So you're talking about not this business?

MS. FISCH: No, I'm talking about after that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That happened because after we came back to the United States, the tension started between us.

MS. FISCH: About competition?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Competition started between us. For example, getting into the show; or maybe rejected, accepted; getting award or not. So the tension started between us.

So more than likely-I didn't like it. I don't know how Gene felt. I really like it fair. So I said, "I don't like this tension; I don't like saying, oh, I got accepted or not accepted; oh, I got the prize. So why don't we stop this and then try to produce a piece together?"

So it's nothing to do with the-nothing to do with, because if we work together, it will help our work. It wasn't that; our only concern was the relationship. Otherwise, I think we split at some point because the competition.

MS. FISCH: Right. So it was really, then, a very conscious decision to work together, and that was okay with you, Gene?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, it was fine with me, because I think Hiroko had things to lend that I lacked.

MS. FISCH: Like what?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, she had a good sense of design. And one aspect-in fact, we have discussed it at one point, where she was more organic-no, when she was more geometric and I was more organic. And so, coming together meant that a little overlap in the concept and the design of an object came into play.

MS. FISCH: Well, when you're working on a piece, did you argue? Or did you discuss, maybe, discuss is a better word?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, we discussed.

MS. FISCH: And was ego not a problem?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't think much of a problem.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Not much of a problem, but sometimes-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Once we set it up, it was not much of a problem.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Sometimes, it made me cry. [Laughs.] I was so mad-

MS. FISCH: -because it wasn't the way you wanted it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or the way I was working. And he said, I clearly remember what-one about, he said "Such an ugly piece." I said, "How could you say that? I'm trying my best." And he said, "Well, that's really ugly. You can do better than this." So I got hurt, and I cried. But then I stopped and looked at him and thought about it; it was ugly. [They laugh.] So I redo it. I redid it, and Gene said, "See, you can do it."

MS. FISCH: And did it work in reverse, the same way? Could you say to him, that's a terrible piece?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know; he never told me. I don't know.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, but did you ever say that any piece that I was working on is ugly, or-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, I don't remember. Did I?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, no. I'm asking: did I?

MS. FISCH: Did you ever say to him: that's an ugly piece.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's what I'm saying, I don't remember.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I don't remember either.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. I think he is very critical about what I was doing, I remember. I don't remember all, but it happened quite often. I didn't cry every time, but I just kind of got-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, you got stronger.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's true. That's true. [They laugh.]

MS. FISCH: I was interested to read something that you wrote, Hiroko, to the dean of the school of art [University of Michigan, Ann Arbor]; I suppose in answer to some questions about how much of this work is yours. And so you were kind of mad, I think, when you wrote this.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, I was mad.

MS. FISCH: You cited four points, and I thought maybe you could each talk about those four points. One was "The development of concept and content results from the flow and interaction of ideas between us." So how did that happen? How would design ideas go between you? By discussion, or by criticism?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, of discussion and just throwing in a word here and there. Maybe that's too big, maybe that's too heavy, sometimes practical aspects of the design. Or maybe this should be turned over [laughs] or-but just discussions in terms of trying to improve the piece, going back and forth.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or I start to make piece and I miss-stuck on some design or whatever, so I hand it to Gene and ask his opinion, or vice versa. That was going on between us. Since we decided to make piece together, we decided to talk once in a while. Even though I think that it's going in the right direction, we needed some input from him, what he think about it, because that's going to be our piece when it's done. So -

MS. FISCH: So some of it had to be deliberate discussion to make sure that it was indeed a joint effort.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or, when he sees another potential on particular piece, he says, "Why don't you do this way and that way and see how it works."

MS. FISCH: But he would say, "Why don't *you* do," rather than, "Why don't we do?"

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because we actually make a piece-we deliver a piece as our joint piece. When we start, it's not necessarily always working together. I will start making this piece, he may start making this piece, but along this process of finishing, we kind of getting into each other's work.

MS. FISCH: Because you're sitting in the same space and you have a chance to look at what you're both doing.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.



MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Sometimes I put things out that I don't know what to do, and he may pick up and finish.

MS. FISCH: I guess that's the part I find so amazing, that you could work simultaneously-or not simultaneously, sequentially-on the same piece and not offend the other person. I mean, if you started a piece, and you're working and you're stuck, and you put it away over there, and Gene comes along and picks it up and does something better with it than you were doing, did that hurt your feelings or make you angry?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. No, not at all, because think about academic situation. Working with the students, students has such a limited ideas, and also students become very subjective in this particular piece. But when the teacher sees it, it's very objective, and then has some good idea. It's the same thing.

MS. FISCH: Same thing? Well, except that, between you and Gene, there's an equality. Between you and the student, it's not equality. There's a difference there, in level of understanding.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but at the same time, it just seems to work out. That is, whoever is helping the other or creating some sort of input or change to the piece, it always seems to work out better, right?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I mean, to me-of course, I was not a student and he was not a teacher, or vice versa. But to me, just because teaching, to me, is not really relationship between students and teacher.

MS. FISCH: It's a relationship between two people.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Two people. Between two equals. But I know a little bit more on maybe skill, or maybe design, or maybe something going on. But I never thought that I'm a teacher, they're a student; no, I don't think so.

MS. FISCH: So you don't have that attitude anyway?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I hope not. I hope not. I always felt that they are equal.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I pretty much feel the same way, that I'm a student. They may be intimidated, but I try to break down that barrier. Because to me, I can get as much as they can give out of the situation-interaction, because they're coming in, they're bright kids, they have -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: They're smart-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They're smart-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Then, I also learn from them, too. So, in a way, I don't know which way to be a student.

MS. FISCH: So, it's interesting, you both have the same philosophy of teaching.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think so. I'm sure you had experience, you learn from student a lot, right?

MS. FISCH: Of course.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So, in that sense, there are also adults I felt as equal. I was sharing what I know, trying to help them. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: So, working with Gene was not so different. Hiroko, you said, "the design and the choice of materials also develop between us." So that you might say, you might initially think, I'm going to use pearls in this piece. And Gene might come along and say, pearls are not the thing. Would you discuss that, or would you simply take his idea and work with it, or give him the piece to work on?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I think if he says, pearl's not the thing, and this is piece should be, I would say, "No. Really?" And try. And if it works, it's fine. If not-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, a lot of Hiroko is great from the standpoint that she gives me a lot of choices. What do you think of this, this, and this and this? And-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because, I cannot make a decision.

MS. FISCH: Typical woman. [Mrs. Pijanowski laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. But I always feel comfortable making a decision, and I usually do it [snaps fingers] like that. I got a feeling that that's going to be the best combination, let's say, and it usually-most of the time, it is.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think Gene has very good intuition. That's what I really respect in his work. And when I was having interview by myself, I mentioned to you that he always has something to try to do-go away, which I also had it in my mind to-

MS. FISCH: "Something to go away." I'm not sure what you mean.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay, we have talked about the beautiful Scandinavian, and it's a beautiful form. He knows that, what the beautiful form is, what people will like. But he doesn't want to stay there. He always ventures-

MS. FISCH: He wants to move past that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He tries to venture where even the, I mean, ugly side maybe. But try to find in ugly side that is okay, also it might be beautiful.

MS. FISCH: So you share that kind of aesthetic interest in disturbing the norm.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because there's enough mediocre art out there. I mean, I even at one point wanted to start-[laughs] I got so-being in academia I would sometimes write little notes about some ideas. And I would make up a series of signs: stop academic art, recycle mediocre art, don't make art.

MS. FISCH: These were kind of your protest-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, it's because there's so much. And then I get a feeling that at different times everybody has a feeling that is it really worth it, the trouble to do it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So when, at the Cranbrook, as I said, when I arrived, I was just so overwhelmed how much other people can do, beautiful Scandinavian-style hardware. Then, David LaPlantz was my colleague. He was a little bit different.

MS. FISCH: Yes, he did not do the Scandinavian thing.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And then, Gene came; he was different. So that David LaPlantz and Gene are really kind of anti-Scandinavian pieces, which were the piece supposed to be at the Cranbrook at that time.

MS. FISCH: Well, there was the famous Cranbrook bottle that everybody had to make.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, right, right, right, right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So that was very strange for me. Why did they make this kind of ugly looking? But I kind of understood, because I didn't make the piece, but I had such little bit twisted mind anyway.

MS. FISCH: So you have this kind of shared aesthetic attitude?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or the direction where the artist should look for or go to.

MS. FISCH: Let's talk a little bit more about the actual physical construction of the pieces that you could both work on. How does that work? I guess for me, it's just so unusual that I want to know how you do that, if you start something, and you get two parts made and you solder those two parts together, but you haven't gone beyond that, but you have to go to bed then. And when you come back to look at it, it's different, because Gene's worked on it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, no. We never do that.

MS. FISCH: He wouldn't do that. Okay, well, tell me how it works. You said that you both work on the same-that you physically both work on the same piece. So I'm curious about how you do that. In what circumstances do you do that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, frankly, for a while, I really loved carving and inlaying. So that was what I was doing-and the raising, I like to raise-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but she's asking how we both worked on one piece.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, okay.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So, what I would say, for example, making a necklace that we made, early '70s. Probably I made a major body, and then, on the surface, has to do some inlay, he did it.

MS. FISCH: He did the inlay. And you knew that ahead of time, you knew he was going to do that. So it wasn't

like you left it, and you came back, and he had done something you didn't expect.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So we knew what the design is going to be, because we talk about it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And I like the inlay because it had this graphic quality to it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or like the pot that has to be raised. I ask him to raise in what shape and he will physically do it. Or, opposite, if he wants me to do coil pots of fabric, I will do that. I am better than him.

MS. FISCH: So you have certain skills that are unique to each of you, and you employ those freely. In developing a design, I guess that's the, sort of, initial part. Do you work on drawing, or do you just discuss in general?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, sometimes drawings.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think lots are discussions. We don't much draw anyway. To make, we just start from raw material and have some idea in hand, some drawings. A very, very simple drawing, not really detailed-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -renderings or anything-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -like renderings or drawings, like I did for commercial jewelry; it's very simple. We wanted to expect. We really didn't know where to go to anyway.

MS. FISCH: So your discussion would-maybe we will do this or maybe we will do this, let's try this and let's try that, rather than we will make it exactly-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Like a paper cord, we have a simple form. Next, I'm going to do this, is it okay? Sure, try. It was simple.

MS. FISCH: You also wrote that truly collaborative work, which is what we're talking about, "reveals not the individuals involved, but a new synthesis of their visions to the creation of which each participant is essential." So I assume that means that there is a Gene/Hiroko vision that is clear, consistent, and definable. Maybe not consistent, but clear and definable. And that there's also a Hiroko vision and a Gene vision, but there's also this synthesis.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, there's a new vision.

MS. FISCH: And I guess maybe you could describe how you do that, and how does it change over time, because I'm sure it didn't remain static, this vision.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: How?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Maybe if we think about the actual piece or series. Yeah, I think we always do small series of things.

MS. FISCH: Do you do samples first, to sort of think about what this vision might be? Or you work in series and it moves from one to two to three?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think we make series.

MS. FISCH: And that helps you to define what it is that you're doing. Are there times when you aren't happy with what the result is and you throw it away or you work at it-put it on a shelf.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, we didn't throw away anything.

MS. FISCH: But did you work to resolve the problem?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Later. Most of the time, I think.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think we did, and I think-I don't know, it fits for the question or not, but I think the paper cord is a good example. We got the material, it was played, and we look each other's piece and what's good, what is not, and why could we do this in this way. And then from one to the other, we could see the progress that is got better and better and better. And then, finally, I feel it's bloomed, like a little flower from the seed to-I could see seed to the final flower, mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: And it was a gradual evolution, worked on by both of you.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think just because there is nothing involved, nothing to do with the technique, just purely material, purely the form, purely the concept. That's why I think we could explain using these examples of paper. But before, we had a certain skill; we had a certain level of knowledge. So I don't think I can clearly explain.

MS. FISCH: So it's not so easy-with work in metal-because you both have skills.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, this one was good-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, so we're dealing with form and texture and color.

MS. FISCH: Do you also work independently sometimes? I mean, is there Hiroko work and Gene work?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, we do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Sure.

MS. FISCH: But does it get assigned to both of you when you put it out in the public?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Why is that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We don't want the tension, and it really-it doesn't matter.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It doesn't matter.

MS. FISCH: I was always curious, because the work would come out, and it was always Gene and Hiroko Pijanowski. And I would think, now this looks more like Gene, and this looks more like Hiroko.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: People can tell, I'm sure. People can tell.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: In fact, I think some pieces were stamped first Hiro, then Gene, or Gene and Hiroko. And that was one way; at least, I did it-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't remember-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I remember a few pieces; I did it consciously.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't know that. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think I told you.

MS. FISCH: I was going to ask you if there were different signatures or hallmarks to identify works that were done in a different way.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, they-yeah, like I just said, some-I made a conscious effort when we're hallmarking either Gene or Hiroko.

[END TAPE 1 SIDE 1.]

MS. FISCH: Which name would be first?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Hiroko would be first. And that was, to me, sort of a determination of who did the most. But then, after a while-in fact, after a while, it was only Hiro-[Mrs. Pijanowski laughs]-right?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Commercial jewelry. The commercial jewelry only has Hiro, yeah, not Gene, because you didn't want it to have a business. [Mr. Pijanowski laughs.]

MS. FISCH: You didn't want any part of that work.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, he didn't.

MS. FISCH: But you do-I noticed that you do discuss that work, even though you don't any longer take any credit for it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I will discuss it, sure, because Hiroko is always-she's sort of insecure and she's always coming

to me, whether it's a dress or a pearl versus a sphere, or what do you think about this combination. And I will move things around or try to help -

MS. FISCH: It's like having a built-in critic. I think you're very lucky, Hiroko [laughs] to have that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think so, too. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: You have also shared the research aspect of your professional lives. Do you each have particular skills that determine what of the research you will do? For example, was it easier for you, Hiroko, to learn techniques from Japanese masters, because of the language? And how did Gene then get that information-from you, or just from observation?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: From me. I think that was a good couple, because I could put him in front as a foreigner who wants to learn technique in Japan. That way, there's no resistance. If I go to Japan and ask them to teach some technique, it might have some frictions, I mean, not to say, yes, I will teach you. They did it just because he's a foreigner, and they know that foreigner cannot go beyond their skill.

MS. FISCH: So he's not going to be a competition.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. But he could get information, because I could speak Japanese. So I always was translating to him, and he's the one actually learning.

MS. FISCH: So you didn't actually physically do the stuff in front of the master, you just kind of translated, or did you both work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: In some cases later on, Hiroko went herself.

MS. FISCH: Yes, you have told me; the chasing she did by herself.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. But to begin with, that was teamwork. And I use that good point of him being American, me good point of could speak Japanese. But later on, I established my career, and if they hear that the professor of the university-wow, she is a professor.

MS. FISCH: You acquired great stature as a result of that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So I could be accepted. But to begin with, I was nothing; I was a nobody, that's why.

MS. FISCH: And Gene was a foreigner, so even though he was a nobody, he was a foreign nobody. [Laughs.]

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And plus, he was a professor already, too. He was teaching at Purdue-right?

MS. FISCH: Oh, that's right. This was when you were doing research; he was already teaching. And then, Gene, what do you-I mean, you would do the actual physical skill building, and then would you both go home and practice together so you could both do the work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: Because my observation was that you were both very skillful at these techniques. When we were doing workshops, you could both do them. Although I'm not sure; did you do all the toolmaking, Gene? Or did you make tools more?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, she makes tools, too.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I could do tools-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, we have got-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We both can do everything that we offer as a workshop.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, Hiroko is just a little bit damascene-she does all this-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Probably you may not know much about repoussé.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I have never really done much; that's basically it. I never had any-

MS. FISCH: You weren't as interested.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I wasn't as interested in it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, but I did it.

MS. FISCH: You did a lot of that. And Gene, then, did you do the recording? I know that you have lots of photographs, so was that something you did, or you both worked at that when you were acquiring the technical information?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think we start taking the photos together, but towards the end, I think he was doing it. But then, the quality of photos-submission by the other crafts people got much higher level. And no longer, we couldn't follow for-to get the photo good as-

MS. FISCH: -as they could do it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We started to send the piece out and have photos taken by professionals.

MS. FISCH: And who did the writing? I mean, you have written articles about some of these techniques, and is that also something you do together, or Gene, you do the writing, or Hiroko, you do the writing and Gene does the correcting, how does that work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, in the beginning, I think the first ones, I was doing more. The first SNAG [Society of North American Goldsmiths] technical papers, I did probably all the writing. And then, later on, Hiroko had other ideas in writing, and she was doing it for Japanese.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I was writing in English, and then I got a ghostwriter.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, later on, when I was in administration.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And then I worked with this ghostwriter, and so he writes based on what I wrote. And also I had a meeting him and talk about it, because he doesn't understand some of the things because it's out of his profession. Then the paper comes back, I read, and, of course, I changed; this section should move to the other, and everything really sometimes turn around. So that was repeated maybe two, three times with the ghostwriter, and then final came out.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and I think it was primarily those ones about other people? For the Japanese magazine, you wrote articles about-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, no. Japanese magazines purely I wrote it, in Japanese.

MS. FISCH: You didn't need a ghostwriter there.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, I didn't have to go to ghostwriter.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But it went elsewhere. Maybe I'm-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I'm talking about the papers, in English.

MS. FISCH: Yeah, the technical information papers.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, or the lecture that I wrote in English, "Gentle Solitude." That's purely me and the ghostwriter. And technical paper on computer, well, that was written by Nicole DesChamps [Nicole DesChamps-Benke] and me, but actually she got so frustrated. So I said, okay, stop. I will just handle the writing part. And I cannot write good English, but I know what I want to say; I know how the phrases should be-

MS. FISCH: You know how to organize it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. I'm very good at it; so I did that again with a ghostwriter. And she did parts of something that she could write from references from the book. For example, what SEL means, what GFI means, that you can condense from the book to writing. And also, the conclusion, and that was very good because she has a good writing ability, but not that type of paper-

MS. FISCH: But not organizing-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Not organize the paper. So I picked a good partner, because she can think, and the ability of writing in her is to make more like a diary or the story. She's very good at it; she writes very good. So the conclusion was something that she could create in her head and think and write. So I know that's good.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: She's not a technical writer, basically. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: You were both always very generous in sharing your information-technical information, skills with the

whole metalsmithing community. We talked about the fact that you have both done workshops and articles and lectures, but sometimes you do them together and sometimes you do them alone. How did you decide on that? Was it just whatever was convenient, or was it based on-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, requirements. Required by whoever invite us.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, most people just wanted to invite one, because of the cost. And so, they would pick one over the other, and most of the time they picked Hiroko.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't think so.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, about equal then, okay.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's equal, but sometimes they say both. Whoever has enough money or they negotiate with us.

MS. FISCH: Did you prefer to do them together, or it didn't matter?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It didn't matter to me.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It didn't matter, no.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because we had a role before we go the workshop, who is going to do what part.

MS. FISCH: I know you have been gathering information and photographs for a major book on traditional Japanese metalwork. I know you have been working on it a long time. Are you continuing with that research; do you have a target date? The whole metalsmithing community has been looking forward to this publication for a long time.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Do you really think so?

MS. FISCH: I do, yes. I have certainly been looking forward to this publication, because I know how much work you have put into it and how much information you have gathered.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Do you think that's important?

MS. FISCH: I do. I told you that a long time ago.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I think it's important. I'm just curious about all of those great photos and what kind of shape they are in. [Laughs.]

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I think black and white goes on more than 100 years.

MS. FISCH: Yeah, black-and-white photographs don't deteriorate.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because I asked a photographer.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But I mean the condition in where they're stored; they have been stored for so many years.

MS. FISCH: Oh, but that's not-I don't think that's going to be a problem.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And also now the computer, they can digitize.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Okay, but in any case, great range of photographs of some of the national living treasures who are now dead.

MS. FISCH: When did you actually start on that project?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Nineteen-eighty.

MS. FISCH: Nineteen-eighty. And I know that you had several grants to support the collection of information. And you have done all the collecting of information and photographs?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's in-basically in Japanese, in chapter format.

MS. FISCH: And it's written?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Not yet.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's pretty much together; you have got it pretty well organized, from what I can tell.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's pretty well organized.

MS. FISCH: But only in Japanese. So it needs to be written in English, because I think writing it in Japanese is too limited an audience.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And I know that you were looking for a publisher, but I don't know if you ever got one.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We talked to the publisher and we had a publisher. I don't know if they still remember me. [Mr. Pijanowski laughs.] But Kodansha International-

MS. FISCH: I thought that was Kodansha?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: Which is a wonderful publisher.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We gave them a sample chapter.

MS. FISCH: But you have never had a contract with them?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. And then what they said, they want more chapter, sample chapter. That's where I start to stuck.

MS. FISCH: You were worried that they would do it without you?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, it was time-consuming for me to write in English. So then the school got busy, my work got busy, and so I think, when I will do it, I will do it. It just delayed, and then somehow it's just taken-

MS. FISCH: Well, it's been a long delay.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, I know. I think that will be my last great accomplishment.

MS. FISCH: I know there have been two other people writing, but only about mokume gane. And you have this whole vocabulary of Japanese techniques that go well beyond that, that no one has written about.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, and what is stopping it is the language. And now, we talked about it, because we know you're going to ask this. We talked about it, and now we can get software that I write in Japanese-

MS. FISCH: -and it translates.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, well, the translation won't be good, but it will be good enough.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Not good enough.

MS. FISCH: Good enough to give to an editor.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, that's what we talked about, and I -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But she's got to -

MS. FISCH: You have to write it in Japanese first.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: First. That I have more interest to do, but if I have to start writing English, I just go like this and want to hide in a ball.

MS. FISCH: I don't mean to press this issue too far, but, for example, all the photographs you have, they all have to have captions.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. Right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Something where to start.

MS. FISCH: -to do that part of it, which isn't so awful in terms of scale and amount of time, but has to be done.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's very true, and I have-when I was going to-when I got this grant for-my father had a



suggestion for me, and I should have listened, which I didn't. His idea was, why you are expecting to do the whole book, why don't you start to just work mokume gane-that's enough. We have enough information on it. And then next year or the second-two years later, you add a little bit to the mokume gane.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: What he's saying, a separate little book?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, add it, and add, and add.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Chapter at a time.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And then finally, within maybe 10 years or 15 years, you complete the whole vision of what you want to do. And he said, because it's impossible; it's too much you're asking here.

MS. FISCH: It was overwhelming, I think, at the beginning. You collected all this information and it was just overwhelming.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: I think that you also have to look at what a publisher is willing to publish. When you look at Oppi Untracht's book [*Metal Techniques for Craftsmen: A Basic Manual for Craftsmen on the Methods of Forming and Decorating Metals*. Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1968], which is enormous, it took him ages to find a publisher for that book, just because it's so huge.

But I think it's important that you get back to that project.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think that-not now, because I started another job. Another career. Another career [laughs] which I should not mention on this archive anyway. So I will be busy for a while, but it's not a forever type of career, I know for sure. So when that's slow down or I finish this new career, I probably want to go back on the book, because I think that's the last thing I can do.

MS. FISCH: But isn't that a collaborative effort?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, she did all-Hiroko did all the research. She has gotten chapters in these big, thick, black folders.

MS. FISCH: I know, I have seen them. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There are a dozen of them or more. No, it's not really, other than I'm willing to help on that first-to make sure, because a ghostwriter, editor, or whatever, is not going to know much about metals. So I want to give them -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So he has to help me.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I got to get in there right after the computer does whatever it is going to do, to make sure it used the right word.

MS. FISCH: But it will be a collaborative book, and so, I guess, going back to what I was saying before, maybe you could start on those more mundane aspects of it just as your contribution to the publication.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I wish I could find someone fluent in Japanese and English, but knows metalwork.

MS. FISCH: Well, have you looked for anybody?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, she had one in mind.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I do have in my mind, though.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: You asked her, actually, didn't you?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, because she will ask me to pay and I can't pay her. And I don't think she will do it without any payment, because she's suffering to make a living. I just can't bother her.

MS. FISCH: I don't think you can ask somebody to do it for nothing.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, but then where the money comes from? I have to have quite a chunk of money.

MS. FISCH: Well, you need to find-what you might think about is a publisher who would give you an advance. That's what publishers do. But you have to be ready to work at it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: You got to be ready to do it, right. And I don't think you will be ready for a while.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I have to be ready for it first. I'm not ready for a while. But we talked about that; it's one of the things we can do after we retire-before we retire. [They laugh.] Then again, the wheels start going to the different directions, that's true.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And Hiroko will find other things, maybe, that are more important to her.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I would like to finish that book right there.

MS. FISCH: I hope so.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because I am going to die, right?

MS. FISCH: Well, that's what-we all are going to be dying, but you don't want all this work that you did to vanish. No, you want-so if you don't get the book done, you have got to at least get the research to someplace-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -to someone-

MS. FISCH: -where someone can have access to it and do it. But I hope you will do it.

So let's now talk about the kind of work you have done. You described the sort of totality of your work as diverse, which I certainly think is a good description, because you have explored many techniques and a wide variety of materials. So maybe we will talk about some of those.

We have talked a little bit about the Japanese metal techniques that you are so well known for. We have talked about mokume gane, but what are some of the others that you have studied and would like to communicate to people? I mean, some of the other chapters in this book we have just been talking about, what are they about?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's about the book, or it's about the techniques that we learned beyond mokume gane? Damascene.

MS. FISCH: Damascene.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Nunome-zogan, or weaving inlay. Damascene is what I call overlay on ferrous materials.

MS. FISCH: Damascene is overlay on ferrous materials?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: So the Japanese version of that is-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: They do both, though. Ferrous, nonferrous-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They don't call it nunome-zogan, do they?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: They do on steel.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, oh, okay. Yeah, I know they do both, but I don't know if they call it damascene-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: What's it called in Japanese?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, N-U-N-O-M-E.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Zogan.

MS. FISCH: Oh, zogan, okay.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Z-O-G-A-N.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: High-relief repoussé and chasing.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Japanese name for that is-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Taka, T-A-K-A-N-I-K-U, takaniku zogan.

MS. FISCH: Zogan?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, excuse me. Takaniku uchidashi, U-C-H-I-D-A-S-H-I, uchidashi.

MS. FISCH: The technique that you described earlier about twisted wire and then soldering it together to make it look like fabric, does that have a name or is that something you invented?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think I invented. But, at the same time, the other girl was doing it, too, which I didn't know. She graduated from-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: What's her name-Patricia Daunis?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Daunis-Dunning. She was doing it at the same time, but I didn't know that.

MS. FISCH: She went to PIA [Program in Artisanry, Boston University], didn't she?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: She did? I thought she went to RISD [Rhode Island School of Design, Providence].

MS. FISCH: Well, she must have gone to RISD after.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: After? Because she worked with John Prip.

MS. FISCH: I thought she went to BU, but I could be wrong about that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So, without knowing her, I thought I invented my own. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I even did that when I was doing soldered mokume.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's true. Right, that's true.

MS. FISCH: Now, except for the high-relief repoussé, the things that you worked on were primarily flat: graphic patterns, images. So what did you do with that approach of flat and graphic? What kinds of things did you think about? What kinds of direction did that suggest to you? I remember that you did some things, some small brooches that were actually mounted on fabric squares, because the twisted wire soldering made it look like fabric, so you actually put it on fabric. Were there other ideas that you had about those patterns that influenced what you made?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think that was a time-nothing much about fabric, but I think that was a time that we really started thinking, why you put this away in a box, in the drawer. So one way is to display how to very easy solutions to depends on something, and putting on something. Why not using this kind of fabric, because the idea came from fabric.

But before that, we made two pieces standing on a stand. That's the first one, actually. So that would be on the table as part of this little sculpture. Then we did some piece on the wall or with a fabric behind it. So that was the second from the first one. But that was basically because we thought that we want to display outside of the box.

MS. FISCH: What prompted your interest in making fabriclike structures in metal?

[Audio break.]

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

What was your interest in fabric that, sort of, prompted this use of metal to look like fabric?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay. I always had an interest in fabric, because when I was a student at Cranbrook, you have to choose minor. Major, of course, is metalwork. Minor, my minor, I chose fiber. I had an experience in weaving, how to weave. So also I think that when you are making things, you don't just look your own area as a reference, right? So you look at something else. Naturally, I went to fiber because that was my minor.

At the same time, Diane Sheehan, who teaches in Wisconsin now, was friend of mine and wanted to see some Japanese fiberwork. So I organized a trip and I took her all over Japan to see the ikat. That was the late-mid-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Mid-'70s.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, early '70s, because that was the time we got to Purdue, next year. So we went to see some national living treasure and mostly the treasures, one, two, three, four, five, or six different places. That's where I saw old ikat-not the new ones. And the pattern was so fantastic, the pattern-I was interested in pattern and metal anyway; that's where I started learning-right? So that's connect right away. So how could I capture

that very fine Ikat pattern to the metal.

MS. FISCH: So that's what prompted your experimentation with the twisted wire?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, twisted wire, because it's going to be a 10 percent in doing traditional way. I wanted to find out something-easier way.

MS. FISCH: And how long did you work in that way?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Probably three, four years.

MS. FISCH: So you did quite a lot of work with that process.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And almost all are flat.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There were a couple that were flowing-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -flowing, and then I bended it.

MS. FISCH: But you didn't ever forge it or form it?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. So my goal was to make a pot, patched like a quiltlike patch, but the form of the dish or the form of-it looks like a raised. And it never happened.

MS. FISCH: Now, you probably don't want to do that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't want to do it.

MS. FISCH: [Laughs.] That was a good idea; it just didn't get done.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It was a good idea. I think now it would be beautiful piece if I made it in a patched, quilted patterns.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That's a good idea, actually, for me, too.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You can do that.

MS. FISCH: Actually, you were talking a little bit about it, Gene, yesterday, when we were looking at your leftover mokume samples.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that's what I was thinking, too. But if I already had a copper pot, I would just solder scraps on and just fill up the surface with scraps.

MS. FISCH: Well, maybe you do a collaboration with David Pimental; I told you he has hundreds of unfinished copper pots.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I wonder if my inlay-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Copper is hard to solder. I hate soldered copper; it oxidize so fast.

MS. FISCH: That's true; it's difficult.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Brass is good. Does he have a brass, raised brass one? [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: He does copper.

MS. FISCH: In 1984, you began to work with Japanese paper cord, and we talked a lot about why you did that. But how did it affect your concepts of design? I mean, it certainly made your pieces much bigger and much more dramatic, and not at all technically oriented. So those are all concepts that were changed, that evolved, because you looked at a new material.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Also, another reason is hell with the technique. That's something I had in my mind, hell with the technique.

MS. FISCH: You got tired of fussing, or-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, no, no, no, because of the woman, Ms. Mokume, and that's totally talking about the technique. So forget it.

MS. FISCH: And you wanted to get past that. I know that you worked in several different ways with that material. I mean, you started out gluing it to -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -fabric. Plexiglas, cardboard? It was some sort of cardboard, yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Fish skins.

MS. FISCH: Well, that was a different material.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but it had mizuhiki edging.

MS. FISCH: Oh, edges around it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: On top of fish skins.

MS. FISCH: Are you still working at all with paper cord, or have you finished with that material?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I'm finished.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I may pick up.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] I'm done.

MS. FISCH: You must have tons of it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. That was one of my plans in retirement, is use up all these materials we have had laying around for years. And I have got some ideas that I would like to pursue using mokume. I mean, I probably would go with the mizuhiki and mokume.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think you are interested in using fish skin.

MS. FISCH: Well, tell me about the fish skin. I only saw one piece. Did you do more?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There wasn't very many of that. A dozen or something, or 10, or -

MS. FISCH: And where did the fish skins come from?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Fish.

MS. FISCH: I know that. [They laugh.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They could have been fake.

MS. FISCH: Are they cured in Japan? I mean, is this a material that the Japanese use?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: You have a toaster?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, you will hate that.

MS. FISCH: I would not like it, right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's an old Eskimo's method, because they made a coat out of-

MS. FISCH: Seal skin.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -seal skin and fish skin. They used both. And the method of curing the fish skin [is] the same way. What they do is to remove all the scale and then meat. And then, using my urine put it in there for a couple of days. And after that, take it out, wash it -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's cured.

MS. FISCH: And it's cured.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Very clean, and take a glass and then stretch as much as you can and dry out.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it usually peels off itself.

MS. FISCH: Well, I have some beautiful fish skins that are dyed that a Norwegian friend gave me. So, if you're interested in doing some more, I'm never going to use them. [Laughs.]

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But I'm not interested in dyed one, because afterwards I found-of course, if you cured a fish skin, you must know that the color will be gone, even the red fish or the blue fish. It's always end up like a gray-

MS. FISCH: That's right. And that's why the Norwegians dye them.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, my way is different. I found that, because it's a half-translucent, right, so, actually, I took a colored pencil and draw it on the paper, and then put the skin on top of it so the color comes through. Or a paper that has iridescent quality-I don't know what you call it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They use it in florists.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Green, transparent, but it has a green color or pink, and it is changed by the lights. So if I put that one and put the skin on top, then it's glossy, just like a live fish color.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Because the greens seem to be more prominent in that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And I think that's better than dyeing it. And that was fun.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That was fun.

MS. FISCH: What did you make?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Pins. Pins, brooches, earrings, yeah.

MS. FISCH: Because the fish skins were small, or that was the size you wanted to work? I mean, I sort of see it as big collars.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, basically most of them are about this size, and some are a little smaller.

MS. FISCH: About six inches.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Real small fish skins we got from-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I got a pretty big piece, that's the biggest piece I made.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, about that would be the biggest. And we got it from the local fish monger who came door-to-door selling fish.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, and I told him I needed fish skin. And he said, "Okay, I will collect you fish skin." That's how I got lots of fish-

MS. FISCH: So then you had to cure them.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and we stuck them in the refrigerator.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but he removed all the scales and the meat; so I cure them all, then brought it back. And that was a very interesting material. I wanted to do more, and I don't know how to start.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's just like anything; you're on to something else.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I find a lot of interesting materials, but then something happens and I don't -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We found out something more interesting.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: [Laughs.] Right-I stop, but it has a lots of good potentials.

MS. FISCH: Well, for example, in 1989, you worked on a project for Formica Corporation, using their newly introduced laminate called ColorCore. We all thought it was wonderful because it had color all the way through. This was maybe more of a diversion than a direction in your work, but I was fascinated by the kinds of objects you chose to make in this basically two-dimensional material: you made three-dimensional objects.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: Tell me about those objects. Describe some of them.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay, the ColorCore I didn't choose myself. ColorCore company, or corporation, looking for the universities to experiment with this material to make it into jewelry, basically. So our school was chosen to work with.

So it's arrived and I give to the students, but my point was, like exactly you said, it's a two-dimensional material, right? And I always think what-normally, when people receive material and start to make it together, what normally people think, what normally people make. Easy to make flat jewelry, to break, it's very common sense, or stack them together. But everything is going to be flat, so my intention is that, how could I make a piece that would be three-dimensional?

So that was my intention from the beginning. So I try-I kind of wrote down what the people will do with it; so that the beads breaking the edges-some of them did that; maybe to stack them together; or maybe combine some other metals. But everything I knew that's going to be flat, and I think I was right. Most of the pieces in the experiment was those direction. And I think that I'm the one person who really made it three-dimensional.

MS. FISCH: That's right, because it doesn't bend very well.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. So I have to think, how can I do? So that's why it came out of the hat, you cut, and if you push it, will be three dimension. Actually, it's two-dimensional, but as an illusion-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's a spiral.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -spiral. And you push it; it will make it more-looks more three-dimension, actually two, but three. Another one, I had a wood base and then bend it-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think that's pretty common with veneer.

MS. FISCH: Yes, but that stuff, I found very brittle. I did some work with it as well, and it's a very brittle material; it doesn't bend very nicely.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It did bend okay. Or maybe you didn't see the slides.

MS. FISCH: Formica bends easier than ColorCore because it's thinner.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Um-hm. But it did bend.

MS. FISCH: Well, I know, because I saw your pieces. And how many did you do altogether?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: One, two, three, four, five-five?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think six.

MS. FISCH: They were all hats.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, because that way it's easy to make three-dimensional form rather than a small jewelry or the neckpiece. So it has to be something more sculptural, but something wearable. So the answer was the hat. Easier, because the scale will be bigger, so it's more bendable; it's more in two dimensional because it was sculptural, that's why. I exactly knew I wanted a hat for that reason. And one was like boat shape. And something had it and something going through and-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And then there was one-yeah, one was just standing up with supports with rubber, yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That was very, very exciting.

MS. FISCH: It was a challenging material to work with, I thought.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Challenge, right. And challenge to do-challenge to find direction that how mine will be unique than anybody else.

MS. FISCH: Right, and you have succeeded. I thought your solution was really interesting.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I thought so, too. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: What has happened to those pieces?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We have still got them around, a couple of them, I hope.

MS. FISCH: Did anybody ever buy them?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. There are a couple that are broken, just because moving back and forth. But I-

MS. FISCH: Now, Gene, did you contribute? Did you work on those at all?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, I worked on them in terms of how forms relate to one another; and we had a student do most of the work, one of our graduate students [Carolyn Dunn].

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I got a grant-

[END TAPE 1 SIDE B.]

-to hire some students and to pay her, one of the graduate students.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Then the names came about because of my interest in Flash Gordon.

MS. FISCH: Right, they have funny names. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, funny names. So I just-well, let's see *Emperor Ming*, *Scrooge*, or something, *Flash Gordon*. He was the one with the yellow and blue, and looked more like a hero's colors. And they were named basically of different characters of the *Flash Gordon* series, or serial.

MS. FISCH: The movies, not the comic strips-or the comic strip?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The movies.

MS. FISCH: Movies-because they weren't in color, the movies.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, but the pieces reminded me of this sort of deco-

MS. FISCH: Right, the kind of robot deco-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right. It seemed to be-it was just sort of funky and he had this type of feeling, because of the different colors, the columns and things of that period.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But see, I don't know anything about this.

MS. FISCH: You didn't do the names.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. [Laughs.] Because I'm not familiar with American comics.

MS. FISCH: You just made the forms.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I did some of the forms, too, in terms of consulting back and forth.

MS. FISCH: Well, I thought it was a wonderful series, and I hope that sometime you can exhibit them again.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the thing about Hiroko, once a piece is done-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I'm finished.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -it really doesn't matter to her anymore. She's through and she's moving on.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And because I-when I feel like I just pushed myself to what I think it should be, then it's done, and that piece, particular piece, I thought it's done. I don't think I could do more.

MS. FISCH: There wasn't anything more to do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Well, it's not basically a very interesting material. [They laugh.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, not really.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Not really. It's hard to work.

MS. FISCH: So, overlapping the paper cord and the ColorCore work is the Gentle Solitude series, which seems to be a very long-term series as opposed to some of the other things you've done. You describe these in your paper, I think, as "an exploration of spirituality which identify and communicate an antidote for the profound loneliness of human existence." And you told me earlier that you were doing this at a time when you were feeling very sad. So these are very personal pieces.



MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And yet you were able to work together on them, or not?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Somewhat, but mostly Hiroko-again, it was just-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Gentle Solitude is more me.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was basically just asking for some advice in terms of where should -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Choosing materials.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -choosing materials and where should this go, or something like that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, locations or compositions.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, the basic premise was Hiroko, because she was wrapped up emotionally into that. MS. FISCH: And you did all of the little repoussé pieces.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, which was right after she studied with Moriyuki Tatura-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -in the '80s.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, and I think that was the year my father passed away, so that had something to do with-

MS. FISCH: So it made you very introspective.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, and start thinking about, probably, life.

MS. FISCH: And death.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Death, yeah. That was the actually the first death in my family that I faced in front. Nobody did-I mean, my grandfather died, but I was in the United States, so I wasn't there. Actually, the first time I ever seen someone die was my father. That's a hard thing.

MS. FISCH: That's a very profound experience, and it's especially hard to lose a parent.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So I thought I am strong enough and it's not going to come in, but it actually did. One year later it just hit me so hard.

MS. FISCH: Can you describe the ideas-maybe take one example and tell me about this composition and the ideas that it expresses? Can you pick out one-in your mind, pick out one of the Gentle Solitude pieces-and describe it for me.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: What do you want me to describe about?

MS. FISCH: Both the physical part and the idea behind it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: One piece that has cherry blossom, that's-the piece is floating in the textured Plexiglas, but it has some three-dimensional forms.

MS. FISCH: So it was a like a hill?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's like a hill. And then there is a little round pink quartz the side of the repoussé and chased cherry blossom. And what that [re]presents, I felt like life is sort of like leaving the shore and then rolling to somewhere, I don't know where, and that so many things happen while you are rowing the boat, maybe a storm comes or maybe you have to fish to eat. So there are lots of discipline there in the ocean, and I felt that life is like that. So I picked the cherry blossom flower; I was presenting me, myself. And then that's why the textured plexi was perfect for that sense, because it had the feeling of the ocean with the tiny, tiny waves by wind-you can see it from here [off our lanai, in Hawaii].

MS. FISCH: Did you texture the plexi or it came that way?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, it just came that way. And then I wanted to make some kind of symbol of me again, so I picked the crystal ball. The idea came from the painting. MR. PIJANOWSKI: A Japanese painting. MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I saw-yeah, a Japanese show by a Japanese painter, Norio Arimoto. He died very young, but his

painting always had little balls. And then, it seems like this represents the sound, or either the spirit, to me, so I used it in my work. So that's how this little crystal ball came. And also, I think it worked as a color, and also form, because the crystal ball is so simple and round, and the repoussé piece is very complicated. And then materials, metals and plexi, are so different, but the crystal ball is sort of axis between, because it was a frosted ball, not clear, so that transition from metal to crystal ball-a frosted crystal ball, crystal balls to the textured plexi. So I think it worked in that sense.

MS. FISCH: I guess you worked on that series over quite a long period of time?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Again, five or six years.

MS. FISCH: Well, that's longer than two or three years.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And how many did you do, do you think?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay: one, two, three, four, five, six-six.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: About that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Six or seven, but the last piece didn't involve the high repoussé piece. I just had a very simple form of, like, a thorn that-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Made out of wire.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Made out of wire, and then I had a gold-plated metal, which is-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Had texture.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -with a texture, which also was plain-it's phase-out gold to between silver-like a cloud-changed to silver.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Brush plating.

MS. FISCH: Did you write haiku for these works?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, so the audience would be a little more literate.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Literate?

MS. FISCH: No, the literary aspect would come in, but did you write your haiku in Japanese?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Japanese-no, English.

MS. FISCH: In English, because you were only going to show these pieces in America?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. I wrote in Japanese also, at the same time. So I have both, in English and in Japanese form. Normally-I mean, actually I wrote in Japanese first, and then I translated to English.

MS. FISCH: And it worked in English as well? I mean, you can't do a direct translation because of the meter and the numbers and -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, that was the difficult part. And I don't really know if the Americans got it. Probably it was hard, and probably it was difficult to-because I think that the customs, they-customs that I have, customs that you people have, is a little different. I don't know how much there are communications. Maybe they didn't understand. That's okay.

MS. FISCH: It's okay. And these-the most recent things that I see here are *The Maple Leaves*, and those are also part of the *Gentle Solitude*?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, that's a development from *Gentle Solitude*, because what *Gentle Solitude*'s theme was how sad life is, but the life is not only the sad-everything is not the sadness; there are some joyful part or pleasure part, so that's how it's been changed-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Especially-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -because the experience of death, there is a beginning to life. And life is beginning-

MS. FISCH: Did you come up with this concept together, or you discussed it, or-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know how that came up. MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, you were collecting maple seeds.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I was.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and then I think it was a matter of talking about scale. Then you went ahead-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, yeah, but first I had to make *Amaryllis*.

MS. FISCH: The *Amaryllis* came first, right?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Yeah, *Amaryllis* [collection of Hermann Miller] was the first one.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, that's right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because that was the bud; that's the beginning of the life. And the form itself is very erotic-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Erotic, yes.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -by itself, and to me that presents two things: erotic and form of beginning of life. So that-I've done that first. And then *Maple Seeds* came second.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but there was going to be two other *Amaryllis*.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I was going to make two more, *Half Bloom* and then *Full Bloom*, but I didn't do it. I never finished that.

MS. FISCH: Because you got off onto *The Maple Leaves* and liked them better, or just because it was more convenient to do that?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because it's more convenient to move to the maple seeds, because the flower form is a little more difficult to carve, so I put them aside. Then I was thinking, how could I make it; how could I cross-that's a matter of mechanism: how can I do it? And I didn't come up with a solution how I can do it, so I put it aside, but meanwhile I had to make some other stuff, so I moved into first pieces over there, the single one.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The single-

MS. FISCH: It's really half of a maple-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, no. That's how-maple seeds comes in different forms.

MS. FISCH: They come in one, two, and three.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. And this is one type of maple tree, always has this, and when they fall down, it's fantastic to see the view. There's a log cut nicely at home, and it fell down, and everything just sticks out like this.

MS. FISCH: They just stick up?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and then the bottom, the heavy part, goes into the grass. It's beautiful, particularly [at] the sunset, because the sun goes through that translucent part of the seed. So I thought it was fantastic. So I made that, and then made two regular ones. And then there was odd-shaped-three, just like finding clovers, four-leaf clovers, within three, but this case, three within two. So I made that, and I also made the jewelry at the same time.

MS. FISCH: Right. Gene, what was your input at this time, or you were just so busy being an administrator you didn't have time to do anything?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not really. No, I didn't have much input there. On the single and a double, I think, but then in a triple, that was gone-that was Hiroko's baby.

MS. FISCH: And you explained to me earlier that you didn't actually make these yourself, that you had somebody to carve them. I'm always curious about how people do that, because I'm not very good at delegating to other people. Did you do a large drawing, or you simply talked to the person?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Simply talked, and I gave a piece of *Maple Seeds* that I really liked, and I said-I explained why I like it, then some part which-of course I didn't like a part of it, right? It's not perfectly the piece that you really

like, so I explain I don't like this part and this, and how I want to make a texture. I told him how to do it, so kind of the cheesecloth, try it. Then I said, use the paper cord as a vein; it should work proportion-wise. And then the vein is supposed to be not the same as that. You have to have variation.

MS. FISCH: It gives you irregularity.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Irregularity and-I think it worked out fine.

MS. FISCH: So they're carved boxwood, and then covered with cheesecloth.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Cheesecloth, and then [paper cord]-

MS. FISCH: And a white glue?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, white glue.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, modeling paste wasn't it? Modeling paste, I thought?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, white cheesecloth? White glue.

MS. FISCH: Because it dries clear.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Modeling paste smudges more; you lose texture.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I thought it was-on a seed part.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, that's wood.

MS. FISCH: That's just the straight wood. The cheesecloth isn't over everything in that center part where it's very smooth. It's just the wood.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Just the wood. And then covered with Australian-was it Australian or Austrian? I thought it was Australian 22-karat gold. It's a real 22-karat gold leaf, of course done by a professional person who graduated from Champaign [School of Art and Design, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL], studied metalwork with-who?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not Robert von Neumann.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You don't know?

MS. FISCH: Billie [Jean] Theide, probably.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, Billie. He moved to Ann Arbor because of his wife's job, and he actually wanted to continue metalwork, so he visited our studio, but he decided not to come to school because of the tuition-tuition was very expensive. So he got into this gold leafing business, and basically he does frames for a living, so he was kind of interested in doing a piece for me. It was a, sort of, a different object to apply gold leaf. So it worked out fine.

MS. FISCH: I think you're amazing at finding people-talented people to do these things. You had to have a carver and then you had to have somebody who could coat things and somebody to guild things.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, luckily we have good students. I mean, they're all ex-students. Either-they're all ex-students and they've drifted into woodworking, and like the Japanese house-the Japanese room we had in our previous house-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That was some of my former students.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: He was in metals and sculpture, and then he gravitated, toward the end of his undergraduate degree, into furniture, and then he just sort of took off from there.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He has a furniture shop.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And he came over, and we showed him a book and asked him if he thinks he can do it. Well, first of all we had him, in our previous house on Georgetown Boulevard. [Ann Arbor, MI], make some-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Cabinets.

MS. FISCH: So you knew he was good.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, basically he just would figure out how things would go, and he'd do it. He was very good.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He's very good, but the Japanese room took a long time to be finished.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right because he-but he -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He did a good job. Very good job.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: He did a fantastic job. There was a couple of other people added, too.

MS. FISCH: But over the years you've both utilized many students to work with.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, yes, we did.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Didn't-let's see, who is-what's her name is now at Kohler [John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Sheboygan, WI]?

MS. FISCH: Kim Cridler.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Kim Cridler did her undergraduate degree with us.

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

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And she was doing-she was doing chasing and repoussé.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, you didn't know?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Did she do a lot of-did she do the gluing for the mizuhiki piece?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, she did.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, she was doing that, too.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, she helped me repoussé and chasing. She was very good at it.

MS. FISCH: And Christopher Grandel. He did some of the mizuhiki things.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He worked the mizuhiki. He was doing mizuhiki also.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And I guess Chris Ramsey was before that, yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, but I don't think I asked him to-

[Cross talk.]

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, there are lots of-the girl, like Ayala, when she worked for us.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Ayala?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and then who else? The guy-the guy who helped us to make the sculpture form, *Surfing Board*?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, interior designer?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Tom [Todd Mathews]?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: What's his name-interior designer/furniture maker. He actually said some nice things-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, he was I.D. [interior design] student and he switched to interior design after he graduated.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, that's true. Then went into furniture. But he makes his living through interior design, basically. He started a whole line, and then he said some nice things about us in *Metropolitan* magazine.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that was amazing. He actually-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: He was being interviewed and-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -respected us so much, which I didn't know. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and he mentioned our names in terms of how he respected us for what we were doing, and he had learned a lot about working.

MS. FISCH: Great. How did your studio practice relate to your various teaching and administrative duties? Were you as collaborative in these responsibilities as you were at home?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: You did your dean duties and you didn't get involved in that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: Gene, you got involved sometimes in teaching in metal.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, I taught-beginning the first few years I taught an evening course or a regular class, but then it just got too much. It just got too much. I felt like I should be doing something, but it just got too much.

MS. FISCH: So in teaching, as you're both teaching metals, even if you're not doing it at the same time, do you discuss direction and solutions, and arrive at something that you agree on?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right. Hiroko has some very definite ideas in terms of what the students should know in the first couple of terms. So I follow her.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So if we don't teach same thing, when they come to the intermediate or advanced class-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They don't have some of the skills.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -then it's unbalanced, and that's going to be a problem.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: So basically I handle those things my own way.

MS. FISCH: But you had a joint goal-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right, right they should accomplish this and that.

MS. FISCH: And did you arrive at those goals by discussion or consensus or agree to disagree or-how do you do that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I think the beginning class especially we worked out.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We worked out.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and then after that Hiroko started developing other classes or workshops within classes. She had some very nice ideas in terms of assignments that were wide and varied from other people, but basically some nice ideas in terms of how to approach things, like taking someone's article, like Bruce Metcalf, and have that as a point of departure, or using the Penland book [Penland School of Arts and Crafts, Penland, NC]. Well, that was my idea; using the Penland book and just having the students pick a person and work in the style of-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or like the catalogue of international jewelry exhibition in-Kyoto. It has a lot of different materials, and I use that as an example, and make jewelry, and what's-how they feel about making jewelry with nothing to the metal; so that was a comparison.

MS. FISCH: When the students are in the studio working, are you both around?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not at the same time, no. They're separate classes.

MS. FISCH: Did the students see you as a team?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't think so.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think at the beginning they thought we were a team, and so some confusion occurred. They think that if they tell you one thing, automatically this thing was passed to him, but this didn't happen, so we told them that we are separate. We are wife and husband, but we are separate, individual teachers. So you should know that; you shouldn't expect that it's going to be a team.

MS. FISCH: So you never really see yourself as a team-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: In teaching, no.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Other than with the graduate students when we have-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, graduate students, yeah. We work together, always together.

MS. FISCH: Because then you are developing an individual, and you're both working with that individual.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, right. But the undergrads, because of the number-20 in a class each-then it's really confusing if they think that we're a team, and then sometimes he has his own idea and sometime I have my own idea-the students are confused. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: If we did it that way.

MS. FISCH: Gene, you did actually teach classes when Hiroko would go off to Japan or a leave of absence.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right.

MS. FISCH: Hiroko, you felt comfortable that he would be doing what you would approve of, so you never felt that he would undermine you.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because I knew he knows what I wanted to teach, so I didn't have to worry.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I would do it-I would cover the bases in my own way basically, and there's all kinds of ways you can accomplish the same thing.

MS. FISCH: So the collaboration in the teaching aspect was not quite as clear a collaboration. I mean, you weren't a team, but you did certainly have similar directions. Some were obvious-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, we wanted to accomplish very similar things, but we did it in our own ways.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And I think that's easier than working on the piece.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: On our piece.

MS. FISCH: It was easier to teach together than to work on pieces together.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: I would think so. I mean, lots of people can teach together, but they wouldn't be able to do work together.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It was easier because there is a syllabus.

MS. FISCH: But the syllabus was something you developed-no?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but if you develop it, you don't change every term. I didn't. And so -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I would change almost every term and still cover the syllabus.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, advanced class, but not the beginning class.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The beginning class, I would get them to do the same thing that -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, but you change, but the basic is the same.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, the basic is same, yeah, just getting at the thing. Because I would get bored, I changed every semester.

MS. FISCH: I think it's wonderful that you've maintained a kind of ongoing contact with some students. I think that speaks well of your abilities as teachers that the students-former students-still call upon you and think of you as friends. I think that's really a great tribute.

Is there anything else you want to talk about in relation to studio work or teaching?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think we've pretty well run ourselves out.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It might-it may come to my mind later.

MS. FISCH: You seem to enjoy a lifestyle based on two cultures: Japanese and American. I look at your environment and I see a strong Japanese aesthetic in the design and the uncluttered quality of your home, and I wonder is this is intuitive for both of you, or has it evolved over many years of living together? Do you agree on your environment and do you have similar tastes?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think we do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think we do; it's just a matter of whether this should go over a couple of inches, or is that quite right? And sometimes we have little-little conflicts, like the green and the yellow towels. I folded them in half and she spread them out, and then all of a sudden one of my towels-because I like the green and the yellow together. The next day one was missing. [Laughs.] She didn't care.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But did you look again?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I know it's back again.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: The yellow's back.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's that type of thing. I think it's almost a game in some-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's not a game.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think it's a game.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't like it, but then I thought about it; it looked good, so I put it back again.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but in any case I view it as sort of a game. You do it a lot, too. She'll come by, and she didn't like quite how I placed a piece of art or something, and she-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or the furniture, I change it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And then I move it back. And sometimes she doesn't notice. [Laughs.] So I think it's a game.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Do you think so? I don't think so. I'm so serious.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, well, all right, it's a game for me.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, okay.

MS. FISCH: When you choose your furniture, for example, you do that together, I assume?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that's pretty important.

MS. FISCH: And is that difficult?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: You have similar tastes.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think we do really have similar tastes. And I didn't know that he has such a good taste, as much as I do. [They laugh.]

MS. FISCH: Until when? When did you learn that?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Early on. When we get married. I thought that American is more gaudy and is more unsophisticated. Actually, Gene had a very sophisticated taste, from my standpoint, from Japanese standard point. He liked very simple ones. Sometimes he likes simple pieces than I am, more simple than me.

And that was surprising, and I think that goes back to what I mentioned about the Scandinavian design. He knows what's good-he knows what's good design. He knows what's beautiful. So that's-he had it in him already, which I didn't know, because what he produced was not that.



MR. PIJANOWSKI: I try to go beyond-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But that's a totally different category that he-he was doing it for different reasons.

MS. FISCH: But in your environment, in your home, you don't have a lot of conflict about your lifestyle.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, she doesn't like my bedroom. I'm just doing it to be-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't like his bedroom; I don't like his offices.

MS. FISCH: Because they're-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Messy.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Messy. And it's not organized.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's sort of organized, it's just-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: For him it's organized, but for me it's not organized.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think one has to have a room that just sort of-things just lay around because-it just takes time to develop a system. Maybe I haven't developed a system here yet. I don't know.

MS. FISCH: But you can stand it because you don't have to use it, Hiroko?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Let him do whatever.

MS. FISCH: So you can just close the door.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Just close the door.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Say, oh, that's Gene's room. Hell with it. He can do whatever he wants. I think he needs release, too.

MS. FISCH: So, in your public spaces you don't have a conflict -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: More than likely he's, I think, trying to agree with me, and I think he wants to make more mess. Yeah, I'm sure while I'm gone, I can see the dining table was full with some papers. And I'm sure that table in the living room is all messed up with the magazines. But when he knows I'm coming back, he cleans up.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I clean up, sure.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: See? So that's okay.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I figure when we have guests, I can put it in order pretty quickly. No use putting things away every two seconds.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But I don't like to live in that either.

MS. FISCH: What do you think are the significant Japanese elements in your lives together? Is your food more Japanese than American or-what do you think?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think here it's more American, and then in Japan it goes a little bit more towards the Japanese.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Food-wise, you mean? Just because of availability. In Hawaii or United States, it's very difficult to get the materials to make food close to real Japanese. It's not easy, and some things is not available.

MS. FISCH: But do you reach those agreements just on mutual practicality?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yes, practicality, right. I know what she likes to eat, but I'm not a Japanese cook, so she just suffers through whatever I fix for her.

MS. FISCH: But you do the cooking.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I do the cooking, because Hiroko decided it was not important anymore. And I started because I thought it was actually-rather than coming home and plop myself in front of the TV and kick the cat after a

stressful day. The cooking was sort of release, because I would go to a butcher shop or a fishmonger-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think that there's another reason, just because I get ill very easily from exhaustion, teaching or whatever I do. And so he sees that I don't have enough energy to do everything, so one day he took over cooking, and grocery-he loves to go grocery shopping-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I like-especially in Ann Arbor. It was fun.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -and I don't. Actually, it frustrates me, and then I come home and I complain to him how awful that grocery shopping is, and I think he wants to do it rather than hearing my complaining.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I actually enjoy it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He enjoys it, too. And the cooking definitely, just because lack of my physical-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Strength.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -strength, yeah. And washing machine, washing clothes, he's been doing it since we got married, and I am not really interested in housework, period, anyway, so I put off washing: oh, my God, it's getting piled; I have to wash it. Then I hear the washing machine going.

MS. FISCH: It's like, "Oh, who's doing it?"

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He can't stand it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, it's not I can't stand it, I just-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You have something to do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it keeps me busy.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I was ready to do, but it's always he beat me before.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, you timed it right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So that's great.

MS. FISCH: You like that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I like it, just let him do. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I just like to move around, and if there's something to do, I just do it. I've got the energy, so-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: The only thing we hire people is to clean up the house. We both doesn't like it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I don't mind it. I cleaned it this time.

MS. FISCH: Well, when you're teaching and working full time, it's pretty hard to do that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And I need very clean house. I need-and all the cats, they shed a lot, and so we-I really need someone to clean well, and both, we don't like vacuuming the house.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I vacuumed the other day.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I know, but it's-

MS. FISCH: But it's not your favorite thing to do, I'm sure.

What do you think are the particularly American aspects of your life together? Are there American aspects to your life?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I don't how to divide it between Japanese and Americans. Human beings just do things they have to do.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: What's American like?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I don't know what Americans like, actually.

MS. FISCH: Well, I suppose if I were to describe some American, it might be acquisition of goods that you have- you have two nice cars and you have wonderful appliances; you have a beautiful home that's very large compared to Japanese homes, and to me that's a very American part of your life.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's Japanese acquisition. I think the Japanese have a stronger sense of acquisition than the Americans.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Do you think?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think so. They are more serious about it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yes, but I think Americans are also serious about it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but they don't have the taste.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Taste for what?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, like a Japanese-normal Japanese has a certain level of taste that is much, much higher than, say, the average American. I see no-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: From your standpoint, from your eyes.

MS. FISCH: You don't agree.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He is not the common American.

MS. FISCH: He's not the usual American.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't think so. He's not American-American.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I don't feel like-I've never felt American-American.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: His taste is not American-American, I don't think.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I've always been confused about what am I doing here? It's so surreal; doesn't make a lot of sense what people do.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But you are American.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I was born here, but-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You were born in United States, you are raised in the United States, but he's-I don't know where he's coming from.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I just don't feel any place is really-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: For me, his taste is a little different from common American. I'm not saying that artists- there's a difference, don't you think?

MS. FISCH: Well, certainly in your environment, and I guess what I'm asking is how much are you living in the Japanese style and how much are you living in the American style?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Totally, that the house and those-are more Western. I can say-I would like to say Western. I don't want to say American. The Western includes-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that's better, Western.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It includes United States, Europe, because ours is-to me, our taste is a little more European. I don't know how you see that, but I do see myself more like the Dutch, not the German, but Dutch. Not the British either, not the French either, but more like-I feel more like the Dutch.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I feel the Dutch have probably the best taste in the world.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I feel so too. It's very simple, very practical.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But at the same time-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: At the same time it is simple, simplicity.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's different.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And the German is a little cold, and Dutch design is warmer to me. He likes that. He's a little casual.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Casual but also-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Not really serious like Germans.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it sometimes has a little bit-

MS. FISCH: But the Dutch are pretty serious, I think.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Do you think, really?

MS. FISCH: Oh, yes.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But the thing of it is, I think they sometimes have a sense of humor in their work. So I like that, yeah. They're serious, but they have a-

MS. FISCH: Subtle sense of humor.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it's very subtle.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I like that, too. I really felt comfortable when I went to German-I mean Netherlands. Their taste, the color or the design for industrial design particularly. I thought that's really nice. And that's had a very similar taste to Japanese, I think.

MS. FISCH: And you spent a whole lot of time, many years, in the Midwest, especially in Michigan. Did this environment affect your lifestyle at all? Do you think the Midwest had anything at all to do with your way of life?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I think I can see skewed-because there's nothing around and nothing available, so you have to focus on yourself, and you have to make the pieces, nothing else.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Especially in Lafayette, Indiana, at the university; that's for sure.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, so to me it was a good place to look at yourself. It does affect-I don't know, not daily life, living, but to live, I think that was good, and I liked it a lot. And I liked because I could go to New York and look at what's going on, and I think if I lived in New York, I don't think I produced as much as I could living in Midwest. There are so many things that happen. Too many distractions, and I will probably confuse what I am supposed to do, because so much there. And I don't need that. I need quiet, but I need to see what's going on. So it's good just to visit New York and stay there for a week and see what's going on, and if I can observe something and go back quiet space, which is Midwest, and produce. And if I live in Manhattan, I will want to see a show, I will go to see this, I'll go shopping almost every day. I couldn't do that in Midwest.

MS. FISCH: All right, but what about the nature of the environment? I mean, *The Maple Leaves* certainly came from your environment-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: From nature.

MS. FISCH: -but were you otherwise affected by the environment in which you lived?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, yeah, the last 12 years in Ann Arbor we had a beautiful house in the middle of an oak forest, and that was very peaceful to come home every night to that-I mean, it was so serene and quiet. I really enjoyed it, except for the winters of course.

MS. FISCH: Well, the reason you're not living in the Midwest anymore is the weather. You hated the winter.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I hated snow.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I was raised in that environment, and I wanted to get out for a lot of other reasons. Basically I had done what I could do in Ann Arbor, and I wanted to burn my bridges. [Laughs.] In essence. I wanted out of there, and Hawaii is not-

MS. FISCH: But you had planned to come to Hawaii for a long time, no?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: To visit.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Me, I did, from the beginning-from-since the day I moved in-moved back to United States.

[END TAPE 2 SIDE A.]

I always wanted to retire in Hawaii.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But you never thought you would.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And the reason is because it's closest to Japan, so I can go back and forth, but living in Ann Arbor is 13 hours flight. From here-from Honolulu to Tokyo it's only six to seven, which is about half. And I know as I get older, it will be much harder to fly or to sit in a chair for 13 hours; I could see that. And also, after we visited Hawaii-it was four years ago?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Five.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Five-I felt comfortable, not just because of the weather, the people, because it's all mixed.

MS. FISCH: It's a very diverse culture here.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and then all-a lot of international marriage. So I felt comfortable.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I felt comfortable because of the people here, too. Everybody is sort of laid-back, and they're hardworking, but they-I enjoy seeing-I've got this thing about enjoying or being a voyeur of large extended families, even though I never was in one. I just enjoy watching people.

MS. FISCH: You enjoy observing those?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, and wishing I could be part of a family.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And the international marriage is nothing here. It's just a common thing.

MS. FISCH: Was that ever a problem for you? Did you ever feel -

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Uncomfortable? Yeah. I did. In Ann Arbor, in mainland, say.

MS. FISCH: Probably not in California, because it's more common in California.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't live long enough-

MS. FISCH: You weren't there long enough to know.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -to say, but Midwest wasn't really comfortable, because always-there's always Japanese group who came from Japan, would never invite us because we were intermarriage.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not never, but very seldom.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Never, but very seldom. And I know why; I understand why. Because if foreigner, I mean American, comes in to the group, because of the language problem, it will stop the conversation, and it's very uncomfortable. I understand that feeling, but I felt it's odd. So I-that's from their standpoint. From my standpoint I go-invite to party, but we were the only interracial marriage, and maybe they're not thinking anything, but I noticed and I feel uncomfortable.

MS. FISCH: Even after many years?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, Hiroko is definitely Japanese.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I'm definitely Japanese and that's-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right from day one-will never be anything else.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So that was from my side; that was my problem, but here I don't have that sensation.

MS. FISCH: So this is the perfect place for you to live.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think so. And nice weather. [They laugh.]

[END SESSION 1.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Eugene and Hiroko Pijanowski at their home in Honolulu on May 16, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number three.

I know that you participated in several symposia and workshops over the years, and I wonder if you want to talk about those and say a little bit about what they were like and what you gained from them.

There were two in the U.S. and two abroad. The one that you did together was the tin symposium in Vienna in 1980, and I haven't heard a whole lot about that, so why don't you tell me about that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, basically it was a tin symposium just before--was it just before the World Crafts Council meeting in Vienna?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: What was the tin? Is that actually tin or was it--

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was pure tin-zinn. Zinn in German. We were supplied with it in various forms, mostly sheet, pure tin. I think there were people representing Australia--

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Who was from Australia?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I can't remember, husband and wife. Sydney, probably? And then there was, from the U.K., David Watkins and Wendy Ramshaw.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: She was not there. She wasn't. She joined later.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, she joined later. Oh, okay. And then from Germany it was--

MS. FISCH: Otto Kunzli--was he in there?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: There was a political problem at that time, so Hermann-Jünger--was actually invited, but he wrote a letter saying because of blah-blah-blah, so they had a nice poster that Hermann Jünger sent to organizer Symon. So from Germany, a couple, two--presented two people. One, he used to do the fingers.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That's from Italy.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, that's Bruno--

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Martinazzi.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He was invited, and he was there for a couple days, but most of the time he's gone, and everybody thought maybe he's found some lady friend.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And also, Emmy [van Leersum] and Gijs Bakker, Bakker from the Netherlands. And Arie [Arie Ofir] from Israel--Arie?

MS. FISCH: Arie Ofir.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Ofir, from Israel.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And his wife was with him.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Later.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, later she came to visit.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So two Germans, very simple names, Kris [sp]--Kris something.

MS. FISCH: Well, we'll look it up later. But what was it like to be--this was the first international symposium that Americans had been invited to. I mean, the Europeans do symposia all the time.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: All the time, right.

MS. FISCH: They had done a steel one and some others, but I think this was the first time that Americans were

included, and I had been invited but I couldn't go, so I was very curious about how that went, what happened, and was it important to you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was important, again, for the human contact, other people working in metals, and then seeing how they approach relatively new material with somewhat different properties than all of us were accustomed to. There was a wide variety of approaches, from this one German, we're trying to think of his name, but he was only one who did casting. He did-he took everybody's fingerprint and then cast it so-and then gave everyone -

MS. FISCH: Well, that was Gerd Rothman.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right. In any case, he did that, and he gave us all our own fingerprints after the symposium. He was supposed to actually give it to the museum, because he was supposed to collect all of the items for their permanent collection of-all the works done at the symposium.

It was interesting from the standpoint that there were minor cliques that developed. We were in the biggest one, I think. Some of the others went off in their own direction. It was a lot of fun just to socialize with people.

MS. FISCH: But was the work serious? I mean, did people work seriously, or not so seriously?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I think it was semi. There was, I think, a lot of-I think Emma was the most serious of them all.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think there are three types in the workshop: one, very serious; one is half-serious, one just took it kind of a joke about this whole workshop. For example, this guy from Germany, Gerd. I don't think that he took it seriously. He was kind of tongue-in-cheek about the material itself. So he knew what he's going to do from the beginning, so attendance wasn't that great either. So he'd just hop out once in a while, and did this all casting, which he just left. And I don't know, it was something, again, political problems between Germany and Vienna, I really don't know what about. That was his attitude.

And Bruno, he, as you know about him, he's just laid-back and easygoing. He's kind of, oh, great, I mean, about the symposium-probably enjoy it, but I'm not really serious about it. I'll just do whatever I want to do.

MS. FISCH: Well, it probably had very little impact on his own work, that kind of thing.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right, so he just did his old style, like lips and eyes, that is recognized as his work.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So I don't think he was really-

MS. FISCH: But did he do it in bigger scale?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, not at all. So, from my standpoint about him, it's interesting to meet him and know him, but his approach to the symposium was just-to me it was an excuse to come to Vienna. That's how I saw it.

And Emmy and Gijs, they were the half-serious people, I thought. Emmy is very, very precise, very picky person towards the work, and that was great to see how she does, how this team works together, because there's another couple who works from metal, like us, but of course they produce different pieces and go in different directions. But Gijs was very, very supportive of Emmy. And whatever she wants, he gets it for her. And they must have some line, how much they can be serious. So they did some work seriously and stopped and took off, and they had fun later with their son.

David Watkins was very serious. However, he didn't know how to deal with the material itself. He was very frustrated. So he didn't make any piece at all with tin. He just did a study on the drawings. It was very interesting, and he didn't even touch it. He even didn't touch the material. And from my standpoint I didn't understand why he knows the material without touching, but the drawing and what to make, so from his-who else?

Arie, he was serious, too, and he was doing some raising, and showing what he can do with his skill. But-so that was-what else did he do? Raising?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think he did some casting, and then he started stretching.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Stretching-and who else? And us.

MS. FISCH: And what did you do?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I was more interested in working right away with the material because I have to know, what does it do? So we did roller printing.

Again, everybody thought I was going to use, again, raw material by itself; nobody made me think about the surface decoration. So that was my intention to try to do, and I thought that's more different from others.

So we did-I did try roller printing, but not thinking about the tin being soft, so it would take something in-that's what-

MS. FISCH: Oh, it would simply lock in?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right, just like one of the Japanese people who did pound inlay. Yeah, screen into pure aluminum.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Pure aluminum. So that's what I had in my mind, and so we both tried different materials, but I thought to me the most interesting thing was a paper. The tin took a paper.

MS. FISCH: It just locked paper to itself?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Locked, right. Of course if you bend it back again, it pops out.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Actually it was interesting; it almost became fabric; it was embedded into the metal.

MS. FISCH: Well, if you roll it thin enough.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And then because the character of the tin itself, you don't need high temperature to solder together, right? So even we tried to solder-actually I didn't know how to solder the tin at this point. So I fused it. I made a cube with rolled paper in the tin, and-what-

MS. FISCH: Plain?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, welded. The paper was still there.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Because it didn't cut off the heat.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It doesn't need much heat. So with this cube-even I couldn't make soldered cubes. Cubes, with the welded edges, with the color-just a touch of color in the lines.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The color-yeah, the color of the paper was still there, which was nice.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So I think we were very serious. I was very serious, and I was there for all the time, and from my standpoint I thought we did the most-trying to find the possibilities, not just to play "what you have done in the past," because that's obvious you can do it.

Everybody can see-for example, Bruno-that it's easy because tin is soft. The raising has already been done by someone; casting already been done in the past. And David is trying so hard to try to go to new direction but couldn't get something out, just because he was so stubborn working just on paper. I wish he could touch the metal straight. But I felt that maybe that's something to do with I came from the United States. They're not afraid; they just go, direct and play and experiment as much as they can, but the Europeans are a little more conservative.

MS. FISCH: Well, maybe a little bit more concerned about their image.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, that's true, image.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that's very important.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's very true, their image, but we are not. We always experiment, and maybe from mistakes something comes out and we use it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There was a whole series-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But the whole attitude or whole facing to the metal material, from that-from different-the eyes are different going through to look at what's very interesting to me, because a whole variety of people-whole variety of directions. I don't mind that Bruno took off and played. That's part of his-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Personality.



MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't mind that this Gerd cast in this-took it in a cynical way. I thought to me that was typical German. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: More Italian. But in any case, yeah, then there was some interesting-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So it was fun.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -taking sheets and folding and trapping something in between, like you do in roller printing, and then peeling it partly open.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, that was fun, too.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And so we had, like, fans coming out like this, and this paper on both sides, different fragments of the same sheet that was trapped in between. It would get attached over here and some over there, and it was beautiful. It was like a weaving in way, the weft. And I think that was a nice series, too.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I like that, too. I don't know what happened to all the work.

MS. FISCH: It all stayed in Vienna.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's in Vienna, yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We've got slides someplace.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And at the end of the symposium they had a show.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: At the museum.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Museum, and they put out everything. But on the side-of course we took a side trip and went to wine country and typical picnic style of Austria, which I really enjoyed very much.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, then the Russian. Sergei-Sergei [Blumin].

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Sergei. And then a wine, fresh wine, and the fruit and the cheese, that's all. And that's something that I've seen through the movies, but I was there as a real-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, there was this Sergei, a Russian émigré who was living in New York City, who also-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, that's right; he was there.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And he was a classical clarinetist?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Trumpet?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Violin?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, it was a wind instrument. Yeah, he was trained in Russia, and actually he-in New York he still played professionally. Sergei-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's right, Sergei. I totally forgot him.

MS. FISCH: So he entertained you from time to time?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but he was a metalworker, too. He basically did enameling.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, he was invited to be one of the symposium participants, presented from United States, but we didn't know who he was. But actually, he was presented Russia maybe.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Sergei Blumin.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He came from Russia and moved to New York.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: He was only in the United States for a couple of years, and he was just getting established.

MS. FISCH: Was it different to participate with an international group than it would have been with an American

group?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, like me. I'm actually from-presenting from Japan, but I came from United States.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, that's like Sergei, too. They probably couldn't get anybody from Russia, maybe, at that point. There was a person who-from Czechoslovakia-who couldn't come, couldn't get a visa.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, one more person from Poland [Tomasz Zareust].

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Anton Chekhov?

MS. FISCH: From Poland?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Somewhere in Poland.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Anton couldn't come because of visa problems or something.

MS. FISCH: He's in Hungary.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Or Hungary. But in any case he couldn't come. And then there was-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: The one from Poland. Do you remember his name?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: From Poland, yeah-oh, no, it got bounced here someplace.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: A very simple name. And I don't even remember what he made-house. He made a house once.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, right, okay, a house.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He made a house in metal.

MS. FISCH: And did Josef Symon also participate in the materials, or he was just kind of organizing?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Organizing.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Organizing it, yeah. No, he did something.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He did? I don't remember. What is it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I can't remember either.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We also had a couple of student assistants to help us. To get something-when we need something, they will get it for us.

MS. FISCH: And where did you stay?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Just on the outskirts, at a youth hostel, a brand new one, and it was a room with a-it was kind of-well, very avant-garde. It was a room and then a curtain, and behind a curtain was a toilet and shower and basin. So you just pull it and-

MS. FISCH: It went away.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, down the drain.

MS. FISCH: So would you consider that a really high point at that time for you?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Well, yeah.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, it was very high point at that time.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because actually working with people who came from another country; also they are very well-known people in our field. So I was honored to be in it to begin with, and I'm glad that we were being included. And also it was interesting, like I mentioned, to see how people's reaction brought-

MS. FISCH: Right, and I don't remember, did they do any kind of catalogue about the-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: They made very simple catalogue.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, a very simple black and white, not such great pictures.

MS. FISCH: But a kind of record of what happened.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: A record, yes, right.

MS. FISCH: You also participated in a similar kind of thing, but it was called a workshop rather than a symposium, in platinum in 1979 at San Diego State. And that was run somewhat similarly, in that I invited people from all parts of the country and invited people who had different approaches to working to introduce them to platinum, which most of us had never worked with before.

So tell me what your experience was in that workshop. Was it valuable to you professionally, or it was simply an introduction to a material you weren't used to?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: To me it was more the introduction of materials, and during that workshop I don't think I was really observing people like I did at Vienna, mainly because basically I know who they are.

MS. FISCH: You knew the people, right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So I was not quite interested in how they reacted. But also, Americans are always serious. You don't see a person like Bruno or Gerd. If they are invited, they will do their job, and they don't-probably they feel guilty if they don't work hard with these other people.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's Puritan ethic or something, maybe.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: They are all-they are all serious, right?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, too serious.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We worked very hard, I thought. So probably I was more nervous in that workshop than the workshop in Vienna.

MS. FISCH: Well, it came before the Vienna one, so that may be the reason; that was the first one.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Maybe that's why I was so nervous. So I don't have much of a space to think about others or to look over the shoulder what's going on, and only concern I have at that time was that I have to make a good piece. And I didn't know what the real purpose of the workshop about, I think.

MS. FISCH: Oh. Well, the purpose was to introduce you to a material that you didn't know.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But I didn't know what I have-supposed to do. I think that's one confusion I have, because looking at Helen Shirk, she produced a piece. I didn't know I was supposed to produce finished products. I didn't know whether I'm going to learn the technique; I didn't know I am going to-I don't what I'm going to do. So I end up trying how much the metal can have stress. That's what my-I just decided that was my goal.

MS. FISCH: But I thought it was good that you actually approached the material in an experimental way. Helen came only for a week, and so she didn't have time to do that. She had to just take what she knew and make a piece. But I thought that what you did, and what a few other people did, was actually to investigate the material by playing with it, and that was really the intention. I don't remember what you did.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Basically I-I think it was something-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You did the very interesting stuff, I thought.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but I had either just finished that blacksmithing workshop-I think I did-a few months earlier, so I was trying to forge weld, and I made a little pin where I took three wires, forge welded that to it, and then tapered-it was kind of difficult in such a small piece-of tapering it. So it was a pin with a basket-you know how two baskets-

MS. FISCH: The kind of typical blacksmithing-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And then at the end I had a little knob of metal, and then I forged pretty well a tiny little cube on top rather than just a ball. What else did I do?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Square. You were constructing-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I can't remember what else I did.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Constructing a form. You always like forms. I thought you were constructing something and you were tumbling it. You were tumbling-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I can't remember what else; I just remember that one piece.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -besides buffing, because buffing was a pain in the neck. [They laugh.] So I think you were tumbling it.

MS. FISCH: Hiroko, you did a series of hairpins.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Hairpins, I did that, and just because I made a decision, okay, I am going to try how much metal stress among other metals; second, I am going to make simple series of pins. I don't remember all of the pins. I still have one.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, it's sitting up there.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's sitting up there. And basically the tip of the pin had a different-applied different techniques than I thought. One was a twist wire, obviously. The other one was-I don't remember-articulation-that I did?

MS. FISCH: I don't know. There are plenty of photographs.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know what happened. You do have-I would like to see what I actually did. And I was very nervous among those people, too, because, again, really it was the first time.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I was a little, too.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I was nervous.

MS. FISCH: Well, they were your peers, and in a much more family situation. They were all Americans, and they were all people that you knew from exhibitions, if you didn't know them personally, so I suppose there's a little more apprehension than in the European community. You didn't know those people anyway, so you could do whatever you wanted and it would be okay.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And you worked hard for that, for organizing that.

MS. FISCH: I organized the platinum.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think that was one of the early ones that started happening.

MS. FISCH: There were several before that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Before, but that's one of the early ones.

MS. FISCH: Yeah, and then there was an aluminum workshop at Long Beach, which I think must have been '81 or '82. I don't remember.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: A couple of years after platinum workshop, I think?

MS. FISCH: And that was specifically to learn how to weld aluminum. And, Hiroko, you went to that one and Gene didn't.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I went to that one.

MS. FISCH: How was it different for you to go by yourself?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: By myself? Lonely probably. So, lacking something, but that was the third time, third around. So I just decided not to stress out myself, learn how to weld, but I don't have much interest, to tell you the truth, at that time in aluminum.

MS. FISCH: In that particular material.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Material-the reason why, I don't know. I just didn't feel that it was exciting as much as tin symposium. It's not really exciting as much as aluminum either. I never thought about why I didn't really care about much. I never thought about that, but I didn't enjoy it either.

MS. FISCH: I didn't go to that one, but my understanding was that it was very technically difficult, and that also because of the amount of equipment available you couldn't work as freely. You had to sort of take turns.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And that's a bit annoying.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, it was annoying, and also I think-sorry to say this, but the organizer wasn't quite clear what she really wanted from us, I think. So it wasn't really clear to me what I was supposed to do, again, but I think I felt some feeling from the rest of the participants. So it has something to do with the organizer. That's what I had the conclusion at the end, and that-I think that partially I'm confused just because of that.

MS. FISCH: Do you think it would have been different if Gene had been there with you? MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't think so. It's just because the way to set up wasn't really-anyway, the direction wasn't that clear, and equipment wasn't that quite well-set up. The result was not appealing either.

MS. FISCH: And then, Gene, you went to one just recently. We talked a little bit about it before.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You know what I forgot? He went to another workshop.

MS. FISCH: Oh, you did?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The Haystack "Precious Metal Clay [PCM]" [Haystack Mountain School of Arts and Crafts, Deer Isle, ME].

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's what I forgot about.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, that was kind of fun, even though-and that was-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, actually, before, we were invited to the Tyler workshop in electroforming, but we didn't go.

MS. FISCH: I know you weren't there, because I was there at that one.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I wish I could have.

MS. FISCH: That was early; that was in '76.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Anyway, you went to clay.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: "Precious Metal Clay."

MS. FISCH: Were you both invited?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. But I went to Japan.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So, in any case, that was good because Jack Prip was there, Sharon Church, Chris Ramsey-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Kim Cridler.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Kim Cridler, two of our students.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Our undergraduate students.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Tim McCreight organized it with Mitsubishi.

MS. FISCH: Mitsubishi and Ron Pearson.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And Ron Pearson, right.

MS. FISCH: Well, tell me what you did.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, basically what we did, it was pretty well set up. There was adequate materials, the equipment was adequate, and the instruction was very, very good. They furnished all the tools that they had gathered, I guess, from having workshops done in Japan, and they were simple tools, but they were the right

ones, and a wide variety of things. I was just playing-I was making Kurt Vonnegut's-one of the stories-a pile of cannonballs. And so I started making the figures, rolling these clay balls, and then I stacked them together. I made this sort of pyramid, and that was my first piece. It didn't come out; it wasn't fired long enough, so just a couple of disasters.

And then I made three cups with sheet-using some wax sheet techniques to create textures on the surface and then just, sort of, clay working techniques of joining-pinching them together-and two of the three came out. And then with gold I did a whole series of little tiny forms-little tiny spirals? I intended them to be charms, spirals, little-just tiny little geometric forms. They all came out. And it's a couple of sheet things that actually were quite similar to what I was doing in wax in Japan many years before.

And it was-I didn't think enough because I had poison ivy. The day before-

MS. FISCH: I didn't know they had poison ivy.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, I got it the day before.

MS. FISCH: How long was the session? I don't remember. Was it a week?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was one week, yeah. So luckily they had some salve and a first-aid kit, and then Tim took me to a doctor, who gave me a couple of shots and some salve. By then it was really-

MS. FISCH: Pretty virulent, huh?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was very, very uncomfortable. But in any case, I should have thought of what I was-I had been more recently doing, but I just-was just playing. But I did like-Kim Cridler got a little frustrated, because she couldn't do what she was doing because in her own work she wanted to transfer it to this other material.

But Chris Ramsey made the best pieces. He threw the clay. Well, he didn't throw it in actuality; he took a lump of it and turned it on a lathe. So basically he got a wooden rod and built up clay around it and turned it into a shape and then tried to hollow it out as much as he could. And he got some very-and then he put some glazes on it and he got sort of a raku effect. And it was quite nice, and he left it real ragged and torn, like some of the raku. So he did some ceramic techniques, which made sense.

MS. FISCH: Right, because the material was more like clay than it was like metal.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, so I think he did the best pieces.

MS. FISCH: And did you see any future for you in this material?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, I didn't see any future-

MS. FISCH: You didn't like it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -from the day I stepped in the door. I just-I don't know if they developed a product since then, but it was so porous you couldn't really solder, because it would take a ton of solder to do anything. And then a few years later Hiroko actually had Tim come to the University of Michigan and do a workshop with PMC.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, I organized one.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and invited art educators, both in the public schools-right?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I invited Randy Long. I mean, people who are probably-how many miles? Two-hundred-mile radius. So Fred Fenster came-Fred Fenster, Randy Long, Kathleen Browne. Who else?

MS. FISCH: So this wasn't for your students, this was for colleagues.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: For colleagues.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Colleagues, and she wanted to bring in some high school-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: High school, a couple of high school teachers, so that goes to the-because we have-Michigan has a great programs in jewelry making at high school level. They make pretty good jewelry. So it's more like a promotion about our school to send more students. So that was an important part, too. And who else-more was there.

MS. FISCH: But you organized this one.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I organized it.

MS. FISCH: And did you get to participate in it? I mean, did you get to work with the material as well?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm.

MS. FISCH: And what was your reaction to the material.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Actually, I liked it. I liked it a lot, and I think that to me there is a potential. I just didn't have enough time to play. I wanted to play more because I have so much idea I wanted to try, and one of the two days I couldn't. And more than likely I have to know what does it do, and some part, I didn't know what will happen. But I myself would like to go back actually, I do.

MS. FISCH: It seems to me now, thinking about it, that it might be a really interesting material for you, Hiroko, to work on now, because it doesn't require the kind of strenuous activity that some of the other things do.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's right. To me it's soft enough to play. I don't need-I don't have to stress out physically.

MS. FISCH: Now they've also developed the product to the point where it doesn't shrink as much and where you can reduce to slip and actually pour it into molds and pour out, so that you can actually make thinner things. I looked at the cups that you have made, Gene, and the stuff was really thick and heavy.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: So I think there's been a big improvement.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I'm sure that they will develop a little more, and it will be much more easy to be able to solder, easy to do things. And I've seen the books with-I've seen the photos of new examples, and it's much more progress from-it's quite an advance from the beginning I know of-so when I was working with that, I really enjoyed it. I think that's one thing I would like to go back, if I go back to working in metal, because it's not hard material; it's very soft.

MS. FISCH: Right. It's a Japanese product, promoted by Mitsubishi, but do they promote it and sell it in Japan, or is it, sort of, not very apparent? It's gotten very popular in the U.S.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because of Tim [McCreight].

MS. FISCH: Because of Tim, but also because Mitsubishi has promoted it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Put a lot of money in it.

MS. FISCH: They hire Tim and they give him money to develop workshops and credential people to teach it and so on, and I'm sure they came to this market because it's a much bigger population.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, probably so.

MS. FISCH: But I wonder if it isn't also now of interest to hobbyists in Japan.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think it was before it came here.

MS. FISCH: Yes, it was, but they didn't-it wasn't very well received, was my understanding.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, it wasn't, and I think now as a hobbyist [inaudible], and I think that's a perfect material for the-what do you call that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Hobbyist?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Perfect for the tourist.

MS. FISCH: You mean to buy it or to make it?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: To do it.

MS. FISCH: To do it, because it's quick.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Quick and easy, and easy to make something quick. So the tourist comes to the store and then work it and then next day-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Ah, just like these ceramic places.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -next day you have a piece already finished. If you want to make a necklace, just put through the chain, it's done. The ring, it's easy. So that aspect actually a lot of potential in this country, too. But in this country took the material a little more seriously than just for the tourist.

MS. FISCH: I don't think it's been developed so much for hobbyists in the U.S.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't think so.

MS. FISCH: There are all these people who make jewelry-and it is a large number-that this is a good market. But as with anything, when you want to expand your market, then you try to make the material simpler and the equipment simpler so that you can go to a bigger audience.

I also happen to think it's an ideal thing to do in a high school situation, because you don't have to have so many materials or tools.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. That's why-yeah.

MS. FISCH: It's just the expense, and I think they've been actually working on trying to reduce the cost.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. I thought that-

[END TAPE TWO SIDE B.]

I thought that's a great workshop because it's a combination of people. All local people was joined. Like from CCS [Center for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI]. And Tom Muir-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Center for Creative Studies. Well, actually, its name has changed. What is it now?

MS. FISCH: Well, Gene, you were talking earlier about organizing some workshops in Japan; some short-term things that you might do at some various schools. This might be the perfect material to work with, because if nobody professionally is working in PMC in Japan-and I haven't seen any work that looks like that-then that's a wonderful niche.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I wonder if the school?

MS. FISCH: For Hiko Mizuno [College of Jewelry, Tokyo]?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. They would love us.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: He probably had-I think they got it already.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Probably they do, but-

MS. FISCH: But you know something-you could have a different approach.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, that's true.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And here, in Hawaii, if they invite them-the band, they let them play. They will love it. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, right. Oh, sure. There's a lot of possibilities.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I like PMC myself. [Cross talk.]

MS. FISCH: Well, I haven't developed a liking for it, but I haven't worked with it very much. I have never been a clay person, so for me, it's a little too much like clay.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You know who enjoyed the most at this workshop at the university? Randy Long.

MS. FISCH: Oh, but yes, she was a ceramic person before.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. She said, "I really like this." [Laughs.] "This is great." And she made a nice container, a little tiny container.

MS. FISCH: Well, because her ceramic work was always very small, so the scale of ceramics, for her, is very similar to what you could do in PMC.



MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I see. And she was very excited. She said, "I am going to work more at home." She was the only one. And then Fred Fenster was kind of laughing. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Well, it's not his kind of material.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Well, he enjoyed being in the group.

MS. FISCH: So the workshop situations and the symposia have been provocative and satisfying for you.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. Right.

MS. FISCH: We were going to talk just the last minute about the mokume gane, one in-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -in Melbourne, Australia.

MS. FISCH: You talked a little bit about it in your interview. Is there anything else you want to talk about?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not really, other than I would like to maybe go back for a little bit longer stay, take advantage of the equipment to see what else I could do and giving myself time to develop some ideas, because it was just too short, two weeks. We had to take turns at-because there was only one machine. There was a lot of downtime, so to speak.

MS. FISCH: But would you also look forward to the opportunity to work collaboratively or side by side with Ian Ferguson? Or is that not of interest to you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I asked Ian why he only made hemispheres. He says, "Yeah, a lot of people have asked me that." He says, "They seem to be appropriate form for my experiments."

MS. FISCH: And he knows how to make them. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and he knows how to make-well, he spins them, he has them spun. [Laughter.] So, in any case, because I think he's more of a technician, it seems to me. And I'm curious what he actually teaches at his technical college, whether he actually teaches metallurgy, or whether it is a metalsmithing program, or what.

MS. FISCH: This is at RMIT [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Australia]? No, he teaches somewhere else.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no. He teaches in London at this-I forget the name of it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's just a short time, right? Or forever?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, it's a permanent position.

MS. FISCH: Oh, so there's no reason for you to go back to Melbourne, because he wouldn't be there. Except for the equipment.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -the equipment, and there's people who-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: The equipment. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, yeah, right. Exactly. The equipment, and there's a couple technicians who know how to use it. That's about it.

[Audio break.]

MS. FISCH: You have traveled a great deal over the years, much of it back and forth to Japan. But you have also traveled to lots of other places and different cultures. And I wonder which ones have had a significant impact on you, either personally or in your work? I know that for many winters you went to the Caribbean.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. But that's just the personal fun.

MS. FISCH: But it certainly affected your interest in diving.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Diving, and then it affected your interest in different flora, flowers and leaves and things, remember?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, that's true. Yeah, that's true.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We went to Puerto Rico once and she really got-she was taking rolls and rolls of pictures, but mostly black and white, of-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Color.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Was it all color? Yeah, color.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And the drawings, precise drawings of flowers.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Of mostly leaves.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, flowers.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There were leaves, too, a lot of leaves, I remember.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I took up photos.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I know, it's okay.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: The drawings are basically the flowers, but-

MS. FISCH: And had you ever done that before?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, not much, not that intensively like that.

MS. FISCH: So the environment had a huge impact.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's true. I totally forgot about that.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And she still uses some of those photographs.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I do. That's where I turned on to the flowers. That's right. That was mid-'90s.

MS. FISCH: I didn't know when you started doing that. And where did you go, specifically?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Caribbean, Cayman-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Grand Cayman, Puerto Rico, Bahamas-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Bonaire-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Bonaire, one of the Dutch Antilles.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Puerto Rico?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Puerto Rico. I think I went to Grand Cayman two or three times-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, for underwater photography.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -because I wanted to take underwater photography.

MS. FISCH: Originally, I thought you went to Cancun.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, that's right, Cancun. Thank you for reminding us. [Laughs.] Cancun and Cozumel.

MS. FISCH: You went there several times, no?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We went to Cancun twice.

MS. FISCH: And that was in the early '90s?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Early '90s. Then, second time, we took my mother with us. Then we went to Cozumel, which is a little island off from the Cancun. Then we explored more, like going to Bahamas, Grand Cayman, Bonaire, and all these islands in the Caribbean. And I didn't know that-I didn't know about the Caribbean. I knew the word Karibukai-this means Caribbean-but I didn't know that Caribbean has more than, what, 30,000 little islands total of it. I didn't know. And if I knew earlier, in the early '90s, I would have been there much sooner, and I took the scuba diving much earlier than the age of 50. So I took this certification when I was 50.

And the reason is that because it's such a totally different world living above the ground. Underwater is totally different. I mean, what I see, what I feel-because you don't walk; you just fly. So it's totally a different sensation than walking, and I feel very light; I don't get tired as much as I walk, and the species I see is totally different, colors are totally different. [Laughs.] It's such a fun, such a wonderful world.

And it's just like the earth, but it doesn't have any air; it's surrounded with water. And you can either walk, or you can fly like a bird, or you can float, or you can stop, just-you can sit in the middle of anywhere if you are right in breathing. You need some skill, but you can do that: you can just sit and watch. Actually, you sit like just Zen-style, like this, like this; you can do that anywhere in the water.

MS. FISCH: And you just float along. So, for you, it's a wonderful, magical experience.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Wonderful, magical.

MS. FISCH: Gene, I gather, it's no so wonderful for you.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's apprehensive. But a few times I did do what they call beginner dives, where you don't need certification: 30 feet, one atmosphere.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's a pleasure dive.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Pleasure dive, one atmosphere. I enjoyed it, basically, but there's still a certain amount of apprehension.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Fear.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Fear, yeah. So, I have gotten better since Hiroko started diving, but I still have that fear, yeah, right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And that's something that he cannot get away.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: When I got in the water, I did do a few dives.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because if I go skydiving or glider, or whatever you call it-what do-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, you mean parasailing.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Parasailing. I think I would have a fear, probably the similar one; just the fact that I was raised near beach, and I went to beach almost every day during the summer, so I can swim pretty well and I'm not afraid of ocean. But he was born in Midwest. Not near water. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well no, we had the Great Lakes-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But there is a difference.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -and it was only two, three miles away, and we used to go to the beach all the time. But I just never-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And I just love ocean. And friend of mine, friends in Japan, summer equaled me; that's what they think. They have image.

MS. FISCH: Right, because that's when they saw you at your best, in the water.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Your grandparents had a house on the beach.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Everybody used to go there and camp out, yeah.

MS. FISCH: What other kinds of traveling have you done that you enjoy or that you think was significant for you? You have been to Europe, because you have been in these various symposia.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right. I think our then-decision to start coming to Hawaii led us to retire here.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Investigate, yeah, investigate. If we like Caribbean, how about Hawaii, because it's close to Japan but still to within the U.S. Because while we were in Caribbean, Gene-I always like to own something.

MS. FISCH: Oh, you want to be a property owner.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Wherever she goes.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes [laughs], I own something. So I was thinking about Grand Cayman, because you can avoid the tax. Everybody knows that, right? And there are lots of banks that, kind of, dealing with Switzerland, and all the money just going around in a little island. But it was pretty expensive, actually; the property is expensive. Then Gene said, "How about Hawaii, let's try." That's the beginning, we came to Hawaii, big island-

MS. FISCH: When was the first time you came to spend time here?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Early '90s. Probably '94, '93/4.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's early '90s we went to Caribbean.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We went first to the big island.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And we liked it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Did we go twice there?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Twice. We liked it so much.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Your mother didn't like it.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And again, I like to own some things. I bought a timeshare there. [Laughs.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We're trying to peddle it now.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But made a big mistake.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, they're the worst investments. They're not an investment.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's not; it's a bad thing.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's a supposedly convenience, but I think it's rip-off.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Exactly. Hustle, actually.

So then, after that, because my father's inheritance, we bought our own condominium as an investment at the same time.

MS. FISCH: Here in Honolulu?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: In Honolulu. So we were coming here every winter and diving and flowers and-that's nothing to do with your work, though.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But the flowers certainly-

MS. FISCH: Certainly the flowers have come out in your commercial line very strongly.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Exactly, it did, and paintings. It did come to-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But you had been interested in orchids all your life, I think.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: All of my life, yeah, just, again, for fun. I always had a dream to raise orchids, and I had some in Indiana.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, they were in a bathroom.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but as you know, the weather is not for them. I didn't have any greenhouse, and that just killed them. So I stopped doing it, because I thought it was no use.

MS. FISCH: So, will you start doing it now, raising orchids?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I love to. I actually did buy some orchids, because I thought I can start. Then I got another commitment in Japan. I had to leave here, so they are dying. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: And Gene doesn't take care of them?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I took care of them, I think.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but it's all the bugs-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right. I just-watering, basically, is going on. I repotted once, but, I think, marginally took care of them.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But when I come back to Hawaii, I would.

MS. FISCH: You will focus on that a little bit?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes. And I mentioned it to you. Probably I will really focus on it and I will make my own category-and name it Hiroko. [They laugh.]

MS. FISCH: You want an orchid named Hiroko?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Well, that's a very good goal.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, another goal. I have so many goals. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Are there other places in the world that you want to see for any reason? Do you think about traveling in the future, or are you content to stay in Hawaii?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Myself, that I like-I think most of the people will probably laugh at me, why. But I'm not really interested in going to Italy, where I supposed to be packed with art. I'm not interested in going to Paris, which is packed with paintings. I'm not interested in all those, I don't know why.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, both Hiroko and I have just sort of lost that interest in art travel, yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Because I don't get much of-okay, for example, if I go to museum. I went to museum in Paris because I went to opening for this show that is held there. And I went to museum, and I didn't get any excitement. I don't know why, I just didn't get anything. I just got tired, that's all. And I just got tired, and within one hour, I just didn't want to stay any longer in the museum. I just took off and I went to see castle.

But if I see one castle, that was enough, because almost all the same to me. It's just gaudy and very decorative; because I just dropped interest. I was more interested shopping. [They laugh.] That was more exciting for me, I don't know why.

Do you find this as very helpful for you to see?

MS. FISCH: Well, I'm an urban traveler, and so I like to travel to cities and go to museums and look at architecture. I'm not a landscape traveler. It's wonderful to look at beautiful vistas, but half a day is enough for me. So I have a different feeling about traveling, I think.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: To me, it doesn't do anything. I rather to be not seeing anything, maybe. But, for example, if I get the flowers from that, flowers without anything. Like you, like landscape maybe; that's what you said. From there I get more ideas.

MS. FISCH: I think everybody, yeah, everybody has different ways.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -has different way. So the travelers-I used to love to travel. When I was in university, I took a lot of travel in Japan, so almost all of Japan I already knew then. So I loved it, I loved to look at the temples, I loved to look at the architecture, I loved the gardens, Japanese gardens, and all. But if I go to Europe, it's such a really different culture.

Basically, Europeans [use] stones; Japanese are more like wood and paper. And the feeling of it is really-to me, is like this. And it's very difficult to make us accept it, the fact that it's made out of stone. And it's so cold to me and so rough-too rough for me, and I just can't take in. That's first thing it comes to me, I just reject right away.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, in traveling, my first time out of this country was to Japan, and it felt almost immediately more like home.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: For you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. It was more like, this is a place that I can be more comfortable in. It doesn't matter if I speak the language or not; it's just, I can get more joy at looking at a tree in a temple with a cord around its

trunk that's 200 years old than looking at a Picasso or looking at the *Mona Lisa* or something like that. Those are- I get more joy out of it. I feel more of a kinship with that than the other stuff.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: When you go and see, for example, Italy; then when you look at the real piece, real statue of Apollo, do you feel something?

MS. FISCH: Well, I feel awe, I suppose.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Awe?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Overwhelmed.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Overwhelmed? Why?

MS. FISCH: Because it's so beautiful. I mean, to me, it's very beautiful. I draw this, and then it influences my work. The kinds of things that influence my work might be a detail of a corner of a building that I happen to notice had an interesting configuration, and I might draw that. But just being in an environment where there's so much beauty is, at times, very overwhelming; and I can only take a certain amount of that, and then I have to go away.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You see, I don't get that feeling. I look at-for example, probably, if I look at the statue of Apollo, it's beautiful and it's done in a long time ago, and so what. That's what I probably feel. I may have a different feeling if we go and see it, but that's what I can guess from little experience, going to London, going to Vienna, Hungary [laughs].

MS. FISCH: Some things, I think, are different because they are not in museums. If you go to Athens and you visit the Acropolis, that's a whole different emotional impact, because the art is not separated from the culture. But I wondered, have you traveled around in Asia? I would think that you might enjoy Bali, for example, because of the flora and the environment.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, Fiji.

MS. FISCH: But you have been to Fiji?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, last year.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I would like to go back.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I like Fiji because it's primitive. Hiroko doesn't like it too much because of that, but she likes it for a different reason.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I like it because the diving sites [laughs] are great.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I like it because of the people.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And the people, I like the people.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The people are so wonderful. They speak good English, and very, very, warm. I thought the people, basically, the people in Hawaii were warm.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But they are more warm.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: More warm, and it's from the heart, and that's what I enjoy.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And, from our standpoint, their living is very poor. They don't mind that, of course, or they don't know what better life is.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, they're beginning to learn just that.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But they are so warm people, and laid-back; and it's very comfortable.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They're very comfortable people. Again, it's a matter for me of just watching families.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: But I would like to go to Tahiti; I would like to go Bora Bora, I would like to go to-

MS. FISCH: You might like Papua, New Guinea.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -New Guinea. I like to go to-what's the island, it's called like a pearl, like-it belongs to India

[Maldives]. It's a thousand little, little island[s], but it's made in a circle. It looks like a pearl, so they call it pearl islands. It's so many islands. I want to go there. I want to go-basically, I'm interested in more-not the old, ancient art, but I'm interested in more places that has nature, or maybe like to see the African art, but not carved wood. Like I'm interested in going to Ivory Coast. I have never been, but I would like to go there because there is a casting metalwork. Also-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The Ashanti.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And also African jewelry that I'm interested to look at. I'm not interested in European architecture or the sculptures or paintings.

MS. FISCH: So you're more interested in ethnic cultures?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think I do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, me too.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: That's what I'm more interested in.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I'm interested in ethnic cultures because of the people. The culture or the people, the people-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or China; China is interesting.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. The people are, to me, the art of any culture.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: China is interesting, too. I want to see basketry; I want to see jewelry, of course; I want to see textiles for sure. I want to go to India because they stick to textile. And I know in the southern part of India there is a place you can buy already woven, beautiful, woven piece. You would like it.

One of the girl[s] from India came to U of M one day, wanted to become graduate student, but she wasn't qualified for that. But the piece she showed me, pot-it had a piece; I said, "Where did you get this one?" She said, "From India." "And what part of India?" And she says, "Well, this-you have to go to a particular place, which is more at the tip of India; that's where they produce these." And that's a just gorgeous thing. I would just love to have that, and she promised to bring it back, but never did. [They laugh.]

MS. FISCH: On another subject, have people understood and accepted the way in which you have worked together and lived your life?

I was especially interested in what happened at the university level. I gathered from some reports you wrote, Hiroko, that there was often a question for you about how you worked with Gene. I don't know if it was a problem for Gene, because he was an administrator. But as a faculty person, you seemed to always have to be answering questions. What kinds of questions and problems did this situation bring up?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think, in a lot of cases, during these annual merit reviews, it was a question of, why, they're cheating. Two people are working together; that way they can get twice as much work out. Or the work is so small they can ship it very easily. I mean, these were questions, I mean, dumb, dumb questions-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think basically it came from jealousy.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, we were too productive.

MS. FISCH: And too prominent.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, mm-hmm.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So they try to find some excuse to make us feel bad, or trying to find the faults so that they could not give a good raise.

MS. FISCH: How did you get around this? How were you able to answer these questions?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We explained how we produce pieces, and we explained that we-they cannot say that it's cheating, because that's how we make pieces; that's how the work comes out from us. So that we really cannot say, this piece is his, this piece is mine; and you can't tell us we have to divide it; it's none of your business. And if you say that it's cheating, sending one piece in the same names, and then when we write the resume, you spread-

MS. FISCH: You both take credit for the piece.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: So that's what they didn't like about. And they probably had a hard time to make a decision of salary raise. So I said, "Well, we produce probably twice more than you guys do, so what's the difference? If you divide in half our work-let's say if you want to divide our work in half, okay, take 10 pieces for him, 10 pieces for mine, is fine." But to look at it, still-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We're outproducing you, yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -top of the rest of you, rest of the faculty, so what makes a difference?

MS. FISCH: And was this answer acceptable?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It was acceptable. They couldn't say anything, because the fact is that we were delivering so much, and they were not.

MS. FISCH: Were these questions and problems coming from the bureaucracy, the academic bureaucracy, or from your colleagues?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: From the colleagues and executive committee, basically. But there was always one or two on the committee who were vocally in our support, so we always made out; we were always at the top.

MS. FISCH: So, in the end, it didn't disadvantage you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, but I think Hiroko got-

MS. FISCH: Just made you uncomfortable-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I got frustrated enough about the same questions, because the committee changed membership on a rotation. And they were the same things for years. In the early years is even worse, basically because we had a few painters who were just extremely jealous. I mean, this was just stupid.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's a very personal level-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Very personal, juvenile-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -very subjective, I thought. But maybe every time we have to submit this-what's it called, Saturday resume?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, just basically-

MS. FISCH: -a review. Did you do that annually?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Annually. So finally I'm fed up with it, so I attached the statement every time so they can read.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The new group could read it. [Laughs.]

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And probably-it took five, six years. After that they didn't question. They stopped questioning. And plus, the fact that he became a dean, so-

[Audio break.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Gene and Hiroko Pijanowski at their home in Honolulu on May 16, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number four.

Do you know any other artist couples, whether they're bi-national or just two artists together? And have you ever had conversations with them about lifestyle? What have you learned about other people?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We never talk about their lifestyles, but we know a little bit about them-Emmy?

MS. FISCH: Emmy van Leersum and Gijs Bakker.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Unfortunately, she died, but those couples almost I respect within our field. And I think-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They're not bi-national though.

MS. FISCH: No, but they are an artist couple.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. It has to be any country, right? And David Watkins and Wendy Ramshaw. And Mr.



Kurokawa-kuro, K-U-R-O, kawa, K-A-W-A, and Mrs. Sonobe, S-O-N-O-B-E. That's a Japanese couple who works in metals, both are jewelers. Who else? Do you know any couples in metals? Are you limiting in only metals?

MS. FISCH: No, no.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Okay, then Carlier and Akio Makigawa, and her husband are Japanese. Akio. Unfortunately, he died. Bob Stocksdale and Kay Sekimachi, Ruth Radakovich and Toza [Svetozar] Radakovich, both are in metal couple, metals. They are the couple that works in metals. I had more, didn't I?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Or do you know anybody else?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I can't think of anybody else-[inaudible].

MS. FISCH: No others in your faculty at the University of Michigan; there were no other couples, art couples?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: They are, but they are not teaching at the same place. But they did have John Stevenson and his wife, Susan Stevenson, who both graduated from Cranbrook; and John Rush and his wife, Mary; they also graduate from Cranbrook. [Laughs.] And John was in sculpture and his wife was in painting. Also-oh yes, my first teacher, Fred, Frederick [Lauritzen] and his wife in Northridge. I will check it, but he was in metal and his wife was in ceramics.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Both of them from Cranbrook, too?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Both of them are Cranbrook. [Laugh] There are lots of couples from Cranbrook.

MS. FISCH: Do you think that's because of the close environment?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Close, and small environment-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: There are more couples from Cranbrook, if you're talking about around us.

MS. FISCH: Well, I was thinking more about also whether you ever had a chance to either observe those people, those couples, or actually even talk with them about mutual problems?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't think we ever did, did we? I didn't.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, not really.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. Oh, there was another one at the university, lesbian. They graduate from Cranbrook, but they got sort of married for a long period of time. She died. Mary was in painting and-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: She was actually originally from Germany.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, she came from Germany and met this lady who thought it would be good for-as a partner. And both their paintings-she taught at the university, and I don't know what the other lady did, stayed at home?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think stayed at home.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: You remember her name?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I only met her twice, I think.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, the German?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, no, no, no. Her partner.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Mary, her name is Mary, I don't know the last name, but-the person who taught at the U of M.

MS. FISCH: Did observing these people have any effect on you? I mean, did it suggest any other ways of dealing with each other?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, to me it's-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, it was just social.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -social. We didn't feel anything particularly too close just because of that. I didn't really ask their problems or anything, because I felt it's none of our business. It's their life-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -and if they had wanted to say something, they would say something.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: We never thought that we were doing it. Sitting around the table, we never thought that way. Maybe you should have. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Well, I just think for some people, it doesn't work out. There are many artist couples who are divorced because the tensions were just too much; the professional tensions often were too much. And so I guess I would think that the successful ones have something to offer to new ones, that this is how it works, or this is how we have done it and we're still together and we can still function. But that's never come up?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Do you know anybody else? No, I'm curious, do you know someone?

MS. FISCH: I didn't have anyone particular in mind. I know the same people you know, so I wasn't thinking of anyone in particular. I just wondered whether people in that situation ever exchanged thoughts and information. But apparently not, so that's an interesting observation.

You have both retired now and you have chosen to live in Hawaii, for reasons which you have already said. Are you happy with this environment? Do you feel comfortable here? Do you like living here? You're glad you did this?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, I'm glad. Yeah, because I needed to get away from the ongoing stress of many years. The only thing that I miss would be the students, but that will be to a certain degree compensated by when I start working at the academy, hopefully by-well, in August, I will be starting.

And I just enjoy the weather; I enjoy the smallness of the island as opposed to having to drive an hour to do something. Here, if I drive an hour, I'm at the other end. [They laugh.] So there's less driving. Yeah, I like driving, but I don't like driving just to run errands. Two hours one way, and coming back. I like it here that things are relatively convenient.

Beginning to meet a group of people who seem to be friendly and, hopefully, develop friendships and relationships, both social and professional, that will keep me busy. I like to be alone, but at the same time, I need human contact. Whether it's visceral or not, whether it's talking or watching-I have always been, because of my personality, have always been a people watcher. I'm always interested in what people are doing, and sometimes even why they're doing it. So this fits the bill.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: For instance, Frances Pickens is trying to help us to get people-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, Frances Pickens, who is becoming a mentor here, who-

MS. FISCH: So she has been introducing you to people?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, she has been a great help.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, she has been a great help.

MS. FISCH: So you're very pleased that you did this?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I'm very pleased.

MS. FISCH: How about you, Hiroko? You haven't been spending so much time here?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No. [Laughs.] I mean, when I retired, I thought I'm going to live in this island, Oahu, Honolulu area. Going to diving and to take lessons-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Hula maybe.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -because I wanted to sing better, or so I already-actually, I started oil painting, because I wanted to go back to my old painting again. And I did a series of flowers again, based on the idea that I-just Gene mentioned, that I got from Puerto Rico long, long time ago. By looking at the photos, the idea came. Of course, in beginning, I had to do some very academic painting to get the skill back. And so I have done that, and then I jumped into my idea.

And that idea was to paint time. Not locking time, but the movement of the time. Movement of time is not just bloomed flower; bloomed flower will wilt, and that I will capture this time movement-that's what I call it, time

movement. Then, luckily, I entered the show and I got grand prix, the prize, which I found out is not the show in the state of Hawaii, but it's something that I started.

Then I start to-I already started haiku. I already start to write the haiku a couple years before I retired. But I extensively wanted to study, and I did study; and when I moved to Hawaii, I joined one of the professional groups. That expanded me to join a special professional group in Japan, because the one I found in Honolulu was a branch of one of the professional group in Japan. Then I-when I actually started the haiku, I started in Ann Arbor, but only to very small private group, consisting of only 15 members. Then, those group split in two place: Tokyo and Ann Arbor. And so how they run the haiku, communication was done by fax machine. So the fax machine was-

[END TAPE 3 SIDE A.]

-going back and forth. But from that, I got the idea that maybe I can use the internet and form my own group-so I kind of talk to my colleagues in Japanese-I don't know, how do I say it?

MS. FISCH: Colleagues.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Colleagues, college colleague in Japan. And so that now I have 11 members working haiku and formed a group, it's called Yuu Haiku Ku Kai; it means play haiku group. And I think it's very neat. I don't think there's nothing exist something like this group on Earth. I am proud of this, a formation of a group, because then a member can be anywhere: could be in Hawaii, could be in Manhattan, could be in Malaysia, could be in Sydney, could be in Japan. Most of the members, of course, at this point, locates in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, and sometimes maybe in Hawaii. And we just-I just lay the rules and now we are enjoying it.

At the same time, I start to enter the national level of competition, only in haiku. When I'm getting pretty good response. So far, within two years, I received some kind of prize or the positions more than 12 times.

MS. FISCH: That is terrific.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And I think it is-I didn't know I have such ability. [They laugh.] Maybe lucky, too. Anyway, then my uncle found out that I was retired. He lives in Tokyo, he is 81 year[s] old, and he is pretty well. He doesn't have any children, but owns three companies. So he thought that I am capable to run the business after he dies. So he asked me to help his business, which is the business that deal with the gifts or the prize that you can get at the pachinko parlor.

MS. FISCH: This is a big stretch from where you have been.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's a big stretch. So my oil painting approach slowed down. Haiku, I'm still on it because I can do anywhere I go to; I only need paper and pen and one small book; that's all I need as equipment. I can write here, I can write in airplane, I can write in-at the company if I want to. I'm not doing it, but I can. So I'm still continuing with haiku, but the time working for my uncle, just enormous and take away from what I really wanted to do, and it's a physically exhausting job; mentally, probably, also.

So oil painting, at this point, I have to put on the side. The haiku group, I still belongs to this original group in Michigan. The one I formed, I really still-I'm still running it. And also I belong to this professional haiku group. So what I have to do for these three groups: I have to submit three haiku for Michigan one, Michigan group; five haikus for my colleagues group; five haikus to this professional group. On top of it, I'm entering national competition.

So I'm pretty serious on haiku, because haiku-I mean, not even haiku, everything, you have to continue. You have to constantly to make things, either to bad or good, it doesn't matter, just make it. Just keep making it. Otherwise, you lose interest, or otherwise you lose some niche that you already grabbed in the past. Then, haiku also makes easier circumstance to continue. So that will be my-another career, and I start to make my own resume just on haiku. Now it's already four pages. [Laughs.] I'm a resume maniac.

MS. FISCH: The haiku is something that meshes okay with this business responsibility?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And how is the business responsibility impacting your life with Gene?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I think that's pretty tough on both of us, because I have to be in Japan nine months total a year, and three months I can come back to Hawaii. But of course, this three months is split in between nine months.

MS. FISCH: So you don't do a whole three months?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: You come back for a month.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and go back to Japan, work there for three months, come back to Hawaii for a month. But also Gene can come to Japan and join me while I'm there, so we are meeting every other month probably. So that's okay, but I have to split my mind, here and Japan, and that's, I think, a little bit difficult for me, but not too much. And it's business and teaching; it's totally different, and stress is much less than teaching.

MS. FISCH: Oh, it is? Even though it's a whole new thing for you?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It is even a whole new thing is less stress. The reason is because teaching is not only to teach a student. You are involved with some kind of politics among the colleagues at the university, and also the stress that they put on you to be higher level of-keep at higher level of profession. And that's something that I don't have to follow, but because of my characteristic, I have to be atop of it always. That made me stress, so I was-myself was cause for making stress myself, but the environment also made me that way, too. If I wasn't there, I probably wouldn't push myself hard enough to be such maniac-to be exhibits. So, it's in a way good-it was good in a way, so that I made it. But in a way, it made me stressed out.

Now that working a company, just because being a president, I conduct everything. I put the pressure to the workers. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: So now you have absolute control, except for your uncle?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I'm trying to, yeah. Except my uncle, yes, I think I do. I had a little problems when I started it, but I hunkered down and I am taking leadership. And I did that, and I think I needed to do it, otherwise I would be frustrated; I would be stressed out again, working with other people. And I really don't know anything about the business side, even though I did sell my own commercial jewelry business. This is totally different because it's already established. I just have to keep up, that's all responsibility. That's all my responsibility is, which is easier than trying to establish from nothing-

MS. FISCH: Well, also, the business is not you. I mean, your jewelry business was you; this was your person on display. And here, you're not personally involved or personally on view for the business. You simply are there, making it all work together.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. What's interesting about this business is the people. How I can manipulate the position, or how I can make the person to perk up to work better, or how I can use people, because before I had never used people for doing something, you know what I mean?

MS. FISCH: Well, you did hire people to do part of your work. I mean, we talked about that yesterday, so you actually did. But it was always on your terms and in a part-time situation. And here, you're involved in a company where there are long-term employees who are dependent on the company. So it becomes a responsibility that's a little bit different.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And then I-to use people means like how I can use, for example, you, in which direction-

MS. FISCH: What talent can you use?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: What talent, yes, that's the fun part. What does he have, what can he do, what would be better that he can do?

MS. FISCH: How many employees are in this company?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Fifteen. It's a very small company, but still there are some role that I can play, and that's really fun. And also, I will ask without knowing whether he or she can do this. For example, I would like to know when the sales tax becomes 16 percent, what would be our profit. Would you please make a statistic going back to the three years, and then come up with the result, what really are going to look like. And I cannot do that, because I don't know much about business aspect. I cannot read the bookkeeping well enough. And she says, okay -

MS. FISCH: But you know the right questions to ask.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -I think I have a right question. So she come up with the results, and she will show me, this is how it's going to happen. And then just to do the results-and then-how did I say, manipulate-how we should do, what we should think about the future, where we should save money. That kind of management, I'm kind of starting to enjoy it.

MS. FISCH: So this is a new creative aspect that you hadn't actually planned to do.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It's a totally different thing, but there is some fun part to it.

MS. FISCH: And how long do you think you will do this?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Until my uncle dies [laughs], probably. He is 81 and he's pretty ill. I don't think he can survive another 10 years, honestly. And I'm not hoping that he dies soon, but the fact is, it is going to be pretty soon. Then I think I will close business, and I will come back to Hawaii. And then I really go back to painting and more put my energy to haiku. But we just talk about PMC, I probably start to play with that, maybe before I come back to Hawaii.

MS. FISCH: Because it is something you can do in a small space in Japan-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Small space, yeah, it's a great idea. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: -and it will keep your mind [laughs] off the business on weekends, anyway. So your plans for the future are a little bit determined outside of your control because of this business, and Gene, you're just kind of going along with it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I'm just going along with it. I think it will work out; probably I will be in Japan, maybe teaching while I'm there, six or eight weeks at a stint. So I think-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Have already investigated Hiko Mizuno, and he's interested. Mr. Mizuno very interested in hiring Gene, probably from next spring, because that's the beginning of their school year. So he's waiting for me to go back with his resume and slides, and that's just a formality; I know that he will hire Gene. So that Gene will be there from April to the end of June.

MS. FISCH: And that will give you a purpose and something to-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right. It will keep me busy two or three days a week.

MS. FISCH: Well, not just to keep busy, but to give you actually something to focus on.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Yeah, I have another problem: I may have to be longer to stay in Japan. I have to take care of my mother. And she's 83 year[s] old, but she's pretty healthy, and I think she may make it another 10 years.

MS. FISCH: But she sometimes comes here?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Right, she does. But how long can she continue to come here, because it's already making her a little difficult to fly.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: First class, I keep on saying. Upgrade.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, I think she better to take an airplane empty and take all these five seats in the middle, then stretch out, because first class, you can't do that. You can lay down in a certain degree, but she likes to be flat. [Laughs.] So anyway, we figured out-my mother knows it's important for me to be with Gene. And she knows that I'm retired, and she's very generous. And she said to me that if she cannot move at all, she said, "Put me somewhere and you should be free." But I don't-I cannot do it.

MS. FISCH: I don't know that you can do that even, but would she-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Even she says-tells me so.

MS. FISCH: But would she consider living here full time?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, because the green card; I cannot get the green card for her.

MS. FISCH: But she wouldn't be working.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That doesn't matter.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: It doesn't matter. No, the government only gives green card to the people who thinks that it's good for the United States. They don't need old people, so they don't give a green card. I applied a number of times, but I never got it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: In lotteries, basically.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And friend of ours, one of the colleague at the U of M, is a good friend of the vice president. But he didn't want to bother-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the previous vice president, yeah.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -of those personal problems, and I can understand; it could destroy a friendship. I'm sure a lot of people asked.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, one of our colleagues went to school with-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Mondale?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, no. Who was the vice president who got elected popular vote that didn't-who was running against Bush the last time?

MS. FISCH: The vice presidential candidate, or the president? You mean Al Gore?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Al Gore.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, one of our persons who teaches sculpture, he lived in the same house and he studied art history at Yale, and-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: They're good friends.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They are good friends; they still remain good friends. He got them to-and he carves wood, so he got Mike to-what's his last name-oh, Kapetan, Mike Kapetan-a gig at the National Cathedral, carving angels, because he has two lines of work. He does carvings for Russian Orthodox churches and he also-so he is an excellent carver of the liturgical stuff.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: He does beautiful carvings, I mean, so elegant.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Beautiful. But, in any case, he was-he did a couple of angels for the National Cathedral in wood.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Did he graduate from Cranbrook?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, he graduated from U of M. In sculpture, undergraduate degree is in art history. So Mike Kapetan-and he has Al Gore quite a bit. And his other line of work, so to speak, is sundials. He does these very contemporary sundials, and he does very Brancusi-type sculptures.

MS. FISCH: So, was he looking for a green card, or how did this-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, well, Hiroko asked Mike to ask Al-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Oh no, I asked him whether he can ask Al for my mother. And his answer was that "I really don't want to be bothered with personal problems and ask his favor"-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But you wrote a letter, didn't you.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: -"just because it might destroy my friendship." And I understood, and I thought I did something beyond what I should ask.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But wasn't that letter written?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: No, but he said, "But let me think about it"; he said that. I don't know if he did or he didn't; I don't know.

MS. FISCH: But the end result is that you expect your mother to stay in Japan, and you are responsible, since you're an only child, and so you have to accommodate whatever is necessary. But I certainly hope that you will be able to enjoy your retirement and that you will both be able to continue your creative work.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I find something anywhere I go, or be at, anyway. I don't know if it's a form of metal as an art form, but certainly haiku, I consider is one type of art form. Painting, of course, if I stay long in Japan and if I'm not working for my uncle, I would probably go back to painting, too. Take the classes somewhere, so I have a space to work in.

MS. FISCH: And, Gene, you feel you can work wherever you are; you find something.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I will find something, I think very similarly. Well, just a lot of things are happenstance or whatever, like Frances Pickens. And this happens-will happen-wherever we go; we will meet someone who just, sort of, will help us.

MS. FISCH: So you both respond to circumstance and opportunity.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right.

MS. FISCH: And you always have-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. Right.

MS. FISCH: -and I think that's really good. Is there anything else you want to discuss at this time, or are we finished?

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: I don't think so.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I just thank-thanks for the opportunity-

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: Thank you for the opportunity, and I think it's a great honor that, being one of the member of Archives of American Craftspeople [sic]-

MS. FISCH: For the Smithsonian. You have an important position in the American craft community, and so it's very appropriate. So I'm glad we were able to do this.

MRS. PIJANOWSKI: And thank you for Arline Fisch, who interviewed us.

MS. FISCH: Oh, it's been fun.

[END OF INTERVIEW.]