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Oral history interview with Eugene
Pijanowski, 2003 May 13-14

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Transcript

Preface

The following oral history transcript is the result of a tape-recorded interview with Eugene Pijanowski on May 13-14, 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 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

ARLINE FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Eugene Pijanowski at his home and studio in Honolulu on May 13, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number one.

Gene, can we talk first about your family and childhood in Detroit?

EUGENE PIJANOWSKI: Yes. [Laughs.] I was born in Detroit, October 5, 1938. I have two siblings, two younger brothers. One is named Jerome-and three years younger than myself. The other is Michael, 10 years younger than myself.

I was raised at 6445 Concord, Detroit, Michigan, in the year-from 1939 until we left in 1952.

My parents were Genevieve [Agacinski] Pijanowski and Michael Pijanowski. My mother primarily was a homemaker until we moved to the suburbs, but that would be a later subject. My father was an autoworker for the Chrysler Corporation, Plymouth Division. He was in quality control. We moved to the new suburbs of Roseville in 1952, where I started attending-oh, before that, let me back up a little bit, I attended St. Thomas Catholic Elementary School first through the sixth grade. I then attended one year at Burroughs Junior High School, both in Detroit. We moved to Roseville in 1952, where I attended Washington Junior High School and then later Roseville High School, which I graduated from in June of 1956.

MS. FISCH: Were your parents artistic at all?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: My mother did a lot of crocheting, sewing, and later she won a few blue ribbons at the Michigan State Fair with her quilting. And my father didn't have any hobbies other than-well, other than taking care of the house.

MS. FISCH: I see. Were there visual artists anywhere else in your family?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, there weren't.

MS. FISCH: So did you become interested in art for some other reason or just serendipitously?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I think most young males who have a certain characteristic or personality of being shy, slightly withdrawn go to things such as comics to read, and I began to copy comics. I graduated from comics to natural-well, to, what should I say, to -

MS. FISCH: Drawing natural objects or -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, what I want to say is animals. We had an animal encyclopedia at home. I started copying from that. And that led me to watercolor. So basically everything was self-taught, and I just tried to reproduce as well as I could.

MS. FISCH: And did your parents encourage you to do that, or they didn't care particularly?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Either way. It kept me quiet.

MS. FISCH: [Laughs.] So did you ever, at that early age, decide you wanted to be an artist?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I didn't think of anything. I think-those were the '50s. The '50s in my mind were sort of the old days. The old days weren't very good. I think the old days of the 50s for me were empty days. The schooling that I got was mediocre, it was overcrowded, those masses of people moving from the city to the new suburbs, overcrowded the sewers and the education.

MS. FISCH: And the school.

So you didn't really become interested in art at school; it was just kind of on your own.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, on my own.

MS. FISCH: And did you ever have any special art instruction?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I remember entering "Draw Me" or "Draw This" on the back of a matchbook cover.

MS. FISCH: Many of us remember those.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I sent it in. I was probably 14 years old, and, of course, a salesman came to the door. And, of course, we couldn't afford the lessons.

MS. FISCH: I never sent any in, so I never knew what happened. If you sent it in somebody came to sell you something?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but a correspondence course.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Which in actuality I saw later, and it wasn't that bad, because I think you could learn in that manner. It was again copying, but at least it was structured in a way that you could learn proportional relationships within the human anatomy; you could become acquainted with the terms of value and light and shadow and all of that.

MS. FISCH: But you didn't get those lessons?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I did not.

MS. FISCH: And were you sad about that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I was ambivalent about everything, I think, at that time of my life. I was just sort of-we were only going because of overcrowding in the schools. Until my senior year, ninth, 10th, and 11th grade, we only did half a day.

MS. FISCH: And what did you do the other half-a-day?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I worked.

MS. FISCH: I see. You had a job?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, at supermarkets and garden centers and things of that nature. So I was working every afternoon and Saturdays and Sundays.

MS. FISCH: And not at anything art-related, just -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, nothing art-related.

MS. FISCH: -general kind of jobs.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: General jobs, right.

MS. FISCH: So when you graduated from high school what did you do?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I graduated in June of 1956, and with two other people, one of which was going, he said, to join the Marine Corps, and we were just going along with him. The two of us joined and he didn't; but I was only 17 years old, so I had to have my father's permission; so I brought the papers back to my father and my father said, "You think it over for at least three days or longer, and if you want to go, I'll sign." So after three days I said I still think it would be good for me to go, because I don't see much future here. I had been enrolled in the University of Detroit in business, a business course.

MS. FISCH: So you did intend to go to college?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but it didn't really-I didn't see myself as a manager of something.

MS. FISCH: Of a grocery store.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: A grocery store, because I had been assistant manager when I was a student in high school. So the Marine Corps seemed to be a way out.

So I flew from the city airport-that was before Metropolitan Detroit Airport-in July-July 16th, no, 17th, and my first plane ride in '56 was a four-engined plane. I think we stopped four or five times in those days. I remember sleeping in the aisle because I got tired. The aisles were spacious. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: The seats were small but the aisles were good.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Actually the seats were kind of big, actually, in those days.

So I arrived in San Diego. I immediately went through the indoctrination of shaving your head and things of that nature.

MS. FISCH: Were you at MCRD?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I was at San Diego Marine Corps Recruiting Depot, where I went through it was 12 weeks of boot camp, which went okay. Being docile, I just sort of did everything they told me to do.

So I then went to Camp Pendleton, California, north of San Diego, for what they call infantry combat training, which was four weeks after the boot camp.

MS. FISCH: Is that when they send you out to the desert for survival?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, send you up to the desert, survival stuff, and just running around making a fool of yourself with a couple thousand others, going on bivouac and not getting any sleep for a couple of days and flares going off and just trying to avoid doing anything.

So in any case, after that we were all then given our orders. Either they didn't know what to do with me-I scored fairly high in different aptitude tests; 99 percent of the other people went to regular units. They put me-I stayed.

MS. FISCH: At Camp Pendleton?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: At Camp Pendleton in an infantry training unit as permanent personnel, a permanent appointment, let's say, where I was a company clerk for one of the companies that I had just gone through training with. So I got to work with the drill instructors, and here I was a private first class. It was mostly sergeants out of Korea, because Vietnam hadn't started yet. The Korean War. It was two years-it was two years after.

So after being a company clerk at Oscar Company, 2nd Infantry Training Regiment, for about a year, I saw on the bulletin board that Special Services wanted someone to go to motion picture projectionist school in San Diego, run by the Navy. So I knew a guy in the Special Services and he sort of vouched for me to his first sergeant; he was a nice guy and all that stuff. So I went to four weeks of motion picture projectionist instruction at San Diego and basically we learned how to run the old-style 35-millimeter cameras, two of them, with carbon rods, much like the old searchlights, two carbon rods coming together, a negative and positive electrical charge create a gas ball. That gas ball is in front of the refracted mirror and it shoots out tremendous light through the film onto the screen.

MS. FISCH: Someone I met recently told me that she's making a sculpture out of those carbon rods, because they don't use them anymore.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right.

So in any case, they were coated in copper and they sort of went together, but you had to watch them, and then you had to switch reels seamlessly. The upper-right-hand corner where the cue marks-as we all probably remember, some were more noticeable than others.

So I came back to the 2nd Infantry Training Regiment, and I was one of the two projectionists. I worked one day on, one day off, weekend on, weekend off, showing pictures to the training units. It was a drive-in movie for the permanent personnel and then up front, seats for about a thousand trainees.

MS. FISCH: These weren't feature films; these were training films?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, these are feature films. And then occasionally the women's club, women's officers club or the wives of officers, wanted to keep subject matter away from these young impressionable trainees, would come, and I would have to sit down and show them the movie if they had heard rumors that it had a racy scene in it or something and then I would have to cut it out and splice it together. That was one of my jobs during the

day.

But it was an outdoor movie. It had a stage and there was male and female dressing rooms, and the two projectionists lived in the dressing rooms, and then when we had a USO [United Service Organizations] show, we had to move out for the day while the females did whatever -

MS. FISCH: Got their makeup.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -costume changes, makeup and stuff.

So that was kind of interesting, and then I did time and I did that until my three years was up.

MS. FISCH: So you literally stayed in San Diego your whole three years?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: Weren't you lucky.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Riding up 101 in the old days past San Diego State when there was just minimal buildings at that point. I realize now what I was looking up at.

But in any case, so three years-then I met another projectionist from another camp at Camp Pendleton who was from Detroit, and he said, "What are you going to do? Are you getting out soon?" I said, "I don't know." He said, "Well, I'm thinking of giving Wayne State University [Detroit, MI] a try." And I said, "Well, maybe that's not a bad idea."

So I got out in July of 1959. I applied to Wayne State University and I got rejected. And so I went in to find out why. Number one, my high school grades were not that great, even though I got into U of D [University of Detroit], and I had not-because the school hadn't offered some courses that were minimal, according to the state of Michigan, I never got to take because of the overcrowding in Roseville.

So they had a program; it was a noncredit program where you'd take one semester of three four-credit classes, one in history, one in math, and one in English, and you had to pass-it was just pass/fail, and you had to pass at least two of the three. So I managed to pass English and math. History -

MS. FISCH: Didn't do so well.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I didn't do well. He was a tough taskmaster. The others were reasonable, I thought.

So in any case I got into Wayne State University on that basis. I was interested in math, took some math courses, and realized that I really couldn't do anything with the math and I wasn't really as good as I thought I was.

In the meantime, well, in the Marine Corps I started drawing again towards the end. I'd walk past an art supply store in San Clemente and there were sketchbooks. And I said, gee, I bought a sketchbook and I started sketching on my own the scenery around me and marines and stuff.

So that got me going, and then after about a year and a half at Wayne State University just taking introductory courses and stuff, I decided to take a couple of electives, and it was a drawing class. I took a drawing class, took a second one. Then I couldn't take another class. I couldn't get into any class but a metal class. They had space, so I took a metals class.

MS. FISCH: Was that with Phillip?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That was with Phillip Fike.

And then I was more interested in printmaking at that point, and a friend of mine was getting married and he said, "Oh, you took metals; make me a wedding ring." So I went to Phil and I asked him if I could use his casting machine and he said, "No, you've got to be a student." So I signed up for a second course, and that got me going. So I was printmaking / metals through my undergraduate and my M.A. at Wayne State University.

MS. FISCH: So after you did your bachelor's, you just went on and did an M.A.?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and it took me -

MS. FISCH: Was that in metals or in printmaking?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, it was again both. And I had won awards in life drawing, life sculpture, in the student shows

in printmaking and metals.

MS. FISCH: How many art students were there at Wayne State? Was it a big department?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was a pretty big department. I think three or four hundred, and it's grown a lot since then.

MS. FISCH: Right. And how many in metals?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: When I started, there was only one other undergraduate student and about a semester later he graduated, and I was the only major for about two years. And then I started my M.A., and there was one other graduate student, but Phil didn't think he should be in the program, so he asked him to leave because he only wanted to do wax carving, and Phil said that's not metal.

And so he asked him to leave, and then I was the only one. I was his assistant for two years and we hung out together both-well, socially, and it was good. He took me to a couple summers at Oxbow Summer School of Painting in '63, and I actually did more painting there than anything else, and then I went again in '64 as a scholarship student of printmaking, and Phil was teaching metals.

So then in '65, the summer of '65 or '66-I skipped one year I think-I went back again; this time I was Phil's assistant the whole summer, and I stayed the whole summer from Memorial Day until Labor Day.

MS. FISCH: And where is Oxbow?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oxbow is one of the oldest summer schools in the country. It's on Lake Michigan-Saugatuck, Michigan.

At one point it was heavily-the faculty was heavily Wayne State, and then gradually over the years Chicago Art Institute [Art Institute of Chicago] took over. But there were two sisters who ran it for a number of years, and they tried to keep it open to everybody, but eventually they died and -

MS. FISCH: And how big is Oxbow?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oxbow probably was at that point maybe a hundred students. Since then it's grown considerably. A lot of buildings have been built. When I was there, they were still old fishing shacks right on-Oxbow was Oxbow River, where there used to be a river and sand dunes covered in-well, ships used to be-the last stop before Chicago. Ships used to stop there and get wood for their fire, for their engines, or just stop. There was an inn there and that became Oxbow Inn. And after the sand dunes filled in, the two ends there became a lagoon, and Oxbow had-still has I think-about 40 or 50 acres.

MS. FISCH: So is Oxbow privately owned?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was privately owned by a number of artists, and then the sisters sort of inherited it and kept it up over the years. Elsa and Marie [Ulbricht]-I forget their last name.

MS. FISCH: But now it's a sort of standard not-for-profit institution?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think Chicago owns it now probably.

MS. FISCH: You mean, the Chicago Art Institute owns it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I'm pretty sure they do. We had a chance-the University of Michigan had a chance in the early '80s to step in and take it over, but we just didn't have the budget to get it going.

MS. FISCH: So after earning an M.A. degree at Wayne State in metalsmithing, why did you decide to do the M.F.A. program in metals at Cranbrook [Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, MI]?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I applied for a job at Kent State in-well, after I got my M.A. in '67, yeah, '67. And the last semester at Wayne the government passed its Peacetime G.I. Bill, the catch-all between Korea and Vietnam, and I fell into it so I took -

MS. FISCH: So you could go to school on the G.I. Bill?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I could go on the G.I. Bill, even though I never went to war. I surfed in San Diego; I don't know if that was war or not.

So I applied-well, here again, I couldn't get a job with the M.A. at Kent State, didn't have much in the portfolio or a strong enough portfolio, I guess, and so this friend, she was applying in printmaking and she said, "Why don't

you apply?" I said, "Okay." So I applied. She didn't get in and I got in. But I was still interested in printmaking, but I had a stronger metals portfolio, and my plan was during the first and second year to see if I could switch.

MS. FISCH: So you weren't really going there to study with Richard Thomas?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was just basically I was going there because I had heard a lot of good things, and this girl was going there, and I had the G.I. Bill, and actually I didn't apply anywhere else. I just didn't think of applying anywhere else.

MS. FISCH: So if you hadn't gotten in, you would have gotten a job doing something?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I probably would have got a job doing something, or I may have ended up maybe applying someplace else, because at that point I was pretty free-spirited; it didn't matter to me if I had money or not. I just went where things took me. I just didn't-I didn't plan, so if it's luck, karma or whatever- it rules us.

So I got into Cranbrook. Richard Thomas was the artist-in-residency in metalsmithing.

MS. FISCH: Did you get along with him?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The first year I got along fabulously with him. Hiroko Sato at that time was a second-year student, and by the end there was a party. It was a Halloween party. Everybody went in dress of different sorts, and Hiroko and I went on a date, and there were a bunch of other artists there. At that time there was, oh, the pop artist, which is becoming popular again, he was at the party. Who was that pop artist? Peter-Peter -

MS. FISCH: Peter Max?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Peter Max. Peter Max and his following were there and it was a brawl, broken beer bottles, but in any case that's how Hiroko and I-well, that was our first date. It was just a wild, wild party.

So in any case our relationship developed on the grounds of Cranbrook walking around. She was living in a girls dorm and I was living in a boys dorm. And by the second semester we were getting serious. By the end of the second semester I asked her to marry me and she said she didn't know; she would have to talk to her parents and her parents said no. Her father spoke English. I talked to him on the phone. I said, "We're getting married. You can't stop me-us." And so we got married June 1, 1968.

MS. FISCH: That's when you graduated or Hiroko graduated?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, Hiroko graduated.

So at that point, I think, we were going to get married. I said, well, I needed a better job than-more than just a scholarship, so I took a federal exam for the post office. So we got married, Hiroko graduated, and I went to the Birmingham [Michigan] Post Office because I had gotten extra points for being in the service and my score was high and I could choose where I wanted to go, so I said Birmingham Post Office.

We moved a couple blocks away to a little cottage behind a bigger house, which a lot of people in Birmingham did. They had guest houses they were renting. Fred Woell did that and a number of other people.

So I worked there in the back room for a couple weeks, and then after which there was an opening for special delivery, but they said odd hours, and so I went to the postmaster and said, "What do you mean, odd hours?" "Well, you're expected to go when there's mail. And it's after hours." I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, you'd have to come in at 6:00 PM, and if there's no mail, you work in the back room and if there's a special delivery you go deliver it." And my stomping grounds for the post office at Birmingham, Troy, Bloomfield Hills. I delivered mail to Max Fisher, the Taubmans [wealthy Michigan residents], all these big wheels. But in any case, Hiroko would sometimes go with me, so I'd stop home and pick her up and go for a ride, and I worked till midnight.

MS. FISCH: It sounds like an ideal job for a budding student.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was an ideal job and I did it, and I was not really putting in 40 hours a week. Sometimes I would get there at 8:00, 8:00 PM and would only work to 10:00. I said, well, there's not any mail, I'd just punch out and go home.

And I did this until through the summer, into the fall, and then my supervisor said, "You're not putting in 40 hours a week." I said, "Well, I'm not greedy; this is fine with me." He said, "Well, okay."

And then one day after the Christmas rush he said, "You're working full time. That's what you're supposed to be doing, working full time." I said I really don't want to. And he said, "Well, you're either full time or nothing," and they were going to put me on the day shift. So I quit.

In the meantime Hiroko was working at a place that I had worked at when I was a student at Wayne State University, Perfection Jewelry Company. She was a buffer and hated it, but she learned how to buff. I had been a bench worker there for about a year, and then after that I worked for Orange Blossom Wedding Rings and we specialized in 18 karat.

MS. FISCH: Was this when you were at Wayne State?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, at Wayne State, and then I got tired of it, I quit, and the owner called me and said, "You were doing a good job, why are you quitting?" I said, "Well, I got this-I'm going to go start in the fall at Cranbrook and I really can't work." And he said, "Well, when you get to Cranbrook give me a call. I live nearby."

So I started while I was at Cranbrook, after I finished the post office; I called him on a whim and he said, "Well, come on down." He only lived a half a mile away from Cranbrook on Cranbrook Road. It seems that he was very rich and he was into sports cars. So some Saturdays I would go and help him change his oil on his Ferraris or whatever else, and then we started talking about, he was going to New York and he was buying these sketches from famous artists-Warhol, some of the other pop artists at that time. He would take them out to lunch and he bought sometimes their work, but he was buying sketches. He would say, "Here's a piece of paper; give me a sketch for a ring." And then in two seconds they would put their little cube on a band and that would be it and he'd give them a couple hundred bucks. And they'd sign it and he'd have a piece of art and a design. He was pretty clever that way.

So in any case, I had this bench work experience so he said, "I've got all these drawings and I've always wanted to make them." He said, "Do you think you have time at Cranbrook to make these models for me in gold?" I said, "Well, I'm busy but, yeah, I'll do it." So I made a half a dozen models of different artists' sketches, and I'd go over during the week-I'd work late in the metal studio and make these models, and then on Saturday mornings if he was around, I'd go deliver them and he'd look at them and say, "Well, make this change" and I'd go back, and he was giving me \$25 an hour, which was a lot of money then, and materials.

MS. FISCH: That's even a lot of money now for anybody doing bench work.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And-well, he was trying to help me basically. But I would only work three or four hours a week but that was big money in those days. And then Hiroko connected through to Charlie March, who was doing work for the Little Gallery, and then I sort of got a disconnect with this guy as he was going through a divorce and all of that, and Hiroko was doing the work for the Little Gallery and I was helping out while I was this little student. I set up a casting on this little porch and this little cottage, a casting machine and a kiln so we could-Hiroko, well, during the day she'd do casting and buff. She really couldn't use the facilities because she had graduated at Cranbrook.

So I set up the studio there and Hiroko used it, and then I graduated in '69. And we had promised Hiroko's parents to go to Japan. I would go to Japan and try to stay as long as possible and what was I going to do. I had no other dreams, or I thought, well, I've never been to Japan, so we went to Japan.

MS. FISCH: At this point you hadn't applied for any teaching jobs, right?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, because I knew we were going to Japan.

MS. FISCH: I see, because I know that Richard Thomas had a reputation for placing his students rather well.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, he placed them. Well, the second year I didn't get along with him. I lost favor, and one time I walked into his office and basically he was a-he called himself in charge of the tool crib and I think that's all he ever did. I never got a critique from him really. You would ask him something; he'd say, "Well, what do you think" and, "Oh, that sounds good," and that would be it; I mean, no dialogue. It just wasn't his style. He had a style for people who should be mature coming in and they would learn from the other students.

MS. FISCH: And who were some of the other students?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, some of the other students was Chris Sublett, Roger Armstrong -

MS. FISCH: Not the Scotchman?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, no, this was the guy who put out the spiral.

MS. FISCH: Roger Miller.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Was it Miller? [Millard.] Skip Holbrook went to Santa Fe, taught at the Indian school, retired from there because it was a civil service job.

Norman Thomas, Al [Alfred] Green.

MS. FISCH: Al Green.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Probably retired now from someplace, a woman's college in Texas.

And Richard [Johnston] someone-forget the last name-who went to Salt Lake City, University of Utah, and I think he went to sculpture.

MS. FISCH: And was that Richard Dehr?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, Richard Dehr. Well, there's Richard Dehr and there was another. That's right, Richard Dehr was there and then he went back to California and died in a homemade plane a few years later.

MS. FISCH: Yes, Hiroko mentioned that.

So essentially you were-the students that you were with were the same ones that Hiroko was with. There must have been some changeover.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There was some changeover. There wasn't much that year.

MS. FISCH: I mean, who replaced-well, Ruth Laug was there.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, that was before both of us. Well, Hiroko -

MS. FISCH: No, Hiroko said she was there.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There, yeah, right.

MS. FISCH: But nobody replaced Ruth and Hiroko? I mean, were there any other women who came into the program when you were there? When did Mary Lee [Hu] come to the-Mary Lee-that wasn't in your year?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. She did her undergraduate there.

MS. FISCH: Yes, that's right.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right, which was rare. There was actually one person who did her undergraduate when we were there, too, but that was very unusual. I forget her name. One of the women that came in with me was Joanna Stone.

MS. FISCH: Joanna Stone. Okay, don't know her.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, she-I don't know what she did, but I got a note from her 10, 15 years ago. I guess she had seen some work in a magazine and dropped me a line saying, "Do you remember me," and it was, sort of, she had really bad health problems after she left Cranbrook.

MS. FISCH: But Chunghi Choo wasn't there when you were there?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, she was already gone.

MS. FISCH: I interrupted you about your relationship with Richard Thomas having deteriorated.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, the second year was not that great, because the first year I felt he didn't give enough, and I wasn't aware that this was a valid philosophy of teaching. In my mind a teacher taught everything they or she-he or she knew. And so I used to question him, "Well, I'd like to do this; teach me." "Well, it's in this book on this page," or "Richard knows how to do that."

MS. FISCH: Was it because he was just lazy, or was this a philosophy that he had?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was his philosophy, but I didn't realize that during the first year. He did give us sort of a raising demonstration.

MS. FISCH: Well, somebody had to teach you how to make those Cranbrook bottles.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But at the same time one of the students from years before us had done their master's thesis

and had this display of about 30 steps of raising a hemisphere. So all you would have to do is go there; it was real detailed. And he would say, "Oh, check step three of whatyacall's thesis." And he would always refer to a thesis, which was always in the libraries, and they were a fantastic source of information, such a wide variety.

His secret was getting relatively good technical papers out of graduating students, and some of them were duplicated, but usually they got better the second or third time something-it was the same subject because they had benefited. And then he took credit for it all.

But he was a very good silversmith early on before he-he actually graduated from Cranbrook in painting, went to war, was in the cavalry, one of the last cavalry units. In the Depression he was a high diver for money and candy bars; he used to tell us stories. And he was just this old salt of the earth, a real man's man, with a Napoleon complex.

MS. FISCH: But he did make hollowware himself, didn't he?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Early on. Yeah, he did, and some of it was a hack job and most of it was done, I think, by students.

MS. FISCH: I see.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, needless to say, so in any case the second year we didn't get -but one day I walked in the office and said, "Hiroko and I are getting married." He said, "Where are you going to get married?" And I said, "The city hall." He said, "No good. Let me call somebody." So he arranged for a Unitarian pastor, whatever they're called, to marry us. So my parents came, and my brother and my parents gave us a little reception at their house with some Cranbrook students. So in any case we got married in '68. But I should be bouncing up to '69.

Okay, '69 we left for Japan, but we taught at Oxbow.

MS. FISCH: Oh, the summer after you got married, you taught at Oxbow?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, it was the summer after I graduated in '69.

MS. FISCH: Okay.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: So-because a friend of mine, Stanley Rosenthal, who-he had done his M.F.A. at Wayne State University, and he was very involved with Oxbow, and for a couple of years he was manager during the summer. He still teaches printmaking at Wayne State University. We were buddies during my M.A. days.

So in any case, Stanley gave us a job, so we taught a metals course there for four weeks.

Then after that we-a couple weeks after that we stayed with my parents and then we left for Japan. We got to Japan probably August. We flew into Haneda, because Narita wasn't built in the '60s, until the '70s.

So in any case we flew into Haneda; parents picked us up. We had a nice dinner, took us home, and about a week later I said, "I'd like to take lessons, Japanese lessons." So they fixed me up with a private tutor, and I took some lessons with this tutor, and then we visited Geidai [National University of Fine Arts and Music]. And I was enthralled about the school, so I asked my father-in-law and I said, could I get in. He said, "Oh, I'll find out." And Hiroko's father had a lot of connections, because he was the president of Nippon Steel Hospital, and a lot of executives were his personal patients and everybody knows everybody who graduated from the best universities in Japan, whether it's art or whatever. If you graduated from the same school, you help. So I guess he called one of his fellow schoolmates, and it happened to be Mr. Uno. And Mr. Uno was a pretty famous guy and he said-well, he didn't teach at Tokyo but he knew Hiramatsu, and so I met Mr. Hiramatsu, and Hiramatsu said, "Sure."

And so I enrolled at the-that was by October of '69. I really worked fast. I was enrolled-school was starting-as a special student. Mr. Hiramatsu sat me down one day and showed me how to make a chisel, so I made a chisel after a couple of hours. He gave me a sample board, steps-make one cut here, make one cut there, and then he came back and showed me how to harden and temper it, and then he goes to the vault and brings back another board of samples and he said, "Make these chisels," and gave me blanks. So another month making chisels by the numbers. And he would come by every so often, because he only came in on Fridays, because he was one of the senior professors and the assistants ran the place. They ignored me, but I got to be friends with a couple students and we'd go to lunch together.

So I'd go there every day, five days a week, and most of the days there's no other students around. Students didn't go to school, only when they had a final semester project to do.

MS. FISCH: Isn't that amazing?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So they were guaranteed a job as long as they graduated from Geidai, the best school in Japan; "great university," it translated. And I felt I needed more Japanese, so I went to a private school for a while and then finally I decided, "I wonder if my G.I. Bill is still working." So I went to Jojidaigaku [Sophia University, Tokyo], which is St. Sophia's, a Jesuit university, and they had an international division.

And so I went in and talked to the Jesuit priest, and he said, "Oh, I can check on that; we've got a lot of G.I.s in our international division." And he said, "Yeah, it looks like you can go for-it depends on how many credits you take. You can take another dozen credits, if you want." And I said, "Great," because I had already-I-being in the military I had thought three years of schooling was three years in the service. I ended up getting four and a half years of schooling and I could have gone forever, and I was waiting for them to ask for the money back, years later; they never did because I was only entitled to three years, but I got four and a half years of full-time study.

MS. FISCH: Amazing. Weren't you lucky.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I got through the system somehow.

And then at that time we had moved into a new house that my in-laws had built for us on this land that they had-already had purchased. So it was a small three-bedroom. Two of the bedrooms were studios, and in one bedroom we slept. Dining, living room, and kitchen sort of a room across the middle, and a bathroom in the corner, so maybe 600 square feet, real tiny, divided up into a lot of rooms, enough room to work. So Hiroko started going out to hustle the things that we were making-I was making on weekends. Because I was going to school two nights a week and five days a week.

MS. FISCH: So five days a week you were going to Geidai. And two nights a week-where did you do this Japanese language or Oriental history?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That was at Sophia, in Sophia. So I did that for a semester, and I was taking, I think, eight credits: four language and four history.

So in any case then after Sophia ended, some fashion designers, friends of friends, they were looking for someone to design metal stuff for this new corporation they were starting, Renown, a huge clothing manufacturer. And they've got divisions, kids, women's, teenagers; it's all divided up and very specific, like I think most companies of that ilk are.

So I worked in a new division they were starting out, college graduate, who the clients were college graduates who were on the track to be section chiefs who had-well, making this much money; so a new company arose, Renown Nishiki out of this. So they hired a bunch of designers, a few designers that knew a friend of Hiroko's, who had graduated from FIT [Fashion Institute of Technology, New York], with students at FIT and went back to Japan.

So I was in this design studio, and actually there were three of us, two others who had graduated in, I think, industrial design, and myself, who were to design cufflinks, tie bars, anything that would relate to this niche.

MS. FISCH: And were you eligible to have a job under the terms of your immigration?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Well, no, I guess, I think, they fixed it.

MS. FISCH: They fixed it, okay.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, they never asked me anything; I just went to work and it was a one-year contract and they paid me if I was there or not. I could say I was doing research and be gone for a couple of days, because most of the people were out doing research. Research consisted of going to the library, which the company had-I mean every magazine that had anything to do with fabric or style or design, I mean, they subscribed to, every history book ever and anything, not just fashion, because they believed in research.

MS. FISCH: What a wonderful opportunity.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And it had a full-time librarian. You would say a period or something and she would pull it out, what language also, Japanese, English. A lot of it was in other languages, most of it being English, of course. And I'd go to the library and read for days sometimes.

And then I sort of got tired of doing paper designs, so I said, "I think I could actually make as many designs. You could feel them. I'll do the prototypes at home and bring them in." They said, "Okay, let's try that for a couple months."

So I'd go in one day a week and drop off a half-dozen designs, and I was doing-I don't know if I cheated or not, but I found a couple companies in the metalworking, metal supply district, because of running back and forth, buying supplies for Hiroko or doing errands in the district; I would stick my head in the door and they were doing all kinds of interesting things. One place was cutting up all kinds of different tubing at different angles. I don't know what they were cutting it up for, but they had bins and bins and bins of this.

So one day I walked in, got a plastic bag, and I said, "Could I have some of these, some of these?" They said, "Oh, okay, we'll weigh it." So I came out with a big bag that cost me maybe \$10, and that gave me a design source that lasted for months. I would just sort of lay these out and move them around and tack them together and take them to work. Sometimes I'd get them plated and take them to work, and they would pay me for any materials or they'd reimburse me for all of that.

And actually, in Japan they paid your transportation because that's part -

MS. FISCH: That's part of your salary.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Because some people live so far out, a dent in their -

But in any case, so I worked for Renown Nishiki for about six or seven months, and I got just tired of the whole thing, and I walked in one day and I said, "I quit. I'm not coming back anymore." And they didn't say anything, so I walked out.

And because I had signed a contract for one year, they kept their obligation. They sent me checks for the next four months.

MS. FISCH: Even though you never showed up.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Never showed up and Hiroko got so mad at me. She said, "You can show up at least once a month." Something. And I said, "If they're stupid." I was -

MS. FISCH: Pretty arrogant I would say.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, pretty arrogant. "If they're stupid enough to pay me. I'll take the money and run." That was my American attitude, which isn't that great.

MS. FISCH: So that's what you did.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That's what I did in Japan, along with then one day I just got tired of all this running around and going to schools and going to suppliers and dropping things off at galleries and then trying to get as much work done on the weekends as I could, casting, because I did most of the casting at home and stuff and just got burnt out. And I said, "Hiroko, I've got to go back," and I said, "I've always thought maybe of teaching."

I didn't know if Hiroko was going to follow me or not, so I came back and I stopped in the Bay Area, and there was a CAA meeting that I had heard about.

MS. FISCH: CAA, College Art Association?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Mm-hmm. [Affirmative.] In San Francisco, and then Howie and Kathy [Howard and Kathryn] Clark had just set up or had set up a year previously Twinrocker in the Bay Area because -

MS. FISCH: Twinrocker is a -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: A handmade paper company, and they were just starting out. It was serendipitous with them also. Kathy had studied printmaking with Aris Koutroulis, who learned papermaking from the printmaker at Cranbrook at that time, I forget his name, but anyway a couple generations down the road Kathy learned it from Aris.

MS. FISCH: Now, what's his name?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Aris Koutroulis, who taught printmaking at Wayne State University.

MS. FISCH: Koutroulis?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's a K and it's long.

MS. FISCH: Koutroulis, okay.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And she had some samples of paper, and she was hanging out with poets and they said, "God,

that would be nice paper to print our poetry on." And she said "Well, that's all the paper I have," and they asked "Could you make some?" And Howie, Howard Clark, who was at Wayne State-well, at Purdue-got his mechanical engineering degree, then went into the service, was stationed in England, came back from the service, and decided a second degree in industrial design, and that's where we met. I went to Cranbrook, and a year or two later they moved to San Francisco. Three years, almost three years later I'm in San Francisco visiting them. Howie had just finished a beater, built his own, mechanical engineer, figured it all out.

MS. FISCH: So you didn't have a job when you came back from Japan?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Nope.

MS. FISCH: You just sort of came back. And stopped at the College Art Association.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And got a couple of interviews. In those days were jobs and so nothing-well, in Tucson I got interviewed later. I ran into a guy who actually graduated from Wayne State University. I forget his name now.

MS. FISCH: So did you go back to Detroit then?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. So I visited-well, first of all I went up, I drove north, visited David LaPlantz for a week or so, and then I flew to Detroit, moved in with my youngest brother, needed to get a job, borrowed a casting machine from a friend, set up in my brother's garage a little kiln that I had left behind years before and started to do some castings, did some castings, schlepped them around to a couple galleries, left them there, not much money came in, still needed a job. So my brother said, "They're hiring at Dodge Truck." So I said, well, a job-I had worked at Cadillac on the assembly line at one point too. I said, the assembly line is good pay; I can do that. So I got with Dodge truck and they looked at my resume and said, "What are you doing here?" I said, "Well, this is-I need a job," so they hired me, and they put me in the dynamometer room, where I test drove Dodge semi-trucks-if they started at the end of the assembly line. If they started-half of them didn't start. Quality control was out the window in those days, the '60s. Too much pot and too much drugs on the line.

And so I was in the dynamometer and sometimes-and it would only take me 15 minutes to test a truck and I was supposed to be doing four to six an hour. And I would only get one, max two, an hour, because so many didn't start, and they would just tow-truck them out to the yard.

MS. FISCH: And start over again.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, not start over again; they would send a mechanic out there to try and figure out what was wrong, what -

MS. FISCH: What did somebody forget to do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Forget to do or did something wrong, like put gasoline in the motor block and put motor oil in the gas tank. I mean, those guys-those were the-yeah, that was the early '70s and they were just-I mean, they didn't want to be there, let's say. They wanted to be someplace else.

So in any case I did that for the whole summer. Well, and one weekend I went down to Tucson to interview and I didn't get the job. Then how did I get to San Diego?

MS. FISCH: Well, that's why I'm asking about the sequence, because you came in September of '72, and I thought you came directly from Japan, but -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, no, I came from Japan in January of '72. So by the fall of '72 I was in San Diego. Now, how did I get to San Diego? David LaPlantz recommended me.

MS. FISCH: Yes, David had been teaching as a sabbatical replacement for me.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right, and then your other person -

MS. FISCH: Jack [Hopkins] went on sabbatical. For a whole year.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: David told me about the job and I applied. That was it.

MS. FISCH: That was how it happened.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was the fall of '72. Hiroko was still in Japan. I drove a car loaded with whatever stuff I had to San Diego. I stayed for a couple of days at a weaver -

MS. FISCH: Joan Austin.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Joan Austin, because she had been a student at Cranbrook and I got in touch with her. She wasn't home; she was gone someplace for the summer. So she left keys out for me- in National City [California]- keys next door, so I drove up and got the key, and then I called Hiroko, I'm in San Diego, come on.

A couple weeks later Hiroko was in San Diego after sort of getting rid of the equipment so then her parents could do something with the house, gave away rolling mills and all the stuff to some people and sold some stuff.

In any case, we were in August, Joan still not back, but we figured we've got to find a place. So we're driving down Montezuma near San Diego State University and we see a "For Rent" sign. And we drove in and she said, "Are you a student?" And I said, "No, I'm going to be a faculty member." And she was very glad to have me because they didn't want students, so we got a nice location and we stayed at San Diego State for one year teaching with Arline Fisch.

MS. FISCH: It was a sabbatical replacement job. Was that really your first teaching job, full time?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, my first full-time teaching job. I had taught at Bloomfield-another thing I did while I was a student at Cranbrook, the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Association, I taught a casting class early mornings for a semester.

MS. FISCH: I remember that you were very well organized and you generated lots of excitement with your project assignments, and the students did really good work.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, at that point I was pretty well-for some reason I was pretty well organized. Well, Phil Fike taught me a little bit about organization, so I had some pass-outs from him or handouts, I should say, wrong word pass-outs-handouts. I used that word for years and people finally said to me, "Don't use that word." And I didn't know what I was saying, so now handouts-handouts, and I'd learned from the organization that he used in his handouts. I used Hiroko's help in developing the inlay and other Japanese technique handouts and other things.

MS. FISCH: At that time we had really large classes, especially in the beginning level classes, and we met in quite small quarters, and so it was not easy teaching under those circumstances.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was exhausting, yes.

MS. FISCH: But I thought that you did a really good job, and it was nice having you as a colleague for that year.

What are your memories of that experience?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, my memories were wonderful memories from the standpoint of the location, having a banana court right next to the metal studio, or not quite. I was smoking so I used to take smoking breaks every chance I could get, but it wasn't very many chances because the students were just-there were a lot of them and they always had a lot of questions.

But I enjoyed having lunch in that court. Sometimes Hiroko would come for lunch, or else I would go home for lunch. It was only about a five- or seven-minute walk away.

So it was a very-it was a learning experience and it was a good experience in a beautiful location with some wonderful students, many of which have gone on to do a lot of good things. There were a lot of people.

MS. FISCH: It was a very heady time for the studio, I think, and there were wonderful students.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There were at least I think-I probably can't remember all their names, but at least six or eight who still are doing metals and most of them in academic situations.

MS. FISCH: Right. It was a very talented group and they kind of fed off each other, so it was a good, lively environment, and I think you brought a lot to it, and it was nice having Hiroko there as well, although she was a little shy at the time.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, she was. She took a ceramics course and made this huge number of things right off the bat. I mean, it was surprising.

MS. FISCH: Oh, I don't think I ever saw what she did.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I mean, she was-she did in the one semester-she probably outworked everybody in that class, because I'd stop by every so often and she made lidded canisters. We still have a few lying around the house.

MS. FISCH: I don't know; did she work with Martha Longnecker or Erik Gronborg?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. Erik a little bit and who was the other guy?

MS. FISCH: Frank [Papworth].

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Frank.

MS. FISCH: Oh, well, I just didn't-I didn't remember that. Isn't that interesting.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, she just sort of asked if she could take the course, and they said sit down, no enrollment.

MS. FISCH: Right. Well, that was good.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And she had a good time and she did fantastic work, really explored a lot of glazes, and I was surprised.

MS. FISCH: But did she ever do anything after that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: It was just an opportune moment.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was just an opportunity.

MS. FISCH: I mean, she said this morning that she didn't have-initially she didn't have any place to work, and so she felt uncomfortable working in the jewelry studio because it was always so crowded and she was used to working alone, and then you set up something for her.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, right.

MS. FISCH: And so she was able to work.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was a two-bedroom apartment.

MS. FISCH: But she never mentioned the ceramics. Isn't that interesting, because I think that's-that was something I wasn't aware of.

So then you went on to Purdue [Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN], and you were hired there for a tenure-track position right away, I think?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was a tenure-track. I met Charles Dorn, actually in San Diego. He was in San Diego for an art education conference, and the current head of the department at San Diego State, printmaker Paul Lingren, I guess knew Charles, and they had-and Charles had mentioned he was looking for someone and he hadn't found anybody yet.

So I was interviewed -

MS. FISCH: Right there.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -right on the spot. I took in my slides and he said, well, it's yours.

MS. FISCH: I didn't know that.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. I mean, it was just a simple -

MS. FISCH: I knew you went to Purdue, but I didn't know that it happened that way.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right. He had, I guess, interviewed people before, and he was a pretty macho guy. He just did whatever he did and no one questioned him. The way things were set at Purdue was such.

So in any case he said, "You'll get a contract in a week," and I was so knocked over I said, "Purdue, number one, where is that?" I didn't know if it was public or private or what, whatever, and so I had to look it up. I thought it was in Illinois. I knew it was someplace in the Midwest. So I looked it up and a week later he sent me a contract. He knew what I was making.

MS. FISCH: Well, Paul had probably told him.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And so he gave me \$2,000 more and I was satisfied. He didn't pay any transportation. So we rented a U-Haul, put everything in the U-Haul. We had a Pinto station wagon, because my car I drove from

Michigan died so we had to buy something, so we got a loan and bought this new Pinto station wagon. I wanted to buy a Japanese wagon. Hiroko said "No. No, we're going to Detroit, we can't. We can't do it." In any case, we bought this Pinto wagon and moved.

And you had recommended us for Haystack [Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, Deer Isle, ME], and because there was a Japanese-themed summer. And so we, in the summer of '73, we had to pack up, move everything to Purdue. We drove our rental and dropped everything off at Howie and Kathy's farm in their barn. We had two days before we had to drive to Haystack, and we're looking around, and so we put this bid in on this house, and we went to Haystack while all of our belongings were in this barn.

And about a couple weeks, about halfway through the workshop, we get a call. You got it. Send us-we had left a thousand dollars and we needed another thousand for minimum down payment. So I borrowed a thousand dollars from my parents, because I didn't have it; the thousand was all we had, didn't save much in San Diego, so we looked at-it was a total of \$2,000 down, and at the end of the summer we drove back to the barn and Howard had a pickup truck; he helped us move all this stuff to our new little house, this little 900-square, three-bedroom brick house across from this technical park. In West Lafayette, Indiana.

[END OF DISC 1.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Eugene Pijanowski at his home and studio in Honolulu on May 13, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number two.

So where were we? We were going to talk about what you did at Purdue once you started teaching there. What were your responsibilities there?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: My responsibilities at Purdue University in the Department of the Creative Arts was to teach three classes per semester, one being in the design area, primarily three-dimensional design, but I taught two-dimensional design, and two metal classes, one beginning and one mixed advance.

Purdue is primarily a land grant institution, so the emphasis really wasn't, and isn't, on the arts. We had not many people who were majoring in art in the Department of Creative Arts. We had mostly-we were a service unit for the rest of the campus. At the beginning level we had a lot of classes, because they could just sign up without any experience. But out of those we got-we drew a couple of good students who continued on in metals or in art from electrical engineering and different, other aspects of engineering to biologists, whatever, who had gone to Purdue to pursue a degree that their parents thought would lead to employment. So a lot of these people were, a lot of them were from the greater Chicago area and Indiana, of course.

And we had some very good students. We didn't have many graduate students. We only had an M.A. program. But I ended up getting one or two from other areas, but some of the best graduate students I ever had were from Purdue because they came out of a science academic background. Some of them already had undergraduate degrees and started all over again. They were seniors; they took an art class and graduated in their science and then came back for a second undergraduate degree.

So we had a few of those, and because of being a small unit on campus-but the unit consisted of art, art education, art history, music, and theater, yes.

MS. FISCH: And within the visual arts were there other crafts?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, there was Marge Levy, who was teaching ceramics, and Diane Sheehan, who was teaching weaving. We were all teaching in Quonset huts, which in some ways wasn't too bad, because we could do anything to that space that we wanted to. You couldn't hurt them.

In any case, we basically had furniture from old chemistry labs that we adapted, right. And some of it was quite good furniture. I remember getting an almost brand new exhaust hood with a sliding glass door, and that was fantastic, and a lot of other good solid oak furniture.

In any case, we couldn't charge a lab fee and we had a very small budget for tools, but we managed to do what we could do, and there had been some left from the previous person who had taught there. He was interested in blacksmithing, so we had a blacksmith's forge and just basics and over the years-I was there for eight years. Took a one-year sabbatical, and I taught at Wayne State University one quarter and the rest of the time spent in Ann Arbor with Hiroko, who was already teaching at the University of Michigan School of Art, started during the fall of '78. I taught there in the spring or summer of '78 just to see what it was like. They offered me a job, so I took it.

There were some good students from the standpoint of really good work habits. Kids were coming in with-I'm always of the opinion if I can get a student who has the drive and who has a strong science background, they will

make the best students because they're more methodical. They have a certain kind of discipline. And over and over again I've found this to be true.

MS. FISCH: So who were some of the students you remember from those years?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Carl Hines, who came out of chemistry.

MS. FISCH: And what does he do now?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Actually he's a multimillionaire. Not from being a metalsmith, I'm sure.

Well, after he finished his M.A. at the time I left to go on sabbatical and they hired him to replace me, cheap, of course, and his wife graduated from theater with her M.A. at the same time and she got the sabbatical replacement, so they stayed on for another year teaching full time, after which they both moved to Chicago. He had been a jack-of-all-trades, very smart, very well organized; he helped me remodel this Frank Lloyd-second-generation Frank Lloyd Wright prairie-style house that we owned, so he was good at everything.

He went and couldn't find anything to do, other than he got a job as a cost estimator for a large construction company because he had all these skills and a good math head, and he became a major contract developer in Chicago. And his wife, who was basically in costume design, she started a corporation making western dance dresses, the billowing skirts.

MS. FISCH: Oh yeah. Just at a time when western dance became really popular.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right. So in any case, but he was-he had so much insight, I mean, he was way beyond me in terms of-I mean, just he was very practical.

MS. FISCH: So do you think he'll ever go back to doing anything in metal?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I haven't heard from him in years, 20 years probably. We've lost track, other than I heard from another person what he was doing.

MS. FISCH: And was Chris Ramsey from Purdue?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, Chris Ramsey was from Ann Arbor. And then there was another person, Dianne Davis, who got her M.A. Now she's teaching at Purdue in home economics, fashion design. She was always interested in jewelry and clothing.

And there was one other person [Jim Ferringer], who bought our house, actually, before we left.

MS. FISCH: Maybe you'll think of it later.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But in any case Purdue-Hiroko had gotten the job at University of Michigan. I got a one-year leave of absence after I finished my obligation of one year's service after my sabbatical. You have to do that. So they gave me a year leave of absence. I got there and we were negotiating a joint appointment, this new idea of a joint appointment, and I got to do some research and found out, and Hiroko said it would be great: you teach one class, I teach one class, and that's it. I said, "Well, we only get one salary."

So I was negotiating with the dean, who later became dean at Tyler [Tyler School of Art, Temple University, Philadelphia, PA], forgot his name [George Bayliss], for this joint appointment. Then at that point the University of Michigan came under review for closure. MS. FISCH: At Ann Arbor, they were going to close Ann Arbor?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, they closed a couple of departments.

MS. FISCH: Oh, departments, okay.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, but this was the School of Art.

But in any case they made a bad mistake. Out of the woodwork came a lot of good people and they made asses of themselves. The president soon after left and became president of Princeton, I think.

But in any case the School of Art survived. We were-the associate dean, George Bayliss, moved down to Tyler School of Art. The associate dean hired Hiroko primarily. Wendel Heers became dean. I was teaching there part-time.

MS. FISCH: In this year's leave of absence, weren't you a visiting professor?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I was a visiting professor.

In any case, I was there. I left Purdue-I started in '81 at the University of Michigan while still on leave from Purdue, taught for one year while Hiroko was on a leave of absence to do research in Japan under a Japan fellowship on national living treasures.

She came back. I got another extension from Purdue for another year. George Bayliss left. Wendel Heers took over for a year. One of the-Bill Lewis took over as associate dean but he really didn't want the job. So they opened it up to the faculty. Two tenured faculty applied and I said, "Why don't I apply, too?" So I applied to be associate dean. Marge Levy-no, to be associate dean. Marge wasn't there yet. To be associate dean on a temporary basis until everything got worked out; that is, they started a search and they brought in a year later Marge Levy. As a new dean.

So Wendel was dean for about a year and a half. I was acting associate dean for a semester. Then I went on a Fulbright, and while I was gone, Bill Lewis stepped back in as acting associate dean, to fill in for me. I got back. They had hired Marge Levy. I got back but she couldn't start until January of 1986, so I came back late summer, reassumed my duties as acting associate dean. Marge came, thought that because we had been friends previously, that opened it up again to whoever was interested to apply. She formed a committee. The same two people who I beat out for the acting associate dean applied again, both senior professors, one industrial design and one in sculpture, really dedicated, but probably the rest of the faculty knew too much more than I did at that time about them.

So they went through a search, listed me as first, and Marge said, "Well, I can work with him." And I got a three-year contract. Then after three years Marge renewed it for two more years, because her contract would have been expired, because she had a five-year contract, so both of us left at the same time. During the last year of her tenure or contract she got a vote of no-confidence from the faculty, asked to leave by the faculty. The provost came in, asked her to stay on for another six months. She renewed my contract for another three years, and surprisingly, she said, "Put together a portfolio." So I put together a portfolio and she took it to the president, I found out later, and said, "I want to give him tenure and promotion." They wouldn't do the tenure, but they said, "You can give him any rank you want."

MS. FISCH: Oh, so that's how you got promoted to full professor?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Marge thought a lecturer, associate dean contract, and she'd shoot for the moon because we were good friends and we worked well together. And so in any case I got that, and so I have a couple more years, and there again there was an acting dean, John Stevenson, who had just retired from ceramics. They asked him to come back for two years, this interim, so we could straighten ourselves out, get back on track, according to the upper administration.

So Marge left. John Stevenson, halfway through his two-year contract, my contract expired and I asked him; he said, "I can only give you a one-year contract, because that's all I'm going to be here for." Okay.

So we did a national search, external national search. We brought in some really heavy hitters, mostly women that were heads of museums, foundations -

MS. FISCH: This was to be -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Dean. Gave the list to the provost and the president, and they said no. Pick someone from the inside. He was punishing us.

MS. FISCH: No, they want somebody weak.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, that's it, someone weak. And everybody looked around and they offhandedly asked me, and I said, "Come on, don't pull my leg. I've been here too long to know that that's no job for me. I'm just holding my own here." And so this guy who is a very talkative, very likable guy, industrial designer, who we thought would be at least pretty well organized, being an industrial designer, there were hints that he's the only one; so he was at the top of our list, and they said okay. So we had this person for five years and I didn't get along with him very well. Towards the end of his five-year term-well, starting his fifth year, they gave him notice. You can have it until your sixth year but that's it.

So I talked him into extending my contract until the end of his contract, and then I made it through the last couple of years with him without getting rid of me before my contract ended.

And a new dean came in, asked me if I wanted tenure. At that point I was going to be retired in one year and then-and I have papers, I talked to-deciding all this, these letters, because I learned that you need stuff on paper and witnesses, another person in the room. You can't be just you and that person.

So in any case, I negotiated with the new dean who was coming in. My contract expired. He said, "I'm bringing in

next semester my person who was with me at Carnegie Mellon [Pittsburgh, PA]." And I said, "That's fine, I didn't expect anything." He said, "How many more years do you want to stay here?" I said, "Forever." And he said, well-he laughed and he said, "I've got a letter saying you want to quit and you're ready to go in one year and the other dean signed it." I said, "I would like you to extend that for one year." And he said, "Oh, whatever."

So I had two more years, and I decided I would just teach and see how things work. I taught for only one year and I decided that's not what I want.

MS. FISCH: The last two years there were to be not as a dean but as a faculty.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: A faculty person teaching in metals. Because by that time Hiroko had built up. We were offering six undergraduate classes.

MS. FISCH: So she needed somebody.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, she had someone, but I just replaced a couple of part-time people she had. She had started teaching there with only two. Over time she had started classes, she had a couple sections of classes that were titled "Metals for Designers."

MS. FISCH: Yeah, she talked about that.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That was oriented in different ways.

MS. FISCH: And the enrollment really built.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Built from then because they weren't learning anything in industrial design. And we had a graduate student, Nicole DesChamps, who was just terrific. She got her M.F.A. with us and then she was our lab demonstrator after that, and then part-time, and then we hired her-we actually hired her on a three-year contract-I got her a three-year contract when I could. So she was teaching those classes, and she was so organized.

So in any case she got married to a physicist and they moved to Texas. She's raising a family now.

MS. FISCH: So there was that position and you took that on.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: So you did teach then in the metals area?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: For a year. And then I decided at the end of that, went to Japan in the summer, and in Japan I said, all this stuff is going to be changing. Already I feel myself speaking up at the faculty meetings-not that I'm against the change; I'm all for it, but speaking to these faculty who I've lost some of the respect and they're asking these dumb questions. I'm just so fed up with this. I'm ready to leave. So after that summer in Japan I came back, I talked to the dean, I said, "One more semester, I want to be out of here in January." "Whatever you want." And I said, but I need, because I hadn't finished a year between sabbatical, I had to take the sabbatical, too. I had never had a sabbatical before. They screwed me out of a sabbatical because they told me a person who wasn't permanent-but I actually was permanent. I had an ongoing contract; they were just being renewed. This one secretary, the dean's executive secretary, who we canned, said, "Oh, you can't do that." I said, "Okay." I believed her- [END TAPE 2, SIDE A.] - a new executive came in and said yes.

MS. FISCH: It's amazing what you learn.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and so they gave me a sabbatical real quick, and then I came back -

MS. FISCH: But then you had to pay it back.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. He waived it. He said-well, I said, "I want to get out of here." He said, "I understand. You owe us a semester and you should be here for a year otherwise you have to pay us back." I said, "You can always waive that. Deans can do anything." And he just laughed and he said, "I really appreciate your candor with me, in clueing me into some of the faculty and what your thoughts are of the curriculum," because I had changed the curriculum once. That's as much as I could do with that faculty, but I wanted to go actually in the direction they're going now, but I couldn't get the faculty. I did a complete change of the first-year program. It just made more sense to me-doing this whole thing as sort of Bauhaus just didn't make sense to me, so I changed it, and it lasted about four or five years. And the new dean came; he had some good ideas and I just loved him, but I decided I didn't want to be in the transition because there might be more friction than I needed at that point and I needed to get out.

So he gave me a furlough without having any prerequisite, and he did the same thing for Hiroko.

MS. FISCH: So you lucked out in a way.

Did you find it exciting to be an administrator, or was it just more frustration than challenge?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, after a couple of years in the learning curve-it's a two-year learning curve, I think, to go through two years-two years of routine. You do the same thing. There's recruiting time, there's a graduation time, there's adding new classes, developing a summer program time, meeting with students time. So you develop your yearly schedule. It takes most people two years. The first year you're just fumbling. The dean, who I had, didn't know anything, had been there for 30 years-didn't know anything of how to do a schedule of classes. Our faculty committee had always done it, and I looked at what they were doing and it was a good start, but I disbanded the faculty committee. I disbanded a lot of faculty committees because they weren't doing anything and doing it badly.

MS. FISCH: The time seems to have passed for most large art departments to have the governance in the hands of faculty committees. One, they don't want to spend the time.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That's it exactly.

MS. FISCH: And in some ways I think it's too bad, because they give up a lot of control and a lot of responsibility, but they want the time.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They want the time and they got it.

MS. FISCH: So as long as you have a benevolent administrator who can do that work, it's pretty good. It's when you have a nonbenevolent administrator -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, or incapable.

MS. FISCH: -that it becomes dangerous.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: So in any case it's in new hands and I think they're doing well. In January of 2001-we came here in January of 2002; spent my furlough year, 2002, here, and I have officially been discharged from the University of Michigan. I got my professor emeritus status January 1st of 2003.

MS. FISCH: Congratulations.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And set up a studio in a small room adjacent to my garage. I'm working, trying to establish some sort of more organized jewelry program at the Honolulu Academy of the Arts [Honolulu, HI], [because of support and mentoring from Francis Pickens-a longtime resident and metals person in Hawaii].

MS. FISCH: I think that's a really exciting project that you're undertaking, even though you don't want it to be full time.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I don't want it to be full time. It won't be. I've already laid the law on that, and I'm willing to share responsibility, and there's one person who seems to be-I could work with, the director of education [Carol Kwehok], and this other person [Carole Sakihara], who will be graduating [from Indiana University], who is an older person.

So that and maybe teaching a class during one of my long visits to Hiroko in Japan while she's working for her uncle in the pachinko business.

MS. FISCH: Well, I wanted to ask you about workshops and intensive short courses, which you've always taught, at least you did for years, around the country and around the world, and that teaching is very different from university teaching.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's more exhausting. It's more intense. It's kind of fun that you can do something in that short a time. And at one point Hiroko and I had set the metal program up that way. We had a series of workshops within a semester. It was three weeks of doing this, with a project at the end, start over again into another direction.

MS. FISCH: But three weeks is a fairly long time compared to most workshops. Sometimes they're only two days.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, but you only need-you only meet six hours a week. And to get students to work outside of class now is a bear. They still put in a lot of time, but sometimes instructors don't realize that they are beginners, and I've made that mistake before and expect a little too much, and then you get crap.

MS. FISCH: Well, when you teach these sort of technical workshops, which is mostly what workshops are these days, do you find that rewarding or just exhausting?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's rewarding, because it's a new location and different faces and it's good to do from a well, it's sort of self-promotion, so it's good for your ego in that regard, and you meet new people.

MS. FISCH: And do you think you'll continue to do that? If invitations come, are you open to those, or are you tired of doing them?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I don't know how many people are going to hire me to fly from Honolulu.

So the last workshop I did-well, actually it was only a lecture-was at Wayne State University just before I left, when a new faculty member was hired. So he invited me, because he knew I was leaving and he thought it would be good if I gave a lecture, and my niece [Shayna Pijanowski] was actually in the class, so she was curious to see what I was talking about.

MS. FISCH: Now I'd like to talk a little bit about the research part of your teaching and your own work, because it's always been a significant part of both-both your own art and your teaching. Starting in the early '70s it centered on traditional Japanese metalworking techniques, and what drew you to that area of investigation? Was it just because you were in Japan, or were you interested before?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. Hiroko-between her first and second year at Cranbrook she had taken-because the students prior to me arriving at Cranbrook were asking her questions about Japanese metalwork, which she didn't know anything about actually, so she went back between her first and second year to Japan and studied some of these techniques and then taught it to us. And I did a couple pieces with inlay in it, so I learned how to do crude things. After I got to Geidai, I learned to define or refine those techniques.

MS. FISCH: I wanted to know why you were interested in those, other than that you were in Japan.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, we were both interested, and it was just maybe happenstance that the connection was with Mr. Hiramatsu, who was in the chokin rather than the other raising area or the casting, because the casting, whether a sculpture or craft, is one section. The raising of small or large or sculpture was here, and Hiramatsu was in the area where -

MS. FISCH: They did surface decoration.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -surface decoration basically, yeah.

MS. FISCH: And did you see at the very beginning that these were things that would have an impact on your work, or did you see a place for them in your work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I saw, after I learned how to do a few techniques, that I could apply them. And I had always been interested in printmaking, which was two-dimensional, basically a two-dimensional media, and I wound up applying that line structure, and some of the first pieces echoed some of the things that I had been doing in printmaking years before, that is, this creation of a series of lines to create a graphic sense of motion.

MS. FISCH: So there was some connection already for you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right.

MS. FISCH: And in printmaking you actually make lines either by cutting or by etching, and with inlay you could then fill up those lines and -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right, just did contrasting.

MS. FISCH: -get back to the surface.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Plus the fact that I always remembered my lessons in niello through Fike. Because it was an etching, niello theory was developed.

MS. FISCH: Talk a little bit about niello. Just explain a bit what that is.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, niello is a sulfide, a very low-melting sulfide, not a true metal, that is comprised of small amounts of silver and copper and lead and flowers of a sulfur. They're melted together to create a new product, which is used traditionally to fill in either chased or etched negative areas. And it's a blue-black in color. So that always intrigued me, that I saw shakudo inlay into silver.

MS. FISCH: And what's shakudo?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Shakudo is a Japanese alloy consisting of two to up to 12 percent pure gold with copper. After it's boiled in the patina agent, called rokusho, which is a Japanese formula for turning different alloys different shades of black, brown, orange-so all that came into play to produce objects that were graphic in nature. There's very little relief. So most of the work in the beginning were domed or pieces soldered to flat -

MS. FISCH: Were they mostly jewelry-scale pieces, or larger?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: In the beginning they were primarily jewelry. Then I did make a few pieces of hollowware with inlay into them.

MS. FISCH: The research and work in mokume gane was probably the one that had the most significant impact on the metalsmithing community, not only in the United States but ultimately in other places around the world. And artists were eager to learn the technique and you had found out how to do it. You and Hiroko were both very generous in sharing that information through workshops and demonstrations. I know you used mokume gane and you still do in your work, so how important was that investigation?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, mokume gane is wood grain and metal. Wood has always fascinated me in grain structure, so it was an ideal format. As a kid I did wood burning, and I remember those days of burning wood. Make the grain, the sapwood come up and the heartwood is denser, so it doesn't-now wait a minute. Was it opposite?

MS. FISCH: I don't know. I'm not a wood person.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The sapwood burns faster than the heartwood, so it's lower than heartwood. Okay.

So all of that came together, all these memories of childhood, studying with Phil Fike, studying in Japan, having really developed a sensibility for this wood-grained pattern, and I liked it because it was so Zen you couldn't really plan it. It was so random, at least the way we were doing it in the beginning.

MS. FISCH: In the beginning was different from how you do it now. In the beginning you soldered things together.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I did my M.F.A. thesis on soldered mokume at Cranbrook. And I did a whole bunch of samples.

MS. FISCH: Now, do they do that in Japan? Do they actually solder?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I don't believe-well, there is -

MS. FISCH: Or was that your adaptation?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, that was-that was-the soldering came from Robert von Neumann's book [*Design and Creation of Jewelry*. Radnor, PA: Chilton, 1967].

MS. FISCH: But it was a non-Japanese adaptation?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: He thought-he went to Japan after the Second World War, maybe 1950. He saw some work in mokume and he tried to-he didn't understand how it was done, so he thought it was soldered. And then he-he did some research himself, and from the research he found everybody else thought it was soldered, from the Japan Society, the turn of the century they were writing technical papers and they were saying soldered.

MS. FISCH: So it wasn't anything you improvised.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, but then Robert thought, just took it for the word that it must be soldered. He thought it was, and they said it was, so he wrote me up some instructions. I got his first edition of the book when I was at Wayne State University, just how to do it briefly.

MS. FISCH: This is von Neumann?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Robert von Neumann, *Design and Creation of Jewelry*. First edition.

So I was searching around for a thesis in my second year, because I was just basically doing raising and doing some sculpture work, and I did some-there were the sterling competitions. I went to-right-being tongue-in-cheek basically all my life, loving pop and funk art, I did a silver vessel called *Captain Whizbang's Interstellar Pot*. It basically was a really odd-shaped pot that I raised and fabricated. It had a pistol grip, had three spouts, had a

lid, and when you poured it, the fluid would come out and joined about three or four inches from the spout. I don't know if I planned it or not, but it worked. And I entered it and it got rejected because it was too far out.

Three or four years later there was another one that looked very similar to mine but had a ceramic handle, pistol like a flame, and it had this big long-handled the same attitude, let's say -

MS. FISCH: But didn't it have to be in silver to go into that silversmith competition?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but a few years later they started to-it was all sterling silver.

MS. FISCH: Oh, it was. The one you made was silver?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was about this big. Yeah, it was huge. Silver was so cheap.

MS. FISCH: Right, \$2 an ounce.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And Mr. Thomas had it in 24 x 24, any gauge you wanted, and he bought it by the pound. I mean, he got it in really good prices and he passed it at exactly the same price. We were getting it at half the market price because he had gotten it so cheap and he had stocked it. He had some stuff that was laying around for 20 years, I think, but he sold it for what he bought it. He was a tool master and metal seller; that was his job. He always said that.

MS. FISCH: So you first did this solder mokumem and then when did you switch to doing diffusion?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Okay, the soldered mokumem I did tubing and drew it. I did everything conceivable with brass, copper, and sterling silver, just soldering it together, and most of the time just using silver solder as the color.

We went to Japan, came back from Japan teaching at Purdue for a couple of years, went to Japan. Oh, at one time we had gone to a traditional Japanese metal exhibition at one of the department stores, and we saw this amazing thing by Norio Tamagawa. I said, "That's mokume, but where's the soldering?" They were raised vessels. My whole thesis was based on the fact you couldn't do much with this sheet of metal because it would break up, but I did some raising and chasing but not much with the solder stuff. So I said -

MS. FISCH: How do they do that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And Hiroko and I just, were just flabbergasted, and I said, "Hiroko, check with Hiramatsu, who did this?" He knew the technique. And it's actually the raiser knew the technique at Geidai, but I didn't know that, and he wasn't teaching it but he had done it.

But we found Norio Tamagawa and he invited us to Akita, a town of metalworkers to do all the raising of tea ceremony pots and decorative objects, but now it's basically a culinary, cutlery, stainless steel, almost everything, and copper-clad stuff.

But his family still does, with a couple of others, traditional Japanese raising of hot water kettles used in the Japanese tea ceremony of copper with the spout in one piece.

MS. FISCH: Oh, that the spout comes right out of the body, without any joint.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The body. Their family is a designation for that and a stipend [from the Japanese government] so they can keep up that. So they did that and a number of other very traditional things, and they were known, the family was known, and Norio, was the seventh, I believe, generation. And Hiroko probably could tell you more in detail of how he got started. He got started because someone else in town was doing it and taught him, and he developed it on weekends-he was doing it as a hobby. He never really sold the stuff; he just did it as a hobby, and then he entered an exhibit, because he was a craftsman. But he entered a competition once and it was recognized, and he started doing really nice things, nice, very beautiful forms, and he started thinking of patterns and doing different things. And there were a couple other people; so we studied with him and then visited two other people. Then we wrote an article for, at that time *American Craft* [Hiroko Sato Pijanowski and Eugene Pijanowski. "Workshop: Mokume-Gane," *Craft Horizons*, February 1978] about these three people, one Norio, one who sort of fused everything together and it was hit and miss, and Mr. [Gyokumei] Shindo, who did it in a traditional way, but he was doing big things. He would piece them together primarily and make very large objects.

So we studied with Norio Tamagawa for four days. Most of it is cleaning the metal, getting it prepared, according to his very methodical way of getting it flat and clean. I mean, it was just two days of sanding, filing and sanding. And he had discs. Instead of squares, because eventually you would have to cut off the corners to raise them. So that was his innovation, because Mr. Shindo still did big squares.

But the binding wire thing and heavy metal steel plate on the top and a heavy copper plug of the same dimension on the bottom that would diffuse, and the steel wouldn't because it's coated with probably yellow ochre, not white out, yellow ochre, so it wouldn't fuse. Actually sometimes it did fuse, but in any case, so we did a billet with him there, and then he demonstrated the start of the raising process and showed us different things he had in the process.

So we went back to Purdue. My first thought, because at that point I didn't have a forge, my first thought was there was a forge there but I wasn't interested in the forge so I gave it away. So we come back and we had this really good lab electric kiln. I mean, it was a really good one, well calibrated, and so we did a couple trials and melted things until we got the calibrations, because we didn't know what we were doing and how long it had to be in at what temperature for heat soaking. That was the key.

So the beginning was making a few using that method. I had gotten some ceramic cones, plus or minus one degree, that would help me also to see how the heat distribution was in the kiln. Of course, in a kiln you can't open a door. All the heat, it was bad enough to peek in and then all the reflection -

MS. FISCH: Against the metal you can't really see it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -and against the metals, right.

And I knew about heat treating, and right across the street in this technical park that we lived in was a heat-treating plant. So I think it was Hiroko went across the street and told them what we were doing and they said, "Oh, you put it in a stainless steel envelope," which was another method now being taught, but we never pursued the electric or the steel envelope, even though we got results, and we had one of our students who was a metallurgy student did all the micro-photography for us and gave us advice.

We got a forge and we started doing it the traditional way using coke, and we managed to get coke from blacksmiths in the area.

So in hindsight maybe we should have pushed the electric kiln or this other method.

MS. FISCH: Instead of the forging.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because I know about-because this heat-treating place was using argon to push the oxygen out, along with the envelope of stainless steel.

MS. FISCH: And that's what you just used recently with Ian Ferguson at Melbourne [Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Australia].

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Except Ian was using pressure and they were just using heat.

MS. FISCH: Well, I was going to ask you about the sort of short-term workshops that you have taken at various times in your career, like the five-week course in blacksmithing at the Turley Forge in Santa Fe. That must have made a big difference for you.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, because I wanted to learn blacksmithing. I knew that I needed to know more about it, because at that point I didn't have a forge. No, I think maybe we had gotten a forge, but then I-then Hiroko was already teaching, had just started in '78, and Wendel Heers, who had just stepped into the associate deanship after Hiroko took his job, was going to go, too. He was always fascinated by blacksmithing, and we were talking one day and he said, "I'd like to go to a workshop, but it would be good if I went with someone." I said, "I'll go with you." And then another student came along. So the three of us drove out there; we took the five-week workshop in blacksmithing, because I really wanted to learn more about forge welding, which Jack Turley was supposed to have been the master of.

MS. FISCH: And was that experience important? I mean, did it impact your work in mokume?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because I learned how to keep a fire going better, how to start a fire, keep it going, and really what's in that fire. And then from there we took what we learned from Norio and what we learned from some students a little later from Carbondale, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, in building a kiln, in effect, around the fire.

MS. FISCH: And so how long did you continue to work with mokume, or are you still using it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I've still got billets from years ago.

MS. FISCH: But do you still make billets?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I haven't made-the last billets I made were last fall in Melbourne at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Melbourne, Australia. With Ian Ferguson, who was a student of mine years prior at a workshop in Perth, who then went to Melbourne to get his M.A. and then later went to the Royal College to get his doctorate in mokume. And he developed a different method.

MS. FISCH: Are you still interested in using it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah. I mean, I'm interested in actuality, when I find time of going back to mokume, using some of the scraps I have in gold and in different materials and in combining them in new ways.

MS. FISCH: Sort of the patchwork idea, you think?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The patchwork idea.

MS. FISCH: Were you pleased to see how many other people started using mokume as the result of your research?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was very pleasing, because it taught me a little bit also. Every workshop I learned something. I was of the opinion that from novices-you can learn more from beginning students than advanced students as a teacher. A novice, a beginner makes so many mistakes and it works. And you scratch your head and think, I've got to remember that. They're not afraid to try anything. And maybe that is a good way of teaching in essence. I used to teach my beginning class-they'd walk in not expecting to do anything the first day. I do what I usually, everybody does, but I would keep them the whole period and they would make a scribe the first day, so they'd learn how to file, grind, file, sand, polish, harden, and temper, and make their own scribe in the first day. It worked and everybody did it. I mean, the only hard part is tempering and that's always hard for everybody. Half the people would do it the first time; the rest of the people would take 10 times, but that's just life.

MS. FISCH: As a result of all your research and workshops and so on, lots of people use Mokume and, in fact, there's even somebody who produces it commercially now-Philip Baldwin.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Phil Baldwin, who was a student at Carbondale [Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL] when we visited.

MS. FISCH: People don't have to know how to make it anymore, so a lot of people use it, and some people don't use it terribly well.

Do you have any regrets about the way it's been commercialized, or you just think it's a great material and people do what they want.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's a great material that just hasn't been explored enough. I mean, George Sawyer, I think, is doing the best commercial things with it out of Minneapolis. I like his work the best and then, of course, the person that just came out with a book -

MS. FISCH: Steve Midgett [*Mokume Gane: A Comprehensive Survey*. Earthshine Press: 2000].

MR. PIJANOWSKI: -Midgett is doing some interesting things.

MS. FISCH: For a while when you went to craft fairs, there would be so much done with pattern metal, a lot of it really not very good, and you think, oh, I hope this goes away soon.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, right, it's people -

MS. FISCH: But when you see really good work, then it's very rewarding I think.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think more could be done, like anything. I mean, people, they call me and ask me how to do it, because they tried it with brass and copper and silver, and I say, "Well, first of all, forget that damn brass." That's the worst metal. Use something like a little more copper or something.

MS. FISCH: Now, do you have any current research projects underway? Are there other processes that you are looking at or thinking about?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I bought a couple months ago a brush plater.

MS. FISCH: What do you want to do with that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's good for touch-up work, number one. I could use it to-if I'm soldering something, I can

brush plate a silver-soldered joint to camouflage something, and in Japan they've been doing it for years. Example: The first time we ran across it, maybe 20 years ago, was an electroformed Mt. Fuji with brush electroplating done by this little old man who used to specialize in doing coloration for traditional pots, like doing rokusho, because in Japan, [craft work] is divided into different shops. And his business was going down, and he sort of picked up on this brush plating. He was doing plating, and then he moved into this brush plating. He found that he could-and that's not new because I remember when I was a kid brush plating chrome with this little kit that I bought from *Popular Science* magazine, or something, and the chrome-I did a lousy job but the basic principle of baby shoes being bronzed and bronze plating of-or not bronze plating but chrome plating of chrome-plated objects, bumpers primarily, by the industry.

MS. FISCH: But does brush plating put a heavy enough deposit on something? I mean, my experience has been that it's pretty weak.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's surface, but it could be two or three times thicker than the regular plating, because it is -

MS. FISCH: So you just keep adding layer on layer?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Just keep on layering.

MS. FISCH: And I guess that would give you a whole range of tones also.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: You can, because you can dial the amperage. Before, I was doing it with just a car battery, and it worked for bronze shoes. Most of the people in the old days were just using car batteries, 12 volt, and baby shoes gave enough of a resistance to do this yellow color of copper, basically copper.

MS. FISCH: So what metals can you plate? I mean, certainly silver and gold, but nickel and so on?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, you can plate nickel, anything nonferrous.

MS. FISCH: You can even get a bigger range then.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. You could do ferrous if you copper plate first.

So in any case, this Japanese guy was doing clouds in white. He had a couple shades of blue. I mean -

MS. FISCH: It sounds like something that people were doing for a while using titanium coloration. Brush plating.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Brush anodizing, plating, whatever you want to call it, it's the same basic idea.

And I remember visiting-I did a workshop at Jack Prip's [Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI] and I stayed overnight at his house and he showed me an electroform from a raised-electroform piece from a raised piece that was done at the turn of the century, the electroform.

MS. FISCH: Oh yes, because it was started in the 19th century.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and it was perfect, I mean absolutely perfect and no nodules. I've got it going doing my objects with no nodules when I didn't want nodules; it's just slower is all.

MS. FISCH: You just have to do it slower.

Have you ever visited the electroforming lab at, I think, the British Museum [London, England]. I think that's where Stanley Lechtzin did some of his initial research.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I've never seen it.

MS. FISCH: I haven't seen the facility, but I know it's there or was.

So this brush plating is something you're going to explore a little bit?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the brush plating a little bit.

MS. FISCH: Anything else?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think primarily I'll be doing more mokume. I've got a large sheet of sterling silver, because I want to do a raised part, but if you're going to raise something, you might as well make it out of something worthwhile. But at the same time I'll be adding mixed metals to it.

MS. FISCH: It sounds exciting. And you think you're going to work sort of large scale? Well, I mean a modest

scale.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I've always been-when people ask me the scale, I like to say I'm a human and I like to do things on a human scale. I like to do things that I can carry like this. We once did a surfboard of high-density foam core that was six feet. You may have seen it in our house in Georgetown. It was sitting in a corner, looked like a surfboard leaning against the wall. Or maybe it was after, but in any case I got the second part, the small surfboard emerging from the wall and the bigger surfboard, and I called it *Intergalactic Surfboards*. And the design came from a Shinto priest's hat, which is sort of like that. And I had it carved in wood [by Todd Mathews] and I was going to make a piece of jewelry, and Hiroko said, "God, that would be good big." And I said, "Yeah, that would be good." We made one this big, and then I said, well, and I've always been fascinated with corners. Not many people do the little corners. And then this other that leaned against this wall, and this one came down almost touching, like Michelangelo's *David*.

MS. FISCH: Oh yes. No, on the Sistine Chapel.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and so I always thought of that.

MS. FISCH: That's not David, that's God.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That's God, that's right. But in any case Adam and God. For some reason -

In any case, I got the small part. The day we moved, I was deliberating. The morning we were going to leave [for Hawaii], I had an hour and I was walking through the house, our bags are packed, sitting on the porch for one of my students to pick us up to drive us to the airport. And I was deciding what to do with this, because I hadn't put it in, because I couldn't; no one seemed to want it. Okay, so I had a piece of real thin copper that I sort of formed over the tip and I was going to copper it by hammering nails into it, like a lot of African stuff is done, but I never got around to it. And so I picked it up, carried it into my woods in a ravine, and propped it, and then I took a bunch of pictures of it in the snow.

So I don't know if the new people when they moved in, if it's still out there or not -

MS. FISCH: But at least you have a record of it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I have a record of it. But that was the largest thing we ever did.

MS. FISCH: And do you like working large?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I would like to work large in Styrofoam and gold plate. Or carve wood and do more of that. That was interesting. But Hiroko was doing most of that, because I was so wrapped up in the administration and every other diversion that kept me awake at night. Let's say I didn't have much energy these last couple years.

MS. FISCH: Well, maybe in our next conversation we'll talk a little bit more about the specific kinds of artworks that you've done in the past and have been doing.

[Audio break.]

This is Arline Fisch interviewing Eugene Pijanowski at his home and studio in Honolulu on May 14, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number three.

Gene, I'd like to go back to a few things in the teaching category that we maybe didn't talk about yesterday. I was interested in hearing a bit about your Fulbright year, or was it a half year?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: A half year.

MS. FISCH: In Austria, and how that was.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The Fulbright in Vienna, Austria, at the Hochschule.

MS. FISCH: Hochschule fur Angewandte Kunst [University of Applied Arts] was in what year?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That was in 1985, from January through June. During that time I gave demonstrations on toolmaking but most specifically on mokume gane. They had a forge in a basement tucked away and we got that going. No one did anything with their billets.

MS. FISCH: Did the students participate? I mean, I had been there two years before, and I found that initially the students, the first week they were there, and then they just kind of drifted away.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That was very true. There were a couple of them that were very interested, because they had been doing blacksmithing with a blacksmith outside of Vienna.

MS. FISCH: Well, of course, all the ironwork in Vienna. There's a huge potential employment for people who know how to do that.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right. Well, in any case there were a few interested. We did a few billets and that was the end of that. And like you said, the first week I gave a presentation revolving around Hiroko's and my work, and that was well attended. I did a couple of demonstrations, and then about halfway through that semester I did the mokume demonstration, but no one did anything.

I was there dutifully almost five days a week, because I didn't bring many tools along and I started doing nunome zogan and-well, actually I was doing damascene, mild steel, so I did a whole series of objects-that was quite interesting; I wish I would have followed up on it-and did some carving a la Hiramatsu on solid blocks of brass.

But it was a disappointment. No one was around, or very few people were around. They seemed to be either working or going to another school across town in architecture, but I did socialize with three or four of them on a regular basis. They were very good. I still have contact with two of them to this day.

It was strange. At the end of the semester it was determined whether some people would go or have to repeat the year.

MS. FISCH: There seemed to be no failure; you either repeated or you didn't.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, and some people were repeating for a couple years until they ran out of the government monies. Most of them were subsidized.

MS. FISCH: Yes, they were subsidized for X number of years. I can't remember the number.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right, and most of them milked it dry.

MS. FISCH: Now, did you have much contact with Carl Aubock?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Very, very little other than occasionally we would go visit a gallery en masse. I think that only happened about three times.

MS. FISCH: Did he come every day?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: Oh, the year I was there, he dutifully reported in every day but only for about an hour.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, he was-yeah. Yeah, he did come in almost every day, but he wasn't there so as far as I was concerned. He was just seeing if the place didn't burn down overnight, I think, and maybe that was his obligation.

But in any case and then we had a get-together with some students from Munich.

MS. FISCH: From Hermann Jünger?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Hermann Jünger and his students came, and then we had a night out together, but other than that the instructors were very distant from us, distant from the students. There was not a good relationship I think.

MS. FISCH: Did you work at all with Josef [Symon]?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Josef didn't speak German and he didn't speak English. So it was very difficult. He was Czech. And the students were just always frustrated because he couldn't speak German and he couldn't speak English, and he was always trying but he never quite got across to the students.

A nice man, but in any case I didn't have much contact with him other than he helped me move to an apartment in a working class area that was owned by a sponsor, I think, of the school. And that was about it.

MS. FISCH: Did you have anything at all to do with the conservation department, which was upstairs?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, accidentally I discovered it. I didn't even know it was there. One of the instructors came down because she had heard I was there, from another student, of course. Communication was not very good.

Then I went up there and she showed me around the studio and we never got back together again. I was very interested in going up there, but every time I'd go up there, either it was locked or no one was around. I wanted to do something in terms of gold leaf at least, but that didn't work out, but I was going into school almost every day and it was like almost a job.

MS. FISCH: Did you get your work done? I mean, did you get some work done?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I did. I was working every day for three or four hours and trying to help students. I did a lot of experimenting because they had a very good acid room with different types of etching to do-well, I never did any pieces with it, but I always wanted to try electro-etching, and it gave me time to play and I developed a little technique there, which I took back and taught my students, which actually I learned from the second edition of von Neumann's Design and Creation of Jewelry.

MS. FISCH: Were you there in the spring or the fall?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I don't know if they called it spring or not because it was cold. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: Well, I mean, did you go in the autumn and then stay till winter?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I came in winter and left in June.

MS. FISCH: That's what I did. I went in February.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I guess I did get there the first of February when school started and stayed on for a couple weeks afterwards, and I drove with a couple friends and a couple of students and their girlfriend, a girlfriend's grandmother's Peugeot- they drove me to Munich. I packed up, went to Munich, spent some time, three or four days there, and then flew to-managed to turn in my ticket, because Hiroko was going to join me in Vienna but her father was very sick, so I went from Munich to Tokyo.

MS. FISCH: So in general it wasn't a great experience?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was not a great experience, but I did learn something about another educational system. These people, students took advantage of the system, as did instructors.

MS. FISCH: Yeah. It was very disturbing to me. I had a whole different anticipation from having met Carl Aubock, who was head-he was the professor in the metals department, although he was an architect, and so I had got a whole different impression of what was going to happen from Carl, and then I found that the students had no respect for him or for anybody. They were very cynical. I found it a very disturbing experience.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They were, because they felt they were being always shortchanged, and the students-graduate students-it was an undergraduate program in a way.

MS. FISCH: But the students were older.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: All of them were older. And they expected more.

MS. FISCH: And did you meet any Viennese metalworkers? I mean, did you meet Peter Skubic, for example? Because he was at the school when I was there.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, he wasn't there, but I met him because he was always coming back to Vienna to a couple of openings. There was a very important opening at the metal museum-not the metal museum but at the museum of contemporary work at that time. It was titled-it was 1985. It was an international jewelry show.

MS. FISCH: And Peter probably was involved in organizing that.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that's why I met him.

MS. FISCH: And did you get to meet Inge Asenbaum at the gallery [Asenbaum Gallery, Vienna]?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I visited her a couple of times, and I actually left some of my work with her, and she sold a couple of the pieces that I had done in Vienna, the damascene; I call them overlay into a ferrous base.

And, yeah, she was very nice. I went to her house for dinner once and visited her gallery two or three times.

MS. FISCH: She had a wonderful collection of jewelry, including Wiener Werkstatt and Josef Hoffman.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, the old stock, yeah. It was nice to visit the museums there to see some really fine work of that period.

MS. FISCH: So did that experience have any effect on how you were going to teach or any effect on your work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not much on my work, but it showed me what I shouldn't do; I should be around more. But after that I went into the administration. I did teach for the first couple of years [at Ann Arbor] on a part-time basis out of guilt, and then one of the deans said, "Why are you still teaching? You've got too much to do." So I stopped teaching.

MS. FISCH: But you have done other projects with students. Tell me about those.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, but some of the projects ranged from-I believed I could get the most out of students if they saw me at work, saw me developing an idea, and I would talk about how I developed an idea. Of course, it was somewhat canned. It was not really how I worked. But I think they appreciated that and they realized that I was human and everything doesn't turn out right every time.

MS. FISCH: Did you work in the studio at school?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I worked in the studio at school. I would try to-sometimes I worked in the class when it was-people were just busy, and I felt I was getting in their way towards the end of the semester sometimes, so I'd pick up a hammer and start working and actually they would ask me more questions if I was working, rather than standing around looking over their shoulder. And I think I garnered a little bit more respect from them because of that. They saw me as a human being as opposed to an honorific professor type, because I've never really believed that. I believe that I was never really taught; I taught myself. It's just the times when I went to school, there was not a lot of instruction during the '60s. I mean, you just sort of had a couple demonstrations, and in drawing you'd draw and sometimes the faculty never come back and sometimes not. I mean, they were out doing something. It was just the ways of the times, it seemed, and not in all cases but in some cases.

MS. FISCH: Was that true of Richard Thomas? Hiroko seemed to think that that was his style.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, Richard Thomas spent 99 percent of-well, maybe 90 percent-of his time either somewhere on campus, because he was dean of students for a while, or he was in his supply shed, as he called it.

MS. FISCH: And what about Phillip Fike? Did he have a more hands-on kind of teaching?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, he had more of a hands-on, but being the only advanced student at the undergraduate level it was difficult, because students learned from students. I think that's the key, and if you can establish your critical mass of students who are reasonably civil to one another, they can get a lot done, and you try to stay away from the commotion, let them solve the problems.

MS. FISCH: Have you done specific projects with students where you actually took a group of students or took a student and worked on a project?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, well, my last year at the University of Michigan we did a Damascus steel project, and we all worked on the forging and the forge welding of the basic billet. And so we worked there. Working as a team in that instance just makes a lot of sense, someone manning the hammer and someone holding the hot iron. So that was good, because you need to-and that taught them how to work, because if you didn't have it flat on the anvil, or you didn't trap the metal between the hammer and the anvil, something would happen. Either it would bounce and someone would get burned or hurt. So there were a few burns, but no one really got hurt, because they realized they had to work together and they had to pay attention. Sometimes it's hard to get through to some students with earphones on. I mean, in trying to do some technique, no, no, that's not going to work, guys. Sometimes you need to hear that hammer hit.

So in that instance there was a lot of group. Then we did a project for the Habitat for Humanity auction, where the theme that year was birdhouses. So to show the students I did eight and they only had to do one. A couple of them actually did two or three, because they were pretty simple, but the principle there was it could be ornamental, it could be functional, but it had to look like a birdhouse.

So they took all kinds of different approaches. Actually, one student was working with wire, and I showed him Arline Fisch's book on wirework and they did a birdhouse [*Textile Techniques in Metal for Jewelers, Sculptors, and Textile Artists*. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1975] like a wren house all out of wire, I mean, and it was a first time and it was beautiful, weighed a ton, because we used very thick wire, but there was a wide range of things.

I did one-inch silver birdhouses that I cast, and I did five or six of those. I did, actually, a couple of interesting what I call fused plastic boxes that turned out to be very cubist in a way and organic at the same time, because plastic would melt and bubble and do crazy things, but it really worked out, some of the best work I did in the

last couple of years I think, and a couple were functional.

MS. FISCH: Well, it sounds like you had a very good relationship with students. Did that just come naturally or was that something you worked at deliberately?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I never really did work at it other than I figured that if they knew I was practicing, I was doing my work and I was willing to share with them my mistakes and discoveries, I think I garnered more respect from them, and I think that's the key in teaching. If a student respects the teacher, they can still call me Gene or call me mister, it doesn't matter to me. It's really up to them.

But the respect comes in a lot of different forms. Asking a question that it's not a dumb question.

MS. FISCH: You were talking to me a little bit about the exchange opportunity you arranged, organized as an administrator I suppose, between the University of Michigan and Japan, and I thought that was a really interesting opportunity.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I started an exchange program between Seika, Kyoto Seika Art University in Kyoto, Japan, and the University of Michigan School of Art. We exchanged students alternate summers. Between, oh, 12 to 20 students would come to the University of Michigan. We would usually send six to 10 to Seika.

And at Seika the students could work in four-well, almost any discipline. There they had a class in Japanese comic book illustration, manga.

MS. FISCH: And that's interesting, because it's so prevalent in contemporary Japanese painting, that comic book imagery.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, and the movies and videos, the anime, the animation, I mean, I would guess any young male, primarily, loves that. Like I was drawing stills, they're very influenced in this field, this fast action, violent, which is almost normal, I guess, cartoon.

MS. FISCH: So this was an opportunity for the students from Michigan to do something-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: To take that or ceramics or printmaking, Japanese painting -

MS. FISCH: Now, were these special classes set up just for the American students?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yes.

MS. FISCH: So they were taught in English.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They knew ahead of time who was interested in what. So what we would do, Takeshi Takahara, who teaches printmaking at the University of Michigan, and I got it going, and he would go there with our students every other summer.

We would get together and we'd advertise in January that we were going to do this. We'd have two different meetings, one on alternate days for the students so it wouldn't interfere with their schedules, and give little short presentations, slides and information about what possible classes they could take and what those classes would consist of, and then we'd ask them to make a \$100 deposit if they were interested.

MS. FISCH: Now, was this self-funded by the students or did the university provide some money?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: The university, yeah, the \$100 was just a commitment. They had paid \$100 and their own transportation; that was it. Room and board and the classes were taken care of by us and Seika. It was a great deal. Of course, you had to beat the bushes. So we had a couple presentations, and then 20 would sign up, and we told them \$100 is not refundable, because students who sign up and back out, I mean, they're always shopping. But in any case we would add an extra \$500 to put up by the scholarship committee because four or five wouldn't-and they'd fight to want to get the money back, but we had it on paper, nonrefundable, and with their signature. After the first year we learned all these things.

So in any case then we would arrange a group rate, and they'd fly over together and get picked up in Osaka and Seika and brought -

MS. FISCH: Seika is in Kyoto proper?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's up in the hills above Kyoto.

MS. FISCH: And so they have student housing?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Student housing right on campus, right. They have one building that's six stories just devoted to weaving.

MS. FISCH: I knew about the fiber program; I just didn't know about the other areas.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that's probably the best.

So in any case, Takeshi and usually one of the faculty members would go.

MS. FISCH: But you didn't go?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I went just twice during that time, for maybe a week. They stayed for sometimes four weeks, sometimes it was six weeks, depending on what Seika wanted to do.

MS. FISCH: So it was more than a two-week program?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was a two-week at our end, because part of their coming to the United States to do a two-week here-well, usually they would spend a week in California and play, then two weeks with us, and then they would go to New York for a week. And then while the Seika students were at the University of Michigan, they would have choices, and we had summer school going on at the same time, so it was-we learned after the first summer metal was the only class that we really needed to staff because everybody wanted to take metal.

MS. FISCH: Why is that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Because they didn't have metals there. And after the first summer everybody-and we luckily hired David LaPlantz and the first summer he taught it. They had such a great time and came away with so much stuff in two weeks that two years later the international director at Seika said, you've got to get David back again; they just want to take David, David, David. So he continued on for about three more times. And so David was a great instructor, a lot of energy, very personable.

MS. FISCH: And would you be in town when that was going on or not necessarily?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Sometimes-not necessarily. I was most of the time in my office and I would drop by, but that was-no, just part of the time. Mostly I was gone. I would be taking my vacation about that time. After it got going, after everything got going, the spring term, the summer workshops, then I would take my vacation.

MS. FISCH: Well, it sounds like a wonderful project.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was, because then after that some of our students then asked for longer stays at Seika, and we arranged six months or one year, and then we found out from Seika that our students could apply for Monbusho [Monbukagakusho Scholarship, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology, Government of Japan].

MS. FISCH: What's that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's basically a full ride for six months or a year. It's a grant from the Japanese government to do research or travel. So they used the money to go to Seika and study for an extended period of time, all expenses plus a stipend every month. I mean, it was great. They got to travel in Japan. Some stayed on for a second year.

MS. FISCH: And if they stayed during the year, did they have to learn Japanese?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: If they were going to go on Monbusho, they would have to take-I think they had to take at least two semesters of Japanese or more, and the University of Michigan has one of the best language schools around, especially in Asian. They in the Second World War had one of the best. I think it was-Yale was the other one maybe.

MS. FISCH: So it was possible.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was possible, because they had to pass this preliminary test in order to get the grant, but it was pretty easy, because I looked at it. I think I would have passed it.

MS. FISCH: Well, it sounds like a wonderful opportunity that you provided to the students. Is there anything else in the teaching area that we haven't covered that you'd like to talk about?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, other than that students were the most important aspect of being at the university. The rest was just superficial, as far as I was concerned. I did my job and I think I did my job well, but in the end you

leave and it continues in its own way. I mean, your influence is in most instances minor, especially in the administration.

MS. FISCH: It sounds like your primary interest was in the student, and sometimes that's not what administration is necessarily about.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I had my choices in terms of designing the job. I had to do a lot of things that some people wouldn't want to do, but my main concern was to recruit the best students I could, because there's always a complaint from the faculty and myself when I was teaching, "Where do these people come from?" So luckily the university draws a lot of applicants, and part of the application process for the School of Art is both-first the academic, and they have to come in with the SATs and the grade point averages that a person coming into any other unit on campus. Well, each unit of campus has its own entry level, and ours was right up there with the humanities, because we decided, the faculty, myself, we decided that it should be as high because we're going to have problems later from administration.

MS. FISCH: Then in addition to that you did portfolio reviews.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I did portfolio reviews of different sites around the country. Luckily, there were a few other faculty who were interested in doing it, so we would be doing 12 to 15 every fall term. I would usually do around six and the faculty would pick up the rest, out of probably-probably it was getting up to close to 30, so we would just pick the locations where we wanted to go.

MS. FISCH: When you talk about numbers of sites, it's places, not numbers of students.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it's wherever the National Portfolio Day Association set up a site, and it's loosely connected with the Department of Education.

MS. FISCH: So was a portfolio review required for entry?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was required for entry. So we had a portfolio appraisal sheet that the appraiser would fill out during or after they saw a student's portfolio. It would basically be on drawing skills, compositional skills, and conceptual skills.

MS. FISCH: It's unusual for a public university art department to do this, isn't it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It is. We are one of the few who go to these, but Wendel Heers started it, probably in the early or mid-'70s, and then I took over in '85.

MS. FISCH: Mostly there would be art schools who would be doing these kind of reviews.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was mostly art schools, art institutes, and of course, their academic requirements were a lot lower. I mean, if they graduated from high school, that would have been enough, but ours were usually-we were taking the top 20 percent, what I would say here are the openers. You have to have taken all these academics in high school that the university requires, the language, math, certain level of math, and all of that, physical and natural sciences, and then have a cumulative grade point average of three-point or more, SAT of 1,200 or more or an ACT-what was the ACT? I forget. But in any case those were basic requirements for admission to the university.

The second part, before you would be fully admitted to the School of Art, if we rejected you, you couldn't go to the university because their level was something that was going by they had openers of 3.25 and 1,200. I brought it down just a little bit, and I could do whatever I wanted to with the dean's approval.

And so we would get, I would say, upwards of 300 applications who met those minimums. We'd get about 500 applications. Met those minimums and then we either meet the students at portfolio days or we'd meet the students in my office.

MS. FISCH: They'd come to the campus?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They'd come to me and about half of them come with parents. And the first thing I would do was ask the student if they wanted their parents in the briefing room. Most students at that stage wouldn't say anything. I mean, they're just shell-shocked, a whole new environment, and parents would come in. And it was a sell, too, at the same time. I was recruiting parents.

MS. FISCH: So how many students are in the School of Art altogether?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We tried to keep it at 500 to 550 undergraduates. To maintain that number, because of graduation, some people just transferring out after the first year-it happens-but we had the lowest attrition rate

around. Once we got them, they stayed. We would have to accept-of 300 academically qualified we would have to accept around 250 to get 125. It was always a numbers game. Some years we'd get too many and some years, because usually the University of Michigan was the second or third on the list. The parents wanted them to come to the university.

MS. FISCH: In case they changed their minds.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: In case they changed their mind, because then they could go to another unit after they were already in the university. So some people used us as a back door. It happens.

So in any case, so we would have 100 to 125. Then the last couple years we tried to bring down the first-year students to 100, and there were already guaranteed spaces. We'd have orientation before school started during the summer for parents and students; so I set that up, where they'd meet me, they would meet a couple faculty members, staff members and have lunch together. I had a good budget. And then the parents would get a tour of the building, and the students would go off with other students, and if a class was on, they could visit. It was three days- two nights and three days. And the parents and students had to pay for it. I mean, we treated them in some ways, cookies and lunch, and the parents, the parents loved us. It was a nice facility. I mean, it wasn't like a lot of the art schools that are sort of grungy. We had some really sharp students. I would have my students-I had maybe half a dozen students that worked for me, maybe 10, 12 hours a week, because they were coming in all times a day. And for a while I was doing Saturday mornings as a convenience during recruiting, fall terms.

MS. FISCH: Well, it sounds like you enjoyed the recruiting aspect.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, it was great. That was the best part of it. Working with the executive committee and its different members. That was not fun. But in any case the recruiting and then, of course, the graduation and we did a lot -

MS. FISCH: Were you in charge of graduation?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Of course. We would have our own graduation, and traditionally someone would be reading the names. And for the first year or two I would read the name, and even though I had it [written] phonetically (my secretary put it phonetically for me), I would still screw up a few. And so I said, no more. I'm embarrassing myself, I'm embarrassing the students, I'm embarrassing the parents and grandparents and whatever, because we have it in our courtyard and about half of the students were out-of-state students, 50/50, that's the split. The state didn't like it, but we did it that way because we could have been 75 percent out of state if we wanted to.

MS. FISCH: Because you wanted good, high-quality students.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And naturally it's normal for a student in Michigan wanting to go someplace else if they could afford it, and Michigan cost the highest of any state institution in Michigan and one of the highest in the nation. So in any case, basically what I did was I would just, rather than line them up in alphabetical order, they'd line up and then I would say to them, okay, here's the deal. You state your name and you have 15 seconds to thank your parents and any grandparents who are here and any faculty member, so that was the best little thing that I ever did for graduation. Everybody loved it. It was because I couldn't pronounce some of their names; so you get around things.

MS. FISCH: You have a nice creative solution to your problem.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I had a great, great secretary [and registrar] for ten years. She was great. Barbara Carr.

MS. FISCH: Why don't we move on to your work. You've always maintained an active studio production.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I've tried to with all the other things going on in my life, yeah.

MS. FISCH: And how did that relate to your teaching and your research and your administration? Were they completely intertwined or did they simply coexist?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They coexisted. Even I tried to get out of the office. I usually would jog during lunch and have an apple, and sometimes I'd jog or walk with students. It was a beautiful river run or walk for an hour every day just to relieve that tension. And getting out of the office into the school halls. I was always wandering around and between appointments, because I did my work on weekends.

MS. FISCH: In your own studio at home.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: At home and at school. I did things at school that I couldn't do at home, basically forging. In the last couple of years I was doing more blacksmithing and a lot of odds and ends, and most of it to support my

teaching.

MS. FISCH: So your primary studio work, for part of the time at least, was really related to teaching?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was directly related to teaching. And I really learned a lot technically. I have a backlog of stuff over the last 15 years that I started and never finished. I'm the worst student in the world for getting enthusiastic and putting something aside. I reach a point in a lot of the work-and even some of the stuff that I finished that I like has never been exhibited.

MS. FISCH: Why is that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Never got around to it.

MS. FISCH: Is it also not important to you to do that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's important to some degree, but Hiroko and I would be doing things and those things have seemed to be more important. So I just would put some of those things aside. Some were finished. I exhibited them at a faculty show or something like that but never in an exhibition outside.

MS. FISCH: I know that a lot of the work that you do with Hiroko and that is collaborative, and we'll talk about that with you together, but there must also be work that you do privately.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah.

MS. FISCH: And how is that different? How is it different physically, and also how is it different emotionally for you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's different from the standpoint that I'm an assembler or rearranger. I put parts together and most are my own parts, because I feel that in order to make unique objects, one has to find new context, new arrangements of forms that one likes, and some of the things that I like other people think are a little quirky, let's say, but I enjoy that quirkiness and I enjoy the mistake, I enjoy the crack, I enjoy-it's almost a Zen quality that I've always had even before I went to Japan. I've always enjoyed the mistake. I've always enjoyed-I figured if I was making something, I'm not a machine, number one, and I've always enjoyed doing a lot of different things and materials in that new arrangement.

MS. FISCH: So what kinds of materials do you particularly like to work with, or doesn't it matter?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I like-I usually stick to metal, but it may be because that's the vocabulary I know. I like plastics and I sometimes incorporate those. I like to incorporate casting and raising, and I made a series of little ink water pots for sumi ink painting that I don't think I've ever exhibited anyplace, but I like them. One has for a handle Hiroko's thumb with a moonstone. And they're a combination cast, fabrication, and they're small, little objects.

I don't know if it's a rule or not, or I just set it up for myself; I try to make three of something, and then I go onto something else.

MS. FISCH: So you work in a series of three?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. The first one is the best anyway, and then by the third one, sometimes they get better, but usually the first one is the best. And I move on.

I did a series of wall hangings that had a lot of carving and inlay, and I did a couple of those. No, actually I did about a half dozen of those.

MS. FISCH: I'm interested in the fact that you don't necessarily care about exhibiting them.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not-well, my ego likes to be out there seen by others, but not in reality, no. It doesn't matter to me, because number one, it more than likely is not going to sell. I won't get any feedback other than the hassle of photographing it, packing it and shipping it, and then trying to get it back.

MS. FISCH: So all those kinds of ancillary things are of little interest.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Very little-unless because both Hiroko and I-Hiroko more than myself-were in this academic publish or perish world.

MS. FISCH: But you didn't necessarily have to participate in that, did you, as an administrator?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, I had to in order to merit review. They looked at my art production.

MS. FISCH: Oh really? And not at your administrative skills.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, that was just part of it. So I had to do double duty.

MS. FISCH: So if you were asked to describe yourself, asked what you do, are you an artist, a sculptor, a metalsmith, a dean, a teacher, or all of those things?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think metalsmith-teacher.

MS. FISCH: That's what you'd like to be known as?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right. I think it's sort of presumptuous for me to call myself an artist.

MS. FISCH: Why?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: To me creativity means to make something unique, something almost original, and other than a genius or God it's not possible.

MS. FISCH: You don't think that a personal perception or a personal approach is a unique thing? I mean, you're a unique person.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, yeah. I think yes and no. I think that a unique piece can be art if it has a certain presence, has a history, and has a future. It really knocks someone's socks off in some way, because the viewer is going to take it differently. So it's unique to one person; it's not unique to the other. One person spends five seconds; one person spends five minutes looking at something.

So uniqueness is a vague thing; it's all in the eyes of the perceiver, sort of trite.

And to be unique, going back to that past and future, there has to be, I think, a history of things, unique objects I guess we could call, that leads to this. It has to be a continuum and I don't think I am in that continuum.

MS. FISCH: You don't think you fit into that continuum?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't think. I'm just too-some people go through life with blinders on. They have a goal. They have an avenue to take, and that avenue takes them to greatness. The other way that could take one to greatness or to create a unique object is what I do. I bounce against these walls and my eyes are wide open, and I'm too heavily influenced by too many things.

MS. FISCH: Well, I suppose you could describe it as being receptive rather than influenced.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Receptive, maybe perceptive, yeah, sure, but I never-I think it has something to do with the intellect, and the intellect means to me a certain quantity and quality of knowledge, which I don't think I am capable of acquiring.

MS. FISCH: You think there's some ultimate body of knowledge that you haven't gotten yet?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, I do not have enough knowledge, enough perception to create something unique. I haven't arrived there yet and I don't know-I don't think actually-I have to be more specific-I don't think that I'll ever arrive at it because I just have too much self-doubt, and that is why I don't finish a lot of things. Ideas are a dime a dozen, like telling it to my students, ideas-you can talk about something all day, but if you don't put it in front of me and it's not up to my standards, it doesn't mean anything to me. And you're a student; I'm the evaluator. So I'm tough on them and I'm tough on myself.

MS. FISCH: How do you feel about your own creative work? Are you satisfied with it or it's never satisfying?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I'm sometimes satisfied but very, very seldom, and usually, as I said somewhat earlier, those things I'm satisfied with, other people just either don't acknowledge-I think it all stems from the standpoint that I've always been searching for an objective critique.

MS. FISCH: From where? From anywhere?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: From anywhere.

MS. FISCH: And you don't think you've ever had that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: When I was in school, it was just like you'd walk in, I'll give you a B, and that was a final

critique.

MS. FISCH: You have been cheated in life, haven't you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I have been cheated, and that's the weakest part of my teaching, too, giving critiques. So I get around it by different ways. I help the students with design and technical aspects to a certain point. Then we have what I call a midpoint review, and at that point they critique each other and I'm only the monitor. And the students have had basic drawing and basic design and most of them are pretty bright and most of them are vocal, and I try to be the monitor. And they come up with some very, very interesting things, or I come in the day with a newspaper clipping that just sort of struck me-nothing to do with art most of the time-and we'll start a conversation and the conversation will evolve into, well, "Okay, Sarah, what do you think of Richard's piece." And I had been giving them beforehand sort of a little list of different types of critiques that I'd lifted from a book, of course, and let's be objective. Let's not talk about technique or how well it was done. There's a whole list of things. Okay, let's start talking about those design aesthetic qualities that the piece has. I'll evaluate the technique. That's where I'm good.

So they talk about it, and sometimes I even have them grade themselves. They grade themselves pretty high, but towards the end of the semester they're really honest with one another. Sometimes we get into terrible arguments, but I'm learning from them.

MS. FISCH: So did you ever put your work there?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because I do work, especially the last couple years I finish projects sometimes in class just to show that I could do it. "You cheat; you've been doing it for so long." I say, "Well, that's life, kid." I mean, some of you took three years in metals in high school, and some of you, this is your first time out and first time out is much better than the guy over here. You're just stuck with bad technique or something like that.

MS. FISCH: So how do you evaluate your own work, or don't you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I look at it and I look at it-I look at it too long, I think.

MS. FISCH: I mean, do you think you're overly critical of your own work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't think I'm overly critical. It just takes me sometimes too long to make that final decision to decide what next to do or not to do. So it's basically my own insecurities, my own self-worth, self-esteem, and all of those words that come out in therapy.

So this is genetic, picked up in my environments, all of the above.

MS. FISCH: Does the sense of spirituality play a role in your work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It did in the beginning, as a matter of fact, because I really was-I didn't know anything. Phil Fike was kind of neat from the standpoint he was centered around technique and you do whatever you want with the technique, and I didn't know what to do, but I had-art for me was, from my Catholic upbringing, the crucifix, and because I had drawn some pictures, before I started art school when I was in the Marine Corps, of Christ in different-my manifestations, sort of like-oh, what is that New York magazine strip?

In any case, there was a cartoonist for, I think it was the *New Yorker*, who did these figures, so I reinterpreted that style along with [Alberto] Giacometti style in crucifixes. The first semester I did a half a dozen of them, sheet metal, casting. I've still got a couple of them around.

But in any case, that was what I thought was art. So I was-I don't know if I'm spiritual or not, but I enjoyed them because they gave me a sense of accomplishment that I wasn't treading on tradition, but I was bringing my traditions into my first explorations in metal, but that left afterwards, after I saw what other people were doing with abstract stuff.

MS. FISCH: So you don't think that now there's that aspect?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, other than-other than I was knocked out of an exhibition of spirituality in a show in Chicago, "Spirituality in Art"-in art, yeah. It was this nice catalogue and I read it and most-I don't know if it's been influential, but the best book I've read, a catalogue about spirituality in art, and I like what it says so I don't know if it's-I'm consciously -

MS. FISCH: Is it something you're seeking?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, maybe something I'm seeking. I'm always seeking-I always envy those people who have a certain amount of-who have faith. I had problems or questions back when I was in fourth and fifth grade, and I

used to get Ds all the time in religion.

MS. FISCH: So you went to Catholic school?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I went to Catholic school for the first six years, yeah. I was a very quiet kid, but it just didn't make sense, and the Dominican sisters would say, it's faith. And I'd say, "No." So my mother would go in and, "Just say you understand." So I did. You learn after a while. How to cope.

MS. FISCH: What do you think are the things which have most influenced your work over the years, or what are your sources of inspiration? What do you look for?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's not too obvious. My sources of inspiration are nature, but it doesn't show up, but in a logical way or a visual way. It's there, but people probably don't see it because of the mix.

I have-one of my early theories was every piece that I would make would have a geometric and organic component.

MS. FISCH: And that was something you intellectually decided on?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, right. I thought, after looking at art, I decided it had to have both, or more organic the better, but it should have a couple of straight lines, just to hold it together so it wouldn't be a blob.

So that early on, especially the jewelry that Hiroko and I were making when we were in Japan, I used that theory a lot.

MS. FISCH: That was the work that came out under the Gene Limited title.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Limited, yes. That was Gene Limited.

MS. FISCH: And that sort of combined this organic and geometric?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was cast in sheet wax work, organic forms, and then framed with a couple of straight lines to create sort of a geometric element.

MS. FISCH: Is the function of objects an important factor in your design concepts, but maybe not in your art?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it is. Yeah.

MS. FISCH: I mean, I read in-I think maybe it was *Ornament* Magazine-this: When the ornamentation and the techniques are appropriate to the function of an object, it should be a transcendent experience not only to view but to incorporate into their lives, which is a Japanese attitude that Carol Benesh, who wrote this article, felt stimulated a profound artistic response in you-that's her observation. I wonder what you think about it.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, people see what they want to see, number one. They see what they have experienced. The East-West dialogue is a pretty obvious conclusion. Because it's unique. So people have a tendency to read more into it than is there. Just because Hiroko is Japanese and I'm American, there is that. It's there, but I think they read more into it than there actually is. I think it's probably about 50/50.

MS. FISCH: I wondered if it was actually a struggle to get past that obvious East-West connotation.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, but then it's hard once you're using the Japanese techniques. I mean, that makes it doubly difficult. So, yeah, because of their uniqueness, that uniqueness in terms of what patterns, what textures you can create, I couldn't have created before Japan. So how does one take and transform some basic ideas, concepts from this Eastern outlook and adapt it to Western. And we've been doing it all our lives now, Hiroko and I.

MS. FISCH: I know that you and Hiroko do this together, but I wonder if you also are involved within yourself individually, the work that you do by yourself.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the work I do by myself probably is more Eastern. Here is something. Hiroko, we tried to-we decided-and I think Hiroko will still acknowledge this-years ago that I was more organic and she was more geometric. So if one says that in this East-West conversation, it's wrong. It should be the opposite. I'm soft; she's hard. It could break down to that. I think Hiroko would say that. Hiroko is a very-I'm this sort of wishy-washy in many ways. I just sort of-I do things. I keep busy-because this is the Zen philosophy, play pachinko all your life. It's one way of living, bouncing against the walls. Well, it's all your personality, your genetics, but it seems right to me, and I'm not fighting it, and I've never fought it. I never thought of fighting it maybe. And Hiroko has been always fighting it.

MS. FISCH: You are maybe more laid back, or more accepting?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: More accepting of people. Yeah, of people and things in general. It affects my work. The way I work is the way I am and it affects it because I probably don't do or finish enough to satisfy myself, because I'm always in self-doubt-"is that right?" or put it aside for six months. Usually that's the result, put it aside and I'll use it later.

MS. FISCH: So you do actually abandon a lot of work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, I abandon a lot of work and I've got a lot of abandoned work.

MS. FISCH: Do you ever go back and look at it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, I'm always-that's why I try to keep it in sight. In view. Maybe that's bad, but I have a series dedicated to four cats. Two are finished. It's a collage. It's fish skins and mizuhiki on a textured board, sort of like a painting.

MS. FISCH: So you do actually abandon work that you don't think is successful. Then do you go back sometimes and rework that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, yeah, actually the third of that series is almost done. I went back to it about a year ago. And I had it in the studio, I was working on it and I asked a student, "What do you think? I'm stuck." And he said, "Yeah, I really like it, but, yeah, it's not finished." And I said, "What do you think? Help me." And I was being truthful and he was in really deep thought and he said, "Why don't you pour some clear plastic over it? I mean, it's sort of fragile and it would give it this encasement," and I said, "Good idea." So I bought some liquid acrylic and poured it over and then moved it around till I got sort of ripples.

MS. FISCH: Are you happy with it now?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I'm happy with it, sure.

[Audio break.]

MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Eugene Pijanowski at his home and studio in Honolulu on May 14, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number four.

You also work in sculpture, and I was interested in the series that you did with Hiroko called *Gentle Solitude* [1986], which incorporates a piece of jewelry. What's the scale of this work and how does it relate to your other work and how long did it go on?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, the *Gentle Solitude* series continued for quite a while, I think the early '80s and through the '90s, most of the '90s in different forms. The first format was 18-by-18 inches.

MS. FISCH: A kind of platform?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: A platform that in some cases was flat, like a tableau; in some cases they hung on walls, but they were 18-by-18 inches. All of that series had haiku, which was written after the fact. The haiku was in English. We talked about it, but Hiroko basically knows more about the rules and how the proper format-subject matter, nature, time of the year, geographic location-all have to be incorporated in a certain way and have really quite-that's what Hiroko likes about it, there's a lot of rules. And Hiroko loves to break the rules, and a lot of the work is in some ways erotic and sometimes very subtle, most of the times very subtle ways, won't even notice.

A form floating on a sea, a chrysanthemum on a textured piece of Plexiglas to make it look like a seascape with it floating. A brooch is a copper tinted bright red and gold, brooch pendant sitting on the surface.

But that format goes back quite a few years. That is a brooch or pin or pendant on a surface resting or attached to it. It goes back to some of the work in twisted wire, copper and silver primarily, sometimes with shakudo, the three wires twisted together, soldered, flattened, and then edge-soldered together to create herringbone, many times herringbone patterns that then were left. Torn edges were created, or the illusion of torn edges, and then, much like fabric floating in the breeze, resting on everything from Plexiglas platforms to aluminum platforms with copper inlay into them.

But all of those have been going on for many years, this surface upon which a piece of jewelry rests or is attached to. That's been before and through the *Gentle Solitude* series.

The *Gentle Solitude* series then continues with carved wood with gold leaf, and takes the more literal format on a larger scale of maple seeds, amaryllis; those were the two themes in larger sculpture.

MS. FISCH: So these gilded boxwood, maple leaf forms are part of this *Gentle Solitude* series?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think they are. Not in name but, yeah, some of it in name, as a matter of fact. I'm trying to remember the titles now.

MS. FISCH: But those are not jewelry at all.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, but these are manifestations of nature and how we relate to it. The maple seed is just a by-product of an imagery of a child watching a single, double, or triple maple seed floating down to earth, enjoying that pull of gravity, that feeling of lightness, of floating, of drifting, of dreaming.

MS. FISCH: When did you actually start working with those, with that particular image, the maple leaf?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, that actually went in the whole series of jewelry, too-the maple seed: earrings, pendants, brooches, which is one of my favorite series because of its simplicity.

MS. FISCH: But going back to the *Gentle Solitude* things that were in this 18-by-18 inch format, how long did you work on those and how many are there? Are there numbers of them?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That specific series, I believe there are four, and then the other series before and then the larger sculpture afterwards. The series, oh, there was a number of wall pieces that were done when I was on sabbatical from Purdue [that] I did at Wayne State University that had the same idea but didn't have jewelry.

MS. FISCH: So they were just wall plaques? With an arrangement of objects?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, an arrangement of the mokume objects, arrangement of cast abstract forms, and all of that could have been jewelry but -

MS. FISCH: But you chose not to make it jewelry?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because all the forms were jewelry-sized. In fact, some of them had brooch backs on them, but brooch backs were cut off and screwed onto a base.

MS. FISCH: And did that series include poetry as well or not?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, it didn't include poetry, just that 18-by-18 inch series, one of which is in the Japanese museum in Florida. Where is that museum [Morikami Museum, Delray Beach, FL]? Hiroko would remember. We only had one, and the other one was sold to a private person.

MS. FISCH: So how many of the wall pieces did you do at Wayne State? I assume you did those on your own.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, pretty much, but they were influenced by what we had done before with the twisted wire, and then there was stuff, kimono silk backing pinned onto that, the brooches. I think probably half a dozen of those; sold two or three at a gallery in Detroit.

MS. FISCH: You did show those as a series?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right. And they were cheap enough, because I wanted to get rid of them. They were okay, but they were just design exercises as far as I was concerned.

MS. FISCH: So you didn't think of them as highly significant?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, they were basically assemblages in different materials, in most of the cases rather quick, for me quickies, but they satisfied a certain [need to] get it done.

MS. FISCH: And those then led into the horizontal ones that were actually jewelry oriented.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right. About that time Hiroko was taking classes a couple of summers with a national living treasure, one chasing and one person in inlay, nunome-zogan primarily. And those pieces were done as a result of that tutelage.

MS. FISCH: I remember seeing some of those. There was a little rabbit I remember.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that little-yeah, we had a little rabbit. Oh yeah, then there was the series of sculptures that were about six to eight inches high that had turned cones out of wood that were either sandblasted or burned to raise the grain and platforms onto which, one case, a little rabbit sat with a knot of pure gold and a rod coming up with a ball on top, and that was a series, too, that sort of came about in that time. I think there were four or five in that series.

MS. FISCH: And was there haiku connected to that series or not?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. But they were all sort of evolving at the same time.

MS. FISCH: And so all of these fall under the general title of *Gentle Solitude*?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Why? I mean, what does the title mean?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the title means that gentle solitude means the only-well solitude means being alone and you're quantifying it.

MS. FISCH: So they're contemplative.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but it's a Zen thing. You have these objects arranged on these sculptures and that are—they give the illusion that they're related, but in fact it's a way to draw the viewer in. Along with the rabbit there actually was constructed a little wooden sake cup but in miniature with red lacquer inside, so you got the rabbit and that sake thing; what it was, they could guess whatever, and then the tied knot of the gold and then that rod with the little ball, red ball at the top. That may have been Calder in a way.

But in any case, those, they formed some sort of relationship that seemed to be—that is not intellectual.

MS. FISCH: So they were evocative rather than narrative.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Correct. But they alluded to being narrative, because they were recognizable objects.

MS. FISCH: Because you could recognize the objects.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, and then the viewer could put that together in some way, and it was basically a way to engage the viewer. I think art that engages the viewer is best. And then how long do you engage them. I think you engage them the longest if there's a certain amount of mystery or connectedness to it. So if you put a number of objects that relate but don't relate, depending on the viewer or the maker, you create this.

MS. FISCH: You create a mysterious environment.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, you create this environment that is so nuanced that it's curious. We're making curios—in a good way. [Laughs.]

MS. FISCH: And does this continue in this format, or you did a certain number and then you wanted to change the format?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, no, the format, yeah, I got a lot of platforms I work from. Then there was a series of objects based on creatures. And maybe Bruce Metcalf was an influence there, because I've always admired Bruce's work from his narrative standpoint, that I just sort of did stick figures. There's one that's out of thick black Plexiglas and there's out of wire these stick figures and a little track made out of abrasive paper and Mokume wall and these little guys are racing I think and they're doing this race, there's jumps but one of the jumps is actually jumping in front of them.

So again that's even more narrative than some of the other things but it's still questionable why these materials were used this way and what really is happening, and Hiroko's finger is in there too.

MS. FISCH: And have you shown this work publicly?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I showed that work at a faculty show. I got actually a couple of good responses. And at a show in Hawaii, the Shoebox Show [International Shoebox Sculpture Exhibition, University of Hawaii]. It was the right format, and I got rejected this year from the show. I said, "Well, I'll try it again," so I put some things together that were probably—I took a couple digital pictures of it, and I said these could be some of the ways these parts could be arranged. It's up to you to arrange them or just lay them out in this narrative, and that goes back to Onno Boekhoudt, some of his early work.

So it's not conscious—I don't do it consciously, not too consciously. It comes out after the fact. I notice it after the fact. So that's what I tell my students, too; you've got to be aware of your references before, after, and during, and give credit where the reference is due, when it's due.

MS. FISCH: How do you feel about it when a work is rejected?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, well, I'm not-well, early on I would have been hurt. This time, well, just the juror didn't like it, I mean, didn't like my arrangement. I liked it, okay.

MS. FISCH: You talked earlier about not having critiques of your work at the right time, but when you have comments from critics or responses from the public, does that affect your spirit or affect your thinking?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, usually people aren't going to say they hate it.

MS. FISCH: Well, sometimes critics do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But then no one says anything anymore other than there is-we were at one show and it was very curious. Hiroko was with me, and I don't know what was in the show, but I remember these two young-I guess they were young- metalworkers, and it was our work they were standing in front of and [we] were standing in back of them, and they said, "I don't know how they got the reputation they got." And that was kind of interesting.

MS. FISCH: Did that hurt?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. But that was the only time. That was the only time. I just put it off as, well, they don't understand it or they're coming from someplace else. And the same thing you can say of jurors; so you grow up, you mature, and you know that your work is not going to be appreciated by everybody under the sun, so it really doesn't matter anymore. Does that stop you from showing? Not really, no.

MS. FISCH: Do you like to respond to thematic competitions? I mean, does that stimulate anything for you? You entered the "Shoebox" show but it was something you already had finished.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, it just fit. I found a shoebox that fit.

MS. FISCH: Right, but I mean, there are thematic exhibitions that come along.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, and there was one recently, but I've been looking and collecting these since I've been in Hawaii, and I get carried away-that I find the thing six months later or a week after it was due, just like this Hawaiian show. I missed it. It was a big show. I could have sent something and I just missed it. And there was a show I sent away and got information about at the metals museum [National Ornamental Metals Museum, Memphis, TN], in Memphis, stones, and I had a couple great ideas and I was going to say, get some-I've got Petoskey stones. Some of them are in the shape of skipping stones.

MS. FISCH: What kind of stones?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Petoskey stones. Petoskey, Michigan, has on its shore, as does a place in West Africa on the ocean, the same stone that has the same fossil arrangement, only two places in the world. So in any case I got a whole box of them. Go to Petoskey and pick up stones. But in any case I was going to find a couple that looked like skipping stones and box them or, because they had some texture to them, maybe take a wax impression or maybe one in wood, one in wax and one real stone, but three is a magic number, stones in a nice box, display box. That would be my stone entry. It's probably gone by now.

I get these ideas like that, but then you weigh them: is it too corny, is it just another good idea I'll never do. Well, then I used to say to myself, Leonardo da Vinci said at one point in time that if it exists in my head, that's enough. It doesn't have to have material, so it's an excuse.

MS. FISCH: Tell me about these recent gilded wood series, which is the image of the maple seed. Is it a seed, I'm not sure, or a pod?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's a pod, I guess, and the seed is in the middle.

MS. FISCH: At the top.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, at the top. So they come single, double, and triple.

MS. FISCH: I've never seen a triple one before.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, we found a triple one, and we have a triple model. Sometimes I think they came, that idea, at least, of gold-leafed wooden objects, come from Buddhist and Shinto shrines, where they have water lilies out of scale. So that's something realized after the fact and -

MS. FISCH: So it wasn't a conscious inspiration but clearly -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: But clearly afterwards we realized, yeah, even in the process of doing it, we realized that and just continued.

And the amaryllis was probably the best received of that. There were supposed to have been three of those.

MS. FISCH: Three amaryllis?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. We had three bases and only one got finished, so one amaryllis was just barely opening, so that it had white gold where it was starting to come out, and then the next one was going to be half open, and then full, sort of the same scale, about 30 inches.

MS. FISCH: What made you switch to that scale, because the scale of these is, what, about 18 to 20 inches or bigger?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, bigger, 30 to 40 inches, something like that.

MS. FISCH: You haven't worked in that scale for a while. Or maybe never, I don't know.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, we worked at that scale before, did *Intergalactic Surfboards*; that was one part of that was six foot and the other about two feet, but the shape where two of these surfboard shapes were interacting in a corner, where one was almost touching the other.

MS. FISCH: But these maple leaf things are of a larger scale and yet you say they're still part of this *Gentle Solitude* series. How does that happen?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, from the standpoint that they're-when you duplicate something, either you duplicate it smaller, bigger, the same size, or much larger. We just chose to do a much larger scale because maybe it would be more noticeable. I really don't know.

MS. FISCH: Was it an opportunity to notice the structure, so you made them bigger in order to notice the structure?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, actually it made it harder, because we had to make up ways of creating it.

MS. FISCH: And what method did you use?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the base was wood, boxwood.

MS. FISCH: Boxwood, okay. Hiroko had said balsa wood, but I didn't think that was correct.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, it's not balsa, it's boxwood. Balsa wood is too soft and grainy and breaks. It's too fragile. Well, boxwood has a tight, uniform grain, so you can do a lot of things with it, so that-maybe out of laziness-less carving was done.

MS. FISCH: And do you carve them or somebody else?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, somebody else did them. The veins were made out of string with cheesecloth.

MS. FISCH: So you carved the wood, and then you put the strings on, and then you cover it both, all of it, with cheesecloth, or the cheesecloth comes first?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, some of the wood-cheesecloth was first to give a background and then the string to make the veins on top of the cheesecloth, and then gold leaf.

MS. FISCH: Hiroko told me that you had them professionally gold leafed, because they're beautifully done and that's really hard to do.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. There was this one person, he was a graduate of our painting program years ago, and I guess-well, years ago there was a-I forget his name, a painter who I admired even when I was a student at Wayne State University who was doing this gold leaf paintings. This guy was a student of his, and he learned how to do gold leaf, and eventually that was his business, doing picture frames and whatever else.

MS. FISCH: So you just take them to him and he gold leafs them.

What audience did you intend these for? Were they to be inside of interiors, or were they to be freestanding?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, they had to be interior. MS. FISCH: No, I mean as interior ornamentation, or as meaningful sculpture, or just objects?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think meaningful objects, maybe Hiroko would say sculpture, but I'd say meaningful objects that had a sense of this, to me, playfulness, the seriousness too, so the essence of life, the seed.

MS. FISCH: They're rather realistic interpretations, just on a very large scale, and I wondered what your intention was for the impact of those.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Other than make the viewer see something on a scale like Claes Oldenburg.

MS. FISCH: They're contemplative at the same time that they're very ornamental.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, they're very ornamental. That's why one person said, "Why'd you even do that?" I said, "Well, first of all they're not found in nature in that scale. Secondly, they're not accurately done." And basically it's just something that needed to be done on a larger scale just to prove ourselves, I think-ego involved.

MS. FISCH: Did you have a place that you wanted them to go to be seen, or were you doing them for yourselves?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I can't remember if it was for a show or not. The only place they've been shown other than in Ann Arbor was at a show that Komelia Okim arranged at her school [Montgomery College, Rockland, MD].

MS. FISCH: There was an exhibition in Washington at the time of the SNAG conference that Komelia did at Montgomery College. Is that where it went?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And I think it was done-the timing was right, I think. It was done in time for that show, so I think in the back of my mind it was for that show. Hiroko then had one of our workers make crates for them and drove them there.

MS. FISCH: Are you in contact at all with the Wustum Museum, which now is called the Racine Art Museum [Racine, WI]? You haven't participated in their thematic shows? Because this year they're doing a botanical shows -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, I heard about that.

MS. FISCH: -and it would have been an ideal contribution.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's just shipping this stuff.

MS. FISCH: But from here it's a little bit less appealing to have to get it there.

Have comments from critics or response from the public affected you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, other than the two instances I-the two students standing in front of our work and then -

MS. FISCH: Right, but I'm thinking more of written critiques.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There have never been any negative things written. People pussyfoot around, I think, in many instances, very few negative.

MS. FISCH: What happens if you send something to a competition and it's not accepted? Does that upset you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: One time I got mad and wrote a letter. Who was it? At that time on the ACC [American Craft Council] but no longer connected and now teaches at St. Clair Community College in [Port Huron] Michigan. That was years ago. It's 25 years ago maybe. I thought it was one of the best pieces. So we come back from a workshop and open the letter, and I was tired and I dashed off this letter. And it was a dumb letter and he wrote back very politely that these things are very subjective and other factors played into it, and don't be so juvenile. And I was.

MS. FISCH: So let's move on to some of your professional activities outside of the studio. Who are your closest professional colleagues? Are they the ones you went to school with or people that you've met afterwards, and how did you get to know them?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Colleagues. I don't know if I really -

MS. FISCH: I'm talking about colleagues in the art world. As opposed to the teaching world.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, if I wanted to call them colleagues, people such as-who I deeply respect for their work and probably I like them personally, is, well, I'll start, I'll go back in years.

Let's say Phil Fike; I respected him and I respected his humor, his lifestyle, and his tenacity, and to a lesser

degree his work.

After that, Richard Thomas was nothing.

Hiramatsu-I was lucky to study with him, to drink with him, to enjoy his family's company, and teach them English. We had weekly English lessons that turned out to be a feast, a drunken feast, could barely make the last train most of the time. But in any case I respected Mr. Hiramatsu and what he did and what he continues to do. It's hard to be not influenced by the guy.

MS. FISCH: Well, his work is so diverse anyway.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right.

But I think the carving, I think that's the biggest influence in that regard, and I learned how to do it in a slightly different way than he did. So I incorporated that and still do to a lesser degree than in the past, so Mr. Hiramatsu.

Then Arline Fisch after we came to the United States, first her work seen in magazines, and then after teaching with her and seeing what she had done, with students that I then had in most cases, because they were pretty darn dedicated. They knew what they were about in most cases. And the professionalism employed both in teaching and in her professional work and the service to the community at large of the world, the craft community in general.

Then I was happy to meet Jack Prip, who I admired for years through *American Craft*.

Bruce Metcalf, who I visited in Kent, Ohio, a few times, I admired his work. I had doubts in some cases about the sexuality of it, but that's where he was coming from. It's okay with me. You can appreciate it or not appreciate it. I appreciated it probably on a different level than he made it, but that's the viewer's prerogative. I liked the way he writes. I don't agree with everything, but you don't have to agree with everybody. I like his stance. He makes a stand. And he holds to it and that's very important to me.

MS. FISCH: Are there Europeans that you've been close to?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, Hermann Jünger from Germany. We've always admired his work; David Watkins, Dame Wendy Ramshaw. Is it dame? I guess you could say dame.

MS. FISCH: I think she's a dame now, yes.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Wendy Ramshaw-because of their professionalism.

It seems that the people who become big or-whatever big is-have or need to contain a certain amount of professionalism and consistency to gain notoriety, if one can say it that way.

So there's Onno Boekhoudt, who I again had the pleasure of doing a workshop with, and Hermann Jünger, in school I did a workshop-at college did a workshop.

So then Gijs Bakker and his wife [Emmy van Leersum], who's deceased many years now; I mean, they were a major influence years-I admired their work when I was first starting out, and Gijs, I still like his work, saw recently some of the work in the slideshow in Birmingham two years ago.

Who else? Oh, then a person who does kinetic rings. Reinhold? Friedrich Becker.

MS. FISCH: Did you meet him?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I never met him, but I've always admired his work from the technical standpoint, and here we have a very geometric format and it has humor. I mean, these things that revolve. I mean, all kinds of connotations to me. Maybe I'm reading into it, but that's my prerogative as a viewer. But they're fun, they're evocative, they're provocative, they're fun.

MS. FISCH: I know you've been to Australia. More than once?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: A couple times.

MS. FISCH: And are there people there that you feel connected to in any way?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not really. No. Oh, the only one probably whose work I liked the most is Carlier Makigawa and her husband [Akio Makigawa], deceased. She isn't doing much in the last couple years other than finishing some

of her husband's installations.

MS. FISCH: And you had a chance to meet with them and spend time with them?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I didn't see-that was not much time. That was many years ago. But our connection is sending students to study with Carrier.

MS. FISCH: Have you been more or less involved actively with organizations, or only peripherally?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Peripherally. I had wanted to at one point, before I got to the University of Michigan, when I was still at Purdue. Someone called me-maybe it was Bruce-and asked me for some ideas in terms of serving on a committee. I said-well, strangely, he didn't ask me if I wanted to; he was asking me for names. I said, "Well, why don't you call Richard Mawdsley," and he became president a few years later. But I was never asked and I never volunteered, so what are you going to do? I was just too busy and I didn't feel like I could contribute in that way. After I got into administration and learned some of the so-called ropes, I could have, but I was just too busy, and now I'm just too tired to do that.

MS. FISCH: Has what they've done had any importance for you? I mean, they've run exhibitions and they publish magazines.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, well, participating in some of their exhibitions. Yeah, they've published, and technical papers. I think the technical papers are the most important to me, because they contain some, I think-well, some of our work that got out that wasn't exhibited much actually, some of the mokume stuff.

MS. FISCH: So they made a contribution to you in that way?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: In that way. I think that was the greatest aid to us, to help us disseminate the information to a wider audience than just through workshops.

MS. FISCH: Were you connected to the local artist groups in Ann Arbor?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. I was-Hiroko and I were connected to the Michigan Silversmiths Guild. I was co- Hiroko and I were co-presidents one year. Basically the job there was just to arrange a few workshops and apply for a couple grants, which we got almost every year, for bringing people. Fred Fenster was always popular, so he came in every two or three years.

MS. FISCH: And was that important to you because it made connections for you in the community?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it did make connections in the community. I got to meet the people who taught at Eastern [Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI], another, Skip [Frederick] Hunter, who graduated from Fred, one of Fred's first graduate students. And he has a pretty good department there in terms of facilities.

MS. FISCH: What was his name again?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Skip Hunter. MS. FISCH: Because you were at the University of Michigan, did you also have opportunities to work collaboratively with places like East Lansing and Cranbrook and Detroit, or not so much?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it was with Phil Fike in Detroit. Cranbrook, we volunteered but we didn't get much response. Eastern we did a workshop. The Center for Creative Studies [College for Creative Studies, Detroit, MI] we did a couple workshops when Buffy Thomas, Mr. Thomas's ex, was teaching there. Michigan State [East Lansing, MI] really didn't have a department. Mary Lee Hu was there for a year or two and then she was gone and they put things in a locked room and they're still there.

MS. FISCH: What craft and art periodicals do you read, and have they been significant in any way?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Probably the old *Craft Horizons* [now *American Craft*] were the most-at the beginning that was very important to me, less so now. I get mixed feelings about some of the work, but it's déjà vu, 99 percent of it. I've seen them, been there, done that type of attitude.

MS. FISCH: So you don't find it so exciting.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't find it so exciting, other than the last issue of *Metalsmith* I kind of liked on the cover. What was that? Thomas Mann -

MS. FISCH: And what about Japanese publications? Do you get involved in those at all? They always seemed to me to be more commercially oriented.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Well, basically it was Hiroko who's connected to it, and then I helped her write some articles on U.S. jewelers for a jewelry magazine and that was years ago.

MS. FISCH: But you have written articles from time to time for various periodicals, and these were, I guess, mostly technical articles relating to your research.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was basically a lot of the early research translated into whatever the language of the magazine.

MS. FISCH: But you did coauthor articles about American jewelry for Japanese publications.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: German and Korean and Japanese.

MS. FISCH: I think that's a real service to the field. Can you see yourself doing more writing now that you're retired?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, I don't think so. The administration killed any incentive to do any writing. After the first few years of writing these memos asking for things primarily, that's what you do, you ask for help, and pleading for help and begging for help, crawling on one's knees for help, you sort of give up. One dean said, "Well, keep it up, someday they'll read them. You've got to keep it up." So you keep it up, but you just don't have your heart into it anymore. There's just the yearly request for something. And you may get one response from the same person.

MS. FISCH: The writing part is not useful to you. I mean, you don't have any great theories that you want to put into print.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. Everybody has their own theory and mine is so anti-intellectual at this point in time that it wouldn't serve anybody. It probably wouldn't even serve me to attempt to put anything down on paper.

MS. FISCH: When did you first exhibit your work? I know you participate in many national and international exhibitions, but when did you first exhibit your work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think it was one of the Wichita, Kansas, shows in '63, something like that.

MS. FISCH: They started in the '50s, I think, didn't they?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. Well, I think I got in one of the last ones. I asked Phil Fike; he said, "Yeah, give it a shot." So I sent it and I got in.

MS. FISCH: And how did that make you feel?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Great. I mean, to be accepted, someone else liked it, is a very juvenile-but still it exists in all of us to be, this wanting to be accepted, either in one's person or one's persona or one's work.

MS. FISCH: So how important have exhibitions been to you personally and also to your career?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, they were personally, because you get out to other countries, to different venues, but I want to-but it's only halfhearted now to participate. I still am in the mode of doing that, but it became less important, because it was just for the old merit review, another line in your resume, and it was just becoming so-I was becoming so cynical about that whole thing, because it really didn't matter anymore to have it out there, but I'm still trying. I think I'll still try a couple, every year. If I get rejected, that's fine too, just to keep my foot in it.

MS. FISCH: Do you make work specifically for exhibitions, or you try to take the work that you've already done and make it fit?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Make it fit.

MS. FISCH: So you don't specifically do work for an exhibition?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, like we were invited to do this menorah show at this very swanky mall in Troy, Michigan, and there was a piece that I started-well, no, actually Hiroko started it and didn't finish. It was, sort of, this piece that had staggered steps and had a platform. So I figured out how to put enough candlesticks going up and down the platform to serve the function as menorah and then little birthday candles stuck in all different colors.

Actually, the menorah candles come in this size, too, because the synagogue had-I called and I said, "What size are the candles," and they said, "Oh, I'll send you some." So they sent me two or three sizes.

MS. FISCH: Well, menorahs also are used at home, so they can be much smaller.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, but this was supposed to be only about 12 inches and maybe five inches tall, a little small, a combination of anodized aluminum, silver, brass, copper.

MS. FISCH: So sometimes it's a challenge.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, it was kind of fun. It was a challenge, right. And I tried to design it so it would fit a couple different size candles, the candles, so it wouldn't drip all over the place; I had a little-the holder was square so I could put a round-into-a-square sort of problem, and then another larger square tubing cut off around that to catch the drip, and then you could take it apart and from the bottom push out the melted part.

MS. FISCH: So over the years you have exhibited extensively. What exhibitions do you think were the most significant?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: "Poetry of the Physical."

MS. FISCH: That was the American Craft Council.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That was a council meeting. This was the '70s? The '80s. Well, I think it was very important, because we went to the opening, which was rare for us to do. I think that one was it, because we saw the show.

And then the other one that was important was "Sculptural Concerns" [Fort Wayne Museum of Art, 1993] that traveled around. I got to see it in Kalamazoo, and then I got invited to do a presentation -

MS. FISCH: Well, both of those shows traveled extensively.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, right, so that was the primary reason. I regret now being too cheap not to go to some of the other openings. That's basically it; it was money. I was too cheap.

MS. FISCH: Well, or thinking that maybe that's not very important.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, no, some of them I really wanted to go, but I had designated the money for other things, to buy more something, who knows what.

MS. FISCH: I know you've also exhibited internationally throughout your career, and I wonder, how did you make connections with the international community or did they make contact with you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: They made contact with us. The first instance was when Hiroko and I were co-coordinators of the metal section of the World Crafts Council conference and meeting in Kyoto, Japan, in 1978. A committee sent us a list of American and European and Australian [metal persons] from all over the world who they wanted to be invited, and it was our job then to solicit from that list as many as we could, and, of course, they had it in priority. If we could get the first dozen, then we were set, but we had sometimes to go down the list.

So we wrote everybody a letter and asked first if they were interested and then their responses. We replied to ask them to write a statement that we could then read with, I guess, three or four slides at the conference of their comments, so they were free to say whatever they wanted to.

We still have a folder of all of those, and probably we can dig up all of the slides from that too.

MS. FISCH: So that's how you first became involved in international committee -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: And we met people who we had admired through magazines primarily and books. Some of them-well, I think a lot of them knew us already from the same venues, from books and slides and exchanges and other people going to them and showing our work or reading about us. Most of those-most of the people who came, we had already known their work. We didn't know them personally until a few did show up at the conference.

MS. FISCH: But then did you receive invitations to exhibit your work as a result of those connections, do you think?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I believe so and from other people who passed on our names to others, yourself, Arline Fisch, and I think Bob Ebendorf actually passed on our name a couple of times, and others, but I can't think of them.

MS. FISCH: But then you actually exhibited a lot in Europe for a while.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because of the paper cord or mizuhiki. We sold most work from in one series-to a gallery outside of Amsterdam. I forget, a small, little gallery. Hiroko wanted us to do one of the openings actually, but I never went; she did.

And Helen Drutt bought a whole series, I think ten of one series in that *I Am Precious* [1990] series, number something. She bought a whole-it was numbered one through 10 and we only had made two, and so she wanted to buy a whole edition, I guess you would call it.

MS. FISCH: But didn't you also show at "Ornamenta I?" [Schmuckmuseum, Phorzeim, Germany, 1989.]

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, "Ornamenta" -

MS. FISCH: And that was a very important exhibition.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, we got invited-or was that a competition? No, that was an invitation. Most of those were invitations and then we entered a few. I remember one of the first ones that I got into, a couple of rings that I entered into a show in Italy when I was still in Japan working. I sent a couple rings and it became a collection there someplace, and that was great.

MS. FISCH: Do you keep track of where your work is?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, yeah, most of it we -

MS. FISCH: You know where it is?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, some of it was bought by private individuals and then we're told, but we never asked probably and that was our fault too.

MS. FISCH: No, sometimes they won't tell you.

But there are now many museums around the world collecting contemporary jewelry, crafts in general, but specifically jewelry.

Which ones do you think have made a special commitment to the metals field?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, Hiroko has got a piece in the Danner Collection [Danner-Stiftung Collection, Munich]. That's in Germany. I think that-I haven't seen the collection.

MS. FISCH: Well, it isn't on view at the moment, but it's going to be. I just heard from a woman who delivered a piece for me there, and apparently it's a new building. It's called Die Neue Gallerie, and there the Danner Collection is going to occupy a whole floor of this museum in Munich, so it will be very exciting and there is going to be an opening, I think. She thought it would be either this fall or early spring, and I'm going to go and I think you should go.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, maybe I could-I probably would like to go. But it depends on Hiroko, if she wants to go.

MS. FISCH: They don't own a lot of American work, but I know they own a piece of yours.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I wonder which piece it is actually.

MS. FISCH: I think it's one of the large collars.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, it may be the collar, yeah.

MS. FISCH: But I'm not sure.

And do you know what other collections-are you in the museum at Pforzheim, for example? Well, you must have been, because you were in the "Ornamenta" show, so do they own something of yours?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I don't think so. No, we were in the "Ornamenta," but I think it was a series, a wall piece with eight hairpieces. We put two sets of those; one was in the museum in Kyoto and this other set we still have.

MS. FISCH: So you are represented in museums in Japan?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Kyoto is the only one in Japan.

MS. FISCH: And how has that happened? Did they purchase work from you or from your gallery?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. We were invited to submit and we did, and then we submitted both of those, two of them, and they bought one.

MS. FISCH: So they did purchase?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yes, they purchased.

MS. FISCH: Because a lot of American collections want you to give the work.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We've given very little. We both-well, one of the paper cord pieces we gave to Cranbrook, along with a mokume piece that I did, one of the very first pieces for their collection we donated. They asked and we donated it.

MS. FISCH: Well, that seems appropriate. You're graduates of Cranbrook.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Sure. The rest though were either purchased by the museum or given by someone who bought from a gallery to the museum, or the gallery bought it and gave it the museum. That's the only-I can't remember where we-because we didn't give any other. Everything else was either someone gave it or we sold it. No one asked us to give. In fact, that raises the whole question in a few years, first of all, how do you catalogue the work? One of my plans eventually is put it all on a CD in slide format. Scan from slides, because it's a good image, and then send it around.

MS. FISCH: And let people choose?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Let people choose or just keep it. Just send like a catalogue on a disc, and it's cheap, a buck a shot and just send it off.

MS. FISCH: What a good idea.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Send off a hundred of them to different museums or whatever, and if they're interested, fine. If they're not, fine, they've got it.

MS. FISCH: What do you want to happen to your work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That's another question, what do you do with the stuff?

MS. FISCH: Have you thought about it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I don't know. I was thinking, though, I'm going to make contact with Ian [Ferguson] and Victoria and Albert [Victoria and Albert Museum, London] about the mokume, because we have samples from the major workers, finished and unfinished, sometimes just ingots or billets of living treasures who did mokume and just the cutoff from a sheet. I mean, it weighs about two pounds, just this little trim, but in any casem what do you do with stuff like that? Do we put it all together and donate it as a package within the subject matter of mokume? So I'm going to talk to Ian about that.

MS. FISCH: I think that you need to pursue that, because otherwise it's just not going to get done, and eventually it's just going to be thrown away and that would be too bad.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because some of the samples themselves that we did early on and then we got finished pieces that were given to us by these people-just floored me.

MS. FISCH: I mean, even a place like the Metals Museum in Memphis.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Or the Metals Museum was the other thought too. But I like to shoot big.

MS. FISCH: But the Victoria and Albert, right, might be a very good place. It's just whether they are -

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, whether they have the space or the interest. But Ian would be a good in, because he's got a few pieces of his titanium, I think he told me, there.

MS. FISCH: That's correct.

Well, on another subject, you also operated a production jewelry business for several years.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, that was mostly Hiroko.

MS. FISCH: Well, it was called Gene Limited.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, in Japan, yeah, that was called Gene Limited and I did most of the designing there, because most of it was cast. Then in the beginning we did all the casting, and then afterwards rubber molds, and then other casters were doing it. After we realized after you make a couple, then you get an order for ten, it's cheaper to send it out. So molds are made and then give us 10 of this in silver and five in gold or whatever. And then you send it to finishers and stone setters, and that's just the way production works.

MS. FISCH: And that's what you did initially in Japan.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the first year we did everything ourselves, and then it started going as Hiroko hit more and more galleries.

MS. FISCH: I know you did the project jointly with Hiroko, but I wonder what aspects of the enterprise were your particular responsibility. I mean, did you like having a business?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I liked it because we needed the money, but Hiroko worked herself to death running around a lot.

MS. FISCH: And what did you do?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I went to school.

MS. FISCH: No, I mean what did you do for the business?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, for the business? For the business I did in the beginning all of it.

MS. FISCH: All the designing, all the model making?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it was a collaborative. Most of the model-yeah, most of the model making I did, because I was just whipping them out because I had that organic structural thing, and they were just-I'd get a sheet of wax, put it in warm water, manipulate it so it's sort of sexy, and then cast it, trim off a little bit here so I have a corner to put a straight wire across, and then complete the square or the triangle or whatever, pop in a couple pearls. It was just a fun design exercise and that's how I looked at it. I didn't think it was serious. It was a lot of work. Hiroko did a whole, a real interesting, intricate wax dripping series of rings. And so she used to do a lot of that, until I finally decided to do rubber molds.

So in any case, she was doing the dripped wax, and I was doing this organic geometric and did a lot of construction, too, along with it, because I was interested in learning or getting back the structure that I'd done in industry.

MS. FISCH: So was it a successful venture or it was just a lot of work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It was a lot of work and it was a successful venture, except we got robbed once. We were doing projects for individuals, so we had a couple valuable pieces, stones and pearls, a couple pearls worth \$2,000 or \$3,000 each. No insurance, of course, no safe. So we got ripped off, and then we bought a safe and an alarm system. That's the way things go. So it took us about six months to get back, but business was good.

MS. FISCH: Was it an enjoyable experience?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. It was enjoyable for me because I was working in this solitude and I was really enjoying it and taking my walks occasionally and going grocery shopping. Hiroko was all over Tokyo and Yokohama. Whenever I went to school, I tried to do as much running around because it was near the metal suppliers areas, too, and we dropped off things to galleries on the way to and from school.

MS. FISCH: Would you ever consider doing this again?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. It was too exhausting. We were working about 80, 90 hours a week between school and the businesses. It was just go, go, go, go. And the one time we took a break, Hiroko's parents came over and took us out for lunch, supper Saturday night, and we were gone for only two hours, it was a rainy night, and we locked ourselves out. But a Japanese house is pretty easy to get into, so they just randomly picked our house. Ripped us off.

MS. FISCH: Your work has also been widely published in books and periodicals, and has this been beneficial to you either from the sales point of view or from the acknowledgment point of view?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: From the acknowledgment. Sales of most of the stuff that's exhibited is not that great. The only good-if we wanted to say a profitable-series was the paper cord. That was about the only one.

MS. FISCH: Do you think it's important to publish your work as often as possible, or not?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not as important as it was before, because I'm a different person now and my goals are different. So I'm, as I said earlier, trying to not-maybe reinvent is too drastic, but to reform some ideas I had 10 or 15 years ago about the work, whether or not to continue on using those parts that have been laying around, or have enough nerve and throw them all away and really start all over again.

MS. FISCH: And you're willing to do that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No. I'm a keeper. Some of them I just like. They've been around so long.

MS. FISCH: I would have a hard time throwing everything away and starting fresh.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I threw a few things away that were just bad. There was just no hope. Mostly half-raised things.

MS. FISCH: But hope springs eternal when you see these parts that you made.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I wish I would have brought some of the things, because they're in the heart, the boring part of the raising process, and I gave them all to my niece and I don't know that she's interested in metals.

MS. FISCH: Well, I just recently visited David Pimental at Tempe, and he has these tons of raised vessels that are not finished. They're all in copper, that I suppose he did as samples, but they're wonderful things.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, well he was here last year.

MS. FISCH: Yes, doing a workshop.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Was it last year or the year before? But in any case he was doing a workshop and I stopped by and I-well, he had brought about a dozen that were set up in the gallery, and he was teaching his free-for-all, it looked like. Just pounding metal. People were trying to do spicula six feet long. It was kind of funny. And then I was invited to show my slides, so I did and so on, went over there one evening. It was in an evening class? Yeah, it was an evening class and during the evening classes, so I spent an hour showing some slides.

[Audio break.] MS. FISCH: This is Arline Fisch interviewing Eugene Pijanowski at his home and studio in Honolulu on May 14, 2003, for the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. This is disc number five.

Gene, I wanted to talk to you about galleries, because that seemed to be the major way in which work gets shown and sold and so on. Which galleries have been important for the exhibition and sale of your work?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think Atlanta, Georgia, for a while, that was a pretty good gallery. What was the name of it?

MS. FISCH: Great American?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah.

MS. FISCH: Which now is called Connell.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, we were there for a couple of years, and then we were sending- I think this was probably in the mid-'70s and we were doing well there. We even had an apprentice at that point. We had gotten an apprentice, one of the first apprenticeship grants from the NEA, National Endowment of the Arts, and I think Albert Paley was the other one. They were sort of trial balloons.

MS. FISCH: Right. I got one I think the following year.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: So we had help and we were-yeah, we were sort of doing semi-production stuff, and Great American Gallery in Atlanta, Georgia, was doing well with that work.

Who knows why, I can't remember, either that dried up or closed, or we decided they weren't selling enough.

Then what were some of the other galleries? Hiroko remembers this stuff better than I do.

MS. FISCH: Well, did you sell at Yaw Gallery [Birmingham, MI]?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, not much, but we had some things, two different-actually we shared the exhibition in probably the late '70s with Marvin Lipofsky at the Yaw Gallery, didn't sell a thing; he sold out.

And then a number of years later with the new production line of about three years ago there was a show at the Yaw Gallery and also another one within that same year down the street at another, newer gallery that Hiroko

could tell you the name of. It was upstairs, Weissman or Weiss something gallery. In Birmingham, Michigan.

MS. FISCH: Did you ever sell through Helen Drutt [Helen Drutt Gallery, Philadelphia, PA]?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh, yeah, Helen Drutt bought-besides the paper cord edition, I don't know if she bought anything else.

MS. FISCH: But did she ever represent you? That is, did she handle your work on a regular basis?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Semi-regular. I can't remember much going there. No, I can't remember.

MS. FISCH: So what's been the most useful vehicle for marketing your work, or has marketing not been important?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, it's been important but we never found something-oh, there was a gallery in Seattle in the Space Needle early on, too, that we did fairly well, but after the '80s nothing much, because we were more-I think we were more doing the art end of things, so naturally it was-mostly exhibitions and a few galleries here and there.

MS. FISCH: And did you sell your work out of exhibitions?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Not much.

MS. FISCH: Do you still own all this work or where is it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, in different collections, I mean, different private and public collections, but we've got a lot of stuff.

MS. FISCH: You still have a lot of work. And what are you going to do about it?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That is a big problem. Hiroko couldn't care. I think Hiroko would just throw it away. Hiroko, that was then, I'm here now. Hiroko -

MS. FISCH: You do have work at the Renwick, in the Renwick Collection [Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.]?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I think so.

MS. FISCH: And how did-did they buy that from you, or from a gallery?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, the Renwick, the Associates bought a piece. Renwick Alliance, sorry. Yeah, I forgot about that. Again, I think it was the paper cord, if I remember correctly.

MS. FISCH: So when you say selling your work was important, but it doesn't seem to be-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, it was just, we felt that to be successful you've got to sell your work. Then we learned later that really is not that critical if we're teaching.

MS. FISCH: So did then that influence the kind of work that you did, that perception?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Sure. Oh yeah, right. Then we could break out.

MS. FISCH: So then you didn't do so much production or even semi-production?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh no, no. Other than Hiroko in the last-until recently, the last five, six years, at a juncture when Hiroko decided that the students needed to have enough information to go out and to make at least a basic living rather than do something entirely different.

MS. FISCH: So the interest in production work again became a kind of model for students?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Students and, of course, what defines success in another arena. It's a whole different arena.

MS. FISCH: Well, the commercial world is very different.

So over the years you don't consider, then, that galleries were terribly important for you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Just for exhibition and most of those were invitations. We tried always to enter a competition or two a year just to see, and we got in most of those.

MS. FISCH: But that wasn't then a primary motivation for you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No.

MS. FISCH: Did you sell-did you deal with galleries in other parts of the world?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Other than the one outside of Amsterdam?

MS. FISCH: I mean, did you have galleries in-or deal with galleries in Japan?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Japan. Other than when we were living there, no.

MS. FISCH: And not in Austria?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, we had some pieces at different, two different times, I believe, at Galerie-no, I was going to say Galerie Ra, but that's not right.

MS. FISCH: At Inge Asenbaum's Gallery [Vienna, Austria].

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, I can't remember the name.

I think we had once or twice pieces at Galerie Ra [Amsterdam, the Netherlands].

MS. FISCH: But never in England. Did you ever sell through Electrum [Electrum Gallery, London, England]?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Oh yeah, we did Electrum. See, you're bringing all this back, thanks. Electrum, actually it was-I'm going for about three or four years and we sold a few things through them. Then we just stopped sending it because it was such a hassle through customs.

MS. FISCH: So you don't think that your relationships with galleries and dealers were terribly productive?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It wasn't worth the effort-were definitely not productive. It was not worth the effort when we tried to design for a gallery. In the long run it was not something we wanted to do because-other than at one point Hiroko wanted to open her own gallery.

MS. FISCH: Oh, she did. And what did you think about that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I said long hours, long hours, long hours.

MS. FISCH: And lots of money down the drain.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Down the drain. In any case it didn't stop Hiroko from doing other things.

MS. FISCH: But you never did open a gallery?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: We never did open a gallery, no.

MS. FISCH: Well, you have received many grants and honors and awards throughout your career. Let's talk about the grants. What kinds of grants did you have that were helpful; I mean, that made a difference for you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the Japanese-American Exchange Grant paid for our way to the Kyoto World Crafts Council, so that was important in that regard.

Then the Fulbright was important from an academic standpoint. It wasn't too rewarding from a professional standpoint for me, other than I did do things that-I did damascene. That was interesting. It was different from inlay and it was-I did a lot more really tiny, tiny, tiny stuff, so I liked that, but I didn't continue that. So the Fulbright was-on a personal basis it was rewarding. From a professional basis it was okay. Not terribly productive, because they had me serve in such a way that it didn't make for-even though I was working, probably more than anybody else there, I was there just about five days a week, at least four to six hours a day.

MS. FISCH: But the other day you mentioned that you might think about applying for a Fulbright to do something else. What would that be?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the current dean of the School of Art is always sending to all the faculty all the updates and Fulbright opportunities and other opportunities, and I was just sort of breezing through them and I said, "Well, maybe Melbourne. I really liked staying in Melbourne. Maybe I can do more mokume with that machine." And then I wrote myself a note, and then I sent a piece, and then I said, "Oh, shit, they're going to not like that piece. I don't think it's very good." So then I'm now weighing whether or not I would write them an e-mail or not;

would you support me in writing a letter to the Fulbright Commission?

MS. FISCH: What are the terms of the Fulbright to Australia? I'm not sure I know. Is it just a year or less?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: I think it's six months or a year and basically senior lecturer.

MS. FISCH: And that would interest you to do that?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: That would interest me if it's during the right time of the year and just really exploring the mokume, because it's so much easier, and they really have access to that rolling mill.

MS. FISCH: Ian Ferguson has set up such a great facility.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, such a great facility, then the access to a commercial rolling mill.

MS. FISCH: So there are lots of appealing things.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: There's a lot of appeal there where I wouldn't have to really work as hard physically at getting things done.

MS. FISCH: And what about honors and awards? Which are significant to you?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Honors?

MS. FISCH: Well, you were made a fellow of the American Craft Council. Was that important?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, a fellow of the American Crafts Council was probably the most important thing ever to happen to us, because I never thought that the body of work was strong enough to warrant that. I always felt there were other people out there. I'll always feel that way probably.

MS. FISCH: I don't happen to agree with you. I think you're very important.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, but in any case there are other people coming up who really deserve it; I think my regret is not participating in organizations.

MS. FISCH: Where you could have made a bigger contribution?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Where I-maybe I could have made a contribution and meet people and meet some of my peers. I think that would have been a major draw for me, to work with peers who I admire.

MS. FISCH: But you have gone to some SNAG [Society of North American Goldsmiths] conferences.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Right and one in Seattle. In the early days Hiroko and I gave a presentation, and then Hiroko gave one in St. Louis a couple of years ago. I mean, those were, I think, important for her and for me, and I was so proud at what she did at the St. Louis. It was just so well done what she and her assistant, or colleague I should say, did [Nichole Dechamps-Benke].

MS. FISCH: Let's see, there's one last thing I wanted to talk about. What do you think your greatest accomplishments are?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the dissemination of information about the Japanese techniques and hoping that some people took advantage of that to make work that-or make honest work that they were satisfied with, because that's self-satisfaction, I think, is the first step towards-if you're satisfied with what you did, it doesn't matter what other people think.

MS. FISCH: And what do you hope for in the future?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I hope to have good health. I hope to get my act together in terms of making things that I like and if I like them to try to share them with other people. And I think they'll be both functional and nonfunctional objects. I don't think there will be too much jewelry. I think there will probably be, if they're going to be, or allude to being functional, they'll be vessels of sorts, open, closed, whatever.

MS. FISCH: Would you ever consider doing a public art project?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: No, my ego isn't that strong, I guess.

MS. FISCH: Does it have to do with ego, or just energy, the energy of going through the process.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: It's the process. Well, there are processes out there that make it easier now with technology to make things bigger. There are different machine shops who have this technology who are more than willing to work. I've found them to be very receptive and have given me cost breaks and my students cost breaks.

MS. FISCH: And you're comfortable working in that manner, contracting out?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah, because I can't do things. I just don't have the equipment or the inclination, mostly I think equipment. And the technology offers new possibilities.

MS. FISCH: Well, that's why I wondered if the public art scene would intrigue you, just because you can do it with other people. And Hawaii seems to be receptive to public art projects.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Yeah. There are a few things going on. Now that I'm in Hawaii for over a year, I guess I'll be accepted as a resident to participate in their annual shows, which I missed this year, but maybe the next round I'll be more aware.

MS. FISCH: Tell me finally about this project that you're undertaking with the Honolulu Academy of Art, because I think that is something for the future.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, the Honolulu Academy Art Center has a facility that left much to be desired and a few people knew that, Frances Pickens being one. She is the instigator and the fundraiser for developing a new facility in the basement of that same building across the street from the Academy, the oldest existing high school in Hawaii at one time.

So it's a space of about 1,500 square feet in which we were trying to design a facility. I don't want a facility that can do everything because it wouldn't make any sense. I want a facility that would do the basics. Technology has-we couldn't support it. We can always get the funding to initiate it, but to support it, to get technical support and keeping it updated is just too costly in my mind, after going through that trip.

So it would be a bare-bones facility that will do traditional work, traditional hand metalwork. We will have, of course, buffing wheels and casting machines and stuff like that, but that's, I think, pretty basic. And from that we can do enough to satisfy clientele.

So that is an initiative that I'm very interested in pursuing on a part-time basis. I don't want to get involved with it administratively. That's why one of the things I was very specific about-that if I was going to be involved, it would be a full-time technician devoted to that facility only, and it looks like it's there, nothing on paper yet, and I'm waiting for the paper contract of some sort to guarantee, before I sign anything, that all I'll be responsible for, there will be that and some sort of budget to keep the facility going.

MS. FISCH: So you're kind of excited about this?

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Well, I'm mainly excited because this is a new environment, and I want to establish personal relationships to people who are interested in crafts and some of the things that I do and they do. I would like to know what they're doing, too, because it's got to be always a two-way street between anybody. You just can't have a one-way street. You can't be giving; you have to take, and that's the secret of any good relationship, give and take.

MS. FISCH: Okay, now is there anything else that you want to say about yourself, your work or-

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Other than the life or the lives and times of Gene have been formed greatly, over the last 36 years since I first met Hiroko, by Hiroko, to which I'll be eternally grateful and loving for.

MS. FISCH: Amen.

MR. PIJANOWSKI: Amen. [They laugh.] [END OF INTERVIEW.]

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